Oxfordshire County Council

Equality and Climate Impact Assessment

November 2021

Contents

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Commercial Development, Assets and Investments, Property Team
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Rollout of an inhouse digital post room solution
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New – joint digital operation between County Print Finishers and Facilities Management (FM)

Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	• Historically, the traditional approach to outbound and inbound paper mail consumes the time of the in-house service and FM staff:
	    o Outbound – Getting mail printed, into envelopes, postage applied and manually collating post ready for the delivery service.
	    o Inbound – Receiving, sorting and distributing paper mail to staff, which is stored physically - paper mail is not accessible remotely.
	 • Whereas hybrid mail places the majority of the responsibility and effort onto a service provider (either internally or externally):
	    o Outbound – Staff choose a special print option from their computer and the rest of the mail fulfilment activity is undertaken by the service providers.
	    o Inbound – Incoming mail is received, sorted and scanned by the service provider, and electronically distributed to recipients.
	
	 Therefore, the use of hybrid mail offers efficiencies in terms of staff effort in both sending out and receiving paper mail electronically. Around 80% of the council's current mail could be digitised by using both the outbound hybrid mail approach and the inbound hybrid mail (scanned and forward) options.

Completed By	Vic Kurzeja
Authorised By	Karina Russell and Sandra Fisher-Martins
Date of Assessment	3rd November 2021

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	• Outbound hybrid mail benefits: o Supports agile working – post can be sent via a portal to a fulfillment site, removing the need for staff to travel to offices to print and post. o Lower cost - Lower unit cost per outgoing post item (better value for money). Currently most post has outdated franking through FM-managed offices, and internal data systems show staff elsewhere use a range of legacy postage arrangements, many of which utilize poor value for money postage methods (e.g. courier, first class stamps). o Lower staff effort - Less staff time spent preparing and handling paper mail, moving the manual overhead to specialist service providers (greater efficiencies). o Supports climate action – reduced travel for post and officers and reduced paper. o Best 'clean mail' postal discounts. Reduces staff error – pre-prepared templates prevent errors in address format, mail can be grouped and printed to gain discounts. o Reduce MFD Device numbers - A fully operational hybrid mail solution for outbound mail could replace printing for the purposes of outgoing mail, thereby removing the current practice of services using less cost-effective printing (travel time, staff time at printer) and costly postage options (poor address format = undeliverable mail). • Inbound hybrid mail benefits: o Remove need for physical storage - The digitisation of incoming mail means the documents are stored electronically, reducing the need for physical storage. o Agile/Remote access to electronic files - The flexibility of electronic documents being accessible remotely supports the agile working practices for all OCC staff. o Incoming mail – this can be handled efficiently at FM managed sites by staff who intuitively know how to route mail most efficiently. Sites will continue to receive mail directly.

	Exceptions, which are a significant cost in external hybrid solutions, can be managed more efficiently. o An in-house option retains local employment, prevents collateral impact on those on lower wages, delivering positive social and environmental impact.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	Hybrid mail places a greater onus of effort on the hybrid mail provider, and less on council staff. This coupled with the lower unit costs of provision of hybrid mail, demonstrates that hybrid mail is the best value and most efficient option for the council going forward.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you	This approach follows extensive research and service engagement over many months; OCC has trialled a proof of concept of the outbound hybrid mail approach and this demonstrated that for outgoing post, hybrid mail was better value than the traditional approach. The council's built-in accessibility document checker will continue to apply to outbound mail prepared by staff, aligning the new post room to government guidelines for senders and readers with visual impairment or disability. Scanned inbound mail includes searchable text and could be used by a screen reader software.

make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	Confidentiality within the new digital post room is covered by the Data Protection Impact Assessment for the wider Document Services programme. Staff working on digital mail will follow GDPR and Information Management's processes and good practice. Technical systems are secure and will have access controls in place.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Maintaining the current manual format is not in keeping with the council's commitment to address the climate emergency.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☒	☐	☐				
Disability	☒	☐	☐				
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐				
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐				
Race	☒	☐	☐				
Sex	☒	☐	☐				
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐				
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐				
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐				
Carers	☒	☐	☐				
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Other Council Services	☐	☒	☐	Reduction in staff resources focusing on post duties which will enable staff to focus on other priorities.			
Providers	☒	☐	☐				
Social Value [1]	☐	☒	☐	Initiative seeks to develop skills modernisation and preserves inclusive and worthwhile local employment, whilst increasing resilience for the council and adding value to these job roles and the council. County Print Finishers is a Supported Business, providing employment			

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[1] If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				opportunities beyond those required by reasonable adjustment, through the operation of a commercial business			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Climate Change Impacts

OCC and CDC aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. How will your proposal affect our ability to reduce carbon emissions related to

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Energy use in our buildings or highways	☐	☒	☐	Supports Agile Working which can aid rationalisation of buildings and consequential carbon footprint.			
Our fleet	☒	☐	☐				
Staff travel	☐	☒	☐	Reduces need to travel as post can be sent via a portal to a fulfilment site, removing the need for staff to travel to offices to print and post.			
Purchased services and products (including construction)	☐	☒	☐	The digitalisation of incoming mail, means the documents are stored electronically, reducing the need for physical storage.			

Maintained schools	☒	☐	☐			

We are also committed to enable Cherwell to become carbon neutral by 2030 and Oxfordshire by 2050. How will your proposal affect our ability to:

Climate change impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Enable carbon emissions reduction at district/county level?	☐	☒	☐	Supports Agile Working which can aid rationalisation of buildings and consequential carbon footprint			

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	**6 monthly from implementation by April 2022**
Person Responsible for Review	**Mark Atkins/ Lucy McConville**
Authorised By	**Emily Schofield, Head of Strategy**