

Shropshire Council
Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)
Initial Screening Record 2021-2022

A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions

Name of proposed service change
<i>Ceasing of the provision of peripatetic Registration Services in Bishops Castle</i>

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening
Karen Burton

Decision, review, and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Initial (part one) ESHIA Only?	X	
Proceed to Full ESHIA or HIA (part two) Report?		

If completion of an initial or Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes above. If a Full or Part Two report is required, please move on to full report stage once you have completed this initial screening assessment as a record of the considerations which you have given to this matter.

<p>Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations</p> <p>Prior to the Pandemic peripatetic arrangements where a registrar attended to register Births, deaths and deal with legal preliminaries to marriage or civil partnership at Church Stretton at an arranged time and on an arranged regular weekday, only when there is the need.</p> <p>This facility has not been operational since March 2020 due to the requirements and legislative restrictions put in place at various times throughout the last 2 years.</p> <p>At times during this last 2 years the only office out of which the registration service could operate was the register office in Shrewsbury.</p> <p>Births and legal preliminaries to marriages and civil partnerships during this time remained face to face whilst death registrations were conducted by telephone as provided for in the easements introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020.</p> <p>The Coronavirus Act sunsetted on the 24th March 2022 and since this time all registration appointments have returned to being held face to face.</p>
--

Office usage in Church Stretton was extremely low prior to the pandemic and has been at nil since. No complaints have been received in relation to the lack of service provision.

The ceasing of this service could have a negative impact on elderly people, disabled people or those without transport. Service use was very low prior to the pandemic and has been at nil since the pandemic.

To mitigate any likely impact, where there is demonstrable need and inability to attend a registration service office the registration service will provide domiciliary appointments. These are likely to be extremely rare, we have not been asked to provide one for at least 5 years.

We plan to conduct a consultation to include the public, town councils, parish councils, Shropshire Council members, GP practices, funeral directors, nursing homes/hospitals. It is hoped that by doing this we will be able to further inform this assessment before making a decision whether or not to go ahead with our proposal.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality, social inclusion, and health considerations

We are currently working with the Customer Feedback team to establish a rolling customer survey which will provide customers with the opportunity to feed back on their experiences and for the service to be aware of any difficulties which require further actions. This information will be available constantly for monitoring purposes. In addition the Corporate Customer complaint, comments and compliments process provides an excellent way in which customers can make the service aware of any difficulties experienced.

Associated ESHIAs

Previous ESSIA carried out in 2015/2016.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations. This includes climate change considerations

We are currently working with the Customer Feedback team to establish a rolling customer survey which will provide customers with the opportunity to feed back on their experiences and for the service to be aware of any difficulties which require further actions. This information will be available constantly for monitoring purposes. In addition the Corporate Customer complaint, comments and

compliments process provides an excellent way in which customers can make the service aware of any difficulties experienced.

Climate change

Please use this section to insert the Climate Change Appraisal completed for the committee report associated with this ESHIA, or internal record of appraisal if this is a working document.

Health and well being

Cabinet gave approval in February 2020 to the use of health impact assessments. Interim guidance was subsequently developed and included within the template, in order to start to capture the health and wellbeing benefits anticipated. With the fuller revision of the template, please outline any potential actions in this regard. There is a table included in section B of this screening document for you to record anticipated impacts with regard to individuals and with regard to the wider public.

Economic and societal/wider community

This may be actions to enhance place shaping approaches and efforts to promote and sustain economic growth for the wider community in an area, e.g., as part of a Levelling Up Fund bid, or actions to mitigate negative impacts if a facility or service is being withdrawn or altered such as a public transport offer, an education offer or a library or cultural offer.

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>		
<i>Any internal service area support*</i>		
<i>Any external support**</i>		

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers to support external to the service but within the Council, e.g., the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, the Feedback and Insight Team, performance data specialists, Climate Change specialists, and Public Health colleagues*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Accountable officer's name</i>		

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

The closure of public buildings by direction of the government during the pandemic period had a considerable impact both on staff and on customers. The only Registration Office to be able to remain open throughout the pandemic was the register office in Shrewsbury, where all notices of marriage or civil partnership appointments and birth appointments had to be held.

There is a legal requirement to register deaths face to face within 5 days and the service has tried over the years to continue to have a presence in as many localities as possible. However, what has been shown is that people who may usually have opted to attend at one of the peripatetic offices, have been able to attend at fixed offices with ease and from this, that the peripatetic offices are no longer required.

The peripatetic services in Church Stretton have remained closed since March 2020 with no issues highlighted to Shropshire Council nor complaints received. We now seek to make this closure permanent.

We understand that this may give cause for concern, however where there is genuine need the registration service will attend at the homes of informants to carry out a domiciliary registration. These are extremely rare occurrences the domiciliary service is there for when it is needed.

Other conditions supporting these proposals

In post pandemic times it is increasingly difficult to find suitable accommodation in which registration services can be provided. The accommodation in which we have been able to work from to provide these peripatetic services are small and poorly ventilated. These are not recommended settings in which staff and members of the public can safely meet. Clearly the councils own public health and staff welfare responsibilities are unlikely to be able to be met .

Registration staff are highly trained professionals and quite correctly have a great deal of specialist knowledge. The numbers of trained registration officers are low nationally and locally, having only enough registration officers available to allow service to be provided. All but 2 trained registration officers are part time employees. All are based within fixed offices and the peripatetic service is provided by these same officers. In times of annual leave, sickness, absence or emergencies around the ceremony schedule, officers are necessarily moved to cover fixed offices first as these are where the majority of appointments are booked. The result of this is that any appointments booked at a peripatetic site are cancelled, or if the absence is planned we often have to close the appointment booking diary for these sites in order to provide service at busier offices.

Operating from the peripatetic sites is not without its technical challenges. In this age of increasing reliance on digital technology it is essential that services such as ours are able to access reliable and secure IT provision. The lack of reliable IT resources is undeniably a concern which is significant as the work we do has to be recorded on a national secure IT system which requires stable access to IT. There have been many instances prior to the pandemic of officers having to revert to manual methods of registration only to have to re do any work when back at a fixed office creating additional work for officers and also distress and annoyance for customers when things go wrong.

Increases in workload brought about by legislative change, increased deaths, ceremonies and legal preliminaries have required the service to use its resources wisely and efficiently. The current provision of attendance by appointment at peripatetic offices are neither a wise nor efficient use of resources.

This can be demonstrated below:

Evidence

Breakdown of time required to attend a single appointment at a peripatetic office:

- Staff time to drive into their base, collect their security stock, laptops, printers
- Staff time to drive out to the peripatetic office
- Staff time to set up laptops and printers etc
- Appointment time
- Staff time to close down, cash up if necessary, disconnect equipment and return to their vehicle
- Staff time to drive back to base.
- Mileage costs

In reality a single 30 minute appointment can account for 2.5 hours of staff time whereas the same appointment in fixed office will take just 30 minutes with set up and close down time being split equally across all other appointments undertaken within that fixed office on the same day. Attendance of registration staff at peripatetic offices for, in the majority of instances, just a single appointment is costly and is not an economical use of staff time, a member of staff in one of our fixed offices could realistically provide 4 appointments in the time it takes to attend to deliver a single appointment.

Utilisation of offices

As you can see from the breakdown of appointment types between 2018 and to end June 2022, if the prime purpose of maintaining a peripatetic service within these localities was to provide access for those people who may have difficulty travelling and have to register a death within 5 days it is not these people who were using the service with the majority of appointments being taken by birth informants who have 42 days to register or marriage and civil partnership notices which can be done 12 months before the event. As we can see from customer behaviours during the pandemic, these customers have been willing and able to travel to other offices which have been able to open. For context see the figures below which provide a representation of work done expressed as a percentage of the work done by the registration service across the Shropshire Council Area in relation to appointments (not ceremonies)

Source – Zipporah Appointment Booking diary (includes Birth, Birth declaration, Birth Re-registration appointments)

Showing the numbers of Birth related appointment bookings made in each location and as a percentage of the total number of Birth Registration appointments booked by location

Birth related appointments	Office	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022 (01/01 to 30/06)	
	Total bookings	1482		1412		1640		759		506	
	Shrewsbury	680	46%	642	45%	1123	68%	472	62%	250	49%
	Oswestry	253	17%	227	16%	157	10%	123	16%	101	20%
	Bridgnorth	144	10%	132	9%	106	6%	59	8%	33	7%
	Ludlow	127	9%	121	9%	95	6%	36	5%	44	9%
	Market Drayton	105	7%	108	8%	64	4%	40	5%	33	7%
	Whitchurch	87	6%	94	7%	69	4%	29	4%	45	9%
	Bishops Castle	21	1%	26	2%	1	<1%	0	-	0	-
	Church Stretton	19	1%	16	1%	6	<1%	0	-	0	-
	Wem	46	3%	46	3%	13	1%	0	-	0	-

Source 2018, 2019, 2022 Zipporah Appointment booking diary (includes death and death declaration appointments)

2020 and 2021 – Numbers of actual registrations completed

Showing the numbers of Death Registration appointment bookings made in each location and as a percentage of the total number of Death Registration appointments booked by location

Death related appointments	office	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022 (01/01 to 30/06)	
	Total Bookings	3249		3362		3767 all death registrations took place over the telephone after 24/03/2020		3610 all death registrations took place over the telephone		1713	
	Shrewsbury	1875	60%	2158	64%	3748	99%	3610	100%	883	52%
	Oswestry	337	10%	313	9%					255	15%
	Bridgnorth	382	12%	324	10%					232	14%
	Ludlow	301	9%	279	8%					143	8%
	Market Drayton	113	3%	108	3%					99	6%
	Whitchurch	172	5%	111	3%					96	6%
	Bishops Castle	13	<1%	14	<1%	8	<1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Church Stretton	17	<1%	14	<1%	3	<1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Wem	39	1%	41	1%	3	<1%	0		0	0%

Source Zipporah Appointment booking diary (includes Civil partnership and marriage notice appointments)

Showing the numbers of appointment bookings made in each location and as a percentage of the total number of Marriage/Civil Partnership preliminary appointments booked by location

