

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

Discontinuation of Security Guard provision at Marischal College and the Town House

### 1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

It is proposed we cease the current contract for 2 security guards from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. This would mean that there would be no security guards on site at Marischal College Customer Service Centre to:

- support staff in relation to incidents, such as violence and aggression or drug activity in the public toilets
- Support staff with the implementation of our Unacceptable Actions Policy
- De-escalate situations where there may be threats to staff members
- Undertake regular patrols to the Town House or respond to emergency requests from Town House reception.

This proposal will mean that staff will be responsible for managing behaviours within the Customer Service Centre and Town House.

Security Guards are provided as contractors and are not Aberdeen City Council staff.

This proposal supports the move towards a statutory service only delivery model and would realise a financial saving which contributes to the savings target of the organisation to achieve a balanced budget.

### 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:**

CE21

## 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		
<a href="#">Age</a>		X			
<a href="#">Disability</a>		X			
<a href="#">Gender Reassignment</a>			X		
<a href="#">Marriage and Civil Partnership</a>			X		
<a href="#">Pregnancy and Maternity</a>		X			
<a href="#">Race</a>		X			
<a href="#">Religion or Belief</a>			X		
<a href="#">Sex</a>		X			
<a href="#">Sexual Orientation</a>			X		

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

The remit of the current security guard provision is to ensure the safety and security of the premises and people within, including staff, citizens, and visitors. These groups will all include people with protected characteristics and so the impacts noted cover all groups within the premises.

Citizens access our services at Marischal College to use the computers to get access to the internet, attend pre-booked appointments, make payments at our payment kiosks, deliver/collect documentation or seek help in a crisis situation. Approximately 3,000 citizens per month drop into Marischal College in addition to approximately 680 pre-booked appointments per month. According to our database, 1,564 staff members work out of Marischal College and whilst some operate from the Customer Service Centre, many use the Customer Service Centre to enter and exit the building.

Citizens may access the Town House to visit elected members. Although the option is available to email, write or phone, some citizens, particularly the elderly, prefer face to face appointments, which are hosted at the Town House. The Town House is also used by staff, constituents and citizens accessing services such as Archives. A range of meetings are regularly held in the Town House including the Disability Equity Partnership meetings, Tenant Participation meetings and Committees. The attendees of the Disability Equity Partnership meetings include people with disabilities and older people who would be impacted if a security incident happened at the Town House and there were no Security Guards to respond.

Some citizens accessing our services are doing so during periods of crisis and may be suffering from mental health or substance dependency issues, affecting their behaviour and interactions with staff and fellow citizens. The Security Guards are tasked with de-escalating situations where citizens may threaten members of staff or other members of the public within the building. Having security guards on site can act as a deterrent to anyone who may become aggressive, abusive or violent. Security guards also patrol area of the building where staff are not present as often, including the public toilets. There has historically been instances of drug use in the public toilets. As baby changing facilities are provided within the public toilets then any items left behind, such as needles or substances, could present a risk to babies, children and parents. The discontinuation of the security guard provision may give rise to security incidents. Over the past 12 months, 24 security incidents have been logged. Without the security guard provision in place, other staff would be required to deal with these incidents.

All protected characteristics groups have been assessed as low risk or above. The removal of the security guards may cause incidents of discriminatory abuse against people on the basis of any of the protected characteristics.

Older people who do not access the internet, may choose the Customer Service Centre to make cash payments because there is security presence to reassure them. In general, people with protected characteristics which may make them physically vulnerable, have been assessed as medium risk without security guards there to protect them. These groups include Age, Disability, Pregnancy and Sex. There is a concern that the removal of security guard presence may increase anxiety within these groups, preventing them from being able to access services required causing strain on other Public Bodies.

Race has been assessed as medium risk on the basis that 16.6% of security incidents logged related to racism.

### 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?**

The IIA has been informed by data that was collected through both face-to-face engagement sessions and online questionnaires which were responded to by various community organisations in Aberdeen and individuals who have / or work with people with protected characteristics.

Specific feedback received relating to this proposal highlighted concerns that females could be negatively impacted in circumstances of violence and that older people feel reassured by the security guards when making cash payments. Feedback was received from an older citizen stating that they specifically come into Marischal College to make payments because there is security to protect them, which is not the case at other pay points or Post Offices.

To help understand the scope of the impact, the footfall to Marischal College has been analysed. Customer Service Centre data relating to footfall volumes from January 2023 to November 2023 are as follows:

#### **Drop-In Service (people visiting without a pre-booked appointment)**

Bioline (food waste)	1,573
Drop Off / Pick Up	4,349
Information / Sign Post	5,927
Laundry Card	53
Payment Kiosks	3,549
Police Scotland	2,795
Self Service PC	252
Telephone	10,399
Visitor	3,666

**Total**

**32,572**

**Month People visiting for pre-booked Appointments**

January 712

February 739

March 832

April 558

May 642

June 659

July 643

August 760

September 624

October 690

November 580

**Total 7439**

This tells us that the approximate monthly number of visitors to Marischal College is 3,000 drop ins and 680 appointments. Customer Service Centre footfall data captured by the appointments system indicates that 70% of all appointments within the Customer Service Centre relate to free bus travel. The customer accessing this service are primarily disabled, older or children/young people.

24 security incidents have been logged within Marischal College and the Town House. 4 of these involved racially aggravated incidents.

Conclusions drawn from this data shows that support is required to help protect and defuse situations that arise within the Customer Service Centre and Town house. Whilst over the 12 months there has been 24 incidents noted, there may be an increase in footfall directed towards Marischal College as this is linked to another budget option, which looks at the removal of payments within other locations such as Post Office and Pay Points.

Another budget option that may impact this policy is Removal of telephony channel (Customer Contact Centre) and Customer Services staff within the Customer Service Centre. This would mean that if the removal of customer service staff and the discontinuation of security guard provision, would result in no staff presence in the Customer Service Centre, which could see an increase the number of incidents and a decrease in the number of employees available to support citizens when incidents occur.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service published a report of hate crimes recorded in Scotland: [Hate Crime in Scotland 2022-23 | COPFS](#). This shows that racially aggravated crime remains the most [Current breakdown of SIA licence holders by gender - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) commonly reported hate crime. Sexual Orientation aggravated crime is the second most commonly reported hate crime and is on the increase. Disability is the third most commonly reported hate crime and is also on the rise. Religion and Transgender Identity hate crimes are lower in comparison to others but remain fairly consistent. This tells us that there is still risk of discrimination in Scotland and that people with these protected characteristics may be at more risk of abuse within the premises without security guards there.

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

Engagement has been undertaken with Extended Corporate Management Team, Customer Services and the Security Guard contractor. This budget proposal was also 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 (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. 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 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.

There were no comments specifically relating to this proposal.

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

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

Since May 2021, Police Scotland have been co-located at Marischal College and operate their public counter from the Customer Service Centre. Police Scotland presence within Marischal College has been noted as positive in deterring abusive, aggressive, or violent behaviour from individuals and the volume of incidents has reduced as a result. However, police officers are not routinely available to assist with incidents. They can be called upon if necessary, as they would be to the public.

Zero Tolerance posters are displayed within the Customer Service Centre and the Town House. The poster has been positive in highlighting behaviours which are deemed unacceptable. More information could be provided on protected characteristics within these posters. This signage could be made more prominent within the premises to ensure maximum exposure.

CCTV is already in place within the Customer Service Centre to act as a deterrent and to capture any potential incidents. The presence of CCTV could be made more prominent in signage to further deter negative behaviours.

There is specialist lighting in the public toilets to deter drug usage, however monitoring of the use of toilets is required to ensure no mis-use. Staff would unlikely have the capacity to undertake this activity which is currently undertaken by the Security Guards. It can also be time consuming encouraging individuals to leave the building when their behaviour deems it necessary.

Staff have support aids such as the [Unacceptable Actions Policy](#). Training staff to deal with security incident against a clear protocol would be required in the absence of Security Guards. Refresher courses should also be made available in relation to the training that they have already received regarding dealing with violence and aggression. Frontline staff must be able to call upon managers should they feel uncomfortable or require assistance in dealing and supporting citizens or visitors of the Customer Service Centre and Town House.

There is currently a panic alarm system which the Security Guards respond to. The response to panic alarms would need to instead be undertaken by staff as capacity allows. Response times may be slower.

A reduction in security guard provision could be made, rather than the removal of them altogether and a reduction made from the savings identified.

The above mitigations will act a deterrent in some cases however will not remove all risks.

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

High	
Medium	X
Low	
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 \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

#### 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?

It is possible that people within all groups listed above will not have unrestricted access to the internet or telephones. In this case they would be unable to go online to communicate with the council and need to access Marischal College self-serve computers to complete their interactions with a service. People within any of the above groups may need to access Marischal College for appointments in relation to money advice, crisis grants or homelessness. Citizens living in deprived areas are also more far likely to not have a bank account so will need to access Marischal College to pay by cash at the payment kiosks.

The removal of security guards would not stop them accessing these services, but they may feel more vulnerable in the event that they are carrying cash to make payments at the kiosks.

Their visit to Marischal College may also be disrupted by ongoing security incidents or aggressive behaviour.

#### 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?**

In the past 6 months, 1,472 citizens have made cash payments totalling £404,585 via the kiosks in Marischal College:

Year	Months	Sum of Amount	Count of Clients
2023	Aug	£68,080.00	262
	Sep	£56,625.00	243
	Oct	£63,385.00	249
	Nov	£75,805.00	270
	Dec	£75,370.00	209
2024	Jan	£65,320.00	239
Grand Total		£404,585.00	1,472

People living in deprived areas are more far likely to not have a bank account according to the latest report from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) (July 2023). There are areas of Aberdeen City which sit in the 20% most deprived areas according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020. As a result of this, they are more likely to enter Marischal College to make payments in cash.

The Scottish Government published the [Scottish Household Survey 2022](#). This reported that 91% of households in Scotland have access to the internet, meaning 9% of households do not. Only 84% of households in the most deprived areas of Scotland have access to internet. Additionally, 80% of those in social rented housing had internet access, compared with 94% of households who owned their home. These statistics back up the assumption that socio-economic factors impact people's access to the internet and as much as 20% of council house tenants may not have access to the internet at home.

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

Engagement has been undertaken with Extended Corporate Management Team, Customer Services and the Security Guard contractor. This budget proposal was also 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. There were 3,192 responses.

In part 2, the public could either increase, decrease or not change the level of expenditure in areas listed. There were 2,654 responses.

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. 126 people with protected characteristics took part and 377 comments were received.

There were no comments specifically relating to this option.

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

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

Zero Tolerance posters are displayed within the Customer Service Centre and the Town House. The poster has been positive in highlighting behaviours which are deemed unacceptable. More information could be provided

on protected characteristics within these posters. This signage could be made more prominent within the premises to ensure maximum exposure.

CCTV is already in place within the Customer Service Centre to act as a deterrent and to capture any potential incidents. The presence of CCTV could be made more prominent in signage to further deter negative behaviours.

Staff have support aids such as the [Unacceptable Actions Policy](#). Training staff to deal with security incident against a clear protocol would be required in the absence of Security Guards. Refresher courses should also be made available. Frontline staff must be able to call upon managers should they feel uncomfortable or require assistance in dealing and supporting citizens or visitors of the Customer Service Centre and Town House.

There is currently a panic alarm system maintained by the Security Guards. The maintenance and operation of panic alarms would need to be managed by staff.

<b>With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?</b>	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
<b>Article 6:</b> <a href="#">Right to a fair trial</a>		X	
<b>Article 7:</b> <a href="#">No punishment without law</a>		X	
<b>Article 8:</b> <a href="#">Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence</a>		X	
<b>Article 9:</b> <a href="#">Freedom of thought, belief and religion</a>		X	
<b>Article 10:</b> <a href="#">Freedom of expression</a>		X	
<b>Article 11:</b> <a href="#">Freedom of assembly and association</a>		X	
<b>Article 12:</b> <a href="#">Right to marry and start a family</a>		X	
<b>Article 14:</b> <a href="#">Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms</a>		X	
<b>Article 1 of Protocol 1:</b> <a href="#">Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property</a>		X	
<b>Article 2 of Protocol 1:</b> <a href="#">Right to education</a>		X	
<b>Article 3 of Protocol 1:</b> <a href="#">Right to participate in free elections</a>		X	

##### 4.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

n/a

##### 4.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

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



n/a

**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
<b>Article 1:</b> definition of the child		X	
<b>Article 2:</b> non-discrimination		X	
<b>Article 3:</b> best interests of the child		X	
<b>Article 4:</b> implementation of the convention		X	
<b>Article 5:</b> parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities		X	
<b>Article 6:</b> life, survival and development		X	
<b>Article 7:</b> birth registration, name, nationality, care		X	
<b>Article 8:</b> protection and preservation of identity		X	
<b>Article 9:</b> separation from parents		X	
<b>Article 10:</b> family reunification		X	
<b>Article 11:</b> abduction and non-return of children		X	
<b>Article 12:</b> respect for the views of the child		X	
<b>Article 13:</b> freedom of expression		X	
<b>Article 14:</b> freedom of thought, belief and religion		X	
<b>Article 15:</b> freedom of association		X	
<b>Article 16:</b> right to privacy		X	
<b>Article 17:</b> access to information from the media		X	
<b>Article 18:</b> parental responsibilities and state assistance		X	
<b>Article 19:</b> protection from violence, abuse and neglect	X		
<b>Article 20:</b> children unable to live with their family		X	
<b>Article 21:</b> adoption		X	
<b>Article 22:</b> refugee children		X	
<b>Article 23:</b> children with a disability		X	
<b>Article 24:</b> health and health services		X	
<b>Article 25:</b> review of treatment in care		X	
<b>Article 26:</b> social security		X	
<b>Article 27:</b> adequate standard of living		X	
<b>Article 28:</b> right to education		X	
<b>Article 29:</b> goals of education		X	
<b>Article 30:</b> children from minority or indigenous groups		X	

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

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

Customer Service Centre footfall data captured by the appointments system indicates that 70% of all appointments within the Customer Service Centre relate to free bus travel. The citizens accessing this service include children/young people. The discontinuation of security guard provision may give rise to incidents of violence or abuse.

### 5.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

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

Zero Tolerance posters are displayed within the Customer Service Centre and the Town House. The poster has been positive in highlighting behaviours which are deemed unacceptable. More information could be provided on protected characteristics within these posters. This signage could be made more prominent within the premises to ensure maximum exposure.

CCTV is already in place within the Customer Service Centre to act as a deterrent and to capture any potential incidents. The presence of CCTV could be made more prominent in signage to further deter negative behaviours.

There is currently a panic alarm system maintained by the Security Guards. The maintenance and operation of panic alarms would need to be managed by staff.

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

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

X

## 6: Sign Off

### **Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?**

Sex has been assessed as medium risk as it is noted that 11% of Security Industry Authority licence holders in the UK are female and 89% are male, with a total of 2054 across Aberdeen. This highlights that sex as a protected characteristic would be impacted from the policy, with this being a male dominated job role at present.

### **Overall summary of changes made as a result of impact assessment.**

To ensure that groups with protected characteristics still feel safe when entering the Customer Service Centre and Town House, signage advising of unacceptable behaviours and CCTV in operation should be more prominent. All staff working at these premises should be trained to deal with security incidents and the law relating to protected characteristics. A panic alarm system should be maintained by staff.

### **Outline of how impact of policy will be monitored.**

Security incident data will be collected and analysed on an ongoing basis. Any incident relevant to the contents of the protected characteristics section of the Equality Act 2010 will be recorded as such. Visitor feedback will be monitored to ensure a positive experience for all visitors and to capture any incidents involving protected characteristics that was not deemed a "security incident."

### **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.

<b>Assessment Author</b>	Duncan Dallas
<b>Date</b>	22 February 2024
<b>Chief Officer</b>	Lucy McKenzie
<b>Date</b>	23/02/24