

The purpose of an Integrated Impact Assessment is to evidence that Aberdeen City Council is meeting its legislative duties by assessing the potential impacts of its policies and decisions on different groups of people and the environment. The legislation considered within this assessment is:

- Section 2 [Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics](#)
- Section 3 [Socio-Economic](#)
- Section 4 [Consumer Duty](#)
- Section 5 [Human Rights](#)
- Section 6 [Children and Young People’s Rights](#)
- Section 7 [Environmental impacts](#)

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 option NEW-101 - Reduce level of service from Digital and Technology
1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?
This budget proposal will reduce the level of digital spend by £450k against a budget of £11.7m. This represents a reduction of 3.8%
1.3 Is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision?
This proposal forms part of the 2025/26 budget options which will be considered in full by the council
1.4 Is this a new or existing policy?
New savings proposal. Links to Target Operating Model.
1.5 Is this report going to a committee?
Yes
1.6 Committee name and date:
Full council 05/03/2025
1.7 Report no and / or Budget proposal number and / or Business Case reference number:
New-101
1.8 Function and Cluster:
Digital and Technology, Corporate Services

Impacts

Aberdeen City Council has a legal requirement as a public sector organisation to assess the impact of its work on equality groups and assess against human rights, children’s rights and our socio-economic duty. This is our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED has three key parts:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity.
- Foster good relations by tackling prejudice, promoting understanding.

This following five sections in the Integrated Impact Assessment demonstrate that these considerations that have been made in the policy, that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted, and what mitigating steps can be taken to reduce any negative impact of the policy.

2: Equality Act 2010 - Protected Characteristics

Aberdeen City Council wants to ensure everyone is treated fairly. This section identifies what impact the policy may have on people with [protected characteristics](#).

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

Protected Characteristic	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 impact of the budget saving will reduce levels of service within Digital & Technology which supports internal council services and ensures our citizen facing services are robust and comply with the accessibility regulation 2018 and WCAG guidance. Development of digital services is aligned with promoting access and services include support for face to face, telephone and on line. Current plans for digital delivery include adoption of AI voice to support citizen interactions and also a broad programme of support for both Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership and Bon Accord Care. This includes both analogue to digital transition and adoption of wider technology enabled care services.

There is potential for those who use telephone to access the council’s services to be impacted by a general reduction in capacity within Digital & Technology as digital offerings may be less robust and expansion into new supported features may be impacted. Similarly those who access services from health and social care may also be impacted as the service contracts.

Support for schools IT will be impacted by this proposal. The current £17.7m investment in schools ICT will delivery benefits and improve automation of routine tasks that will help minimise the impact from a support perspective. Development of this initial baseline investment will be essential if schools are to benefit from the next generation of technologies.

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 House of Lords report - Digital exclusion in the UK was considered and highlighted the lack of basic digital skills of citizens who required to access services on line. The committee found that too many online services had poor accessibility for those with additional needs and argued that provision needed to be made to maintain access to services for those that chose not to use online.

[Digital exclusion in the UK: Communications and Digital Committee report - House of Lords Library](#)

The report "Health Inequalities and Mitigating Risks of Digital Exclusion" underscores significant challenges faced by older adults and those who are digitally excluded. It highlights that digital health technologies, while promising to enhance healthcare delivery and accessibility, inadvertently widen the health disparity gap for those less adept with digital tools. Older adults, in particular, often face substantial barriers such as lack of digital literacy, limited access to the internet, and age-related cognitive and physical impairments, making it difficult for them to benefit from digital health services.

Moreover, digital exclusion exacerbates existing health inequalities. Individuals who are digitally marginalized often lack access to essential health information, telehealth services, and digital health records, which are increasingly becoming standard in modern healthcare. This exclusion can result in delayed care, mismanagement of chronic conditions, and a general decline in overall health outcomes. The report stresses that without targeted interventions, these populations will continue to experience poorer health outcomes compared to their digitally connected counterparts.

