

Highland Council Customer Service Board Review 3

Service Point Business Cases

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| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Acharacle Service Point |
| Lochaber Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revised Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Lochaber area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Acharacle
- Mallaig
- Kinlochleven

The Fort William Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area.

| 3. Current Service Delivery | Acharacle Service Point |
|--|-------------------------|
| <p>Service Provision</p> <p>Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acharacle Resource Centre (surgery provision at this location) • Mallaig Library (co-located within High Life Highland premises) • Kinlochleven (located within High Life Highland premises) <p>Opening Hours</p> <p>Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acharacle Opening Hours are on a Tuesday from 11.00am to 2.30pm • Mallaig Opening Hours are Thursday and Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm • Kinlochleven Opening Hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm. On a Tuesday and Thursday this office is open 10:00am to 1.00pm, 2.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acharacle – 0.1 FTE (HC4) • Mallaig – 0.4 FTE (HC4) • Kinlochleven – High Life Highland Staffing <p>Service Users</p> <p>The Lochaber area offices provide access to council services for some of the largest geographical ward areas (Fort William and Ardnamurchan and Caol and Mallaig). These wards also have some of the lowest population densities.</p> <p>Acharacle Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions</p> <p>Acharacle Service Point has recorded very low weekly customer transactions for Highland Council business. There has been on average 1 transaction per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and less than 1 transaction on average per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.</p> <p>Registration function is not provided at Acharacle Service Point.</p> <p>Partnership Service Delivery</p> <p>There is no partnership service at Acharacle Service Point.</p> | |

| 4. Savings | Acharacle Service Point |
|--|-------------------------|
| <p>The closure of Acharacle Service Point would realise £2,180 direct savings towards the Customer Service Review and contributes to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.</p> | |
| 5. Alternative Service Delivery Options | |
| <p>There are a range of alternative delivery options for Acharacle Service Point.</p> <p>Fort William Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Fort William Service Point is open 9:30am to 4.00pm. It is also delivers Registration.</p> <p>All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).</p> <p>Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions carried out at Acharacle Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.</p> <p>Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.</p> <p>Payment Provision – there are 9 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of Acharacle Service Point.</p> <p>Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Ardnamurchan, Knoydart and Mallaig (High Life Highland library premises).</p> <p>Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is in Mallaig 35 miles away, this is an outreach service.</p> <p>Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public. • Sheltered Housing Support Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden. • Other Housing Support Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation. <p>Access Point – there is no current Access Point option for Acharacle Service Point.</p> | |

| 6. Outcome of Consultation | Acharacle Service Point |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <p>Stage One – Community Consultation Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.</p> <p>Stage Two – Specific Consultation Customer Services Consultation 2015</p> <p>The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.</p> <p>UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals.</p> <p>The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.</p> <p>Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%). • Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age. • Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability. <p><i>The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.</i></p> <p>Summary of Key Findings from Community Group Consultation for Acharacle Service Point</p> <p>There were no individual responses from Acharacle however 3 Community Councils responded with regards to Acharacle Service Point.</p> <p>One expressed concern regarding the proposal, noting the already limited service and the travel times involved to access the service. The views on the potential impact of the proposal were mixed with one group reporting that it would make little difference given the reductions already experienced, whilst another that it was difficult to determine at this stage. One Community Council felt that, although difficult for people in Acharacle, it would be positive for Strontian. This view was expressed with the belief that a Service Point would be located within the library in Strontian.</p> | |

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Acharacle Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Acharacle

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other ‘vulnerable’ groups.

Acharacle Data - Fort William and Ardnamurchan Ward Profile

Fort William and Ardnamurchan is our third largest Ward and has one of the lowest population densities. The population profile is similar to the average and the total population grew by 0.9% by 2010 with inward migrants moving to the extreme east and west of the Ward from outside Highland.

The Census response to health is one the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness is slightly above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Fort William and Ardnamurchan is 18.8% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council’s annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. Three Community Councils and the Lochaber Disability Panel responded to the consultation with regard to the Acharacle Service Point and 2 telephone interviews were undertaken.

Potential Impact – Acharacle Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council’s Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Acharacle Consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Acharacle Consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Acharacle Service Point

The Lochaber Disability Access Panel responded on the themes of transport and social isolation and the potential impact on disabled members of the community.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Acharacle Service Point

With 6 responses received, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Acharacle Service Point were that access to services was already limited for those without access to transport. It was also highlighted that it was an already limited service that was provided and that any impact would be difficult to determine at this stage.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Acharacle Service Point

A specific suggestion from Lochaber Access Panel was that an Access Point could be housed within the Community Company's base or the Acharacle Centre. One respondent suggested an appointment based mobile service.

Mitigating actions specific to Acharacle are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Acharacle Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Acharacle Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. No partnership opportunity is in place or has been identified to sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 3.5 hours per week and has no capacity to undertake additional work

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Acharacle Service Point

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Acharacle Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5. No Access Point Model proposed due to low volume of customer contacts.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Acharacle Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Closure of Acharacle Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Closure of Acharacle Service Point with customer access supported by alternative service provision as outlined in Section 5.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Fort William Service Point or Ardgour Registration Office (Home Based Registrar).

It is also important to note that Access Point facilities will not be exclusive to the ten locations identified in this review. There will be opportunities to explore the introduction of Access Points across Highland including the far North for example Strontian.

Customer Services Review**Business Case – Ardersier Service Point****Inner Moray Firth South**

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|---------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
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- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Inner Moray Firth South area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Point locations

- Ardersier
- Hilton
- **Fort Augustus**

The Inverness, Nairn and Fort William Service Points have been designated as the “Community Hubs” for this area.

Fort Augustus Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Ardersier Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Ardersier Library (located within High Life Highland premises)
- Hilton (co-located within the Community Centre)
- Fort Augustus (Located in the Memorial Hall owned by Highland Council)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Ardersier Opening Hours are Monday 12.00pm to 5.00pm, Wednesday 10.00am to 1.00pm, Friday 12.00pm to 5.00pm and Saturday 10.00am to 1.00pm
- Hilton Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Fort Augustus Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm.

Staffing

- Ardersier– High Life Highland Staffing
- Hilton – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Fort Augustus – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Aird and Loch Ness is our fifth largest ward with a population density less than the Highland average.

Ardersier Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Ardersier has recorded very low weekly customer transactions. There has been an average of 3 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 2 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is not provided at Ardersier Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

High Life Highland Staffing.

4. Savings

The move to an Access Point Model at Ardersier Service Point would realise no Highland Council staff savings but contribute to the realisation of management (Team Leader) savings.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Ardersier Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Ardersier Service Point.

Inverness or Nairn Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Inverness Service Point is open 9:30am to 5.00pm. Nairn Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.00pm and offers Registration functions.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions carried out at Ardersier Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 21 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Ardersier, Inverness and 8 other libraries within 20 miles (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office in Nairn is located 6 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) located in Ardersier (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Ardersier Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals.

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

There were no responses in relation to Ardersier from individuals or community groups.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Ardersier Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Ardersier

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Ardersier data – Culloden and Ardersier Ward Profile

Culloden and Ardersier is a mixed rural and urban Ward with an overall population density above the average. The proportion of people in the 16-49 age group is the one of highest and the proportion in the 0-15 group is above the average but declining at the third highest rate. The population fell by 0.8% by 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness is the second lowest in Highland. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Culloden and Ardersier is 16.2% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 3 telephone interviews undertaken and no community group responses to the consultation with regard to Ardersier Service Point.

Potential Impact – Ardersier Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

OFFICIAL

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|---------------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note Ardersier consultation comments |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Ardersier Service Point

Concern was raised about vulnerability of the age group using the Service Point but also positively received the opportunity to explore the benefits of new technologies.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant.
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Ardersier Service Point

There were 3 telephone interviews undertaken and no community responses to the consultation with regards to the Ardersier Service Point.

OFFICIAL

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Ardersier Service Point

There were no specific comments on service delivery to the consultation with regards to the Ardersier Service Point.

Mitigation Actions

Mitigating actions specific to Ardersier are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Ardersier Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Ardersier Service Point is staffed by High Life Highland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)**Ardersier Service Point**

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- **Customer Service Volumes**
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- **Partnership Working**
Partnership Working in place with High Life Highland. No additional partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- **Savings Impact**
The move to an Access Point Model at Ardersier Service Point would realise no Highland Council staff savings but contribute to the realisation of management (Team Leader) savings.
- **Alternative Service Delivery Options**
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
Access Point Model can be delivered from current location, minimising potential impact on customers.
- **EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors**
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- **Potential for Workload Relocation**
No workload relocation options have been identified for Ardersier Service Point.
- **Overall Recommendation**
Move to Access Point Model for Ardersier Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Point Model from current library location supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Nairn Service Point and Inverness Registration Office.

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| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Bettyhill Service Point |
| Northwest Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

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- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Northwest Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Bettyhill
- Durness
- **Lochinver**

The Thurso Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area. There is also the option for customers to utilise the Wick Service Point.

Lochinver Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Bettyhill Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bettyhill (Naver Teleservice Centre)
- Durness (Visitor Centre co-located with Visit Scotland)
- Lochinver (co located within the Culag Annex)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bettyhill Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm
- Durness Opening Hours are Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm
- Lochinver Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 11.00am to 2.30pm

Staffing

- Bettyhill - 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Durness – Visit Scotland Staff
- Lochinver – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

North, West and Central Sutherland is our second largest ward with the lowest population density in Highland.

Bettyhill Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Bettyhill has recorded low weekly customer transactions. There has been on average less than 10 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and less than 6 transactions per week on average for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Bettyhill Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is a Police Scotland partnership agreement at Bettyhill Service Point. Library Service is also provided.

4. Savings

The TUPE transfer of Bettyhill Service Point ensures continuity of Library Service and Police Counter Service provision and contribute to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Bettyhill Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Bettyhill Service Point.

Thurso Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Thurso Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4.30pm. It is also delivers Registration

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions carried out at Bettyhill can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided at the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 8 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Bettyhill, Thurso and Wick (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Bettyhill and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Bettyhill (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Bettyhill Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals.

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Bettyhill Service Point

Respondents suggested that there would only be small savings made by closing the Service Point, as the Service Point is co-located with the library and shares a member of staff. There were also concerns that closing the Service Point could put the Naver Teleservice Centre at risk.

Concerns about the distance to the Community Hub, unreliable telephone and broadband and residents becoming disengaged were also highlighted.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Bettyhill Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Bettyhill

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Bettyhill data – North, West & Central Sutherland Ward Profile

North, West & Central Sutherland is our second largest Ward with the lowest population density in Highland. It has an ageing population with the lowest proportion of residents in the 0-15 and 16-44 age groups in Highland and the highest proportions in the 45-64 age group. The Ward has experienced fairly high rates of inward migration and the west coast is a popular destination for house buyers, but the ageing population and the highest outward migration of young people in Highland resulted in a population fall of 2.6% between 2005 and 2010, which is the second highest in Highland.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. North, West & Central Sutherland has a high rate of self-reported illness, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 21.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There was 1 individual response, 2 community group responses, and 2 telephone interviews undertaken for the consultation with regard to the Bettyhill Service Point.

Potential Impact – Bettyhill Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

OFFICIAL

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note Bettyhill consultation comments |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Bettyhill Service Point

There were comments in the consultation responses on the theme of use of technology and barriers faced by older people.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

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Specific Comments for Bettyhill Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 1 individual response, 2 telephone interviews undertaken and 2 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Bettyhill Service Point are:

- One respondent noted that residents may leave the area and therefore increase the fragility of the area.
- All three respondents were concerned that removing the Service Point would make the Council distant and “faceless”.
- One respondent highlighted that broadband coverage is poor with slow download speeds. They also noted that adverse weather conditions can lead to a loss of phone and internet services.
- One respondent was concerned about the loss of a job in the community. Another respondent was concerned that closing the Service Point/ library could impact on other services currently renting office space in the same building.
- One respondent was also concerned about a potential loss of local knowledge.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Bettyhill Service Points

- One respondent suggested work should be decentralised from busy offices to Service Points to make better use of the Service Point Officer’s time. Another respondent was happy for the current co-location of the Service Point and the library to continue, there was also a suggestion about co-location with the health centre or school.
- Two respondents in this area did not think appointments or a mobile service would work in this area.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Bettyhill are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Bettyhill Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Bettyhill Service Point will transfer under TUPE arrangements to High Life Highland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership Working in place with High Life Highland and Police Scotland. High Life Highland has confirmed 1) the need to maintain the Library function 2) the agreement to TUPE transfer. 3) the agreement to operate full Service Point function.

No additional partnership working opportunities identified.
- Savings Impact
TUPE arrangements will contribute to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.
- Service Delivery Options
Not required as full Service Point function recommended.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation for Bettyhill Service Point as retained under TUPE.
- Overall Recommendation
TUPE transfer of Bettyhill Service Point – with full Service Point delivery maintained.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Bettyhill Service Point

Bettyhill Service Point to be retained with budget and management transfer under TUPE arrangements to High Life Highland.

