

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:	Re-opening of the OSS - (Post Covid-19 Contact Centre Re-opening)					
Officer completing IIA:	Rebecca Delaney					
Lead Officer / Project Manager:	Gregg Edwards / Rebecca Delaney					
Service:	Customer Services					
IIA completion date:	19.10.2021 and updated 16.03.2022					
Type of proposal: (please place an X in the relevant box)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plan
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedure
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please identify):				
Give a brief description of the proposal including the aims, and any links to relevant reports or documents:	This report contains plans to re-open the One Stop Shop (OSS) - Civic Centre reception area and face-to-face provision, following the easing of restrictions. This means that customers will be able to access services via face-to-face appointments (and for emergencies) and the correct level of support is offered.					

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	Service delivery will not change but face to face appointments can be booked but it is envisaged that this will be rare.	This will be monitored as part of service delivery.
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			Those in the community who need Housing, Homelessness or Housing Benefit service will have a greater level of face to face support.	As above.
Environmental Well-being - Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside.			X	Service delivery will not change but face to face appointments can be booked but it is envisaged that this will be rare.	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			Customers will receive face to face information, advice and assistance when and if they need it.	As above.

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		

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

Evidence has been through meeting with service area managers and an overall analysis of how services are being delivered since closing the front of houes and what the options are for working differently going forward. Feedback from Members (including Scrutiny Members) have been included.

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?
<p>Long Term - Thinking and planning for the long term, balancing short term and long term needs.</p>	<p>Council services have continued to be available for customers via online and telephone channels. Services will be available for customers needing face to face support in particular regards to Council Tax, Housing Benefits and Housing services.</p> <p>Appointments will be offered to limit face to face contact. In line with our corporate objectives, customers will still be encouraged to use online channels where possible.</p>	<p>Alternative support will be available if customers do not have access to online options.</p>
<p>Prevention - Preventing problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	<p>Customers can currently access services online or by telephone. Customers who do not feel confident using other means will have access to face to face appointments. This will empower customers.</p> <p>The OSS reopening is in line with other Welsh Councils and we are offerering services as other organisations start to re-open and provide services face to face.</p> <p>Reopening face to face will reduce the level of support for customers via telephone and a focus will be shifted to front of house for some areas.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Integration - Impact on our well-being objectives, national well-being goals and the well-being objectives of other public bodies.</p>	<p>Outside organisations who previously used the Civic Centre reception are not yet reinstating face to face contact so there is no adverse impact on those partner organisations.</p>	

	<p>The reopening of the OSS allows service areas across the Council to reinstate provisions; this will eliminate the recent issues where departments have experienced in providing services in different ways, until more sustainable options are available. The reopening plan relies on support from service areas who use the reception area so that we are able to provide a face to face service that is managed safely.</p>	
<p>Collaboration - Acting in collaboration with others inside and outside the Council.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Involvement - Involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and who reflect the diversity of our communities.</p>	<p>Information is being published on social media and the corporate website to inform customers of changes and will include service specific messages closer to re-opening.</p> <p>There will be information on our telephone system to advise customers of changes. Payment methods are available on the telephone options.</p> <p>Future Council Tax correspondence will include a note to advise customers how they will be able to do business when we open.</p> <p>The re-opening plan has been designed to take in to consideration all feedback from service areas managers and include measures that ensure services can be effectively run. The re-opening plan pays particular attention to keeping both the customers and staff safe through queuing systems, appropriate PPE, and limited contact where possible. Consideration has been given to ensuring there is adequate access to the building via the ramp and to the provision of adequate toilet facilities.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Sources of evidence to support the above (please use this information when completing the section 'Data and Evidence'):</p> <p>The Customer Services Manager has held regular meetings with service area managers on service delivery need and is a part of the Recovery group. National guidelines have also been followed as a part of the risk assessment and re-opening plan. Feedback from Members (including Scrutiny Members) have been included.</p>		

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	Alternative cash payment provision is available at any PayPoint outlet.	
Disability - People with disabilities/long term conditions.			X	A disabled toilet provision is available. The one way system will not affect access.	
Gender Reassignment - People whose gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth.			X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership - People who are married or in a civil partnership.			X		
Pregnancy and Maternity - Women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave.			X	There will be no restriction to access as the ramp is accessible for all customers.	
Race - People from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds.			X		

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	Positive	Negative	Neutral		
Religion or Belief - People with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs.			X		
Sex (Gender) - Women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender.			X		
Sexual Orientation - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual.			X		
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 Language Standards, links			X	A Welsh speaking member of staff will be available if required and any IT solution will be bilingual.	

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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		
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'):

A Welsh speaking member of staff has recently been employed in the contact centre and an additional post is currently being considered to further support this.

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	Re-opening does not limit the current service provision; any telephone options and support for benefits remain unchanged.	Alternative support will be available if customers do not have access to online options.
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	Re-opening does not limit the current service provision; any phone options and support for benefits remain unchanged.	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.

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		
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	Support for customers has been available while the building is closed and so re-opening has no impact.	As above.
Area Deprivation - Where you live e.g. rural areas, and where you work e.g. accessibility of public transport.			X	Re-opening hours would not impact on those who rely on public transport.	As above.
Socio-economic Background - Social class i.e. parents' education, employment and income.			X	Services offered are for all customers regardless of socio-economic background.	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.

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		
Socio-economic Disadvantage - What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged?			X	Support for customers has been available while the building is closed and so re-opening has no impact.	As above.

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

Feedback from Members (including Scrutiny Members) have been included.

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	N/a	N/a

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

Feedback from Members (including Scrutiny Members) have been included.

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		Weekly reports of telephone calls to the contact centre have been used and compared to pre-covid volumes. Meetings with departments have taken place where issues on service provision have been looked in to.	It has not been possible to predict how customers will respond to re-opening (ie whether they will remain using current channels) given that they have been using alternative reliable channels for a sunstantial period of time, This along with the agile working policy means skeleton staff would be required to manage back office functions if face to face appointments are required.

Sources of evidence to support the above:

The information gathered at meetings is available. Feedback from Members (including Scrutiny Members) have been included.

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	Access to the OSS would be limited on a needs only basis and there is no surrounding biodiversity to consider.	N/a

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

Feedback from Members (including Scrutiny Members) have been included.

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	2 of 4	0 of 4	2 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
	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 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
	0 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
Summary			
The main positive impacts are:	The main positive impacts are that those in the community who need additional support for Housing, Homelessness or Housing Benefit will have a greater level of access to face to face channels. By providing these channels, customers will be able to receive the right information, advice and assistance face to face when they need it.		
The main negative impacts are:	There are no negative impacts identified.		

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
Cabinet Approval	March 2022	Cabinet	2 weeks	In progress
Finalise plans	March 2022	Customer Services Team	2 weeks	In progress

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
001	Cabinet	30/03/2022	

11. Monitoring and Review

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.

How will the implementation and the impact of the proposal and any amendments be monitored?	Operational monitoring
When will the proposal be reviewed? How frequently will this take place?	Daily
Who is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the proposal?	Customer Services Manager

12. IIA Approval

IIA Approved by:	Mike Parry	Job Title:	Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services	IIA Approval date:	16/03/2022
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