

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Budget Saving Proposal - Cease Provision of Sandbags for Flooding

Assessment ID	IIA-002620
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Approved By	Philip McKay
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1. Overview

This document has been generated from information entered into the Integrated Impact Assessment system.

Stop providing sandbags to the public during flood events. Sandbags can provide limited protection against property flooding when used correctly. However, they are generally not effective at fully safeguarding properties from flooding. Property owners are responsible for taking appropriate measures to protect their properties from flooding. Aberdeenshire Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide sandbags.

During screening 5 of 11 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 3 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Sustainability and Climate Change
- Town Centres First

In total there are 4 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 8 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 1 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by philip.mckay@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The remainder of this document sets out the details of all completed impact assessments.

2. Screening

Could your activity / proposal / policy cause an impact in one (or more) of the identified town centres?	Yes
Would this activity / proposal / policy have consequences for the health and wellbeing of the population in the affected communities?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect greenhouse gas emissions (CO2e) in the Council or community and / or the procurement, use or disposal of physical resources?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the resilience to extreme weather events and/or a changing climate of Aberdeenshire Council or community?	Yes
Does the activity / proposal / policy have the potential to affect the environment, wildlife or biodiversity?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy have an impact on people and / or groups with protected characteristics?	Yes
Is this activity / proposal / policy of strategic importance for the council?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's rights?	No
Does this activity / proposal / policy have an impact on children / young people's wellbeing?	No
Does the activity / proposal / policy relate to budget proposals?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Health Inequalities	Not Required
Town Centre's First	Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated

4. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

4.1. Protected Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Age (Younger)		Yes		
Age (Older)		Yes	Yes	
Disability		Yes	Yes	
Race		Yes		
Religion or Belief		Yes		
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and Maternity		Yes		
Sexual Orientation		Yes		
Gender Reassignment		Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership		Yes		

4.2. Socio-economic Groups

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Low income		Yes		
Low wealth		Yes	Yes	
Material deprivation		Yes		
Area deprivation		Yes		
Socioeconomic background		Yes		

4.3. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
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Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Age (Older)	<p>This proposal may affect older residents in communities who could rely on the community to help them protect their properties from flooding.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Sandbags can provide limited protection against property flooding when used correctly. However, they are generally not effective at fully safeguarding properties from flooding.</p> <p>Property owners are responsible for taking appropriate measures to protect their properties from flooding. Aberdeenshire Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide sandbags.</p> <p>While it is not always possible to prevent flooding entirely, a variety of products are available on the market that can help reduce the risk of damage. Aberdeenshire Council maintains a small stock of such products and offers them for sale to the public at cost price. These prices reflect the discounts the Council receives through bulk purchasing, which are often lower than prices available when purchasing directly from suppliers.</p> <p>The products available include flood gates, vent guards, and 'FloodSaxs':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flood gates: Designed to protect doorways from water ingress, these come in different sizes to fit various door openings. - Vent guards: Used to cover air vents, these are available in two sizes. - FloodSaxs: A lightweight, compact, and biodegradable alternative to sandbags. They are flat and contain an absorbent polymer gel that expands on contact with water. <p>Timescale April 2025 onwards</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Age (Older)	<p>This proposal may affect older residents in communities who could rely on the community to help them protect their properties from flooding.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Engage with communities and provide information on the next steps and what further things they need to consider.</p> <p>Timescale April 2025 onwards</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
<p>Disability</p>	<p>This proposal may affect disabled residents in communities who could rely on the community to help them protect their properties from flooding.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Sandbags can provide limited protection against property flooding when used correctly. However, they are generally not effective at fully safeguarding properties from flooding.</p> <p>Property owners are responsible for taking appropriate measures to protect their properties from flooding. Aberdeenshire Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide sandbags.</p> <p>While it is not always possible to prevent flooding entirely, a variety of products are available on the market that can help reduce the risk of damage. Aberdeenshire Council maintains a small stock of such products and offers them for sale to the public at cost price. These prices reflect the discounts the Council receives through bulk purchasing, which are often lower than prices available when purchasing directly from suppliers.</p> <p>The products available include flood gates, vent guards, and 'FloodSaxs':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flood gates: Designed to protect doorways from water ingress, these come in different sizes to fit various door openings. - Vent guards: Used to cover air vents, these are available in two sizes. - FloodSaxs: A lightweight, compact, and biodegradable alternative to sandbags. They are flat and contain an absorbent polymer gel that expands on contact with water. <p>Timescale April 2025 onwards</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Disability	<p>This proposal may affect disabled residents in communities who could rely on the community to help them protect their properties from flooding.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Engage with communities and provide information on the next steps and what further things they need to consider.</p> <p>Timescale April 2025 onwards</p>
Low wealth	<p>Individuals in communities may not be able to afford property-level flood defence products as an alternative to sandbags.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Engage with communities and provide information on the next steps and what further things they need to consider.</p> <p>Timescale April 2025 onwards</p>
Low wealth	<p>Individuals in communities may not be able to afford property-level flood defence products as an alternative to sandbags.</p> <p>Can be mitigated No</p> <p>Justification Although Aberdeenshire Council can assist with purchasing property flood protection products, these can only be supplied at the cost from the manufacturer.</p>

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	The Scottish Flood Forum	<p>The Scottish Flood Forum advises that traditional sandbags have many limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They may not hold back water unless a waterproof sheet is placed under them. - They can be expensive, heavy, difficult to transport and labour intensive to assemble into food defence barriers. -They are prone to leakage, rot very quickly after use and contain viral and bacterial infections often present in food water. -They require proper environmental disposal. <p>Alternative products, such as barriers, often provide more effective long term protection, are more easily deployed and have greater reliability when fitted correctly.</p>	External confirmation on the limitations of sandbags.

4.5. Overall Outcome

Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Sandbags are not effective at preventing flooding. We would encourage residents to invest in products that have been proven to reduce the risk of damage.

Although some residents may be unable to afford property food protection products, the alternative (sandbags) has been proven to be ineffective at preventing ingress of floodwater.

Local authorities are not legally obligated to prevent flooding of individual properties and there is no statutory duty to provide sandbags.

5. Sustainability and Climate Change Impact Assessment

5.1. Emissions and Resources

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Consumption of energy	Yes		Yes	
Energy efficiency		Yes		
Energy source		Yes		
Low carbon transition		Yes		
Consumption of physical resources	Yes		Yes	
Waste and circularity	Yes			
Circular economy transition		Yes		
Economic and social transition		Yes		

5.2. Biodiversity and Resilience

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Quality of environment		Yes		
Quantity of environment		Yes		
Wildlife and biodiversity		Yes		
Infrastructure resilience		Yes		
Council resilience		Yes		
Community resilience			Yes	
Adaptation		Yes		

5.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Consumption of energy	By stopping supplying sandbags, less natural resources will be consumed (quarrying sand) and less energy will be consumed through reduced transportation.
Consumption of energy	The Service has knowledge of individuals travelling from Aberdeen City and Angus (these councils do not supply sandbags) to Aberdeenshire Council depots to collect sandbags. Stopping supplying sandbags at depots would eliminate these journeys and individuals would be more likely to source sandbags from their local building merchants which would be a shorter journey.
Consumption of physical resources	Reduced volume of quarried aggregates will be required.
Waste and circularity	Although uncontaminated used sandbags can be reused or recycled, many are abandoned (or become contaminated) and end up in landfill. Stopping supplying sandbags will reduce this waste.

5.4. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Community resilience	<p>Stopping supplying sandbags may reduce community resilience to flooding.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Continue to support communities to invest in property level protection products.</p> <p>Timescale April 2025</p>
Consumption of energy	<p>Although this will be a saving to the Council of fuel and resource, residents will individually have to seek resources instead which will be multiple individual journeys (whether for sandbags or alternative).</p> <p>Can be mitigated No</p> <p>Justification It would not be possible to stop residents seeking alternative protection measures.</p>
Consumption of physical resources	<p>Personal effects/flooring/furniture could be affected by not having sandbags to divert water from properties which will result in an increase in consumption of resources for the residents.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation An effective communications plan to advise residents of the research/evidence of the ineffectiveness of sandbags and advise of suitable alternative food prevention measures.</p> <p>Timescale April 2025</p>

5.5. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	The Scottish Flood Forum	<p>The Scottish Flood Forum advises that traditional sandbags have many limitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They may not hold back water unless a waterproof sheet is placed under them. - They can be expensive, heavy, difficult to transport and labour intensive to assemble into food defence barriers. - They are prone to leakage, rot very quickly after use and contain viral and bacterial infections often present in food water. - They require proper environmental disposal. <p>Alternative products, such as barriers, often provide more effective long term protection, are more easily deployed and have greater reliability when fitted correctly.</p>	Confirmation that sandbags are not effective.

5.6. Overall Outcome

Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

There is a risk that some communities could be less resilient to flooding by not supplying sandbags.

Sandbags are not effective and should not be seen as the solution to stopping flooding. Stopping supplying sandbags might encourage residents to invest in more effective property level protection products.

6. Town Centre's First Impact Assessment

6.1. Local Factors

Indicator	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Unknown
Town centre assets		Yes		
Footfall		Yes		
Changes to road layouts		Yes		
Parking		Yes		
Infrastructure changes		Yes		
Aesthetics of the town centre		Yes		
Tourism		Yes		
Public safety		Yes	Yes	
Town centre business		Yes	Yes	
Cultural heritage and identity		Yes		
Social and cultural aspects		Yes		

6.2. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Public safety	<p>Although sandbags are not very effective against standing floodwater, they can be used to divert flowing floodwater. This may impact on public safety in some situations.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Members of the public or community groups should plan for flooding and prepare their own arrangements for dealing with floodwater.</p> <p>Timescale April 2025 onwards</p>
Town centre business	<p>Although sandbags are not very effective against standing floodwater, they can be used to divert flowing floodwater. This may impact on town centre businesses.</p> <p>Can be mitigated No</p> <p>Justification Information could be shared through business groups and business support agencies about how business owners can better protect their properties from flooding.</p>

6.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Data	Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009	Local authorities are not legally obligated to prevent flooding of individual properties. Instead, their duty focuses on managing and reducing overall flood risk in accordance with national and local flood risk management plans.	Confirmation of duties.

6.4. Overall Outcome

Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Members of the public or community groups should plan for flooding and prepare their own arrangements for dealing with floodwater.

Local authorities are not legally obligated to prevent flooding of individual properties. Instead, their duty focuses on managing and reducing overall flood risk in accordance with national and local flood risk management plans.

7. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
<p>Work with Communications colleagues to develop a communications strategy for stopping sandbag supply during flood events.</p>	<p>Lead Officer Gavin Penman</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Tuesday April 01, 2025</p> <p>Planned Finish Saturday May 31, 2025</p> <p>Expected Outcome All communities to be fully aware of the changes and take greater responsibility for protecting their properties during flooding.</p> <p>Resource Implications Staff time.</p>