The Registration function would continue to be delivered from Bettyhill Service Point.

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|---|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Bonar Bridge Service Point |
| East Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the East Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Bonar Bridge
- Brora
- **Dornoch**
- Helmsdale
- Lairg

The Alness and Golspie Service Points have been designated as the "Community Hubs" for this area.

Dornoch Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Bonar Bridge Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bonar Bridge (co-located in the Library)
- Brora (co-located within the Library and Cultural Centre)
- Dornoch (the building was owned by Scottish Court Service, new owner identified)
- Helmsdale (co-located within the Community Centre, owned by the Community)
- Lairg (co-located in the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bonar Bridge Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 5.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 5.30pm to 8.00pm
- Brora Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm
- Dornoch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm
- Helmsdale Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Lairg Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Bonar Bridge – High Life Highland Staffing
- Brora – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Dornoch – 1.5 FTE (HC4)
- Helmsdale – High Life Highland Staffing
- Lairg – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural ward and has a low population density.

Bonar Bridge Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Bonar Bridge has recorded very low weekly customer transactions of an average of 8 for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 9 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is not a function provided at Bonar Bridge Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

High Life Highland Staffing.

4. Savings**Bonar Bridge Service Point**

The move to an Access Point Model at Bonar Bridge Service Point would realise no Highland Council staff savings but contribute to the realisation of management (Team Leader) savings.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Bonar Bridge Service Point.

Alness and Golspie Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Alness Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12:30 pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm. Golspie Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12.30pm. It is also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions in Bonar Bridge can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 12 PayPoints within a 15 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Bonar Bridge, Dornoch, Golspie, Tain, Alness, Invergordon and Brora (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Alness 18 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Bonar Bridge (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Bonar Bridge Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals.

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Bonar Bridge Service Point

Respondents from Bonar Bridge felt that maintaining face to face services was important for the community, particularly for elderly people. Poor public transport links and poor internet connections will make it challenging for the community to access services in the future.

If the proposal went ahead respondents felt that the Council would become distant and faceless, and communication with the Council would decrease. The proposals would cause difficulties in the community, particularly for people that cannot use technology. There were also concerns that if home visits were introduced then vulnerable people may be targeted by fraudsters.

There was confusion over where savings would be made as the building and staff member is shared with Highlife Highland.

It was suggested that the Council should be trying to improve services in the area rather than removing them.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment - Bonar Bridge SP

Equality Impact Assessment: Bonar Bridge

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Bonar Bridge data – North, West & Central Sutherland Ward Profile

North, West & Central Sutherland is our second largest Ward with the lowest population density in Highland. It has an ageing population with the lowest proportion of residents in the 0-15 and 16-44 age groups in Highland and the highest proportions in the 45-64 age group. The Ward has experienced fairly high rates of inward migration, but the ageing population and the highest outward migration of young people in Highland resulted in a population fall of 2.6% between 2005 and 2010, which is the second highest in Highland.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. North, West & Central Sutherland has a high rate of self-reported illness, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 21.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 5 individual responses, a focus group (4 attended) and 3 community group responses to the consultation with regard to Bonar Bridge Service Point.

Potential Impact – Bonar Bridge Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

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| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|---------------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Bonar Bridge Consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Bonar Bridge Consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Bonar Bridge Consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Bonar Bridge Service Point

- The potential for impact was referred to for older people and people with mobility impairments and affected by hearing loss.
- The proposals would cause difficulties in the community, particularly for people that cannot use technology.
- The growing elderly population was highlighted and it was suggested this is likely to result in a greater need for face to face services in the future. Poor internet connections, the considerable distance from alternative provision and poor public transport links, would make it challenging for the community to access a service in the future.
- Two of the groups outlined concerns about the approach of providing home visits for people who require it; it was suggested that vulnerable people will be targeted by fraudsters who claim to be from the Council.

A concern was noted that vulnerable Service Point users will not have been able to respond to this consultation.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

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A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Bonar Bridge Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 5 individual responses, a focus group and 3 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Bonar Bridge Service Point are:

- Two respondents were concerned about the potential impact any closure would have on the already fragile community, while some respondents highlighted the poor public transport links between Bonar Bridge and Golspie and Tain
- There was some concern about the Council becoming faceless and distant, particularly with reference to Council tenants. There was concern that this could result in bad feelings towards the Council.
- One respondent noted that broadband in the area is poor and so they were concerned about relying on internet services.
- Two respondents were concerned about the downgrading of a local job. One respondent was also concerned that the downgrading the Service Point could lead to the library hours reducing and to other Council staff being moved from these offices.
- A local elected Member expressed concerns about the economic impact of the loss of the Service Point on an already fragile rural community.

Some respondents also raised concerns about the perceived centralisation of Council services.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Bonar Bridge Service Point

- One respondent suggested that the Council introduces a decentralisation policy
- Some respondents were happy for the continued co-location with the library however wanted this to continue with a full Service Point rather than an Access Point
- Another suggestion from one respondent was that the Council puts on extra public transport to Golspie throughout the week

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Bonar Bridge are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work**Bonar Bridge Service Point**

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Bonar Bridge Service Point is staffed by High Life Highland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership Working in place with High Life Highland. No additional partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
The move to an Access Point Model at Bonar Bridge Service Point would realise no Highland Council staff savings but contribute to the realisation of management (Team Leader) savings.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
Access Point Model can be delivered from current location, minimising potential impact on customers.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Bonar Bridge Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Bonar Bridge Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery Bonar Bridge Service Point

Customer Service delivery by Access Point Model from current library location supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Dornoch or Golspie Service Points.

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|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Broadford Service Point |
| Skye and Wester Ross Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Skye and Wester Ross area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Broadford
- **Gairloch**
- **Kyle** – (it is proposed that this office will now remain open and be viewed as a Community Hub)
- Lochcarron

The **Kyle**, Ullapool and Portree Service Points have been designated as the “Community Hubs” for this area.

Gairloch Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Broadford Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Broadford (co-located with High Life Highland and Social Work)
- Gairloch Police Station (Partnership agreement with Police Scotland)
- Lochcarron (co-located in the Library)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Broadford Opening Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10.30am to 2.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Gairloch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Lochcarron Opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Broadford – 1.0 FTE (HC4)
- Gairloch – 0.75 FTE (HC4)
- Lochcarron – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The total population showed a slight decrease by 2010 despite inward migration.

Broadford Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Broadford has recorded low weekly customer transactions of an average of 24 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 14 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is provided at Broadford Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is a Police Scotland partnership agreement at Broadford Service Point. Library Service is also provided.

4. Savings**Broadford Service Point**

The TUPE transfer of Broadford Service Point ensures continuity of Library Service and Police Counter Service provision and contributes to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Broadford Service Point.

Kyle, Ullapool and Portree Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Kyle Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm. Ullapool Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm. Portree Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm. They all deliver Registration functions.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions in Broadford Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 12 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Broadford, Kyle, Plockton, Knoydart, Mallaig and Lochcarron (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is in Broadford and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Broadford (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Broadford Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals.

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Broadford Service Point

Respondents in Broadford felt that maintaining face to face services is essential particularly for older people who may not have anyone else to talk to. They were also concerned it could deter people from moving to Skye as it will become more difficult to access Council services.

Respondents queried what savings would be made and felt it they would not be proportionate to the impact the change would have on the community.

Community groups highlighted the lack of public transport in the area and noted that the Service Point currently covers a large rural area.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Broadford Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Broadford

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Broadford data – Eilean a' Cheò Ward Profile

Eilean a' Cheò is a sparsely populated rural Ward with a below average population density. The overall population profile is slightly older than the average, with low proportions in the 0-44 age group and the second highest proportion of people aged 45 to- 64. The 65-74 age group was also above average while those aged 75 plus were similar to that of Highland. The population grew by 3.1% by 2010 as a result of inward migration.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability.

The rate of self-reported long term illness in Eilean in A' Cheo' is above the Highland average, and Sleat has the some of the highest rates seen anywhere in Highland. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Eilean a' Cheò is 19.8% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 4 responses from individuals, a focus group (7 attended) and 4 responses from community groups to the consultation with regard to Broadford Service Point.

Potential Impact – Broadford Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

OFFICIAL

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Broadford Consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Broadford Consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Broadford Consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Broadford Service Point

Respondents agreed that face to face services are essential, particularly for older people. The proposals could deter people from moving to Skye as it will be difficult to access Council services, particularly for people with mobility problems.

The emphasis on the use of technology and telephony, and barriers to travel to the likely nearest Service Point, were noted to likely have particular impact on older people, young people with learning disabilities, and people with mental health problems.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

OFFICIAL

Specific Comments for Broadford Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 4 responses from individuals, a focus group and 4 responses from community groups, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Broadford Service Point are:

- Respondents were concerned about how this would affect the fragile communities in and around Broadford. There was concern about a continued loss of services and that people may be deterred from moving to Skye due to a lack of services.
- It was highlighted that there is inadequate public transport to access the Kyle or Portree Community Hubs.
- One respondent noted that the community would feel abandoned by the Council and another noted that if the proposal went ahead it would be bad for the Council's popularity.
- It was suggested that as people would have to travel further to the nearest Community Hub in Kyle or Portree then costs are being transferred to the public.
- One respondent felt that although one of the principles of the review was to look at each area individually, that many communities were being treated the same as the proposal was the same for 17 communities.
- One respondent noted the loss of a local job which could adversely impact on the local area, as alternative employment opportunities are difficult to find.

Some respondents also noted the particularly difficult road conditions in this area which could make travelling to the nearest Community Hub difficult or impossible in winter.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Broadford Service Point

- Some respondents suggested decentralising work out to Service Point staff
- One respondent suggested co-locating with the school or the new hospital
- One respondent suggested a mobile service, such as a van once a week
- Focus group respondents suggested operating with reduced hours

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Broadford are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work**Broadford Service Point**

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Broadford Service Point will transfer under TUPE arrangements to High Life Highland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership Working in place with High Life Highland and Police Scotland. High Life Highland has confirmed 1) the need to maintain the Library function 2) the agreement to TUPE transfer. 3) the agreement to operate full Service Point function.

No additional partnership working opportunities identified.
- Savings Impact
TUPE arrangements will contribute to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.
- Service Delivery Options
Not required as full Service Point function recommended.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation for Broadford Service Point as retained under TUPE.
- Overall Recommendation
TUPE transfer of Broadford Service Point – with full Service Point delivery maintained.

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery | Broadford Service Point |
|--|--------------------------------|

Broadford Service Point to be retained with budget and management transfer under TUPE arrangements to High Life Highland.

Registration function would continue to be delivered from Broadford Service Point.

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| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Brora Service Point |
| East Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
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1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the East Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Bonar Bridge
- Brora
- **Dornoch**
- Helmsdale
- Lairg

The Golspie Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

Dornoch Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Brora Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bonar Bridge (co-located in the Library)
- Brora (co-located within the Library and Cultural Centre)
- Dornoch (the building was owned by Scottish Court Service, new owner has been identified)
- Helmsdale (co-located within the Community Centre, owned by the Community)
- Lairg (co-located in the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bonar Bridge Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 5.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 5.30pm to 8.00pm
- Brora Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm
- Dornoch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm
- Helmsdale Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Lairg Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Bonar Bridge – High Life Highland Staffing
- Brora – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Dornoch – 1.5 FTE (HC4)
- Helmsdale – High Life Highland Staffing
- Lairg – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural ward and has a low population density.

Brora Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Brora has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 35 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 33 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Brora Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership agreement at Brora Service Point.

4. Savings**Brora Service Point**

The move to an Access Point Model at Brora Service Point would realise £10,670 savings towards the Customer Services Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Brora Service Point.

Golspie Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Golspie Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12.30pm. It is also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Brora Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 10 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Dornoch, Golspie, Tain, Brora, Helmsdale (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Golspie 5 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Brora (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Brora Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Brora Service Point

Respondents in Brora did not like the proposals as they felt that the current provision works well and that it is already a 'community hub'.

Respondents highlighted that it could be difficult for people to travel to Golspie due to the limited availability of public transport and that it can take half a day for a return journey. Respondents felt that this would not be suitable for many people, including older people and people with disabilities. There was also a concern that the proposals would cause difficulties for people who cannot use computers.

The Community Council reported that the consultation was not accessible for vulnerable people within the community.

7 Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Brora Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Brora

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Brora data – East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Profile

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural Ward and has a low population density. It has the oldest age profile in Highland with the some of the lowest proportions of people in the 0 to 15 and 16 to 44 age groups and the highest proportions of people aged over 64. Due to fairly high rates of inward migration from the rest of Highland, Scotland and the UK the population increased by 1.2% between 2005 and 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. East Sutherland and Edderton has the highest rate of self-reported illness in Highland, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in East Sutherland and Edderton is 23.1% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 5 individual responses, 3 telephone interviews undertaken, and 1 community group response to the consultation with regard to Brora Service Point.

Potential Impact – Brora Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7 Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Brora Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Brora Consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Brora Consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Brora Consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Brora Service Point

- The proposal would cause difficulties as people would have to travel to Golspie which is not easy for all (particularly older people and people with disabilities). It would also cause difficulties for people who cannot use computers. Respondents felt that the proposal would reduce their interaction with the Council.
- Concerns were noted at the limited availability of transport to Golspie in order to access services from the Community hub and the impact upon the elderly and vulnerable within the community. It was suggested that such a trip would take around half a day and would not be suitable for anyone who is disabled.

The Community Council reported that the consultation was not accessible for vulnerable people within the community.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Brora Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 5 individual responses, 3 telephone interviews undertaken, and 1 community group response, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Brora Service Point were:

- Respondents were concerned about another service being removed from their community and felt this would be detrimental
- Two respondents noted that there are poor public transport links between Brora and Golspie, with one respondent stating that it would take half a day to make a return journey
- Respondents emphasised that one size does not fit all
- One respondent highlighted the good relationship between local people and their Service Point officer. It was noted that she can make them feel at ease in a way that would not be possible with another method of service delivery
- One respondent noted the loss of a local job
- A local elected Member expressed concerns about the economic impact of the loss of the Service Point on an already fragile rural community.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Brora Service Point

- One respondent noted a range of groups that the Service Point could share a location with: Police, several voluntary groups such as BaDAG, Friends Clyne War Memorial, library and CAB.
- One respondent suggested that an appointment based system may work.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Brora are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Brora Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Brora Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with some capacity for additional work load. However, with Golspie Community Hub in close proximity, an Access Point Model available and there being no partnership opportunity identified to sustain this office; it is not suitable for workload transfer.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Brora Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5. An Access Point Model can be applied from the current location.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Brora Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Brora Service Point (current Service Point location).

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

The move to an Access Point Model in current library location at Brora Service Point with customer access supported by alternative service provision as outlined in Section 5.

Registration for this area would be provided from Golspie Service Point.

Customer Services Review

Business Case – Dornoch Service Point

East Sutherland Area

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|---------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the East Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Bonar Bridge
- Brora
- Dornoch
- Helmsdale
- Lairg

The Golspie Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

3. Current Service Delivery**Dornoch Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bonar Bridge (co-located in the Library)
- Brora (co-located within the Library and Cultural Centre)
- Dornoch (the building was owned by Scottish Court Service, new owner has been identified)
- Helmsdale (co-located within the Community Centre, owned by the Community)
- Lairg (co-located in the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bonar Bridge Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 5.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 5.30pm to 8.00pm
- Brora Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm
- Dornoch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm
- Helmsdale Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Lairg Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Bonar Bridge – High Life Highland Staffing
- Brora – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Dornoch – 1.5 FTE (HC4)
- Helmsdale – High Life Highland Staffing
- Lairg – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural ward and has a low population density.

Dornoch Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Dornoch has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 96 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 122 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Dornoch Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is a Visit Scotland partnership service at Dornoch Service Point.

4. Savings**Dornoch Service Point**

The closure of Dornoch Service Point would have realised £34,211 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Dornoch Service Point.

Golspie Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Golspie Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12.30pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions in Dornoch can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 16 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Dornoch, Golspie, Tain, Brora, Bonar Bridge, Invergordon, Alness and Cromarty (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Tain 9 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Dornoch.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Dornoch Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.
-

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Dornoch Service Point

Individual responses from Dornoch accounted for almost 40% of all responses to the consultation.

Respondents emphasised that Dornoch should be considered a unique town due to the large number of tourists that visit and the large number of weddings that take place each year. There was concern about the economic impact the proposals could have on the town and also about the sustainability of the building should the Council withdraw.

Respondents were concerned about the removal of face to face services and the impact this could have on Dornoch's large elderly population. It was suggested that elderly people are less likely to be able to travel, less likely to have access to technology but the most likely to need face to face services.

There were mixed views about using the library as an Access Point: some respondents felt this was a suitable alternative but others highlighted that the only private space is upstairs which is not accessible for everyone. It was suggested that the only way to overcome any problems was to keep the Service Point open as it currently is. Some respondents were also concerned about the figures that have been used to determine that Dornoch should be closed. They felt that the Council has used incorrect figures to calculate costs and savings.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Dornoch Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Dornoch

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Dornoch data – East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Profile

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural Ward and has a low population density. It has the oldest age profile in Highland with the some of the lowest proportions of people in the 0 to 15 and 16 to 44 age groups and the highest proportions of people aged over 64. Due to fairly high rates of inward migration from the rest of Highland, Scotland and the UK the population increased by 1.2% between 2005 and 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. East Sutherland and Edderton has the highest rate of self-reported illness in Highland, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in East Sutherland and Edderton is 23.1% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 82 individual responses, a focus group (11 attended) and 1 community group response to the consultation with regard to the Dornoch Service Point.

Potential Impact – Dornoch Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Dornoch Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Dornoch Consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Dornoch Consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Dornoch Consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Dornoch Service Point

- Respondents emphasised the importance of face to face services, particularly as there is a large elderly population in Dornoch.
- Respondents voiced many of the concerns outlined in the main report. In relation to using the library as an Access Point, some respondents noted that the only private space in the Dornoch library is upstairs which is not accessible for everyone.
- Respondents in Dornoch were particularly concerned about the impact the proposals for their area would have on elderly residents, as this group is less likely to be able to travel, less likely to have access to technology but the most likely to need face to face services.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Dornoch Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 82 individual responses, a focus group, and 1 community group response, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Dornoch Service Point are:

- It was noted that many services have moved out of Dornoch over recent years, such as the Police and Sheriff Court, and respondents felt that removing the Service Point would further weaken the community. Some respondents noted that there are poor transport links with Golspie and Tain, and that it would take many hours to complete what is currently a short errand.
- Respondents were concerned that removing the Service Point would make the Council distant, remote and faceless. Respondents suggested this would result in local people feeling hostile towards the Council.
- Some respondents felt that communities were not being treated individually and that the Council has a one size fits all mentality.
- Some respondents felt that the Service Point is more than a place to go for Council business. There is a level of trust and a relationship between residents of small communities and the Service Point staff.
- It was stated that there could be economic impacts in Dornoch as the closing of the Service Point could impact on the tourism industry in the area.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Dornoch Service Point

- Some respondents suggested moving work from other offices to the Service Point.
- There was a small level of support for co-locating with the library but a number of problems were mentioned in relation to this, such as shorter opening hours and a lack of confidential space.
- One respondent suggested making it easier to contact offices directly by phone.
- A small number of respondents suggested continuing with the current service but on reduced hours.

Mitigating actions specific to Dornoch are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work**Dornoch Service Point**

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Dornoch Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. While there is an Access Point Model available there is a Partnership with Visit Scotland in place which helps sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 30 hours per week and has sufficient capacity to undertake additional work.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Medium HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
There is a Visit Scotland Partnership in place at Dornoch Service Point.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Dornoch Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5. An Access Point Model can be delivered.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
Business Support workload transfer has been identified for Dornoch Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Retain Dornoch Service Point supported by the transfer of Business Support work load.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Dornoch Service Point

Dornoch Service Point to be retained with support of the transfer of Business Support workload.

Registration function would continue to be delivered from this office.

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|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Durness Service Point |
| Northwest Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council’s commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Northwest Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- **Bettyhill**
- Durness
- **Lochinver**

The Ullapool and Thurso Service Points have been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

Bettyhill and Lochinver Service Points are also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Durness Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bettyhill (Naver Teleservice Centre)
- Durness (Visitor Centre co-located with Visit Scotland)
- Lochinver (co located within the Culag Annex)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bettyhill Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm
- Durness Opening Hours are Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm
- Lochinver Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 11.00am to 2.30pm

Staffing

- Bettyhill - 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Durness – Visit Scotland Staff
- Lochinver – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

North, West and Central Sutherland is our second largest ward with the lowest population density in Highland.

Durness Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Durness has recorded very low weekly customer transactions of an average of less than 1 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average less than 1 transaction per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Durness Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

Visit Scotland staffing & partnership agreement at Durness Service Point.

4. Savings

The closure of Durness Service Point would realise £5,330 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Durness Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Durness Service Point.

Ullapool and Thurso Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Ullapool Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm. Thurso Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4.30pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions in Durness can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 7 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Lairg (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Kinlochbervie 18 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – there is no Access Point Model for Durness Service Point.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Durness Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Durness Service Point

Respondents highlighted the poor transport links in Durness which would make it difficult to travel to the Community Hub. The potential savings were also queried, especially as any replacement services are likely to be more expensive than the current Service Point.

There was also a concern that people will become disengaged from other services such as the CAB.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Durness Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Durness

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Durness data – North, West & Central Sutherland Ward Profile

North, West & Central Sutherland is our second largest Ward with the lowest population density in Highland. It has an ageing population with the lowest proportion of residents in the 0-15 and 16-44 age groups in Highland and the highest proportions in the 45-64 age group. The Ward has experienced fairly high rates of inward migration, but the ageing population and the highest outward migration of young people in Highland resulted in a population fall of 2.6% between 2005 and 2010, which is the second highest in Highland.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. North, West & Central Sutherland has a high rate of self-reported illness, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 21.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There was 1 individual response and 1 community group response to the consultation with regard to Durness Service Point.

Potential Impact – Durness Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Durness Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Durness Service Point

There were no specific equality related comments with regard to the Durness Service Point.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Durness Service Point

Specific Comments for Durness Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 1 individual response and 1 community group response received, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Durness Service Point are:

- It was highlighted by one respondent that there is only one bus a day to Kinlochbervie and so it would take a full day to travel to the nearest Community Hub.
- One respondent felt the proposal would lead to the Council becoming more distant to the community.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Durness Service Point

- One respondent felt that a weekly surgery could be held in the community centre or school. However, another respondent did not believe a mobile service was the answer as it would be more expensive than the current Service Point

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Durness are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work**Durness Service Point**

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Durness Service Point is staffed by Visit Scotland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership Working in place with Visit Scotland. No additional partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
The closure of Durness Service Point would realise savings and contribute to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Durness Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Closure of Durness Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Durness Service Point

Closure of Durness Service Point with customer access supported by alternative service provision as outlined in Section 5.

Registration for this area will be provided from Kinlochbervie Registration Office (North West of Scotland Advice and Information Centre).

It is also important to note that Access Point facilities will not be exclusive to the ten locations identified in this review. There will be opportunities to explore the introduction of Access Points across Highland including the far North of Scotland.

Customer Services Review**Business Case – Fort Augustus Service Point****Inner Moray Firth South**

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Inner Moray Firth South area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Ardersier
- Hilton
- Fort Augustus

The Inverness and Fort William Service Points have been designated as the "Community Hubs" for this area.

3. Current Service Delivery**Fort Augustus Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Ardersier Library (located within High Life Highland premises)
- Hilton (co-located within the Community Centre)
- Fort Augustus (Located in the Memorial Hall owned by Highland Council)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Ardersier Opening Hours are Monday 12.00pm to 5.00pm, Wednesday 10.00am to 1.00pm, Friday 12.00pm to 5.00pm and Saturday 10.00am to 1.00pm
- Hilton Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Fort Augustus Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm.

Staffing

- Ardersier– High Life Highland Staffing
- Hilton – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Fort Augustus – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Aird and Loch Ness is our fifth largest ward with a population density less than the Highland average.

Fort Augustus Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Fort Augustus has recorded very low weekly customer transactions of an average of 15 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 10 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is provided at Fort Augustus Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Fort Augustus Service Point.

4. Savings

The closure of Fort Augustus Service Point would have realised £12,132 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Fort Augustus Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Fort Augustus Service Point.

Inverness and Fort William Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Inverness Service Point is open 9:30am to 5.00pm. Fort William Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm. Both Service Point's offer Registration functions

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Fort Augustus can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 10 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Beauly, Kingussie, Caol, Fort William and 12 further libraries all between 20 and 40 miles away (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office in Fort William is located 31.5 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – there is no Access Point Model for Fort Augustus Service Point.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Fort Augustus Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Fort Augustus Service Point

Respondents were concerned about how the proposals would impact on the community. There was concern that community spirit would be affected and also about what would happen to the historically significant Memorial Hall.

Community groups were concerned about the distances people would have to travel as the Fort Augustus Service Point covers a wide geographical area and public transport in the area is limited. It was also queried if any replacement services would be as cost effective as the current Service Point.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Fort Augustus SP

Equality Impact Assessment: Fort Augustus

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Fort Augustus data – Aird and Loch Ness Ward Profile

Aird and Loch Ness is our fifth largest Ward with a population density less than the Highland average. The population profile shows a lower than average proportion of people in the 0 to 44 and 75 plus age groups. The proportion aged 65 to 74 is very similar to the Highland average while those aged 45 to 64 are well above. The total population grew by 8.8% between 2005 and 2010, the second highest growth rate of all Highland Wards.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness in Aird and Loch Ness is lower than the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Aird and Loch Ness is 17% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There was 1 individual response, 5 telephone interviews, and 2 community group responses to the consultation with regards to Fort Augustus Service Point.

Potential Impact –Fort Augustus Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Fort Augustus SP

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments on Fort Augustus consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments on Fort Augustus consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Note comments on Fort Augustus consultation |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Fort Augustus Service Point

The themes of technology and accessible communication were referred to in the Fort Augustus consultation, in particular the reliance on telephony and technology and the impact on older people. Face to face contact was considered important where communication can be complex, e.g. where English is not a first language.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Fort Augustus Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 1 individual response, 5 telephone interviews, and 2 community group responses received, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Fort Augustus are:

- Two respondents noted that there is poor public transport provision in and around Fort Augustus.
- One respondent suggested that any changes could result in a lack of trust in the Council.
- Two respondents were concerned about losing the 'centre' of the village and concerned about what would happen to the Memorial Hall (where the Service Point is currently situated).

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Fort Augustus Service Point

- Change in opening hours
- A regular (weekly) outreach
- A mobile service
- More online services
- Developing the Service Point into a leisure centre, with a swimming pool and other activities, the library, lecture or conference space and workshops
- Co-location with Police Scotland or Job Centre Plus

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Fort Augustus are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Fort Augustus Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability
-

Fort Augustus Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. With no Access Point Model in place and a partnership opportunity identified to co-locate with Police Scotland; this office is now sustainable and suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and has sufficient capacity to undertake additional work.

Recommendation – transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
There is no Partnership agreement in place at Fort Augustus Service Point. However a partnership opportunity with Police Scotland has been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Fort Augustus Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5. No Access Point Model had been identified.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
Customer Service workload transfer has been identified for Fort Augustus Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Retain Fort Augustus Service Point with the support of Customer Services workload transfer.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery Fort Augustus Service Point

Retention of Fort Augustus Service Point provision supported by the transfer of Customer Services workload and the relocation to the local Police Station.

Registration function continues to be delivered from Fort Augustus Service Point.

Customer Services Review

Business Case – Fortrose Service Point**Inner Moray Firth North**

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|---------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Inner Moray Firth North area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Fortrose
- **Invergordon**
- Muir Of Ord

The Dingwall Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area.

Invergordon Service Point will also now provide Service Point delivery 2 half days per week.

3. Current Service Delivery**Fortrose Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Fortrose (located within the Leisure Centre)
- Invergordon (co-located within the Library)
- Muir Of Ord (located within the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Fortrose opening hours are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm
- Invergordon opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30 pm to 4.30pm
- Muir of Ord opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Fortrose – 1.0 FTE (HC4)
- Invergordon – 2.31 FTE (HC4)
- Muir Of Ord – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

The Black Isle Ward is a rural ward with a large number of individual settlements and an overall population density above the Highland average.

Fortrose Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Fortrose has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 32 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 44 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Fortrose Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Fortrose Service Point.

4. Savings

The move to an Access Point Model at Fortrose Service Point would realise £21,028 towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Fortrose Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Fortrose Service Point.

Dingwall Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Dingwall Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4.30pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions in Fortrose Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 22 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Fortrose, Cromarty, Ardersier, Inverness and 8 other libraries within 20 miles (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Dingwall 15 miles away

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Fortrose.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Fortrose Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Fortrose Service Point

Respondents in Fortrose wanted more information about what an Access Point would offer. It was acknowledged that a full-time office may not be required but there was concern at the complete loss of the facility.

Respondents were most concerned about the impact the proposals could have on elderly people as they are less likely to be able to use online or telephone services.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Fortrose Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Fortrose Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Fortrose data – Black Isle Ward Profile

The Black Isle Ward is a rural ward with a large number of individual settlements and an overall population density above the Highland average. The proportion of people in the 16 to 44 age group is one of the lowest in Highland and those aged 0 to 15 and 75 plus is also below average. The proportion of the population aged between 45 and 74 is well above the Highland average. The population grew by 11.5% between 2001 and 2011, similar to the Highland average of 11.1%.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness in the Black Isle is below the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in the Black Isle is 16.8% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 2 individual responses, a focus group (3 attended), and 1 community group response to the consultation with regard to the Fortrose Service Point.

Potential Impact – Fortrose Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Fortrose Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Fortrose consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Fortrose consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Fortrose Service Point

The impacts on older people and disable people were specifically mentioned. If face to face services were removed, respondents felt that the elderly and disabled people would be affected as they are less likely to be able to use online or telephone services. Telephone contact can be a challenge for those affected by hearing loss.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Fortrose Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 2 individual responses, a focus group, and 1 community group response, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Fortrose Service Point are:

- Residents will have to travel further to reach the Community Hub in Inverness. As the current Service Point covers the whole Black Isle, this whole area will be left without a Service Point.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Fortrose Service Point

- Home visits
- A mobile van/library system

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Fortrose are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Fortrose Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Fortrose Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub within close proximity. While there is sufficient capacity to undertake extra work, there is no partnership opportunity in place to sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. There is also an Access Point Model available.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)**Fortrose Service Point**

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Fortrose Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model proposed.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Fortrose Service Point
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Fortrose Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Point Model supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

Registration for this area is provided from Dingwall Service Point and Inverness Registration Office.

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|---|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Gairloch Service Point |
| East Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

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The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Skye and Wester Ross area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- **Broadford**
- Gairloch
- **Kyle** – (it is proposed that this office will now remain open and be viewed as a Community Hub)
- Lochcarron

The Kyle, Ullapool and Portree Service Points have been designated as the “Community Hubs” for this area.

Broadford Service Point is also now retained.

| 3. Current Service Delivery | Gairloch Service Point |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <p>Service Provision</p> <p>Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadford (co-located with High Life Highland and Social Work) • Gairloch Police Station (Partnership agreement with Police Scotland) • Lochcarron (co-located in the Library) <p>Opening Hours</p> <p>Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadford Opening Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10.30am to 2.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm • Gairloch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm • Lochcarron Opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadford – 1.0 FTE (HC4) • Gairloch – 0.75 FTE (HC4) • Lochcarron – 0.5 FTE (HC4) <p>Service Users</p> <p>Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The total population showed a slight decrease by 2010 despite inward migration.</p> <p>Gairloch Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions</p> <p>Gairloch has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 44 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 31 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.</p> <p>Registration function is provided at Gairloch Service Point.</p> <p>Partnership Service Delivery</p> <p>There is a partnership agreement with Police Scotland at Gairloch Service Point.</p> | |

4. Savings

The move to an Access Point Model at Gairloch Service Point would have realised £18,757 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Gairloch Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Gairloch Service Point.

Kyle, Ullapool and Portree Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Kyle Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm. Ullapool Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1.00pm. Portree Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm. They both deliver Registration functions.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Gairloch Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 7 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Gairloch, Ullapool, Portree, Broadford, Lochcarron and Kyle of Lochalsh (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office in Dingwall is located 58.7 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Gairloch.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Gairloch Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Gairloch Service Point

Respondents were concerned about losing face to face services in Gairloch and felt that it was inappropriate to ask people to travel to Ullapool for services due to the long, often closed road and inadequate public transport. They noted that older and vulnerable people will be affected most.

Respondents were particularly concerned about the loss of their local member of staff. They highlighted that many people in the area like to talk to someone they know, especially for something as distressing as registering a death, but respondents were also concerned about a loss of a job in the area. There was also a concern that a mobile service could delay registering deaths.

There was a lack of support for an Access Point in the library as this is located in the school and a lack of support for a mobile service due to the large area it would need to cover.

Community Councils did not believe there would be any major savings as there has already been a reduction in service.

Some respondents were concerned about how the focus group in Gairloch was conducted and feel there should have been a public meeting instead.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Gairloch Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Gairloch Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Gairloch data – Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Ward Profile

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The overall age profile is older than the average with a below average proportion in the under 45 age groups. The total population showed a slight decrease of 0.8% by 2010 despite inward migration.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh has a rate of self-reported long term illness above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is 19.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 22 individual responses, a public meeting (17 attended), and 2 community group responses to the consultation with regard to Gairloch Service Point.

Potential Impact – Gairloch Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Gairloch Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Gairloch consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Gairloch consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Gairloch consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Gairloch Service Point

Respondents from Gairloch were concerned about the potential loss of face to face services particularly for older people and other vulnerable groups who may be most affected and become more isolated from the Council.

Respondents felt the proposals would cause difficulties, particularly for older people who are not able to use or do not have access to a computer. Using a telephone can also be difficult in terms of hearing but also that some elderly people feel that it makes them more vulnerable. Face to face is therefore important for them.

Concerns were also raised about new mothers who were felt to be sometimes unsupported, vulnerable and unable to travel to a Community Hub.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Gairloch Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 22 individual responses, a public meeting, and 2 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Gairloch Service Point are:

- Some respondents felt that Gairloch already had limited services, particularly in relation to Inverness and towns on the East coast.
- It was noted that there is only one bus a day to Dingwall and Inverness, and one bus a week to Ullapool. Therefore there would be difficulties for people who rely on public transport.
- Respondents felt there would be a deterioration of relations between the community and Highland Council.
- One respondent noted that it is important to consider rural jobs in this process.

It should be noted that there was not a proposal outlined for Gairloch and some respondents felt unable to make fair comments without a clear idea of what might happen in their community.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Gairloch Service Point

- One respondent suggested moving more work out to the Service Point and another suggested co-location with the museum.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Gairloch are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Gairloch Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Gairloch Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. With no suitable Access Point Model available and a Police Scotland partnership in place to sustain this office it was suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and also has the capacity to undertake additional workload.

Recommendation – transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership working in place with Police Scotland. No additional partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Gairloch Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
Customer Service workload relocation options have been identified for Gairloch Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Retain Gairloch Service Point support by Customer Service workload transfer.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Gairloch Service Point

Retain Gairloch Service Point provision with Customer Service workload transfer.

Registration function would continue to be delivered from this office.

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|---|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Grantown Service Point |
| Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Grantown
- **Kingussie**

The Aviemore Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

Kingussie Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery

Grantown Service Point

Service Provision

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Grantown Town House (owned by Highland Council and shared with other services)
- Kingussie (Located in Council Offices owned by Highland Council)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Grantown Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.00pm
- Kingussie Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm

Staffing

- Grantown – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Kingussie – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Badenoch and Strathspey has the third highest population but its large geographical size means that the population density is below the Highland average.

Grantown Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Grantown has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 30 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 37 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is provided at Grantown Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Grantown Service Point.

4. Savings

The reduction in hours at Grantown Service Point would realise £10,238 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Grantown Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Grantown Service Point.

Aviemore Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Aviemore Service Point is open 10:30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Grantown Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 15 PayPoints within a 15 miles radius of Grantown Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Badenoch, Aviemore, Grantown On Spey Tomintoul and Inverness (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Grantown and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) located in Grantown.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Grantown Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Grantown Service Point

Respondents were concerned about the impact the proposals would have on elderly and disabled people, and a potential increase in isolation. The importance of face to face was underlined, especially for those unable to utilise technology. It was suggested that people should not have to travel far to register a death and that a mobile Registrar would not be appropriate here.

It was felt that the library was not a suitable location for the Access Point as it is too small and does not have a private space.

It was highlighted that the community would feel abandoned and like the Council does not care about it if the Service Point is removed.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Granttown Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Granttown Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Granttown data – Badenoch and Strathspey Ward Profile

Badenoch and Strathspey has the third highest population but its large geographical size means that the population density is below the average. The proportion of people in each of the under 45 age groups is below the average. The population grew by 6.8% by 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness is below the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Badenoch and Strathspey is 16.5% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 6 individual responses, 3 telephone interviews undertaken, a focus group (1 attended) and 4 community group responses to the consultation with regard to the Granttown Service Point.

Potential Impact – Granttown Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Granttown Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Granttown consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Granttown consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Granttown consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Granttown Service Point

- Respondents felt that the Service Point is needed particularly for older people and disabled people. They felt that services would not be improved as many people cannot travel or use online services.
- The importance of face to face was underlined, especially for those unable to utilise technology.
- A further view expressed was that the library was not appropriate for an Access Point given issues around disability access and the lack of a confidential space.
- 2 community groups, including the Badenoch and Strathspey Disability Access Panel, responded about both Service Points in Badenoch and Strathspey. Concerns were noted at the travel distances to both locations, especially for those who cannot drive and also the emphasis being placed on electronic communication in the future. It was felt this would isolate the elderly, disabled and people with learning disabilities.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Grantown Service Point

Specific Comments for Grantown Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 6 individual responses, 3 telephone interviews undertaken, a focus group, and 4 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Grantown Service Point are:

- It was highlighted that there is poor public transport in Grantown which would make it difficult to access Aviemore. One respondent this would be particularly difficult for people living in smaller communities around Grantown.
- Respondents felt that the Council is becoming more distant and that rural communities feel abandoned.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Grantown Service Point

- One respondent suggested using village halls to reach out to local people. Another suggested co-locating with the Police and another respondent thought more work should be moved out to the Service Point from other offices.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Grantown are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work**Grantown Service Point**

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Grantown Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. There is no partnership opportunity in place or has been identified to sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. With an Access Point Model available and a limited capacity to undertake extra work this office is not recommended for workload transfer.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Grantown Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model proposed.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Grantown Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to reduced hour's provision for Grantown Service Point due to high volume of Registration events (per Service Point Profile sheets).

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|--|-------------------------------|
| 10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery | Grantown Service Point |
|--|-------------------------------|

Retain Grantown Service Point provision on reduced hours supplemented by Access Point Model and alternative service delivery as outlined in Section 5.

Registration function to be delivered on reduced hours from this office or from Aviemore or Nairn Service Points.

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|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Helmsdale Service Point |
| East Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council’s commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the East Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Bonar Bridge
- Brora
- **Dornoch**
- Helmsdale
- Lairg

The Golspie Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

Dornoch Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Helmsdale Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bonar Bridge (co-located in the Library)
- Brora (co-located within the Library and Cultural Centre)
- Dornoch (the building was owned by Scottish Court Service, new owner has been identified)
- Helmsdale (co-located within the Community Centre, owned by the Community)
- Lairg (co-located in the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bonar Bridge Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 5.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 5.30pm to 8.00pm
- Brora Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm
- Dornoch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm
- Helmsdale Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Lairg Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Bonar Bridge – High Life Highland Staffing
- Brora – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Dornoch – 1.5 FTE (HC4)
- Helmsdale – High Life Highland Staffing
- Lairg – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural ward and has a low population density.

Helmsdale Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Helmsdale has recorded very low weekly customer transactions of an average of less than 5 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 4 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is not a function provided at Helmsdale Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

High Life Highland staffing.

4. Savings**Helmsdale Service Point**

The move to an Access Point Model at Helmsdale Service Point would realise no Highland Council staff savings but contribute to the realisation of management (Team Leader) savings.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Helmsdale Service Point.

Golspie Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Golspie Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12.30pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Helmsdale Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 9 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of Helmsdale Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Golspie, Brora and Helmsdale (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Golspie 17 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Helmsdale (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Helmsdale Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Helmsdale Service Point

Respondents showed some support for the principles guiding this review but were unsure how they would work in practice. They suggested that many people in the community cannot use technology and the community needs to maintain this local service.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Helmsdale Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Helmsdale Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Helmsdale data - East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Profile

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural Ward and has a low population density. It has the oldest age profile in Highland with the some of the lowest proportions of people in the 0 to 15 and 16 to 44 age groups and the highest proportions of people aged over 64. Due to fairly high rates of inward migration from the rest of Highland, Scotland and the UK the population increased by 1.2% between 2005 and 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. East Sutherland and Edderton has the highest rate of self-reported illness in Highland, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in East Sutherland and Edderton is 23.1% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 4 individual responses, 8 telephone interviews undertaken, and 2 community group responses to the consultation with regard to the Helmsdale Service Point.

Potential Impact – Helmsdale Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Helmsdale Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Helmsdale Service Point

There were no specific equality issues raised for the Helmsdale Service Point.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant.
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Helmsdale Service Point

Specific Comments for Helmsdale Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 4 individual responses, 8 telephone interviews undertaken, and 2 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Helmsdale Service Point are:

- Some respondents noted that the Council was becoming distant and faceless to rural communities.
- It was suggested that costs are being transferred to local people, mainly due to the cost of transport to the Community Hub in Golspie.
- A local elected Member expressed concerns about the economic impact of the loss of the Service Point on an already fragile rural community.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Helmsdale Service Point

- One respondent suggested that continuing to co-locate with the library would be acceptable.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Helmsdale are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Helmsdale Service Point is staffed by High Life Highland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Helmsdale Service Point

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership Working in place with High Life Highland. No additional partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
The move to an Access Point Model at Helmsdale Service Point would realise no Highland Council staff savings but contribute to the realisation of management (Team Leader) savings..
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
Access Point Model can be delivered from current location, minimising potential impact on customers.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Helmsdale Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Helmsdale Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Model from current library location supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Golspie or Wick Service Points.

Customer Services Review**Business Case – Hilton Service Point****Inner Moray Firth South**

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|---------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Inner Moray Firth South area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Ardersier
- Hilton
- **Fort Augustus**

The Inverness, Nairn and Fort William Service Points have been designated as the "Community Hubs" for this area.

Fort Augustus Service Point is also now retained.

| 3. Current Service Delivery | Hilton Service Point |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <p>Service Provision</p> <p>Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardersier Library (located within High Life Highland premises) • Hilton (co-located within the Community Centre) • Fort Augustus (Located in the Memorial Hall owned by Highland Council) <p>Opening Hours</p> <p>Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardersier Opening Hours are Monday 12.00pm to 5.00pm, Wednesday 10.00am to 1.00pm, Friday 12.00pm to 5.00pm and Saturday 10.00am to 1.00pm • Hilton Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm • Fort Augustus Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm. <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardersier– High Life Highland Staffing • Hilton – 0.5 FTE (HC4) • Fort Augustus – 0.5 FTE (HC4) <p>Service Users</p> <p>Aird and Loch Ness is our fifth largest ward with a population density less than the Highland average.</p> <p>Hilton Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions</p> <p>Hilton has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 54 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 71 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.</p> <p>Registration function is not provided at Hilton Service Point.</p> <p>Partnership Service Delivery</p> <p>There is no partnership service at Hilton Service Point.</p> | |

4. Savings

The closure of Hilton Service Point would realise -£9,479 savings. This would reduce budget pressures for Customer Services and realise management savings.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Hilton Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Hilton Service Point.

Inverness Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Inverness Service Point is open 9:30am to 5.00pm.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Hilton Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 14 PayPoints within a 5 miles radius of the Hilton Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Ardersier, Inverness and 8 other libraries within 20 miles (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Hilton.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) located in Inverness.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Hilton Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Hilton Service Point

The main concern from respondents in relation to Hilton was that the Church Street Community Hub would be too busy. Some respondents highlighted that it can be difficult for elderly people to get into the town centre and also that there is a lack of parking near the Community Hub.

One community group, which supports individuals with brain injuries, noted their client group may struggle if all face to face appointments need to be booked in advance. However they did feel that if the right support is provided then it would be achievable.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Hilton Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Hilton Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Hilton data – Inverness West Ward Profile

Inverness West is a mainly urban Ward with a population density well above the Highland average. The Ward has a "narrow" age profile with the second lowest proportions of children in Highland and above average proportions in the 16 to 64 and 75 plus age groups. The total population was generally stable between 2005 and 2010 with a population decrease of just 0.8% but with a large percentage fall in the under 44 age group: this is almost certainly the result of a maturing population with relatively low inward migration.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness in Inverness West is above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Inverness West is 21% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There was 1 individual response, a focus group (6 attended) and 3 community group responses to the consultation with regard to Hilton Service Point.

Potential Impact – Hilton Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Hilton consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Hilton consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Hilton Service Point

- It was noted that it may be difficult for older people and disabled to get to the town centre to use the Church Street Service Point. Public transport is not always assessable for wheelchair users. Limited parking and specifically accessible parking at Church Street, Inverness may cause difficulty for some who wish to use face-to-face services.
- Representation was made about potential impact on 2 specific groups of people affected by particular conditions – a group supporting people with brain injuries noted how busy the Inverness office is and that it is likely to get busier with this proposal. A further comment was made about Church Street being a very busy and noisy office and is therefore not autism friendly.

Community\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for community impact such as:-

- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Hilton Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 1 individual response, a focus group, and 3 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Hilton Service Point are:

- One respondent noted the lack of parking at the two locations in the centre of Inverness.
- It was noted that local people feel confident going to the Service Point with all questions but may not feel as comfortable using the Community Hub. One respondent suggested this could lead to the isolation of some groups.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Hilton Service Point

There were no specific comments on service delivery to the consultation with regards to the Hilton Service Point.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Hilton are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Hilton Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with a Community Hub in close proximity. No partnership opportunity is in place or has been identified to sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and has no capacity to undertake additional work

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Hilton Service Point

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
The closure of Hilton Service Point would reduce budget pressures for Customer Services and realise management savings.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Hilton Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Closure of Hilton Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Closure of Hilton Service Point with customer access supported by alternative service provision as outlined in Section 5. Note close proximity to Inverness Service Point Community Hub for face to face service delivery.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Inverness Registration Office.

It is also important to note that Access Point facilities will not be exclusive to the ten locations identified in this review. There will be opportunities to explore the introduction of Access Points for this community.

| |
|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Invergordon Service Point |
| Inner Moray Firth North |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Inner Moray Firth North area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Fortrose
- Invergordon
- Muir Of Ord

The Alness Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

3. Current Service Delivery**Invergordon Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Fortrose (located within the Leisure Centre)
- Invergordon (co-located within the Library)
- Muir Of Ord (located within the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Fortrose opening hours are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm
- Invergordon opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30 pm to 4.30pm
- Muir of Ord opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Fortrose – 1.0 FTE (HC4)
- Invergordon – 2.31 FTE (HC4)
- Muir Of Ord – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

The Black Isle Ward is a rural ward with a large number of individual settlements and an overall population density above the Highland average.

Invergordon Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Invergordon has recorded weekly customer transactions of an average of 175 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and an average of 199 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Invergordon Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Invergordon Service Point.

4. Savings

The reduction in hours at Invergordon Service Point would realise £52,280 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Invergordon Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Invergordon Service Point.

Alness Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Dingwall Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12:30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Invergordon can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 15 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of Invergordon Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Fortrose, Cromarty, Alness, Invergordon and 8 other libraries within 20 miles (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Alness 3 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Invergordon (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Invergordon Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Invergordon Service Point

Respondents were concerned with maintaining face to face service provision, especially for people who cannot use technology. Respondents were also concerned about the mobile service, feeling that there were unanswered questions and that it would not work in practice. Some respondents felt the current Service Point is in the wrong location, but did not want to see another service being removed from the town.

Respondents stated that the proposal would impact on their ability to make rent and Council Tax payments as they currently do this weekly at the Service Point. It was highlighted that even though Alness is relatively nearby, not everyone can travel there easily.

The Community Council noted the lack of clarity around what provision would be put in place to support any emergency situations within Invergordon. It was noted that at times there would be a need to ensure an immediate response was provided and provision therefore needed to be in place to support this.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Invergordon Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Invergordon Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Invergordon data – Cromarty Firth Ward Profile

Cromarty Firth contains a mixture of urban and sparsely populated rural areas with an overall population density above the average. It has the second highest proportion of children in and low proportions of people in the over 50 age groups. The total population grew by 2.6% by 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness in Inverness West is above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Inverness West is 20.5% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 14 individual response, 1 telephone interview, and 1 community group response to the community consultation with regard to Invergordon Service Point.

Potential Impact – Invergordon Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Invergordon Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Invergordon consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Invergordon consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Invergordon consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Invergordon Service Point

Concerns were raised on the themes of transport and maintaining face-to-face services for some vulnerable members of the community, especially for people who cannot use technology.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Invergordon Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 14 individual response, 1 telephone interview undertaken, and 1 community group response, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Invergordon Service Point are:

- Some respondents highlighted how Invergordon has lost a number of Council services over the years and they feel as though the town is being downgraded.
- One respondent noted that they felt the Council was becoming more distant.
- Two respondents noted that the closure of the Service Point would result in the public having to pay to travel to Alness for the Community Hub.
- One respondent noted that there are limited jobs in the area and so it would be difficult for the Service Point staff to find new employment.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Invergordon Service Point

- One respondent suggested co-location with the Post Office or bank.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

- Mitigating actions specific to Invergordon are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Invergordon Service Point

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability
-

Invergordon Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with a Community Hub in close proximity. There is an Access Point Model in place, however there is no partnership opportunity in place or has been identified to further sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 32.5 hours per week and has limited capacity to undertake additional work.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Invergordon Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model proposed.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Invergordon Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to reduced hour's provision for Invergordon Service Point due to high volume of Registration events (per Service Point Profile sheets).

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery Invergordon Service Point

Retain Invergordon Service Point provision on reduced hours supplemented by Access Point Model and alternative service delivery as outlined in Section 5

Registration for this office to transfer to Alness Service Point. Some Registration function will still be provided on a reduced hour's basis from Invergordon Service Point.

