

# Integrated impact assessment (IIA) Template

Complete as a record of your assessment.

Read the IIA guidance before completing this template.

<b>Title of proposal</b>
Plant Based Products – Internal Catering Service for council and commercial events
<b>Purpose of proposed work</b>
To reduce the environmental impact of food served by City of Edinburgh Council internal catering services at Waverley Court and City Chambers through changing menu options to plant-based options only.
<b>Lead officer, name, job title, service and department</b>
Ann Marie Hughes, Catering Manager, Facilities Management, Place Directorate
<b>Additional colleagues: name, job title, service and department</b>
Victoria Scruton, Carbon Manager, Climate and Nature Strategy Team, Chief Executive Office Gohar Khan, Performance and Audit Officer, Place Directorate Ruth White, Strategy Manager, Climate and Nature Strategy Team, Chief Executive Office
<b>Date</b>
25/05/2026
<b>Briefly describe public involvement in this proposal to date and planned</b>
None

## Impacts

### 1 Equality impacts

We want to ensure our proposals are fair for everyone. Consider potential positive and negative impacts on groups/people with [protected characteristics](#). Assessment of impact means we consider the needs of everyone with an “intersectional lens”. This means looking at the impact that different protected characteristics and other factors can have on people.

Consider if your proposal will help prevent discrimination, advance equal opportunities by reducing disadvantage and meeting different needs and foster good relations by encouraging inclusion and understanding.

**Consider if your proposal could impact on groups/people with protected characteristics. Tick all that apply**

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact Neutral impact?
1. Age	Y	Y	
2. Disability			Y
3. Gender reassignment			Y
4. Marriage and civil partnership			Y
5. Pregnancy and maternity			Y
6. Race			Y
7. Religion or belief	Y	Y	
8. Sex			Y
9. Sexual orientation			Y
10. Care experienced children and young people			Y

**Use the text box below to describe the impacts you have identified on each of the groups/people with protected characteristics. Consider any intersectional impacts.**

**Age**

**Negative impacts:** Reducing animal products from menu options reduces the range of choices that are more traditional and/or well established (e.g. 'sausage and mash'). Habit and preference for familiar diet choices have been identified as a barrier for older adults (55 and over) adopting or choosing plant-based meals.

All ages: Vegan diets can be heavily reliant on nuts as a source of protein and nutrients. If these are used more often in recipes as a protein replacement, there is a higher risk of cross contamination and exposure for those with nut allergies.

P

**Positive impacts:** Plant-based diets have been linked with a lower rate of obesity and coronary heart disease, as well as a reduced blood pressure and blood cholesterol. Diets high in plant-based foods, which contain pulses, legumes and fresh fruit and vegetable can contribute positively to human health, through increased consumption of fibre and lowering of disease risk associated with red and processed meat consumption.

These are benefits for individuals at any stage of life but particularly if they are facing long-term health issues or health issues associated with being elderly. Promotion of diets that have these health benefits can influence people to adopt healthier lifestyles and ultimately improve public health and reduce reliance on public health services.

**Religion or belief**

**Negative impacts:**

Although no cultural or religious events have been identified that have a meat necessity, reducing animal-based provision may impact on the Council's ability to host international delegates in the future or holding cultural / international events which centre on certain foods (e.g. Burns Supper)

**Positive impacts:**

Increasing plant-based provision makes menus more accessible for those who are vegetarian or vegan for ethical, cultural or religious reasons – all protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act. Vegans can often be the target of discrimination and harassment. A large organisation like the City of Edinburgh Council boosting provision for plant-based diets can help normalise these diets and reduce sources of discrimination.

**Evidence**

**Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.**

**Example: we know women are more likely to be vulnerable to poverty. The [Gendered Nature of Poverty briefing note](#) provides an overview of this issue and why it matters.**

**Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.**

Sources 1 and 2: The [NHS Eatwell Guide](#) and [Vegan Diet advice](#) highlights the importance of reducing red and processed meat, the majority of a balanced diet relying on starchy carbohydrates, vegetables and fruit. It is also noted a balanced vegan diet should be planned in order to account for essential nutrients.

Source 3: An article on the [‘perspectives of adults aged 55+ on plant-based diets rich in protein’](#) provides data on how adults aged 55 and above are less likely to adopt or choose plant-based meals.

Source 4: The [nutritional benefits of nuts](#) highlighted by this article on the [Nutfruit](#) website (part of the [International Nut and Dried Fruit Council](#)).

