

Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal
2020-21 Budget Preparation Savings Template CSS02 – Customer Service Centre and Registration Services.

Intended outcome of proposal
To produce £100,477 of savings (£95,282 in YR1 2020/21), through the generation of £41,340 in additional income and £72,619 in cost savings. Note that there will be additional costs of £5148pa to remodel the service delivery and help to achieve cost reductions. The cost savings include the removing of 1.5 FTE CSC LGE6 Agents (1 based in Campbeltown and 0.5 based in Dunoon CSP), and 0.5 LGE76 CSP Agent based in Campbeltown CSP.

Description of proposal

None of the additional income proposals have any significant EqSEIA impacts and they include:

- Paid Web Advertising
- Promotion of relaunched service (Genealogy, Ceremonies, Lair Searches)
- Increased Registration Fees (Set by NRS, not the council)
- Increased Blue badge Income from additional demand
- Increased room hire income from Social Security Scotland.

The following cost savings proposals have no EqSEIA impacts:

- Removal of surplus photocopier, postage and printing budget
- Removal of LAP server costs (alternative integration approaches will be used)
- Ceasing BT Directory Ads (We will still have a council phonebook entry)
- Cessation of text in service, which was only used a few hundred times last year.

Therefore this proposal relates solely to the following cost reduction and service redesign proposals that have been identified as having potential EqSEIA impacts:

- The reduction of a current full time LGE6 CSP agent post at Campbeltown CSP by 0.5 FTE; thereby reducing the staffing at the CSP from 3 FTE to 2.5 FTE. The rationale here is that there is falling demand for face to face services and uniquely amongst CSPs the Campbeltown CSP can be supported by CSC staff sent from Kintyre House to cover absences. It is not proposed to reduce CSP opening hours. The current post holder has recently resigned and a temporary replacement has been recruited, hence **there will be no redundancy associated with this post reduction.**
- The removal of a 0.5 FTE LGE6 CSC post that is based in Dunoon. This post was created when the council took on Parking Management 4 years ago and began issuing Parking Fines. It was help manage the extra demand. The online parking self service portal and assimilation of parking enquiries into mainstream means this post is no longer required. The post is currently vacant and will not be filled, hence **there is no redundancy associated with this post removal.**
- The removal of 1.0FTE LGE6 CSC Agent from the CSC at Kintyre House Campbeltown due to the falling volumes of mediated contacts as customers switch to Self Service and Automated Services – see bullet point below for Service Redesign that will further accelerate this trend. Note that this post reduction is facilitated by a retiral and voluntary staff hours reduction, **so there is no redundancy associated with this post reduction.** It will still leave 8.5 FTE LGE6 agents and 1.0FTE LGE9 Supervisor in the CSC.
- The redesign of 2 FTE current LGE6 CSC Agent posts to become two LGE7 CSC Digital Agent Posts. These new digital engagement agents will service the new AI and outreach technologies being introduced. This model then reduces mediated contact volumes from customers by giving more pro-active information and allowing automated agents to deal with more enquiries 24/7. This will further reduce mediated contacts to facilitate the 1.0 FTE LGE6 agent reduction noted in the bullet point above. The new posts will be ring fenced to the existing CSC Agents and **should therefore not require any redundancies.** The posts have been graded at LGE 7 so will be attractive to current staff.
- Cessation of the Website BrowseAloud Service. We currently pay £3,392 for the BrowseAloud service on the council website. This was introduced as part of our Equalities agenda as it helps customers with visual impairment by reading content. It also has a translation capability.

Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes
We ensure Information and support is available for everyone. We engage with our customers, staff and partners. Argyll and Bute's economic success will be built on a growing population.

Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Robert Miller
Job title	Customer Engagement Manager
Department	Customer and Support Services
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Jane Fowler
Job title	Head of Customer Support Services
Department	Customer Support Services
Sign off of EqSEIA	Jane Fowler
Date of sign off:	30/10/2019

Who will deliver the proposal?
Robert Miller, Customer Engagement Manager.

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement
<p>All Service staff – via a series of calls for ideas and inputs to the proposal shaping process.</p> <p>CSP Staff whose posts are at threat of redundancy or whose posts are affected.(only one fell into this category and they have since resigned).</p> <p>CSP Supervisors at CSPs through the Area Team Meeting Forum.</p> <p>Web Team Manager, CSC Operations Manager and Digital Service Team Managers</p> <p>Deputy Registrar General, National Records Scotland in respect of Registration Service.</p> <p>Trade Union Side through the options for ringfencing and the grading of the two new Digital Agent posts.</p>

Data

Drop in volume of CSP customer led activity between years:

MEDIATED TRANSACTIONS 2018/19	Q1	Q2	MEDIATED TRANSACTIONS 2019/20	Q1	Q2
Telephone	30764	29151	Telephone	29319	28383
Face to Face	14196	13749	Face to Face	11964	13147
Email	2804	2565	Email	3184	3089
Letter	1128	1095	Letter	692	1013
Smart Assistant	835	917	Smart Assistant	1035	703
Facebook	134	226	Facebook	185	217
Text	116	80	Text	71	89
Webmail (Contact Us form)	69	94	Webmail (Contact Us form)	63	79
Chat	33	44	Chat	84	26
Voiceform	9	9	Voiceform	52	426
Total	50088	47930	Total	46649	47172

Note drop of circa 3,000 face to face transactions in first 6 months of 2019/20 compared to same period in 2018/19.