[Mitigating Risks of Digital Exclusion in Health Systems | Good Things Foundation](#)

The "Digital Exclusion Review 2022" highlights significant challenges faced by the elderly and individuals with limiting conditions in accessing and effectively using digital technologies. It underscores that these groups often experience barriers such as lack of digital skills, limited access to devices, and financial constraints, which exacerbate their exclusion from vital online services. The review also stresses the need for targeted interventions, including tailored training programs and subsidised access to technology, to bridge the digital divide and enhance the quality of life for these vulnerable populations.

[Digital exclusion: a review of Ofcom's research on digital exclusion among adults in the UK](#)

The inclusion of AI technologies in schools offers a myriad of opportunities for young people, significantly enhancing their educational experiences. According to the technical report on "Use Cases for Generative AI in Education" from October 2024, AI-driven tools can provide personalised learning experiences, adapting educational content to meet the diverse needs and learning paces of students. This personalised approach can help identify and address learning gaps more efficiently, ensuring that each student receives the support they need to succeed. Additionally, AI can facilitate innovative teaching methods, such as interactive simulations and virtual tutors, making learning more engaging and accessible. Furthermore, the report from the Good Things Foundation highlights that integrating AI into the curriculum can equip students with essential digital skills, preparing them for the future workforce, where proficiency in AI and related technologies will be increasingly valuable. By embracing AI in education, schools can foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment, ultimately empowering young people to thrive in a rapidly evolving digital world.

[AI Opportunities Action Plan - GOV.UK](#)

[Use Cases for Generative AI in Education - Building a proof of concept for Generative AI feedback and resource generation in education contexts: Technical report](#)

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

Budget discussion via ECMT. Service engagement sessions with Bon Accord Care and Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership. Overall narrative as part on the council's Target Operating Model and the associated enabling strategies.

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy?

Council budget consultation generated responses that voiced concern over cutting services that supported education, health and transportation. Digital spans all 3 with active projects around education modernisation, Technology enabled care and internet of things (IoT) to help manage the city in relation to transport, water management and CCTV.

Feedback to the Health and Social Care budget consultation highlighted that greater use of technology could reduce operating costs and broadly supported by 90% of respondents. In more specific feedback concern was raised about the usability of digital self service and technology enabled care solutions for older people. Technology design will play a key factor in aiding and supporting adoption.

2.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

Ensure that resource reductions are targeted to avoid undue impact on citizen facing services that are designed to support the identified groups.

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

High	
Medium	
Low	
Negative Impact Removed	x

3: Socio-Economic Impacts

Aberdeen City Council has a duty to reduce the inequalities of outcome that can arise from socio-economic disadvantage. This section is used to consider what impact the policy may have on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage – and how any inequalities of outcome arising from the policy can be reduced.

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 people who experience the following aspects of socio-economic disadvantage?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Low income – those who have insufficient earnings to meet basic needs, such as food, clothing, housing, or utilities.		x	
Low/ no wealth – those who have no savings for unexpected spend or provision for the future.		x	
Material deprivation – those who cannot afford or access goods or services that are considered essential or desirable for a decent quality of life, such as food, clothing, heating, transport, internet, cultural, recreational and social activities.		x	
Area deprivation – those who live in an area with poor living conditions, such as higher levels of crime, pollution, noise, congestion, or lack of infrastructure, amenities, or green spaces.		x	
Socio-economic background – social class, parents’ education, employment, income.		x	

3.2 In what way will the policy impact people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage?

These savings will not adversely impact from a socio-economic impact as the saving relates to costs of running an internal service based on the mitigations included above. Considerations for affordable access to services have been covered in Section 2 above.