Source 5: The [British Nutrition Foundation](#) has noted the general correlations between vegetarian and vegan diets and better health outcomes.

Source 6: A study by the [University of Edinburgh and Food Standards Scotland](#) has highlighted that “meat and dairy reductions were not associated with any concerns over intakes of protein.

Source 7: [Interfaith Leaders Urge UN’s COP26 to Adopt the Plant Based Treaty to Avert Climate Catastrophe - Plant Based Treaty](#)

A plant-based menu is generally more inclusive in terms of cultural and religious preferences, for example, vegetarian or vegan alternatives are more inclusive if an individual only eats halal meat.

**Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 9 of this template**

## 2 Human Rights impacts

The Council must act compatibly with Human Rights legislation. Think about what kind of impact the proposal may have on people in terms of [Human Rights](#). Use the text box below to describe which Human Rights Articles are relevant, which groups are affected and what the potential impacts are.

No impact identified, under Article 9 of the The Human Rights Act, there is no right to have dietary preferences catered for.

### Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

N/A

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 9 of this template

## 3 Children's Rights impacts

The Council must act compatibly with Children's Rights legislation. Think about what kind of impact the proposal may have on children and young people in terms of [Children's Rights](#). Use the text box below to describe which Children's Rights Articles are relevant, which groups are affected and what the potential impacts are.

There are no identified impacts on children as the scope of this report does not include statutory or voluntary school meals or services offered to children.

### Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

N/A – no impact identified

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 9 of this template

#### 4 Socio-economic disadvantage impacts

The Council has a duty to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by [socio-economic disadvantage](#), when making strategic decisions. However, to support the Council’s Business Plan priorities, the Council considers it best practice to consider the potential impact that all relevant proposals may have on people experiencing socio- economic disadvantage and how any inequalities of outcome can be reduced.

Consider if your proposal could impact on any of the below groups? Tick all that apply.

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
<b>Low income</b> – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	Yes	Yes	
<b>Low/no wealth</b> – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with unexpected spends and no provision for the future	Yes	Yes	
<b>Material deprivation</b> – being unable to access basic goods and services, ie home contents insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm winter coat			Yes
<b>Area deprivation</b> (including communities of interest and communities of place) – where you live, where you work, visit or spend a continuous amount of time can all have an impact ie rural areas, accessibility of transport, education and employment impact, people who have experienced homelessness and/or the asylum system, those who share an identity and/or protected characteristic			Yes
<b>Socio-economic background</b> – disadvantage that can arise from parents’ education, employment and income, social class in other words.	Yes	Yes	

Use the text box below to describe the impacts you have identified on each of the groups above, and then consider how you can reduce inequalities of outcome?

**Internal meetings – staff and visitors**

**Negative impacts:** Reducing choice to plant-based products only can be perceived as exclusive for those who are not familiar with plant-based alternatives.

**Positive impacts:**

Standard provision of snacks or drinks often include some element of dairy (e.g. milk for hot drinks or butter within biscuits). Changing provision to plant-based only will reduce the number of staff and visitors likely to have an ethical or dietary intolerance to ingredients.

**Staff canteens – CEC staff and building tenants**

**Negative impacts:** For colleagues who are living in or at risk of poverty, the staff canteen meals may be the only instance during a day they either have meat or a hot meal at a subsidised rate. Reducing or removing meat-based options can result in colleagues feeling excluded or pressured to eat elsewhere if they are unable to make food at home to bring in to work.

Removing all animal-based products risks alienating staff and visitors who have cultural or personal eating habits and preferences.

**Positive impacts:** There is a significant amount of research showing that nutritionally balanced plant-based diets can be cheaper on the domestic level. There is also evidence to suggest with rising awareness of the need for climate action, more of the population are making diet choices based on environmental impact. Raising awareness of the variety of plant-based meals and options can support colleagues in poverty to diversify and make healthier diet choices outside of work.

**Paid meetings, events and conferences**

**Negative impacts:** As noted previously, meat and dairy have traditionally been relied on as staples of UK diets to provide protein and calcium. Removing meats such as chicken, fish and beef from menus can be off-putting for potential customers. Limiting choice to plant-based ingredients would restrict the bespoke service offered to customers for events therefore potentially making our catering service less attractive to potential customers and prompt them to go elsewhere.

