

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: 12 December 2018
Name of Proposed Budget Saving ¹ : Service reduction- Customer Service Centre

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 Sections of this Template.		

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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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			X
Disability			X
Gender Reassignment		X	
Pregnancy and maternity			X
Race		X	
Religion and belief		X	
Sex		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Other groups to consider			

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4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the proposed budget saving impact on?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
x	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>Positive impacts +</p> <p><i>(Describe groups affected.)</i></p>	<p>Negative impacts -</p> <p><i>(Describe groups affected.)</i></p> <p>Affected groups, Age, Disability and Pregnancy and Maternity.</p> <p>As Universal Credit (UC) rolls out the percentage of the Housing Benefit (HB) customers over pension age is increasing, as at the end of November 2018 42.22% of the caseload were over pension age. By stopping or reducing the facility to pay cash we could be disadvantaging this group of people.</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 as well as a potential financial impact if benefit issues are not resolved timeously.</p> <p>Pregnant customers on benefit also need to contact the CSC for changes such as the birth of a baby therefore a reduction in CSC services could impact his group financially which can in turn affect health and well-being.</p> <p>CSR's make frequent referrals to HSCP when it is identified that further support is required which can often lead to increased finances for</p>

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	<p>by the customer and or family. The outcomes of such referrals can lead to the award of extra benefits such as Carers Allowance or Personal Independence Allowance as well as providing help on budget planning. A reduced service from the CSC could result in such referrals not being made due to time pressures or customers not waiting for advice due to long queues.</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.

The closure of the Customer Contact point in Port Glasgow could have an impact on customers with a low income or a disability having to travel to Greenock albeit the level of usage at Port Glasgow is very low; the average monthly callers to the Port Glasgow CS facility over October and November were 105 compared to 2,500 in Greenock with the Greenock figures likely to be higher as not all customers seen at the first point of contact are captured. The impact of this saving is therefore likely to be minimal and could perhaps be mitigated by providing appropriate sign posting within Princes House and on the website

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 already socio-economic disadvantaged.

Increased waiting times to see a CSR face to face due to service reduction could result in people with disabilities or those socio-economically disadvantaged waiting in long queues to for example hand in evidence for a HB 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 being pursued by the council's debt partner incurring more costs.

The impact of this service reduction could have an impact on mental health and well-being as customers experience more stress trying to get issues resolved; pressures from landlords could lead to potential worry about homelessness.

7. Impact – LOIP 2017/22

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

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impact on?	
	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)
	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
<p>Briefly describe how the budget saving proposal will impact on the LOIP Priority/Priorities.</p> <p>Inequalities – Could end up with a wider gap between richest and poorest as those richer are more likely to use technology and self-serve – the impact on the poorest could have an impact on wellbeing and financial circumstances.</p>	

8. Impact – Corporate Plan 2018/22	
Which Priority/Priorities from the Corporate Plan 2018/22 will this budget saving impact on?	
	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
x	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

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	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

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

Impact 4 – Delays in delays in HB processing and dealing with Council Tax enquires could have an effect on financial circumstances resulting in or increasing poverty which could affect children.

Impact 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.

Impact 6 – For reasons already stated this service reduction is likely to have an impact on health and well-being therefore having a potential impact on living well and for longer.

Impact 9 - resources – by improving on self-service and forcing channel shift we could improve digital access for residents able to do so.

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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 targeted CSC survey in Spring 2018</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2017: 64% of respondents supported a reduced service provision in the Customer Services Centres.</p> <p>Budget Consultation 2018: 55% of respondents supported the proposal to close the Customer Services Desk at Port Glasgow. Additionally, 48% of respondents supported the proposal to reduce service provision in Customer Services, Greenock.</p>
Research	
Officer's knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	It is well known that a high percentage of CSC users are socially and economically disadvantaged and fall into a few of the protected characteristics as already mentioned
Equalities monitoring data	
User feedback (including complaints)	
Stakeholders	

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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 IT proficient taking up self-service from home as a channel of contact therefore freeing up resources in the CSC to assist other groups.

Potentially providing a facility for customers to hand in mail such as evidence for HB to the HSCP office for forwarding the relevant service and could perhaps be supported by providing appropriate sign posting within Princes House and on the website

By reducing the capacity for or stopping taking cash as well as reducing service provision through longer queues to see a Customer Service representative (CSR) either face to face or on the telephone, this could assist channel shift as those able to do could utilise self-service as a channel of contact which could save on travel costs for individuals currently travelling to the CSC as well as reducing telephone bills for those who are already on low incomes and saving those capable of accessing on line services with disabilities having the inconvenience of travel.

it should be noted however that the majority of users particularly those seeking face to face contact at the CSC are the least likely to move to self-service due to lack of IT facilities or skills.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:	Name: Fiona Maciver
	Position: Revenues and Customer Services Manager
	Date: 13 December 2018
Authorised by:	Name: Alan Puckrin
	Position: Chief Financial Officer
	Date: 13 December 2018

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

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

21 November 2018