Integrated Impact Assessment

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	
Digital only access for non-emergencies	
1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?	
The purpose of this budget option is to reduce costs by providing a digital-only route for enquiries relating to non-emergencies. This would cover services such as Roads, Waste, Grounds, Environmental Services, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Parking, and Bus Lanes. Emergency issues and services that are not online will still be managed by the Contact Centre. As only emergencies will be handled over the telephone this would allow the council to redesign the staffing structure within the Contact Centre. This will result in £200,000 saving in 2025/26.	
1.3 Is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision?	
This would be a strategic decision made as part of the Budget setting for 2025/2026**.**	
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:	
New 116	
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 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?

This proposal would have significant impact on any vulnerable citizens unable to access services digitally. It would also pose further challenge more widely around accessing support to council services. There are situations where citizens have no choice but to engage with Aberdeen City Council and therefore it is essential that there are no barriers, with support in place when necessary.

Digital only access for non-emergencies may:
- result in less favourable treatment for particular groups.
- give rise to indirect discrimination.
- lead to discrimination arising from disability.
- pose risk of impact on public sector equality act which requires how the services we deliver serve people with different levels of access.

The 2025/26 public budget consultation conducted in September 2024 highlighted concerns about accessibility, vulnerable citizens, and impact on older people. Many respondents highlighted that digital-only access would exclude those without internet access or digital skills, particularly affecting older and vulnerable populations.

Age has been assessed as medium risk as elderly individuals would more likely contact the Council by telephone or face to face for additional support. The call volumes in relation to free bus travel are high which indicates that young people and those over 60 years old make telephone contact and therefore the protected characteristic of age is impacted. There are elderly people who are not digitally literate and may fear using the internet due to concerns about fraud. Personal interactions with council employees can have a social and mental health benefit

to some elderly people by making them feel less isolated, which would be affected by a reduction in telephone and face to face service.

Disability has been assessed as medium risk. Visually impaired citizens for example would be significantly impacted if a telephone service is not available and they would be required to submit requests or queries online. An online only approach could also pose particular challenge to Dyslexic individuals or those with cognitive challenges. Citizens with disabilities such as ADHD, autism, sensory impairments, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and BSL users struggle or are unable to use digital tools. The personal independence of these citizens could be reduced by their reliance on carers, friends or family members to assist them with digital technology.

Race has been assessed as medium risk. Citizens whose first language is not English could potentially also be impacted as although the website has an accessibility tool to translate, the current online forms are not available in alternative languages, whereas the telephony channel offers an interpretation service via Global Connect. Citizens whose first language isn't English may struggle to navigate and understand online systems, whereas a phone call or face to face engagement with council employees, using translators where appropriate, will be much more helpful.

There is a fear that the lack of easy access to communicate with council employees will mean that people within these vulnerable groups will not be able to access services required, causing strain on other areas of government/healthcare.

The proposal would have no impact on people with other protected characteristics – gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation – as there is no evidence to suggest that people with certain characteristics in these groups would be disadvantaged by a digital-only model.

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 undertook a two-part public consultation around the 2025/26 Budget and future spending plans from August 2024 to November 2024.

In Part 1, conducted throughout August 2024, participants were asked to provide feedback on four key areas: Budget Options, Council Tax, Service Area Prioritisation, and Capital Programme Expenditure. Under Budget Options, respondents were queried about the potential impacts of proposed options, including both reduction strategies and income-boosting charges. Regarding Council Tax, input was sought on acceptable levels of increase and their potential impacts. Citizens were also invited to express their views on which service areas should be prioritised for spending and to offer their opinions on capital programme expenditure.

In Part 2, which took place throughout November 2024, the Council consulted on additional budget options, again focusing on the impact if implemented. The phase 2 consultation included budget options relating to the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership.

