

The purpose of Aberdeen City Council is to protect the people and the place of Aberdeen from harm, enabling them to prosper and supporting them in the event of harm happening.

The purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment is to evidence that Aberdeen City Council are making decisions in an informed way, and that the impact of decisions made is understood and accepted. The legislation that is considered within this assessment are:

- Section 2 [Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics](#)
- Section 3 [Socio-Economic](#)
- Section 4 [Human Rights](#)
- Section 5 [Children and Young People’s Rights](#)

The term ‘policy’ is used throughout this document and applies to policies, proposals, strategies, provision, criteria, functions, practice, budget savings and activities that includes delivery of our services.

1. About the Policy

1.1 Title

Stop all external communications except public notices as required by legislation

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

The vast majority of the Council’s external (public-facing) communications is managed by the Communications and Marketing (C&M) service. The team is made up of Designers; Communication Business Advisers (CBAs); and an Audio-Visual Content Editor. Communication and Marketing tools includes the website, social media and media releases.

The proposal will bring about budget savings in response to an ask that the service considers statutory duties only.

- Local authorities have a number of statutory duties placed on them by the *Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005* during an emergency. With respect to the C&M service:
 - Warn and inform the public
 - Provide advice to the public

From the Council’s perspective, an emergency is regarded as an event or situation that causes or may cause loss of life; illness or injury; homelessness, damage to property; disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel, a system of communication, of facilities for transport, or services relating to health.

Our CBAs are a weekly on-call rota that allows us to provide 24/7 cover in responding to an emergency, supporting Duty Emergency Response Co-ordinator (DERC) with messaging e.g. road closures during flooding.

- The other statutory duty currently residing with the C&M service is posting notifications to the London Stock Exchange about decisions and events etc that might have a significant bearing the Council’s financial position. This is required under the Council’s Bond protocol,

All other activity would stop under this proposal.

This would mean an end to us producing and proactively sharing information with the public and the media about council services and projects; committee decisions; and events.

Existing information on our website would not be updated. C&M would no longer assist services (internal customers) in making sure that communications were clear, concise and consistent.

The design/production of maps, diagrams, graphics, promotional posters, logos, and still/moving images - all of which can greatly aid clear and compelling communication - would cease. Our visual productions significantly enhance the professionalism of external communications and help shape (and preserve) the Council's brand identity. No support would be available for the production of internal materials, including committee papers and annual reports.

Social media would not be monitored.

Reactive communications would cease. Media inquiries would not be answered from a corporate position except in an emergency situation.

1.3 Is this a new or existing policy?

New

1.4 Is this report going to a committee?

Yes

1.5 Committee name and date:

Budget Meeting, Council, 6 March 2024

1.6 Report no and / or Budget proposal number and / or Business Case reference number:

CE19

Impacts

This section demonstrates the considerations that have been made in relation to the policy – and that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted.

2: Equality Act 2010 - Protected Characteristics

Aberdeen City Council wants to ensure everyone is treated fairly. This section identifies the [protected characteristics](#) that the policy potentially affects and records the impact and mitigating steps.

2.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Protected Characteristic	What is the impact?				
	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Age			X		
Disability			X		
Gender Reassignment				X	
Marriage and Civil Partnership				X	
Pregnancy and Maternity			X		
Race			X		
Religion or Belief			X		

Sex			x		
Sexual Orientation			x		

2.2 In what way will the policy impact people with these protected characteristics?

The non-statutory work of the C&M service promotes initiatives aimed at making Aberdeen an inclusive, prosperous city. The Equality Act 2010 and the Scottish Specific Duties require us to ensure our Council is accessible and that information is shared in an accessible and timely manner as part of our statutory duty. The Community Empowerment Act puts emphasis on consultation, and C&M works to encourage and facilitate participation in decision-making. This includes capturing feedback about potential impacts on people with protected characteristics.

Specifically:

We promote events and activities whose primary audience is protected groups (e.g. Pride, Mela, baby & toddler groups etc), as well as campaigns whose purpose is to raise awareness for certain groups and issues, improve inclusion and sense of belonging, and to advance relationships between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not - for example, promoting celebration days, awareness days and religious festivals. Not doing this could lead to intolerance.

-- Therefore, people with Race, Religion or Belief, or Sexual Orientation as a protected characteristic may be negatively impacted by these proposals.

We publicise employability events, activities, as well as updates around cost of living and financial / welfare support. These are targeted at people who already face barriers to employment and socio-economic disadvantage. This can include parents, especially women; people with a disability; and those aged over 50. A large proportion of our Facebook and Instagram followers are female and therefore reductions in content will impact them disproportionately.

