

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

Stop Support for Business Growth and Invest Aberdeen.

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

The policy seeks to make a saving of up to £406,000 through the removal of costs associated to cost centre J66500.

This covers the activity of the Business Support Team, and Invest Aberdeen, associated staffing costs, and the funding commitment to Our Union Street (£33,000).

The roles and responsibilities undertaken by the Business Support and Invest Aberdeen teams includes:

- Supporting the growth of businesses in the city through development and delivery of externally funded interventions, such as the Business Start Up Grant and Business Toolkit.
- Overseeing the delivery of the Business Gateway service within the city
- Leading on the economic interventions directed at the regeneration of Union Street including the Union Street Empty Shops Action Plan
- Facilitation of external partnerships with Our Union Street and Aberdeen Inspired
- Supporting active membership of the World Energy Cities Partners and delivery of the H2 Twin Cities projects
- Supporting inward international delegations to promote trade and investment opportunities
- Working with Aberdeenshire Council to lead on attracting inward investment opportunities to the city and NE Scotland (Invest Aberdeen is a shared service - this proposal would remove City from that service).
- Supporting active membership of the Scottish Cities Alliance

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:

Budget Proposal New - 113

1.8 Function and Cluster:

Function - City Regeneration & Environment

Cluster – City Development & Regeneration

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?

The impact of services like business support and inward investment on protected characteristics can be multifaceted and significant. Potential impacts of business support and inward investment on these characteristics include:

Access to Opportunities: Business support services can help marginalised groups access resources, funding, and networks, enabling them to start or grow their businesses. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals from underrepresented groups, including women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

Employment Opportunities: Inward investment typically leads to job creation. If businesses are encouraged or required to adopt inclusive hiring practices, this can lead to increased employment opportunities for individuals with protected characteristics. For example, targeted recruitment efforts can help diversify the workforce.

Economic Empowerment: Supporting businesses owned by individuals from protected groups can lead to economic empowerment and reduced inequalities. This can be achieved through targeted business support programs that focus on the specific challenges faced by these entrepreneurs.

Inclusive Business Practices: Inward investment can encourage businesses to adopt more inclusive practices, benefiting employees and customers with protected characteristics. This can include developing products and services that cater to diverse needs or creating inclusive work environments.

Community Development: Investment in local businesses can lead to broader community development, positively impacting social cohesion and reducing inequalities. This can contribute to better outcomes for communities with diverse populations.

Policy and Regulation Impact: The design and implementation of business support programs and inward investment initiatives can either mitigate or exacerbate existing inequalities. Policymakers must consider the needs of different groups to ensure that benefits are equitably distributed.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Effective monitoring and evaluation of business support initiatives can help identify disparities in outcomes for different groups with protected characteristics. This data can inform future policies and practices to promote inclusivity.

Awareness and Advocacy: Business support services can raise awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with protected characteristics, leading to advocacy for more inclusive policies and practices within the business community.

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

Equality Act 2010 (UK): This legislation outlines the protected characteristics and establishes the legal framework for promoting equality and preventing discrimination in various sectors, including employment and business.

Public Sector Equality Duty: Under the Equality Act, public bodies are required to consider how their decisions affect people with protected characteristics. This includes evaluating business support and investment initiatives.

"Building a Fairer Economy: The Role of Business Support": as an example of papers discussing how business support can foster equality and inclusion.

National and Regional Economic Strategies include references to promoting diversity and addressing inequalities through business support and investment.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: as an example of research reports focused on poverty, inequality, and economic development and discuss the effects of economic policies on different demographic groups.

Reports by Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC): how economic policies impact various groups and provide recommendations for inclusive practices.

"Inclusive Business: A Guide for Practitioners": Publications that focus on best practices for inclusive business models and investment strategies can provide insights into how protected characteristics are considered in business development.

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.

This policy proposal was included in part 2 and 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

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) equating to 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. However, as noted above the partners represent c. 2,000 businesses based in the city.

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)?		
Seek external funding to support activity and replace revenue budget. This is high risk and would (at best) generate short term funding.		
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?

This policy to stop business growth and investment will, as noted above, reduce the attractiveness of the city to businesses and potential investors leading to a decline in the economy. This will mean fewer jobs as businesses close or do not make investments for growth.

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?

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.

Stopping all business growth and Invest Aberdeen Activities significantly impacts the aims of the poverty action plan.

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)?

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Seeking further external funding and funding from regional partners for Invest Aberdeen activity would reduce the impacts.

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

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 – while the proposal has a limited direct impact on individuals, reductions in activity to support and attract businesses to the city will have an indirect negative impact through reductions in jobs/employment opportunities. This was noted in the responses to the Part 2 consultation.

Small Businesses - the consequences of ceasing business growth and Invest Aberdeen activity was noted in the responses to Part 2 of the public consultation and in the interviews and discussions with business groups and noted above. In summary the impacts would be 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 of all sizes; leading to economic decline;
- Support for small businesses 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.

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)?		
Seeking further external funding and funding from regional partners for Invest Aberdeen activity would reduce the impacts.		
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?

It is not considered that the policy would have a direct impact on 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	

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		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?

The service has a role to play in supporting businesses move to net zero and supporting businesses with energy transition It also has a role in working with partners to create green jobs of the future.

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)?		
There is a possibility that governments may work directly with other organisations to deliver some of these services, however this is high risk as those organisations would need to have the resource to deliver these services along with the governance and scrutiny that the Council provides in relation to public funding.		
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	

8: Sign Off

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

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.

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

If the suggestion of not accepting the cost saving proposed but instead setting a reasonable income target is taken forward – this would be monitored through monthly budget reports to ensure that the income target is on track to be achieved.

Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.

Monitoring the impact using metrics on the economic health in line with the Regional Economic Strategy Metrics

Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.

If the cost saving proposed is accepted it is likely staff would be displaced and therefore appropriate process will be applied, formal consultation and moved to redeployment for a search for a suitable alternative role.

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Date	28 January 2025
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Date	15/02/2025