There were 4,278 responses across the four areas consulted on during Part 1 of the online consultation and 1,535 responses to Part 2. Respondents had the option to indicate which protected characteristics would be affected.
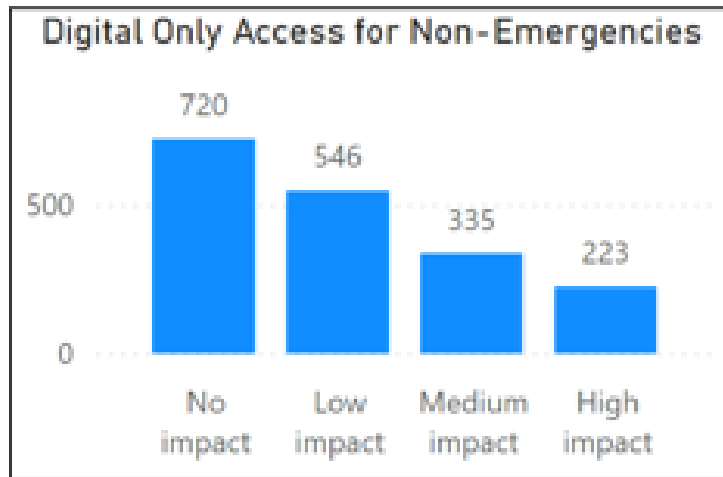
Various approaches were offered to support participation. Throughout both phases, opportunities were offered for the public to attend face to face and digital sessions to discuss the proposals in more detail. There were 2 face-to-face sessions, including British Sign Language options and 4 digital sessions, with a total of 24 attendees.

Respondents to the consultation highlighted that barriers to telephone contact could disproportionately impact those with disabilities and the elderly, making it harder for them to access essential services. Many people fed back a preference for human interaction as they find speaking to a person is more effective for resolving issues quickly and so a reduction could particularly affect older and vulnerable populations.

Several respondents noted that the current digital services are already inefficient and frustrating, suggesting that further reliance on them could exacerbate these issues.
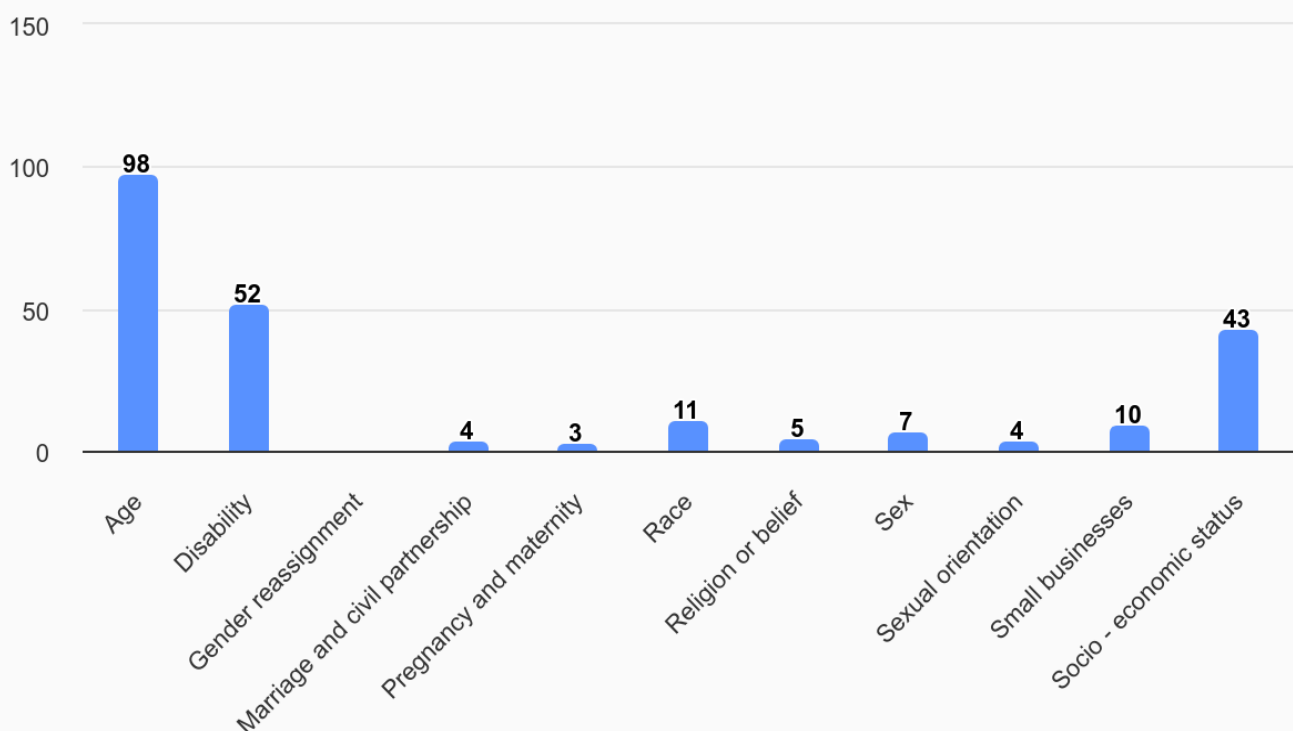
The IIA has been informed by data that was collected through both face-to-face engagement sessions and online questionnaires as part of phase 1 of the Council's budget consultation. This was responded to by the general public and various community organisations in Aberdeen and individuals who have / or work with people with protected characteristics.

