

Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal	
DEG01 – Economic Growth – 7% Savings	
Intended outcome of proposal	
Budget saving	
Description of proposal	
Removal of the European Support Officer post This post was originally a saving from 1 st April 2020 but has now been delayed until 1 st April 2021. This post is required to undertake the financial due diligence and compliance of all European funded projects and programmes delivered by Argyll and Bute Council, which will be subject to Scottish Government and European audits particularly as the UK is due to leave the EU.	
Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes	
Budget reduction required from Economic Development & Strategic Transportation Service.	
The service contributes towards the delivery of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Argyll and the Islands LEADER programme and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);• the Economic Strategy;• BO110: We support businesses, employment and development opportunities within the D&EG Service Plan 2020-23; and• the Administration's objective: Argyll and Bute Council priority of championing economic development, working in partnership with businesses and supporting targeted economic development within the local areas as part of a strategic approach (proposal will decrease the contribution to this outcome).	
Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Ishabel Bremner
Job title	Economic Growth Manager
Department	Economic Development & Strategic Transportation, Development & Infrastructure
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Fergus Murray
Job title	Head of Economic Development & Strategic Transportation
Department	Economic Development & Strategic Transportation, Development & Infrastructure
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	29/10/2019

Who will deliver the proposal?

Economic Growth as from 1st April 2021. This post was originally a saving from 1st April 2020. However, this post is required to undertake the financial due diligence and compliance of all European funded projects and programmes delivered by Argyll and Bute Council, which will be subject to Scottish Government and European audits particularly as the UK is due to leave the EU. The use of discretionary funding to finance this post will mitigate the significant risk to the council if the post was removed for the year 2020/21. For example, as the council is the Accountable Body for the Argyll and the Islands LEADER programme, failure to meet European funding audit requirements (includes the necessity for separation of duties under the project claims process which needs to be concluded by December 2020) could incur extrapolated fines which could potentially exceed the original funding.

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA**Consultation / engagement**

Initial discussions with the European Support Officer took place on 27th September 2019 further to the publication of the Policy and Resources Committee papers on 7th October 2019.

Data

LARCs system which records all the LEADER project information, which records the support provided by the LEADER team to ensure all applications and claims are compliant in terms of LEADER processes.

Other information

N/A

Gaps in evidence

Uncertainty still remains on the impact of Brexit and future funding streams that may replace current programmes such as LEADER.

Section 3: Impact of proposal**Impact on service users:**

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Gender		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population	X			
Island populations	X			
Low income	X			
Low wealth	X			
Material deprivation	X			

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Area deprivation	X			
Socio-economic background	X			
Communities of place	X			
Communities of interest	X			

Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age		X		
Disability		X		
Ethnicity		X		
Gender		X		
Gender reassignment		X		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		X		
Pregnancy and Maternity		X		
Religion		X		
Sexual Orientation		X		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		X		
Island populations		X		
Low income		X		
Low wealth		X		
Material deprivation		X		
Area deprivation		X		
Socio-economic background		X		
Communities of place		X		
Communities of interest		X		

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

N/A

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

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Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?

Yes

Details of knock-on effects identified

There will be limited resources in the current team to deal with any future Scottish Government and European audits which will undoubtedly occur, particularly as the UK is due to leave the EU on 31st October 2019.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?

All LEADER project enquiries and support given is recorded on the LARCs system. Internal systems record EMFF activity. Therefore all relevant information should be captured for future audit purposes. However, the removal of this post in 2021 will mean the loss of in-depth knowledge on current and past LEADER and EMFF projects.
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