

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	17/02/21	June Cranna	N/A

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions including those that affect services the council delivers).	
Service	Business Services
Section	Finance
Title of the activity etc.	The Impact of Voluntary Severance within Finance
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	To delivery monetary savings to the value of £208,000 to reflect the impact of increased digitalisation and to meet budgetary obligations resulting in the removal of 6.75 FTE posts within the Finance staffing structure.
Author(s) & Title(s)	June Cranna, Team Leader (Financial Support) Corporate Finance

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment and explain what it means in relation to the activity you are assessing.		
Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Reputation Indicators show over 75% of people believe the Council delivers value for money. The service monitors performance through a range of quantitative and qualitative performance, including customer feedback and complaints. Currently it indicates that the service is performing satisfactorily during a period of significant change.	
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Senior officers within services, Business Services Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Group and Strategic Leadership have all been advised on the voluntary severance proposals and the needs for a more self-service approach to financial information.	

<p>External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).</p>		
<p>External data (census, available statistics).</p>	<p>Aberdeenshire Council's Reputation Indicators show over 75% of people believe the Council delivers value for money. Departments for Work and Pensions, Scottish Government and benchmarking data enable comparison across a range of performance measures within Finance so that the impact of budget and resource decisions can be assessed.</p>	
<p>Other (general information as appropriate).</p>	<p>All Political Groups engaged in the budget process have been advised of the implications of the voluntary severance proposals</p>	

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	No, although the UK Government budget announcement may have implications.

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	The service will monitor UK and Scottish Government funding announcements	Ongoing
	The service will continue to liaise with COSLA to ascertain the direction of travel and the likely impact of financial announcements	Ongoing

Stage 5: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas?	
These should be included in the action plan.	Key Services within Aberdeenshire will continue to be provided by the finance service and communication to the wider community will be maintained.

Stage 6: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?
Any future apprenticeships or schemes to enable those back into the working environment may be affected as these reductions may see the loss of future opportunities.

Stage 7a:
Are there potential impacts on protected groups?
The protected groups covered by the equality duty are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how? Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger		Yes		
Age - Older			Yes	
Disability			Yes	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Sex		Yes		
Pregnancy and maternity			Yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Yes	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Yes	

Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?

This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.

On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:

- Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g. housing, transport.
- Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service
- Prospects: peoples life chances e.g., Access to, or ability to access: employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.

Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities • People who live in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners • Looked after children • Carers including young carers • Veterans • Students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People in low paid work • People with one or more protected characteristic
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Please complete by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing			Yes	

Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future			Yes	
Pockets: 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 and hobbies			Yes	
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work		Yes		
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e., parents' education, employment and income, educational achievement.		Yes		

Stage 8: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive	Negative
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	Increase in skill requirements and training.	<p>The majority of those seeking VS will be female given the ratio of predominantly female staff in the service.</p> <p>The removal of 6.75 FTE posts within the staffing structure will in effect lessen the future employment opportunities for those seeking employment within Aberdeenshire Council</p>

	Greater emphasis on succession planning and training and development	As a large employer within Aberdeenshire, in some areas it could see a reduction in the employment opportunities in areas where there is the most deprivation.
		With less future employment opportunities this will in effect drive up unemployment, causing more financial difficulties within those areas where there already are considerable vulnerabilities. This in turn could have wider implications for the financially vulnerable within our local communities.
		There will be less opportunity for younger elements of the community to partake in apprenticeship schemes held in Administration roles within the Finance Section

Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?

Staff wishing to participate in the Voluntary Severance Scheme were provided with full information, and communication has been given at all stages.

Stage 10: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?

	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	The Voluntary Severance HR policy will be followed at all stages	Ongoing

Stage 11: What monitoring arrangements will be put in place? How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	This will continue to be monitored through HR policy. This will affect more than one year's budgetary arrangements and therefore the cause and effect of VS will continue to be monitored throughout the two-year timescale for completion.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?	
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1 No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	2 Negative Impacts have been identified; these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3 The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen
There are negative impacts, but these cannot be mitigated, budget pressures dictate that Voluntary Severance will proceed. Services to the community will continue to be provide to the same level.	

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.
Budgetary pressures will continue to dictate priorities for Aberdeenshire Council. Staffing commitments contribute greatly to the pressures that Aberdeenshire Council faces in the next few years. Voluntary Severance is a necessity to drive down those costs, whilst still maintaining the services provided to the residents of Aberdeenshire Council. Greater automation of processes and streamlining working practices will enable these services to continue to be provided.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.	
Sign off and authorisation	1) Service and Team Business Services - Finance
	2) Title of Policy/Activity (if appropriate)

3) Authors: I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/ activity.	Name: June Cranna Position: Team Leader Corporate Finance Date: 17/02/2021 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
	Name: Position: Date: Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Susan Donald Date: 17/02/2021	
5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Mary Beattie Position: Head of Finance Date: 17/02/2021	Name: Position: Date:
6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.	Date:	
7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk	Date:	