Respondents were asked what impact this proposal would have on them and responded as below:

Digital Only Access for Non-Emergencies

Impact	Count
No impact	720
Low impact	546
Medium impact	335
High impact	223

They were then asked if the impact related to any protected characteristics and answered as below, with Age and Disability forming the majority of answers:

8B. If any of the options impact you because of your protected characteristic please select all that apply.

Characteristic	Count
Age	98
Disability	52
Gender reassignment	
Marriage and civil partnership	4
Pregnancy and maternity	3
Race	11
Religion or belief	5
Sex	7
Sexual orientation	4
Small businesses	10
Socio - economic status	43

The Customer Contact Centre data relating to demand received between January 2024 and November 2024 is detailed below and evidences the significant number of citizens who still choose to contact us via telephone.

2024 YEAR TO DATE	Answered Calls
National Entitlement Card (NEC)	14721
Benefits	11541
Community Support	5800
Council Tax	54728
Environmental Health and Trading Standards	3613
Fleet Services	383
Grounds and Roads	5304
Housing Repairs	45860
Non-Housing Repairs	2184
Parking Permits	14865
Service Income	2320
Tenancy Enquiries and Housing Options	33799
Waste and Recycling	12092
Grand Total	207210

A review was conducted in late 2023 to help understand why citizens call the Contact Centre rather than using the online resources available. All callers over a 3-week period were asked if they had tried to take the action online before calling. This was divided into service areas. The results showed that in the majority of cases the user had not tried to access online.

Q: Did you try to access the service online before calling?

Service	Yes	No
Benefits	20%	80%
Blue Badge	25%	75%
Council Tax	28%	72%
Environment Health & Trading Standards	14%	86%
Fleet	29%	71%
Grounds and Roads	37%	63%
Housing Repairs	40%	60%
NEC Card	38%	62%
Non-housing Repairs	42%	58%
Parking Permits	45%	55%
Service Income	7%	93%
Tenancy Support	33%	67%
Waste and Recycling	24%	76%

If they had not tried to access the action online, they were asked why not. The main reasons were that they either prefer to call or that they had no ability (digital) or no access to the internet.

Q. What was the reason you didn't try to access the service online?

Service	Prefer to Call	No Ability	Didn't Know Online	No Access	Already Reported Online	Emergency
Benefits	34%	37%	5%	14%	5%	4%
Blue Badge	33%	25%	0%	42%	0%	0%
Council Tax	35%	16%	27%	5%	14%	2%
Environment Health & Trading Standards	41%	21%	21%	6%	3%	8%
Fleet	80%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Grounds and Roads	37%	29%	13%	13%	4%	4%
Housing Repairs	25%	14%	4%	14%	3%	41%
NEC Card	48%	23%	14%	11%	0%	4%
Non-housing Repairs	0%	57%	14%	0%	0%	29%
Parking Permits	41%	11%	25%	20%	0%	2%
Service Income	26%	30%	19%	22%	4%	0%
Tenancy Support	52%	18%	20%	7%	0%	3%
Waste and Recycling	28%	38%	7%	18%	8%	1%

