

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the **process** and **decision**. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.
- whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being or has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Resource / City Development	Service area: Economic Development
Lead person: Fiona Bolam	Contact number: 0113 5351882

1. Title: New Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme		
Is this a:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify		

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
<p>This screening document is in relation to 'The New Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme' report which is due to be discussed by Executive Board on 22nd June 2022.</p> <p>The New Discretionary Business Rates Relief report sets out the new criteria and conditions of the refreshed and renewed rates relief scheme. The lasting effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving the EU and more recently the war in Ukraine are changing the needs of business and creating uncertain economic conditions for businesses. With the exception of the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) scheme, the Covid-19 business support schemes have ended and so it is now the right time to review and renew the Discretionary Business Rate Relief Scheme so that it is fit for purpose in the current climate.</p> <p>This new scheme we will focus our support on young businesses, social enterprises and businesses with a social or civic purpose with the purpose supporting business retention and growth. By supporting firms to scale-up, or to grow or maintain their investment in</p>

Leeds we are helping to sustain and expand the business rates base of the city, and thus the future income of the Council. Rates relief is an important part of the Council's offer in seeking to back innovators and entrepreneurs as outlined in the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Leeds Economic Recovery Framework.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies and policies, service and functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater or lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	X	
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		X
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment • Advancing equality of opportunity • Fostering good relations 	X	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

The new scheme has been designed to be fair and transparent and to ensure a wide reach of businesses. By updating this scheme to an 'online application process' rather than personal direct contact, we aimed to ensure fair access and a broad reach from businesses across the whole Leeds MD geography. The updated criteria has also broadened the base of potential applicants by focussing more on the type of work a business is doing rather than the sector they are in. This means a greater number of businesses are likely to benefit from the scheme than previous and they will be able to do so with fairer access.

This proposed scheme will provide businesses with fiscal support which will allow them to not only afford their business rates bill, but also focus other resource into business matters such as innovation, research and personnel development. Their sustainability and a focus on creating benefits for society and civic purposes inherently promotes equality and will reflect positively in impact.

Desktop research on business rates data and prior scheme data as benchmarking was carried out to ensure the suitability of the scheme. Internal consultation has been undertaken with the Economic Development Team, Business Support Team and finance colleagues responsible for business rates. This informed the development of this proposed approach. The views of the Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education have been sought, and they are supportive of this proposal.

- **Key findings**

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

By focusing on our support on young businesses, social enterprises and businesses with a social or civic purpose, alignment with our City Ambition and Three Pillars ensures that we are providing support that is beneficial to all the city's residents through opportunities for employment in the future. This proposal promotes improved relationships with a broad range of businesses, and as such this project is deemed very positive in improving equality and diversity within the city.

Additionally, by providing an opportunity for businesses to pledge to a bespoke CSR component that has benefits to the city, businesses can improve relationships with

residents and other businesses alike. As such, it is believed that the framework will have a positive impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove / reduce negative impact)

This renewed and refreshed scheme also recognises diversity and inclusion across all of the action areas, for instance through encouraging employers to have CSR components and consider job retention and development. Overall, the aim is to help people and businesses to survive and thrive in our rapidly changing labour market, and creating more equality of opportunity. We will monitor and review delivery of this scheme to ensure we are providing subsidy in a fair and consistent manner, and that the reach of the scheme is providing an opportunity for those that are eligible to achieve a successful application.

5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Fiona Bolam	Head of Economic Policy	27-5-22
Date screening completed		27-5-22

7. Publishing

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.

- A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services	Date sent: 27/5/2022
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent: