

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

Further efficiencies in City Development and Regeneration

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

This policy seeks to create further efficiencies across the City Development and Regeneration cluster to the target of £309,000 by reducing a number of budgets.

This target can only be achieved through reductions in staff employment, staff development, professional membership and cultural venue maintenance / upkeep budgets, and continued promotion of the city as a place to invest, visit, live and establish businesses in.

Income from grants is the largest source of expenditure related to on-going activity and business as usual.

Impact on inward investment, grant income and cultural offer would be significant, with services reducing or ceasing to function.

The cluster would expect to see a commensurate reduction in economic activity across the city / region as this cluster is also responsible for the development of the Regional Economic Strategy, Plan and Investment Pipeline for Aberdeen city Council, as well as the nascent Investment Zone.

The work of the cluster is essential to the city's Purple Flag status in particular in relation to further reductions in relation to "selling" the city as a place to work, live, visit and invest in (Exhibitions; M&G Operations; International Trade & Investment; World energy Cities Partnership).

Employability & Skills budget reductions in particular account for some of the staffing "on costs" related to significant grant income and employment to deliver significant funding streams. A reduction in these areas may be possible if Government (UK/Scot) allow on-costs to be absorbed in overheads rather than fall to Local Authorities when managing and administering over £2M in grants. However, should on-costs fall to Aberdeen City Council, a reduction in these budget areas (No One Left Behind; Parental Employability support fund; Young Persons Guarantee) may result in the Cluster being unable to manage these grants and funding streams and returning underspend to UK & Scot Government.

Professional membership of groups such as World Energy Cities and Museums Association adversely impact the ability of staff to work at a national and international level, bringing partnership working to the city to the benefit of specific programme streams.

Recent positive advantages have included:

£25k/ann for free school travel to visit the art gallery focussed on Torry and ASN groups across the city

£30k across 2 years to embed “science capital” into museum activity

£52k via Museums Galleries Scotland for rationalisation project and marketing photography

Budget area	Cost centre	Total budget	Saving proposed	Impact
CO - City Development & Regeneration budget	F30103	219,317.36	96,000	There are salaries currently sitting in this cost centre – a hangover from previous redesign – we need to rebalance all staffing budgets to take into account other recent changes.
Exhibitions	J66317	50,000	50,000	No support for Offshore Europe; no attendance at “selling” and promotion” conferences
M&G Activity	A13122	11,871	6,500	Covers membership of professional bodies required for Museum Accreditation (Museums Association 2k; Art UK 1k; Contemporary Art Society 3k)
M&G Buildings & Operations	A13111	716,617.80	17,000	Most costs outwith control and include utilities & NDR Efficiencies may be found, but would reduce quality of public offer as budget covers cleaning, maintenance, H&S
International trade & investment	J66510	32,527	32,000	Cease all international trade and investment activity
NOLB	J66530	10,989.39	11,000	Cease all activity / establish full cost recovery on all grants
Parental employability support fund	J66530	79,640.81	80,000	Cease all activity / establish full cost recovery on all grants
World Energy Cities Partnership	J66505	4,500	4,500	Stop membership of WECP
Young Persons Guarantee	J66530	12,770.59	12,000	Cease all activity / establish full cost recovery on all grants
	TOTAL		309,000	

1.3 Is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision?

This is a non-statutory fund and therefore is being considered as part of the budget process.

The decision to remove this budget line is subject to a decision of Full Council as part of its budget setting process, therefore this is considered to be strategic.

1.4 Is this a new or existing policy?

This is a new policy proposal

1.5 Is this report going to a committee?

Yes

1.6 Committee name and date:

Full Council. Budget setting meeting – 5 March 2025.

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

New 112

1.8 Function and Cluster:

City Regeneration and Environment Function

City Development & Regeneration Cluster

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:

- **Working age Population:** From 2015 to 2021, Aberdeen's working-age population (16-64) declined by 5%, equivalent to 7,900 individuals. Reduced resources in the cluster could limit the ability to provide services and programs aimed at attracting and retaining younger residents, exacerbating the decline in the working-age population.
- **Ageing Population:** The data indicates a growing aging population in Aberdeen, which necessitates future investment to make the city an attractive place to live, visit, and do business. In 2011, 71% of Aberdeen City's population was of working age; this has declined to 67% in 2021 (APS – ONS). This trend is expected to accelerate if staff reductions are implemented, leading to a net negative impact on other aspects of ACC's budgetary position. As the city spends more on social care and sees a reduction in working-age individuals contributing to the system, particularly in terms of council tax, there will be additional council tax reductions as a result.
- **Youth Employment and Skills Development:** One group that has experienced significant disadvantage since the pandemic is young people. In Scotland, the youth employment rate (age 16-24) fell by nearly 10 percentage points to just over 50% during the pandemic although it has subsequently recovered. Aberdeen's youth employment was among the highest rates of all local authorities in Scotland pre-pandemic and has fallen to among the lowest by mid-2022. Reduced resources in the cluster could hinder the ability to provide training and development programs for young people, impacting their employment prospects and contributing to higher youth unemployment rates.

Disability:

- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** The gap in employment for those disabled vs those who are not is 32.2% in the North East of Scotland in 2021, with a RES target of 27% by 2029. Economic inactivity among people with disabilities remains a significant issue, with many individuals requiring support to participate in the workforce. The number of people economically inactive due to long term sickness reached an all time high in 2024 in Aberdeen City at 10,800 people, representing more than a third of those who are economically inactive in Aberdeen City. The reduction in staff and resources could negatively impact the ability to implement and maintain accessibility improvements in public spaces and infrastructure. This could lead to decreased accessibility for people with disabilities, limiting their participation in community activities and access to services

Sex:

- **Gender Employment Gap:** The gap in earnings for men and women is 11% for Aberdeen City aged 16-64, 2021, we have a target in the RES to reduce to 4.7% by 2029. The reduction in staff and resources could exacerbate existing gender disparities in employment. Women, who are often overrepresented in lower-paid and part-time positions, may be disproportionately affected by job cuts and reduced support services.
- **Support for Women and Families:** Reduced resources could impact programs and services that support women and families, such as childcare, family support services, and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in the workplace

Fostering Cultural Identity and Belonging

- Fostering a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging in the region is crucial for Aberdeen's social and economic development. The current participation rate in cultural activities in Aberdeen City is 72.8%, with a target to increase this to 82.6% by 2029. Additionally, there is an aim to increase the number of assets held by communities across the region from 34 to more than 54 by 2029. Another key objective is to boost the number of jobs in the creative industries from the current 6,100 to over 7,700 by 2029. The cluster's work is vital in achieving these cultural goals. Reduced staff and resources could hinder the ability to support cultural initiatives, community projects, and creative industry development. This could lead to a decline in cultural participation impacting individuals' mental and physical wellbeing, fewer community-held assets, and limited growth in creative industry jobs. Consequently, the region's cultural identity and sense of belonging may be negatively impacted, affecting the overall quality of life and attractiveness of Aberdeen as a vibrant and inclusive city.

The significant reduction in staff within this cluster would impact on working-age people across the city with a potential reduction in attracting business to stay in or relocate to Aberdeen.

The additional and more specific impact is on attractiveness of the city to residents, inward investment, businesses and tourism. It would reduce the flexibility of the team, restricting how the city could respond to situations such as Covid (business grant, recovery) and opportunities such as UK Government funding (UKSPF), investment zone initiatives and establishment of new business investment in the city / region like GB Energy.

City demographics show an aging population, in common with general trends in Scotland, and with the change in energy production / energy transition, it is vital to develop the future investment in the city as an attractive place to live, visit and do business.

The work of the team also has a direct impact on the pipeline of well trained, skilled and qualified people, as well as the recovery and rehabilitation of people re-entering the job market through the Employability & Skills work and No One Left Behind.

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?

Documentation

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

Consultation

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.