-- Therefore, people with Age, Pregnancy and Maternity, Sex or Disability as a protected characteristic may be negatively impacted by these proposals.

2.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

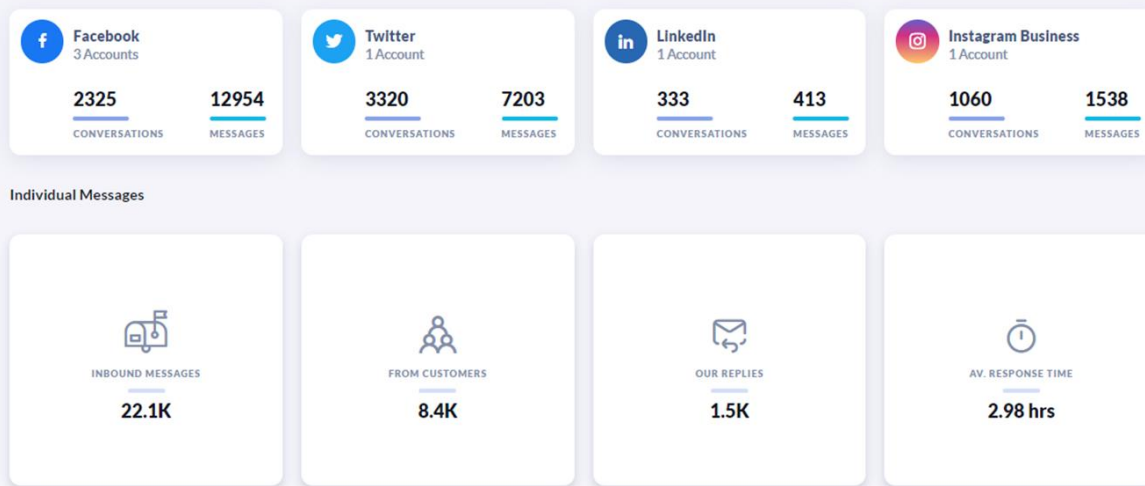
What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

We have 35,474 Facebook followers. 23,874 are female. In the 55+ age group we have 7,307 followers; 3,982 are female. In the 65+ age group we have 2,199 followers; 1,490 are female. 1,774 make up 18-24 age group; 993 are female.

We have 5,646 Instagram followers. 3,252 are female. In the 55+ age group we have 459 followers; 327 are female. In the 65+ age group we have 119 followers; 73 are female. 395 make up 18-24 age group; 192 are female.

During the first six months of 2023, 8,444 people contacted us (rounded down to 8.4k below).

Account Summary



Here are some campaigns pertaining to welfare, minority groups, and safety. Clicks show where someone has gone on to look at supplementary information.

This includes 12,700 views of the Fairer Aberdeen Fund information since February 2021; 64,600 views of Benefits and Money Advice since September 2021; 424,100 views of Cost of Living advice since October 2022; 6,100 views of Benefits for the Elderly since June 2022; and 1.2 million views of Marischal College being lit to mark a range of "national days". Since March 2016.

CAMPAIGN	LAUNCHED	NUMBER OF POSTS	NUMBER OF VIEWS	NUMBER OF CLICKS
Business Support Grants	Sep 2020	11	18.4k	224
Community Councils	Jan 2020	14	16.7k	293
Fairer Aberdeen Fund	Feb 2021	6	12.7k	105
Adoption	April 2015	40	128.1k	211
Benefits and Money Advice	Sep 2021	17	64.6k	3.5k
Climate Change	Dec 2021	58	71.9k	1.7k
Cost of Living	Oct 2022	111	424.1k	8.3k
ELC	Aug 2019	64	228.2k	4.1k
Covid Crisis Support Line	May 2020	21	85.8k	619
Multi Storey Fire Safety	July 2019	20	32.4k	215
Waste	Jan 2018	492	1.6m	31.6
Flooding	Nov 2022	57	476.9k	4.4k
Storms	Feb 2022	84	139.5k	1.3k
LOIP	Dec 2016	13	14.9k	1.1k
Marischal College lit up - used to mark various "days"	March 2016	240	1.2m	2.5k
Benefits for the Elderly	June 2022	2	6.1k	96
Aberdeen Afghan Appeal	Sep 2021	6	21.8k	434

For the month of July, 2023 (when Phase 1 of the Budget Consultation was launched), we had approximately 75,000 visits to the home page our website homepage, which is typically used as an entry point before moving to other pages.

