

## Equality Analysis - Stage One – Initial Analysis

### What you are analysing?

#### Award of Discretionary Rate Relief (Charitable and Voluntary Organisations)2014/15

Is it a; service  function  policy  procedure

Is it? A new service, function, policy or procedure

An existing service, function, policy or procedure

An amended or revised service/ function/ policy/ or procedure

<p>1. What are the main aims and objectives or purpose of the service, function, policy or procedure (proposal)? What needs or duties is it designed to meet?</p>	<p><b>To allow continuation of discretionary rate relief to charitable, not for profit and voluntary organisations for 2014/15 based on existing policy.</b></p>
<p>2. Who is or will be affected by this proposal?</p>	<p><b>Charitable, not for profit and voluntary organisations that are liable to pay business rates.</b></p>
<p>3. Is the proposal affected by external drivers for change? (e.g. new or amended legislation, national policy, external inspections etc.)</p>	<p><b>No. The policy allows the Council to exercise a discretionary power to reduce the business rates bills of qualifying organisations. The power is granted under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and has been in place for many years.</b></p>
<p>4. Who is responsible for defining and implementing this proposal?</p>	<p><b>Revenues and Benefits Service</b></p>
<p>5. How does Wolverhampton City Council interact with other bodies or organisations in relation to the implementation of the proposal?</p>	<p><b>A copy of the policy and details of how to apply are published on the council's website. Information is provided to each organisation as part of an annual review to verify ongoing entitlement.</b></p> <p><b>No formal consultation has been conducted in respect of the decision being requested of Cabinet (Resources) Panel as the policy is unchanged.</b></p>
<p>6. What analyses, information or data relating to the proposal already exist?</p>	<p><b>WCC holds some information on those organisations that apply for discretionary relief. This is limited to information that is required in order to determine an application for relief.</b></p>

<p>7. Is there any evidence of higher or lower take up under the proposal for any particular groups? (from formal monitoring or informal anecdotal evidence)</p>	<p><b>No</b>  <b>The underlying policy only applies to organisations (not individuals) that are liable for business rates.</b></p>
<p>8. Is there any evidence that the proposal may be directly or indirectly discriminatory?</p>	<p><b>No</b>  <b>The underlying policy is based on Government guidance and sets out clear eligibility criteria against which applications are assessed.</b></p> <p><b>Eligibility for relief is triggered by the status of the organisation (i.e. charitable / not for profit) and not by the function of the organisation. There are however additional qualifying criteria that require the organisation to demonstrate open access and compliance with equal opportunities.</b></p>
<p>9. If the proposal is discriminatory, can it be justified?</p>	<p><b>N/A – see comments in box 8</b></p>
<p>10. If the proposal is not discriminatory, is there any evidence that it has a differential impact?</p>	<p><b>Registered charities will be granted 80% mandatory relief and are granted 20% discretionary relief if their activities satisfy the scheme criteria and there is direct benefit to the local community.</b></p> <p><b>Other not for profit and voluntary organisations can be granted up to 100% discretionary rate relief. The proposal is to continue to grant relief in 2014/15 on the same basis as 2013/14 provided they still satisfy the criteria for the scheme.</b></p> <p><b>Any differential impact is assessed as being positive in nature. The underlying policy states that:</b>  <b>“Sympathetic consideration will be given to applications from groups who actively encourage membership from particularly disadvantaged groups in the community, e.g. young people or the disabled, elderly people and ethnic minorities.”</b></p>
<p>11. If there is a differential impact, is it likely to have an adverse impact on any group?</p>	<p><b>No – see comments in box 10</b></p>

<p>12. If there is an adverse impact, can that impact be justified?</p>	<p><b>N/A – see comments in box 10</b></p>
<p>13. What evidence have you used to make your judgment of discrimination and/or adverse impact?</p>	<p><b>The scheme is open to any organisation provided it satisfies the policy criteria.</b></p>
<p>14. If the discrimination/adverse impact cannot be justified, how do you intend to deal with it? Is there any alternative measure which would achieve the desired aim without the adverse impact identified?</p>	<p><b>The finding of this screening is that there is no discrimination or adverse impact.</b></p>
<p>15. Does or could, the proposal contribute to a specific duty in equality law?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation</li> <li>• advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups</li> <li>• foster good relations between people from different groups.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The policy is to grant business rates relief to charitable, not for profit and voluntary organisations based on government guidance.</b></p> <p><b>The effect of the policy is to reduce the amount of business rates payable by qualifying organisations. Many of these organisations assist individuals from protected groups and the financial assistance provided under this policy contributes to the viability of the organisation.</b></p>
<p>16. Are there any groups which might be expected to benefit from the intended outcomes but do not?</p>	<p><b>There is no evidence to suggest that any particular group could benefit but does not.</b></p> <p><b>This judgement is based on the fact that applications are assessed on clear eligibility criteria, based on Government Guidance and described above.</b></p>
<p>17. Is the proposal intended to increase equality of opportunity by permitting or requiring action to redress disadvantages? If yes, is it lawful?</p>	<p><b>Although this is not a specific policy intention, applications are assessed against a requirement that the organisation must demonstrate open access.</b></p>
<p>18. Have you consulted as part of your analysis? Who have you consulted? What methods did you use?</p>	<p><b>No – see comments in box 5</b></p>
<p>19. Is there any public concern (in the media etc.) that the proposal is being operated in a discriminatory manner?</p>	<p><b>No</b></p>

20. Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? If so, are these anticipated or dealt with by the proposal?	<b>No</b> <b>New applications do not indicate any changes in the type of organisation applying for relief</b>
21. How is information about the proposal publicised?	<b>A copy of the policy and details of how to apply are published on the council website and provided to each organisation as part on an annual review. Information is provided with all annual rates bills.</b>
22. How will you monitor in future?	<b>The level of relief and types of organisations will be taken into account with any reviews of the scheme. It is likely that a new scheme for discretionary rate relief will be developed for 2015/16 onwards and appropriate consultation will be carried out at that time.</b>
23. Is there any other relevant information?	<b>No</b>

**Officer(s) completing the analysis**

**Karen Hampshire**

**Job Title**

**Revenues and Benefits Manager**

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**Date 13/02/2014**

**Upon completion of this form please record the date sent to:**

Authorising Officer

Date sent

Head of Equalities

Date sent

Equality Project Group (if appropriate)

Date sent