

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

Budget Consultation – 2025/26

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

Like all local authorities, Aberdeen City Council faces rising costs for delivering public services. Some extremely tough decisions will need to be made to stay within budget. To help guide these tough decisions, Aberdeen City Council is committed to listening to the views of our citizens. In addition, the Consumer Scotland Act (2020) aims to put the consumers interests at the heart of strategic decision-making across the public sector to deliver better policy outcomes for Scotland. We want to understand our citizens priorities, so that spending plans are made with these in mind. To gather this information citizens are being asked to participate in a consultation and completing surveys.

The survey allows participants to provide their views on:

- budget options, which provides potential options that have been identified for making savings or generating income.
- Council tax, which explores potential increases, and
- Capital programme, which focuses on prioritising capital spending.

In each section, participants can share insights on how the possible choices might affect their protected characteristic.

Participants will be asked to fill in optional demographic data. This information will be used to understand the demographics of those who have engaged with us and to assess the participation and representation from diverse groups across the city.

Citizens will also have the option to attend engagement sessions, which will provide the opportunity for participants to discuss potential impacts face to face.

The purpose of this Integrated Impact Assessment is to assess the consultation process itself. It is proposed that the consultation will take place over the period of four weeks. It will consist of:

- Digital survey (developed using a simulator supplied by Commonplace)

- Engagement sessions held with communities (virtual and in person options), supported by our GREC partners
- Alternative formats of the survey made available *e.g. large print, braille, alternative language.*

The digital surveys will be conducted using a consultation platform provided by Commonplace. Commonplace have provided public consultation tools to more than 300 public sector organisations. They have published over 3,500 engagement sites, including many budget consultations for local authorities in the UK. Over 3 million contributions have been processed and analysed via these platforms. The engagement platform is compliant with web content accessibility guidelines version 2.1 AA standard.

Information about the consultation will be available on the website, which complies with accessibility requirements and includes the ReciteMe accessibility tool.

A briefing will be shared with Chief Officers and Service Managers to allow them to cascade the budget consultation and any potential impacts to their teams prior to launch on the 19th August. The survey will be featured on the internal platform Intranet, which is accessible to most staff members who are encouraged to participate and complete it.

We will reach out to key stakeholders and community groups, inviting them to promote and participate in the consultation. In addition, we plan to conduct engagement sessions via our Equality Participation Network to distribute the survey among those groups and individuals who are typically underrepresented.

Digital assistance is available at local libraries and at the Customer Service Centre, Marischal College during opening hours.

We are hosting pop-up events to offer digital assistance for completing this year's survey. During these sessions Aberdeen City Council officers will provide citizens support in completing the survey.

The results will be shared with all political group leaders, who will be encouraged to explain how the consultation feedback has informed their Budget proposals when bringing them forward in 2025.

1.3 Is this a new or existing policy?

N/A

1.4 Is this report going to a committee?

Feedback from Phase 1 consultation will be presented to Council on 2 October 2024.

1.5 Committee name and date:

Council 2 October 2024.

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

General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme - 2023/24 to 2027/28

1.7 Function and cluster:

People and Citizen Services

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?

During the last budget consultation, aside from the engagement sessions, there were no paper surveys requested, leading to the choice of conducting the survey digitally.

The proposed consultation should have a positive impact on people with any of the above protected characteristics because it involves the use of a consultation tool to collect and analyse their feedback. It also looks to include engagement sessions, both virtually and in person which will be undertaken by the Equalities Team, who will reach out to particular groups. In providing participants the opportunity for each proposed option to share insights on how the possible choices might affect their daily lives it provides the opportunity to capture as much information as possible from people with protected characteristics.

Citizens with certain disabilities require tools to aid them in accessing, understanding, and engaging with online surveys. To ensure as many people as possible can access and engage with the consultation hub, the provider, Commonplace is accessible to WCAG 2.11 AA Standards. Users can amend the display elements, use screen readers, and navigate using their keyboards. There is a voice recording tool for users to submit their ideas and feedback, which will assist citizens who have difficulties in communicating via text.

For citizens with protected characteristics that might impact them accessing the survey digitally, support will also be provided to aid completion within local libraries and our customer service centre at Marischal College.

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?

Aberdeen City Council conducts a biennial [Population Needs Assessment](#) (PNA) for the city. The aim of the PNA is to provide a high-level analysis of key groups, priorities, and challenges across public services, including service performance and information available on the customer perspective. The data used within the PNA is also included in the online [Aberdeen Outcomes Framework](#) which is maintained with the latest data as it becomes available.

By way of background, [The Consumer Scotland Act 2020](#) ('the 2020 Act') introduced a duty ("the consumer duty") on 'relevant public authorities' in Scotland, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise their functions, to have regard to:

- the impact of those decisions on consumers in Scotland, and
- the desirability of reducing harm to consumers in Scotland

An outcomes-based approach should be taken to meet the duty with a focus on providing better quality services and outcomes for consumers, as users of public services.

Through consultation, stakeholders voiced the need for a comprehensive process to capture the interests of consumers and integrate these interests into public authority strategic policy and decision making to help achieve positive outcomes for consumers.

The budget impacts every citizen within Aberdeen City boundaries and beyond. The [latest population data](#) for Aberdeen City is from 2021 which states the total population is 227,430, with a projected population 228,970 for 2025 ([nrscotland](#)). The demographic age groups are as follows: -

- 15.8% under 16, 68.9% working age, 15.4% pensionable age.
- 10,897 aged 0-4
- 11,924 aged 5-9
- 13,038 aged 10-15

The [Population Needs Assessment](#) (PNA) for the city Survey 2023, reported that 91.4% of households has access to the internet, with 96% reporting to have access to at least one device (laptop or PC, smart phone, or tablet). [City Voice](#) survey 2024 indicates 78.5% completed surveys was completed online.

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

Consultation has also taken place with the Equalities Team, Customer Experience and External Communications to ensure a focus on accessibility.

Equalities group GREC, has been consulted to support and cater with accessibility.

Consultation is planned with the Community Planning Partnership to help inform the approach going forwards.

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)?

Engagement with Aberdeen Youth Movement to identify ways in which young people would wish to participate in the consultation.

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

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

As the consultation platform is an online system it can only be accessed by those with internet access and digital ability. In the event that someone cannot access the online tool, council officers will support in aiding participants in completing this and obtain feedback directly from the citizens and include these in the consultation. We will also promotion of engagement events cross the city in accessible location, support will be provided for participants to complete the consultation.

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?	High	
	Medium	
	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 on low incomes will not have unrestricted access to the internet/ devices. This means they are not able to access the consultation online from their own home.

Low-income household may have restricted ability to fund travel, limited their involvement in engagement session.

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?

[4. Internet - Scottish Household Survey 2022: Key Findings - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

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?

Consultation has also taken place with the Equalities Team, Customer Experience to ensure a focus on accessibility.

Equalities group GREC, has been consulted to support and cater with accessibility.

Consultation is planned with the Community Planning Partnership to help inform the approach going forwards.

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?

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

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

To mitigate this issue, we will be promoting engagement events for citizens to attend and find out more about consultations. We are also committed to promoting hubs where citizens can get free Wi-Fi and computer access in order to take part in surveys.

In promotion of engagement events cross the city in accessible location, limited the costs associated with travel.

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

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?

The consultation will have a positive impact on articles 8 and 9 as it gives people the route to express their opinions and how council proposals may impact on their beliefs.

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
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?

For most articles, the impact will be neutral. For some, the impact could be positive as the council may collect opinions from children and/or parents/guardians that will feed into proposals to better service the needs of disabled children and contribute towards leisure, play, and culture.

5.3 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

6: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?
n/a
Overall summary of changes made as a result of impact assessment.
<p>It has highlighted the need for officers to be able to collect feedback on consultations from citizens who cannot access the internet or may have other issues restricting them from responding online.</p> <p>The need to promote engagement sessions throughout the city in accessible locations, which reduces travel from those with restricted travel means.</p> <p>The use of the Commonplace tool improves accessibility with features such as voice recording capabilities.</p>
Outline of how impact of policy will be monitored.
<p>Responses to consultations will constantly be monitored to ensure that we are receiving feedback on proposals from citizens in every demographic and targeted engagement to reach communities with low take up.</p>
If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.
n/a

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