A recent Public Accounts Committe decision relating to the HMRC has also been considered including the implications if restrictions are implemented before digital offerings are fully available.
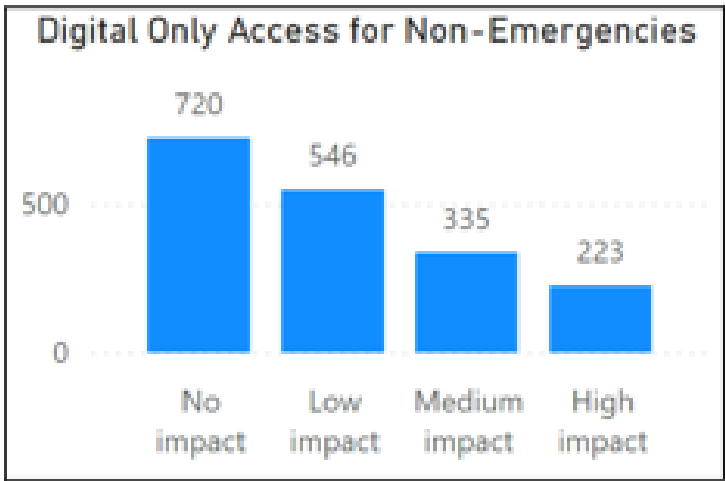
What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with officers and partner organisations?

The proposal has been discussed within the extended Corporate Management Team and with Senior members of the Customer Service Team. Engagement has also taken place with other Scottish Local Authorities to understand how telephony and face to face contact is handled. This engagement also highlighted that the impact on older people and people with disabilities would be negative due to digital literacy or access.
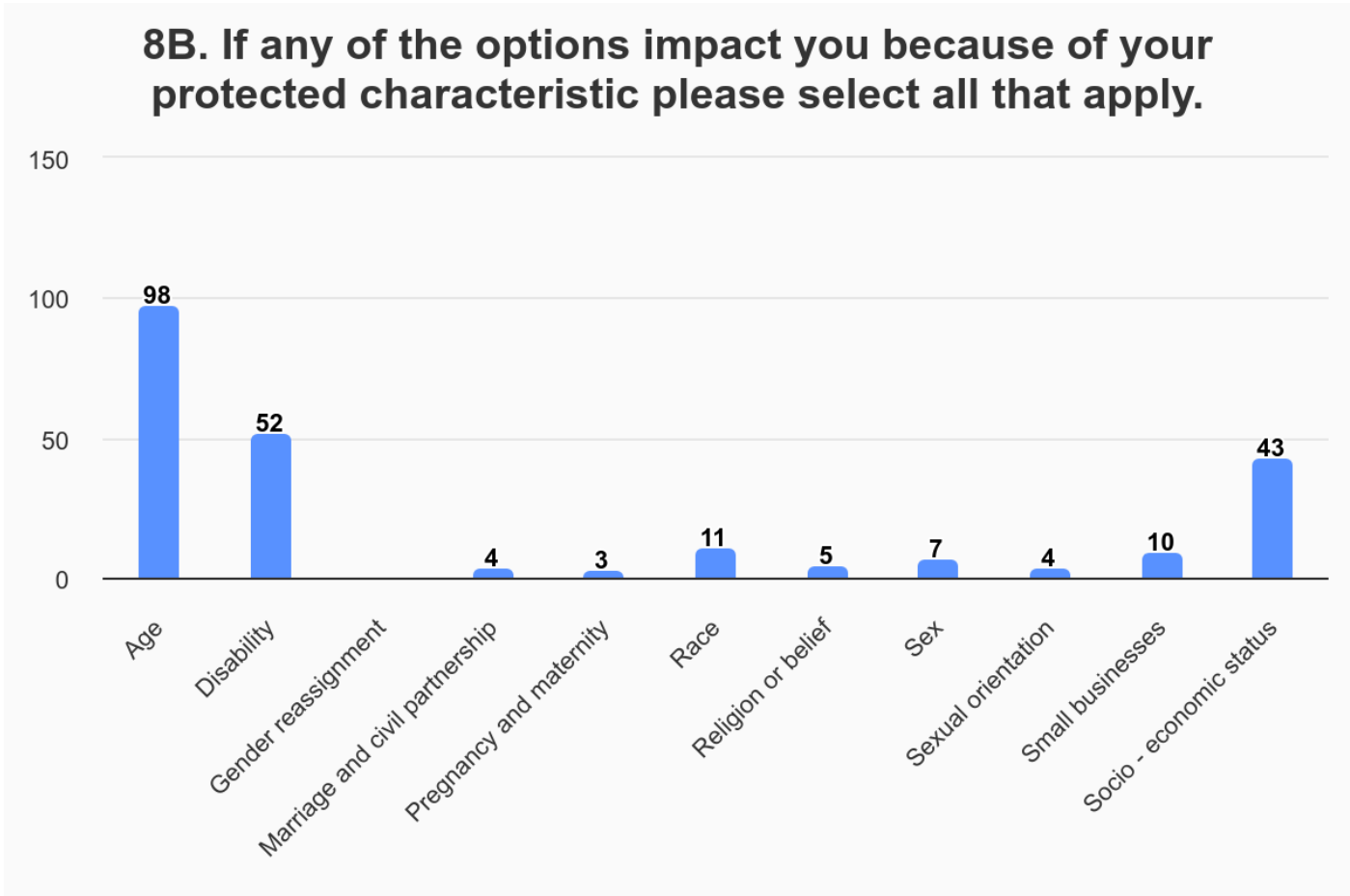
What consultation and engagement has been undertaken with people who may be impacted by this policy?

