

**Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template**



Function Title: Consideration as to whether the Council should charge a council tax premium on long term empty dwellings

New

Who is responsible for developing and implementing the Function?

Name: Mike Taylor

Job Title: Council Tax Manager

Service Team: Revenues

Service Area: Resources

Assessment Date: 18th January 2019

1. What are the objectives of the Function?

Consideration needs to be given as to whether or not the Council should charge a council tax premium on long term empty dwellings.

2. Please provide background information on the Function and any research done

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 has amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 by inserting section 12A which gives the Council the discretion to discontinue any discounts granted to long term empty homes and apply a premium of up to 100% on top of the standard rate of council tax. A long-term empty dwelling is defined as a dwelling which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at least a year.

Many issues of community concern arise from some of the empty properties within the city; these include fly tipping, nuisance, vandalism, criminal activity and visual deterioration, all of which have the potential to adversely affect neighbouring properties and residents. Some empty properties can be a blight on a local community and boarded up dwellings have a significant impact on the way potential investors perceive an area. In addition to the above, empty properties also represent a wasted resource in light of the housing demand within the city. There are currently approximately 1400 properties empty for more than six months at any one time and the Housing enforcement team within the Shared Regulatory Services (SRS) actively monitor 200 of those empty properties on a prioritised basis as part of the Cardiff Housing Strategy

In addition to reactive visits to complaints about empty properties, the SRS also work proactively to capture the wider scope of long term empty properties. The Council seeks to incentivise owners to act positively in bringing properties into beneficial use in a number of ways. These include signposting owners to the Houses into Homes loan scheme, providing a list of private property developers, referring to a Housing Association for lease and repair where feasible or providing proof of empty status letters for VAT reduction on renovation costs. Although some owners may be receptive to this approach, there are of course

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment Corporate Assessment Template

situations where owners are absent and cannot be traced or are resistant to resolving the issues. In these circumstances, the SRS is able to exercise a number of enforcement powers. These can deal with immediate issues such as fly tipping and making premises secure to more long-term solutions such as enforced sale or compulsory purchase. The imposition of premiums for long term empty dwellings could act as an added incentive to bring properties back into beneficial occupation

As at 31st December 2018 there were 156,460 dwellings on the Council Tax Valuation list and currently 3135 (2%) are recorded as being unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. Of this figure 1815 are exempt and out of the remaining dwellings 869 (28% of the vacant dwellings and 0.55% of the total number of dwellings) had been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 12 months

The table below gives details of how the 869 long term empty properties are split over the parishes within the city and their bands.

Admin Unit Name	Properties	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Adamsdown	34	1	6	13	8	2	0	2	1	1
Butetown	31	3	1	2	9	12	2	2	0	0
Caerau	11	1	2	4	3	0	1	0	0	0
Canton	58	1	14	10	16	14	2	1	0	0
Castle	18	0	1	4	4	5	2	0	0	2
Cathays	45	1	18	4	5	14	2	0	0	1
Cyncoed	22	0	2	0	2	5	5	6	1	1
Ely	18	0	12	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fairwater	21	0	2	5	11	3	0	0	0	0
Gabalfa	23	0	1	7	2	11	2	0	0	0
Grangetown	72	1	11	16	16	22	5	0	0	1
Heath	27	0	0	2	6	8	9	2	0	0
Lisvane	9	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	1	1
Llandaff	22	0	0	2	7	7	2	1	1	2
Llandaff North	10	0	0	2	6	2	0	0	0	0
Llanedeyrn	8	0	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Llanishen	22	0	0	7	6	0	3	4	1	1
Llanrumney	19	3	6	7	1	2	0	0	0	0
Old St Mellons	9	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	1
Pentwyn	11	0	2	6	1	1	1	0	0	0
Pentyrch	8	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	0	1
Penylan	38	1	3	2	7	8	10	4	0	3
Pontcanna	34	1	4	3	7	10	6	3	0	0
Pontprennau	6	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
Radyr	11	0	0	0	4	4	2	0	0	1
Rhiwbina	25	0	0	3	4	6	9	3	0	0
Riverside	37	0	9	16	8	3	1	0	0	0

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment Corporate Assessment Template

Roath	109	6	32	22	22	15	8	3	0	1
Rumney	19	0	4	4	5	4	2	0	0	0
Splott	32	2	6	8	16	0	0	0	0	0
St Fagans	8	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	3	1
Thornhill	5	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
Tongwynlais	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Tremorfa	7	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trowbridge	11	2	0	1	3	3	1	0	0	1
Whitchurch	27	0	0	6	5	10	3	2	1	0
	869	24	140	176	198	181	83	38	10	19

The spread of long term empty property across the parishes seems to be a fairly even one given the size of each parish. Grangetown and Roath are larger parishes hence the higher volume of long term empty dwellings.

