

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

Reduction in equalities grants

1.2 What does this policy seek to achieve?

This option would mean a reduction in the funding available from the Equalities budget for organisations to apply for equalities grants.

Each year, Aberdeen City Council Equalities budget provides funding to **GREC, Shopmobility and DeafBlind Scotland** to the combined sum of £161,475 in supporting Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes as part of our commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between diverse groups of people.

For the past 10+ years, £53,500 of this funding has been allocated to **ShopMobility** on an annual basis. This grant is divided into two parts: £19,500 for the delivery of Shopmobility services and £34,000 to cover the running costs of the vehicle/mobile unit, AbleDeen.

- Shopmobility offers a range of services to enhance accessibility and mobility for people with disabilities. These services include the provision of manual and powered wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and a self-drive wheelchair accessible vehicle for both day and longer-term loans. They also provide information and signposting to related services and organizations. Shopmobility is involved in various community groups and forums to promote civic participation and represent the views of service users at the Equality Participation Network and the Disability Equity Partnership. They also offer disability awareness training and advice to elected members and support service users in sharing their opinions in council consultations.
- AbleDeen focuses on providing mobility services to people in their own communities throughout Aberdeen City. This includes enabling access to local amenities, leisure facilities, and community events. AbleDeen also provides enhanced access at shows, events, and activities held in Aberdeen City. Their services are aimed at promoting community involvement, making and strengthening local connections, and supporting individuals to maintain their independence.
- Both aspects of the service provision play a crucial role in supporting Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes by ensuring that social and physical barriers are identified and removed, and by promoting inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities.

For the past 10+ years, £93,000 of this funding has been allocated to Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) on an annual basis which is used to undertake equalities work across all protected characteristics in Aberdeen City focusing on Casework and Counselling services, community engagement, support implementing Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report, training on equalities, etc. GREC play a key role in the implementation and development of Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes through continued planning and facilitating the Equalities Participation Network (EPN) to ensure that the needs and views of partners and community members are represented.

- Casework Service: GREC provides free, confidential support and advice to people in Aberdeen who have experienced inequality or discrimination on the grounds of any protected characteristic. The service provides support, advice, advocacy, and mediation, with language support if required. Overall, in financial year 23-24, GREC's Casework service supported 282 clients.
- Counselling Service for adults: GREC's Adult Counselling Service provides free specialist counselling support for adults in Aberdeen, who are affected by discrimination, prejudice and hate crime on the grounds of any protected characteristic. The service is confidential and provided by a team of professionally trained volunteer counsellors. Overall, in financial year 23-24, GREC's Counselling service supported 47 adults in Aberdeen.
- Equality Participation Network (EPN) and Community Engagement: The EPN is a space for Aberdeen City Council and people from diverse communities in Aberdeen to engage with each other periodically for the purpose of advancing equality. In addition, support is provided to plan inclusive equalities related events throughout each year.
- Training: All sessions can be delivered online or in-person and can be held as one-off workshops as part of a wider training programme. Sessions include Introduction to Equalities, Introduction to Intersectionality, Inequality and Discrimination: An Overview of the Grampian Context, Cultural Awareness and Competency, Unconscious Bias and Working Effectively with Interpreters.

For the past 7 years, 14,975 of this funding has been allocated to DeafBlind Scotland on an annual basis, **supporting individuals with dual sensory impairments. Here are some key services they offer:**

- Training and Awareness: Deafblind Scotland offers up to two training sessions on deafblind awareness, providing advice and guidance to elected members and council officers. This helps in building awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with dual sensory impairments
- Support and Guidance: They provide advice and guidance on Integrated Impact Assessments and accept referrals from services to assess needs and provide information, advice, and support to maintain individuals' independence. This includes a welfare rights service.
- Community and Event Access: Deafblind Scotland offers consultation to improve access to community and commercial events, ensuring that individuals with dual sensory impairments can participate fully in their wider community.
- Direct Support: They provide one-to-one direct support from a guide/communicator, which is person-centred to each individual's needs and abilities. This support is available to adults of all ages living with a dual sensory impairment across Aberdeen City^[1].

These services play a crucial role in promoting inclusion and accessibility for individuals with dual sensory impairments, helping them maintain their independence and participate actively in the community.

The budget option of this IIA proposes a £50,000 reduction in the £161,475 of grants available - leaving a total of £111,475 to distribute to voluntary sector organisation in support of our Equality Outcomes. This is part of the wider suite of budget options being presented to Full Council in March 2025, which collectively seek to address the funding shortfall by implementing budget options that ensure the

efficient allocation of resources while minimising the impact on essential services. The aim is to achieve a balanced budget for the fiscal year 2025/26 and beyond, while considering the potential impacts on diverse groups of people and the environment.