Part 2 received 1,148 responses of which 483 (42%) responses noted that the proposal would have a medium/high impact on them. There were 240 comments recorded and these focused on concerns relating to the negative impact this policy would have in relation to the following:

- The city's economy
- Job creation
- City Attractiveness
- The sustainability of small businesses
- Impact on retail and leisure
- Community services
- Entrepreneurship and
- Quality of Life

This policy proposal was not included in either part of the public consultation, though may be considered to have been broadly covered by the entirety of the bulleted list above.

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

This was a new budget option proposal, and as such did not go for wider consultation. The team members directly impacted have been briefed and consulted on the papers going to forward for decision.

In person consultations on all business/economic related budget proposals were undertaken with officers from the following business organisations:

- Federation of Small Businesses;
- Aberdeen Inspired;
- Our Union Street; and
- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce.

These organisations represent approximately 2,000 businesses in the city, the majority of which are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) this c. 25% of the business base of the city.

The main points raised in these consultations were as follows:

- At a time when the cost of doing business is increasing (eg NI contributions) any local originated cost increases will impact on the sustainability of small businesses, constrain growth and potential to result in closures and job losses;
- Reducing support for business growth will harm the city's overall prospects, making it less attractive for investors, job seekers and businesses; leading to economic decline;
- Support for business is crucial for both job creation and safeguarding, especially as the city economy transitions from its over reliance on the oil & gas sector; and
- At this time proposed budget savings have a high potential to result in business closures, delayed business investment and result in job losses across all sizes of businesses and fewer job opportunities being made available.

In addition, Skills Development Scotland, Opportunity North East, Scottish Development International, Scottish Enterprise and ETZ Ltd raised the same concerns.

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

As noted, this was a new proposal and was not a specific part of the public consultation.

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)?

Additional funding could be sought through government grant schemes; however, success is far from guaranteed and such schemes are highly competitive.

The uncertainty and lack of multi-year funding would make a strategic approach to the work of the cluster unfeasible, resulting in the loss of expertise as staff seek secure roles out with the public sector.

Current funding agreements would be placed at risk, including £multi-million delivery programmes managed through the cluster and invested through and supporting local partner delivery mechanisms.

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?

De-funding the cluster to this extent, in addition to a wider range of budget reduction proposals would render the work currently delivered as unfeasible.

Grants would be handed back to UK and Scottish Government as remaining staff would be unable to manage, distribute, track, audit and report on economic, employability and inward investment programmes.

Museums and gallery would reduce opening hours and limit the cultural offer in the city.

Business support would be significantly reduced, and efforts to invest in areas seeing a decline in retail would no longer be supported.

The Regional Economic Strategy, Plan and investment pipeline would be disrupted and work on the establishment of an Investment Zone would be significantly reduced.

All activity is focussed on increasing investment in the city through employment, skills development, attracting and retaining businesses, attracting and retaining young people to offset an aging demographic, and “selling” the city as a place to live, visit, work and invest in.

Reducing economic growth services can have significant negative impacts on people experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage including: Job Losses and Unemployment (disproportionately affecting individuals in lower-brackets who may have fewer job opportunities), access to education and training, increased economic inequality (leading to a wider gap between the wealthy and poor), mental health and well-being, limited access to funding and resources (hindering local economic development and job creation). It may impact on future generations perpetuating cycles of poverty across generations.

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?

Low Income:

- Insufficient Earnings: Reduced resources in the cluster could limit the ability to provide support services and programs aimed at increasing employment opportunities and wages for low-income individuals. This could exacerbate financial instability and make it harder for these individuals to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, and utilities.
- Employment Support: The reduction in staff may impact the availability of employment support services, such as job training and placement programs, which are crucial for helping low-income individuals secure stable employment
- SMEs and businesses or start-ups in the city's regeneration areas account for 94% of the city's business base. Reduction in activity across the cluster will have a significantly negative impact on developing and diversifying the business base of Aberdeen resulting in fewer job opportunities for people with protected characteristics.
- In its annual poverty report and action plan, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation states the best way in which to get people out of poverty is to get them into employment. This is priority action number 1.