Aberdeen City Council launched a public consultation in Aug/Sept 2024 outlining various options to reduce, charge for, change or stop certain services. The consultation was conducted online, with 3 face to face sessions and 2 online sessions held for people to discuss the options further. Various partner organisations working in Equalities were contacted so that they could highlight the availability of the consultation to their communities to ensure responses from groups with protected characteristics.

Respondents were asked to what extent each option would negatively impact them. The responses to the option for digital only access for non-emergencies were:

Digital Only Access for Non-Emergencies

720 — No impact
546 — Low impact
335 — Medium impact
223 — High impact

They were then asked if the impact related to any protected characteristics and answered as below, with Age and Disability forming the majority of answers:

8B. If any of the options impact you because of your protected characteristic please select all that apply.

Characteristic	Value
Age	98
Disability	52
Gender reassignment	
Marriage and civil partnership	4
Pregnancy and maternity	3
Race	11
Religion or belief	5
Sex	7
Sexual orientation	4
Small businesses	10
Socio - economic status	43

291 further comments were provided, which highlighted a perceived negative impact on older people and people with disabilities on the basis of digital access and literacy, with the main concern being exclusion of people in these groups.

Participants in the virtual sessions expressed concerns about the accessibility of digital-only services, especially for older and disabled individuals who may struggle with online systems. This could create barriers for individuals who struggle with online communication or prefer face-to-face interactions. Participant 1 highlighted that many community members find it challenging to communicate online or over the phone, especially when dealing with sensitive issues like financial struggles.

In addition, engagement has taken place with Torry Community Council regarding existing digital offerings and the feedback indicated that citizens do not always find existing digital channels easy to use and rely on telephone

contact to access services. The feedback from the group also highlighted that improvements were necessary in order to drive digital uptake.

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)?

Some citizens who engage with the council via telephone or face to face appointments do so not because they are unable to go online but because it is their preference or habit. Other citizens use these methods because they are not able to go online. This can be for a variety of reasons such as a lack of ability or fear of online, particularly within the elderly community, or disabilities that restrict them from being able to access or understand online forms.