Customer Services Review**Business Case – Kingussie Service Point****Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey**

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|---------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- **Grantown**
- Kingussie

The Aviemore Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area.

Grantown Service Point will also now provide Service Point delivery 2 half days per week.

3. Current Service Delivery**Kingussie Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Grantown Town House (owned by Highland Council and shared with other services)
- Kingussie (Located in Council Offices owned by Highland Council)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Grantown Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.00pm
- Kingussie Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm

Staffing

- Grantown – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Kingussie – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Badenoch and Strathspey has the third highest population but its large geographical size means that the population density is below the Highland average.

Kingussie Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Kingussie has recorded low weekly customer transactions of on average less than 25 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 27 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is provided at Kingussie Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Kingussie Service Point.

4. Savings

The move to an Access Point Model at Kingussie Service Point would have realised £12,028 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Kingussie Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Kingussie Service Point.

Aviemore Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Aviemore Service Point is open 10:30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Kingussie Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 13 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the Kingussie Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Badenoch, Aviemore, Grantown On Spey and Inverness (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Kingussie and is 0.16 miles away from the current Service Point and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) located in Kingussie and Aviemore.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Kingussie Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Kingussie Service Point

Respondents felt it was important to retain face to face services, particularly for the older people in the area as they are less likely to be able to use technology or be able to travel to Aviemore.

Another main concern was the further centralisation of services in to Aviemore. It was suggested that the communities served by the Kingussie office are wide spread and the travel distances involved for people to access a service in the future will be even greater. It was suggested that there was a lack of public transport and that the cost of the increased travel would need to be met by already vulnerable individuals. There was also a concern about the potential economic impact the proposals may have on the village of Kingussie because in the future people may travel direct to Aviemore and do their shopping there.

It was also suggested that it would become more difficult to interact with the Council, and the Council will become more distant to people living in and around Kingussie.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kingussie Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Kingussie Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Kingussie data – Badenoch and Strathspey Ward Profile

Badenoch and Strathspey has the third highest population but its large geographical size means that the population density is below the average. The proportion of people in each of the under 45 age groups is below the average. The population grew by 6.8% by 2010.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness is below the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Badenoch and Strathspey is 16.5% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 24 individual responses, a focus group (3 attended) and 3 community group responses to the consultation with regard to Kingussie.

Potential Impact – Kingussie Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kingussie Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Kingussie consultation |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Kingussie Service Point

Respondents in Kingussie felt it was important to retain face to face services, and were particularly concerned about the impact on elderly people in the community, learning disabled and other disabled people. They felt that older people are less likely to be able to use technology or be able to travel to Aviemore.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant.
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kingussie Service Point

Specific Comments for Kingussie Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 24 individual response, a focus group, and 3 community group responses, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Kingussie Service Point are:

- Respondents highlighted that there has been an erosion of services in Kingussie and that it feels like people are penalised for living in rural areas.
- One respondent highlighted that there is poor public transport to Aviemore and another noted that road conditions can be very bad during bad weather. It was also highlighted that it would be even more difficult for people in outlying villages to travel to Aviemore, for example people in Laggan or Newtonmore.
- Some respondents felt like the Council is becoming more remote and there is reducing communication with people in rural areas.
- One respondent noted the cost of travelling would be passing to the public. It was noted by a few respondents that their working hours would make it difficult for them to visit the Aviemore Community Hub.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Kingussie Service Point

- As the new Kingussie Court House is being built in the town, respondents felt this should be used as a Community Hub and that the staff could take on work from other offices.
- One respondent suggested limiting the opening hours to three afternoons per week.
- It was also suggested that if a reduced service was to be offered then it would be important that service opening times are well advertised.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Kingussie are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work**Kingussie Service Point**

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Kingussie Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. While there is an Access Point Model available, there is a proposed partnership opportunity being progressed which will help to sustain this office for work load transfer. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and has sufficient capacity to undertake additional work.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. However a potential opportunity is being progressed.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Kingussie Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model proposed.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
Business Support workload transfer has been identified for Kingussie Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Retain Kingussie Service Point supported by Business Support workload transfer.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Kingussie Service Point

Retain Kingussie Service Point with Business Support workload transfer.

Registration function will continue to be delivered from this office.

| |
|---|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Kinlochleven Service Point |
| Lochaber Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Lochaber area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Kinlochleven
- Mallaig
- Acharacle

The Fort William Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area.

3. Current Service Delivery**Kinlochleven Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Acharacle Resource Centre (surgery provision at this location)
- Mallaig Library (co-located within High Life Highland premises)
- Kinlochleven (located within High Life Highland premises)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Acharacle Opening Hours are on a Tuesday from 11.00am to 2.30pm
- Mallaig Opening Hours are Thursday and Friday 10.00am to 4pm
- Kinlochleven Opening Hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm. On a Tuesday and Thursday this office is open 10:00am to 1.00pm, 2.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm

Staffing

- Acharacle – 0.1 FTE (HC4)
- Mallaig – 0.4 FTE (HC4)
- Kinlochleven – High Life Highland Staffing

Service Users

The Lochaber area offices provide access to council services for some of the largest geographical ward areas (Fort William and Ardnamurchan and Caol and Mallaig). These wards also have some of the lowest population densities.

In both Kinlochleven and Mallaig the primary users of the service are library customers.

Kinlochleven Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Kinlochleven has recorded low weekly customer transactions of on average less than 25 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 28 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

There is no Registration function provided at Kinlochleven Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

High Life Highland staffing.

4. Savings**Kinlochleven Service Point**

The move to an Access Point Model at Kinlochleven Service Point would realise £2,281 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Kinlochleven Service Point.

Fort William Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Fort William Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4.00pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Kinlochleven Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 8 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the Kinlochleven Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Mallaig, Knoydart, Broadford, Ardnamurchan, Fort William, Kinlochleven, Caol and Kyle of Lochalsh (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Kinlochleven and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Kinlochleven (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Kinlochleven Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from community group consultation for Kinlochleven Service Point

There were no individual responses from Kinlochleven however there was one response from the Lochaber Access Panel regarding all the Service Points in the Lochaber area. It was suggested that an Access Point be considered either at Kilchoan or Acharacle, otherwise disabled members of the communities of Ardnamurchan, Morven and Knoydart will become isolated, or the journey time to the alternative Service Point in Fort William is 1.5 hours.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kinlochleven SP

Equality Impact Assessment: Kinlochleven Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Kinlochleven data - Fort William and Ardnamurchan Ward Profile

Fort William and Ardnamurchan is our third largest Ward and has one of the lowest population densities. The population profile is similar to the average and the total population grew by 0.9% by 2010 with inward migrants moving to the extreme east and west of the Ward from outside Highland.

The Census response to health is one the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness is slightly above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Fort William and Ardnamurchan is 18.8% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There was a focus group (3 attended) and 3 community group responses to the consultation with regard to Kinlochleven.

Potential Impact – Kinlochleven Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kinlochleven SP

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Kinlochleven consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Kinlochleven Service Point

The Lochaber Disability Access Panel responded on the themes of transport and social isolation and the potential impact on disabled members of the community.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant.
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Kinlochleven Service Point

A focus group was undertaken and 1 community group response to the consultation with regards to the Kinlochleven Service Point.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Kinlochleven Service Point

No specific comments.

Mitigating actions specific to Kinlochleven are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Kinlochleven Service Point is staffed by High Life Highland so no workload transfer can be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)**Kinlochleven Service Point**

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
Partnership Working in place with High Life Highland. No additional partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
The move to an Access Point Model at Kinlochleven Service Point would realise no staff savings but contributes to the realisation of Highland Council management (Team Leader) savings.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5.
Access Point Model can be delivered from current location, minimising potential impact on customers.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Kinlochleven Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Kinlochleven Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Model from current library location supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Fort William Service Point.

| |
|---|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Kyle Service Point |
| Skye and Wester Ross Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Skye and Wester Ross area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- **Broadford**
- **Gairloch**
- Kyle – (it is proposed this office will now remain open and be viewed as a Community Hub)
- Lochcarron

The Kyle, Ullapool and Portree Service Points have been designated as the “Community Hubs” for this area.

Broadford and Gairloch Service Points are also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Kyle Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Broadford (co-located with High Life Highland and Social Work)
- Gairloch Police Station (Partnership agreement with Police Scotland)
- Kyle (Kyle Service Point located on the High Street)
- Lochcarron (co-located in the Library)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Broadford Opening Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10.30am to 2.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Gairloch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Kyle Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm.
- Lochcarron Opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Broadford – 1.0 FTE (HC4)
- Gairloch – 0.75 FTE (HC4)
- Kyle – 1.5 FTE (HC4)
- Lochcarron – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The total population showed a slight decrease by 2010 despite inward migration.

Kyle Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Kyle has recorded weekly customer transactions on average of 100 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and 114 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is provided at Kyle Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery (e.g. Police Scotland, Passport office)

Library Service is provided.

4. Savings

No savings to be made as Kyle Service Point to be retained as Community Hub.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Kyle Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Kyle Service Point.

Portree and Ullapool Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Ullapool Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm and delivers Registration functions. Portree Service point is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.00pm and delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions in this location can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Payment Provision – there are 12 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the service point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Broadford, Kyle, Plockton, Knoydart, Mallaig and Lochcarron (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Kyle Service Point and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Kyle (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Kyle Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. No focus group was held in Kyle as it had already been re-assigned as a Community Hub. However there were some paper consultation responses regarding the Kyle Service Point.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Kyle Service Point

Respondents were pleased that the decision has been taken to retain the Kyle office. Should the office be retained there would be no negative impact upon the community.

However respondents did take the opportunity to note how a closure would have an effect. They thought it would negatively impact on elderly and disabled residents, and there would be no other way to deliver services, apart from a full Service Point. Respondents also highlighted that rural areas need to be considered differently as technology is not as reliable especially in bad weather.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kyle Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Kyle Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Kyle data - Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Ward Profile

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The overall age profile is older than the average with a below average proportion in the under 45 age groups. The total population showed a slight decrease of 0.8% by 2010 despite inward migration.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh has a rate of self-reported long term illness above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is 19.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case.

Potential Impact – Kyle Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Kyle Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Kyle consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Kyle consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Kyle Service Point

Respondents noted how a potential closure would negatively impact on elderly and disabled residents, and there would be no other way to deliver services, apart from the full Service Point.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant.
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Kyle Service Point

As Kyle is being retained, the 7 individual respondents and 1 community group respondent were pleased to see the decision. One respondent did note that if the Service Point were to close then there was not any adequate public transport to allow them to travel to any Community Hub.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Kyle Service Point

Not applicable as Kyle Service Point is retained.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

Not applicable – Kyle Service Point retained as Community Hub due to increased customer volumes.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Not applicable – Kyle Service Point retained as Community Hub.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Kyle Service Point to be retained as Community Hub due to increase in customer contact volumes.

Registration function would continue to be delivered from this office.

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|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Lairg Service Point |
| East Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the East Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Bonar Bridge
- Brora
- **Dornoch**
- Helmsdale
- Lairg

The Golspie Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area.

Dornoch Service Point is also now retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Lairg Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bonar Bridge (co-located in the Library)
- Brora (co-located within the Library and Cultural Centre)
- Dornoch (the building was owned by Scottish Court Service, new owner has been identified)
- Helmsdale (co-located within the Community Centre, owned by the Community)
- Lairg (co-located in the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bonar Bridge Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 5.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm and 5.30pm to 8.00pm
- Brora Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 1.30pm to 5.00pm
- Dornoch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm
- Helmsdale Opening Hours are on a Monday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 12.30pm and Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Lairg Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Bonar Bridge – High Life Highland Staffing
- Brora – 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Dornoch – 1.5 FTE (HC4)
- Helmsdale – High Life Highland Staffing
- Lairg – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

East Sutherland and Edderton is a mainly rural ward and has a low population density.

Lairg Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Lairg has recorded low weekly customer transactions on average of 21 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 26 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is a function provided at Lairg Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is a Police Scotland partnership service at Lairg Service Point.

4. Savings**Lairg Service Point**

The move to an Access Point Model at Lairg Service Point would realise £11,520 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Lairg Service Point.

Golspie Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Golspie Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:00am to 12.30pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Lairg Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 11 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the Lairg Service Point office.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Dornoch, Golspie, Tain, Brora, Bonar Bridge, Invergordon, Alness and Cromarty (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Golspie 15 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Lairg.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Lairg Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual consultation for Lairg Service Point

Respondents were concerned about the removal of local services and having to travel to Golspie or Tain for the Community Hub.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lairg Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Lairg Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Lairg data - North, West & Central Sutherland Ward Profile

North, West & Central Sutherland is our second largest Ward with the lowest population density in Highland. It has an ageing population with the lowest proportion of residents in the 0-15 and 16-44 age groups in Highland and the highest proportions in the 45-64 age group. The Ward has experienced fairly high rates of inward migration, but the ageing population and the highest outward migration of young people in Highland resulted in a population fall of 2.6% between 2005 and 2010, which is the second highest in Highland.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. North, West & Central Sutherland has a high rate of self-reported illness, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 21.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 2 individual responses and 3 telephone interviews for the consultation with regard to Lairg Service Point.

