



General Purposes Committee

Monday 9 December 2019 at 11.30 am*

Members Suite - 4th Floor, Brent Civic Centre,
Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9 0FJ

***Please note the start time for the meeting**

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

M Butt (Chair)
McLennan (Vice-Chair)
Agha
Farah
Colwill
Hirani
Krupa Sheth
Tatler

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Aden, S Choudhary, Kabir, Knight, Miller, M Patel and
Southwood

Councillors:

Kansagra and Maurice

For further information contact: James Kinsella, Governance Manager
Tel: 020 8937 2063; Email: James.Kinsella@brent.gov.uk

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democracy.brent.gov.uk

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also significant enough to affect your judgement of a public interest and either it affects a financial position or relates to a regulatory matter then after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect of expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

(b) The interests of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who is the subject of a registrable personal interest.

Agenda

Item	Page
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1	Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
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2	Declarations of interests	
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Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, the nature and existence of any relevant disclosable pecuniary or personal interests in the items on this agenda and to specify the item(s) to which they relate.

3	Deputations (if any)	
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To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.

4	Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 6
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To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 22 July 2019 as a correct record.

5	Matters arising (if any)	
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To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6	Calculation of Council Tax Base 2020/21	7 - 12
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This report is presented to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory role to set a council tax base for 2020/21.

The Council Tax Base must be set between 1 December 2019 and 31 January 2020.

Wards Affected:
All Wards

Contact Officer: Minesh Patel
Director of Finance
020 8937 4043
Minesh.Patel@brent.gov.uk

7 Exclusion of Press and Public

There are currently no items listed on the agenda that will require the exclusion of the press and public.

8 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.



Please remember to set your mobile phone to silent during the meeting.

- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Monday 22 July 2019 at 5.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), McLennan (Vice-Chair), Agha, Farah, Colwill, Hirani, Krupa Sheth and M Patel

1. **Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tatler, with Councillor M Patel being present as a substitute.

2. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interests made by Members.

3. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations received.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 May 2019, be approved as an accurate record.

5. **Matters arising (if any)**

There were no matters arising.

6. **Stopping Up Order - Land Fronting Roe Green Hall**

Councillor Krupa Sheth introduced a report from the Strategic Director, Regeneration & Environment seeking authority to make a Stopping Up Order for the stopping up of the highway fronting Roe Green Hall (as indicated on the Plan attached as Appendix A to the report), pursuant to section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990) as amended.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note that the draft Stopping Up Order had been advertised within The London Gazette and the Brent & Kilburn Times, in accordance with the requirements of Section 252 TCPA 1990. On-site public notices had also been placed in the vicinity of the area to be stopped up. In response to the consultation twelve stakeholders had informed the Council that they had:
 - no objections;

- no record of apparatus in the immediate vicinity of the enquiry;
- no strategic additions to the existing network or envisaged any in the immediate future, and

In addition, no objections had been received from the general public.

- (2) To note that whilst Thames Water had confirmed they had underground apparatus in the area they had not objected to the proposal, with the Church Growth Trust (the applicant) having agreed to resolve with Thames Water any diversions or access requirements prior to the Stopping Up Order being made.
- (3) To approve the making of the Stopping Up Order and notice of making being advertised, subject to written confirmation from Thames Water that an agreement had been reached with the Church Growth Trust (the applicant) to either allow access or divert their services.

7. **Disciplinary & Dismissal Procedure for the roles of Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer**

Debra Norman (Director of Legal, HR and Audit & Investigations) introduced a report from the Head of Paid Service seeking for changes to the Council's Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for the roles of the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, arising from recommendations made by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of local authorities.

