

**Template for Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment**

<b>Subject of assessment:</b>	Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution			
<b>Coverage:</b>	Crosscutting			
<b>This is a decision relating to:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Policy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Service</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Function</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Process/procedure</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Project</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Review</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Organisational change</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other (please state)</b>		
<b>It is a:</b>	<b>New approach:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Revision of an existing approach:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>It is driven by:</b>	<b>Legislation:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Local or corporate requirements:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>Description:</b></p>	<p><b>Key aims, objectives and activities</b> To assess the impact of proceeding with the revised delivery approach for the Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution.</p> <p><b>Statutory drivers</b> The Council does not have a statutory legal obligation to operate set inbound telephony hours for council tax and benefit support, and will continue to provide a range of accessible facilities including phone lines, online portals and face-to-face contact centre support. The proposed approach will contribute towards the Council’s delivery of the Welfare Strategy and strategic ‘vulnerability’ priority in the Council’s Strategic Plan 2021-24.</p> <p><b>Differences from any previous approach</b> During periods of high activity, especially during council administration of temporary government initiatives such as covid and cost of living grants, inbound call demand into the service exceeded resource due to residents and businesses seeking information and reassurance that could be found elsewhere such as the council website. The long call queues at peak times resulting from the volume of these low-value calls resulted in frustration for residents and businesses attempting to contact the service to make a rates payment or respond to bills, reminders or summons letters. Potentially vulnerable and financially-stretched households struggle to reach our skilled and experienced advisors for help with reviewing and settling their accounts among the high phone traffic. On 8 June 2021 the Executive Member for Finance and Governance approved proposed changes to the telephony opening hours for Revenues and Benefits, from 8.30am until 5.00pm (Friday 4.30pm) to the current opening hours of 10.00am until 4.00pm Monday to Friday which became effective from Monday 5 July 2021. As a result of these highly successful changes, the service was able to better respond to demand with extra resources being allocated during peak call times, as well as maximising cash collection ability outside of opening hours including the clearance of outstanding work and undertaking targeted outbound collection activity. The new delivery approach is to close the inbound phonelines for one day a week from Monday 3rd October 2022, to maximise outbound targeted financial support and income recovery. In order to mitigate impact on accessibility of the service for residents and businesses, the opening times on the remaining days will be increased to 4.30pm from the current 4pm closure time with the exception of a Friday which will remain at 4.00pm. Following a 2-month trial period and careful consideration of resulting performance levels, a further weekly closure day may be implemented. Should this not be practical, consideration will be given to reducing the daily open times, which will provide an ideal opportunity to target specific areas of the town where support is needed, thus avoiding the need for these residents to contact the service at a later date. The telephony solution will be transformed in such a way that the service can reduce the level of random calls coming into the service by introducing more specific ways of engagement with residents who are experiencing financial insecurities.</p> <p><b>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate)</b> The key stakeholders are: the Council; local residents and businesses</p> <p><b>Intended outcomes.</b> To seek the adoption of the new delivery approach for the Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution.</p>
<p><b>Live date:</b></p>	<p>Executive Member for Finance and Governance will consider Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution report on 11 October 2022.</p>
<p><b>Lifespan:</b></p>	<p>Until replaced by a future revised operating model.</p>

<b>Date of next review:</b>	September 2023
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Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
<b>Human Rights</b> Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	☒	☐	☐	The Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution has been designed to increase accessibility to financial advice and support for our most vulnerable residents and businesses in line with the Welfare Strategy by providing targeted outbound contact opportunities. The service will continue to uphold individual Human Rights as enshrined in legislation. The new telephony operation will be supported by enhanced online webpages, self-serve portals and the reopened in-person Customer Contact Centre offering residents and businesses a suite of channels for advice and support that meet their preferences and needs. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of human rights.
<b>Equality</b> Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*	☒	☐	☐	The Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution has been designed to increase accessibility to financial advice and support for our most vulnerable residents and businesses in line with the Welfare Strategy by providing targeted outbound contact opportunities, actively improving outcomes for commonly disadvantaged groups. The new telephony operation will be supported by enhanced online webpages, self-serve portals and the reopened in-person Customer Contact Centre offering residents and businesses a suite of channels for advice and support that meet their preferences and needs. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of equality.

\* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
<p><b>Community cohesion</b></p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>The Resident and Business Support Telephony Solution has been designed to increase accessibility to financial advice and support for our most vulnerable residents and businesses in line with the Welfare Strategy by providing targeted outbound contact opportunities and tailored support for areas of the town with specific needs. The new telephony operation will be supported by enhanced online webpages, self-serve portals and the reopened in-person Customer Contact Centre offering residents and businesses a suite of channels for advice and support that meet their preferences and needs. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of community cohesion.</p>
<p><b>Next steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➡ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed.</li> <li>➡ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.</li> </ul>				

<b>Assessment completed by:</b>	Nicola Mearns	<b>Head of Service:</b>	Janette Savage
<b>Date:</b>	09.09.2022	<b>Date:</b>	12.9.2022