

Aberdeenshire Council

Integrated Impact Assessment

Customer Service Strategy

Assessment ID	IIA-001418
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1. Overview

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

The implementation of a Customer Service Strategy across the organisation, detailing how we plan to deliver customer service in line with our Customer Service Charter

During screening 5 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 are 28 positive impacts as part of this activity. There are 16 negative impacts, all impacts have been mitigated.

A detailed action plan with 3 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?	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

3. Impact Assessments

Children's Rights and Wellbeing	Not Required
Climate Change and Sustainability	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty	All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated
Health Inequalities	Not Required
Town Centre's First	No Negative Impacts Identified

4. Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

4.1. Protected Groups

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

4.2. Socio-economic Groups

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

4.3. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Age (Older)	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Age (Older)	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Age (Younger)	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Age (Younger)	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Disability	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.

Impact Area	Impact
Disability	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Gender Reassignment	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Gender Reassignment	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Race	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Race	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Religion or Belief	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Religion or Belief	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Sexual Orientation	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Sexual Orientation	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Sex	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Sex	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.

Impact Area	Impact
Area deprivation	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Low income	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Low wealth	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Material deprivation	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.
Socioeconomic background	Successful implementation of the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation will result in improved customer service delivery for all and increased customer satisfaction.

4.4. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Age (Older)	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Age (Younger)	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Disability	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Race	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Sex	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Area deprivation	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Low income	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Low wealth	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>
Material deprivation	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Socioeconomic background	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>

4.5. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Engage - Customer Services Survey	Survey results highlighted where customers are satisfied with current service delivery and the areas where they felt improvements were required, due to previous issues experienced on contacting the Council. It detailed how customers currently contact us and how they would prefer to contact us in future. It highlighted where means of contact is working well and also where it is not.	Improvements required to communicate with customers, advising progress on queries submitted, timescales for completion of work and a consistent approach to delivering customer service across the organisation.
Internal Consultation	Consultation with Elected Members	Area Committees in Banff & Buchan, Buchan, Formartine, Garioch, Kindardine & Mears and Marr were all consulted. The results of the Engage survey and external consultation were shared with Elected Members. Opinions and views of the external consultation were in line with those of Elected Members. The same areas of focus for the CS Strategy were highlighted.	Improvements required to communicate with customers, advising progress on queries submitted, timescales for completion of work and a consistent approach to delivering customer service across the organisation.
Internal Consultation	Attendance at Directorate Management Teams	Positive comments received.	Comments incorporated in Strategy.

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Customer Services Satisfaction Surveys and Feedback Team Information	Regular satisfaction surveys and corporate Feedback Team data is consistent with the results of the Customer Services Survey undertaken in April 2023.	We are aware of the issues faced by customers and what their priorities are.
External Consultation	Consultation with community groups and community councils	Consultation was undertaken with customers visiting our existing 8 Service Points; Tenants' Participation Group; Syrian/Ukrainian Refugees; Adult Learning; Gypsy Travellers; Lived Experience Network; Mid-Deeside and Buchan Community Councils. Consultation events highlighted where customers are satisfied with current service delivery and the areas where they felt improvements were required, due to previous issues experienced on contacting the Council. It detailed how customers currently contact us and how they would prefer to contact us in future. It highlighted where means of contact is working well and also where it is not.	Improvements required to communicate with customers, advising progress on queries submitted, timescales for completion of work and a consistent approach to delivering customer service across the organisation.

4.6. Engagement with affected groups

Online Engage survey; face-to-face consultation at 8 Service Points across Aberdeenshire; consultation events held with groups as detailed previously; face-to-face consultation with Elected Members and with Directorate Management Teams.

4.7. Ensuring engagement with protected groups

All existing groups representing those with protected characteristics have been contacted to consult on their views/opinions.

4.8. Evidence of engagement

Evidence is available in terms of submitted Engage surveys, as well as detailed notes taken at all consultation events attended. Email communication with various groups representing those with protected characteristics and responses given. Contact with the Tackling Inequalities & Poverty Coordinator was made to obtain the views of those with lived experience. Comments relevant to the Strategy were included.

4.9. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

All information obtained whilst undertaking consultation/engagement has been used to inform the content of the Customer Service Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to improve customer experience of service delivery across the board within the organisation; ensure consistency of approach and encourage good practice. Doing this will support the organisation to meet customer priorities which were identified in the recent Customer Service Survey undertaken. Customers advised their priorities were for us to resolve enquiries at first point of contact; provide timescales for resolution of requests; meet timescales provided for resolution; keep them informed of progress; and to treat them fairly and listen to their concerns. Improved customer service delivery should be organisational-wide and cover all forms of customer contact eg. telephone, face-to-face, email, website contact etc. The action plan will take account of the negative impacts and work with other Services/customers to ensure improved community hub facilities and access to alternative contact channels.

4.10. Improving Relations

All work undertaken as a result of the Customer Service Strategy will be fully inclusive with Services, customers, partnership organisations and existing forums involved.

4.11. Opportunities of Equality

Implementing the Customer Service Strategy across the organisation should ensure consistency of approach and service delivery, regardless of which Service or which role. The Customer Service Charter details how, we as an organisation, will deal with customers. The Strategy will support the Charter and buy-in for the Strategy will ensure accountability of approach.

