

Equality Impact Assessment

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 Measure of the Welsh Language (Wales) 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) has on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st, 2021, onwards the Council has a duty to give due attention to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

I Details

I.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Cyngor Gwynedd Digital Plan, 2023-28

I.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Cyngor Gwynedd's Information Technology Strategy has come to an end, and a new Digital Plan is being presented for the next 5 years (2023/28) and runs alongside the Council Plan. The intention of the Digital Plan is to present a vision and list of projects to strengthen and improve the Council's digital provisions, including Customer Contact, Information and Data, Administration and Business Systems, Workforce and Resilience.

I.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Huw Ynyr, Assistant Head of Information Technology

I.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

August 2023. 1st version.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

Council officers, public, visitors, businesses and partners.

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either because of location or because of need) who live with socio-economic disadvantage?

A Digital Board has been established along with 4 digital sub-boards to guarantee cross-departmental representation. We also collect feedback from users of our website through opinion questionnaires, and an external company tests the accessibility of our website.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The feedback received from the website questionnaire and the accessibility reports feed into the website improvement work programme. The purpose of the Digital Board and the sub-boards is to collect ideas of improvements that can be introduced to improve digital provision throughout the range of our services, with the agreement that the introduction of digital provision will not hinder our ability to host alternative platforms that already exist.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

- Technical trends including opportunities (new technology) and threats e.g., increase in cyber-attacks.
- Changes to the Council's services.
- National strategies and legislation:
 - The Welsh Government's Digital Strategy.
 - The Well-being and Future Generations Act.
 - Wales' anti-racism action plan.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

N/A

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to any other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	Project to redesign the website to consider the "Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan" for the accessibility of websites in languages other than Welsh and English.
Disability	Positive	There is a commitment to reach a minimum AA accessibility level (WCAG 2.1) for any system, internal and external.
Sex	None	No effect identified
Age	None	No effect identified. The intention of the Digital Plan is to add to the channels that already exist for accessing.
Sexual orientation	None	No effect identified
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	No effect identified
Gender reassignment	None	No effect identified
Pregnancy and maternity	None	No effect identified
Marriage and civil partnership	None	No effect identified
The Welsh language	Positive	The Plan commits to maintaining digital services bilingually, with all internal developments created and enabled bilingually and the default choice being Welsh. A digital suitability assessment is to be carried out for every system or digital service that is provided, including the acquisition

		of new systems, with the assessment including a specific clause for assessing the suitability of the systems to meet our linguistic requirements.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive	<p>Digital poverty, whether based on socio-economic disadvantage, geography and lack of connectivity or because the individual is unable to use specific digital media, is addressed in the Plan.</p> <p>No part of our community will suffer a bit as we improve our digital provision, and we will continue to maintain access to our services through the traditional methods.</p>

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	The digital developments listed in the Plan will not be introduced at the expense of non-digital access to services, e.g., we would continue to report on paper and by post if individuals did not have access or the means to use digital services.
Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	We will. There will be no difference to the services offered based on the ability or means to use technology, e.g., we will continue to accept cash as a means of paying for parking services, but we will also accept electronic payments.
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	Improving inclusion and digital connectivity making it easier for individuals and groups to stay in touch.

3.3. How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less

favourably than English, and that all opportunities are taken to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The Welsh language plays a key role in all digital developments, with all internal development being done bilingually, without exception, and the default setting being Welsh. There is a proper place for the Welsh language in each and all developments, and this will be reflected in the Digital Suitability Assessment which will be a mandatory step before any of the Council's departments acquire a digital system or service.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to have a positive effect on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice could have on the Welsh language?

We will continue to follow the good practice recommendations to develop bilingual software in the "Hello Blod" package that has been prepared by the Welsh Government.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have paid due attention to the need to tackle inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for all).

Digital transformation is a major challenge for our society today. A variety of people, including children, older people, and those in rural communities, face a lack of access to the digital world. This situation creates 'digital poverty', where those who cannot access the social network and online services miss out on opportunities to learn, communicate, and get hold of jobs. To answer this problem, it is necessary to create suitable resources and opportunities to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the digital world. We must continue to research and develop solutions to this, as it is vital to ensure that the whole population benefits from the opportunities that come from technological development.

There is a specific project in the Plan for improving connectivity and digital competence.

3.6 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have considered the need to reduce unequal outcomes because of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

Nothing to add.

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?

The introduction of the Digital Plan will have a positive effect, improving the standards of our provision for disability, further emphasis on bilingualism for internal provision, and collaboration with external bodies to improve digital poverty.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?

No. The introduction of the digital provision will not be done at the expense of existing provision.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	✓
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

4.4 What steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Although we do not see any negative impact, we will monitor and act as required.

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

Regular monitoring of the Digital Plan will be carried out in accordance with the governance set out in the plan, including the impact of equality and its alignment with the Well-being and Future Generations Act and the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy.