

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

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal

Budget Savings Proposal - Customer Engagement Team v0.5

Intended outcome of proposal

To deliver a saving of £318k through a reduction in staffing in Customer Service Centre, Customer Service Points and Registration services, with a consequent change in the model for delivering those mediated services.

Description of proposal

This proposal has three components:

1. Close the doors of all CSPs (Customer Service Points) to walk in customers and operate an appointment only service at them. Move to digital only receptions at Kilmory and Helensburgh Civic Centre. Most CSPs would be retained as offices, as they house other services and/or are the locations of Registration District Offices. Offering only structured appointments would allow more efficient use of resources and incentivise the shift to digital. This would allow a reduction in headcount that would provide **£233,454** savings as follows:
 - Oban CSP to lose an LGE9 Supervisor and be managed from Mull, Upgrade an LGE6 CSP agent post to LGE7 Service Point Officer in Oban to support the Mull based supervisor
 - Islay to lose 1 LGE6 CSP Agent Post
 - Lochgilphead to lose 1 LGE6 CSP Agent Post
 - Helensburgh to lose 1 LGE6 CSP Agent/Reception post
 - Campbeltown to lose 1 LGE6 CSP Agent Post
 - Kilmory to lose 1.5FTE LGE6 Agent/Reception posts
 - Dunoon to lose 0.5FTE LGE6 CSP Agent Post
 - Bute to lose 0.5FTE CSP Agent Post.
2. Closure of the part time CSPs on the smaller islands, which would mean shutting the CSP on Tiree (0.4 FTE LGE6) and withdrawing the funding for Jura and Colonsay Development Companies, who run the part time CSP service there on the council's behalf. Also removing 4 part time Home Based Registrar post on these three islands, plus Coll and merging the Registration Districts with larger ones. Savings will be **£31,038** as follows:
£18,745 withdrawn funding for Development Companies on Jura and Colonsay
£8093 For 0.4 FTE LGE6 and office expenses on Tiree
£4,200 saving of net cost for 4 Home Based Registrars.
3. Reducing the CSC Agent resources in the Contact Centre by 15% and accepting a lower standard of responsiveness and less resilience for unusual peaks of demand and support to other Services. Savings will be **£53,247** from reduction of 1.8FTE LGE6 CSC Agents.

The above is the minimum viable CET service that still provides an appointment based face to face contact option for digital strugglers and the minimum statutory Registration Service using digital remote registration processes recently given legislative approval by the Scottish Parliament. It is predicated on the continuing optimisation of digital engagement channels and automations that have seen face to face interactions fall to circa 40% of pre-pandemic levels. Risks/Impacts for service users and service delivery are detailed below.

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.
 We are efficient and cost effective.
 Argyll and Bute's economic success will be built on a growing population
 COI = Increase the percentage of all Self Service and automated outcomes.
 COI = Level of Customer Satisfaction

Lead officer details:

Name of lead officer	Robert Miller
Job title	Customer Engagement Manager
Department	Customer Support Services

Appropriate officer details:

Name of appropriate officer	Jane Fowler
Job title	Head of Customer Support Services
Department	Customer and Support Services

Sign off of EqSEIA



Date of sign off

9th February 2022**Who will deliver the proposal?**

Robert Miller, Customer Engagement Manager.

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA**Consultation / engagement**

CSP Supervisors and Registrars.
 CSC/CSP Staff whose posts are at threat of redundancy or whose posts are affected, including Home Based Registrars.
 Colonsay Community Development Company, Colonsay CSP Scalasaig, Colonsay PA61 7YW.
 Jura Development Trust, The Service Point Craighouse, Isle of Jura, PA607XG
 Tiree Business Company and Tiree Community Council
 Coll Hotel
 Access Working Gp of HSCP and Council Officers
 Heads of Service from CET using Services
 Deputy Registrar General, National Records Scotland in respect of Registration Service.
 Note; Due to short timeframe for consultation, inputs are still being received and the EqSEIA will be updated and version controlled as they come in.