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	The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. This may have an impact on our existing asset management portfolio and will provide the opportunity to co-locate community hubs with other Services.

5.4. Negative Impacts and Mitigations

Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
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Impact Area	Details and Mitigation
Low carbon transition	<p>The implementation of the Customer Service Strategy will cause a review of current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services. For some customers, this may increase travel time/distance to access face-to-face services, which may impact low carbon transition.</p> <p>Can be mitigated Yes</p> <p>Mitigation Work will be undertaken to increase community hub facilities across areas. In addition, online services will be reviewed to improve options for customer access, resulting in the need for customers to travel less.</p> <p>Timescale 12 months</p>

5.5. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
Internal Data	Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Customers want to be able to access council services at a time and place that suits their needs.	Improving community hub facilities at additional locations across Aberdeenshire will improve options available to our customers. In addition, improving alternative contact channels will support what our customers want. Both improvements will potentially reduce customer travel to access services face-to-face and support low emission transition.

5.6. Overall Outcome

All Negative Impacts Can Be Mitigated.

All information obtained whilst undertaking consultation/engagement has been used to inform the content of the Customer Service Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to improve customer experience of service delivery across the board within the organisation; ensure consistency of approach and encourage good practice. Doing this will support the organisation to meet customer priorities which were identified in the recent Customer Service Survey undertaken. Customers advised their priorities were for us to resolve enquiries at first point of contact; provide timescales for resolution of requests; meet timescales provided for resolution; keep them informed of progress; and to treat them fairly and listen to their concerns. Improved customer service delivery should be organisational-wide and cover all forms of customer contact eg. telephone, face-to-face, email, website contact etc. The action plan will take account of the negative impacts and work with other Services/customers to ensure improved community hub facilities and access to alternative contact channels.

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. Positive Impacts

Impact Area	Impact
Footfall	Improving our ways of working and offering access to Council Services in local areas, based on what our customers tell us they want, will improve our service delivery. As a result, through word of mouth in local areas we could potentially increase footfall to locations in certain places and in turn, Town Centres and local businesses.
Town centre business	Improving our ways of working and offering access to Council Services in local areas, based on what our customers tell us they want, will improve our service delivery. As a result, through word of mouth in local areas we could potentially increase footfall to locations in certain places and in turn, Town Centres and local businesses.

6.3. Evidence

Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
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Type	Source	It says?	It Means?
External Consultation	Consultation at Existing 8 Service Points	Customers advised that on visiting local locations, they have not always been able to access the required information.	Improving our ways of working, ensuring customers can access required information at an appropriate local community hub will improve our service delivery. As a result, through word of mouth in local areas we could potentially increase footfall to some local locations and in turn, Town Centres and local businesses.
External Consultation	Engage - Customer Service Survey	Customers advised that on visiting Council locations, they have not always been able to access the relevant information.	Improving our ways of working, ensuring customers can access required information at an appropriate local community hub will improve our service delivery. As a result, through word of mouth in local areas we could potentially increase footfall to some local locations and in turn, Town Centres and local businesses.
Internal Data	Feedback Team Data	Complaints from local residents following visits to local locations, where they have been unable to access the required information at the time of visiting. Resulting in customers having to contact us again, either by a second visit to an office, or via telephone/web chat/online etc.	Improving our ways of working, ensuring customers can access required information at an appropriate local community hub will improve our service delivery. As a result, through word of mouth in local areas we could potentially increase footfall to some local locations and in turn, Town Centres and local businesses.

6.4. Overall Outcome

No Negative Impacts Identified.

All information obtained whilst undertaking consultation/engagement has been used to inform the content of the Customer Service Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to improve customer experience of service delivery across the board within the organisation; ensure consistency of approach and encourage good practice.

7. Action Plan

Planned Action	Details	
Review current service delivery, which may impact the locations at where customers can access Council services	Lead Officer	Michelle Milne
	Repeating Activity	No
	Planned Start	Thursday February 01, 2024
	Planned Finish	Monday March 31, 2025
	Expected Outcome	Increased community hub provision across Aberdeenshire
	Resource Implications	Resources will be managed within the Customer Service team and the wider Customer and Digital Services Service, in conjunction with the Transformation Programme.
Work with LLA to identify appropriate locations for community hubs.	Lead Officer	Michelle Milne
	Repeating Activity	No
	Planned Start	Thursday February 01, 2024
	Planned Finish	Monday March 31, 2025
	Expected Outcome	Increased community hub provision across areas.
	Resource Implications	Resources will be managed within the Customer Service team and the wider Customer and Digital Services Service, in conjunction with the Transformation Programme.
Review of all contact channel delivery.	Lead Officer	Michelle Milne
	Repeating Activity	No
	Planned Start	Thursday February 01, 2024
	Planned Finish	Monday March 31, 2025
	Expected Outcome	Ensure our customer service delivery is fit for purpose and meets the needs/ priorities of our customers as identified in the Customer Service survey undertaken.
	Resource Implications	Resources will be managed within the Customer Service team and the wider Customer and Digital Services Service, in conjunction with the Transformation Programme.