



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Equality Impact Assessment

Cherwell Link Publication

January 2021

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Communications, Strategy and Insight
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Migrating the residents' publication, Cherwell Link, from a printed publication to an online newsletter
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing function
<p>Summary of assessment</p> <p>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).</p>	<p>We propose moving the quarterly printed residents publication <i>Cherwell Link</i> online from April 2021. The online newsletter would be supplemented by a small print run, with copies distributed to public spaces such as libraries, family and leisure centres. This would enable residents without digital access to have access to a printed copy, although we recognise</p> <p>Migrating <i>Cherwell Link</i> from a print publication to a digital product is in line with national trends in wider digital adoption and usage and will enable us to engage more directly with residents and provide content that suits their needs.</p> <p>The printed magazine is currently delivered to c. 57k households across Cherwell. By migrating it online, we would be disadvantaging those who do not have access to the internet or email. To mitigate for the fact that not all residents will be able to access a digital copy, we will continue to print a limited number of copies, which will be distributed to public spaces including libraries, family centres and leisure centres. We note that the current COVID-19 restrictions limit access to public spaces and may temporality limit access to the printed copies. However, the national approach to COVID-19 management indicates that this situation will be for a limited timescale following the implementation of the proposal. The current requirements on timescales as set out below also limit impact of communication with respect to the current crises which will be improved with the shorter timescales required for an on-line publication.</p> <p>By migrating the content from print to online, we would benefit visually impaired residents as the online version would be accessible for screen readers.</p>
Completed By	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC

Authorised By	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC
Date of Assessment	December 2020

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>Cherwell Link is Cherwell District Council’s residents’ magazine, which is produced four times a year (spring, summer, autumn, winter) and delivered to households across the district four times each year.</p> <p>The magazine is designed and printed by an external company, CIS, who produce the magazine free of charge in return for keeping the advertising revenues. Advertising currently comprises over 30% of the content. CIS have given us notice that they no longer cover their costs through advertising revenues and wish to reduce the number of issues they produce from four to three per annum, which would affect the quality and frequency of our engagement with residents. The magazine is distributed by a local distribution company at a cost of c.£24k per annum.</p> <p>The long lead-in time to produce the publication means news is frequently out of date by the time it reaches doorsteps. The magazine has therefore become non-time-specific features dependent, with a high ratio of advertising to content.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The proposal is to move from a quarterly printed publication to a more regular digital newsletter. The online newsletter would be supplemented by a small print run, with copies distributed to public spaces such as libraries, family and leisure centres. This would enable residents without digital access to have access to a printed copy.</p> <p>Moving to a digital-first publication offers a number of advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It enables the production of a more regular publication with up-to-date content as there would not be the same time constraints as with a printed product. • It provides an interactive platform through which we can actively engage with residents and solicit feedback • It enables people to receive content tailored to their interests and preferences • It provides a format that can be read by screen readers and so is accessible for the visually impaired • It supports our organisational commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 by reducing print and distribution significantly <p>We would use the final copy of the print magazine (February 2021) to inform residents of the changes and encourage them to sign up to the online version. Geo-targeted paid social media advertising would be used to promote content and encourage subscriptions.</p>

<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>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 make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>Feedback from residents indicates that the current distribution of the printed version is patchy, with streets or whole villages reporting that the magazine has not been delivered.</p> <p>While feedback about the content of the magazine is generally positive, there are anecdotal concerns raised about the ratio of advertising to content, which is currently over 30%.</p> <p>According to a 2018 report by OCSI, approximately 10% of residents of Cherwell are categorised as ‘passive and uncommitted internet users’, which means they have limited or no interaction with the internet. This compares with 20% in England as a whole. This indicates that Cherwell has a high-internet-usage population.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Alternatives considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue producing a printed residents’ magazine, but at a reduced frequency (2 or 3 times a year) 2. Stop producing a residents’ magazine <p>Option 1 would further weaken our engagement with residents, while option 2 would have a significant detrimental impact on engagement. While only published quarterly, Cherwell Link is the only regular form of communication that residents receive other than an annual letter from the Council Leader with council tax bills.</p>

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moving to a digital product would impact those residents who do not have access to, or do not use, the internet or email.	The online newsletter would be supplemented by a small print run, with copies distributed to public spaces such as libraries, family and leisure centres. This would enable residents without digital access to have access to a printed copy	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC	Throughout year
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moving to a digital version would benefit residents with visual impairments as it would provide a format that could be read by screen readers		As above	As above
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual printed copies of the magazine are not currently delivered to armed forces bases – a digital copy would enable personnel to access a copy wherever they were based		Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC	Throughout year
Carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moving to a digital product would impact those residents who cannot afford internet access	The online newsletter would be supplemented by a small print run, with copies distributed to public spaces such as libraries, family and leisure centres. This would enable residents without digital access to have access to a printed copy	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC	Throughout year

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Providers do not receive a printed copy of the magazine. A digital version would enable them to see coverage of how their work is being profiled.		Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC	Throughout year
Social Value ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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

Section 3: 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	31/03/2022 – following the first year of implementation
Person Responsible for Review	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC
Authorised By	Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Communications, Strategy and Insight, CDC