Data Used in Development of EqSEIA

1. Total CET Interactions (Mediated and Self Service), for Quarters 1-3 of 2022/23. Note Face to face is circa 14% of mediated transactions, which in turn are circa 23% of all transactions recorded through CET Digital and non Digital Channels:

MEDIATED TRANSACTIONS 2022/23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1%	Q2%	Q3%
Telephone	26994	24883	22988	0	68.9%	66.2%	67.8%
Face to Face	4977	5431	4823	0	12.7%	14.5%	14.2%
Email	4459	4350	3632	0	11.4%	11.6%	10.7%
Letter	1146	960	598	0	2.9%	2.6%	1.8%
Smart Assistant	878	866	693	0	2.2%	2.3%	2.0%
Digital Assistant	67	656	693	0	0.2%	1.7%	2.0%
Facebook	113	70	74	0	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Text	105	124	93	0	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Webmail (Contact Us form)	22	21	16	0	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Chat	313	149	106	0	0.8%	0.4%	0.3%
Voiceform	92	64	205	0	0.2%	0.2%	0.6%
Total	39166	37574	33921	0	100%	100%	100%

2022/23 ALL TOTALS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1%	Q2%	Q3%
Mediated Transactions	39166	37574	33921	0	20.6%	24.6%	27.5%
Automated Information	124072	84151	60485	0	65.4%	55.1%	49.0%
Automated Transactions	26463	30969	28964	0	13.9%	20.3%	23.5%
Automated Information + Transactions	150535	115120	89449	0	79.4%	75.4%	72.5%
Total	189701	152694	123370	0	100%	100%	100%

2. Registration Activity in each District for calendar year 2022 and compared to 2019 Pre-Pandemic demands:

	CAMPBELTOWN	COLL	COLONSAY	DUNOON	HELENSBURGH	ISLAY	ISLE OF BUTE	JURA	KILFINCHEN	LOCHGILPHEAD	OBAN	THREE	TOBERMORY	2022 TOTALS	2019 FIGURES	2019 FIGURES
TOTAL OTHER Reg. Activity	10	0	0	7	5	0	2	0	0	1	13	0	5	43	47	196
TOTAL REGISTRATION	238	7	3	466	957	85	171	9	15	435	455	22	85	2948	2838	2722
TOTAL CIVIL CEREMONIES	16	2	1	86	176	21	24	1	3	158	74	5	33	600	552	474
Total Registration Activity	248	7	3	473	962	85	173	9	15	436	468	22	90	2991	2885	2918
Total Registration Activity 2019	214	4	5	445	850	120	199	5	17	394	529	25	111	2918		
Difference 2019 Compared to 2022	34	3	-2	28	112	-35	-26	4	-2	42	-61	-3	-21	73		
% Difference	15.9%	75.0%	-40.0%	6.3%	13.2%	-29.2%	-13.1%	80%	-11.8%	10.7%	-11.5%	-12.0%	-18.9%	2.5%		

3. Service Point Activity in Typical Month of October 2022, Including face to face footfall compared to 2019 Pre-Pandemic Levels.

Service Point Totals and Averages Oct 22	Campbeltown	Dunoon	Helensburgh	Islay	Lochgilphead	Mull	Oban	Rothsay	Tiree	
Channel Type	Totals	Totals	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Totals	Totals	
Chat	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	25	12	0
E-mail	148	270	181	21	175	71	125	53	1	
Face to Face	322	360	787	65	105	120	201	152	12	
Facebook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
Letter	23	51	70	1	31	5	30	5	0	
Outbound Phone	0	0	0	0	1	0	19	0	0	
Phone	267	292	329	24	330	50	332	177	6	
Text	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Twitter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Webform	195	167	66	0	0	11	2	0	0	
Webmail	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Voiceform	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Smart Assistant	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Oct 2022	956	1153	1434	111	642	257	734	399	24	
Total Oct 2019	1078	1065	3342	775	609	571	824	626	69	
Cash Receiving Counter Payments	56	90	131	2	5	15	64	33	2	
Cash Receiving Phone Payments	27	37	14	4	0	15	32	31	0	
Total Hours worked on My Options	382.06	408.53	520.97	125.28	253.77	208.71	366.14	203.56	44.52	
Service Requests per worked Hour	2.72	3.13	2.33	0.93	2.55	1.38	2.27	2.27	0.58	
Face to Face Totals Oct 2022	322	360	787	65	105	120	201	152	12	2124
Face to Face Totals Oct 2019	939	856	2981	353	361	249	595	297	62	6693
F2F % 2022 vs 2019	34%	42%	26%	18%	29%	48%	34%	51%	19%	32%

