

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

Recommission contract for security guards at Marischal College /Town House reducing the cover from two to one security guard.

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

The proposal would see the reduction of security guards at Marischal College/ Town House from two to one.

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

This would be achieved through a review of the contracts for security guard provision, resulting in one security guard, Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm. This provision would still enable a security guard presence for most of the day except during breaks 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 during security guard's breaks which equates to around 1 hour per day.

This proposal would realise a financial saving which contributes to the savings target of the organisation to achieve a balanced budget.

1.3 Is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision?

No

1.4 Is this a new or existing policy?

New

1.5 Is this report going to a committee?

Yes

1.6 Committee name and date:

Budget meeting, Council, 5 March 2025

1.7 Report no and / or Budget proposal number and / or Business Case reference number: CE21

1.8 Function and cluster:

Corporate Services, People and Citizen 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 <u>protected characteristics</u>.

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

Protected Characteristic		Negative		Neutral	Desitive
	High	Medium	Low	Neutral	Positive
Age			Х		
Disability			Х		
Gender Reassignment			Х		
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Х		
Pregnancy and Maternity			Х		
Race			Х		
Religion or Belief			Х		
Sex			Х		
Sexual Orientation			Х		

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 prebooked appointments, make payments at our payment kiosks, deliver/collect documentation or seek help in a crisis situation. 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.

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 have 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.

All protected characteristics groups have been assessed as low risk. The reduction of the security guards may cause an increase in incidents of discriminatory abuse against people on the basis of any of the protected characteristics. Of the 12 incidents recorded between 1 October 2023 and 30 November 2024, 3 were reported as relating to race (25%).

In general, people with protected characteristics which may make them physically vulnerable, have been assessed as low risk as there will still be security guard provisions to act as a deterrent. These groups include Age, Disability, Pregnancy and Sex. Reducing security guard presence, still allows these groups to access services required, without increasing anxiety and causing strain on other Public Bodies.

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?

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 2024 to October 2024, tells us that the approximate monthly number of visitors to Marischal College is 3,300 drop ins and 652 appointments. Customer Service Centre footfall data captured by the appointments system indicates that 59% 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.

Between 1 October 2023 and 30 November 2024, 12 security incidents have been logged within Marischal College and the Town House. 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. This is a low number and whilst events cannot be predicted, it indicates that the frequency would likely be extremely low during the security guards one hour break.

It should also be noted that whilst over 12 months (1 October 2023 – 30 November 2024), there has been 12 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.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service published a report of hate crimes recorded in Scotland: <u>Hate</u> <u>Crime in Scotland 2023-24 | COPFS</u>. This shows that racially aggravated crime remains the most 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, which is reduced with the security guard presence.

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations? Engagement has been undertaken with Extended Corporate Management Team, Customer Services and the Security Guard contractor.

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

During the 2024/25 Budget Consultation, a proposed budget option to remove all Security Guard provisions was described, with links to the consultation shared directly with many partner organisations. From all the engagement undertaken, we received no comments specifically related to security guard provision.

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)?

As this proposal looks to reduce the number of Security Guard presence from two to one, impacts are limited to short periods of the day when the on duty guard is on a break. This would be mitigated by staff supporting citizens.

Consideration will need to be given to how any risks to staff operating from the Customer Service Centre during the Security Guard's breaks will need to be mitigated. There may be potential impact directly on individual groups of employees and equalities, for example older employees, females, those with neurodiversity and as evidenced in the incident report data, race. Those protected characteristics mean in potentially difficult situations they may be at a greater disadvantage.

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.

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 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 misuse. Staff will support in with this activity during the security guards one hour break.

There is currently a panic alarm and radio system which the Security Guards respond to. During the Security Guards, one hour break Customer Service Centre staff will support in responding to this alarm should it be needed. This may result in a slower response time.

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.

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	High	
the negative impact(s)?	Medium	
	Low	Х
	Negative Impact Removed	

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: <u>The Fairer Scotland Duty: Guidance for</u> <u>Public Bodies (www.gov.scot)</u>

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	Х		
needs, such as food, clothing, housing, or utilities.			
Low/ no wealth – those who have no savings for unexpected spend	Х		
or provision for the future.			
Material deprivation – those who cannot afford or access goods or	Х		
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.			
Area deprivation – those who live in an area with poor living	Х		
conditions, such as higher levels of crime, pollution, noise,			
congestion, or lack of infrastructure, amenities, or green spaces.			
Socio-economic background – social class, parents' education,	Х		
employment, income.			

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

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 reduction of security guards would not stop them accessing these services although there may be feeling of vulnerability for carrying cash to make payments at kiosks during period where there is no security guard presence.

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, citizens have made a total of 6,605 cash payments via the kiosks in Marischal College.

Month	Number of transactions
June	963
July	1188
August	1131
Septembe	r 1094

October 1197 November 1032 Total 6605

People living in deprived areas are far more 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 <u>Scottish Household Survey 2022</u>. 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 has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?** Engagement has been undertaken with the Extended Corporate Management Team, Customer Services and the Security Guard Contractor.

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

During phase 2 of 2024/25 Budget Consultation, a proposed budget option to remove all Security Guard provisions was described, with links to the consultation shared directly with many partner organisations. From all the engagement undertaken, we received no comments specifically related to security guard provisions.

