

Integrated Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment is to evidence that Aberdeen City Council is meeting its legislative duties by assessing the potential impacts of its policies and decisions on different groups of people and the environment. The legislation considered within this assessment is:

- Section 2 [Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics](#)
- Section 3 [Socio-Economic](#)
- Section 4 [Consumer Duty](#)
- Section 5 [Human Rights](#)
- Section 6 [Children and Young People's Rights](#)
- Section 7 [Environmental impacts](#)

The term 'policy' is used throughout this document and applies to policies, proposals, strategies, provision, criteria, functions, practice, budget savings and activities that includes delivery of our services.

1. About the Policy

1.1 Title

Reduction in Funding to VisitAberdeenshire

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

Proposal would remove 50% of Aberdeen City Council funding for VisitAberdeenshire in budget year 2025/26 creating a budget saving of £130k per annum

1.3 Is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision?

Strategic

VisitAberdeenshire developed, and are responsible for the implementation of, Aberdeen's Destination Strategy for development of the visitor economy and tourism. This includes leisure, events and business tourism. Total value of which is in excess of £1bn annually to the region. VisitAberdeenshire is also a key strategic partner in Event365.

1.4 Is this a new or existing policy?

New

1.5 Is this report going to a committee?

Yes – as part of the 2025 budget setting process report.

1.6 Committee name and date:

Council (budget) March 2025

1.7 Report no and / or Budget proposal number and / or Business Case reference number:

New-01

1.8 Function and Cluster:

Cluster: City Development and Regeneration

Function: City regeneration and development

Author of IIA: Matthew Williams, Service Manager

CO: Julie Wood

Director: Gale Beattie

CONFIDENTIAL

Impacts

Aberdeen City Council has a legal requirement as a public sector organisation to assess the impact of its work on equality groups and assess against human rights, children's rights and our socio-economic duty. This is our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED has three key parts:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations by tackling prejudice, promoting understanding.

This following five sections in the Integrated Impact Assessment demonstrate that these considerations that have been made in the policy, that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted, and what mitigating steps can be taken to reduce any negative impact of the policy.

2: Equality Act 2010 - Protected Characteristics

Aberdeen City Council wants to ensure everyone is treated fairly. This section identifies what impact the policy may have on people with [protected characteristics](#).

2.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Protected Characteristic	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Age			X		
Disability			X		
Gender Reassignment			X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership				X	
Pregnancy and Maternity				X	
Race			X		
Religion or Belief				X	
Sex			x		
Sexual Orientation			x		

2.2 In what way will the policy impact people with these protected characteristics?

AGE: VisitAberdeenshire works extensively with travel trade companies dedicated to leisure tourism which specialise in groups of 60+ and disabled visitors. In particular they work through CruiseAberdeenshire to develop and deliver the programme which caters for a very high number of passengers with disabilities including mobility issues. They also provide advice to local businesses about best serving guests/customers with specific needs relating to age and disability.

AGE: VisitAberdeenshire also run an extensive volunteering programme to support visitors, with 547 hours of support time in the past year. Many of the volunteers are of retirement age and cite the programme as important to their social mobility, health and mental wellbeing. Conversations were held between the Service Manager – Commercial and volunteers at a recent event celebrating their achievements in 2024. A written survey could be provided. The programme offers training and skills, social opportunities that reduce loneliness and isolation, and increasing a sense of purpose and belonging to the local area.

AGE: Employment pathways for the future workforce through engagement with local schools will be cut, with negative impact on secondary school leavers considering work in the visitor economy, including hospitality and events.

DISABILITY: VisitAberdeenshire's work has a significant focus on inclusive and accessible tourism, promoting Aberdeen as a destination that can meet the needs of the growing 'purple pound' market, worth in excess of £15 billion to the UK visitor economy. Workshops and advice for businesses to enhance the regions' accessible credentials are an ongoing element of this programme. Aberdeen has an opportunity to be a market leader in accessible tourism.

SEX: VisitAberdeenshire supports 5663FTE posts in the tourism economy in the region. The industry standard measure shows that 51.4% of those roles will likely be occupied by women (5% higher than the rate for the general workforce)*. In the area of hospitality (hotels, catering, etc) around 24% will be of non-British nationality*. Accommodation and Food Services at the fifth largest employment sector for women in the UK** These posts are at risk of loss or reduction if this proposal is accepted. These jobs range from low-paid, such as cleaning staff and porters to senior roles in management, marketing, hospitality services, food service, etc VisitAberdeenshire does this through driving business directly to businesses in the visitor economy as well as supporting those businesses through seminars, business development events, and events for professionals in the industry. It also holds an annual conference each year for the local visitor sector.

