

Cyngor Sir Powys County Council

Impact Assessment (IA)

The integrated approach to support effective decision making



Please read the accompanying guidance before completing the form.

This **Impact Assessment (IA)** toolkit, incorporates a range of legislative requirements that support effective decision making and ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. **Draft versions of the assessment should be watermarked as “Draft” and retained for completeness. However, only the final version will be made publicly available. Draft versions may be provided to regulators if appropriate. In line with Council policy IAs should be retained for 7 years.**

Service Area	Countryside Access & Recreation	Head of Service	Matt Perry	Director	Nigel Brinn	Portfolio Holder	Cllr Heulwen Hulme
Proposal	Countryside access savings, 2021-24						
Outline Summary / Description of Proposal							
<p>Countryside access has a required savings target of 30% over the period from 2020-2024. The service delivers the following activities, which are statutory with some associated discretionary powers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance and enforcement on public rights of way; - Maintenance, enforcement, national co-ordination and promotion of two National Trails (Offa’s Dyke and Glyndwr’s Way National Trails) - Access provision and enforcement on open access land; - Maintaining and updating the legal records of public rights of way (Definitive Map), common land and town or village greens (Commons Register) and processing of legal applications associated with these records; - Provision of advice to the public, including property searches; - Biodiversity duties. <p>The majority of the saving of £210,000 was made from core Countryside access budgets in 2020-21, through a restructure of the team; four posts were lost. The remaining £20,000 will need to be achieved in 2021-22. It is not anticipated that any further posts will be lost; the saving will be achieved from core budgets for materials and contractors and reductions in travel costs.</p>							

1. Version Control (services should consider the impact assessment early in the development process and continually evaluate)

Version	Author	Job Title	Date
V01	Sian Barnes	Professional Lead, Countryside Access and Recreation	17 th December 2020

2. Profile of savings delivery (if applicable)

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025	TOTAL
£190,000	£20,000	£0	£0	£0	£210,000

3. Consultation requirements

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Consultation Requirement	Consultation deadline/or justification for no consultation
Public and Staff consultation required	January to March 2021 — i.e. development of Rights of Way Improvement Plan work plan for 2021-22

4. Impact on Other Service Areas

Does the proposal have potential to impact on another service area? (Have you considered the implications on Health & Safety, Corporate Parenting and Data Protection?) PLEASE ENSURE YOU INFORM / ENGAGE ANY AFFECTED SERVICE AREAS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY
<p>Corporate Health and Safety and Insurance teams – Increased risk of the team being unable to meet health and safety responsibilities in a timely way e.g. collapsing footbridges, leading to increased risk of injury and associated claims;</p> <p>Legal Services – Increased public dissatisfaction due to reduced capacity to resolve issues on public rights of way, leading to a greater number of informal and formal legal challenges and complaints. At the current time, less than 40% of the public rights of way network is assessed as being ‘open and easy to use’ and this is expected to fall with reduced resources.</p> <p>Social Services and Powys Teaching Health Board - The service will be less able to assist in meeting the priorities of other Council services and Powys Teaching Health Board services. Access to public rights of way and open space, and involvement in volunteer activities to maintain them make an important contribution to preventive healthcare, by improving mental and physical wellbeing and physical activity levels. If a greater proportion of public paths are not open and easy to use, the potential to contribute to this will be significantly reduced.</p> <p>Regeneration / Tourism - The tourism potential associated with public rights of way in Powys will be reduced, if less budget is available to ensure that paths are open and easy to use.</p> <p>Finance - The team’s capacity to generate income on a cost-recovery basis e.g. through processing public path Orders will be reduced, with less staff capacity.</p> <p>Data protection – Increased risk of errors and information breaches occurring, due to individual staff being required to address higher volumes of casework and being under pressure to complete tasks too quickly.</p>

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5. How does your proposal impact on the council's strategic vision?