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?
N/A
What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?
N/A
What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy?
N/A

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?	
No negative impact identified.	
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains
	Yes – negative impact reduced
	Yes - negative impact removed

4: Consumer Impacts

The Consumer Scotland Act 2020 places a Consumer Duty on the public sector to put consumer interests at the heart of strategic decision-making, emphasising the need for accessible and affordable public services, especially during times of financial pressure. This person-centred approach is intended to result in better quality services and outcomes for the public as consumers of public services across Scotland.

This section of the IIA is used to consider the impact of the policy on consumers of any services that the policy is intended to change.

Use this guide to understand more on the consumer duty: [How to meet the consumer duty: guidance for public authorities](#)

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

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Individuals		x	
Small businesses		x	

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

Cost of internal service delivery based on mitigations in section 2. No identified impact on consumers.

4.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?	
No negative impacts identified.	
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains
	Yes – negative impact reduced
	Yes - negative impact removed

5: 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](#).

5.1 What impact could this policy have on Human Rights?

Human Rights Article	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 2: Right to life		X	
Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour		X	
Article 5: Right to liberty and security		X	
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	

5.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

Internal saving related to service costs. No human rights impact has been identified at this stage.

5.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

No negative impact identified.

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

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

6: 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 18-26 years old.

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

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

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
PROVISION			
Article 2: non-discrimination		X	
Article 3: best interests of the child provision and protection		X	
Article 5: parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities		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 22: refugee children		X	
Article 23: children with a disability		X	
Article 24: health and health services		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 39: recovery from trauma and reintegration		X	
Article 40: juvenile justice		X	
PROTECTION			
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 protection		X	
Article 11: abduction and non-return of children		X	
Article 15: freedom of association		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 25: review of treatment in care		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 32: child labour		X	
PARTICIPATION			
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 42: knowledge of rights		X	

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

Internal saving related to service costs. No Children and Young People’s Rights impact has been identified at this stage.

6.3 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

No negative impact identified.

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

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

7: Environmental Impacts

Aberdeen City Council has a duty to meet its legal environmental responsibilities by working towards Net Zero emissions, adapting to climate change, and acting in a way it considers most sustainable. We must also fulfil the [biodiversity duty](#) and [sustainable procurement duty](#).

This section in the Integrated Impact Assessment demonstrates that these considerations that have been made in the policy, that the impact of proposals made is understood and accepted, and what mitigating steps can be taken to reduce any negative impact of the policy.

Use this guide to understand more on the legal climate change duty: [Climate change - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) and find out more about how Aberdeen is adapting to Climate Change: [Aberdeen Adapts | Aberdeen City Council](#)

7.1 What is the impact of this policy on any of the below climate, environmental and waste considerations?

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Council or City-wide carbon emissions		X	
Active and sustainable travel		X	
Facilities for local living		X	
Resilience and adaptability to flooding and weather events		X	
Biodiversity improvement and wildlife/habitat connectivity		X	
Water consumption and drainage		X	
Pollution (air, water, noise, light and land contamination)		X	
Impact on resource use and waste		X	
Sustainable procurement of goods and services		X	

7.2 In what way will the policy impact the environment?

No impact identified at this stage.

7.3 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 saving relates to service costs and an assessment of the criteria show no impact at this stage.

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with local groups, partner organisations, experts etc? Where required, identify any other environmental assessments that have been completed.

- N/A

7.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to remove or reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?

No negative impact identified.

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

No – negative impact remains

Yes – negative impact reduced

Yes - negative impact removed

8: Sign Off

Any further positive or negative impacts on individuals or groups that have been considered?
None identified.
Does the policy relate to the Council's Equality Outcomes? If yes, how.
No
Overall summary of changes made to the policy as a result of impact assessment.
Not a policy change but consideration has been given to targeting the cost reductions to avoid under impact.
Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.
Review as each stage gate is passed through the budget process. The impact of any agreed reduction will be monitored as part of the service standard reporting to Communities Housing and Public Protection Committee
If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.
N/A

Assessment Author	Steve Roud
Date	21/02/2025
Chief Officer	Steve Roud
Date	21/02/2025