GENERAL EQUALITIES: VisitAberdeenshire has not focused specifically on LGBTQ+ tourism or Black and Minority Ethnic tourism in terms of direct campaigns. However, they have extensively worked on ensuring a visitor welcome for all, particularly with accommodation providers.

2.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

Destination Strategy outlines intent.

Destination Strategy Leadership Group (Service Manager, Matthew Williams, is a member) monitors progress and delivery of the Destination Strategy.

VisitAberdeenshire Board monitors delivery of the overall goals of the organisation. (Cllr Radley is a member, Chief Officer, Julie Wood, is the attending Officer)

Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) shows total impacts.

Annual paper presented to the Board with operational updates, finance position, etc

All recent data and papers have been provided along with accompanying impact statement from VisitAberdeenshire CEO.

*Local Government Association data from 'Supplying Skills for the Local Visitor Economy', 2019

**House of Commons Research Briefing 'Women in the Economy', March 2024

Aberdeen City Council undertook a two-part public consultation around the 2025/26 Budget and future spending plans from August 2024 to November 2024.

In Part 1, conducted throughout August 2024, participants were asked to provide feedback on four key areas: Budget Options, Council Tax, Service Area Prioritisation, and Capital Programme Expenditure. Under Budget Options, respondents were queried about the potential impacts of proposed options, including both reduction strategies and income-boosting charges. Regarding Council Tax, input was sought on acceptable levels of increase and their potential impacts. Citizens were also invited to express their views on which service areas should be prioritised for spending and to offer their opinions on capital programme expenditure.

In part 2, which took place throughout November 2024, the Council consulted on additional budget options, again focusing on the impact if implemented. The phase 2 consultation included budget options relating to the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership.

There were 4278 responses across the four areas consulted on during part 1 of the online consultation and 1535 responses to part 2. Respondents had the option to indicate which protected characteristics would be affected.

Various approaches were offered to support participation. Throughout both phases, opportunities were offered for the public to attend face to face and digital sessions to discuss the proposals in more detail. There were 2 face to face sessions, including British Sign Language options and 4 digital sessions, with a total of 24 attendees

From the responses received in the consultation:

Option in Phase 1: 'Reduction in funding to VisitAberdeenshire'

2150 responses – 134 (6%) felt negative impact would be 'high' with a further 279 (13%) finding it 'medium'.

Highest protected characteristic impacts were age (20%) and disability (10%) for the culture options as a whole.

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

VisitAberdeenshire have been consulted by the Chief Officer – City Development and Regeneration

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy?

Council Budget Consultation – Phase 2 (see also statement above)

Elderly volunteers have been consulted by the Service Manager – Commercial Development

Due to the nature of the organisation the cut would impact on visitors with protected characteristics from outside of the area with whom consultation is not possible within the timeframe required to return IIA for this budget option

There has been very high-level feedback from businesses and organisations in the visitor economy. Indicative quotes are below with full responses available upon request:

'I was extremely alarmed to read within the [budget] consultation that there is a proposal to stop funding VisitAberdeenshire, even more so at a time where the role the DMO fills in driving positive economic impact, promoting the destination and helping manage the delivery of tourism responsibly and sustainably has never been more important. As a destination which has had to ride out some extremely challenging and difficult times over the years and still some would say in a period of transition, with some fantastic assets not least the P&J live, with the huge potential to grow both the leisure and business tourism offer if anything the council should be looking to upweight their support of VisitAberdeenshire and increase the funding, not be looking to reduce or stop it.' – Marc Crothall MBE, CEO of the Scottish Tourism Alliance, and Co-chair of Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership.

Mr Crothall appended the Scottish Tourism Alliance response to the 2025/26 UK Budget which further outlines the importance of Destination Management Organisations such as VisitAberdeenshire.

