

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

(Includes Well-being of Future Generations, Protected Characteristics, Welsh Language, Socio-economic Disadvantage, Sustainability and Biodiversity, Consultation/Engagement and Data/Evidence)



Before completing this Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), please refer to the corresponding **guidance document**, which provides essential background information.

An IIA MUST be completed for:

- Any Council / Cabinet report.
- Any strategic decisions being taken where due regard is required to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.
- Any project (i.e. something that has a start and end date and is different from day to day business).
- Where you are implementing significant change e.g. service provision.

This IIA helps to support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation. This IIA must be completed at the start of any project or proposal.

Title of Report / Project:	Council Tax Resolution 2022/23				
Officer completing IIA:	Steve Jones				
Lead Officer / Project Manager:	Steve Jones				
Service:	Finance				
IIA completion date:	14 th February 2022				
Type of proposal: (please place an X in the relevant box)	Policy	X	Strategy		Plan
	Practice		Restructure		Procedure
	Other (please identify):				
Give a brief description of the proposal including the aims, and any links to relevant reports or documents:	The proposal sets out the Council's statutory duty under legislation to disclose its calculations of its Budget Requirement and Council Tax for 2022/23 under statutory resolutions and to approve the formal Council Tax Resolution for 2022/23. .				

1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives

Does your proposal help to deliver any of the Council's Well-being Objectives?

How does your proposal help to deliver any or all of the Council's Well-being Objectives?

Well-being Objectives	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on the Council's Well-being Objectives? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Best Start to Life - Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.	X			The proposal is a major contributing factor in ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council thus enabling the continued delivery of essential Council services.	Continued robust financial management.
Working Life - People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.	X			As above	As above
Environmental Well-being - Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside.	X			As above	As above
Living Well - People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they feel safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.	X			As above	As above

1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives

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How does your proposal help to deliver any or all of the Council’s Well-being Objectives?

Well-being Objectives	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on the Council’s Well-being Objectives? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section ‘Data and Evidence’):

Budget Monitoring reports 2020/21

Balanced Budget proposed for 2021/22

Reflects projected budget deficits for 2022/23 to 2024/25

Additional budget demands reflected within the updated Medium Term Financial Plan with schools protected from any budget reductions..

2. Sustainable Development Principles (The Five Ways of Working)

Does your proposal demonstrate you have met the sustainable development principles (five ways of working)?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to consider how any proposals improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being, whilst also looking to the future, planning for the long term and ensuring that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Please consider the national well-being goals when completing this section.

Five Ways of Working	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met the five ways of working when developing the proposal?	Are there any additional actions to be taken to better contribute to the five ways of working and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
Long Term - Thinking and planning for the long term, balancing short term and long term needs.	The proposal is fundamental to the long term financial sustainability of the Council.	All services require to consider how services can be delivered differently and more efficiently within the Council's projected affordability envelope.
Prevention - Preventing problems occurring or getting worse.	This proposal by recognising and managing the unavoidable additional demand pressures mitigates potential in-year financial problems for 2022/23.	As above.
Integration - Impact on our well-being objectives, national well-being goals and the well-being objectives of other public bodies.	This proposal integrates with all strategies since it is fundamental to the continued financial sustainability of the Council.	As above.
Collaboration - Acting in collaboration with others inside and outside the Council.	Collaboration with other parties will be explored in addressing future plans within the Council's Transformation Programme.	As above.
Involvement - Involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and who reflect the diversity of our communities.	In re-configuring services engagement with people and communities will be an essential requirement.	As above.

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

Local Government Settlement 2022/23
 Additional Demands and Financial Pressures
 RTI Plan and Capacity Exercise Phase 2 investment
 Balanced Provisional Budget for 2022/23
 Capital Programme supporting capital ambitions

3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)

Does your proposal directly impact on service users, employees and/or the wider community, including the nine protected characteristic groups and Welsh language as identified below?