In considering the report Members noted:

1. Whilst the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures already adopted in Brent complied with the mandatory requirements, the change proposed as a result of the recommendations from the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives (JNC) related to the need for the power to suspend the Chief Executive, should this be necessary on the grounds of urgency, to be delegated. It was proposed that this be to an officer rather than elected member as proposed by the JNC. This was a technical change, which recognised that personnel matters, as non-executive functions, could not under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 be exercised by an elected member.
2. That should the need arise to exercise the delegated power outlined in 1. above in relation to suspension of the Chief Executive this would involve the Head of HR having to consult with the Monitoring Officer and also (by way of assurance regarding member involvement) the Chair of General Purposes Committee, pending the matter being reported to General Purposes Committee.
3. The opportunity taken, in reviewing the procedure to also update references to job titles.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To agree the delegation of power to suspend the Chief Executive to the Head of HR, subject to the consultation requirements set out above and as detailed within the amended Procedure attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

- (2) To approve the revised Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for the roles of Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report.

8. Gender Pay Gap - Closing the Gap

Martin Williams (Head of HR) introduced the report from the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations providing information on the make-up of the council's employed workforce across pay quartiles. The report had been designed to increase understanding and better inform priority actions aimed at reducing the gender pay gap (GPG).

Members were advised that the report had been forwarded on to the Committee following consideration by the Council Management Team (CMT). Having noted the overview and summary findings provided in relation to the gender pay gap g, along with the gender breakdown of data for each pay quartile (as detailed within section 3 of the report) Members were being asked to consider the main conclusions identified along with the current and proposed initiatives being developed to address and reduce the current gender pay gap within Brent.

Specific reference was highlighted by Members to the findings in relation to breakdown of salaries across pay grades and greater concentration of men currently in the Upper Quartile pay grades in terms of the impact this was having in contributing towards the gender pay gap. Martin Williams advised that whilst these had been recognised as contributing factors they also needed to be considered alongside the range of other significant findings, as detailed within section 4 of the report, affecting Brent's gender pay gap.

Councillor McLennan (as relevant Lead Member) highlighted the priority areas of action already agreed by CMT in order to address the issues identified, along with a number of additional actions which had subsequently been identified and would involve:

- the introduction of more frequent monitoring of new joiner salaries and internal promotions; and
- the capture of additional information as part of the existing approval process for offering higher starting salaries;

Members also highlighted their support for the continued publication of data as a means on increasing transparency and understanding around the actions being taken in order to address the gender pay gap.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note the findings from the analysis of the pay quartiles, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To note the intention for priority actions to focus on the advancement of pay for female employees.

- (3) To note that the promotion of data disclosure by employees would remain a priority in order to produce meaningful and good quality data analysis, with communication to all Council staff.
- (4) A further report be provided for the Committee in 6 months time in order to review the effectiveness of the existing initiatives.

9. **Equality Pay Gap - Closing the Gap**

Martin Williams (Head of HR) introduced the report from the Director of Legal, HR, Audit & Investigations providing information on the ethnicity make-up of the council's employed workforce across the pay quartiles. The report had been designed to increase understanding and better inform priority actions aimed at reducing the ethnicity pay gap (EPG).

Members were advised that the report had also been forwarded on to the Committee following consideration by the Council Management Team (CMT). Having noted the overview and summary findings provided in relation to the ethnicity pay gap, along with the breakdown of ethnicity data for each pay quartile (as detailed within section 3 of the report) Members were being asked to consider the main findings and conclusions (as detailed within section 4 and 5 of the report) along with the current and proposed initiatives being developed to address and reduce the current ethnicity pay gap within Brent.

Members noted that whilst there was no specific legal requirement to publish ethnicity pay gap information the decision had been made to provide this data on a voluntary basis, in order to be as transparent as possible.

Councillor McLennan (as relevant Lead Member) highlighted the work already being undertaken across the Council address the pay gap identified, along with a number of additional actions which had been identified and would involve:

- ongoing campaigns to encourage staff to disclose their ethnicity and other characteristics in order to enable more meaningful analysis;
- the continued monitoring of new joiners starting salaries within all grades by ethnicity as well as gender;
- the capture of additional information as part of the existing approval process for offering higher starting salaries;
- commencing monitoring of the take-up of apprenticeship and mentoring programmes and learning and development by ethnicity as well as gender.