Marriage/civil partnership preliminaries	Location of service	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022 (01/01 30/06)	
	Total Bookings	1806		2423		2011		2051		1791	
	Shrewsbury	1014	56%	1290	53%	1287	64%	962	47%	874	49%
	Oswestry	226	13%	291	12%	215	11%	357	17%	295	16%
	Bridgnorth	256	14%	353	15%	253	13%	289	14%	284	16%
	Ludlow	100	6%	155	6%	110	5%	226	11%	115	6%
	Market Drayton	100	6%	156	6%	66	3%	110	5%	126	7%
	Whitchurch	70	4%	112	5%	59	3%	107	5%	97	5%
	Bishops Castle	9	<1%	18	<1%	3	<1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Church Stretton	11	<1%	17	<1%	7	<1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Wem	20	1%	31	1%	11	<1%	0	0%	0	0%

As a percentage of numbers of types of appointment booked – Source – Zipporah appointment booking system

Location of service	2018			2019		
	No show appointments			No show appointments		
	Birth	Death	Marriage/CP	Birth	Death	Marriage/CP
Shrewsbury	28 4%	14 1%	30 3%	20 3%	10 <1%	38 3%
Oswestry	6 2%	4 1%	7 3%	8 3%	5 2%	11 4%
Bridgnorth	7 5%	1 <1%	11 4%	6 4%	2 <1%	6 2%
Ludlow	5 4%	2 2%	1 1%	2 2%	4 3%	5 3%
Market Drayton	8 8%	0 0%	5 5%	7 6%	1 1%	2 1%
Whitchurch	0 0%	3 3%	5 7%	2 2%	0 0%	2 2%
Bishops Castle	1 5%	2 15%	0 0%	1 6%	0 0%	2 11%
Church Stretton	0 0%	2 13%	1 9%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%
Wem	3 7%	0 0%	0 0%	2 6%	1 2%	0 0%

There is the equally frustrating issue with unattended appointments which when these occur in the peripatetic offices which result in a complete waste of staff time and an inability to recover the costs incurred. No Show appointments in our fixed locations, although frustrating do not lead to unproductive periods as there are a range of required administrative tasks to be completed in offices which are not able to be completed at peripatetic sites

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

General Public, Elected Shropshire Councillors, Parish Councils, Town Councils, GP Practices, Funeral Directors, Nursing Homes, Hospitals

Evidence used for screening of the service change

See tables above

If this ESHIA is a screening one carried out at the end of a period of consultation, please use this box to outline the feedback and whether as a consequence there are any adjustments now envisaged to what was originally proposed.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Planning to carry out public consultation via Consultation Portal and direct with elected members and local town and parish councils via SALC, direct with GP practices, Funeral Directors, hospitals and nursing homes

Initial equality impact assessment by grouping (Initial health impact assessment is included below)

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groupings and other groupings in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive, negative, or neutral impact (please specify) <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
<u>Age</u> (please include children, young people, young people leaving care, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group e.g., a child or young person for whom there are safeguarding concerns e.g., an older person with disability)				X
<u>Disability</u> (please include mental health conditions and syndromes; hidden disabilities including autism and Crohn's disease; physical and sensory disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; and HIV)				X

<u>Gender re-assignment</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				X
<u>Marriage and Civil Partnership</u> (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				X
<u>Pregnancy and Maternity</u> (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				X
<u>Race</u> (please include ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, Gypsy, Traveller)				X
<u>Religion and belief</u> (please include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Nonconformists; Rastafarianism; Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				X
<u>Sex</u> (this can also be viewed as relating to gender. Please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				X
<u>Sexual Orientation</u> (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				X
<u>Other: Social Inclusion</u> (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; households in poverty; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable; people with health inequalities; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families)				X

Initial health and wellbeing impact assessment by category

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have with regard to health and wellbeing, through stating this in the relevant column.

Please state if it is anticipated to be neutral (no impact) and add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Health and wellbeing: individuals and communities in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two HIA required</i>	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive negative or neutral impact (please specify)
<p>Will the proposal have a <i>direct impact</i> on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, would it cause ill health, affecting social inclusion, independence and participation?</p> <p>.</p>				Low
<p>Will the proposal <i>indirectly impact</i> an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?</p> <p>For example, will it affect their ability to be physically active, choose healthy food, reduce drinking and smoking?</p>				No
<p>Will the policy have a <i>direct impact</i> on the community - social, economic and environmental living conditions that would impact health?</p> <p>For example, would it affect housing, transport, child development, education, employment opportunities, availability of green space or climate change mitigation?</p>				No
<p>Will there be a likely change in <i>demand</i> for or access to health and social care services?</p> <p>For example: Primary Care, Hospital Care, Community Services, Mental Health, Local Authority services including Social Services?</p> <p>.</p>				No

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations including climate change and economic or societal impacts

•

Current nearest Office	Nearest office under option 2	Additional distance of travel for customers
Church Stretton service point The Library	Bishops Castle	13 miles
	Shrewsbury Registrars Office	13 miles
	Ludlow Registrars Office	16 miles