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups. Please note that an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

Protected Characteristics	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on service users, employees and/or the wider community, including the nine protected characteristic groups and Welsh language? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Age - People of all ages.			X	Neutral impact since budget proposals are not discriminatory towards any protected characteristic.	All future service budget reduction proposals will be rigorously scrutinized to ensure all protected characteristics are considered.
Disability - People with disabilities/long term conditions.			X	As above	As above
Gender Reassignment - People whose gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth.			X	As above	As above
Marriage and Civil Partnership - People who are married or in a civil partnership.			X	As above	As above
Pregnancy and Maternity - Women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave.			X	As above	As above
Race - People from black, Asian and minority ethnic			X	As above	As above

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
communities and different racial backgrounds.					
Religion or Belief - People with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs.			X	As above	As above
Sex (Gender) - Women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender.			X	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual.			X	As above	As above
Welsh Language					
The Welsh Language Wales Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact a proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.					
Welsh Language - Opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh language, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, compliance with Welsh			X	As above	As above

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Language Standards, links with internal and external Welsh Language strategies.					

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

The proposals within the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme are non-discriminatory as evidenced in the Appendices to this report detailing additional demands requests, efficiency proposals and capital investment.

In addition a Council Tax increase of 1.0% for 2022/23 generates income of £321,000 for the Authority which assists in maintaining high quality services to customers and also protects jobs thus benefiting the County Borough Council as a whole and all protected characteristics without discrimination.

In respect of the increase in Council Tax and impact on householders there is no distinction made between different groups and the levy is not discriminatory as it applies to all based on property valuations. It is recognised that through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme customers are able to receive assistance with Council Tax bills if specific eligibility criteria are met. This will mitigate the impact on householders of increasing Council Tax bills.

4. **Socio-economic Disadvantage (Strategic Decisions)**

Does your proposal impact/deliver better outcomes for those who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?

The Socio-economic Duty places a responsibility on the Council to have 'due regard' to how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. This duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality at the heart of key decision-making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider: Single parents and vulnerable families, pensioners, carers, looked after children, single adult households, armed forces community, people with low literacy/numeracy, people who are homeless, people who have experienced the asylum system, students, people of all ages leaving a care setting, people living in the most deprived areas of Wales, people misusing substances, people involved in the criminal justice system, people who are not in education, employment or training. Please see the guidance document for more information.

Socio-economic Disadvantage	Does your proposal have a positive or negative impact on socio-economic disadvantage for service users, employees and/or the wider community? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts? What steps will be taken to reduce inequalities of outcome? How will you know when this has been achieved?
	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Low Income/Income Poverty - Unable to afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport, other essential items etc.			X	The report supports additional demands for services and reflects genuine efficiency proposals having no impact on the customer. No budget cuts are proposed. The proposed Council Tax increase at +1% is one of the lowest ever set for MTCBC and is significantly lower than the rate of inflation which is projected to rise to potentially 7% during the 2022/23 financial year. There is also support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for those customers who are having difficulties with their council tax payments. At the average Band D a 1% increase results in an increase of £17.29 for the year, equivalent of 33 pence per week. The	Regular in-year monitoring of financial performance with greater focus on changing customer demand for services.

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
				Police precept and Bedlinog & Trelewis Community Council precept are independently set of the Council.	
Low and/or No Wealth - Enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.			X	As above.	As above.

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Material Deprivation - Unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies etc.			X	As above.	As above.
Area Deprivation - Where you live e.g. rural areas, and where you work e.g. accessibility of public transport.			X	As above.	As above.
Socio-economic Background - Social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income.			X	As above.	As above.
Socio-economic Disadvantage - What			X	As above.	As above.

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Please consider: Single parents and vulnerable families, pensioners, carers, looked after children, single adult households, armed forces community, people with low literacy/numeracy, people who are homeless, people who have experienced the asylum system, students, people of all ages leaving a care setting, people living in the most deprived areas of Wales, people misusing substances, people involved in the criminal justice system, people who are not in education, employment or training. Please see the guidance document for more information.

