

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Tool

1	Lead officer contact details: Amelia Hadjimichael			
2	Date: March 2018			
3	Summary of the proposal: Member Approval for the continuation of the existing Discretionary Housing Payment Policy			
Response to Screening Questions				
	Yes	No	Please explain your answer.	
a) Type of proposal				
4.	Is this a new proposal or a significant change to a policy or service, including commissioned service?		No	No this policy already exists and is annually approved by members
5.	Does the proposal remove, reduce or alter a service or policy?		No	No – this is a continuation of existing policy.
6.	Will there be a restructure or significant changes in staffing arrangements? Please see the restructure pages for guidance for restructure EqlAs .		No	This does not affect staff
7.	If the service or policy is not changing, have there been any known equality issues or concerns with current provision. For example, cases of discrimination or failure to tackle inequalities in outcomes in the past?		No	There have been no issues with equalities in the past. Users who have needed to access Discretionary Housing Payments to supplement their existing Housing Benefit have applied in the normal way, and have had their decisions approved or rejected. Rejections are appealable and dealt with by a panel.
b) Known inequalities				
8.	Could the proposal disproportionately impact on any particular communities, disadvantaged or vulnerable residents?		No	Restrictions in Housing Benefit affect people on lower incomes. People on lower incomes are more often disabled, lone parents who are predominantly female, or come from black and minority ethnic communities.

				Disadvantaged groups more often experience more financial deprivation, than. As such people from these disadvantaged groups are more likely to request additional assistance from the DHP fund. The policy does not favour any disadvantaged group over any other. The main criteria for assistance through DHP's is to demonstrate the need for additional funds, and the exceptional hardship experienced as a result of this.
9.	<p>Is the service targeted towards particular disadvantaged or vulnerable residents?</p> <p><i>This can be a service specifically for a group, such as services for people with Learning Disabilities. It can also be a universal service but has specific measures to tackle inequalities, such as encouraging men to take up substance misuse services.</i></p>		No	The policy is not targeted at any group in particular. The law states when DHP's may be paid. The criteria for awarding DHP is based on eligibility for Housing Benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit. After establishing this, anybody who feels that they can demonstrate exceptional hardship may apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment. The law states that each case must be treated on its own merits and that the authority may not fetter it's discretion by making blanket decisions.
10.	<p>Are there any known inequalities? For example, particular groups are not currently accessing services that they need or are more likely to suffer inequalities in outcomes, such as health outcomes.</p>		No	The Council and other local services provide assistance for people affected by the Benefit Cap or the Bedroom Tax. Also there are services such as Housing Advice and Housing Support for people who have difficulty paying their rent. This enables people to access different support services to help them to make claims for Discretionary Housing Payments. People can also make claims for DHP themselves. There is no evidence to suggest that our existing policy deters anyone from claiming, where those people are from any particular disadvantaged group. The repercussions of not claiming a DHP would be likely homelessness, or increased poverty, and there is no evidence to suggest that any group experiences homelessness or additional poverty

				because of any failure in the Councils DHP policy to reach those groups..
11	If you have answered yes to at least one question in both sections a) and b), Please complete an EqIA.			<p>If a decision is taken not to proceed with a full EqIA, please document carefully your reasons here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An EQIA is not required because the discretionary policy we propose for 2018/19 is being passed for Member Approval. As such there is no significant change to the previous 2017/18 policy. There are no concerns that the existing or proposed policy exposes any disadvantaged group to discrimination or inequality. The policy by law, particularly targets any people in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit, who are suffering exceptional financial hardship, so the policy aims to help those most in need.