4. Service Point Activity Average per month over a full Calendar Year (Oct 21 to Sept 2022)

Service Point Totals and Averages Oct 21-Sept 2022										
	Campbeltown	Dunoon	Helensburgh	Islay	Lochgilphead	Mull	Oban	Rothesay	Tiree	
Average per month over a year for all below	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
Incident/Service Requests Logged Totals Ave P/Month	788	994	1581	663	595	459	859	488	38	
Total Registrar Events Average per month	22	47	101	9	47.75	10	43	16	2	
Cash Receipting Counter Payments Ave per month	54	77	516	20	27	20	68	29	8	
Cash Receipting Phone Payments Ave per Month	34	36	26	43	13	23	38	32	0	
Total Hours worked on My Options	355	358.7	584.4	243.7	254.1	222	341.5	183.2	49.1	
Service Requests Logged per Hour Averaged	2.46	3.01	2.73	2.88	2.42	2.39	2.78	2.95	0.91	
Face to Face service requests Average per month	239	266	618	80	135	102	213	120	16	

5. Jura Service Point Activity FQ1&2 2022/23:

Jura Service Point Usage F2F Collated by Heather Cameron

April - June 2022

General Office use JDT /HiTrans **56**

Customer internet use and general enquiries x **48**

Meeting room bookings x**12**

Registration Event x **1** **Total 117**

July – September 2022

General Office use JDT/Hi Trans x **43**

Customer internet use and general enquiries x **51**

Registration events X **6**

Civil marriage ceremony x **1** **Total 101**

6. Colonsay Service Point Activity FQ1&2 2022/23:

For April through to June 2022 we had **105 people through the door** and the enquiries were for. Coal/gas keys Fuel payments for Coal/gas. Library books. Service point general (meaning people asking for information)

July through to September 2022 **102**. Gas/coal keys. Fuel payments. Library and service point general.

7. Superfast Broadband Provision in Argyll and Bute vs equivalent councils 2022

Argyll and Bute Broadband Provision 2022

Source: [Subnational indicators explorer - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/subnational-indicators-explorer)



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Indicator	Period	Unit	Angus	Argyll and Bute	Highland	Scottish Borders
Gross value added per hour worked	2020	Pounds	35.7	31.2	35.6	32.3
Gross median weekly pay	2021	Pounds	459	458.2	493.8	460.6
Employment rate for 16 to 64 year olds	07/2021 - 06/2022	Percentage	74.4	75.1	71.3	74.4
Gross disposable household income per head	2020	Pounds	19777	20422	20154	20289
Gigabit capable broadband	May-22	Percentage	29.7	3.1	29.1	20.1

8. Note on ACHA Revised Opening Hours 2022:

ACHA have changed their opening hours as from w/c 3/10/22.

Their mainland offices are opening from 9 a.m. till 12.30 p.m. only on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Their island offices (Islay and Bute) are only opening on a Monday and Friday from 9 a.m. till 12.30 p.m.

Other information

Gaps in evidence

Awaiting response from National Records Scotland regarding proposed registration changes.

Section 3: Impact of proposal

Impact on service users:

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age	X			
Disability	X			
Ethnicity		X		
Sex		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 you have identified any impacts on service users, explain what these will be.

This proposal will have negative impacts in terms of face to face customer service and registration delivery on the island communities of Mull, Islay, Rothesay, Jura, Colonsay and Tiree that need to be carefully given due regard, given the Section 7 and 8 duties of the council under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to assess impacts “likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities”.

