

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Budget Savings Proposals

Essential Information
Name of Officer(s) completing this Template: Fiona Maciver
Designation(s): Revenues and Customer Services Manager
Directorate/Service: Finance
Date of Impact Assessment 23 January 2020
Name of Proposed Budget Saving ¹ : Service reduction - Customer Service Centre (CSC)

1. Does the proposed budget saving impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)	Y	
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty ² (see Section 6)	Y	
c. Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017/22 ³ (see Section 7)	Y	
d. Corporate Plan 2018/22 ⁴ (see Section 8)	Y	
2. If “yes” is selected for any part of Section 1, please populate the other relevant		

¹ Please attach the Budget Saving Proposal to this Template

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: interim guidance for public bodies](#)

³ [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/22](#)

⁴ [Corporate Plan 2018/22](#) (agenda item 5)

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Sections of this Template.

If “no” is selected for **every part** of Section 1, **please sign below and email** a copy of this Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer:

karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.

Signature

Date

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3. Impact – Protected characteristics

Which of the protected characteristics will the proposed budget saving have an impact upon? (See guidance for examples of key considerations under each characteristic – this is on ICON.)

Equality Target Group	Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
Age			-
Disability			-
Gender Reassignment		=	
Pregnancy and maternity			-
Race		=	
Religion and belief		=	
Sex			X
Sexual orientation		=	

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Other groups to consider	The Council's customers	=	The Council's customers

4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the proposed budget saving impact on?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Foster good relations between from different groups

5. Impact - groups	
From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.	
<p style="text-align: center;">Positive impacts +</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Describe groups affected.)</i></p> <p>Age; Disability; Pregnancy and Maternity:</p> <p>It should be noted that some users, particularly those currently using face to face contact at the CSC, may move to self-service.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Negative impacts -</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Describe groups affected.)</i></p> <p>Age; Disability; Pregnancy and Maternity:</p> <p>Customers with disabilities are also more likely to need to contact the CSC and increased waiting times could have an impact on their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>It should be noted that some users, particularly those currently using face to face contact at the CSC, may not be able to move to self-service.</p> <p>There are ≤ 5 female employees potentially affected by this budget saving proposal. This proposal will therefore exclusively affect female employees.</p> <p>The age profile of the employees is 50-59.</p>

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6. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will this budget saving proposal have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage? *Please tick.*

Positive Impact +	Neutral Impact =	Negative Impact -
		X

Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.

A reduction in service provision is likely to result in increased waiting times for telephone calls to be answered, resulting in higher telephone bills for those who are already socio-economic disadvantaged.

Increased waiting times to see a Customer Services Representative (CSR) face to face could result in people with disabilities or those socio-economically disadvantaged waiting in long queues to, for example, hand in evidence for a Housing Benefit claim which could affect the date the claim is paid from. Persons waiting to speak to a CSR about Council Tax may give up and end up with larger debts and be pursued by the Council's debt partner, incurring more costs.

7. Impact – LOIP 2017/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the LOIP 2017/22 will this budget saving proposal impact on?

X	1. Population: Inverclyde's population will be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio - economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth
X	2. Inequalities: There will be low levels of poverty and deprivation and the gap between the richest and poorest members of our communities will be reduced (This may already have been highlighted during section 6)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Environment, culture and heritage: Inverclyde's environment, culture and heritage will be protected and enhanced to create a better place for all Inverclyde residents and an attractive place in which to live, work and visit

Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on the LOIP Priority/Priorities.

Priority 1: Delivery of this Priority could be affected by a negative reputation as a

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result of delivering poor service in the way of long waits for calls to be answered on variety of areas such as bin collections, street lighting, Council Tax etc.

Priority 2: This budget saving proposal could result in a wider gap between the least deprived and most deprived members of communities as those who are least deprived are more likely to use technology and self-serve. The impact on the most deprived customers may be in terms of their wellbeing and financial circumstances.