Many of our pages relate to welfare. Here are the number of visitors for July to some of these pages:

Scottish Welfare-Fund	3,470
Children’s Panel	43
Equality Diversity and Inclusion Employer	24
Contact Us- Child Protection	185
Support Ukrainians	253
Family Support and Advice Services	59
Child Protection - Guidance and Materials	38
Equality and Human Rights – Impact Assessments	71
British-Sign-Language	26

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

Discussion with colleagues in Equalities, Legal and People and Organisational Development about potential impacts. The potential consequences of reducing communications were described in Phase 2 of the Budget Consultation, and links to the consultation were shared directly with many external partner organisations.

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy (e.g. citizens, community groups, or other people/groups)?

Aberdeen City Council launched a three-part public consultation around the 2024/25 Budget and future spending plans from July 2023 to January 2024. In part 1, which ran throughout July 2023, people were asked to award points across different service areas to indicate where they thought the council’s spending priorities should be. In part 2, the public could either increase, decrease or not change the level of expenditure in areas listed.

There were 3,192 responses to part 1 and 2,654 responses to part 2. Part 3 was undertaken online and face-to-face where 126 people with protected characteristics took part and 377 comments were received.

Feedback from part 3 of the consultation process has been incorporated into this document. Feedback from someone who attended one of the in-person sessions for people with protected characteristics: “Impact is huge. Back to dark ages if people don't know what is happening or available to support. Not everyone is good at coming forwards to seek help.”

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

Services could communicate directly with residents through social media. However, services may lack the requisite communication and marketing skills - that is, an ability to marshal, distil and disseminate information at pace; ensure material is jargon-free and non-partisan; understand the subtleties of the corporate/political/public interface; possess the technical skills needed to manage the website and social media content management systems; draw value from the data generated; and have capacity to take on extra work.

In time, technologies like generative AI may help (as a tool) in compiling communications but there is nothing currently in place.

Council activity could be promoted by Elected Members on their own social media channels. Media inquiries could be answered directly by Elected Members.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?	High	
	Medium	
	Low	x
	Negative Impact Removed	

3: Socio-Economic Impacts

This section is used to consider the impact of the policy on people who might be **unemployed, single parents**, people with lower **education** or **literacy**, **looked after children**, those with **protected characteristics** as examples.

Use this guide to understand more on socio-economic inequalities: [The Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for Public Bodies \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty/guidance-for-public-bodies/)

3.1 What impact could this policy have on any of the below groups?

Group	Negative			Neutral	Positive
	High	Medium	Low		
Low income / income poverty – those who cannot afford regular bills, food, clothing payments.			x		
Low and/or no wealth – those who can meet basic living costs but have no savings for unexpected spend or provision for the future			x		
Material deprivation – those who cannot access basic goods and services, unable to repair/replace broken electrical goods, heat their homes or access to leisure or hobbies			x		
Area deprivation – consider where people live and where they work (accessibility and cost of transport)			x		
Socio-economic background – social class, parents' education, employment, income.			x		

3.2 In what way will the policy impact people in these groups?

Welfare support would no longer be promoted on corporate channels. As an example, in 2023, we helped encourage 3,723 people to access unclaimed benefits worth £606,298 a week, using social media to direct people to an online benefits calculator on our website.

Opportunities for engaging on council policies would not be shared as widely, denying people a voice in decisions that may impact them. The Budget Consultation revealed lower levels of engagement in areas with multiple deprivation: in response, social media posts were boosted in these areas.

Some events benefit certain groups. This includes our employability events and activities, as well as updates around cost of living and financial / welfare support. These are targeted at people who already face barriers to employment and socio-economic disadvantage. By reducing communications about events, activities and support packages, some people may not learn about them, and may not avail themselves of help.

3.3 What considerations have been made in reaching the above assessment?

What internal or external data has been considered? What does this data tell us?

See 2.2

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

Discussion with colleagues in Equalities, Legal and People and Organisational Development about potential impacts. The potential consequences of reducing communications were described in Phase 2 of the Budget Consultation, with links to the consultation shared directly with many partner organisations.

What consultation and engagement and has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy? citizens, community groups, or other people/groups impacted by this policy?

Aberdeen City Council launched a three-part public consultation around the 2024/25 Budget and future spending plans from July 2023 to January 2024. In part 1, which ran throughout July 2023, people were asked to award points across different service areas to indicate where they thought the council's spending priorities should be. In part 2, the public could either increase, decrease or not change the level of expenditure in areas listed. In part 3, which took place throughout January 2024, there were two face-to-face sessions for the public to attend and an online consultation. There were 3,192 responses to part 1, 2,654 responses to part 2 and part 3 was undertaken online and face-to-face where 126 people with protected characteristics took part and 377 comments were received. Included in all parts of the consultation was a specific question regarding the provision of a PA service for senior leaders. Stakeholders sent a link to the online Budget Consultation Phase 2 included citizens and community groups, many representing people with protected characteristics.