A determination by a local authority to charge a premium under section 12a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 must be made by full Council. The Welsh Government has also stated that a local authority should give consideration to engagement and consultation with key stake holders, including the local electorate, before taking a decision as to whether or not to charge a premium.

Therefore the Council has undertaken an on line consultation exercise from 14th December 2018 to 14th January 2019

Responses were received from over 500 different stake holders including residents, businesses and landlords, the overwhelming majority (85.7%) of which believe that empty properties are an eyesore.

71% of the responders felt that a council tax premium of 50% or more should be charged on long term empty dwellings with a full 100% council tax premium being the most popular choice of all of the options given (43%).

63.8% of the responders indicated that a premium should be charged after a property has been left unoccupied and largely unfurnished for a period of a year

3 Assess Impact on the Protected Characteristics

3.1 Age

Will this Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative/]** on younger/older people?

	Yes	No	N/A
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CARDIFF COUNCIL

**Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template**

Up to 18 years		X	
18 - 65 years		X	
Over 65 years		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.2 Disability

Will this Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on disabled people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Hearing Impairment		X	
Physical Impairment		X	
Visual Impairment		X	
Learning Disability		X	
Long-Standing Illness or Health Condition		X	
Mental Health		X	
Substance Misuse		X	
Other		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change.

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

CARDIFF COUNCIL

**Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template**

3.3 Gender Reassignment

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on transgender people?

	Yes	No	N/A
Transgender People (People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process [or part of a process] to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex)		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.4. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on marriage and civil partnership?

	Yes	No	N/A
Marriage		X	
Civil Partnership		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

CARDIFF COUNCIL

**Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template**

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on pregnancy and maternity?

	Yes	No	N/A
Pregnancy		X	
Maternity		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.6 Race

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project//Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
White		X	
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups		X	
Asian / Asian British		X	
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British		X	
Other Ethnic Groups		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template

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What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.7 Religion, Belief or Non-Belief

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs?

	Yes	No	N/A
Buddhist		X	
Christian		X	
Hindu		X	
Humanist		X	
Jewish		X	
Muslim		X	
Sikh		X	
Other		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template

3.8 Sex

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on men and/or women?

	Yes	No	N/A
Men		X	
Women		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

3.9 Sexual Orientation

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on the following groups?

	Yes	No	N/A
Bisexual		X	
Gay Men		X	
Gay Women/Lesbians		X	
Heterosexual/Straight		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment
Corporate Assessment Template

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3.10 Welsh Language

Will this Policy/Strategy/Project/Procedure/Service/Function have a **differential impact [positive/negative]** on Welsh Language?

	Yes	No	N/A
Welsh Language		X	

Please give details/consequences of the differential impact, and provide supporting evidence, if any.

Liability to council tax is assessed in accordance with existing statute and this will not change

What action(s) can you take to address the differential impact?

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4. Consultation and Engagement

What arrangements have been made to consult/engage with the various Equalities Groups?

See above for details of Consultation Exercise that was undertaken

CARDIFF COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment Corporate Assessment Template

5. Summary of Actions [Listed in the Sections above]

Groups	Actions
Age	None
Disability	None
Gender Reassignment	None
Marriage & Civil Partnership	None
Pregnancy & Maternity	None
Race	None
Religion/Belief	None
Sex	None
Sexual Orientation	None
Welsh Language	None
Generic Over-Arching [applicable to all the above groups]	None

6. Further Action

Any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this Equality Impact Assessment (listed in Summary of Actions) should be included as part of your Service Area's Business Plan to be monitored on a regular basis.

7. Authorisation

The Template should be completed by the Lead Officer of the identified Function and approved by the appropriate Manager in each Service Area.

Completed By : Mike Taylor	Date:
Designation: Council Tax Manager	18 th January 2019
Approved By: Gary Watkins	
Designation: Revenues Services Manager	
Service Area: Resources	

7.1 On completion of this Assessment, please ensure that the Form is posted on your Directorate's Page on CIS - *Council Wide/Management Systems/Equality Impact Assessments* - so that there is a record of all assessments undertaken in the Council.

For further information or assistance, please contact the Citizen Focus Team on 029 2087 2536 / 3262 or email equalityteam@cardiff.gov.uk