Council Priority	How does the proposal impact on this priority?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
The Economy We will develop a vibrant economy	The tourism potential associated with public rights of way in Powys will be reduced, if capital and grant funding is not available to support work to ensure that paths are open and easy to use. Tourism associated with outdoor recreational activities forms a significant contribution to the economy of Powys and particularly so following COVID 19. Without grant or capital funding, the service will be unable to employ local contractors to carry out work on public rights of way.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
Health and Care We will lead the way in effective, integrated rural health and care	Without grant or capital funding, less public paths will be 'open and easy to use' which will impact on access to greenspace and outdoor recreation. This will have a particularly significant effect during COVID 19 restrictions when there are limited options for exercise for mental and physical wellbeing.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
Learning and skills We will strengthen learning and skills	Outdoor recreation and access to open space contributes to lifelong learning through play for children and adults. Volunteering can assist in skills development to support those seeking work. There will be reduced budget and staff capacity to support these activities and maintain paths in an open and easy to use condition, which will have an adverse effect these opportunities.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
Residents and Communities We will support our residents and communities	Reliance on volunteer support and engagement will increase, as budget to support use of contractors decreases. This will increase community involvement, but core funding is likely to be insufficient to allow for community aspirations to be met.	Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding.	Neutral

Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

- Increased public reports of problems in 2020 during COVID 19, when no volunteer seasonal vegetation clearance could be carried out on public rights of way
- Significant increase in demand for countryside access in 2020 during COVID 19 outbreak for residents and visitors
- 5% condition survey carried out as part of review of Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Feedback from public and stakeholders during review of Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Powys Wellbeing Information Bank
- Towards 2040 – The Powys Wellbeing Plan
- Experience gained from Arwain and Natural Resources Wales funded projects to develop community volunteer groups and improve local path networks

6. How does your proposal impact on the Welsh Government’s well-being goals?

Well-being Goal	How does proposal contribute to this goal?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
<p>A prosperous Wales: An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>The proposal will have a negative impact on this goal. Tourism forms a major contribution to the economy of Powys and the natural environment is one of the county’s biggest assets. Reduced budgets to maintain public paths in a condition that is open and easy to use will impact adversely on achieving the potential of the rights of way network and access land for tourism. Without capital and grant funding, the service will be unable to employ local contractors to carry out work on public rights of way.</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.</p>	<p>Poor</p>
<p>A resilient Wales: A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>The proposal will have a negative impact on this goal. One of the team’s statutory duties is in respect of biodiversity; without grant funding, the team will have very little staff capacity to contribute to meeting biodiversity duties.</p>	<p>Poor</p>	<p>A part time staff member will be employed on a fixed term contract for from January 2021 to March 2022, using Welsh Government ENRaW grant funding through the all Wales Biodiversity project. The impact after that is unknown.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

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<p>A healthier Wales: A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p> <p>Public Health (Wales) Act, 2017: Part 6 of the Act requires for public bodies to undertake a health impact assessment to assess the likely effect of a proposed action or decision on the physical or mental health of the people of Wales.</p>	<p>There will be an adverse impact on this goal. Outdoor recreation makes a significant contribution to mental and physical wellbeing and physical activity levels. The need for this is high given the impacts of COVID 19. Reduced core funding will adversely impact on the number of public paths that are open and easy to use, which will adversely impact on the opportunities for outdoor recreation and access to greenspace.</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.</p>	<p>Poor</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities: Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected Communities.</p>	<p>Without capital funds, the service will be less able to respond to health and safety hazards on public paths e.g. collapsing bridges or unsafe surfaces. Path condition is likely to deteriorate with reduced budgets, which will have an adverse impact on the attractiveness of paths for communities and the potential for tourism, reducing community viability</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.</p>	<p>Poor</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales: A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p> <p>Human Rights - is about being proactive (see guidance)</p> <p>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Convention gives rights to everyone under the age of 18, which include the right to be treated fairly and to be protected from discrimination; that organisations act for the best interest of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to be heard.</p>	<p>There will be an adverse impact on this goal. Public rights of way and open space form an important part of low carbon travel and tourism; many paths in or close to settlements already are, or could form valuable parts of the Active Travel network. Without capital or grant funding, that potential will be adversely impacted.</p>	<p>Poor</p>	<p>Work with the Council's Travel officer and other organisations including the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority to seek Active Travel and related travel / transport funding to carry out improvement work on routes with potential for active travel.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

