

2022/23 Initial Saving and Pressure Proposal Form

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the proposal should complete forms

Proposal Title	Equalities and Welsh Language	Senior Responsible Officer:	Matthew Gatehouse
Your Ref No:	CEO2	Operational Lead Officer:	Matthew Gatehouse
Version No:		Directorate:	CEOs
Date:	31/1/22	Section:	Policy, Scrutiny and Customer Experience

Note: The Senior Responsible Officer is expected to be a Chief Officer or Head of Service in most circumstances. The operational lead officer is the lead officer responsible for bringing the proposal together and who would ultimately be held accountable for operational delivery.

1. Proposal Scope and Description Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored and the core objectives.

To increase capacity and expertise in the council's equality and Welsh language functions to ensure that all areas of the work are carried out in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, The Welsh Language Act 1993 and The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

The investment will create additional strategic capacity for equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring that this work is aligned with key policy objectives on social justice, poverty and health inequalities, while progressing commitments in the Strategic Equality Plan to ensure the council has a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace.

It will result in an increase in staffing from 1.0 to 2.0 FTE. The existing Equality and Welsh Language Policy Officer (Band I) will be replaced by a Welsh Language Officer on a lower band, and a new strategic post will be created and assume responsibility for the overall area of work, aligning closely with teams including Partnerships, HR, Performance and Social Justice. Pay Bands for the new posts will be subject to job evaluation but it is assumed this will result in a net increase of £54,666 inclusive of on-costs.

The proposed changes will ensure that these areas are aligned with the council's ambitious policy agenda as described in the latest *Plan on a Page*, and take a more proactive approach to the production and challenge of integrated impact assessments that accompany Council, Cabinet and ICMD recommendations, reducing the risk of either Act being used as a basis for legal challenge of decisions.

Finally, the investment will enable the organisation to respond to increasing number of challenges regarding the implementation of the Welsh Language Standards and become more proactive in our approach to identify and remedy potential problems before they occur, for example by conducting mystery shopper exercises and working across the organisation to grow Welsh language capabilities of staff in customer facing roles.

2. Supporting Data and Evidence: Please confirm supporting evidence for the identified saving and/or pressure. Or to discount any saving being available. Append any further information as necessary.

Over the past eighteen months the authority has received a number of challenges from the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner, giving an indication that citizens are increasingly aware of the Welsh Language Standards. The interest in the language is incredibly positive and bodes well for the council's commitment to support the Welsh Government ambition of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050 as well as the objectives in our own Welsh Language Strategy. Unlike the authority's internal complaints policy, there is no scope for informal resolution of complaints raised through the Commissioner, meaning staff capacity diverted into investigations and formal processes, reducing capacity for more strategic work and promoting the language.

With a single post covering equalities and Welsh language, the growing volume of regulatory and compliance work is impacting on the authority's capacity to work proactively in the space of equality, diversity and inclusion. The council has made clear policy commitments towards social justice and has a morale as well as a legal responsibility to progress the equality agenda. Recent evidence shows high levels of income inequality in the county with Monmouthshire having 21 of the 200 most unequal areas (at Lower Super Output Level) in Wales, more than any other authority.

3. Budget Impact In this section please include the savings and pressures identified and the overall budget impact resulting from this proposal. This must cover each year implicated.

Service area	Current Budget £'000	Proposed Cash Pressure £'000	Proposed Cash Saving £'000	Target year				Total Budget Change Proposed £'000
				2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	
Equalities and Welsh Language	132	55						55

4. External Funding: Has this proposal considered the opportunities for external funding? If yes, what funding avenues have been identified?

Funding Identified	Source	Current status (i.e. confirmed, in application, etc)
Some income has been generated by carrying out translation for partner organisations, this is used to offset our own translation costs and is considerably below what would be needed to fund a post	Partner Organisations	confirmed

5. Corporate Alignment: How does this proposal contribute and align with the current Corporate Plan objectives and have the relevant evaluations been considered and completed? Please consider any implications this proposal may have on our current policies.

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Does this proposal align with the MCC Corporate Plan ?	Y	Aligns with objective 16 of the Corporate Plan, specifically Promote equality and diversity and ensure opportunities are genuinely available to all
Has an initial Wellbeing & Future Generation Assessment being undertaken?	N	
Will an option appraisal be required?	N	
Will this proposal require any amendments to MCC policy?	N	

6. Additional Impacts What are the expected impacts of implementing this proposal? Please include the potential impact on other service areas

Description	Who is effected?	Is this impact positive or negative?
Reduced time dealing with complaints related to Welsh language standards	Could potentially be any MCC department	positive
Enhanced strategic capacity to develop work in key areas of council policy	Initially departments including People Services, Partnerships and Community Development. Ultimately this will benefit communities	positive

7. Mitigation (for budget pressures only) – What mitigation has been identified to reduce the budget pressure proposed? What further steps could be taken to mitigate the pressure further and what are the consequences of this action?

- Closer work with the Social Justice Innovation Manager to reduce inequalities in communities through progression of the authority’s ambitious social justice agenda
- Closer working with the Head of Human Resources to ensure strengthening of actions to promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Improved use of data analysis to ensure that work is more targeted
- Use of mystery shopper to ensure that Welsh Language Standards and complied with across the authority, reducing the risk of interventions being required by the Commissioner

8. Additional Considerations:

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal have any staffing implications?	Y	This will result in the creation of one additional post and will be implemented in tandem with the voluntary retirement of the current Equality and Welsh Language Policy Officer
Will this project have any legal implication for the authority?	N	

9. Up-front Investment Requirement

Describe any additional skills, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposal successfully. For example, new/additional expertise that will require additional investment etc.

Any additional capability required	Where will this come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)
n/a		

10. Consultation Describe any initial consultation that has been or needs to be undertaken in order to inform this proposal and any further consultation that will be required throughout proposal delivery

Consultee	Description	Date (delivered/planned)
n/a		

11. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the outcomes expected from investing in or recognising the pressure identified, including any negative impacts identified in section 6 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/ Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low) Based on a score assessing the probability & impact	Mitigating Actions
Potential difficulties recruiting suitable candidates	operational	Competitive job market	M	Implement wide-reaching recruitment campaign

12. Assumptions

Describe any key assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker
Continued external focus and internal strategic importance placed on Welsh Language Standards	Rising level of correspondence and interest in ensuring compliance with the standards from the Welsh Language Commissioner and Residents	n/a
Continuation of the council's current policy commitment to tackling inequality	Cross-party recognition / support for tackling inequality as evidenced by motions / questions at council.	Cabinet

13. Measuring and monitoring performance

How do you intend to measure the impact of this proposal? This will include budget measures and further possible measures that cover process, staff and customers. Targets need to be set over the duration of the proposal where appropriate.

Focus - Budget/Process/Staff/Customer	Indicator	Target 2022/23	Target 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Target 2025/26
Customer	Progress against a wide range of issues identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission Report 'Is Wales Fairer'				
Staff	Number of Welsh speaking staff	>45	>48	>52	>55
Staff	A more diverse workforce (measures tbc)				

14. Additional considerations:

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal require procurement of goods, services or works?	N	
Will this proposal impact on the authority's built assets?	N	
Will this proposal present any collaboration opportunities?	Y	Potential to collaborate more effectively with other authorities across Wales on equalities issues. In particular those in Gwent who make up the new regional Public Service Board
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	Y	The potential has not yet been fully explored