

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Customer Services Budget Proposals 2024/25

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assessment ID | IIA-001771 |
| Lead Author | Michelle Milne |
| Additional Authors | Caroline O'Shaughnessy, David Anderson |
| Service Reviewers | Colleen Henderson, Alec Mcvean |
| Subject Matter Experts | Suzanne Rhind, Claudia Cowie, Kakuen Mo, Caroline Hastings, Annette Johnston |
| Approved By | Kate Bond |
| Approved On | Wednesday December 13, 2023 |
| Publication Date | Thursday December 14, 2023 |

1. Overview

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

C&DS revenue budget 2023/24 savings proposal to reduce permanent Customer Services staffing. The reduction in staffing will be realised by the closure of 5 of the existing 8 Service Points, with council signposting and customer support activity moved into libraries.

During screening 3 of 10 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 is 1 positive impact as part of this activity. There are 8 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 5 points has been provided.

This assessment has been approved by kate.bond@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? | 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? | 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 |

3. Impact Assessments

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Children's Rights and Wellbeing | Not Required |
| Climate Change and Sustainability | No Negative Impacts Identified |
| Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty | All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated |
| Health Inequalities | Not Required |
| Town Centre's First | All 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 |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age (Older) | <p>Some older customers rely on Service Points as a support mechanism and a way of maintaining social interaction with others if they have no relatives/friends who live nearby. Removing Service Points for these customers may have a negative impact on them.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work is ongoing with LLA to establish community hubs in local areas, to provide access to Council services and continued social interaction within communities.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> |

| Impact Area | Details and Mitigation |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Disability | <p>Customers with physical disabilities who use Service Points to access Council services, may experience issues travelling to alternative sites if they are further away. Those with other disabilities may struggle to access Council services online or by telephone.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work is ongoing with LLA to establish community hubs in local areas, to provide access to Council services meaning additional travel may not be necessary. Community hubs will also provided continued face-to-face support for residents who may require additional support.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> |
| Area deprivation | <p>Removing Service Points in areas of deprivation may negatively impact the local area, by reducing footfall to town centres.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work is ongoing with LLA to establish community hubs in local areas, to provide access to Council services, ensuring we maintain footfall in town centres.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> |
| Low income | <p>Those on low income who use Service Points, may be negatively impacted by the removal of a Service Point in their local area, making it more difficult for them to access Council services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work is ongoing with LLA to establish community hubs in local areas, to provide access to Council services and to continue to provide appropriate to support to those on low incomes.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> |

| Impact Area | Details and Mitigation |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Low wealth | <p>Those with low wealth who use Service Points, may be negatively impacted by the removal of a Service Point in their local area, making it more difficult for them to access Council services. Being able to access face-to-face Council services is a more cost effective way to access Council services rather than having access to online services or having to phone.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work is ongoing with LLA to establish community hubs in local areas, to provide access to Council services and continue to offer face-to-face interaction, as well as access to online services via Libraries.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> |

4.4. Evidence

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Internal Data | Customer Feedback | We know that customers want to have a range of contact channels available to them, to allow them to access Council services in a way and at a time, that suits them. | Continuing to offer telephone access, online services, email, web chat and face to face via community hubs will meet customer requirements. |
| External Consultation | Customer Service Survey | Customers want to be able to access Council services easily, through a variety of channels, in a way and at a time, that suits them. | Continuing to offer access to Council services via telephone, online services, email and face-to-face via community hubs will meet customer requirements. |

4.5. Information Gaps

There may be some gaps in the information we hold as not all customers provide feedback or have completed the customer service survey.

4.6. Engagement with affected groups

Formal engagement will be required in local areas once the decision is taken to close Service Points.

4.7. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

Formal engagement will be undertaken in local areas once the decision is taken to close Service Points.

4.8. Evidence of engagement

Evidence will be provided once formal engagement has been completed.

4.9. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

The implementation of community hubs in local areas to provide appropriate face-to-face support in place of Service Points.

4.10. Improving Relations

Ongoing consultation with relevant groups/areas.

4.11. Opportunities of Equality

The development of community hubs will be based on the requirements within local areas, ensuring service delivery is tailored to the needs of local residents.