1.3 Is this a strategic programme/proposal/decision?

Yes

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:

Full Council – budget meeting, March 2025.

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

New-151

1.8 Function and Cluster:

Corporate Services, People & 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?

General impacts of a reduction in equality grants

It is anticipated by citizens that this budget option could have a significant impact on vulnerable populations, including the elderly, disabled, and low-income families, by limiting their access to necessary services and support. Many respondents to the public consultation expressed concerns that funding cuts to equalities grants would lead to increased social isolation, mental health issues, and reliance on other social services. Equalities grants are crucial for supporting marginalised groups, ensuring they have access to necessary resources and services that promote inclusivity and diversity. Encouraging community engagement and participation through volunteering is seen as essential for building strong, supportive local communities. There is a strong call for continued support and investment in equalities grants to ensure the well-being and cohesion of local communities.

Specific impacts on Protected Characteristics as a result of a reduction in grant funding for DeafBlind

Deafblind Scotland supported a total of 45 individuals with dual sensory impairments in Aberdeen City in 2024 - this support included direct one-to-one assistance, training sessions, and community engagement activities. The Protected Group that would be most impacted by this budget option are those with dual sensory impairments as a **disability**. It is anticipated that the impact on these individuals could be highly negative as DeafBlind have stated that the reduction of equality grants would mean that Deafblind Scotland would not be able to deliver any services in Aberdeen anymore. This is because the funding from Aberdeen is the only money they receive to work in this area. The overall impact on the community could reduce the support for deafblind

individuals, affecting their ability to navigate their local community, attend doctor's appointments, and access other essential services.

The emotional support and well-being services provided to deafblind individuals could be impacted, leading to a decline in mental health among this vulnerable group.

Specific impacts on Protected Characteristics as a result of a reduction in grant funding for ShopMobility

The Protected Groups that would be most impacted by this budget option are those with Age or Disability as a protected characteristic, as they are most likely to rely on services like Shopmobility to maintain their independence and stay connected to the community. It is anticipated that the impact could be highly negative based on the following rationale:

Age

The reduction in mobility services can lead to increased isolation and a decline in the overall quality of life for individuals. Everyday activities such as grocery shopping, visiting friends and family, attending medical appointments, and participating in social events become challenging. This exacerbates loneliness and depression from being housebound and causes physical health deterioration, including decreased muscle strength, joint stiffness, poor circulation, and an increased risk of falls. As a result, there is a greater dependency on healthcare services due to inactivity and prolonged periods of sitting.

The loss of essential social interactions with volunteers and other service users impacts mental and emotional well-being, potentially leading to cognitive decline and related issues due to the lack of mental and emotional stimulation. These factors contribute to increased hospital admissions from health complications associated with inactivity and isolation.

The economic impact on families may arise if they have to purchase mobility equipment independently. When elderly individuals are unable to access services that keep them active, their confidence may decrease, leading to a higher likelihood of falls and related injuries.

The reduction in grants could limit the availability of services that help elderly individuals stay engaged in the community, increasing loneliness and isolation. Services like Shopmobility, which support elderly individuals in living independently and reducing their reliance on social care services, might be affected. Without these services, elderly individuals may become more sedentary, raising the risk of conditions such as Parkinson's, dementia, and heart issues.

Impact on Volunteers: Many volunteers who support these services are elderly themselves. A reduction in funding could limit their opportunities to volunteer, which provides them with a sense of purpose and community engagement.

Disability

The reduction or elimination of essential services, such as mobility equipment provided by organisations like Shopmobility, could significantly impact individuals with disabilities. Without access to wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids, many will find it increasingly difficult to move around independently, resulting in increased isolation and loneliness.

Mobility aids not only provide physical support but also facilitate social interactions and community engagement. The financial burden of purchasing and maintaining mobility equipment can be overwhelming for many individuals with disabilities and their families, leading to significant economic strain. Extended periods of immobility can cause muscle atrophy, joint stiffness, increased risk of falls, poor circulation, pressure sores, and other health issues.

The reduction in supportive services affects caregivers, often leading to caregiver burnout, stress, and financial strain. Access to mobility aids is crucial for community and social inclusion, and without these aids, individuals with disabilities face further marginalization and exclusion. This lack of mobility aids may force individuals to rely more heavily on social services, increasing the burden on these systems. Mental health can also be negatively impacted due to increased isolation and reduced social interactions, resulting in feelings of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. Reduced mobility may lead to increased time spent at home, higher energy consumption, and

increased utility bills, adding to the financial burden. The loss of opportunities for casual conversations and social interactions can reduce mental stimulation, potentially accelerating cognitive decline and impacting overall mental health.