Drop in volume of Registration Activity between years

	Births	Deaths	Religious marriage	Civil Marriage	Total Regist.	Total Ceremonies
2018/19	493	870	462	395	2222	408
2019/20	460	792	433	383	2074	383
Variance	-33	-78	-29	-12	-148	-25

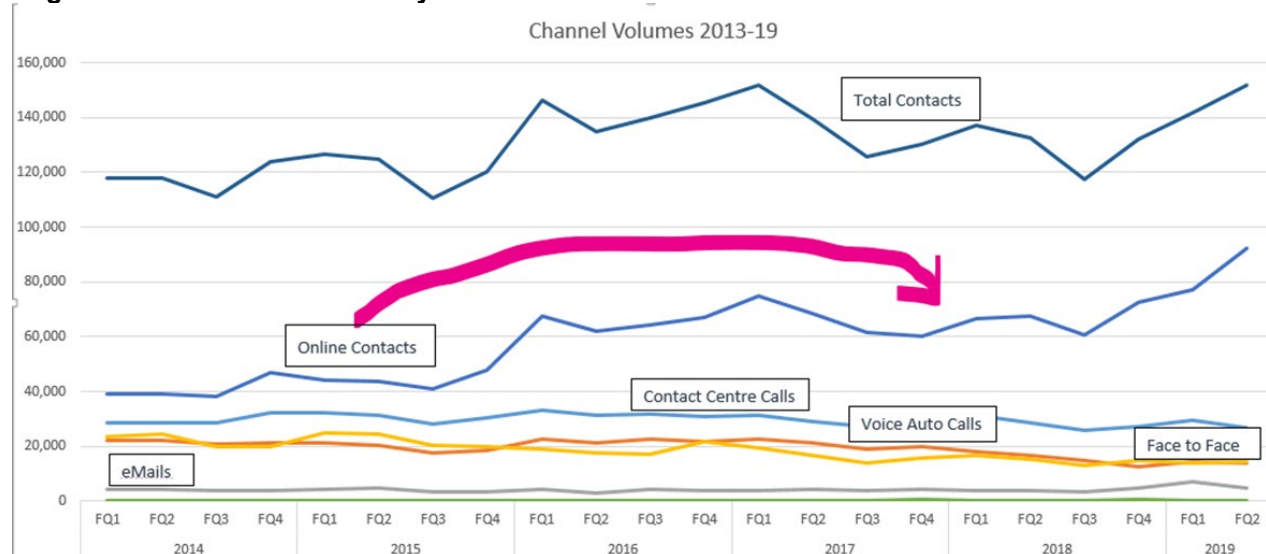
Note drop of 148 Registration events in first 6 months of 2019/20 compared to same period in 2018/19.

Registration Events By District YTD to end of September 2019

DISTRICT	BIRTHS	STILL BIRTHS	DEATHS	RELIGIOUS MARRIAGES	CIVIL MARRIAGES	CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	CP TO MARRIAGE CONVERSION	TOTAL REGISTRATION	HOME OFFICE REFERRALS	CIVIL MARRIAGE CONDUCTED IN A COUNCIL ROOM AND CHARGED A FEE	CIVIL MARRIAGE CONDUCTED IN A COUNCIL ROOM AND NOT CHARGED A FEE	CIVIL MARRIAGE CONDUCTED IN AN OUTSIDE VENUE	TOTAL CIVIL CEREMONIES
CAMPBELTOWN	33	1	71	11	17	0	0	133	0	4	6	7	17
COLL	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1
COLONSAY	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	2	2
DUNOON	76	2	145	26	46	0	0	295	1	11	7	28	46
HELENSBURGH	121	0	196	242	78	0	0	637	4	13	5	60	78
ISLAY	18	0	41	7	16	1	0	83	0	5	0	10	16
ISLE OF BUTE	31	0	85	13	22	0	1	152	1	4	7	11	22
JURA	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	2
KILFINCHEN	0	0	1	8	4	0	0	13	0	0	1	3	4
LOCHGILPHEAD	65	0	77	67	100	0	0	309	3	4	5	91	100
OBAN	94	1	151	46	60	0	0	352	3	6	19	35	60
TIRRE	1	0	7	0	5	0	0	13	0	0	0	5	5
TOBERMORY	20	0	17	11	30	0	0	78	2	2	12	16	30
TOTALS	460	4	792	433	383	1	1	2074	14	50	63	269	383

Note Campbeltown does not have high Registration activity and the number of events was 133 this year compared to 156 last year.

Registration Contact Volumes by Channel - Trends



Note: Downward trend for traditional telephone and face to face contacts and switch to online web based transactions by customer – hence need for switch to Digital Agents.

Parking Fines Activity via CSC in Year to end Sept 2019.