It is important for the council to recognise that not all citizens will be able to use online resources and so the crucial mitigation is to ensure that these citizens have other communication routes that can be as easily accessed by them as the website is for others.

Mitigations for this proposal fall into two main categories:
- Encouraging online use for all those citizens who are able, including providing training and support to citizens to help more of them use this route.
- Providing alternative methods for communication for those who are not able to go online.

A communications campaign could raise awareness of and encourage the use of online resources. For example, 27% of callers for the Council Tax line in the 2023 survey were unaware that it could be done online so reducing this number will reduce demand on staff, allowing them to help those who need alternative methods than online for engagement. Communicating the idea that online is the most effective method to communicate with the council should drive them to take this route by default if they are able, reducing demand on council resources. The majority of all actions a citizen may require to take will need to be available online to achieve this shift.

Assistance is required to bring those that are physically and mentally capable of using online forms but may have apprehensions due to safety or digital ability. Training materials and drop-in sessions could be increased, in conjunction with partners such as NESS, Silver City Surfers and AbilityNet to ensure that anyone who needs support in digital skills can access help.

It is clear from the consultation feedback that not all citizens will be able to use online resources and as such will rely on telephone or in person support. It should be made as easy as possible for these citizens to arrange a telephone call or face to face visit. A phone line would need to be maintained for these citizens. The messaging on that phone line could advise that it is for those who are unable to communicate online and that all other users should access the website in the first instance to cut down on avoidable calls. This line could be used to arrange face to face appointments where necessary. It is likely that despite communications, the phone option for vulnerable citizens would remain highly utilised by others which would impact ease of access.

Respondents to the survey suggested some mitigations:

- There was a suggestion that moving to digital-only access for non-emergencies should not be done in conjunction with a reduction in community development and learning, as these are often the places people go to access support in using digital services.
- Another suggestion was to maintain human phone lines to ensure that people who are not comfortable with digital services can still access support.
- There was also a suggestion to reduce the service to three days each week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) instead of completely moving to digital-only access.

An alternative option is to deliver the savings without the digital only approach. This would result in significantly longer wait times for citizens when making contact. This would also have an impact on protected characteristic groups such as age and disability, as lengthy wait times can cause anxiety. It would also likely impact the speed in which emergency issues are reported which poses risk of harm.

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

3: Socio-Economic Impacts

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)

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?

It is possible that people on low incomes will not have unrestricted access to the internet. In this case they would be unable to go online to communicate with the council. In this event they may be required to travel in order to gain online access, which will incur travel costs.

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)

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?

The proposal has been discussed within the extended Corporate Management Team and with Senior Staff in the Customer Service Team. Engagement has also taken place with other Scottish Local Authorities.

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

Aberdeen City Council launched a public consultation in Aug/Sept 2024 relating to the 2024/25 budget as outlined in section 2.3 above. Respondents were asked to what extent each option would negatively impact them. The responses to the option for digital only access for non-emergencies were:
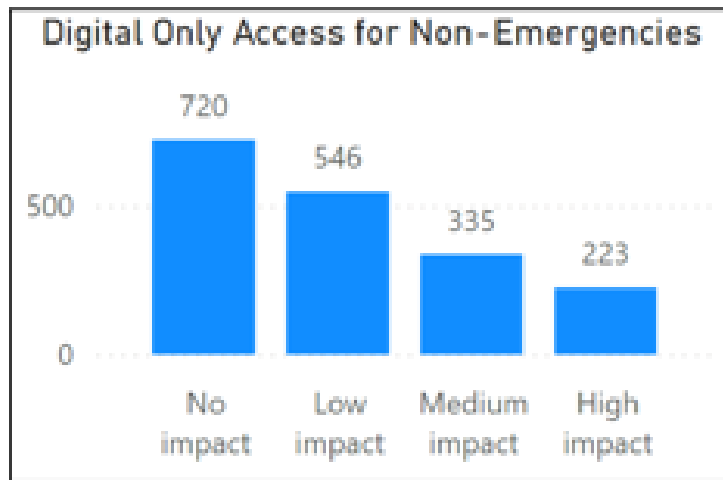

