

North Ayrshire Council

Equality & Children's Rights Impact Assessment (Full Form)

Introduction

This form will assist in carrying out an **Equality Impact Assessment** and where appropriate, **Socio-Economic, Children's Rights, Island Communities and Consumer Duty Impacts** of new, revised and existing policies and practices. Guidance on how to complete assessments is given in the Council's **Equality and Children's Rights Impact Assessment Toolkit**.

The form is mandatory and must be published on the Council website once the policy or practice has been approved.

Section 1 - General Details

1.1 Directorate/Service: Place

Section: Economic Development, Growth and Regeneration

1.2 Name of Policy, Practice or Proposal being assessed and determination of whether this is a new, existing or a budget proposal:

Economic Development, Growth and Regeneration Review

This is a budget proposal.

Please insert Budget Reference number (if applicable) SP-PL-25-01

1.3 List of participants in the assessment

Louise Kirk, Head of Service

EDG&R Senior Managers (through the Mini Enquiry and Budget consultation processes)

**Please note that further assessment may require to be undertaken as part of formal staff and Trade Union consultation on Service review should further amendment be proposed.*

1.4 Manager responsible for the impact assessment

Name: Louise Kirk

Designation: Head of Service

1.5 Timetable (should be started during the development phase of the proposal)

Date Assessment Started: 10 October 2024

Interim Review Date: Ongoing review was undertaken throughout the process.

Final sign off by Head of Service at the end of the form.

Section 2 – Aims and Relevance

2.1 What is the purpose of the policy practice or proposal?

The purpose of this assessment is to consider the equality impact arising from the proposed budget reduction of £400,000 per year over two financial years (2025/26 and 2026/27) from the overall Economic Development, Growth and Regeneration (EDG&R) Service revenue budgets. This would require a reduction in the overall number of posts within the Service and in core revenue budgets with funding being replaced by external funding sources where practical to maximise Service delivery and mitigate potential impact. The two years would conclude on 31 March 2027 and would create the identified savings of £800,000.

Section 3 – Equality and Diversity

3.1 What evidence were you able to access about the relevant needs of protected groups as outlined in section 3.3 below (Please include your sources – links to equality providers and evidence can be found in both the toolkit and the [Promoting Equality Page](#) on Connects).

A range of evidence was obtained and considered from the following sources:

- Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder
- Census Scotland
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- North Ayrshire Locality Profiles
- North Ayrshire Wellbeing Economy Dashboard

Further feedback was also obtained through the budget consultation and Business Support and Development Mini-Enquiry processes. Further details on which are provided at Section 3.4 of the report.

3.2 Are there any gaps in your evidence or areas of uncertainty?

The assessment considered the available local, regional and national evidence and feedback from consultation activities. The budget consultation engaged with a broad range of stakeholders and local communities and the Business Support Mini-Enquiry directly engaged with local businesses, social enterprises and the Third Sector. It is not anticipated that there are substantial gaps in the evidence on this basis.

3.3 From the list of protected characteristic groups identified in the table below please identify any potential positive and negative impacts on any of these protected characteristics?

| Protected Characteristic | Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no) | Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral) |
|--|---|---|
| Age - Older people, children and young people – please identify which categories will be affected | No | Neutral impact. Employability Services are not considered within or impacted by the review and would continue to be delivered at the current levels. |
| Disability - Physical and Learning | No | Neutral impact. Employability Services are not considered within or impacted by |

| Protected Characteristic | Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no) | Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral) |
|--|---|--|
| | | the review and would continue to be delivered at the current levels. |
| Gender reassignment - Where a person is living as the opposite gender to their birth | No | Neutral impact. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | No | Neutral impact. |
| Race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins (including gypsy/ travellers, refugees and asylum seekers) | No | Neutral impact. |
| Religion or belief (includes religious and philosophical beliefs, including no belief) | No | Neutral impact. |
| Sex - Women and Men | No | Neutral impact. |
| Sexual Orientation - Lesbian, gay and bisexual people | No | Neutral impact. |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership - marriage between same sex couples is included | No | Neutral impact. |
| Human Rights | No | Neutral impact. |

| Protected Characteristic | Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no) | Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Care Experienced - This term refers to anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age and includes Kinship Care (other family members); Looked After at Home (with support from social work); Residential Care; Foster Care; Secure Care; Adoption.</p> | No | <p>Neutral impact.</p> <p>Employability Services are not considered within or impacted by the review and will continue to be delivered at the current levels.</p> |

| Protected Characteristic | Impact on the Protected Characteristics (yes or no) | Please Explain (Positive or Negative or Neutral) |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Other - Poverty, homelessness, ex-offenders, isolated rural communities, carers, part-time workers, or people in a marriage/civil partnership</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Neutral impact.</p> <p>Whilst a reduction in economic development activity could impact on isolated rural communities, the review aims to minimise the impact on frontline services to continue to maintain and where feasible improve economic, regeneration, employment and business outcomes and reduce unemployment levels in North Ayrshire.</p> <p>Employability services are not considered within or impacted by the review and will continue to be delivered at the current levels. The local feedback obtained through both the budget consultation and Business Support and Development mini-enquiry process has informed the Service review to enable the proposal to best support local needs, Council priorities and service delivery within the available resource.</p> |

3.4 Describe any consultation or engagement undertaken, including details of the groups involved and the methods used.

A consultation was undertaken on the overall Council budget proposals between 10 October and 25 November 2024. This included a specific section on the EDG&R Service review. This was undertaken through a questionnaire undertaken via online and in person engagement. It was promoted widely to encourage participation through a broad range of channels at a Council, local and Service level. This considered a range of factors in relation to the Service Review, the output from which was analysed by the Council's Policy, Performance and Democracy and Communications Teams. This included the impact on the community within North Ayrshire including local community organisations, social enterprises and businesses and island communities.

The consultation information was shared widely by the EDG&R teams and wider Council Services with communities and stakeholders. The consultation also directly engaged with the following groups: Redburn Grove Tenants Group, Three Towns Community Shed; The First Steps Programme; Syrian and Ukrainian New Scots Women; Garnock Community Campus Umbrella Club; and NAFCO.

A review of Business Support and Development was also undertaken in early 2024 through a mini-inquiry process. This was in response to several factors including approval of the Regional Economic Strategy through which NAC lead on the priority theme of Support for Enterprise, cost of living and doing business increases, the Climate Emergency and new ways of working post Covid.

This was led by the team and comprised of 6 locality face to face workshops and a survey questionnaire. A workshop specifically for the Third Sector was also undertaken through the Third Sector Senior Officers Group (SOG) with support from Connected Communities. A total of 209 businesses completed the survey and 80 businesses attended the locality workshops. A range of business types including Sole Traders, Partnerships, Third Sector organisations and larger Limited Companies input to the review.

Businesses that had engaged with the team over the last three years were invited to participate in the workshops. The survey was also promoted via e-mail to the business base and via social media to encourage participation. A workshop specifically for the Third Sector was also undertaken through the Third Sector Senior Officers Group (SOG) with support from Connected Communities.

The feedback obtained through both processes has informed the Service review to ensure the proposal can best support local needs, Council priorities and Service delivery within the available resource.

Questions 3.5 – 3.7 refer to the ‘Three Key needs (or aims) of the Equality Duty’.

- 3.5 Which aspects of the policy eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

Not applicable, the proposal will not have an impact on this.

- 3.6 Which aspects of the policy advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

The proposal will have a neutral impact on advancing equality of opportunity. Employability Services are not considered within or impacted by the review and would continue to be delivered at the current levels. The local feedback obtained through both the budget consultation and Business Support and Development mini-enquiry process has informed the Service review to enable the proposal to best support local needs, Council priorities and service delivery within the available resource.

- 3.7 Which aspects of the policy foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues).

Version: 6.0

Not applicable, the proposal will not have an impact on this.

3.8 If you have identified any negative impacts of your proposal how will you mitigate these?

Not applicable.

3.9 Is the policy or practice intended to promote equality by permitting positive action or lead to positive outcomes for people based on a protected characteristic?

Not applicable.

Section 4 – The Fairer Scotland Duty

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 places a legal responsibility on the Council to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making decisions.

- 4.1 Does the proposal have the potential to have a significant impact on inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (consider low income; low wealth; material deprivation; area deprivation; communities of place or interest, socio-economic background).

Yes, the proposal has the potential to have a significant impact on inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

If No, please go to Section 5.

If Yes please provide more information under any of the below headings which are relevant, highlighting any evidence and sources of evidence used to inform your information.

- 4.2 Low Income/Income Poverty: Cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food and clothing

A reduction in Employability services or business opportunities and support could impact on income and poverty. The Employability services delivered by EDG&R are however not considered within or affected by the review. Employability services will continue to be delivered at the current levels. Business Support and Development services will be informed by the feedback obtained through the consultation and mini enquiry processes to reflect local priorities and best support the needs of local businesses and communities, within the available resource. The proposal is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on this basis.

- 4.3 Low/and or no wealth: Having enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to pay for any unexpected spends and no provision for the future.

A reduction in Employability services or business opportunities and support could impact on low and/or no wealth. The Employability services delivered by EDG&R are however not considered within or affected by the review. Employability services will continue to be delivered at the current levels. The Business Support and Development services delivered by EDG&R will be reshaped, informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and mini enquiry processes to reflect local priorities and best support the needs of local businesses, within the available resource. The proposal is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on this basis.

- 4.4 Material Deprivation: Being unable to access basic goods and services, i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies

A reduction in regeneration activities could impact on the availability of and access to leisure/recreation opportunities. The Regeneration services delivered by EDG&R post review will be reshaped be informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and strategy development consultation processes (including the Regeneration Delivery Plan, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy and Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy) to prioritise resource to best support the needs of local communities, Council priorities and service delivery. These have been informed by extensive stakeholder and public consultation and the subject of separate assessment processes. The proposal is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on this basis.

4.5 Area Deprivation: Where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport).

A reduction in economic development services could impact on area deprivation within rural areas and the accessibility of transport. The Business Support and Development services delivered by EDG&R will be reshaped be informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and mini enquiry processes to best support the needs of local businesses, within the available resource. Regeneration services delivered by EDG&R post review will be reshaped informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and strategy development consultation processes (including the Regeneration Delivery Plan and Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy) to prioritise resource to best support the needs of local communities, Council priorities and Service delivery, within the available resource. These have been informed by extensive stakeholder and public consultation, take account of area deprivation and other local factors and are the subject of separate assessment processes. The proposal is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on this basis.

4.6 If impacts have been identified how will these be mitigated or explored in more detail? (please outline below)

A range of mitigation measures have been identified and informed by consultation through the review process to minimise any potential impact as noted at Sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 above and to best support local needs, Council priorities and Service delivery, within the available resource.

Section 5 – Children’s Rights

When considering the Children’s Right’s Impact process, some of the key considerations include any evidence, research and consultation (specifically including any consultation or engagement with young people).

5.1 Are any Children’s Rights impacted by this proposal? ([The Children’s Rights Articles](#) have been matched against the GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicators – where relevant these are highlighted in 5.4 below) .

No

5.2 Please indicate, if possible, how many children and young people (nearest estimate) are likely to be affected by the policy or measure?

A neutral impact on children and young people has been identified. The Employability services delivered by EDG&R are not considered within or affected by the review. Employability services will continue to be delivered at the current levels.

5.3 Are some children and young people more likely to be affected than others?

No

If, yes what groups? (consider protected characteristics – for example, disabled young people, LGBT etc)

Not applicable.

5.4 The following [Children's Rights](#) and Wellbeing Indicators are likely to be affected by the policy/proposal:-

| Wellbeing indicator (for example, safe, healthy etc) | Children's Right (for example, 22 – refugee children) |
|--|---|
| Not applicable. | Not applicable |

5.5 What likely impact will the policy/proposal have on Children's Rights and Wellbeing? Either Positive, Negative or Neutral.

Children Rights -

Not applicable.

Other Protected Characteristics

Not applicable.

5.6 What consultation or engagement has taken place with young people?

Not applicable.

5.7 If Negative impacts are identified how will these be mitigated, or the effect reduced?

Not applicable.

Section 6 – Island Communities Impact (or Island Proofing)

Island Proofing is about considering the particular needs and circumstances of island communities when public sector organisations exercise their functions and make decisions. This has been added to the process of assessing the Council Plan and includes a range of issues such as access to services, digital connectivity, employment and access to education, transport and access to goods and services.

6.1 Do the intended outcomes of the proposal potentially differ or have a different impact for our Island Communities?

No

6.2 What are the potential impacts for our Island Communities?

The proposal has been informed by the needs of and challenges faced by our island communities and aims to reflect local priorities, whilst being proportionate to and reflective of available resource. The proposal has been informed by extensive engagement with communities and stakeholders including our island communities.

Demographic – The proposal takes account of the current demographic structure of the islands and challenges faced. The Employability services delivered by EDG&R are not considered within or affected by the review. Employability services will continue to be delivered at the current levels. The Business Support and Development services delivered by EDG&R will be informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and mini enquiry processes to reflect local priorities and best support the needs of local businesses, within the available resource.

Economic – The proposal takes account of the differences between the island and mainland economies and the types of business which are a feature of the islands' economies. The proposal will also not have an impact on the islands' infrastructure, natural environment or biodiversity by continuing to deliver in line with existing strategies, informed by extensive consultation. The Business Support and Development services delivered by EDG&R will be reshaped informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and mini enquiry processes to reflect local priorities and best support the needs of local businesses, within the available resource. Support for small businesses will be delivered in line with the Business Gateway Operating Manual service delivery requirements. Furthermore, this aims to facilitate ongoing engagement with partners including Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support business development and sustainability.