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged?					

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

Budget Proposals contained within the report focus on investing in services with no adverse impact on services to the customer.

A 1% Council Tax increase is potentially the lowest Council Tax increase ever set by MTCBC and is significantly below the Welsh average for 2022/23 which is provisionally circa +3%. In financial terms this means an increase of 33 pence per week at the average Band D, 22 pence per week at the lowest Council Tax banding of Band A, and 78 pence per week at the highest Council Tax banding of Band I.

5. Consultation and Engagement

What consultation and/or engagement has been undertaken to inform the development of the proposal?

There may be a legal requirement to consult in some instances, or a legitimate expectation that consultation will take place. Where it has been determined that consultation is required, the Gunning Principles must be adhered to.

- The proposals are still at a formative stage.
- There is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration'.
- There is adequate time for consideration and response.
- 'Conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.

Please consider: Protected Characteristic groups, those who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, communities and places of interest, other stakeholders, forums, community groups and community councils. Please see the guidance document for more information.

Consultation and Engagement	Has consultation and/or engagement been undertaken on the proposal? Please place an X in the relevant box.			Briefly describe any recent or planned consultation and/or engagement exercises, paying particular attention to evidencing the Gunning Principles. Please identify when the consultation and/or engagement took place or will take place, or why it is not required.	Who was consulted/engaged with? Was sufficient information provided to allow an informed decision on the proposal to be made? What were the key findings of the consultation and/or engagement? Have these findings been taken into account? Is further consultation and/or engagement required?
	Undertaken	Due to be undertaken	Not required		
Requirement for consultation and/or engagement to be undertaken, or a legitimate expectation that it will take place.	X			No service cuts impacting upon the customer are proposed instead investment in services is supported. A Council Priorities and Budget Consultation 2022/23 exercise has been undertaken with the customer including views on Council Tax increases.	The public were engaged through the Budget consultation survey, face to face meetings and social media.

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

Budget consultation survey, with outcomes reported to Cabinet of 23rd February 2022.
Proposals within the report supporting further investment and efficiencies rather than budget cuts.

6. Data and Evidence

What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal?

Evidence may include the outcome of previous consultation or engagement exercises, existing databases, pilot projects, review of customer complaints and compliments and other service user feedback, national and regional data, academic publications and reports, future trends, horizon scanning, business plans etc. Consider the sources of evidence from all of the sections in your explanation.

Data and Evidence	Has data and evidence been used in order to inform the proposal? Please place an X in the relevant box.		What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal? What have been the key findings of this data and evidence? Has this data and evidence helped to inform the proposal?	How has the data and evidence helped to inform the proposal? If the data and evidence did not support the proposal, why was this? Have there been any gaps identified? If so, what steps will be taken to cover the identified gaps?
	Yes	No		
Data and evidence used in order to inform the proposal.	X		Data and evidence in respect of financial pressures faced by services has informed the proposals for further investment. In addition efficiency proposals have been determined after reflecting trends and forecasts of future income projections. Pay Award proposals and Real Living Wage for Care Workers proposals have reflected guidance from the Office for Budget Responsibility and Welsh Government respectively. Council Tax proposal of a modest 1% increase aims to lessen the financial impact on the customer who is already faced with rising energy costs and a CPI rate of inflation probably reaching 7% during 2022/23.	Data and evidence has been used in quantifying the individual budget proposals.

Sources of evidence to support the above:

Additional Demand schedules.
Efficiency Proposals.
Real Living Wage calculations
Pay Award Projections
Inflation Projections

7. Biodiversity and resilience of Ecosystems

How does your proposal impact on Biodiversity and therefore the resilience of Ecosystems?