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A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language: A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.				
<i>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourable than the English language</i>	The impact on this goal will be neutral. The team is already required to ensure that an equal level of service is available in Welsh and English. Formal publications, consultations and statutory notices are produced bilingually and correspondence is referred to the Translation Unit as required.	Neutral		Choose an item.
<i>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language</i>	There will be an adverse impact on this goal. With reduced core funding, the team will be less able to produce interpretation signage and leaflets that would help to promote aspects of Welsh Language and culture in relation to promoted and community trails.	Poor	Work with Tourism and Regeneration teams to access grant funding for promotional / interpretation materials.	Neutral
<i>Welsh Language impact on staff</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.
<i>People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation.</i>	There will be an adverse impact on this goal. Without capital or grant funding, the condition of public paths will deteriorate. That will reduce the ease with which people can be involved in outdoor recreation and will discourage them from doing so.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).				
<i>Age</i>	There will be an adverse impact on this goal, as reduced core funding will impact on the type and quality of path furniture and surfacing on paths. This will make it less easy for older people to remain active.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
<i>Disability</i>	Reduced core funding will impact on the type and quality of path furniture and surfacing on paths. This will make it less easy for those with a disability to use public rights of way.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
<i>Gender reassignment</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.
<i>Marriage or civil partnership</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.

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<i>Race</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.
<i>Religion or belief</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.
<i>Sex</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>		Unknown		Choose an item.
<i>Pregnancy and Maternity</i>	The proposals would have an adverse impact on the service's ability to provide accessible path surfaces and structures e.g. gates that can reasonably be used by those with small children and / or pushchairs. This would make it more difficult for parents and guardians of young children to take their family for a walk.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor

Source of Outline Evidence to support judgements

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7. How does your proposal impact on the council's other key guiding principles?

Principle	How does the proposal impact on this principle?	IMPACT Please select from drop down box below	What will be done to better contribute to positive or mitigate any negative impacts?	IMPACT AFTER MITIGATION Please select from drop down box below
Sustainable Development Principle (5 ways of working)				
Long Term: Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.	The proposals would have an adverse impact on this goal. Failure to maintain a viable and safe public rights of way network will impact on the economic viability and attractiveness of Powys as a place to live. This will have an adverse impact on the number of working age people in the county.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Choose an item.
Collaboration: Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions.	The proposals would have an adverse impact on the service's staff capacity to engage in collaboration. However, the need and requirement for collaboration would be greater, so the overall impact is neutral.	Neutral		Choose an item.
Involvement (including Communication and Engagement): Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them.	The proposals would have an adverse impact on the service's staff capacity to engage with communities. However, the need for engagement and volunteer involvement would be greater, so the overall impact is neutral.	Neutral		Choose an item.
Prevention: Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.	The proposals would have an adverse impact on prevention of mental and physical health problems, as public paths would be less easy to use. There would also be an adverse impact on prevention of poverty; deterioration of the public rights of way network would impact on tourism and job opportunities in the county so increasing the risk of poverty.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor
Integration: Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives.	The proposals would adversely impact on taking an integrated approach. Reduced quality and availability of public rights of way would impact adversely on access to the countryside as an opportunity for wellbeing.	Very Poor	Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.	Poor

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<p>Preventing Poverty: Prevention, including helping people into work and mitigating the impact of poverty.</p>	<p>The proposals would have an adverse impact on the tourism potential of the public rights of way for tourism in the county. Tourism is a major part of the local economy; with reduced tourism, there will be less work opportunities available in the county.</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Seek grants and other external funding to carry out improvement projects on public rights of way and access land, but dependent on availability of grants and staff capacity to seek and manage the funding. Work with volunteers and communities to carry out practical maintenance work on public paths.</p>	<p>Poor</p>
<p>Unpaid Carers: Ensuring that unpaid carers views are sought and taken into account</p>		<p>Unknown</p>		<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Safeguarding: Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults with health and social care needs who can't protect themselves.</p>		<p>Unknown</p>		<p>Choose an item.</p>
<p>Impact on Powys County Council Workforce</p>	<p>There will be an adverse impact on the service workforce, as the proposals will result in a reduced number of staff. Individual workloads will be higher and staff are more likely to encounter dissatisfaction from the public, with impacts on their wellbeing.</p>	<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Set realistic priorities for work, using the framework set out in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Managers in the Service will need to be robust in ensuring that staff are able to adhere to plans and not be required to attend to other, lower priority work.</p>	<p>Poor</p>

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8. What is the impact of this proposal on our communities?

Severity of Impact on Communities	Scale of impact	Overall Impact
Medium	High	Medium
Mitigation		
Working with communities and volunteer groups to agree community aspirations and priorities for the public rights of way network, then seeking grants or external funding to work with them to achieve those priorities. Involvement of community volunteer groups to carry out light maintenance of paths once reopened e.g. seasonal vegetation clearance to ensure long term sustainability.		