A reduction in funding for ShopMobility and an ensuing reduction of their provision could lead to increased loneliness and isolation, which has been likened to the physical impacts of smoking, such as heart disease and cognitive decline in terms of someone's health outcomes.

A girl that volunteers with us comes in with a VSA carer – she used to travel in with her carer, but VSA are no longer able to use their cars for transporting clients. “If it wasn't for you, she'd have no life at all” is what the VSA Carer said to us. People build confidence in using equipment with us – then buy the equipment for home life. This is a 24 year old with epilepsy – she can't get out of house now without support. It's a personal tragedy – reducing funding is life limiting, reducing life chances and outcomes as a result.

- Katrina Michie, Manager, ShopMobility Aberdeen

Gender Reassignment

There is no data available on this protected characteristic for individuals using the service. No qualitative information is available on any disproportionate impact to those who hold this protected characteristic.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

There is no data available on this protected characteristic for individuals using the service. No qualitative information is available on any disproportionate impact to those who hold this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity

In terms of impacts on pregnancy, it is useful to consider that women who are heavily pregnant and experiencing conditions like pelvic pain may require mobility assistance such as wheelchairs, especially in the last months of pregnancy. Postpartum recovery, especially for women who have undergone Caesarean sections, may be prolonged and they may need powered equipment to manage daily tasks, such as walking their children to school. Temporary disabilities during pregnancy, which are often not adequately supported by the NHS, can be mitigated through the provision of mobility equipment, allowing expectant and new mothers to maintain their independence and routine activities. These impacts illustrate the role of ShopMobility in supporting pregnant women and new mothers, ensuring they remain active and independent during and after pregnancy.

Race

There is no data available on this protected characteristic for individuals using the service. No qualitative information is available on any disproportionate impact to those who hold this protected characteristic.

Religion or Belief

Reduced mobility services have several direct and indirect impacts on religious participation and community support. Limited access to worship places hinders attendance at religious ceremonies, affecting those seeking spiritual and community support. This restriction leads to decreased engagement in religious practices, causing isolation from faith communities. Indirectly, reduced transportation weakens community bonds, decreasing mutual support crucial for many individuals. Moreover, limited mobility solutions prevent full participation in religious festivals and events, which are key to cultural and religious life.

Sex

The reduction in budget for Shopmobility's services could have a disproportionate effect on women, who are more likely to be caregivers for both young children and elderly relatives. The additional burden could result in women having less time for their personal and professional responsibilities, exacerbating existing gender inequalities; also, in social interactions and their ability to engage in community and economic activities could be significantly hindered. This isolation could lead to negative mental health outcomes and further deepen the gender gap in accessing essential services and opportunities.

Sexual Orientation

There is no data available on this protected characteristic for individuals using the service. No qualitative information is available on any disproportionate impact to those who hold this protected characteristic.

Intersectional Impacts

Intersectional impact refers to the way different aspects of a person's identity (such as race, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.) intersect and create unique experiences of discrimination or disadvantage. For example, a policy might affect women and people with disabilities differently, but a woman with a disability might experience a compounded effect that is different from either group alone.

In the feedback from the engagement and consultation on this budget option, intersectional impacts are considered in the context of budget options and the importance of understanding not only the direct effects of budget options but also the wider and intersectional impacts that might not be immediately obvious. For instance, the potential impacts on older people who are female and also caregivers for people with a disability; and women in late stages of pregnancy or those recovering from childbirth could face greater difficulties as a result of a reduction in funding for ShopMobility. The service provides essential mobility support for heavily pregnant women and new mothers who may struggle with physical limitations. Without Shopmobility, these women could find it harder to carry out daily tasks and maintain their independence.

Specific impacts on Protected Characteristics of a reduction in grant funding for GREC

The budget option will primarily affect groups protected by race, ethnicity, and disability, as GREC offers casework services for individuals experiencing prejudice, discrimination, and inequalities. It will also have an impact across various protected groups and those with overlapping protected characteristics, as GREC offers services and organises engagement across all characteristics, though there is a historical focus on race/ethnicity.

Age

Children and Young People: Reduced funding could constrain services for children and young people, including educational outreach in school and supporting schools with incidences of discrimination. This could lead to long-term negative impacts on their well-being and development.