Colonsay, Tiree and Jura in particular would no longer have Service Point presence and these islands plus Coll would no longer have an on-island registrar presence; which would be a significant difference to other communities. The Jura Development Company noted “If the savings target is 25%, why is 100% of Jura's service being threatened?” and Coll Hotel noted “Losing our Registrar...would be yet another chip away at the small things that make such a difference to us here on Coll” Similarly the remote mainland community in Campbeltown requires consideration under the Fairer Scotland Duty and shares many of the characteristics of Islands, with similarly detrimental impacts.

The likely foreseeable negative impacts can be summarised as follows:

Impact on service users

1. Although digital technology can help to provide channels of communication between the islands and the council, the withdrawal of face to face representation will potentially affect these communities disproportionately because they are more vulnerable to digital service disruptions and due to the fact their ageing populations are less likely to undertake or have support to undertake digital transactions. This point was made by a number of the island consultees. Whilst there has been a significant drop in CSP

activity since the pandemic, even the small amount of the “real person” contact shown in the data above is valued. Jura DC cited the example of an elderly customer with health issues and deafness who relies on the face to face service as other digital and mediated channels are not open to him and getting a ferry to the nearest remaining CSP at Bowmore is not viable. Tiree BC also referenced the high number of elderly residents who do not have or do not want to have internet access and value the face to face contact.

2. The future of the council owned CSP buildings on Colonsay and Jura with their enhanced broadband connections would need to be discussed between Property and the Development Companies who use them and the loss of income and support would be detrimental to those Development Companies. Jura Development say “losing the SLA would have an impact and we would need to consider how the future sustainability of the community organisation and the assets under its care, which include the island's only shop, cafe and moorings and pontoons”.
3. The current reduced hours opening for walk in customers has already attracted negative comment; particularly in respect of vulnerable customers. This solution would see doors to all council offices closed to walk in customers. HSCP partners have pointed out that very vulnerable customers and the digitally disadvantaged (age, low wealth/income), may struggle to make appointments and thus have equality barriers to access; particularly at very difficult times in their lives, e.g. fleeing domestic violence. The data above also shows that Argyll and Bute has low coverage of superfast broadband and as this revised model relies on digital alternatives, this is also a barrier to access in those areas not covered. Jura Development company noted “Knockrome, the second largest settlement on the island, has broadband speeds of only 0.48mb upload and 0.95mb download.... many self employed people and students on Jura use the council's services at the service point for essential work”. The recent experience on Shetland where cables to island were cut also highlights the risks of a digital only approach.
4. Although digital means are available for many transactions aimed at the vulnerable (e.g. Blue Badge applications, housing benefit, council tax reduction, Scottish welfare fund and free school meal and clothing grants applications), it is the disabled and low income service users who most value the availability of a face to face resource to help them access these services. On islands like Jura, Colonsay, Tiree and Mull the CSP is the only council facility adapted for the disabled with hearing loops and ramps etc. Tiree Community Council noted “The withdrawal of this local office will affect the most isolated and vulnerable members of one of the most isolated and vulnerable communities in Argyll and Bute. The digitally excluded – of which there are many on Tiree – will lose out”. Similarly the provision of physical leaflets and physical services from the council and partner organisations would require a willing alternative venue that is not obviously available on Jura or Colonsay.
5. The new Scottish Government legislation allowing remote digital processing of births, death and marriage paperwork facilitates the removal of the Home Based Registration (HBR), service on small islands. However consultees noted that this would lead to a less responsive registration service at times when people are at their most vulnerable. Consultees make the point that the HBR is a one stop facility for bereaved families in the absence of an island undertaker, helping with funeral arrangements, filling in funeral forms and DWP, liaising with amenities staff and guiding relatives, at a very difficult time. Jura Development Company stated “There have been several cases recently where these services in relation to registering deaths and the associated activities have been invaluable and losing our registrar would have a massive impact on people when they need those services the most”. Tiree community council noted that “To lose that service would be catastrophic”. The absence of undertakers and

refrigeration facilities on Tiree means that not having an island based registrar could slow down burials that must take place in 72 hours. The Deputy Registrar general has not ruled against such a move, but he has stated that it should only be countenanced after a full public consultation.