They were then asked if the impact related to any protected characteristics and answered as below, with Socio-economic Status being the third most prevalent characteristic negatively impacted:
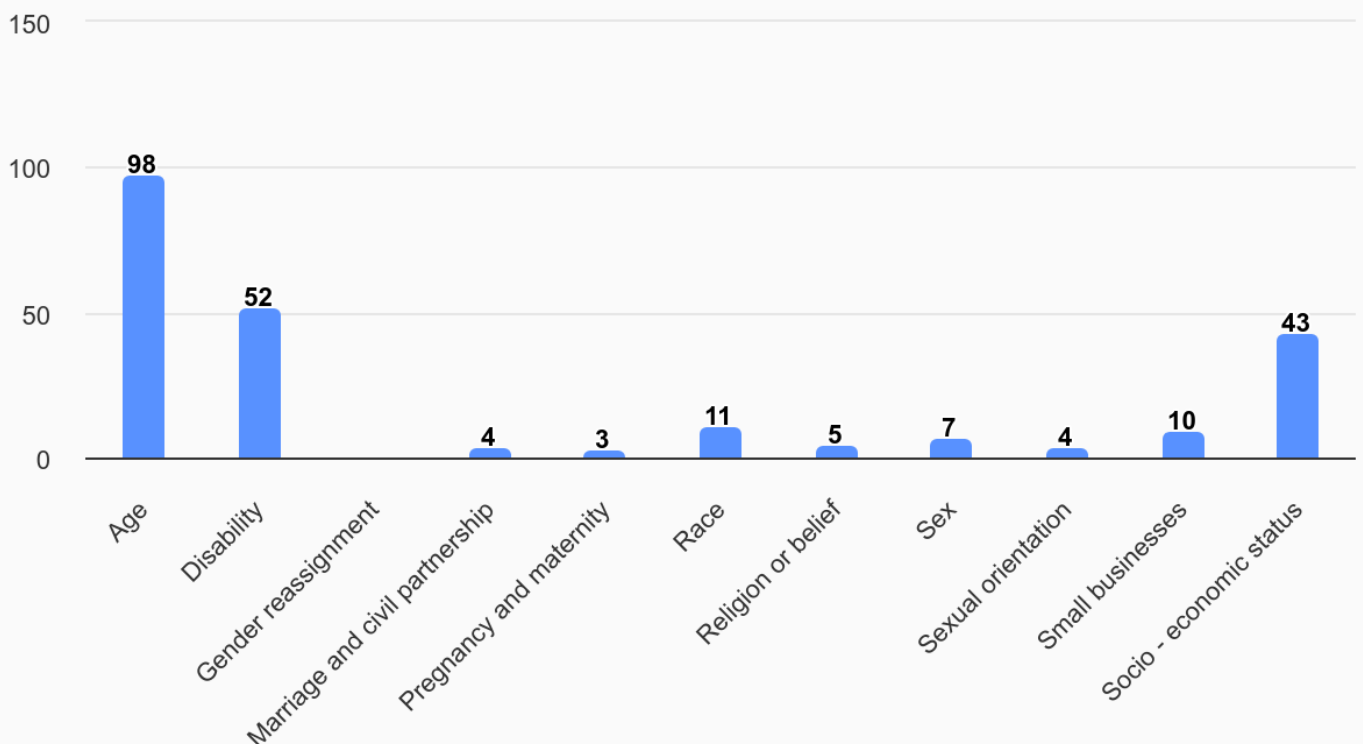
The public consultation for the 2025/26 budget also sought feedback from participants on this proposal. Respondents were asked to what extent each option would negatively impact them. The responses to the option for digital only access for non-emergencies were:

Digital Only Access for Non-Emergencies

	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact
	720	546	335	223
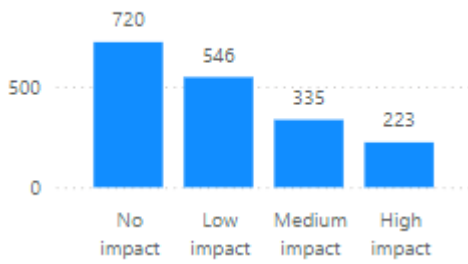
Many respondents highlighted that digital only access would exclude those without internet access or digital skills, particularly affecting older and vulnerable populations. Feedback also stressed that moving services online could disproportionately impact those with disabilities and the elderly, making it difficult for them to access essential services. Several respondents noted that existing digital services are inefficient and frustrating, suggesting that further reliance on them could exuberate these issues. There is a strong concern that digital only access would particularly disadvantage the most vulnerable and poorest citizens. Many people suggested that they prefer speaking to a person rather than using digital services, finding it more effective for resolving issues quickly.

Feedback from the Torry Community Council highlighted that some individuals with low income do not have access to digital devices at home and are not always able to travel to council buildings to access the self service pcs. This is due to physical and financial restraints.

Tenant participation groups also provided feedback around their experiences of contacting the Council by telephone and online. Their feedback around impacts has been incorporated into this document.

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)?		
Support for people without internet access would be required. This would mean using libraries, community hubs and other council-run venues to provide free access to the internet for those without access to the internet at home. Given the feedback from the consultation, improvements to the current digital offerings would also be beneficial in reducing the impact.		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	X
	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?

All citizens of Aberdeen City Council are consumers of our services in one way or another. As such, the same impacts noted above in relation to digital access and literacy concerning people's age, disability, ethnicity (language) and socio-economic status would apply.

For small businesses, it is assumed that anyone operating a business in 2024 has some level of internet access and ability that they would need to conduct their operations so it is not thought that small businesses would be impacted by digital-only access to certain services.

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)?		
As noted in sections 2.4 and 3.4.		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	X
	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?

The right to peaceful enjoyment of your property could be affected if non-emergency repairs or anti-social behaviour could only be reported online.

The right to education could be negatively impacted if a child's parent/guardian could only apply for school places using online forms and there was no telephone option to discuss.

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)?
The services noted in section 5.2 would need to be exempt from the digital-only policy, with a non-digital option provided for those without digital access or literacy.

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	X

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?

In the event that the child's parent or guardian is unable to access the internet this could make it difficult to access services, care needs or leisure, play and cultural events provided by the council.

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)?		
Ensure a communication route other than online for parents who are unable to access the internet, e.g. through schools. This would increase demand on schools considerably and there is limited capacity.		
If mitigations are in place, does this remove or reduce the negative impact?	No – negative impact remains	
	Yes – negative impact reduced	X
	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?

If citizens who do not have internet access in the home were required to travel to get free public internet access this could have a small impact on carbon emissions due to vehicular use.

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?
Other than a potential increase in travel there is no specific concerns about the environmental impact of this policy and no relevant data to consider.

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.
Not required.

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)?
None

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?
The Workforce Reduction, Restructure and Redesign IIA provides information around the potential impact on the workforce and the mitigations in place.

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.
Necessity of enhanced digital offerings and a marketing campaign to drive those that can online to reduce demand to the telephony channel. In order to maintain channels for groups with protected characteristics so they can access our services by telephone, an alternative option would be to realise the savings and operate with a reduced workforce, but without mandated online access to non-emergency services. This would result in lengthy wait times, but telephone calls would continue to be answered. As highlighted above this could impact the speed in which emergency issues are reported which poses risk of harm. There is also a need for work with partner organisations to support these groups using online channels for accessing services. For our citizens who are digitally literate, continue to promote how they can access our services online, so we have shorter wait times and more time to spend with our most vulnerable customers.

Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.
Feedback will continue to be monitored to ensure a positive experience for citizens accessing our services

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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Date	23/12/24
Chief Officer	Isla Newcombe
Date	21/02/25