‘VisitAberdeenshire plays a crucial role in generating income for the city of Aberdeen, driving revenue directly and indirectly for local businesses of all sizes and sectors. Reducing or eliminating its funding would not only jeopardize this vital source of income but also diminish future visitor levy revenues for Aberdeen City Council, especially if such a scheme is introduced.’ – Local accommodation provider, bar owner and food trader

‘infrastructure that enables and creates attraction to the City does require support from the council’ – Local accommodation provider

‘I believe any reduction in the support for VisitAberdeenshire, particularly in the next 5 years, will undermine a key growth area for the city and area as energy industry businesses and jobs decline. My business has benefited from the clear guidance of VABDN. And VABDN will can only continue to realise commercial value from the great natural and cultural resources of the northeast of Scotland.’ – Local accommodation provider

‘...it is very concerning to hear about the Aberdeen Council proposal to stop funding support for VisitAberdeenshire completely in the 2025/26 budget as opposed to the already worrying reduction proposal. The work that VisitAberdeenshire are putting in to support the local tourism and thereby us as a hotel is vital for the continued success in growing Aberdeen as a meeting and convention city as well as a tourism destination for the hotels. The contribution that the Convention Bureau are providing in bringing events to TECA have a massive impact on our business especially for the larger conferences and weekend supporting our occupancy [...] To summarise the risk to the current pipeline of 136,200 bed night that the Aberdeen Convention Bureau are working on in addition that what is already confirmed is extremely worrying to us. It is going backwards instead of a strategic forward looking way of supporting the hotels and tourism sector and will have an impact on our occupancy and revenue.’ – Major multi-national accommodation provider

‘VisitAberdeenshire’s work exemplifies this [strategic approach to visitor economy], supporting the Regional Economic Strategy, economic resilience and sustainability, while amplifying Aberdeen’s voice on the global stage. Aberdeen City Council has been instrumental this transformational approach since the creation of VisitAberdeenshire – continuing support is vital in building on this success in increasingly challenging times for the regional economy.’ – This very full response runs to two pages and outlines the serious economic impacts for the local economy, sector jobs, tourism, conventions and business tourism, visitor readiness for local businesses and the developing programme with schools. It also highlights the loss of match-funding from Opportunity North East and potential reduction in match-funding from Aberdeenshire Council.’ – Tourism Consultant based in Aberdeen, and Board Member of VisitAberdeenshire

‘[I] urge Aberdeen City Council to continue prioritizing funding for VisitAberdeenshire to sustain this vital industry. Tourism not only enhances the cultural and economic vibrancy of our region but also supports countless businesses and communities across Aberdeenshire. The initiatives driven by the Convention Bureau & Visit Aberdeenshire supporting and driving key 2025 events [...] significantly boost our local economy. These events attract visitors from near and far, offering invaluable exposure to our unique heritage and landscapes. They also directly benefit local businesses, from hospitality to retail, and underpin jobs in various sectors. Ongoing support is crucial to maintaining and growing Aberdeenshire's reputation as a premier destination for conferences, leisure, and world-class events.’ – Major multi-national accommodation provider

'I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed withdrawal of funding for Visit Aberdeenshire, an organisation that has played an instrumental role in driving tourism and economic growth in our community [...] It has also helped maintain and raise the professional standards of all those connected to the industry. [...] Reducing financial support from this organisation would not only harm our local economy but also undermine the progress made toward establishing our area as an attractive and vibrant destination for visitors. [...]The importance of tourism cannot be overstated. It generates income for local businesses, creates jobs, and fosters a sense of pride within the community. By investing in Visit Aberdeenshire, you are generating events, marketing campaigns, and initiatives that draw people to our area, which in turn drives revenue for local hospitality, retail, and service sectors. This flow of visitors contributes directly to our economy, enhancing the quality of life for residents and supporting the council's own financial health through increased tax revenue. – International travel trade company based in Aberdeen

Many of these responses run to multiple paragraphs particularly highlighting loss of external spend in the local economy, loss of jobs and cessation of Convention Bureau activities bringing a large number of large conferences and expos to the city. It is hoped that the above is a fair representation of the feedback received.

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

- The Council could continue to fund the work of the volunteers and look to introduce a specific schools education strand related to work in the visitor economy.
- The Council could bring other services in-house to try and reduce the impact on jobs and businesses, running separate marketing campaigns, targeting specific communities in the visitor economy, and targeting conference activity, particularly related to protected characteristics.

These options would all reduce the nature of the budget saving while providing a less-effective replacement of the current position. Loss of economic spend and jobs would remain likely which is the largest factor in considering this budget option.