6. CSPs not only provide access to council services, but also to partner services such as the KeepSafe initiative with the Police and on Mull and Tiree the CSPs hold keys for Registered Social Landlords who do not have permanent presence on the island. The Campbeltown office is the gateway for the local museum. On Tiree the CSP holds keys for ACHA properties and provides the opportunity for payment of Meals on Wheels provision. These facilities therefore contribute towards community of place and closed offices will require negotiation of alternative arrangements with partners a number of sites.
7. The council has a commitment to maintaining sustainable communities of place and so the cessation or reduction of CSP services could be viewed as making such communities seem more isolated and therefore unattractive to people considering moving or staying in them. The loss of the Police and Visit Scotland offices in some of these communities has made the CSPs the go-to place for visitors seeking more general information and so their loss/closure will further erode attractiveness to visitors. The small island groups have argued that the loss of such focal point amenities impacts on efforts to grow populations. On larger islands the reduction of staffing to single officer or double officer has led to the more frequent closure of Service Points due to ad hoc events such as staff sickness and this also impacts vulnerable customer groups and island amenities. Jura Development Company said “we cannot overstate what a lynchpin having the service point and the SLA is for the island community. On paper, usage may not meet the council's expectations of 'Best Value', but island communities rarely score well here. Our low numbers and rurality mean that we can't benefit from the same economies of scale and efficiencies that can be delivered elsewhere. However, if Argyll and Bute Council - a rural and island council - measure by this stick, then soon our remote and rural communities will have nothing at all”.
8. Aside from the CSP provision the actual buildings on smaller islands are used as community hubs and whilst there may be future scope for community buyouts, only one building is currently community owned (Tiree) and it is not certain that local funding could sustain the currently council owned ones. The withdrawal of funding for buildings and the staff to keep them open is likely to have an impact on Community of Interest groups that use the buildings for meetings and group activities such as mother and toddler groups in the absence of a library. Jura Development trust say the Jura CSP is essential to the success of its Community Action Plan 2018-23 and the facilities at their CSP are used by both its ageing and younger members of the community e.g. through Jura Juniors, Parent Council and the focus of the Music Festival event. Colonsay Community Council has highlighted impacts on the library and office space. Arts and cultural activities would also be impacted by loss of venue and utilities as numerous history, music, and arts groups use the venues; particularly on Colonsay and Jura. Tiree Community Business and Community Council say that the change would “Weaken the financial position of Tiree Community Business, which provides office space for the council and also various other essential organisations for Tiree”. They also point out that they have taken responsibility for the Scarinish public conveniences from the council to assist with previous savings.
9. Ensuring adequate income to the islands and remote communities is always a challenge and the loss of tens of thousands of pounds of direct funding on Colonsay and Jura and indirect funding through lost salaries at other service points will have a ripple effect that will be difficult to make up. There would also be reduced employment

opportunities in places where permanent full time and casual work is harder to get. A number of respondents noted that the council commitment to sustainable communities should in actuality be flowing work and jobs and income to Islands; "Tiree Community Council noted "Council should be channelling investment to the most remote and economically fragile communities such as Tiree, where 45% of the housing stock is second homes – not taking it away".

10. An appointment only service naturally imposes a degree of inconvenience on customers used to turning up when it is most suitable for them. This is particularly so when the interaction is a brief one such as having to make an appointment just to hand over documents. It may also require customers to take time off work when they could previously have interacted during a lunch break. It is also difficult to use for those leading chaotic lives through drug & alcohol or mental health issues and for young people, who if there is school attendance only have a very limited window to meet professionals whether social work or others.

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

N/A

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

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Sex	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 you have identified any impacts on service deliverers, explain what these will be.

Impact on service deliverers

1. 25% budget cut to the Customer Engagement area of service delivery will inevitably reduce capacity to deal with customer enquiries, with inevitable reduction in speed and quality of response on behalf of Services as primary service deliverers. There is a consequent probability of increased customer dissatisfaction, resulting in more

complaints and thus reputational damage and rework. The Service is currently accredited with the Customer Service Excellence standard.

