

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	21 January 2021	Kate Bond	

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions including those that affect services the council delivers).	
Service	Business Services
Section	Customer and Digital Services
Title of the activity etc.	Customer & Digital Budget Savings 2021/22
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	<p>Customer and Digital Services supports the organisation through the delivery of Business Change, Business Strategy, Communications, Customer Services and IT services to internal and external customers and residents of Aberdeenshire, working in partnership to identify and mitigate potential risks to the Council. This is achieved by supporting services to identify capacity and improvements through project support across the organisation; the provision of evidence-based data on policy and performance, equalities support, and the community planning partnership; and the support of digital improvements across the organisation, as well as the day-to-day provision of all IT services. In addition, the Service provides front-line support for customer queries and supports internal/external communications, design and photography for all services. A budget for the service is agreed annually and is set based on business need and available resources to ensure the service and council overall has a balanced budget each year. To balance the budget savings must be achieved. This is being delivered through:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voluntary severance scheme across the Service • savings of £45,000 identified against data centre contract • service reviews
Author(s) & Title(s)	Kate Bond, Head of Customer and Digital Services

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment and explain what it means in relation to the activity you are assessing.		
Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?

Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	As part of the C&DS Shaping our Service process (March – August 2020) stakeholder feedback identified opportunities to reshape the service to better meet organisational requirements aligning with the Council's priorities and strategic direction.	Feedback shaped the C&DS vision, identified priorities and the basis for informing the C&DS workforce plan.
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	CDS Management Team Business Change Team Business Strategy Team Communications Customer Services Team IT Team HR Finance	
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	Engaging with external groups eg. Improvement Service, Digital Office provides insight and learning from professional bodies on policy direction and best practice. The links to organisations connected through these groups provides learning on what works.	Learning taken from external bodies contributes to determining service requirements – knowledge and skills within C&DS
External data (census, available statistics).	N/A	
Other (general information as appropriate).	Awareness of other LA organisational structures, delivery and budgets as part of service reviews. Direction of national policy eg. Digital Strategy for Scotland.	Benchmark against similar teams and services to identify best practice. Recognise the strategic direction to shape C&DS structure to meet organisational requirements.

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	No.

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	N/A	

Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?	
These should be included in the action plan.	Ongoing dialogue with Teams in C&DS, involving all relevant staff at appropriate times. Regular communication with services across the council so they understand how to access the support they need from C&DS.

Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?
Service redesign will support the delivery of our savings. This will include a new structure in Business Strategy (where the central equalities team are based) and will consider how best to support and further enhance the promote of equalities activity.

Stage 7a:				
Are there potential impacts on protected groups?				
The protected groups covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.				
Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how? Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger			Y	

Age - Older			Y	
Disability			Y	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			Y	
Religion or Belief			Y	
Sex			Y	
Pregnancy and maternity			Y	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Y	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Y	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Y	

Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.

On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:

- Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g. housing, transport.
- Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service
- Prospects: peoples life chances e.g.access to, or ability to access: employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.

Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities • People who live in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners • Looked after children • Carers including young carers • Veterans • Students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People in low paid work • People with one or more protected characteristic
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Please complete by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing			Y	

Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future			Y	
Pockets: Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies			Y	
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work			Y	
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income , educational achievement.			Y	

Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive	Negative
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	For all characteristics the expected impact is neutral.	For all characteristics the expected impact is neutral.

Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?	
If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	All teams have been fully consulted in the relevant changes affecting them and been given the same opportunity to apply for voluntary severance. This has been through service wide team talks, and direct communication from the Head of Service with everyone in C+DS.

Stage 10: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?		
These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	Engagement with affected Teams in relation to the changes that will be made across the Service.	
	Service Managers and Team Leaders are fully aware that they have to manage the reduction of posts from voluntary severance, in order to make the necessary savings.	
	Service Managers and Team Leaders will review service delivery, implementing necessary changes whilst ensuring business need is at the forefront of decisions taken.	

Stage 11: What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	The impact of any changes arising, including on equality, will be monitored via employee feedback and regular analysis of the management information and PI's.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?		
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
		An assessment will be undertaken of any further proposed removal of, or changes to posts, that may arise; any such proposals will require to be supported by a robust business case. All staff, regardless of characteristics, will be treated in a equitable manner and in accordance with the relevant HR policies and procedures. The impact of deleted posts and future changes to structures may have a detrimental effect on the delivery of service provision due to the requirement to reallocate the workload to remaining staff. This will in turn may have an impact on existing workloads and associated timescales.
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.

	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Due to implications of budget savings that have to be made across the council, there is no alternative. All potential alternatives have been considered but determined not possible due to business need.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Customer and Digital Services		
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	(if appropriate)		
	3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Michelle Milne Position: Customer Service Manager Date: 21 January 2021 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Names: Sarah Rochester, Fiona McCallum, Chris Clelland and Donna Redford Date: 21 January 2021		
5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Kate Bond Position: Head of C & DS Date: 21 January 2021	Name: Position: Date:		

	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.	Date:
	7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk	Date:

