

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Business Gateway Savings

Assessment ID	IIA-003178
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1. Overview

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

IIA to look at the impact on reducing the Business Gateway service budget by £115,000. Aberdeenshire Council manages the Business Gateway service on behalf of Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City Council. This would be from staff vacancies from across Economic Development

During screening 6 of 12 questions indicated that detailed assessments were required, the screening questions and their answers are listed in the next section. This led to 2 out of 5 detailed impact assessments being completed. The assessments required are:

- Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty
- Town Centres First

In total there are 0 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 7 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 2 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by paul.macari2@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?	No
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?	No
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?	Yes
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on inequality of outcome?	Yes
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
Does this activity / proposal / policy impact on consumers of Council services?	Yes

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	Not Required
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		
Disability		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		
Material deprivation		Yes		
Area deprivation		Yes		
Socioeconomic background			Yes	

4.3. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Socioeconomic background	<p>A reduction in funding, may mean in the future that there is a reduced service or support available to businesses.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Business gateway is a service open to all. As a service there is regular feedback taken from customers and evaluation of the support undertaken, which will allow the service to focus and refine the support that is available within our resources.</p> <p>Timescale Ongoing</p>

4.4. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Business Gateway CRM System	We support all service users, including those inequalities and fairer Scotland duty.	Targeted support in the future would have to be considered in order to make sure there is no or limited impact to social economic factors

4.5. Engagement with affected groups

No direct engagement has been carried out as the service is inclusive and supports all. However, if the budget savings are reduced, there will be a longer-term impact on the time spent with clients or to visit them, perhaps if required, due to time constraints and this could have adverse effect on individuals if more support is needed as this will be limited.

4.6. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

No engagement as the service is free and open to all in relation for business support.

4.7. Evidence of engagement

The service is inclusive and open to all, but all future views will be considered in the provision of support as it is important that the service continues to support all in relation to business support.

4.8. Overall Outcome

Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Although there are no short-term effects on the service, cognisance needs to be considered as this could mean that services would have to be reshaped and a reduction in specialised expert help, which is valuable to our clients. This funding reduction in the longer term could have effects in delivery of support and support might be limited.

There is an unknown quantity to support provided as we can not predict what support is needed in the future. Our services is based on demand from the Business Community.

4.9. Improving Relations

Engagement through surveys and if needed to provide tailored focus group sessions in order to make sure we are providing the right support at the right time. Continued working with stakeholder will be key.

4.10. Opportunities of Equality

If more tailored focus groups were offered this could advance opportunity in tailoring more support specifically in what support we offer individuals in terms of business support.

5. Town Centre's First Impact Assessment

5.1. 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		
Town centre business			Yes	
Cultural heritage and identity		Yes		
Social and cultural aspects			Yes	