Disposition	Count
Information Provided	412
Payment Taken	296
Email to Back Office	208
Transfer to Back Office	72
Reply to Customer	63
Direct to Online	45
Enquiry Resolved	38
Call Back Later	26
Payment Failed	7
Counter Transfer to Back Office	4
Contact Details Given	3
File Only - No Further Action Required	2
	1176

Note only 1176 mediated customer contacts by all channels in 12 months cannot justify a dedicated 0.5LGE6 CSC agent post, so this work has been subsumed into wider CSC workload.

Uses of BrowseAloud Facility on Council Website Year to June 2019

Type of Activity		Number of activities ▾	
1.	Speech	510	←
2.	Toolbar	290	
3.	Simplify	44	
4.	Text Magnifier	36	←
5.	Translate	31	←
6.	Settings	7	
7.	MP3	4	
8.	Help	1	

Note the text to speech facility was used 510 times over the year, the text magnifier was used 36 times and the translate facility 31 times.

Other information

The savings proposals in respect of the web BrowseAloud facility could have a negative impact on the disabled as group with protected characteristics. The loss of posts in Campbeltown could be regarded as detrimental under the Fairer Scotland Duty as it is a remote mainland community that shares many of the characteristics of Islands. These likely foreseeable impacts can be summarised as follows:

Impact on service users

1. Although the Browsealoud facility on the website was very lightly used over the past year (see data above), the facility was introduced as part of the council's equality of access assisted digital programme. It does form part of our web accessibility solution, however there are alternative approaches available depending on what web browser the customer is using. For example Chrome has a built in web translator and there are downloadable apps that read page content. All browsers have zoom capabilities that can act as magnifiers. This does however require additional effort and some technological skill on the part of the user, so cannot be said to be as effective as the packaged BrowseAloud solution.
2. The reduction in the 0.5 CSC agent post in Dunoon will have no impact on service users as the servicing of parking fines is being handled as part of mainstream service delivery. The loss of the post from Dunoon does have a marginal impact in terms of loss of income to the area, however the CSP will still be staffed by 3 FTE Agents and there will be no cuts to hours of opening.
3. The reduction of a 0.5 FTE CSP Agent post (and the CSC 1.0 FTE Agent post) in Campbeltown will also involve a loss of income and employment to the area and a marginal impact on the sustainability of the community/community of place. Also while there is no plan to reduce CSP opening hours, there is an increased risk that on occasion the CSP might have to close e.g. if staff illness coincides with peaks of staff leave. This can be mitigated by sending agents from the CSC in Kintyre house; although that will also be reducing in number. Such closures would impact on partner groups such as the Campbeltown Museum and the Passport Video Service, so every effort would be made to minimise them.
4. The reduction of a 1.0 FTE LGE6 CSC post will not impact on service delivery if the trend away from mediated customer enquiries continues and the risk of that is being mitigated by the creation of the 2 LGE7 Digital Agent posts, to improve our self service offering. Indeed the creation of these posts can be regarded as a positive protection of jobs through the evolving of posts to reflect the digital transformation happening in society.

Impact on service deliverers

1. There are no direct threats of redundancy as one post is vacant, one is only filled on a temporary basis until the end of 2019/20 and the full time post reduction will be met from a retiral and ring fenced recruitment exercise. It is possible that if existing CSC Agents do not apply for the 2 new Digital Agent posts then there may need to be CSC agent redundancies, however this is highly unlikely as Digital Agent posts have been graded at LGE7.
2. There will be a 2 FTE post reduction overall that requires considered information to be given to remaining staff as to workloads and ongoing job security and the positive opportunities of the 2 new higher paid LGE7 Digital Agent posts will be welcomed. They are also key to ensuring the ongoing success and increased take up of the new automated services; leaving CSC Agents to focus on complex enquiries where they add value.

Gaps in evidence
None known.

Section 3: Impact of proposal

Impact on service users:

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability	X			
Ethnicity		X		
Gender		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population	X			
Island populations		X		
Low income		X		
Low wealth		X		
Material deprivation		X		
Area deprivation		X		
Socio-economic background		X		
Communities of place?	X			
Communities of interest?		X		

Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Gender		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		X		
Island populations		X		
Low income			X	
Low wealth		X		
Material deprivation		X		
Area deprivation		X		
Socio-economic background		X		
Communities of place?	X			
Communities of interest?		X		

If any ‘don’t know’s have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

Don’t know if sufficient LGE6 CSC Agents will apply for the new LGE7 Digital Agent posts to avoid the need for redundancy. This will become know if/when the proposals are passed by council and the ring fenced recruitment can take place.

How has ‘due regard’ been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

YES, these are outlined at the “Other information” section above and the knock on effects section below.

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?

YES

Details of knock-on effects identified

Campbeltown CSP is the hub for certain other partner related organisations (Police Scotland, HM Passport Service for the remote passport interview service, Campbeltown Museum Trust), so any temporary CSP closures due to unforeseen staff shortages would impact them.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?

The website has extensive feedback and customer satisfaction monitoring and the impact of removing BrowseAloud will be captured through them.

The reduction of posts in CSC/CSPs will be captured through operational reporting to the CSC Operational Manager.