RESOLVED:

- (1) To note the findings from the analysis of the pay quartiles, as detailed within the report.
- (2) To note the intention for priority actions to focus on the advancement of pay for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees.
- (3) To note that the promotion of data disclosure by employees would remain a priority in order to produce meaningful and good quality data analysis, with communication to all Council staff.

- (4) A further update report be provided for the Committee prior to publication of the 2019 gender and ethnicity pay gap information being published.

10. **Appointments to Sub-Committees / Outside Bodies**

Councillor Butt introduced the item, which set out proposed amendments to appointments on the following General Purposes Sub Committee's for the 2019/20 Municipal Year:

Brent Pension Fund Sub Committee

RESOLVED that Councillor Abdirazak to be replaced by a vacancy as a full member of the Brent Pension Fund Sub Committee, with the amended membership of the Sub Committee being as follows:

FULL MEMBERS:

CHOUDHARY (C)	LABOUR
ADEN (VC)	LABOUR
VACANCY (NAME TO BE ADVISED)	LABOUR
DALY	LABOUR
MAURICE	CONSERVATIVE
PERRIN	LABOUR
STEPHENS	LABOUR

CO-OPTED NON-VOTING:

ELIZABETH BANKOLE (UNISON)

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:

LABOUR: CHOUDRY, KABIR, MCLEISH, NAHEERATHAN
CONSERVATIVE: COLWILL, KANSAGRA

11. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no exclusions of the Press and Public.


12. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 5:45pm

Councillor M BUTT
Chair

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 Brent	General Purposes Committee 9 December 2019
	Report from the Director of Finance
CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2020/21	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	Minesh Patel, Chief Finance Officer 020 8937 4043 Minesh.Patel@brent.gov.uk Ravinder Jassar, Head of Finance 020 8937 1487 Ravinder.Jassar@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report is presented to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory role to set a council tax base for 2020/21. The Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992, as amended by the LGFA 2003 & LGFA 2012, requires the Authority to formally calculate the Council Tax Base for 2020/21 and pass this information to precepting authorities by 31 January 2020. The tax base must be set between 1 December 2019 and 31 January 2020.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Agree that the band D equivalent number of properties is calculated, as shown, in accordance with the Government regulations;

- 2.2 Agree that the collection rate for council tax for 2020/21 is set at 97.63%.
- 2.3 Subject to (2.1) and (2.2) above, a Council Tax Base for 2020/21 of 97,605 Band D equivalent properties (after collection rate allowance deduction) be approved.

3.0 Tax Base

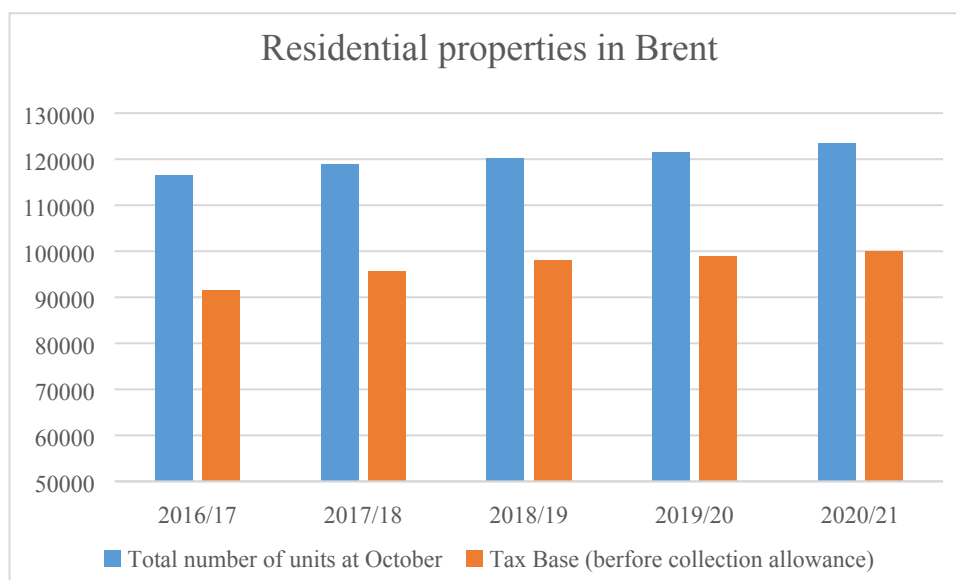
- 3.1 The calculation of the tax base is one of the technical stages in the process of setting the council tax, which is scheduled for the Council Meeting on 19 February 2020.
- 3.2 The Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992, as amended by the LGFA 2003 & LGFA 2012, requires the Authority formally to calculate the Council Tax Base for 2020/21 and pass this information to precepting authorities by 31 January 2020. The tax base must be set between 1 December 2019 and 31 January 2020.
- 3.3 Brent, like all Local Authorities, has to work out how much next year's band D council tax should be so that the total tax that will be collected equals the budget required to pay for its services. To work out the band D tax, the budget requirement is divided by a figure called the council tax base, which is calculated in this report. In effect, the tax base represents the aggregate taxable value of all residential property in Brent. As well as Brent, the Greater London Authority also needs the tax base figure to work out how much they need to add on to Brent's council tax to pay for their services. This is formally known as their 'precept'.
- 3.4 The Council's 'number of taxable properties' has been calculated in accordance with relevant procedures and guidance for 2020/21. The calculation of the Tax Base has two parts:
- (a) The number of taxable properties shown as 'band D equivalents' and
- (b) The expected collection rate for the year.
- 3.5 The calculation method is set out in the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended. For calculating the Tax Base, (and setting the Council Tax) properties in each of the eight valuation bands are given different weightings. These weightings are shown as a proportion of the band D value. These are shown below:

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Weighting	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2

- 3.6 The calculation is primarily based on the Council Tax Base Return submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in October 2019, which is used in Government grant calculations. This sets out the factual number of Band D properties, after taking account of the existing level of council tax support and exemptions. An estimate is also made for the change in the tax base expected in 2020/21 arising out of new housing developments in the

borough and demolitions.

- 3.7 Very strictly speaking, then, the council tax base for 2020/21 could be expressed as:
- The Band D equivalent properties as at 1 October 2019 after adjustments for council tax support and occupancy; plus
 - The estimated net growth in Band D properties between 1 October 2019 and 31 March 2020 (as all of these properties will be liable for council tax in 2020/21); plus
 - Half of the estimated net growth in Band D properties during 2020/21 (all of these properties will be liable for council tax in 2020/21 but as they will complete, on average, half-way through the year, only half of their tax raising potential should be taken into account).
 - Both estimates will be adjusted to account for occupancy levels and council tax support, in-line with existing properties.
- 3.8 The starting point of the Band D properties as at 1 October 2019 is known, and is 96,012. This is 2% higher than the equivalent figure as at 1 October 2018, which would suggest that the rate of housebuilding growth in the borough has increased compared to the average growth of 1% recorded in the last two years. Data compiled by the council from a number of sources, including the planning department and directly from developers, shows a number of consented schemes are likely to complete towards the end of 2019/20 followed by a slow-down in 2020/21. This general trend is also supported by new council tax registrations that are currently awaiting banding by the Valuation Office Agency. On this basis, it is recommended, as set out in section five, to assume that the council tax base will increase to 99,975 units for 2020/21.
- 3.9 This will be reviewed during 2020/21 and if, at that time, the new properties have come on stream at a slower rate than expected then it may be prudent to adopt a lower rate of growth for 2020/21 to keep the collection fund in balance.
- 3.10 The graph below shows the total number of properties in the borough compared to the tax base over the last five years, after reductions for both statutory and local reduction schemes have been applied to households in-line with existing data. The reduction for council tax support accounts for around 14% of the reduction from the total number of properties in the borough.



4.0 Council Tax Collection Rate

4.1 The figure for Band D properties then needs to be adjusted to reflect the fact that 100% collection of council tax is unlikely to be achieved. The council tax base set by the council takes account of what is eventually expected to be collected, not just by the end of the financial year in question. This is referred to as the lifetime collection rate.