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

As previously stated, services could communicate directly with residents through social media.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?

High	
Medium	
Low	x
Negative Impact Removed	

4: Human Rights Impacts

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000

The Act sets out our human rights in a series of 'Articles'. Each Article deals with a different right.

Use this guide to understand more about [Human Rights](#).

4.1 What impact could this policy have on Human Rights?

Human Rights Article	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 6: Right to a fair trial		x	
Article 7: No punishment without law		x	
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence		x	
Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion		x	
Article 10: Freedom of expression		x	
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association		x	
Article 12: Right to marry and start a family		x	
Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms		x	
Article 1 of Protocol 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property		x	
Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education		x	
Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to participate in free elections		x	

4.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

4.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?	
If mitigations are in place, does this remove the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains
	Yes – negative impact reduced
	Yes - negative impact removed

5: Children and Young People’s Rights Impacts

The United Nations Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Children’s rights apply to every child/young person under the age of 18 and to adults still eligible to receive a “children’s service” (e.g. care leavers aged 18 – 25 years old).

The Conventions are also known as the “General Principles” and they help to interpret all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children. They are:

1. Non-discrimination (Article 2)
2. Best interest of the child (Article 3)
3. Right to life survival and development (Article 6)
4. Right to be heard (Article 12)

You can [read the full UN Convention \(pdf\)](#), or [just a summary \(pdf\)](#), to find out more about the rights that are included.

5.1 What impact could this policy have on the rights of Children and Young People?

UNCRC and Optional Protocols	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 1: definition of the child		X	
Article 2: non-discrimination		X	
Article 3: best interests of the child	X		
Article 4: implementation of the convention		X	
Article 5: parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities	X		
Article 6: life, survival and development	X		
Article 7: birth registration, name, nationality, care		X	
Article 8: protection and preservation of identity		X	
Article 9: separation from parents		X	
Article 10: family reunification		X	
Article 11: abduction and non-return of children		X	
Article 12: respect for the views of the child	X		
Article 13: freedom of expression		X	
Article 14: freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
Article 15: freedom of association		X	
Article 16: right to privacy		X	
Article 17: access to information from the media	X		
Article 18: parental responsibilities and state assistance	X		
Article 19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect	X		
Article 20: children unable to live with their family	X		
Article 21: adoption	X		
Article 22: refugee children		X	
Article 23: children with a disability		X	
Article 24: health and health services	X		
Article 25: review of treatment in care		X	
Article 26: social security		X	
Article 27: adequate standard of living	X		
Article 28: right to education		X	

Article 29: goals of education		X	
Article 30: children from minority or indigenous groups		X	
Article 31: leisure, play and culture	X		
Article 32: child labour		X	
Article 33: drug abuse		X	
Article 34: sexual exploitation		X	
Article 35: abduction, sale and trafficking		X	
Article 36: other forms of exploitation	X		
Article 37: inhumane treatment and detention		X	
Article 38: war and armed conflicts		X	
Article 39: recovery from trauma and reintegration		X	
Article 40: juvenile justice		X	
Article 41: respect for higher national standards		X	
Article 42: knowledge of rights		X	
Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure			

5.2 In what way will the policy impact the rights of Children and Young People?

Article 17 of the UNCRC says children and young people should be able to access information from “many places”. Not using our website, social media and traditional media to share information would go against that.

Article 12 says there should be respect for the views of the child. Part of C&M’s work included promoting engagement with school pupils on consultations.

We would no longer share and reshare information on national campaigns relating to child welfare - welfare support available to families, encouraging people to report abuse, campaign to encourage adoption, City of Play opportunities etc.

5.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What mitigations are there against any negative impacts (if applicable)?

Services could communicate directly with residents through social media.

If mitigations are in place, does this remove the negative impact?

No – negative impact remains

X

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

6: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?
The Workforce Reduction, Restructure and Redesign IIA provides information around the potential impact on the workforce and the mitigations in place.
Overall summary of changes made as a result of impact assessment.
None.
Outline of how impact of policy will be monitored.
Elected Members, along with the Corporate Management Team and Extended Corporate Management Team will monitor the delivery of key policies, legislation and regulations.
If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.
The Council has a legal obligation to deliver a balanced budget and this proposal assists with this requirement.

Assessment Author	David Ewen
Date	29/01/24
Chief Officer	Lucy McKenzie
Date	27/02/24