VisitAberdeenshire is funded by three bodies on an approximately equal basis. This reflects its role in promoting the city and region. In addition to any cut the organisation would lose match funding from Opportunity North East, and a high risk of losing funding from Aberdeenshire Council – the other funder. This would be proportionate to any cut made by Aberdeen City Council. At 50% the organisation would scale back all activities, and lay off members of the team.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?

High	
Medium	X
Low	
Negative Impact Removed	

3: Socio-Economic Impacts

Aberdeen City Council has a duty to reduce the inequalities of outcome that can arise from socio-economic disadvantage. This section is used to consider what impact the policy may have on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage – and how any inequalities of outcome arising from the policy can be reduced.

Use this guide to understand more on socio-economic inequalities: [The Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for Public Bodies \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty/guidance-for-public-bodies/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

3.1 What impact could this policy have on people who experience the following aspects of socio-economic disadvantage?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Low income – those who have insufficient earnings to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing, housing, or utilities.	x		
Low/ no wealth – those who have no savings for unexpected spend or provision for the future.	x		
Material deprivation – those who cannot afford or access goods or services that are considered essential or desirable for a decent quality of life, such as food, clothing, heating, transport, internet, cultural, recreational and social activities.	x		
Area deprivation – those who live in an area with poor living conditions, such as higher levels of crime, pollution, noise, congestion, or lack of infrastructure, amenities, or green spaces.	x		
Socio-economic background – social class, parents’ education, employment, income.	x		

3.2 In what way will the policy impact people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?

The visitor economy that VisitAberdeenshire supports includes over 5000-jobs, many at a entry level which do not require learning beyond school level e.g. cleaning, portering, kitchen porters/commis chefs, front-of-house staff, security and stewarding, etc This in turn supports people in those communities most at risk of deprivation, this includes areas of multiple deprivation, those without formal qualifications, those with a criminal record, recent immigrants with permission to work, those returning to work.

Discussions are currently underway regarding the introduction of a Transient Visitor Levy, as recently approved by the Scottish Government. This would raise money to support the visitor economy by charging a small percentage fee on all overnight accommodation in the city, payable by the guest. As part of the legislation funds raised must be directed primarily at the visitor economy, but with benefits to other communities in the Local Authority. Any downturn in overnight accommodation as a result of the loss of VisitAberdeenshire’s support for business and leisure tourism would result in a lower collection of levy funds, and therefore a lower community benefit spend.

3.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

Local Government Association data from ‘Supplying Skills for the Local Visitor Economy’, 2019
House of Commons Research Briefing ‘Women in the Economy’, March 2024
Resolution Foundation, ‘Ethnic Minorities in the Hospitality Sector’, Dec 2020
British Chamber of Commerce, ‘The Role of Businesses in the UK Visitor Economy’, Oct 2024

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?
Consultation as in Section 2.3 (above)
What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy?
Consultation in Section 2.3 above, plus Council Budget Consultation Phase 2

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?		
<p>No mitigations currently identified.</p> <p>VisitAberdeenshire's tri-partite funding agreement provides Aberdeen City Council with significant positive impact.</p> <p>Job losses would be seen within the organisation and potentially across the wider visitor economy.</p>		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	x
	Yes – negative impact reduced	
	Yes - negative impact removed	

4: Consumer Impacts

The Consumer Scotland Act 2020 places a Consumer Duty on the public sector to put consumer interests at the heart of strategic decision-making, emphasising the need for accessible and affordable public services, especially during times of financial pressure. This person-centred approach is intended to result in better quality services and outcomes for the public as consumers of public services across Scotland.

This section of the IIA is used to consider the impact of the policy on consumers of any services that the policy is intended to change.

Use this guide to understand more on the consumer duty: [How to meet the consumer duty: guidance for public authorities](#)

4.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below consumer groups?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Individuals	x		
Small businesses	x		

4.2 In what way will the policy impact people in these consumer groups?

Individuals – lower awareness of Aberdeen as a visitor destination, reduced flights, reduced accommodation choices (including affordable options), reduced potential accommodation for asylum seekers or those placed by Government through other schemes.

Small businesses – responses from small businesses overwhelmingly show objection to this plan, both in writing and at feedback at the Aberdeen Inspired meetings of Business Improvement District levy payers. They cite lower income, potential job losses, and wider risks to their businesses from reduced levels of customers and visitors.

See extensive feedback notes in Section 2.3 (above)

4.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

No mitigations currently identified.

