



Council Tax Technical Reforms 2013/14

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Proposed new policy to be assessed

The Council Tax Technical Reforms to be implemented 1st April 2013.

2. Why is this new policy necessary?

The Government is allowing Councils greater freedom to set discounts for certain empty properties. The Council is proposing to reduce discounts substantially.

3. Reasons for the change in policy

On 17th February 2011 the Government published the Welfare Reform Bill that was subsequently enacted on the 8th March 2012 with The Local Government Finance Bill receiving Royal Assent on 1st November 2012 becoming the Local Government Finance Act 2012 (LGFA 2012).

The LGFA 2012 allows certain freedoms regarding greater flexibility on the Council Tax local authorities can charge in respect of empty properties by reducing the amount of discounts available.

Tackling empty homes is a national housing priority, as empty homes can blight communities by devaluing properties, reduce the visual attractiveness of neighbourhoods and act as magnets for anti-social behaviour and theft.

Measures to bring empty property back into use could increase occupancy rates and reduce the cost to the Council of homelessness. There would be less blight and perhaps less anti social behaviour if empty houses were returned to occupation.

A full Equalities Impact assessment is currently being undertaken but it is not anticipated that they will have a disproportionate impact on any of the Protected Characteristics.