3.4 What mitigations can be put in place?

What can be done to reduce any negative impacts of this policy (if applicable)?			
The mitigations mirror those as outlined in 2.4 above.			
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or	No – negative impact remains		
reduce the negative impact?	Yes – negative impact reduced	Х	
	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: <u>How to meet the consumer duty</u>: <u>guidance for public</u> <u>authorities</u>

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

Negative Neutral

Positive

Individuals	х		
Small businesses		х	

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

This proposal will have no impact on small businesses but could negatively impact individuals.

Anyone visiting Marischal College or the Town House is considered a 'consumer' in terms of the consumer duty requirements. One of the seven principles to be applied to consumers is 'Safety', specifically that "Adequate measures are in place to protect consumers from harm".

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.

Citizens access our services at Marischal College and the Town House to:

- Use the computers to get access to the internet
- Attend prebooked appointments
- Make payments at our payment kiosks
- Deliver/collect documentation
- Seek help in a crisis situation
- Visit elected members
- Access services such as Archives
- Attend meetings such as the Disability Equity Partnership, Tenant Participation meetings and committees

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 have 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.

A reduction in security guard provision would potentially reduce the adequate measures in place to protect consumers from harm.

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)?			
The mitigations mirror those as outlined in 2.4 above.			
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or			
reduce the negative impact?	Yes – negative impact reduced	х	
	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 <u>Human Rights</u>.

5.1 What impact could this policy have on Human Rights?

Human Rights Article	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Article 2: <u>Right to life</u>		х	
Article 4: Prohibition of slavery and forced labour		х	
Article 5: Right to liberty and security		х	
Article 6: <u>Right to a fair trial</u>		х	
Article 7: No punishment without law		х	
Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life, home and		х	
<u>correspondence</u>			
Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion		х	
Article 10: Freedom of expression		х	
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association		х	
Article 12: Right to marry and start a family		х	
Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and		х	
freedoms			
Article 1 of Protocol 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property		х	
Article 2 of Protocol 1: Right to education		х	
Article 3 of Protocol 1: Right to participate in free elections		х	

5.2 In what way will the policy impact Human Rights?

No impact	

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)?				
N/A				
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or	No – negative impact remains			
reduce the negative impact?	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).

There are 4 articles known as the "General Principles". They help to interpret the other articles. 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)

For ease, the articles have been grouped in three categories to support assessments against the Convention, those most directly related to the **PROVISION** of services, those most directly related to the **PROTECTION** of children and young people, and those to encourage their active **PARTICIPATION in decision making**. You can <u>read the full UN Convention (pdf)</u>, or <u>just a summary (pdf)</u>, 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?

o. I what impact could this policy have on the rights of children and	Negative	Neutral	Positive
PROVISION			
Article 2: non-discrimination		х	
Article 3: best interests of the child provision and protection		х	
Article 5: parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities		х	
Article 16: right to privacy		х	
Article 17: access to information from the media		х	
Article 18: parental responsibilities and state assistance		х	
Article 22: refugee children		х	
Article 23: children with a disability		х	
Article 24: health and health services		х	
Article 26: social security		х	
Article 27: adequate standard of living		х	
Article 28: right to education		х	
Article 29: goals of education		х	
Article 30: children from minority or indigenous groups		х	
Article 31: leisure, play and culture		х	
Article 39: recovery from trauma and reintegration		х	
Article 40: juvenile justice		х	
PROTECTION			-
Article 6: life, survival and development		х	
Article 7: birth registration, name, nationality, care		х	
Article 8: protection and preservation of identity		х	
Article 9: Separation from parents		х	
Article 10: family reunification protection		х	
Article 11: abduction and non-return of children		х	
Article 15: freedom of association		х	
Article 19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect	x		
Article 20: children unable to live with their family		х	
Article 21: adoption		х	

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?

Customer Service Centre footfall data captured by the appointments system indicates that 59% of all appointments within the Customer Service Centre relate to free bus travel. The citizens accessing this service include children/young people. The reduction of security guard provision may give rise to incidents of violence or abuse.

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)?		
The mitigations mirror those as outlined in 2.4 above.		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or	No – negative impact remains	
reduce the negative impact?	Yes – negative impact reduced	Х
	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 <u>biodiversity duty</u> and <u>sustainable procurement duty</u>.

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: <u>Climate change - gov.scot</u> (www.gov.scot) and find out more about how Aberdeen is adapting to Climate Change: <u>Aberdeen Adapts</u> <u>Aberdeen City Council</u>

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		Х	
Active and sustainable travel		Х	
Facilities for local living		Х	
Resilience and adaptability to flooding and weather events		Х	
Biodiversity improvement and wildlife/habitat connectivity		Х	
Water consumption and drainage		Х	
Pollution (air, water, noise, light and land contamination)		Х	
Impact on resource use and <u>waste</u>		Х	
Sustainable procurement of goods and services		Х	

7.2 In what way will the policy impact the environment?

No impact

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?

N/A

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)?

 N/A

 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?

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 2,043 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

Staff conversations to be held to highlight support required to cover security guards one hour break.

Does the policy relate to the Council's Equality Outcomes? If yes, how:

Yes, it applies directly to EO 1 - All people with protected characteristics will access information, goods and services knowing that social and physical barriers are identified and removed, with a focus on Age, Gender reassignment and Disability.

Overall summary of changes made to the policy 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, during the Security Guards breaks signage advising of unacceptable behaviours and CTTV 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 the on shift Security Guard and staff during the Security Guards break.

Outline how the 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

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