Under current contract provisions, we are seeing plant-based milks have ranged between 25-70% higher in cost per litre compared to cow's milk. Ingredients for plant-based meals are therefore ranging between 20-35% higher in cost to produce than meat-based meals. This difference in cost for ingredients, if passed on to the customer, may result in reduced uptake of council catering services and reduced revenue.

**Positive impacts:**

Shifting some of our internal catering services to plant-based only would demonstrate real climate action and reaffirm the City of Edinburgh Council's position as a leader in reducing environmental impact. This shift could help influence other businesses to move towards environmentally minded food choices therefore removing stigma and further commercially normalising vegetarian and vegan choices.

**Evidence**

**Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.**

**Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.**

- 1) A [study carried out at Oxford University](#) found that adopting a vegetarian, vegan or flexitarian diet can cut a domestic food bill by up to one third. It is not yet clear why this does not translate to the non-domestic market.
- 2) A 2024 study conducted by the [BBC](#) found that this continued to be the case for a domestic food bill even in the face of rising food costs.  
This due to staple plant-based ingredients such as potatoes, lentils, rice, grains, and pulses being less expensive than meat.
- 3) The [Sustainable Restaurant Association](#) has stated that increasing plant-based provision on a menu can result in lower costs and bigger margins depending on the choice of ingredients.
- 4) The most recent [National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2019 to 2023: report](#) states that fewer than 1 in 5 adults throughout the UK are meeting the UK recommendation for including fruit and vegetables within their diet.
- 5) To date there has been no uptake of the plant-based menu for internal catering for events such as weddings or conferences.

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 9 of this template.

## 5 Climate and nature impacts

The Council has a [duty](#) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, incorporate the principles of sustainability into decisions and actions, and ensure a just transition (just transition only applies to climate mitigation or adaption projects).

Consider if your proposal could impact on any of the below? Tick all that apply.

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
<b>Climate Mitigation</b> - opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions		Yes	
<b>Climate Adaptation</b> - opportunities to prepare for future changes in our climate		Yes	
<b>Just Transition</b> – opportunities to ensure a fair shift to a low carbon economy that doesn't disadvantage people or increase inequality	Yes	Yes	
<b>Nature Recovery Impacts</b>		Yes	
<b>Overall Sustainability</b>		Yes	

Use the text box below to describe the impacts you have identified on each of the sections above and then consider how you can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, incorporate the principles of sustainability into decisions and actions, and ensure a just transition. Also consider any cumulative effects of climate change on people.

**Climate Mitigation and Adaptation and Nature Recovery**  
Positive Impacts:

### Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

The production of cow's milk generates between 2.5 and 4.5 times more greenhouse gas emissions than plant-based milks. Greenhouse gas emissions from most plant-based products range between 10-50 times lower than most animal-based products. Factors such as transport distance, retail, packaging or specific farm methods are often small compared to importance of food type. Emissions produced from production and distribution of meat substitutes such as lentils or tofu are on average 90%-95% lower than animal-based products.

### Habitat and wildlife improvement

On a national level, reducing reliance on animal-based products reduces wildlife and habitat destruction by 66% and water usage by 54%. Natural infrastructure (woodland, hedges) is key to mitigating the effects of extreme weather events such as heatwaves and storms. As more extreme weather events occur more often, shifts away from animal based farming that help restore nature and biodiversity create more resilience in the food system and natural infrastructure.

### Just Transition

#### **Positive Impacts:**

The Climate Change Committee's recommended pathway for reducing Scotland's agricultural and land use emissions calls for significant reductions in meat consumption and a shift to less animal-based diets. A key part of this shift is through diversification of farmer income to forestry and agroforestry. With this shift in diets, there are opportunities to upskill catering service staff in line with the wider expected food system changes.

#### **Negative impacts:**

As the majority of Scottish cow and sheep meat production is not exported beyond the UK, there a strong reliance on local supply chains both from consumer and producer. Drastically reducing our procurement of meat may cause disruption to local supplies chains who rely on the council catering service as a major contract.

In 2025-26 the net revenue from catering services provided within the scope of this report was approximately £306,000. The plant-based menu was launched in January 2026 and to date has had no uptake. Reducing (or removing) meat-based provision by the catering service at this stage without further research or data on the market perception of the full plant-based menu option could result in reduced revenue through the catering service placing staff jobs at risk.

