

POLICY NOTE

THE COUNCIL TAX (VARIATION FOR UNOCCUPIED DWELLINGS) (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2016

SSI 2016/XXX

1. The above instrument is made in exercise of the powers conferred by section 33(1) to (4) of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The instrument is subject to the affirmative procedure.

Policy Objectives

2. These Regulations amend the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2013 ('the 2013 Regulations') in relation to the variation in council tax liability which may be granted in respect of a dwelling which constitutes a "second home" (as defined in the 2013 Regulations). At present, a local authority may grant a discount of between 10% and 50% of normal liability in respect of such dwellings. The 2013 Regulations are amended so that, in addition to that option, a local authority may also decide to grant no discount in respect of second homes. This greater discretion is intended as an additional tool to help local authorities support housing markets within their entire area, or only those areas where second homes are a particular problem. Schedule 1 to the 2013 Regulations, setting out classes of unoccupied dwellings subject to 50% discount, including job-related dwellings, is not changed by these Regulations.

Consultation

3. The Scottish Government has engaged with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and local authority revenue and benefits practitioners in the development of these Regulations.

Financial Effects

4. The amount of additional Council Tax raised from these adjustments is estimated to be £3m a year across all the local authorities in Scotland.

Impact Assessments

5. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on the proposals for the 2013 Regulations. A draft of that Assessment was consulted on at the time and copies were sent to bodies representing equalities groups. As a result of the limited feedback received, the Scottish Government concluded then that, while equalities information is not available in relation to owners of second homes, these proposals were not be expected to lead to negative impacts on any particular equalities groups. As there is no change to availability of equalities information in relation to owners of second homes we do not see any change to the earlier assessment.

6. As the properties affected are second homes only, there is no impact on business or the third sector, and no impact on the environment or on environmental issues, no Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

Local Government and Communities
Scottish Government
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