Area Deprivation

- Aberdeen Local Employability Partnership Delivery Plan: Community Planning Aberdeen has identified three priority neighbourhood partnerships where people experience significantly poorer outcomes than other people across the city and Scotland as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. They are:
 - ☐ Cummings Park, Heathryfold, Northfield, Mastrick, Middlefield (North Locality)
 - ☐ Torry (South Locality)
 - ☐ Seaton, Woodside, Tillydrone (Central locality)
- 10.2% of Aberdeen's data zones are in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. Individuals living in areas with poor living conditions, such as higher levels of crime, pollution, noise, congestion, or lack of infrastructure, amenities, or green spaces, may be negatively impacted by reduced resources in the cluster. This could limit the ability to invest in and improve these areas.
- Aberdeen Investment Plan: Insight into challenges faced by particular communities and the increase in deprived data zones. The reduction in staff may impact the ability to support community development projects aimed at addressing area deprivation and improving living conditions for residents.

Socio-economic Background

- Aberdeen Local Employability Partnership Delivery Plan: The number of children living in absolute low-income families increased from 3,962 in 2014/15 to 4,541 in 2020/21. Reduced resources in the cluster could limit the availability of programs and services aimed at addressing socio-economic disparities based on social class, parents' education, employment, and income. The reduction in staff may impact the ability to support initiatives aimed at promoting economic mobility and reducing socio-economic inequalities, such as education and training programs.

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

As above in 2.3

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

As above in 2.3

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)?		
As above in 2.4		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	
	Yes – negative impact reduced	x
	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 – fewer opportunities driven by inward investment through grants and government funding as staff responsible for the management and tracking of income are reduced; lower business sector investment in the city impacting employment opportunities; fewer cultural engagement and enjoyment opportunities impact on quality of life, health and wellbeing of the individual; lower levels of investment in the city overall, and in green energy in particular; reduced attractiveness and awareness of Aberdeen as a place to work, relocate to, or visit.

Small businesses – lower income, job losses, and potential wider risks to their businesses from reduced levels of customers and visitors; fewer incoming businesses to drive local consumer economy; further reduction of retail offer in the city centre as initiatives to encourage investment are removed or become unmanageable

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)?		
As above in 2.4		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	
	Yes – negative impact reduced	x
	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?

No direct impact

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	

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?

It is not considered that the policy will impact the rights of children and young people. Each Article has been considered separately.

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)?		
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	

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			
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?

The current proposal would negatively impact the delivery of:
Regional Economic Strategy (Net Zero ambitions)
Further development of the Hydrogen Valley Proposals/Energy Proposals
Ability to learn from cities in World Energy Partnership

Ensuring that the city is seen as a place to invest and build businesses in has a positive impact on local living facilities, local provision of goods and services, raising average income, employment levels, anti-social behaviour, cultural health and wellbeing. This will be negatively impacted by this policy of reduction of budget at this scale.

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?

The Regional Economic Strategy outlines the priorities of the region and ambitions for net zero.

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.

None

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)?

As 2.4

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	

8: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?

Failure to Meet RES Targets:

- The reduction in staff and resources could hinder the achievement of Regional Economic Strategy (RES) targets.

Skills and Workforce Development:

- The strategy emphasises the importance of skills and workforce development to support economic growth. Reduced staff and resources in your cluster could hinder the ability to provide training and development programs, impacting the availability of a skilled workforce.
- The city is home to 50,000 students at the Robert Gordon University, University of Aberdeen and North East Scotland College. It is of critical importance to the success of the Regional Economic Strategy attract students and maximise graduate retention in support of economic growth particular in the context of both an aging population and recent migration trends away from the North East since EU Exit, successive downturns in the oil and gas sector, cost of living and supply chain crises. Halting the work of the cluster in supporting the further education sector is this endeavour through the Regional Economic Strategy could jeopardise this important pillar.