5.2. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Aesthetics of the town centre	<p>Business Support is provided to town centre businesses. If businesses are being supported and the units are full, it is in the interest of the premises holder to upkeep the area around the premises. Although there is no short-term impact, the reduction of funding does mean that in future years, support will have to be reviewed and could mean a reduction in support.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work closely with businesses, the town centre team, any other business groups, and bids to ensure support is reviewed. This could mean reducing support and making it more targeted.</p> <p>Timescale 12-48 months</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Footfall	<p>Business Support is provided to town centre businesses. By supporting businesses with activities such as marketing through advisory and expert help this can drive customer to visit businesses in this case the town centre. Although there is no short-term impact, the reduction of funding does mean that in future years, advisor support structure service will have to be reviewed, and also, Expert Help provision will be reduced, which is a key component that adds value and is greatly received by the business community.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work closely with businesses, the town centre team, any other business groups, and bids to ensure support is reviewed. This could mean reducing support and making it more targeted.</p> <p>Timescale 12-48 months</p>
Social and cultural aspects	<p>Reduced funding may result in fewer support opportunities to support creative and cultural enterprises that contribute to the city centre identity. Not within the short term but could effect the longer term.</p> <p>No mitigation has been entered for this impact.</p>
Town centre assets	<p>Business Support is provided to town centre businesses. Retail and hospitality businesses receive extensive support regarding increasing sales and diversification and is a top supported sector for BG. Although there is no short-term impact, the reduction of funding does mean that in future years, advisor support structure service will have to be reviewed, and also, Expert Help provision will be reduced, which is a key component that adds value and is greatly received by the business community. Loss of such service could have an impact where the business might not get the support it needs and may force closure. Although perhaps not directly attributed, it will have an effect.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work closely with businesses, the town centre team, any other business groups, and bids to ensure support is reviewed. This could mean reducing support and making it more targeted.</p> <p>Timescale 12-48 months</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Town centre business	<p>Town centre businesses could experience challenges due to the reduction in Business Gateway funding. With future less start up, growth or expert help support, fewer new businesses may open or existing ones be supported, Underrepresented groups, such as minority and women entrepreneurs, may face greater barriers, reducing diversity and inclusivity in town centre enterprises. Support will have to be reviewed and could mean a reduction in support and more targeted.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work closely with businesses, the town centre team, any other business groups, and bids to ensure support is reviewed. This could mean reducing support and making it more targeted.</p> <p>Timescale 12 - 48 months</p>
Tourism	<p>A reduction in funding for Business Gateway could negatively impact tourism by reducing the variety and vibrancy of town and city centre businesses, which play a key role in attracting visitors. Fewer thriving businesses mean less unique retail, dining, and cultural offerings for tourists, diminishing Aberdeen City & Shire's appeal as a destination. This could result in decreased visitor numbers, lower spending in the local economy, and reduced revenues for both businesses and the hospitality sector. Reduction of funding does mean that in future years, support will have to be reviewed and could mean a reduction in support and more targeted.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work closely with businesses, the town centre team, any other business groups, and bids to ensure support is reviewed. This could mean reducing support and making it more targeted.</p> <p>Timescale 12-48 months</p>

5.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Town Centre Health Checks	Gives an overview of Town Centres and their facilities and attractions as well as some local views	Gives us a snap shot in time of where town centres are and allows us the opportunity to evaluate and plan to improve town centre and where support should be focussed.

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Business Gateway CRM	We support all service users, including those in town centres. The key sector for Business Gateway support is those in the leisure, retail, and hospitality sectors.	Targeted support in the future would have to be considered in order to make sure there is no or limited impact

5.4. Overall Outcome

Only Some Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Support will have to be reviewed, which would mean reducing support and providing more targeted support with the reduction of funding. This does not affect the short term but could have effects on the longer term.

There is an unknown quantity to support provided as we can not predict what support is needed in the future. Our services is based on demand from the Business Community.

6. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details
<p>To provide a survey to the businesses we support along with the wider business population to hear their views on what services they require and are a priority. For the Town Centre support, work with the town centre team, local business groups and bids to provide targeted support. For fairer duty, the same survey as above to be undertaken and when taking feedback into consideration to makes sure there is a fair and represented view so no disadvantages are in places</p>	<p>Lead Officer Kirstie McLaughlin</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Wednesday April 01, 2026</p> <p>Planned Finish Saturday March 31, 2029</p> <p>Expected Outcome Targeted based support, based on most needed which will mean we will not be able to support all or fulfil all requests from businesses</p> <p>Resource Implications Reshape of service which could result in looking at staffing resources or vacancies. Reduction in external expert help and looking at retracting on place based service provision due to balancing resources and demands</p>
<p>Continue to implement the Economic Development Service Strategy which aligns with the Council Plan and was approved by ISC in October 2024.</p>	<p>Lead Officer Kelly Wiltshire</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Friday January 10, 2025</p> <p>Planned Finish Tuesday March 31, 2026</p> <p>Expected Outcome Continuing to implement the Economic Development Service Strategy</p> <p>Resource Implications Economic Development staff and budget and working with partners</p>