4.2 Between 2001/02 and 2012/13 the council's lifetime collection rate was set at 97.5% as an assessment of the amount to be collected for the relevant year. For 2013/14, this was reduced to 96% to take account of the anticipated impact of households formerly receiving council tax benefit who now have to pay at least part of their council tax bill. In practice, the effect of this has been less than anticipated, and an assumption of 97.63% eventual collection is recommended for 2020/21, unchanged from 97.63% in 2019/20.

4.3 This recommendation is based on a historical analysis of collection rates. For example, the collection rate for the financial year 2013/14 as at October 2019 was 97.49% and in October 2018, it was 97.44%. If this trend were to continue, it is likely that a collection rate beyond 97.63% could be achieved in two years' time.

Note: The "budgeted" collection rate differs from the "in year" collection rate. The budgeted collection rate is a lifetime collection rate and is based on all payments received after the year in which the council tax relates. The in-year collection reflects payments actually received between 1st of April and 31st March of the year for which the council tax relates.

4.4 This does not mean that collection efforts will stop once the budgeted collection levels have been reached, or that eventual losses will necessarily be 2.37%. It is, however, essential that an adequate non-collection allowance be made each year. The Government recognises that no billing authority can collect every pound of Council Tax and that an element of collection will continue after the relevant year. The legislation provides for an allowance for non-collection to be incorporated into the calculation of the tax base.

- 4.5 If an over-optimistic assumption of the achievable collection rate is made, at some later stage a deficit in the Collection Fund will have to be declared, resulting in the need to increase the level of Council Tax in subsequent years to recover the deficit. Alternatively, if the assumed collection rate is exceeded, a surplus could be declared later on. For 2020/21, it is considered realistic to assume an overall eventual collection level of 97.63%, as outlined above.

5.0 Setting the Council Tax Base

- 5.1 Taking into account all of the considerations above, the calculation of the tax base for 2020/21, after allowing for an estimated reduced collection rate, is proposed as follows:

Estimated Tax Base (Band D equivalent) (A) = 99,975

Multiplied by:

The estimated lifetime rate of collection (B) = 97.63%

Band D Tax Base after collection allowance (A x B) = **97,605**

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The proposed council tax base for 2020/21 is 97,605 and will form part of the overall calculation of the Council's budget that will be presented to Cabinet in February 2019.
- 6.2 There is a risk that should the actual tax base (for budget setting purposes) be less than the actual prevailing tax base in the borough (likewise for the assumed vs the actual collection rate), a deficit on the collection fund will have to be declared resulting in the need to increase the level of Council Tax in subsequent years. Alternatively, if the assumed collection rate is exceeded, a surplus could be declared.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council Tax Base is the equivalent number of Band D dwellings (after taking account of discounts and exemptions) which would raise the same amount of tax as the actual number of liable dwellings in the borough, with their actual spread of bands. The Band D equivalent total is then multiplied by the estimated collection rate for the year, to give the Council Tax Base figure. In the Council Tax calculation process to be undertaken at Full Council on 19 February 2020 this figure will be used to calculate the amount of tax to be levied for a Band D dwelling. The Council Tax level for each valuation band is then calculated by a fixed ratio, which each band bears to the Band D figure. The Council's Constitution currently requires that the calculation of the Council Tax Base be carried out by the General Purposes Committee.
- 7.2 Section 11A of the 1992 Local Government Act enables the Secretary of State to designate by regulations: (i) Categories of properties in respect of which the discount available in respect of empty properties may be reduced to a percentage of at least 10% (section 11A (3)); and (ii) Categories of properties

in respect of which the discount may be reduced to any percentage or eliminated entirely (section 11A (4)). In the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 the Secretary of State has designated furnished dwellings which are not the sole or main residence of an individual for the purposes of section 11A(3) (except caravan pitches and boat moorings) and unfurnished unoccupied properties for the purposes of section 11A(4). Sections 11 and 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 give billing authorities the discretion to vary the discounts applicable to specific classes of empty properties, second homes and long term empty properties from 1 April 2013.

8.0 Equality Implications

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

9.1 Not applicable for this report.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

10.1 None arising directly from this report.

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel
Director of Finance