2. All work done on behalf of other Services that is not related to core customer contact duties would need to be reviewed and some may need to be handed back e.g. proactive quality phone assessment for Telecare or assisting Education with the processing of grants for Clothing Allowance and Free School Meal applications each summer. This may result in less responsive service for users and more work for Services.
3. The reduction in staffing reduces resilience capability to deal with significant peaks of customer demand due to seasonal, cyclical and one off operational demands such as the Scotland Loves Local exercise, elections, Short Term Lets go live, annual bin calendar renewals or weather events etc. This has consequent potential for overflow of work to Services and temporary reductions in service quality as demand exceeds capacity. Loss of Home based registrars increases likelihood of disruption to ceremonies on small islands like Coll if registrars cannot get their by ferry or aircraft due to weather or strikes etc.
4. Reduced capacity to assist with emergency responses. CSC/CSP resource was used heavily for the pro-active communication and support request management elements of Caring for People and to aid NHS vaccination exercise. There would be no spare capacity for this, so Services and Partners would need to provide the resources and be trained on ad hoc systems used to underpin the response. The Island CSP Agents/Registrars played a vital part in the emergency response, Tiree Community Council noted that the agent there “used her irreplaceable local knowledge and organised our community volunteers to deliver food and medicines and a weekly phone call to isolated islanders. It was her position in the CSP that made her able to do this”. The CSP is also the focus for local emergency resilience, housing the Emergency Plan, Grab Bag and response supplies.
5. There is a gender equality issue with the proposal in that 17 out of the 21 employees whose posts would be included in redundancy pools are female.
6. Due to the remote nature of the communities the employees live in it is disproportionately difficult for them to find alternative employment, both through the council redeployment process or on the open employment market. The same will be true for the people employed by the council funding given to Colonsay Community Development Company and Jura Development Trust, whose jobs will also be at threat.
7. Loss of income through redundancy or reduced hours will naturally mean individual hardship and material deprivation for those employees and the potential to have to move to find work.
8. Rothesay CSP in particular will become the only CSP with a lone worker CSP agent/registrar and thus will have a potential material deprivation of safety compared to other service point agents if there is an accident or aggressive customer incident.
9. All of the community based CSPs (Colonsay, Jura and Tiree), make the point that the CSP buildings are the bases from which they deliver their services and community regeneration initiatives and the uncertainty of the use of the buildings and the income would have a serious impact on their efforts, in contradiction to the Islands and Fairer Duty Scotland Acts.
10. Servicing the islands remotely will also redirect resources from servicing of mainland communities e.g. doing a wedding on Colonsay or Coll will potentially take a mainland registrar offline for 3 days due to ferries etc. It may also cost more due to ferry and

hotel costs for an off island registrar to attend and may deter customers from booking ceremonies on small islands to the detriment of their economies.

11. Numerous small-scale CSP based activities carried out for other Services would need to be “rehomed” as front doors would be locked; e.g. Lair Management, Minibus Hires, Toilet Radar Keys, document scanning, tip permits, recycling bags, witnessing and scanning of documents and management of Trust Applications such as the GM Duncan bequest in Campbeltown. It would also limit access to the free period products and other free resources made available from Service Points.
12. Physical receptionists at Kilmory and Helensburgh and CSPs acting as de facto reception at multi service offices such as Manse Brae and Oban Civic Centre would be removed and alternative measures would need to be put in place direct with Services for visitor management. Security would also require to be reviewed e.g. the installation of secure access to back office areas at Kilmory.
13. There may be an impact on Registration service income as most CSP staff double up as Registrars or Assistant Registrars, therefore the loss of 6.4 FTE from this small service will constrain the ability to accept ceremony bookings; particularly at peak times. It also increases the risk of failed ceremonies due to fewer resources able to cover and Registrars being able to act as witnesses at small on premise weddings – with consequent reputational damage. Tiree community council also observed that it could impact the wider wedding tourism income on the islands. The far smaller pool of registrars also has implications for progression and the ageing profile of our pool of registrars.
14. Negative impact on remaining staff dealing with increased workloads and higher numbers of dissatisfied customers, plus the number of times agents/registrars will be lone workers will increase, with consequent increase in risk. One HSCP contributor noted that if the proposals were accepted “At a very general level we have got to address the issue that the council looks to be shut. Remote access to council services has potential but we need to make sure that it doesn’t make the council seem remote from the people of A&B”.