Social – The proposal takes account of the more dispersed deprivation and social exclusion experienced on islands and seeks to minimise the impact of this. The Employability services delivered by EDG&R are not considered within or affected by the review. Employability services will continue to be delivered at the current levels. The Business Support and Development services delivered by EDG&R will be reshaped informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and mini enquiry processes to reflect local priorities and best support the needs of local businesses, within the available resource.

Island communities have also actively been engaged in and informed the development of the range of Service strategies which will continue to inform Service delivery including the Regeneration Delivery Plan, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy (2024) and Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy (2024).

6.3 Please explain if the impacts are different for communities on different islands?

In comparison to mainland communities, both islands' economies are recognised as being highly dependent on tourism and small businesses. These businesses report that they are already struggling with high costs, limited availability of affordable housing and seasonal employment. This is also further exacerbated by several factors impacting on businesses and communities including the cost of transport and ongoing ferry service disruption. Both of which significantly impact both business operations and residents' daily lives, creating logistical and supply chain issues. Whilst ferry related matters are not substantially within the Council's control, this could further exacerbate the impact of any reduction in service levels. The proposal therefore seeks to mitigate any impact by recognising these local challenges, continuing to support tourism and small businesses and engaging with partners with a view to improving transport arrangements.

6.4 What consultation or engagement has taken place with the Island Communities?

The budget consultation and mini-enquiry consultation processes directly engaged with the island communities. The feedback from these consultations has informed the review process and will shape the final agreed Service structure and delivery approach, also informed by staff and Trade Union engagement. Island communities have also actively been engaged in and informed the development of the range of Service strategies including the Regeneration Delivery Plan, Vacant and Derelict Land Strategy (2024) and Local Transport and Active Travel Strategy (2024).

10-year Island Plans were developed in 2022 with, and for, the island communities to drive the development of community, economic and environmental wellbeing of Arran and Cumbrae. These aim to ensure that islanders are central to local decision-making through a co-delivery process and that the plans are inclusive, adaptable and achievable, responsive to change and opportunity, focussed on action and delivery. The delivery of the Plans is underway, supported by Local Delivery Groups.

6.5 How will you address any potential barriers or wider impacts for Island Communities as identified through this assessment?

The review aims to support the continued delivery of the Service's activities, the Islands Plans and delivery of identified island priorities using the available resource, informed by the feedback obtained through the budget consultation and mini-enquiry processes. The proposal seeks to support continued delivery by aligning available resource to key priorities and maximising access to available partner resource and support. The proposal seeks to maximise external funding to support service delivery wherever feasible.

Recognising the significance for our islands, support for small businesses will be delivered in line with the Business Gateway Operating Manual service delivery requirements. Key activities in the current and next financial year include supporting

the development and delivery of Islands Programme projects and the delivery of the Islands Net Zero Accelerator from a Business Support and Development Perspective.

The continued delivery of the Islands Programme and strategic Local Island Plans aims to ensure that our islands can thrive economically, socially and environmentally and to ensure a coherent approach to sustained longer term renewal, promoting the resilience, health and wellbeing of the islands. This work aims to create opportunities for prosperous, fair, growing and greener North Ayrshire islands, in line with their unique challenges and locally identified priorities. The Island Plans are aligned with the National Islands Plan, National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy.

This is overseen by the Senior Officer- Islands, based within the EDG&R Service. Internally, there is a focus on collaboration across Council Services which includes specific quarterly Heads of Service and Senior Officer Group meetings both with a specific focus on island outcomes. Externally, a broad range groups and organisations are involved in delivering the project including community representatives, Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Islands Federation, Scottish Rural Action and Scottish Futures Trust. These processes will continue to monitor progress going forward.

Section 7 – The Consumer Duty

The Consumer Duty is about the impact of Council proposals on consumers in Scotland. A Consumer is an individual or a small business that purchases, uses or receives goods or services in Scotland, that are supplied either by a business or a public body – please see [What is the Consumer Duty](#).

7.1 Will your proposal impact on consumers?

Yes

If no, please complete the 'Assessment not required' template by emailing northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

7.2 What are the impacts, if any, on consumers in general? Is it likely that consumers will experience harm because of this proposal?

The EDG&R Service review includes the Business Support and Development services, which provides support to small businesses via the Business Gateway services. Any impact is likely to be neutral as the proposal will continue to deliver this in line with the Business Gateway Operating Manual service delivery requirements. Furthermore, the proposal aims to facilitate ongoing engagement with partners including Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to support business development and sustainability. The proposal also seeks to maximise external funding to support service delivery wherever feasible. Employability Services are not considered within or impacted by the review and would continue to be delivered at the current levels.