5. Sustainability and Climate Change Impact Assessment

5.1. Emissions and Resources

| Indicator | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Unknown |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|
| Consumption of energy | | Yes | | |
| Energy efficiency | | Yes | | |
| Energy source | | Yes | | |
| Low carbon transition | | Yes | | |
| Consumption of physical resources | 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 physical resources | Reducing the number of Service Points available gives the organisation the opportunity to look at buildings, with the potential of closing some locations and co-locating facilities within other buildings. |

5.4. Evidence

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Internal Data | Information captured via Workstyle Project | Will determine usage across buildings. | Informed decisions on which locations to retain/dispose of. |

5.5. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

Positive impacts relating to the estate portfolio, allowing the organisation to make informed decisions going forward.

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 | | |
| Town centre business | | | Yes | |
| Cultural heritage and identity | | Yes | | |
| Social and cultural aspects | | Yes | | |

6.2. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

| Impact Area | Details and Mitigation | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Footfall | <p>Closing Service Points could negatively impact footfall to town centres.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work with LLA on the development of community hubs is ongoing. Many of our LLA facilities are located in town centres (or nearby) and it is hoped that footfall to these locations will mitigate the removal of Service Points, by offering access to Council services based on the needs of the local area.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> | |
| Town centre assets | <p>There is the potential that some town centre assets may be disposed of, dependent on requirements.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation This decision will not be taken in isolation. Property and Facilities are already considering the requirement of assets across the organisation, along with the Workstyle Programme. The impact of closing Service Points will be considered alongside all other evidence regarding town centre assets.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> | |

| Impact Area | Details and Mitigation |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Town centre business | <p>Closing Service Points may negatively impact footfall to town centres, which may have a knock on impact on footfall to other town centre businesses.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Developing community hubs in other Council facilities within town centres will encourage footfall to town centres and in turn mitigate the impact on town centre businesses.</p> <p>Timescale April 2024</p> |

6.3. Evidence

| Type | Source | It says? | It Means? |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Internal Data | Customer Service Survey | Footfall to other Council locations in town centres (or nearby) is higher than to some existing Service Points. Customers advised they are happy to attend one Council location to access required services and would be happy to travel up to 10 miles to do so. | LLA facilities are available in more locations than there are currently Service Points. Building community hubs will provide better access to Council services across Aberdeenshire. |

6.4. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken and will continue to take place throughout the development of community hubs, to ensure customer requirements within local areas are met.

7. Action Plan

| Planned Action | Details | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If agreed to close Service Points, support customers in local areas to access council services | Lead Officer Repeating Activity Planned Start Planned Finish Expected Outcome Resource Implications | Michelle Milne No Monday January 08, 2024 Wednesday January 31, 2024 Determine customer requirements for community hubs and support customers on alternative ways to access Council Services. Resources from Customer Service Team will complete required work. |
| Consultation with employees affected by Service Point closures. | Lead Officer Repeating Activity Planned Start Planned Finish Expected Outcome Resource Implications | Michelle Milne No Monday January 08, 2024 Monday February 19, 2024 Employees will remain within Customer Service Team, however, their current roles will change slightly. Customer Services Management Team will undertake consultation with support from HR. |
| Consultation with Area Managers and other affected Services. | Lead Officer Repeating Activity Planned Start Planned Finish Expected Outcome Resource Implications | Michelle Milne No Monday January 08, 2024 Sunday March 31, 2024 Agree how access to Area Offices/other Services will be managed if Service Points close. Will be identified during discussions. |
| Consultation Property & Facilities, other affected Services. | Lead Officer Repeating Activity Planned Start Planned Finish Expected Outcome Resource Implications | Michelle Milne No Monday January 08, 2024 Sunday March 31, 2024 Agree how closing Service Points will impact on retention/disposal of Council assets. N/A |

| Planned Action | Details |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Work with LLA to provide training/support for staff to support customers with enquiries.</p> | <p>Lead Officer Michelle Milne</p> <p>Repeating Activity No</p> <p>Planned Start Monday January 08, 2024</p> <p>Planned Finish Sunday March 31, 2024</p> <p>Expected Outcome Agree what community hubs will look like, locations and appropriate support for customers.</p> <p>Resource Implications There will be some resource implications for Customers Services and LLA to complete training/support.</p> |