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

N/A

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

There has been and will continue to be considerable investment in Digital customer engagement services and in automations to replicate services that CSP staff currently undertake manually, such as Blue Badge processing. This will help to increase efficiency and productivity to offset the fact there will be fewer resources to handle existing customer engagement demands. New systems such as a CSP Appointment Booking System will be implemented to support the proposed revised model.

In line with the Scotgov imperative the “No-one be left behind” in the digital age, easy digital access and assisted digital access alternatives continue to be implemented (for example Google smart speaker bin day look up service went live in December). Telephony and email options remain with 24/7 web and voice automated services. Face to face will remain as an appointment based option and many smaller islands have never had Service Points and use these alternative channels.

This proposal applies similar levels of service provision across the entire Council area, so there is no absolute differential impact between communities in islands, remote and mainland areas. The move towards greater digital delivery seeks to create a more inclusive service than can be provided by physical presence in a small number of communities. The impact assessment gives due regard, however, to the underlying fragility of our remote and island communities and those who are currently digitally excluded.

Only 60% of savings will be taken in 2023/24 to allow for a planned transition to the revised minimum viable service model e.g. to allow most registrars to be retained until September so that the marriage ceremony season is serviced and time for alternative arrangements to be made for duties performed out of closing CSPs.

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 See below

Details of knock-on effects identified

Will impact delivery of the Registration Service
Will potentially impact delivery of the Social Care function on Tiree (shared office)
Will require relocation of “offshored” work on Tiree, Islay and Rothesay (e.g. Blue badge processing, Email and call handling and Telecare calls).

Numerous small scale activities on behalf of other council services will need to be adapted and altered e.g. access arrangement to meeting rooms and digital conferencing facilities, key holding (buildings and minibuses), local, cemetery lair record management and internment/digging/memorial permissions e.g. it will be problematic to manage those on Tiree from Mull and the Tiree Community Council and Business have highlighted funeral arrangements as a particular concern.

The CSPs are also the focus for local emergency arrangements, which would need to be reviewed e.g. on Tiree the CSP holds the Community contingency plan, grab bag and emergency essentials.

Some have educational back up roles such as the CSP on Jura where it has been used as an exam base when pupils cannot get to Islay. These responsibilities will need to be reviewed as will access to the digital conferencing services at all the affected CSPs. Numerous activities completed on behalf of partner organisations will require to be reviewed and agreed including with Police Scotland, Campbeltown Museum Trust, HSCP.

Alternative venues will be required for MP, MSP and Councillor Surgeries if the venues on Colonsay and Jura are closed and for Community Council meetings. The community run CSPs are the bases from which the portfolios of community assets are run, such as shop, ferry tickets and moorings/pontoons.

Will require a review of Property Management arrangements and cost at Tiree, Jura and Colonsay.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

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

Impacts will be very difficult to monitor on Jura, Colonsay and Tiree as there will be no Customer Service employees left on these islands. This will need to be done through the few other council employees, feedback from elected representatives at Community Council and elected member level. Feedback can also be sought from the community organisations who we currently partner to deliver services.

For those CSPs operating an appointment only service every attendee will be offered a survey including questions on fairness and access etc. and these will be reported quarterly.

Service delivery impacts will be reported as part of regular performance reporting in terms of customer complaints, response times to calls, accuracy of returns etc.

Employee impacts will be evaluated through statistical returns, absence returns and employee meetings such as the minuted Area Team Meetings. Financial impacts will be monitored from monthly budget reports and Highlight Reports to Customer Support Services Mgt Team Meetings.