7.3 What are the impacts if any, on consumers in vulnerable circumstances? Is it likely that consumers in vulnerable circumstances will experience harm because of this proposal? (please include any relevant evidence or engagement with consumers)

*Vulnerable circumstances may be temporary in nature and may or may not arise as a result of a consumer's protected characteristics. For more information, please see [page 31 of Consumer Scotland's draft guidance on the consumer duty](#).

The proposal is likely to have a neutral impact on consumers in vulnerable circumstances.

7.4 What consultation and engagement has taken place with consumers around your proposal?

A consultation was undertaken on the overall Council budget proposals between 10 October and 25 November 2024. This included a specific section on the EDG&R Service review. This was undertaken through a questionnaire undertaken via online and in person engagement. It was promoted widely to encourage participation through a broad range of channels at a Council, local and Service level. This considered a range of factors in relation to the Service Review, the output from which was analysed by the Council's Policy, Performance and Democracy and Communications Teams. This included the impact on the community within North

Ayrshire including local community organisations, social enterprises and businesses and island communities.

A review of Business Support and Development was also undertaken in early 2024 through a mini-inquiry process. This was in response to several factors including approval of the Regional Economic Strategy through which NAC lead on the priority theme of Support for Enterprise, cost of living and doing business increases, the Climate Emergency and new ways of working post Covid.

This was led by the team and comprised of 6 locality face to face workshops and a survey questionnaire. A workshop specifically for the Third Sector was also undertaken through the Third Sector Senior Officers Group (SOG) with support from Connected Communities. A total of 209 businesses completed the survey and 80 businesses attended the locality workshops. A range of business types including Sole Traders, Partnerships, Third Sector organisations and larger Limited Companies input to the review.

Businesses that had engaged with the team over the last three years were invited to participate in the workshops. The survey was also promoted via e-mail to the business base and via social media to encourage participation. A workshop specifically for the Third Sector was also undertaken through the Third Sector Senior Officers Group (SOG) with support from Connected Communities.

The feedback obtained through both processes has informed the Service review to seek to best support local needs, Council priorities and Service delivery, within the available resource.

7.5 What alternative proposals are there that could improve outcomes for consumers and/or reduce harm to consumers? How do these compare to the original proposal?

No alternative proposals are required as the approach aims to continue to deliver support for small businesses in line with the Business Gateway Operating Manual service delivery requirements.

Section 8 – Crosscutting Impacts

- 8.1 Have any cross-cutting impacts been identified from other Council Services or Partner Agencies (multiple discrimination or accumulated effects of multiple proposals on a protected characteristic group)?

No cross-cutting impacts have been identified from other Council Services or Partner agencies or through the consultation and mini-enquiry processes.

Section 9 – Outcome of the Assessment

There are four potential outcomes for this assessment which are:

- No major alterations to the policy assessed
- Adjust the policy as potential problems or missed opportunities identified.
- Continue the policy - justification required as potential for adverse impact has been identified.
- Stop and remove the policy or proposal, as potential for discrimination or other harmful impact.

9.1 Please detail the outcome of the assessment:

No major alterations to the policy assessed: the Impact Assessment demonstrates the policy is robust and there is no possible discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to minimise negative impacts and enhance positive outcomes have been taken.

9.2 Please state the key issues, recommendations and future actions arising from the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Not applicable.

Section 10 – Monitoring

10.1 Describe how you will monitor the impact of this policy for example, performance indicators used, other monitoring arrangements, who will monitor progress, criteria used to measure if outcomes are achieved, timescales including any future reviews of the impact of the proposal?

The impact of the review will be monitored through the following on a quarterly and annual basis:

- Operational Delivery Plans.
- Council Plan actions.
- Council Plan Key Performance Indicators.
- Service Key Performance Indicators.
- Regular benchmarking of economic development activity through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) and Scottish Local Authority Economic Development (SLAED) group.

This will be monitored and reviewed by the Service with input from Senior Managers, the Head of Service and Director to review progress and the impact of the proposal to enable appropriate Service adjustments to be made, in line with available resource. The impact of the proposal on island communities will be further monitored through the Islands Programme processes outlined at Section 6.5.

Section 11 – Sign Off

11.1 Head of Service who has approved the impact assessment.

Name: Louise Kirk

Title: Head of Service, Economic Development Growth and Regeneration

Date: 14 February 2025

Section 12 – Publication

12.1 Following approval by Head of Service, completed Impact Assessments need to be published on the Council's External Website.

Please email: northayrshireperforms@north-ayrshire.gov.uk