9. How likely are you to successfully implement the proposed change?

Impact on Service / Council	Risk to delivery of the proposal	Inherent Risk	
Medium	High	Medium	
Mitigation			
Good communication with stakeholders and staff is essential to achieving the savings. Staff need to be fully informed and able to contribute constructively to the process. Stakeholders need to be able to make constructive suggestions as to how they can be involved e.g. in collaborative grant funded projects to avoid frustration leading to legal challenges.			
Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Rating	Mitigation	Residual Risk Rating
Deterioration in condition of public rights of way network will result in legal challenges from members of the public, with cost outweighing savings achieved	Very High	Seek grants and external funding to mitigate against impact, although can only be used for non-statutory improvements. Good communication and regular liaison with stakeholders.	High
Lack of availability of community volunteers to support work, leading to paths not being maintained in long term. This may lead to dissatisfaction and legal challenges	High	Setting realistic goals with volunteer groups that allow for fluctuations in volunteering over time. Review and monitor as time progresses to assess whether risk has increased.	Medium
Inability to address high health and safety risks due to reduced staff and budget, leading to serious accidents and injury claims that may outweigh savings achieved.	High	Allocate highest priority for staff time to addressing these risks. Apply for capital funds if appropriate or remove hazard.	Medium
Reduced staff capacity to seek external grant funding, to mitigate against the impacts of reduced core budget.	High	Work with Council's regeneration team and allocate staff time as a priority to seeking funding, although will impact on other work.	Medium
The team's capacity to generate income on a cost-recovery basis will be reduced, with less staff capacity. This will reduce ability to mitigate against core budget reductions.	High	Seek alternative ways of working to reduce staff input to chargeable activities, to release their time for core statutory work.	Medium

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<p>The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority may choose to terminate the service level agreement if reductions are made. All legal responsibility for maintenance of public rights of way in the National Park within Powys would revert to Powys County Council. The team would be unable to meet high level of expectation that has become established in the National Park, being a tourism asset to the county, so the risk of challenge and reputational damage is high and may outweigh the savings delivered.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Work with the National Park Authority on collaborative projects to seek alternative funding sources.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Overall judgement (to be included in project risk register)</p>			
<p>Very High Risk</p>	<p>High Risk</p>	<p>Medium Risk</p>	<p>Low Risk</p>
		<p>X</p>	

10. Overall Summary and Judgement of this Impact Assessment?

<p>Outline Assessment (to be inserted in cabinet report)</p>	<p>Cabinet Report Reference:</p>
<p>The proposals will have a high adverse impact, both for staff and for the public. Unless grant or capital funds can be secured, the proposals will result in significant deterioration of the public rights of way network, presenting an increased risk of injury claims and legal challenges. The proposals will significantly reduce the potential for physical activity and outdoor tourism in the county, with impacts on the economy and on physical and mental wellbeing. Mitigation is entirely dependent on the availability and goodwill of community volunteers and availability of grants or external funding, so it must be recognised that mitigation may not be successful and that other risks will be realised as a result.</p>	

11. Is there additional evidence to support the Impact Assessment (IA)?

<p>What additional evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?</p>
<p>Recent successful legal challenges against the Council in relation to lack of maintenance on byways; the legal action itself was very expensive and has resulted in maintenance costs from capital budgets that outweigh the savings proposed. Positive impact of 2020-21 Welsh Government grant funding, but it has been difficult to maximise the opportunities that this presents due to increased staff workloads following restructure.</p>

12. On-going monitoring arrangements?

<p>What arrangements will be put in place to monitor the impact over time?</p>
<p>Quarterly reporting against the Service Improvement Plan will indicate the length of the public rights of way network that has received maintenance or improvement work. Risks will be highlighted as they arise, through weekly team meetings and also via quarterly reporting against the Corporate Improvement Plan.</p>
<p>Please state when this Impact Assessment will be reviewed.</p>
<p>Ongoing</p>

13. Sign Off

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Impact Assessment Lead:	Sian Barnes		
Head of Service:	Matt Perry		14 th Feb 2021
Director:	Nigel Brinn		
Portfolio Holder:	Clr Heulwen Hulme		

14. Governance

Decision to be made by	Choose an item.	Date required	

FORM ENDS