Potential Impact – Lairg Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lairg Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Lairg Service Point

There were no specific equality issues raised for the Lairg Service Point.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lairg Service Point

Specific Comments for Lairg Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 2 individual responses and 3 telephone interviews, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Lairg Service Point were that it is a long distance to travel to Tain and Golspie, and that the proposal could lead to decreased interaction with the Council.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a very small number of individuals to the whole community.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Lairg Service Point

No specific comments.

Mitigating actions specific to Lairg are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Lairg Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and has capacity to undertake additional work due to very low customer volumes. There is however insufficient underlying business to ensure the sustainability of this office with workload transfer. There is also an Access Point Model in place and Police Scotland have been consulted on the proposals for this location.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Lairg Service Point

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
There is a Police Scotland partnership currently in place.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Lairg Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Lairg Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model at Lairg Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

The move to an Access Point Model at Lairg Service Point with customer access supported by alternative service provision as outlined in Section 5.

Registration function has been delivered on a “by appointment only” in this office.

Registration for this area to be provided from Dornoch Service Point.

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| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Lochcarron Service Point |
| Skye and Wester Ross Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Skye and Wester Ross area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- **Broadford**
- **Gairloch**
- **Kyle** – (it is proposed this office will now remain open and be viewed as a Community Hub)
- Lochcarron

The Kyle, Ullapool and Portree Service Points have been designated as the “Community Hubs” for this area.

Broadford and Gairloch Service Points are now also retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Lochcarron Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Broadford (co-located with High Life Highland and Social Work)
- Gairloch Police Station (Partnership agreement with Police Scotland)
- Lochcarron (co-located in the Library)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Broadford Opening Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10.30am to 2.00pm and 3.00pm to 5.00pm
- Gairloch Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm
- Lochcarron Opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Broadford – 1.0 FTE (HC4)
- Gairloch – 0.75 FTE (HC4)
- Lochcarron – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The total population showed a slight decrease by 2010 despite inward migration.

Lochcarron Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Lochcarron has recorded weekly customer transactions of on average 36 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 24 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is provided at Lochcarron Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Lochcarron Service Point.

4. Savings

The move to an Access Point Model at Lochcarron Service Point would realise £12,104 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Lochcarron Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Lochcarron Service Point.

Kyle and Ullapool Service Points (an appointment service can be offered as required). Ullapool Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm. Kyle Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm. Both Service Points deliver Registration functions.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Lochcarron Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 9 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of the Lochcarron Service Point.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Broadford, Kyle, Plockton, and Lochcarron (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Kyle and is 23 miles away and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Lochcarron (current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Lochcarron Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Lochcarron Service Point

The main concern in relation to Lochcarron was the distance to the nearest Community Hub in Kyle, as this route is not well served by public transport and can be dangerous in winter. It was also noted that people travel from surrounding villages to use the Lochcarron Service Point and so they will have even further to travel to reach Kyle.

It was felt that those in the community who do not have transport or are not able to access services online will be most disadvantaged by the proposal. Respondents were also unhappy at having to rely on a call centre. It was suggested that there would be more ill-feeling towards the Council if the proposals were to go ahead.

The Community Council also queried how the librarian was going to cope with the additional work. The group noted how there had already been a reduction of service at the existing office and how that had already had a negative impact locally.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lochcarron Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Lochcarron Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Lochcarron data - Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh Ward Profile

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is the largest Ward with the second lowest population density. The overall age profile is older than the average with a below average proportion in the under 45 age groups. The total population showed a slight decrease of 0.8% by 2010 despite inward migration.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh has a rate of self-reported long term illness above the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh is 19.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 11 individual responses, a focus group (5 attended) and 1 community group response to the consultation on the Lochcarron Service Point.

Potential Impact – Lochcarron Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lochcarron Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | Note comments from Lochcarron consultation |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments from Lochcarron consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Lochcarron Service Point

Respondents in Lochcarron felt that the proposal would affect older people in particular, and people with no access to computers. It was also commented that older people may not use telephony due to hearing impairments.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Lochcarron Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 11 individual responses, a focus group, and 1 community group response, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Lochcarron Service Point are:

- One respondents felt like the proposal was killing the community and another was concerned about the lack of equality of access for rural areas.
- Some respondents noted the lack of buses and trains to Inverness and Kyle.
- One respondent highlighted it would take an entire day for a return journey to Inverness. The poor condition of the road to Kyle was also noted.
- Some respondents were concerned about the loss of a job in the area.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Lochcarron Service Point

- One respondent suggested that the Howard Doris Centre could be involved and another suggested a reduction in opening hours. Use of the village hall was suggested.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Lochcarron are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability
-

Lohcarron Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. There is an Access Point Model in place and no partnership opportunity is in place or has been identified to sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and has no capacity to undertake additional work.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Lohcarron Service Point

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Lohcarron Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model available.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Lohcarron Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model at Lohcarron Service Point (from current Service Point location).

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Point Model (from current location of Service Point) supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

Registration for this area to be provided from Dingwall, Kyle and Gairloch Service Points.

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|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Lochinver Service Point |
| Northwest Sutherland Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Northwest Sutherland area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- **Bettyhill**
- Durness
- Lochinver

The Ullapool Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

Bettyhill Service Point is now also retained.

3. Current Service Delivery**Lochinver Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Bettyhill (Naver Teleservice Centre)
- Durness (Visitor Centre co-located with Visit Scotland)
- Lochinver (co located within the Culag Annex)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Bettyhill Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm
- Durness Opening Hours are Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am to 12.30pm
- Lochinver Opening Hours are Monday to Friday 11.00am to 2.30pm

Staffing

- Bettyhill - 0.5 FTE (HC4)
- Durness – Visit Scotland Staff
- Lochinver – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

North, West and Central Sutherland is our second largest ward with the lowest population density in Highland.

Lochinver Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Lochinver has recorded low weekly customer transactions of on average 22 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 9 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration is not a function at Lochinver Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is no partnership service at Lochinver Service Point.

4. Savings

The closure of Lochinver Service Point would have realised £10,478 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Lochinver Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Lochinver Service Point.

Ullapool Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Ullapool Service Point is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 1.00pm. It also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Lochinver Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 6 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of Lochinver Service Point.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Ullapool (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located in Kinlochbervie 42 miles away.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – there is no access point option at Lochinver Service Point.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Lochinver Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

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Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Lochinver Service Point

Respondents felt that Ullapool is too far away to expect people in Lochinver to travel to. They would like to see the Service Point remain in Lochinver to provide friendly, face to face services but do acknowledge that the Service Point could be improved.

The CAB queried if there would be savings from the Lochinver office, as any replacement services are likely to be more expensive. They were also concerned that people would become more disengaged.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lochinver Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Lochinver Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Lochinver data - North, West & Central Sutherland Ward Profile

North, West & Central Sutherland is our second largest Ward with the lowest population density in Highland. It has an ageing population with the lowest proportion of residents in the 0-15 and 16-44 age groups in Highland and the highest proportions in the 45-64 age group. The Ward has experienced fairly high rates of inward migration, but the ageing population and the highest outward migration of young people in Highland resulted in a population fall of 2.6% between 2005 and 2010, which is the second highest in Highland.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. North, West & Central Sutherland has a high rate of self-reported illness, due in part to the ageing population. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 21.6% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 4 individual responses, 2 telephone interviews, and 1 community group response to the consultation with regard to the Lochinver Service Point.

Potential Impact – Lochinver Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lochinver Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|--|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Lochinver Service Point

There were no specific equality comments with regard to Lochinver Service Point.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Lochinver Service Point

Specific Comments for Lochinver Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 4 individual responses, 2 telephone interviews, and 1 community group response, the potential negative impacts highlighted for Lochinver Service Point were the potential loss of a local job and that Highland Council would become more distant.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Lochinver Service Point

- One respondent suggested using technology such as Skype or holding monthly surgeries. Two respondents suggested home visits however the likely increased cost of offering these was acknowledged.

It should be noted that some of these comments were made by individuals and as such, caution should be used when attributing the views of a small number of individuals to the whole community.

Mitigating actions specific to Lochinver are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Lochinver Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity or Access Point Model available. While there is no partnership opportunity in place, this office is open 17.5 hours per week and there is sufficient capacity available for workload transfer ensuring sustainability of this office.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)

Lochinver Service Point

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Lochinver Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5. No customer Access Point Model identified.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
Workload transfer has been identified for Lochinver Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Retain Lochinver Service Point with Business Support workload transfer.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Retain Lochinver Service Point with the transfer of Business Support workload.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Assynt Registration Office in Lochinver (Home Based).

| |
|--|
| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Mallaig Service Point |
| Lochaber Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Lochaber area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Kinlochleven
- Mallaig
- Acharacle

The Fort William Service Point has been designated as the “Community Hub” for this area.

| 3. Current Service Delivery | Mallaig Service Point |
|---|------------------------------|
| <p>Service Provision</p> <p>Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acharacle Resource Centre (surgery provision at this location) • Mallaig Library (co-located within High Life Highland premises) • Kinlochleven (located within High Life Highland premises) <p>Opening Hours</p> <p>Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acharacle Opening Hours are on a Tuesday from 11.00am to 2.30pm • Mallaig Opening Hours are Thursday and Friday 10.00am to 2pm • Kinlochleven Opening Hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am to 1pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm. On a Tuesday and Thursday this office is open 10:00am, 2.00pm to 5.00pm and 6.00pm to 8.00pm <p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acharacle – 0.1 FTE (HC4) • Mallaig – 0.4 FTE (HC4) • Kinlochleven – High Life Highland Staffing <p>Service Users</p> <p>The Lochaber area offices provide access to council services for some of the largest geographical ward areas (Fort William and Ardnamurchan and Caol and Mallaig). These wards also have some of the lowest population densities.</p> <p>In both Kinlochleven and Mallaig the primary users of the service are library customers.</p> <p>Mallaig Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions</p> <p>Mallaig has recorded very low weekly customer transactions of on average less than 7 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 1 transaction per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.</p> <p>Registration function is not provided at Mallaig Service Point.</p> <p>Partnership Service Delivery</p> <p>There is no partnership service at Mallaig Service Point.</p> | |

4. Savings

The move to an Access Point Model at Mallaig Service Point would realise £7,176 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Mallaig Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Mallaig Service Point.

Fort William Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Fort William Service Point is open 9:30am to 4.00pm. It is also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Mallaig Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 8 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of Mallaig Service Point.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Mallaig, Knoydart, Broadford, Ardnamurchan, Fort William, Kinlochleven, Caol and Kyle of Lochalsh (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – Mallaig has a CAB office less than 1 mile away from the Service Point and is an outreach service.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Mallaig (the current location of Service Point).

6. Outcome of Consultation**Mallaig Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

**Stage Two – Specific Consultation
Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from community group consultation for Mallaig Service Point

There were no individual responses from Mallaig however there was one response from the Lochaber Access Panel regarding all the Service Points in the Lochaber area. It was suggested that an Access Point be considered either at Kilchoan or Acharacle, otherwise disabled members of the communities of Ardnamurchan, Morven and Knoydart will become isolated, or the journey time to the alternative Service Point in Fort William is 1.5 hours.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Mallaig Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Mallaig Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Mallaig data – Caol and Mallaig Ward Profile

Caol and Mallaig is one of our larger Wards with a below average population density. The population profile is similar to the Highland average with all age groups being slightly above average except the 16 to 44 age group. The overall population grew by 3.3% between 2005 and 2010 with significant falls in parts of Caol balanced by inward migration to the rural areas.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness in Caol and Mallaig is slightly lower than the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 18% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 4 telephone interviews undertaken and 1 community response to the consultation with regard to the Mallaig consultation.

Potential Impact – Mallaig Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Mallaig Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments from Mallaig consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Mallaig Service Point

Lochaber Disability Access Panel responded raising concerns on the themes of transport and potential isolation with regard to disabled members of the community.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

Specific Comments for Mallaig Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 1 community response and 4 telephone interviews, the potential negative impacts for Mallaig Service Point were the long distances required to travel to the Community Hub.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Mallaig Service Point

It was suggested that a mobile service could be offered.

Mitigating actions specific to Mallaig are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Mallaig Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity; however, there is an Access Point Model available. No partnership opportunity is in place or has been identified to sustain this office and make it suitable for workload transfer. This office is open for 8 hours per week and there is limited capacity to undertake additional work there is insufficient underlying business to ensure sustainability.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)**Mallaig Service Point**

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
No current partnership working in place. No partnership working opportunities have been identified.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Mallaig Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model available from current Service point location in library.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Mallaig Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Mallaig Service Point (from current location).