VisitAberdeenshire's tri-partite funding agreement provides Aberdeen City Council with significant positive impact.

Job losses would be seen within the organisation and potentially across the wider visitor economy.

If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

x

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

5: Human Rights Impacts

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000

The Act sets out our human rights in a series of 'Articles'. Each Article deals with a different right.

Use this guide to understand more about [Human Rights](#).

5.1 What impact could this policy have on Human Rights?

Human Rights Article	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 2: Right to life		X	
Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour		X	
Article 5: Right to liberty and security		X	
Article 6: Right to a fair trial		X	
Article 7: No punishment without law		X	
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence		X	
Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 10: Freedom of expression		X	
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association		X	
Article 12: Right to marry and start a family		X	
Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms		X	
Article 1 of Protocol 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property		X	
Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education		X	
Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to participate in free elections		X	

5.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

Neutral impact – I can see no way in which this impacts Human Rights

5.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?		
n/a		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	
	Yes – negative impact reduced	
	Yes - negative impact removed	

CONFIDENTIAL

6: Children and Young People's Rights Impacts

The United Nations Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Children's rights apply to every child/young person under the age of 18 and to adults still eligible to receive a "children's service" e.g. care leavers aged 18-26 years old.

You can [read the full UN Convention \(pdf\)](#), or [just a summary \(pdf\)](#), to find out more about the rights that are included.

6.1 What impact could this policy have on the rights of Children and Young People?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
PROVISION			
Article 2: non-discrimination		X	
Article 3: best interests of the child provision and protection		X	
Article 5: parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities		X	
Article 16: right to privacy		X	
Article 17: access to information from the media		X	
Article 18: parental responsibilities and state assistance	X		
Article 22: refugee children		X	
Article 23: children with a disability		X	
Article 24: health and health services		X	
Article 26: social security		X	
Article 27: adequate standard of living	X		
Article 28: right to education		X	
Article 29: goals of education		X	
Article 30: children from minority or indigenous groups		X	
Article 31: leisure, play and culture		X	
Article 39: recovery from trauma and reintegration		X	
Article 40: juvenile justice		X	
PROTECTION			
Article 6: life, survival and development		X	
Article 7: birth registration, name, nationality, care		X	
Article 8: protection and preservation of identity		X	
Article 9: Separation from parents		X	
Article 10: family reunification protection		X	
Article 11: abduction and non-return of children		X	
Article 15: freedom of association		X	
Article 19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect		X	
Article 20: children unable to live with their family		X	
Article 21: adoption		X	
Article 25: review of treatment in care		X	
Article 33: drug abuse		X	
Article 34: sexual exploitation		X	
Article 35: abduction, sale and trafficking		X	
Article 36: other forms of exploitation		X	

Article 37: inhumane treatment and detention		X	
Article 38: war and armed conflicts		X	
Article 32: child labour		X	
PARTICIPATION			
Article 12: respect for the views of the child		X	
Article 13: freedom of expression		X	
Article 14: freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 42: knowledge of rights		X	

6.2 In what way will the policy impact the rights of Children and Young People?

The role of VisitAberdeenshire is to the benefit of the economy of the city.

The role is to increase the number of visitors to Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire, support businesses to meet that demand, and to re-invest in what the city/region can offer – increasing length of stay and spend as a result.

Reduction in funding will adversely impact this work including:

- parents inability to find work or losing their job due to implementation of this budget cut. Negative impacts from loss of work on the parents would likely impact on parental responsibility and increased state assistance, with joblessness also impacting negatively on parental guidance
- reduction in support and advocacy for tourist economy and loss of opportunity through schools programmes, skills pipelines and early career development, particularly those from areas of multiple deprivation and minority ethnic communities – reducing their ability to find paid work.
- Gateways Into Employment scheme, annual Foundation Apprentice

Refugee children may be impacted by a loss of hotel accommodation, as a result of business closures, reducing the city's capacity to assist in government programmes to re-settle migrants, often through temporary hotel accommodation in the first instance. This may also mean that they cannot be located in the same cities as existing family or in-country contacts.

6.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

While the Council could bring support for the visitor economy in-house the specific vision and perspective of the Destination Management Organisation would be lost, risking Aberdeen's competitive advantage in the sector, with potential for loss of spend in the economy.

If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

X

7: Environmental Impacts

Aberdeen City Council has a duty to meet its legal environmental responsibilities by working towards Net Zero emissions, adapting to climate change, and acting in a way it considers most sustainable. We must also fulfil the [biodiversity duty](#) and [sustainable procurement duty](#).

This section in the Integrated Impact Assessment demonstrates that these considerations that have been made in the policy, that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted, and what mitigating steps can be taken to reduce any negative impact of the policy.

Use this guide to understand more on the legal climate change duty: [Climate change - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) and find out more about how Aberdeen is adapting to Climate Change: [Aberdeen Adapts | Aberdeen City Council](#)

7.1 What is the impact of this policy on any of the below climate, environmental and waste considerations?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Council or City-wide carbon emissions	X		
Active and sustainable travel	X		
Facilities for local living		X	
Resilience and adaptability to flooding and weather events		X	
Biodiversity improvement and wildlife/habitat connectivity		X	
Water consumption and drainage		X	
Pollution (air, water, noise, light and land contamination)		x	
Impact on resource use and waste		x	
Sustainable procurement of goods and services	x		

7.2 In what way will the policy impact the environment?

VisitAberdeenshire has supported numerous sustainable tourism initiatives, working extensively with local accommodation providers to review their energy use, waste handling, laundry policies, and promotion of active and public transport to visitors. They provide ongoing and regularly updated advice in this regard.

To support these schemes VisitAberdeenshire have developed and implemented a Sustainable Business Toolkit on the basis of advice through an industry development programme aligned with the Scottish Government Tourism Strategy.

Encouraging national use of public transport to visit the region has been key, with partnerships with LNER, and Scottish Rail Holdings (owned by the Scottish Government) for rail travel, including Caledonian Sleeper Services. This has taken place directly, but also indirectly through promotion to travel journalists e.g. a recent Guardian piece which encouraged travel to/from Aberdeen by train and use of the local bus networks to visit the city and wider region.

As a result of VisitAberdeenshire's sustainability focus a Wanderlust article noted that the region was 'leading the way in sustainable tourism'.

In addition VisitAberdeenshire's direct role it uses its marketing reach to amplify Aberdeen City Council messaging around Bus Gates, active travel, event travel promotion, and is working on the Tall Ships project to support those initiatives.

Similarly it gives extensive support and promotion to the Council-owned P&J Live (the UK's most sustainable exhibition and conference venue) in order to attract conferences, events and expos. Working with organisers to use hydrogen and electric buses in support of their delegate transport needs.

It could be argued that a reduction in tourism to the region could lower carbon emissions, noise and pollution from flights, cruise ships and general travel miles. However, the rapid changes in these sectors would mean any benefit decreases in the longer term. Likewise, persuading UK and European business and leisure tourists to remain in the UK rather than choose longer-haul destinations is a net benefit. Given the other sustainability measures this area has been scored as neutral. A full analysis would need to be undertaken to get a more definitive environmental impact assessment.

7.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

Existing board papers and the Destination Strategy, Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor data relating to point of origin and travel method for inbound tourism, news articles, and consideration of the wider approach of the visitor economy sector.

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with local groups, partner organisations, experts etc? Where required, identify any other environmental assessments that have been completed.

VisitAberdeenshire have been consulted to ensure up-to-date data and additional outline of particular schemes.

Local businesses in the visitor economy have commented widely about the impact of the proposal as those most affected.

Feedback from industry focused on economic impacts, but a separate survey of environmental feedback resulting from VisitAberdeenshire's programmes and assistance could be undertaken.

7.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

Engage external consultants to provide sustainability advice to accommodation providers and visitor attractions.

Increase funding to P&J Live to counteract any reduction in messaging from the Convention Bureau.

Provide or seek additional funding for events to market active travel and public transport to the public.

Engage national companies and bodies to influence travel undertaken to the city and region.

This may result in higher spend.

If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

x

8: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?
None.
Does the policy relate to the Council's Equality Outcomes? If yes, how.
N/A
Overall summary of changes made to the policy as a result of impact assessment.
N/A
Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.
Annual city visitor figures. Number of hotel beds sold.
If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.
There are remaining negative impacts but due to the overarching requirement to consider the options available to achieve savings and ensure the Council sets a balanced budget, a statutory requirement, then it should be considered in that context

Assessment Author	Matthew Williams, Service Manager - Commercial
Date	16/12/24
Chief Officer	Julie Wood
Date	21/02/25