Inward Investment and Business Support:

- The RES aims to attract inward investment and support businesses in the region. Maintaining levels of inward investment into the region from FDI/year is crucial, with 6 projects in Aberdeen in 2022, accounting for 5.3% of Scotland's total. Supporting the internationalisation of key growth sectors is essential to maintain North East Scotland's share of overall Scottish exports, which was £11.3bn (23.1% of Scotland's total) in 2021, with a target to exceed 23.1% by 2029. Additionally, maintaining and growing the reputation of being a global innovation hub is vital, with a goal to increase business expenditure on research and development as a percentage of GVA from 1.2% to 2% by 2029. Creating an investment environment where businesses can flourish is also a priority, with a target for startups to achieve year 4 turnover of >£25m, increasing from 1.1% to 1.5% by 2029. With reduced staff, the cluster may struggle to provide adequate support to businesses, potentially leading to a decline in investment and business growth, thereby hindering the achievement of these RES metrics.

Infrastructure and Connectivity:

- Improving infrastructure and connectivity is a key priority in the RES. Reduced resources could limit the ability to invest in and maintain infrastructure projects, affecting the region's attractiveness to investors and residents

Innovation and Inclusive Economic Growth:

- The strategy highlights the need for innovation and inclusive economic growth. With fewer resources, the cluster may find it challenging to support innovation initiatives and ensure that economic growth benefits all segments of the population

Sustainable Environment:

- The RES focuses on creating an attractive and sustainable environment to live and work. Reduced investment in environmental projects and public spaces could negatively impact the region's sustainability goals and overall quality of life

Economic Resilience and Adaptability:

- The strategy aims to build economic resilience and adaptability in the face of changing economic conditions. Reduced flexibility and responsiveness due to staff cuts could hinder the cluster's ability to adapt to new opportunities and challenges

Aging Population:

- The data shows Aberdeen has a growing aging population. In 2011, 71% of Aberdeen City's population was of working age; this has declined to 67% in 2021 (APS – ONS). This trend is expected to accelerate if staff reductions are implemented.

Impact on Aging Population:

- With an aging population, reduced investment and support could lead to a decline in the attractiveness of the city for residents and businesses.

Economic Decline:

- A decrease in inward investment and business support could lead to reduced economic activity and growth.

Reduced Flexibility:

- The team's ability to respond to emergencies and opportunities will be compromised, affecting the city's resilience and adaptability. The cluster was responsible for distributing large amounts of business support during the COVID pandemic and supporting the cities recovery from it.

Impact on Employment and Skills:

- The reduction in staff will negatively impact the pipeline of skilled workers and the recovery of individuals re-entering the job market.

Cultural and Tourism Impact:

- Reduced funding for cultural and tourism-related activities could harm the city's reputation and attractiveness as a destination.

Any staffing impact will be subject to employee and trade union consultation, with final proposals adjusted based on the feedback received.

[Workforce Reduction, Restructure or Redesign](#) IIA provides information around the potential impact on the workforce and the mitigations in place. This includes considerations around supporting staff through redeployment to secure alternative employment should roles be reduced and where staff are at risk of displacement

Does the policy relate to the Council's [Equality Outcomes](#)? If yes, how.

Yes, potentially impacts on the Council's ability to deliver on the following targets.

EO 1 - All people with protected characteristics will access information, goods and services knowing that social and physical barriers are identified and removed, with a focus on Age, Gender reassignment and Disability.

EO 3 – Representation in civic participation of people with protected characteristics will be improved by ensuring our leaders, staff and organisation champion the equality agenda in the city, with a focus on Disability, Race and Sex.

Reduction in support for people returning to the workforce will adversely impact on people recovering from substance abuse and/or leaving prison as the ability to manage those employability and skills programmes would be severely impacted.

Overall summary of changes made to the policy as a result of impact assessment.

Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.

Monitoring the impact using metrics on the economic health of the city eg employment numbers, salary levels; numbers of investments coming to Aberdeen.

In addition: impact through economic outturns for the city, visitor figures, hotel stays, and city centre footfall

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.

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