Older Adults: Older adults, especially those in minority communities or deprived areas, could face reduced access to essential support services. This could result in increased isolation, health issues, and a decline in quality of life.

Disability

- Reducing funding for GREC's services could impact individuals with disabilities. It could limit their capacity to provide essential support, leading to longer waiting times, fewer available support slots, and reduced quality and accessibility of care. This could affect one-to-one casework and counselling services, which offer practical and emotional support.
- GREC receive numerous referrals from various agencies, and a reduction in funding could limit their ability to handle these referrals effectively, leaving individuals without necessary assistance. Many of the adults they support have children with disabilities, so the effects could extend to these children, leading to increased hardship for families.
- GREC's employability support services for individuals with disabilities could also face cuts, reducing opportunities for meaningful employment and financial independence. Training programs for volunteers and new staff could be affected, impacting the overall quality of service delivery.
- In the long term, reducing funding could exacerbate existing inequalities and barriers, leading to increased social isolation, mental health issues, and a decline in overall well-being for individuals with disabilities. It is crucial to maintain and, if possible, increase funding to ensure effective and sustainable support.

Gender Reassignment

No information is available for individuals who have undergone gender reassignment. However, reduced funding could decrease the counselling services provided to support individuals through gender reassignment, as well as limit access to resources that offer support.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

No information is available on any disproportionate impact to those who hold this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and Maternity

- Reduced funding could significantly impact services related to pregnancy and maternity, especially for those facing socio-economic challenges and systemic inequalities.
- Key services affected include casework support for expectant mothers and new parents, crucial for navigating healthcare and social support systems. Fewer caseworkers could limit personalised assistance, impacting access to prenatal care, parental leave, and postnatal support.
- Counselling services for new parents dealing with postpartum depression or anxiety could face constraints, leading to diminished emotional and psychological support. This could adversely affect family health and well-being.
- Financial stability could also be compromised, as services assisting with benefits and financial aid applications could become less accessible, exacerbating low-income families' challenges.
- The ability to provide culturally competent care, including interpretation services, could be reduced, affecting non-native speakers' access to essential healthcare.
- In summary, reduced funding could decrease support for pregnancy and maternity services, impacting healthcare access, emotional support, and financial stability, with profound long-term consequences for family well-being.

Race

Reducing funding for GREC's services could have a profound impact on individuals and communities, particularly concerning race and ethnicity. Currently, GREC's casework and counselling services are vital lifelines for those experiencing prejudice and discrimination. Approximately 90% of the individuals they support through casework fall under categories of socio-economic disadvantage, with race and ethnicity being significant factors in their challenges.

The majority of the individuals we assist are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including new Scots communities such as people seeking asylum and refugees. Our services help them navigate complex issues related to immigration status, access to public funds, and systemic inequalities. If funding is reduced, the capacity of our casework team will be significantly diminished, leading to a decreased ability to provide necessary support. This reduction will likely result in fewer resources to assist with reporting and addressing incidents of racial prejudice and discrimination. It will also limit our ability to offer practical support, such as liaising with authorities or providing counselling to help individuals process their experiences and recover from trauma.

- Maria Jose Pavez, Co-General Manager, Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC)

New Scots and asylum seekers face numerous challenges as they integrate and establish their lives in a new country. Despite various support systems, significant barriers still exist and GREC aim to address these barriers:

- Improving Language Support
- Streamlining Legal Processes
- Economic Empowerment Initiatives
- Foster Social Inclusion
- Enhancing Mental Health Support

Additionally, the reduction in funding could impact GREC's ability to engage in community-building activities and advocacy work that promote racial equality and inclusion. Their role as a critical friend to Aberdeen City Council in identifying and addressing racial inequalities will be hampered, weakening our collective efforts towards creating a more inclusive society.

In summary, reducing funding will disproportionately affect minority ethnic communities, exacerbating existing inequalities and leaving many without the support they desperately need to overcome the barriers they face.

Religion or Belief

Reducing funding could significantly impact the services provided to various religious communities, as GREC often support individuals facing discrimination based on their religion or belief. Their casework services, which

offer practical support for those encountering prejudice, could be diminished, leading to fewer resources for individuals seeking redress for religious discrimination. Many of the clients supported at GREC will have religion as an intersecting protected characteristic. Thinking of the racist incidents in August last year religion and race/ethnicity were also very closely connected, with Islamophobia playing a key role.