## **Evidence**

**Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.**

**Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.**

- 1) Research and data showing emissions associated with plant-based products to be higher than animal-based products across the supply chain:

- [Comparison of environmental impacts of individual meals - Does it really make a difference to choose plant-based meals instead of meat-based ones?](#)
  - [Our World in Data – Comparison of the environmental impact of different foods](#)
  - [Our World in Data – article on the amount of habitable land used for animal agriculture](#)
  - [Detailed analysis of UK diets, led by Oxford University and published in Nature food in July 2023](#)
- 2) [Information on the benefits of adopting plant-based diets for nature and biodiversity - Dr Joseph Poore research – Director of the Oxford Martin Programme on Food Sustainability Analytics at Oxford University](#)
- 3) [The EAT-Lancet report](#) is the first full scientific review of what constitutes a healthy diet from a sustainable food system, and which actions can support food system transformation. Gives information on the co-benefits of a plant-based diet for public health, nature and biodiversity.

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 9 of this template

## 6 Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)

Could your proposal result in significant environmental effects? If yes, you may need to complete a Strategic Environment Assessment? Information is available on the [Scottish Government SEA website](#).

	No
--	----

## 7 Consumer Duty

Council has a duty to consider consumers' interest when making strategic decisions. If this applies to your proposal, you may need to complete a [consumer duty impact assessment](#). Information is available on the [Consumer Scotland website](#).

	N/a
--	-----

## 8 Communications

Record how you will communicate information about this proposal change to those with different communication needs using [inclusive communications guidance and resources](#).

--	--

## 9 Contractors

**Is any part of this proposal to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors and if so, how will equality, human rights, children's rights and climate and nature issues be addressed?**

Impact on small and medium sized enterprises leading to a reduction in economic growth across Scotland. Supplier's changes would need to be aligned to new tendering processes. One of the Councils objectives are to procure and support local supply chain.

## 10 Actions

Record your actions in the table below. Actions may include:

- mitigations to reduce or eliminate negative impacts
- advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations
- addressing cumulative impacts
- collecting additional evidence
- financial implications
- risks
- any other actions.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Who will take them forward (name and job title)</b>	<b>Deadline for progressing</b>	<b>Review date (add name and job title)</b>
Quantify the financial impact and measures to mitigate impact.	<b>Catering Manager</b>	<b>12 Months</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Provide a pricing analysis	<b>Catering Manager</b>	<b>12 Month</b>	<b>3 Months</b>

## 11 Monitoring impact

Monitoring ensures that your proposal is effective and any issues are addressed.

Record your actions in the table below. Actions may include:

- how impacts on protected characteristics will be monitored, once the proposal has been introduced and implemented
- how IIA agreed actions will be monitored
- review process and timescales
- officer responsible.

Actions to measure impact of proposal	Who will take them forward (name and job title)	Deadline for progressing	Review date (add name and job title)
Implement a phased approach to encourage gradual shift in behaviours.	<b>Ann Marie</b>	<b>12 Months</b>	<b>3 Months</b>
Monitor results of phased approach in order to allow strategic workplace planning.	<b>Catering Leads</b>	<b>12 months</b>	<b>3 Months</b>
Review organisational goals, training requirements, upskilling and redeployment (if required).	<b>Ann Marie</b>	<b>12 months</b>	<b>3 Months</b>

### 13 Next steps

Elected members must have access to IIAs in order to scrutinise them before making decisions. You must:

- share the IIA with them (this can be at draft stage for an APM meeting)
- complete the [committee report](#) with:
  - a summary of the identified impacts at section of the committee report template 7: key policies
  - actions to address them at section 5 of the committee report template: next steps
- provide a link to the published IIA or attach as an appendix.

### 14 Quality assurance and approval

Complete the quality assurance checklist.

Send the quality assurance checklist and your completed IIA to your Head of Service for approval.

## 15 Authorisation

<b>Name and title</b>
David Latimer, Head of Service, Place Directorate
<b>Date</b>
25/05/2016

## 16 Publication

Send the approved IIA template to the relevant contact for publication. Ensure the title of the IIA is clear and concise, without acronyms and the content, layout and language style is [inclusive and accessible](#).

The City of Edinburgh Council:

- [integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk) to be published on the [Council website](#)

Edinburgh Integration Joint Board/Health and Social Care:

[sarah.bryson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.bryson@edinburgh.gov.uk) to be published on the [EH&SCP website](#)

Keep a copy of your template for a period of at least three years (longer if needed for business reasons).