

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
	14/02/20	Alan Wood	

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	Finance
Title of the activity etc.	Finance Budget
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	Set a balanced budget for 2020/21 to provide financial advice, information and stewardship in relation to the financial resources of the Council, make payments to suppliers, collect debt, administer and make payments in respect of a wide variety of financial assistance and entitlement schemes, provide money advice.
Author(s) & Title(s)	Susan Donald, Corporate Finance Manager

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).	Aberdeenshire Council’s Reputation Indicators show over 75% of people believe the Council delivers value for money. The service monitors performance through a range of quantitative and qualitative performance, including customer feedback and complaints. Currently it indicates that the service is performing satisfactorily during a period of significant change.	

Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Senior officers on the Budget Strategy Group, Business Services Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Group and Strategic Leadership have all been advised on the proposals.	
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	The budget engagement provided feedback on the budget proposals that would be supported by residents and the areas of expenditure they would seek to see prioritised.	
External data (census, available statistics).	Aberdeenshire Council's Reputation Indicators show over 75% of people believe the Council delivers value for money. Departments for Work and Pensions, Scottish Government and benchmarking data enable comparison across a range of performance measures within Finance so that the impact of budget and resource decisions can be assessed	
Other (general information as appropriate).	All Political Groups engaged in the budget process have been advised of the implications of budget savings and spending proposals.	

**Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.**

Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	No, although the UK Government budget announcement may have implications.
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**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:

**Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?**

These should be included in the action plan.

Building on the positive reputation data and budget engagement information, any service delivery implications of the budget decision will be communicated in terms of the opportunity to build on pre-existing change programmes, the increased availability of self-service options and greater automation. In addition, the availability of financial assistants, entitlement, discount and exemptions will be advertised.

**Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?**

The forms of communication referred to in this document will continue with data being gathered and used as part of the decision-making process.

**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/Older			Yes	
Age - Older			Yes	
Disability			Yes	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Sex (Gender)			Yes	
Pregnancy and maternity			Yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Yes	

Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Yes	

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"> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• Single parents and vulnerable families</li> <li>• People on benefits</li> <li>• Those involved in the criminal justice system</li> <li>• People in the most deprived communities</li> <li>• People who live in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pensioners</li> <li>• Looked after children</li> <li>• Careers including young carers</li> <li>• Veterans</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Single adult households</li> <li>• People who have experienced the asylum system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness</li> <li>• Homeless people</li> <li>• People with low literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• People with lower educational qualifications</li> <li>• People in low paid work</li> <li>• People with one or more protected characteristic</li> </ul>
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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			Yes	
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			Yes	
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			Yes	
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work				Yes
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income , educational achievement.				Yes

**Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?**

Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	The vast majority of current service delivery standards will be maintained with a focus on core service delivery.	It is recognised that turnover savings built into the budget may result in a diminution of service, but this will be mitigated by the availability of self-service options and support in using those options.
	All applicable discounts and benefits will continue to be advertised to assist financially vulnerable households.	

**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?	The budget engagement exercises over recent years have been open to all residents of Aberdeenshire and have included the ability to record text comments.
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**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
	Advertise applicable discounts	Ongoing
	Advertise applicable benefits	Ongoing
	Provide financial advice	When required
	Make appropriate payment arrangement available	When required
	Provide support when it comes to self-service options	Ongoing

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).	Quantitative and qualitative performance measures are monitored throughout each financial year, as are the numbers of people qualifying for financial assistance, discounts and exemptions.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?		
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	The setting of a balanced budget within the constraints of the financial settlement from Scottish Government and an increase in Council Tax has by necessity resulted in the absorption of additional costs and the application of turnover savings, which may impact on service delivery. Mitigating action in the form of changes to business delivery, the promotion of financial assistance, money advice, support and self-service options has been identified.	
	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.
The Council is required to set a balanced budget within the limits of the financial resources available to it and therefore each service and section has to do likewise.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Business Services - Finance	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Finance Budget	
	3) <b>Authors:</b> I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Alan Wood Position: Head of Finance Date: 14 February 2020 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Date:	
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Position: Date:	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:		