Moreover, our community engagement activities, which foster interfaith dialogue and understanding, would suffer. These initiatives are vital for promoting social cohesion and mutual respect among different religious groups. Without adequate funding, we would struggle to maintain these essential programmes, potentially leading to increased religious tensions and misunderstandings within the community. Additionally, the loss of funding would affect our ability to provide tailored support for individuals from minority religious backgrounds who may require specific assistance, such as language interpretation services or culturally sensitive counselling. This reduction in services could leave these individuals feeling isolated and unsupported, undermining their ability to fully participate in community life.

- Ross Mackay, Co-General Manager, Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC)

Overall, the reduction in funding could have a profound impact on GREC's capacity to address and support the diverse religious needs of our community, exacerbating existing inequalities and hindering efforts to promote religious tolerance and inclusion.

Sex

Funding cuts may result in a reduction of specialised programmes focused on addressing specific gender related issues. This includes support services for survivors of gender-based violence, gender-based harassment, and other forms of gender-specific discrimination. The absence of these targeted programs could disproportionately affect women and gender minorities who rely on these resources for safety and support. These services are often lifelines for those experiencing gender-based violence or harassment, any reduction could leave vulnerable individuals without the necessary support.

Sexual Orientation

A reduction in funding could have a negative impact on the LGBT community, which relies on the support and services provided by GREC. Their programs and initiatives tailored to the needs of LGBT individuals are crucial for fostering a safe and inclusive environment.

A cut in funding could mean:

- Reduced capacity for one-to-one casework and counselling services, which are essential for addressing issues such as discrimination, mental health, and social isolation.
- Fewer resources for educational and outreach programs that raise awareness about LGBT rights and support structures within the community.
- Limited ability to offer training and support to other organizations and frontline staff on how to effectively engage with and support LGBT individuals.
- Potential loss of valuable partnerships with local and national LGBT organisations, which help GREC to provide comprehensive and specialized services.

Hate Crime Project: The reduction in funding would severely limit our capacity to support victims of hate crimes. This project relies heavily on our ability to provide dedicated casework and counselling services, as well as educational outreach to raise awareness and prevent hate crimes. A lack of resources would result in fewer victims receiving the necessary support and advocacy and could hinder our efforts to work with law enforcement and community organizations to address hate crimes effectively.

- Ross Mackay, Co-General Manager, Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC)

Intersectional Impact

- In the event of funding reductions, the intersectional impact on GREC’s service delivery could be significant and multifaceted. The ability to support individuals with multiple protected characteristics could be severely compromised. At present, GREC are the only organisation in the region with the expertise and infrastructure to address the needs of clients who experience discrimination and disadvantage on multiple fronts, such as race, disability, and LGBTQ+ status. Without adequate funding, GREC’s capacity to offer specialised and intersectional support would diminish, leaving these vulnerable groups without the comprehensive assistance they need.
- Moreover, the intersection of socioeconomic disadvantage with other protected characteristics could exacerbate the impact on individuals. A significant portion of those they assist are already facing severe economic hardships. The reduction in funding could mean fewer resources to address their compounded challenges, such as low income, unemployment/underemployment, and barriers to access essential services. This, in turn, could lead to a greater strain on other community and public services, amplifying the systemic inequalities these individuals face.
- Reduced funding could also hinder the ability to engage in broader community planning, expansion of services through other funding streams, and capacity-building initiatives. GREC’s involvement in numerous projects aimed at fostering community cohesion and addressing systemic barriers could be curtailed, thereby limiting influence and effectiveness in advocating for the needs of intersectional communities at a regional and national level.
- Furthermore, the role as a critical friend to local authorities and other agencies could be compromised. The insights and evidence we provide about the lived experiences of intersectional communities are vital for shaping inclusive policies and practices. Without sufficient funding, the ability to continue this work and to represent the complexities of intersectional discrimination in policy discussions could be significantly weakened.
- In summary, a reduction in funding for GREC could not only impact direct service delivery but also have far-reaching consequences on their ability to support and advocate for Aberdeen’s diverse communities. This could undermine efforts to achieve greater equality and inclusion for all.

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?

Data is gathered from all recipients of the Equalities Grants scheme to monitor progress against their service level agreement and Equality Outcomes. They are required to provide Annual Monitoring Reports and 6 Month Progress Reports.

This data gives us a rich picture of the service provision as a result of funding and the target population that would be impacted by any reduction in funding.

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

The three organisations that are recipients of the Equalities Grants– ShopMobility, GREC and DeafBlind - were notified in of the potential budget option by email, invited to targeted engagement conversations where the conversations were transcribed to gather further insights on any potentially impact, either directly or indirectly and suggesting measures to minimise these impacts. Their responses, evidence, quotes and data have been incorporated into the narrative of this IIA. The draft IIAs was shared with them for final validation of their responses and quotes.