8. Impact – Corporate Plan 2018/22

Which Priority/Priorities from the Corporate Plan 2018/22 will this budget saving impact on?

x	1. To promote Inverclyde, to both residents and visitors alike, as a great place to live, work and visit
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. To work collaboratively, to enable strong, connected and empowered communities, particularly in areas of deprivation, so that residents have influence and control over the things that matter to them
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. To grow the local economy in a way that creates opportunities for all our residents, including access to good quality jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. To reduce the prevalence of poverty and in particular, child poverty in our communities
x	5. To safeguard, support and meet the needs of our most vulnerable families and residents for reasons already stated
x	6. To improve the health and wellbeing of residents so that people live well, and for longer
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. To protect and enhance our natural and built environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. To preserve, nurture and promote Inverclyde's unique culture and heritage
x	9. To deliver services that are responsive to community needs and are underpinned by a culture of innovation, continuous improvement and effective management of
<input type="checkbox"/>	10. To develop motivated, trained and qualified employees who deliver quality services that meet current and anticipated service needs

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Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on the Corporate Plan Priority/Priorities.

Priority 1: A delay in answering calls on general issues affecting households such as bulky uplifts, pest control, Council Tax etc could give a bad impression of the area.

Priority 5: It is recognised that the bulk of customers seeking help, particularly face to face in the CSC, are amongst some of the most vulnerable residents and families in Inverclyde.

Priority 6: For reasons already stated, this service reduction is likely to have an impact on people's health and well-being and will therefore have a potential impact on people living well and for longer.

Priority 9: By improving self-service and forcing channel shift, we could improve digital access for those residents who are able to do so.

9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the proposed budget saving?

Note: Evidence could include consultations, surveys, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, officer knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, local, national groups.

Evidence	Details
Consultation/Engagement	<p>Citizens' Panel Spring 2018 Survey: 76% of Panel members who had visited the CSC said the speed of the response was good or very good.</p> <p>Citizens' Panel Spring 2018: Comments from Panel members suggest that many of the residents of Inverclyde are not clamouring for change in terms of channels of contact with the Council and these views need to be factored in as we continue to drive channel shift forward. It is likely that significant engagement with our customers will be required to encourage the use of new or alternative channels.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2017: 64% of</p>

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	<p>respondents supported a reduced service provision in the CSC.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2018: 48% of respondents agreed with the proposal to reduce resources at the CSC in Greenock.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2019: 46% of respondents supported a reduction in CSC and Registration services staff.</p>
Research	<p>As part of the drive to move people to less expensive channels of payment, many Councils are considering moving away from cash collection all together in Council premises.</p>
Officer's knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	<p>It is well known that a high percentage of CSC users are socially and economically disadvantaged and have a number of Protected Characteristics.</p>
Equalities monitoring data	<p>July 2019: 44.09% of Housing Benefit caseload customers were over pension age.</p> <p>7% of general calls to the CSC were not answered in 2019.</p>
User feedback (including complaints)	
Stakeholders	
Other	
Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	

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10. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of this Budget Saving Proposal.

Progressing the digital agenda by implementing self-service in full and forcing channel shift could mean more people who are IT proficient will take up self-service from home as a channel of contact; this would free up resources in the CSC to assist other groups. The CSC is currently working with ICT colleagues on self-service options which would be available through the Council's website.

To support the implementation of this saving, it is proposed to allocate up to £45,000 from the Welfare Reform Operational Reserves to fund temporary employee resources. This will allow for the ongoing support that will be required to facilitate the digital strategy/channel shift, the continued move of customers to Universal Credit and the re-allocation of duties between the Registration service and Customer Services.

This document should be cross-referenced with the EIA entitled *Service Reduction – Registration Services*.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:	Name: Fiona Maciver
	Position: Revenues and Customer Services Manager
	Date: 23 January 2020
Authorised by:	Name: Scott Allan
	Position: Corporate Director – Environment, Regeneration and Resources
	Date: 7 February 2020

Thank you for your assistance with the completion of this task.

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy Officer: karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.

21 November 2018