

## Equality Impact Assessment Template – Policy, Function or Strategy

This document should be completed when a new policy, function or strategy is introduced or when a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy is recommended. This will ensure equality considerations are taken into account before a decision is made and the policy, function or strategy can be altered, if required.

<b>1. Policy, function or strategy</b>		
a.	Name/description of the policy, function or strategy <sup>1</sup>	Inverclyde Council Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy 2023
b.	Responsible organisation(s)/Lead Service	Finance Services
c.	Lead Officer	Tracy Bunton, Revenues and Benefits Manager
d.	Date of Impact Assessment	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
e.	Partners/other Services involved in the development of the policy, function or strategy	Peers from other Councils; Scottish Government, Legal and Democratic Services, Inverclyde Council.
f.	Is the policy, function or strategy?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New
		<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed/Revised
g.	What is the purpose of the policy, function or strategy (include details of any new legislation which prompted the introduction of the policy, function or strategy or the substantive change to the policy, function or strategy)?	With effect from 1 April 2023 the determination and administration of Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief will be devolved to local authorities in Scotland. As a result Councils will be required to set their own policy for the rating and reliefs available for unoccupied or empty properties. The Council's Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy 2023 will replicate existing statutory reductions which will terminate at 31 March 2023.
h.	What are the intended outcomes of the policy, function or strategy?	Empty properties will receive relief from Non-Domestic Rates in line with the agreed policy

<sup>1</sup> Please attach details of the policy, function or strategy to this Template

i.	Geographical area (Inverclyde-wide or a specific location)	Inverclyde-wide	
j.	Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy impact on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between people from different groups
k.	Will those who may be directly or indirectly affected by the policy, function or strategy be involved in its development?	No	

<b>2. Does the policy, function or strategy impact on:</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation <b>(see Section 3)</b>		X
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty <sup>2</sup> <b>(see Section 6)</b>	X	
c. Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 <sup>3</sup> <b>(see Section 7)</b>	X	
d. Corporate Plan 2018/22 <sup>4</sup> <b>(see Section 8)</b>	X	

<sup>2</sup> [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/22](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Corporate Plan 2018/22](#) (agenda item 5)

<b>3. If 'Yes' is selected for any part of Section 2, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.</b>		
<b>4. If 'No' is selected for <u>every part</u> of Section 2, please state the reasons for this.</b>		
 <b>Please sign below and email a copy of this Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer:</b>  <b><u><a href="mailto:karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk">karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk</a></u></b>		
Signature:		Date:

### 3. Impact – Protected Characteristics

Which of the Protected Characteristics will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?

Protected Characteristic	Impact				Reasons/Comments
	Positive High	Low	Neutral	Negative High	
Age			X		
Disability			X		
Gender Reassignment			X		
Marriage and civil partnership			X		
Pregnancy and maternity			X		
Race			X		
Religion and belief			X		

Sex			X			
Sexual orientation			X			
Other groups to consider • Carers			X			

<b>4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between people from different groups

<b>5. Impact – Groups</b>	
From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.	
<b>Positive impacts</b> + <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>	<b>Negative impacts</b> - <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>

## 6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will this policy, function or strategy have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
X		
<p><b>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.</b></p> <p>The policy will support property owners where businesses have failed including those affected by adverse economic conditions.</p>		

## 7. Impact – LOIP 2017/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the LOIP 2017/22 will this policy, function or strategy impact on?

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. <b>Population:</b> Inverclyde's population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio-economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. <b>Inequalities:</b> There will be low levels of poverty and deprivation and the gap between the richest and poorest members of our communities will be reduced (This may already have been highlighted at Section 6.)
X	3. <b>Environment, culture and heritage:</b> Inverclyde's environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.
X	4. <b>The local economy:</b> Inverclyde has a thriving and diverse local economy, economic activity is increased and skills development enables both those in work and those furthest from the labour market to realise their full potential
<p><b>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the LOIP Priority/Priorities.</b></p>	

Priorities 3 and 4: The aim of the policy is to encourage empty commercial property back into economic use while allowing reasonable time for owners to achieve this. The return of empty property, including empty listed buildings, is a measure supporting the aims of protecting the built heritage, streetscape and encouraging economic activity.

## 8. Impact – Corporate Plan 2018/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the Corporate Plan 2018/22 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. To promote Inverclyde, to both residents and visitors alike, as a great place to live, work and visit
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. To work collaboratively, to enable strong, connected and empowered communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that residents have influence and control over the things that matter to them
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. To grow the local economy in a way that creates opportunities for all our residents, including access to good quality jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. To reduce the prevalence of poverty and, in particular, child poverty in our communities
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. To safeguard, support and meet the needs of our most vulnerable families and residents
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. To improve the health and wellbeing of residents so that people live well, and for longer
X	7. To protect and enhance our natural and built environment
X	8. To preserve, nurture and promote Inverclyde's unique culture and heritage
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and are underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. To develop motivated, trained and qualified employees who deliver quality services that meet current and anticipated service needs

**Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Corporate Plan Priority/Priorities.**

Priorities 7 and 8: The aim of the policy is to encourage empty commercial property back into economic use while allowing reasonable time for owners to achieve this. The return of empty property, including empty listed buildings is a measure supporting the aims of protecting the built heritage, streetscape and encouraging economic activity.

## 9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the policy, function or strategy?

Note: Evidence could include information from consultations, surveys, the Citizens' Panel, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, Officers' knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, and local and national groups.

Evidence	Details
Consultation/Engagement (including any carried out while developing the policy, function or strategy)	Peers from other Councils were consulted to find almost all plan to make the same recommendation that the policy replicates the statutory scheme ending at 31 March 2023. Informal discussion with Economic Development colleagues concluded with agreement to this approach.
Research	Non-Domestic Rates records were examined to establish the cost of the policy and to compare with the 2023/24 funding allocation. Costs will be contained within the allocation based on the current empty property status.
Officers' knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	108 commercial premises met the criteria for Empty Property Relief between April and December 2022.
Equalities monitoring data	
User feedback (including complaints)	The Policy includes provision for property owners to request a review of decisions regarding Empty Property Relief.
Stakeholders	



Other	
Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	

## 10. Consequences of Analysis

What steps will you take in response to the findings of your analysis? Please select at least one of the following and provide a brief explanation.

a.	Continue development with no changes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Council had limited time to develop a policy however the analysis does not indicate a need for immediate changes, deviating from the statutory scheme.
b.	Continue development with minor alterations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
c.	Continue development with major changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Discontinue development and consider alternatives (where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How will the effect of the policy, function or strategy be monitored following implementation?

Movement in empty property and feedback from ratepayers including applications for relief and payment of rates liability will be monitored.

When is the policy, function or strategy due to be implemented?

April 2023.

When will the policy, function or strategy be reviewed?

Officers would propose to develop the Inverclyde Non-Domestic Rates Empty Property Relief Policy further during 2023/24 for Committee's consideration. This provides time to analyse and understand the trajectory of empty property and to include the financial implications of any changes to the Policy as part of the 2024/25 Budget.

The Policy will be subject to review should funding arrangements change or to take account of any other local arrangements, otherwise the policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 3 years.

What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, function or strategy? Have these resources changed?

Delivery will be carried out by existing resources.

**11. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of the policy, function or strategy.**

<b>Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:</b>	
Name:	Tracy Bunton
Position:	Revenues and Benefits Manager
Date:	23 January 2023
<b>Authorised by:</b>	
Name:	Alan Puckrin
Position:	Interim Director, Finance and Corporate Governance
Date:	23 January 2023

Thank you for your assistance with the completion of this task.

**Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer at [karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk).**