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

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 4278 responses across the four areas consulted on during part 1 of the online consultation and 1535 responses to part 2. Respondents had the option to indicate which protected characteristics could be affected.

Through the online budget consultation, 229 comments were submitted on the potential impact of this budget option on people with protected characteristics, and these have been incorporated into the impact on protected characteristics narrative above.

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 and 4 digital sessions, with a total of 24 attendees, including British Sign Language.

73% of respondents indicated a reduction in equalities grants would have a negative impact, with 27% indicated low impact, 25% indicated medium impact and 21% indicated high negative impact. Meanwhile, 27% indicated no impact.

Of those responding to both Phase 1 and Phase 2 online budget consultation:

- **Sex:** 52.8% stated they were female and 42.8% male. Almost all others selected no option or "Prefer not to say".
- **Age:** Of those stating an age group 8.5% were under 25; 13% between 25 & 34; 21% between 35 & 44; 21% between 45 & 54; 19% between 55 & 64; 12% between 65 & 74; and 4% over 75 or over
- **Ethnicity:** 93% stated they were white; 2% Asian; 1% African; 1% mixed / multiple; < 1% other ethnic group. Others selected no option or "Prefer not to say"
- **Religion:** 60% selected "None"; 16% Church of Scotland; 8% other Christian; 4% Roman Catholic; 1% Muslim. All other options <1%
- **Health:** 17% stated they health problem or disability which limited day to day activities
- **Carer:** 26% stated they provided some care for a family member or friend
- **Employment:** 66% stated they were in full or part time employment
- **Location:** Of those who gave a postcode (746), 93.2% were in the City; 6.6% in Aberdeenshire. A heat map of those located in Aberdeen is shown opposite.

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)?

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service delivered by ShopMobility, then it could bring these services in-house. This would require the council to purchase mobility equipment and have in-house expertise to repair and maintain the heavy-use equipment, such as a mechanic. Whilst this could reduce the high negative impact on people who are elderly or disabled, it would negate the financial benefit of reducing the grant, and therefore is not part of the consideration in terms of this option. Even with this potential mitigation, the impact of removing the ShopMobility community hub for volunteers and service users would remain.

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by GREC, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities and for policy influencing work, though this won't mitigate the negative impact on direct service delivery and community engagement.

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by DeafBlind, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities.

The mitigations set out above are not part of this options, so the low, medium and high negative impacts set out in the rating scale remain.

High

X

With mitigations in place, what is the new overall rating of the negative impact(s)?	Medium	X
	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 \(www.gov.scot\)](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?

It is anticipated that there could be a negative impact for low or no-income families stemming from the proposed budget options. These families often depend heavily on the support and services provided by various community organisations and public sector initiatives. Any reduction in these services can exacerbate their already precarious financial situation.

DeafBlind Impacts:

The reduction in funding could disproportionately affect those on low or no income, as they rely heavily on the support provided by guide communicators. The lack of services could lead to increased unemployment among trained guide communicators and potentially push them towards sickness benefits.

These communicators are often funded through self-directed support funds or the equality grant, and the salary offered is based on the government social care allocation, which is £12 an hour.

The loss of a trained guide communicator, who has undergone extensive training for up to 10 years, could mean that her skills would no longer be utilized, and she might struggle to find other work due to her age and the non-physical nature of her current job.

ShopMobility Impacts:

Increased Financial Burden

One of the most immediate impacts could be the increased financial burden on these families. Without access to affordable or free services such as mobility aids, healthcare, and educational support, families might be forced to incur additional expenses. For instance, if the NHS is unable to supply temporary mobility equipment, families may have to purchase or rent this equipment themselves, a cost that many cannot afford.

Access to Essential Services

Low-income families often rely on public services to access essential healthcare, education, and social support. Budget cuts could mean reduced availability of these services, making it harder for families to receive the care and support they need. This reduction can lead to poorer health outcomes, lower educational attainment, and increased social isolation.

Impact on Children

Children from low-income families are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of budget reductions. For example, if primary schools refuse to accept children using crutches due to high risk, those recovering from operations or injuries may be unable to attend school, disrupting their education and placing additional strain on their families.

Volunteering and Social Participation

Many volunteers who support community services are themselves from low-income backgrounds. These individuals benefit from the social engagement and sense of purpose that volunteering provides. Reductions in funding can lead to fewer volunteering opportunities, isolating these individuals and depriving them of the benefits that come from being active and engaged in their communities.