Under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 we must seek to maintain and enhance Biodiversity within the proper exercise of our functions. In doing so, we must also seek to promote the resilience of Ecosystems.

Biodiversity and resilience of Ecosystems	What is the expected impact on Biodiversity? Please place an X in the relevant box.				Why have you come to this decision? Please provide an explanation.	What actions have been/will be taken to better contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of Biodiversity? How do you know when this has been achieved?
	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced	Neutral		
To maintain and enhance Biodiversity (and therefore promote the resilience of Ecosystems).				X	The proposals address the requirement for a balanced Budget for 2022/23	All future service reduction proposals will be rigorously scrutinized.

Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):

Specific proposals detailed in the body of the report relating to additional demands and efficiency proposals.

8. Summary

As a result of completing this IIA, please identify below;

- The number of positive, negative or neutral scores for the Council's Well-being objectives, the sustainable development principles, protected characteristics including Welsh Language and Socio-economic disadvantage.
- If consultation and/or engagement has been undertaken, is due to take place or is not required.
- If data and evidence has been used in order to inform the proposal.
- If the proposal maintains, enhances or reduces the resilience of ecosystems.

The table below should then be included in the related Council/Cabinet report.

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Neutral/Not Applicable	
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	4 of 4	0 of 4	0 of 4	
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5	
3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)	0 of 10	0 of 10	10 of 10	
4. Socio-economic Disadvantage	0 of 6	0 of 6	6 of 6	
5. Consultation and Engagement	Undertaken	Due to be Undertaken	Not Required	
	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1	
6. Data and Evidence to inform the proposal	Yes		No	
	1 of 1		0 of 1	
7. Biodiversity and the resilience of Ecosystems	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced	Neutral/Not Applicable
	0 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1
Summary				
The main positive impacts are:	<p>The proposed Council Tax increase supports the financial sustainability of the Council in setting a balanced budget for 2022/23 whilst protecting service delivery to customers.</p> <p>Financial pressures faced by the customer are recognized with the proposed increase in Council Tax of 1% for MTCBC.</p>			

The main negative impacts are:	Service demands and external pressures continue to grow placing service delivery under constant financial pressure leading to a fine balancing act between protecting services and minimizing the Council Tax increase to the customer.
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9. Actions

Based on the summary of your positive and negative impacts identified in the Summary section above, will you need to make changes to your proposal to better contribute to positive impacts and/or mitigate any negative impacts?

Please identify any further actions you will need to undertake to better inform this proposal e.g. whether further consultation is required or more data and evidence is required to better inform the proposal.

What are you going to do?	Estimated completion date	Who will be responsible?	Timelines/Milestones e.g. 6 months/over a year, etc.	Progress
None since a balanced budget needs to be approved by 11 th March 2022.	Balanced budget by 11 th March 2022	Chief Finance Officer supported by Corporate Management Team	n/a	Budget Monitoring reports will be prepared throughout the financial year 2022/23

10. Version Control

The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of the development of the proposal and decision making process, and then honed and refined throughout to strengthen and shape the proposal. This section will act as an audit trail to evidence how the IIA has been developed over time.

Please use the table below to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have delivered the sustainable development principles.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

11. <u>Monitoring and Review</u>	
<p>The implementation and the impact of the proposal should be monitored and reviewed throughout the development of the proposal. Please identify how the proposal will be monitored and reviewed as it progresses, including the implementation of any amendments identified.</p>	
How will the implementation and the impact of the proposal and any amendments be monitored?	The number of customers seeking support for Council Tax payments through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be monitored.
When will the proposal be reviewed? How frequently will this take place?	The proposal will be reviewed February/March 2023 in deliberating Budget Settings and Council Tax decisions for the 2023/24 financial year.
Who is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the proposal?	Chief Finance Officer with Corporate Management Team

12. <u>IIA Approval</u>					
IIA Approved by:	Steve Jones	Job Title:	Chief Finance Officer	IIA Approval date:	14 th February 2022