

# Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

Please ensure that you refer to the '[Screening Form Guidance](#)' while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Equalities Officer – Dionne Llewellyn.

## Section 1

What service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Reforming Local Government – Voluntary Merger Opportunities

Directorate: Chief Executive

### Q1(a) WHAT ARE YOU SCREENING FOR RELEVANCE?

Service/  
Function

Policy/  
Procedure

Project

Strategy

Plan

Proposal

(b) Please name and describe below

### Reforming Local Government – Voluntary Merger Opportunities

Council will be aware of the challenging times facing Local Government. The current financial climate is extremely testing and will lead to job cuts and service reduction. Furthermore it is predicted that public sector austerity will continue for several years to come. As a result Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has to make important strategic decisions regarding its future.

Welsh Government has recently published a white paper entitled 'Devolution, Democracy and Delivery – Reforming Local Government', which can be accessed via the background papers for this report. This white paper is part of Welsh Government's response to the Williams Commission Report (Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery) and sets out proposals for the Future of Local Government in Wales.

The white paper explains that Local Authorities have to choose between a voluntary merger with another Local Authority by April 2018, or face the prospect of a compulsory merger by April 2020. The paper sets out the case for reducing the number of Local Authorities with a preferred option being to reduce the number of Local Authorities to 12 in Wales.

In addition to the white paper outlined above, Welsh Government have issued an invitation for Local Authorities to submit proposals for voluntary mergers by the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 (please see background paper 'Invitation to Principal Local Authorities in Wales to submit proposals for voluntary merger'). This document considers key factors such as:

- § Political and scrutiny structures and practices;
- § Staff structures, including in particular senior management structures, and operational structures in priority areas;
- § Financial and budget structures and processes, including Council Tax;
- § Internal support systems and processes, including ICT systems;
- § Assets and estates; and
- § Service delivery policies and practices, including accessibility, eligibility and charging policies.

Submissions will be required to assess whether a proposal for voluntary merger could proceed within the timescales set out by Welsh Government. There would

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also be the need to identify and outline the main enablers and obstacles to merger, and deliver a vision for the potential new Authority.

Welsh Government would prefer proposals for early voluntary mergers that concur with the proposals set out in the white paper. However, the Welsh Government has indicated that it would be willing to consider alternatives which meet the following principles:

- § Proposals consisting of mergers of existing, neighbouring Local Authorities to form the 'building blocks' of a new Authority. They will not entertain proposals for merging only parts of existing Local Authorities, or redrawing boundaries from scratch. They would, however, consider proposals from Authorities seeking to group together into larger configurations.
- § Proposals must not jeopardise the Welsh Government's desire for coherence and the wider merger and reform programme by, for example, having the effect of leaving one Local Authority unable to merge.

If Local Authorities seek to make a case for a merger proposal straddling the boundaries of Health Boards or police forces, they must clearly and comprehensively demonstrate they will still be able to reduce complexity, strengthen strategic and operational collaboration, and improve integration of front-line services.

## Q2(a) WHAT DOES Q1a RELATE TO?

Direct front line service delivery	Indirect front line service delivery	Indirect back room service delivery
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (L)

## (b) DO YOUR CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS ACCESS THIS SERVICE...?

Because they need to	Because they want to	Because it is automatically provided to everyone in Merthyr	On an internal basis i.e. Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (L)

## Q3 WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE FOLLOWING...

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Age	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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**Q4 Have you / will you undertake any public consultation and engagement relating to the initiative?**

Yes       No (If no, you need to consider whether you should be undertaking consultation and engagement – please see the guidance)

If yes, please provide details below

If this original report proposal is approved by Council and discussions lead to a programme of work / project being developed this screening form will be re-assessed and the likelihood would be that public consultation and engagement would take place.

**Q5(a) HOW VISIBLE IS THIS SERVICE/FUNCTION/POLICY/PROCEDURE/ PROJECT/ STRATEGY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC?**

High visibility to general public

(H)

Medium visibility to general public

(M)

Low visibility to general public

(L)

**(b) WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISK TO THE COUNCIL'S REPUTATION? (Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)**

High risk to reputation

(H)

Medium risk to reputation

(M)

Low risk to reputation

(L)

**c) IS THE DELIVERY OF THIS INITIATIVE AFFECTED BY LEGISLATION OR OTHER DRIVERS SUCH AS CODES OF PRACTICE? If so, please identify what and how?**

N/A

**Q6 HOW DID YOU SCORE?**

*Please tick the relevant box*

MOSTLY **H** and/or **M** → HIGH PRIORITY →  EIA to be completed  
Please go to Section 2

MOSTLY **L** → LOW PRIORITY / NOT RELEVANT →  Do not complete EIA  
Please go to Q7 followed by Section 2

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**Q7** If after completing the EIA screening process you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EIA you must provide adequate explanation below (Please use additional pages if necessary).

If this original report proposal is approved by Council and discussions lead to a programme of work / project being developed this screening form will be re-assessed. At present the report recommends that merely discussions commence.

### Section 2

NB: Please send this completed form to obtain email approval from your Head of Service.

Screener- This to be completed by the person responsible for completing this screening
Name: Andrew Mogford
Location: Civic Centre
Telephone Number: 5291
Date: 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2014
Approval by Head of Service
Name: Gareth Chapman
Position: CEO
Date: October 2014