Long-Term Consequences

The long-term consequences of reduced services and support can be severe. Families might face increased health issues due to lack of access to healthcare and mobility aids, which can lead to higher healthcare costs in the future. Children missing education due to temporary disabilities might struggle academically, affecting their future prospects and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

In conclusion, budget cuts have significant and far-reaching impacts on low or no-income families, affecting their financial stability, access to essential services, educational opportunities for children, and overall well-being. It is crucial to consider these impacts when making decisions about public funding and support.

GREC impacts

Reduced funding could have a significant impact on individuals experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Currently, 90% of the people GREC support in casework fall into these categories. Many face systemic inequalities and barriers due to overlapping protected characteristics, income levels, lack of savings, and financial exclusion. These individuals and low or no income families are often in dire need of assistance to meet their basic needs like food, clothing, housing, and utilities.

If funding were reduced, the immediate and most severe consequence could be a reduction in their capacity to deliver frontline services. This could mean fewer casework appointments, which are crucial for providing practical and emotional support to those facing prejudice and discrimination, whether overt or systemic. Additionally, counselling services could be constrained, affecting the mental well-being of clients who rely on long-term, need-based support.

The knock-on effects could be widespread.

As we provide essential services such as help with eligibility for benefits, financial advice, and support for accessing housing and healthcare, a reduction in funding would mean that many individuals might not receive the assistance they need to navigate these complex systems.

This could lead to increased material deprivation, worsening living conditions, and a heightened sense of isolation and helplessness among the most vulnerable groups. Overall, reduced funding would severely diminish our ability to support the most vulnerable, exacerbating existing inequalities and making it even harder for these individuals to improve their socio-economic circumstances.

With less funding, GREC's ability to engage in community-building activities and partnerships could be compromised, including community planning. This could reduce their effectiveness in representing and advocating for the North East in national forums, further marginalizing the socio-economically disadvantaged.

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?

See 2.3

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

See 2.3

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

See 2.3.

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)?

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service delivered by ShopMobility, then it could bring these services in-house. This would require the council to purchase mobility equipment and have in-house expertise to repair and maintain the heavy-use equipment, such as a mechanic. Whilst this could reduce the high negative impact on people who face socio-economic disadvantage, it would negate the financial benefit of reducing the grant. Even with this potential mitigation, the impact of removing the ShopMobility community hub for volunteers and service users would remain.

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by GREC, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities and for policy influencing work, though this won't mitigate the negative impact on direct service delivery and community engagement.

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by DeafBlind, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities.

The mitigations set out above are not part of this option, so the negative impacts set out in the rating scale remain.

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?

Consumer Impacts of a reduction in funding to DeafBlind

Cutting funding to Deafblind Scotland could have several significant impacts on small businesses in Aberdeen. Deafblind Scotland provides essential services that support individuals with dual sensory impairments, helping them maintain their independence and participate actively in the community. Here are some potential impacts:

- Reduced Accessibility:** Small businesses may see a decrease in customers with dual sensory impairments due to reduced accessibility and support services. This could lead to a loss of revenue from this customer segment.
- Increased Training Costs:** Without the training and awareness sessions provided by Deafblind Scotland, small businesses may need to invest more in training their staff to accommodate customers with dual sensory impairments.
- Community Engagement:** The reduction in community and event access services could lead to fewer people with dual sensory impairments participating in local events and activities, impacting the overall community engagement and inclusivity.
- Economic Impact:** The loss of direct support services could affect the employment and productivity of individuals with dual sensory impairments, potentially leading to a decrease in their economic contributions to small businesses.

The overall impact on the community could be significant as there could be a lack of support for deafblind individuals, affecting their ability to navigate their local community, attend shops and access other essential services.

Consumer Impacts of a reduction in funding to ShopMobility

- Individuals as Consumers:** Reduced access to mobility equipment for individuals impairs their ability to shop, dine out, and participate in social activities. This not only affects their quality of life but also limits their choice to engage in activities such as visiting cafes, cinemas, and theatres.
- Small Businesses:** Local shops and businesses, such as the Byron Baker and Tilly Butcher, may see a decline in foot traffic as individuals with mobility issues are unable to visit. This reduction in customers can negatively affect the revenue and sustainability of these businesses.

Shopmobility – the clue is in the title. People use us to go for a bite to eat and go to the cinema. Theatre. They borrow a piece of equipment for the weekend – people can go to hotels and know they get equipment delivered. We are in shopping centres – we encourage people

to come into the shopping centres. That can be scary for people using mobility equipment for the first time – borrowing equipment means we are building confidence in people to use the scooter in their local environment, so they can use it in the city centre.