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Model (from current location) supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Fort William Service Point. (Small Isles Registration Office on Eigg is available depending on location).

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| Customer Services Review |
| Business Case – Muir Of Ord Service Point |
| Inner Moray Firth North Area |

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Author: | Customer Service Manager |
| Owner: | Director of Corporate Development |

| Revision date | Summary of Changes |
|----------------------|---|
| 30.03.15 | Draft Outline Submitted (TP) Version 0.1 |
| 14.05.15 | Customer Contact Volumes & Consultation Update (MG) Version 0.2 |
| 02.06.15 | Workload Relocation, EQIA & Recommendation (MG) Version 0.3 |
| 23.06.15 | Revision of Section 7 (MG) Version 0.4 |

1. Executive Summary

The remit for the Customer Services Board was confirmed on 24th April 2014 as outlined below. It will :-

- undertake a rolling consultation of Members, staff, partner agencies and the public on the future of the Service Point Network.
- consider customer service provision in each of the 23 communities with a Service Point not designated a Community Hub; and
- agree a future service delivery model for each community on the basis of a business case which will take into account the impact on service users and the Council's commitment to remote and rural communities.

2. Introduction and Area Profile

The business case for face-to-face Customer Services in the Inner Moray Firth North area reviews Service Point provision at the following Service Points locations

- Fortrose
- **Invergordon**
- Muir Of Ord

The Dingwall Service Point has been designated as the "Community Hub" for this area.

Invergordon Service Point will also now provide Service Point delivery 2 half days per week.

3. Current Service Delivery**Muir Of Ord Service Point****Service Provision**

Customers use these facilities for a range of enquiries that are detailed on the individual Service Point profile sheets.

Location

Service Point delivery is from a variety of locations:-

- Fortrose (located within the Leisure Centre)
- Invergordon (co-located within the Library)
- Muir Of Ord (located within the Police Station)

Opening Hours

Opening hours reflect both service demand and other business use (e.g. Library opening hours)

- Fortrose opening hours are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm
- Invergordon opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30 pm to 4.30pm
- Muir of Ord opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm

Staffing

- Fortrose – 1.0 FTE (HC4)
- Invergordon – 2.31 FTE (HC4)
- Muir Of Ord – 0.5 FTE (HC4)

Service Users

The Black Isle Ward is a rural ward with a large number of individual settlements and an overall population density above the Highland average.

Muir Of Ord Service Point - Demand and Customer Transactions

Muir Of Ord has recorded weekly customer transactions on average of 29 per week for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and on average 24 transactions per week for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Registration function is not provided from Muir Of Ord Service Point.

Partnership Service Delivery

There is a partnership agreement with Police Scotland at Muir Of Ord Service Point.

4. Savings

The move to an Access point Model at Muir Of Ord Service Point would realise £13,171 savings towards the Customer Service Review.

5. Alternative Service Delivery Options**Muir Of Ord Service Point**

There are a range of alternative delivery options for Muir Of Ord Service Point.

Dingwall Service Point (an appointment service can be offered as required). Dingwall SP is open Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4.30pm. It is also delivers Registration.

All Service Points which deliver Registration are supported by the dedicated Registration office in Inverness where the Chief Registrar is based. This office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm (Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm).

Service Centre – telephone (the majority of transactions at Muir Of Ord Service Point can be delivered via telephone). Opening Hours 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday and Saturday morning 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Booking services for communication support are also taken in-house by the Highland Council and are provided via the Service Centre.

Payment Provision – there are 26 PayPoints within a 20 miles radius of Muir Of Ord Service Point.

Highland Council Website – self-service at home or via public internet access in Muir Of Ord, Dingwall, Beauly and 6 other libraries within 20 miles (High Life Highland library premises).

Third Sector Options – The nearest CAB office is located 6 miles away in Dingwall.

Outreach Provision – There are multiple options for those requiring support, with services and programmes varying widely in terms of aims, content and format. Some examples of this are highlighted below:

- **CAB Network, Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation**
This is an established practice as the Council provides annual funding of £1.1 million to the CAB network, who complement the work of the Council's in-house Money Advice and Customer Income Maximisation teams in providing key services to the public.
- **Sheltered Housing Support**
Services such as Housing already provide support through different mechanisms that could be utilized e.g. Sheltered housing (mainly for older people) with a housing support service from a sheltered housing warden.
- **Other Housing Support**
Another type of support that is available is where a support worker visits a customer in their own home, this is known as 'floating support'. This support can be offered, regardless of where a customer lives. For example, this could be for a young person who has just got their first council tenancy, an older person with mental health problems, living in the family home, or for a person who is moving on from living in supported accommodation.

Access Point – supported self service delivery via High Life Highland library (public internet access points) in Muir Of Ord.

6. Outcome of Consultation**Muir Of Ord Service Point****Stage One – Community Consultation**

Phase 2 of the budget consultation (2014) focused on detailed proposals and was survey based. 9 focus groups were also held with hard to reach/ equalities groups and analysis of responses was undertaken by gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

Stage Two – Specific Consultation**Customer Services Consultation 2015**

The Customer Services Consultation ran from January to March 2015. Researchers from University of Highlands and Islands held focus groups and telephone interviews in affected areas. A consultation document on the proposals was sent to community groups in affected areas and was also available online and in Service Points for the general public to complete.

UHI researchers compiled a report outlining the main points from the focus groups and telephone interviews. To ensure participants remain anonymous, this report did not organise comments by Service Point. Therefore it provides an overview of opinions about the proposals

The individual and community group responses were analysed and compiled into a separate report by the Policy Team. This report did highlight the main concerns for each affected area.

Equality groups for example, all Disability Access Panels in Highland, were invited to participate either directly or through the Communities Panel, in focus groups. Individual responses to an online survey were analysed by gender, age, disability and ethnicity - of 210 individual respondents:

- Over half the respondents were female (56%), 39% were male (39%) and 5% chose not to disclose their gender (5%).
- Most respondents (54%) were aged over 64; 20% were aged 55-64; 18% were aged 35-55; 4% were aged 16-34 and 3% did not disclose their age.
- Most respondents (70%) did not have a disability, while 22% did report they have some form of disability and 7% did not disclose whether or not they have a disability.

The survey analysis noted that the number of people responding and reporting that they have a disability is high at just over a fifth. Over half of all respondents also noted that they were over 64. However, this is not far removed from the 2011 Census which identifies 19% of the Highland population as having a long term limiting illness or disability, and the incidence of disability is known to increase with age. It is anecdotally reported that the user group of Service Points is traditionally older individuals and people with a disability and this also reflects responses to the Council's annual Public Performance Survey carried out with the Citizen's Panel which regularly reports higher contact levels by older people and disabled people.

Summary of Key Findings from individual and community group consultation for Muir of Ord Service Point

Respondents were concerned about the impact of removing face to face services in the area, as there are people in the community who may struggle to use alternatives.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Muir of Ord Service Point

Equality Impact Assessment: Muir of Ord Service Point

The Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 (S149) came into force in April 2011 – this is often referred to as the general duty – and requires public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Protected characteristics are considered in the assessment although the potential for impact is primarily linked to age, disability and other 'vulnerable' groups.

Muir of Ord data – Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Profile

Dingwall and Seaforth is relatively compact, with a population density above the average. The overall age profile is very similar to the average. The total population grew by 2% by 2010 as the Ward became established as a commuter area to Inverness, and there was significant inward migration by families moving mainly from elsewhere in Highland. The area has seen strong population growth around that of the Highland level.

The Census response to health is one of the best proxy measures we have of disability. The rate of self-reported long term illness in Dingwall and Seaforth is below the Highland average. The proportion of people with a Long Term Limiting Health condition in North, West & Central Sutherland is 17.5% which compares to 18.6% in Highland overall.

We do not hold detailed analysis around any of the equality protected characteristics for Service Point users. However, the Council's annual public performance survey is analysed by gender, age, disability, and ethnicity and is referenced in the overarching EQIA.

Consultation

A range of consultation methods were used (questionnaires, telephone surveys, focus groups) – details can be found in Section 6 of this Business Case. Detailed responses from the Consultation are included in the accompanying Analysis Report with highlights per Service Point detailed also in Section 6 of the Business Case. There were 3 telephone interviews undertaken, a focus group (2 attended), and 2 individual responses to the consultation with regard to the Muir of Ord Service Point.

Potential Impact – Muir of Ord Service Point

In considering the potential for differential impact because of a protected characteristic the following evidence sources have been taken into account –the Highland Council's Public Performance Survey, national surveys on digital use and access etc. Further detail is included in the overarching impact assessment.

There were a number of common themes around the potential for negative impact on equality and other vulnerable groups. The common themes are:-

- The Loss of Face-to-Face Contact
- Accessible Communication
- Transport
- Use of Technology
- Social Isolation

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Muir of Ord Service Point

| Protected Characteristic | Impact | Comment |
|---|--------|---|
| Age | Yes | Note comments on Muir of Ord consultation |
| Disability | Yes | Note comments on Muir of Ord consultation |
| Gender reassignment | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Marriage/ Civil Partnership | | No data available on potential impact. |
| Pregnancy Maternity | | No data available on potential impact |
| Race | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Religion/belief | | No data available on potential impact |
| Sex | Yes | Limited Impact |
| Sexual orientation | | No data available on potential impact |
| Other groups, e.g. low income, carers, homeless | Yes | Note comments on Muir of Ord consultation |

Specific Comments on Equality Issues for Muir of Ord Service Point

There was a concern that any 'downgrading' of service would most impact on older people and 'those less able' who may become further isolated.

Rural\Economic Impact

There were also a number of common themes around the potential for impact on rural communities. The common themes were:-

- Potential deterioration of fragile communities
- Lack of public transport leading to reduced accessibility of services
- Council becoming more distant
- Transfer of costs to the public
- Poor internet coverage
- Concern that all rural areas are being treated the same
- Loss of 'more than a Service Point'
- Economic impact

A description of the perceived and potential impact on these themes for groups and individuals is detailed in the main impact assessment.

Individual Service Point profiles provide some limited data around, public transport and Unemployment in relation to the Labour Market.

7. Equality, Social, Economic and Rural Impact Assessment Muir of Ord Service Point

Specific Comments for Muir of Ord Service Point

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation process. With 2 individual responses, a focus group, and 3 telephone interviews undertaken, the potential negative impacts for Muir of Ord Service Point were the potential deterioration of the area as many other services have left the area in recent years.

Suggested Options for Service Delivery

Consultation respondents also suggested options for service delivery (further details on these themes are in the main impact assessment). These options are:-

- Develop Service Points instead of closing them
- Co-location of services
- Make it easier to contact the Council by phone
- Local services
- Reduced hours
- Appointment based system

Specific Comments on Service Delivery for Muir of Ord Service Point

One respondent suggested offering a twice weekly surgery for face to face contact.

Mitigating actions specific to Muir of Ord are listed in section 5 Alternative Service Delivery Options.

8. Re-allocation and Relocation of Work

The following evaluation criteria have been applied to each of the Service Points that are deemed at risk.

- Highland Council Staffing
- Close Proximity to a Community Hub
- Availability of Alternative Service Delivery
- Partnership Working
- Workload Capacity
- Sustainability

Muir of Ord Service Point is a Highland Council staffed office with no Community Hub in close proximity. This office is open for 17.5 hours per week and has capacity to undertake additional work due to very low customer volumes. There is however insufficient underlying business to ensure the sustainability of this office with workload transfer. There is an Access Point Model in place and Police Scotland have been consulted on the proposals for this location.

Recommendation – no transfer of Customer Service work to be applied.

Recommendation – no transfer of Business Support Work to be applied.

9. Options Assessment (against agreed criteria)**Muir Of Ord Service Point**

It is recommended that the following criteria need to be taken into account when assessing the service delivery options at this location.

- Customer Service Volumes
Low HC volumes (2 years data analysed).
- Partnership Working
There is currently a Police Scotland partnership in place.
- Savings Impact
There would be an impact on deliverable savings if Muir of Ord Service Point was retained.
- Alternative Service Delivery Options
Range of options as outlined in Section 5 with an Access Point Model available.
- EQIA\Rural Impact Assessment\Social\Economic Factors
Considered, reviewed and reflected in overall recommendation.
- Potential for Workload Relocation
No workload relocation options have been identified for Muir of Ord Service Point.
- Overall Recommendation
Move to Access Point Model for Muir of Ord Service Point.

10. Recommendations for Future Service Delivery

Customer Service delivery by Access Point Model supplemented by alternative service delivery provision as outlined in Section 5.

Consideration will also be given to the placing of an Access Point in the planned community hub in the Muir of Ord village square. One of the key elements of this new community run initiative is that it is intended to be an information point for the community.

The Registration function is not delivered from this office.

Registration for this area is provided from Dingwall Service Point and Inverness Registration Office.