



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment

Business Rates 2020/21 Enforcement Programme

Ref: EQIA2020102015

Officer Name: Andrew Wilcock

Service Area: Shared Revenues Partnership

Email Address: andrew.wilcock@ipswich.gov.uk

Title of report: Business Rates 2020/21 Enforcement Programme

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What is the report trying to achieve?:

The EQIA is required in respect of a key action as part of the Covid-19 Business and Economy recovery group, under the Business Rates aim - To maximise the income collected during 2020/21.

What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis?:

no relevant data held

Supporting documents (if available):

Is there potential for positive or negative impact on any of the protected characteristics?

- *Age: No Impact*

- **Disability:** *No Impact*
- **Marriage & Civil Partnership:** *No Impact*
- **Race:** *No Impact*
- **Pregnancy & Maternity:** *No Impact*
- **Religion or Belief:** *No Impact*
- **Gender Reassignment:** *No Impact*
- **Sex:** *No Impact*
- **Sexual Orientation:** *No Impact*

If 'No Impact' explain why

Business Rate records hold details of who the ratepayer is, either a limited company, sole trader or partnership. We do not hold details in respect of the above characteristics. All business are treated the same, enforcement activity is determined by parameters based on instalment due dates and value overdue. The enforcement regulations do allow for exceptions for vulnerability.

If you have identified any negative impacts (above) how can they be minimised or removed?

Staff have received appropriate training to help them identify and support vulnerable customers. Although there is no standard definition of 'vulnerability' staff have been trained to make an assessment on three categories. Personal circumstances (such as bereavement, financial hardship), personal characteristics (such as age, mental health, language) and external influences (such as debt collection agents, inadequate housing). Any enforcement action is placed on hold while the situation is established and the case is considered. The Council will then work with the ratepayer to help resolve the situation. For example this could include repayment schedules, debt advice or interpretation services.

The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s):

Enforcement activity is driven by parameters around payment dates/amounts. At the time of generating enforcement activity the above characteristics are not known. Every business is treated the same at the start of the process.

The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):

Businesses are dealt with on a case by case basis when contact is made. Staff are trained to make an assessment on any vulnerability issues and follow the appropriate course of action. This could be referral for debt advice, payment arrangements or interpretation services. Literature promotes support available. Where ratepayers are identified as vulnerable, processes are put in place and the account is flagged accordingly. An example being a database is held of all those ratepayers who need a large print bill. any new bills are automatically sent in large print.

The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s): Where contact is made, we work with businesses on a one to one basis to try and support them through difficult

time, for instance agreeing payment arrangements/holidays.