- Katrina Michie, Manager, ShopMobility Aberdeen

- If people are unable to access these services, they are forced to shop online. When people shop in person for themselves, they tend to buy more than they would otherwise do. Enabling people to get to shops enables them to have more choice and autonomy over what they buy, which provides quality of life; but also means the shop benefits through people buying more. ShopMobility are also supporting micro-business through enabling transport and around the Christmas Markets.

...people can't get from their house to the place without mobility equipment. Customers could use Deliveroo – but there is delivery charge. Going to the shops gets you out and about. Often, it's not about buying the goods, but it's about having something to do. Conversation stimulates the brain, getting out into these shops enables them to chat with Denis the driver and the volunteers. The social element of what we do is important in reducing isolation - often they have no one else to speak to.

- Katrina Michie, Manager, ShopMobility Aberdeen

- **Accessibility to Public Events:** Events such as fireworks displays, Highland games, and other community gatherings may see reduced attendance from individuals with disabilities, impacting their sense of community and inclusion.
- **Impact on Tourism:** Shopmobility support the hospitality and tourism trade through making Aberdeen more accessible to visitors and tourists with mobility difficulties.

Hotels refer to us. Tourism refers to us. We deliver mobility equipment to the hotel, P&J live, large ACC events like fireworks, spectra, highland games, Turriff shows. This encourages people from the shire to come into the city. Next year we've got tall ships. We won't be able to support the events if we have to let the vehicle go.

- Paula Quinn, Chairperson, Shopmobility Aberdeen

Key consumer impacts of a reduction in funding for GREC:

- Small business owners and entrepreneurs could face challenges due to limited access to community-based economic support services such as training, mentoring, and financial advice.
- Volunteers who support community services could experience a decline in resources for coordination and support, leading to reduced volunteer participation and effectiveness.

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)?

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service delivered by ShopMobility, then it could bring these services in-house. This would require the council to purchase mobility equipment and have in-house expertise to repair and maintain the heavy-use equipment, such as a mechanic. Whilst this could remove the high negative impact on consumers, it would negate the financial benefit of reducing the grant.

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by GREC, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities and for policy influencing work.

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by DeafBlind, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities.

The mitigations set out above are not part of this option, so the negative impacts set out in the rating scale remain.

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?

Given the dual sensory impairment faced by service users of DeafBlind, any reduction in funding to Deafblind Scotland could negatively impact the human rights of individuals with dual sensory impairments by limiting their access to essential services, reducing their ability to participate in the community, and affecting their mental health and well-being.

GREC see many clients experiencing barriers in relation to these rights, and not having support services in place or a diminishing capacity for them would see these barriers remaining in place or they'd be harder to remove, making it harder for minorities facing inequalities to understand and exercise these rights.

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)?

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by equalities grant funding, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities, though this won't mitigate the negative impact on direct service delivery and community engagement.

The mitigations set out above are not part of this option, so the negative impacts set out in the rating scale remain.

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

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?

Shopmobility

The reduction in funding for Shopmobility could have significant direct, indirect and far-reaching negative impacts on the rights of children affect children, affecting their financial stability, access to essential services, educational opportunities, and overall well-being. Including those with parents with disabilities, those from low-income families, those with disabilities or those rehabilitating after an injury or illness.

Children from low-income families might face increased financial burdens if their families need to purchase mobility equipment independently. This could lead to reduced access to essential services and support, impacting their overall well-being and development. Additionally, if primary schools refuse to accept children using crutches due to high risk, those recovering from operations or injuries may be unable to attend school, disrupting their education and placing additional strain on their families.

Moreover, the reduction in services could lead to increased social isolation and mental health issues for children who rely on mobility aids to participate in community activities and maintain social connections⁴⁵. This isolation could negatively impact their mental and emotional well-being, potentially leading to cognitive decline and related issues due to the lack of mental and emotional stimulation.

Shopmobility often provides work placements for young people who may not be able to find opportunities in public or private sector organisations, due to their own mobility or behaviour difficulties. A reduction in funding may mean these opportunities can no longer be provided and these children or young people's rights are impacted.

GREC

Reducing funding to GREC could constrain services for children and young people, including educational outreach in school and supporting schools with tackling incidences of discrimination. Through casework GREC do a lot of work with families, so there would be a negative impact for children through that work stream being diminished. This could lead to long-term negative impacts on their well-being and development.

Additionally, the reduction in funding affects the ability to provide timely support for housing and other needs, especially for families with children. This is particularly important for New Scots children, young people and their families – and those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), as children in these families are entitled to support regardless of their parents' immigration status.

Furthermore, the reduction in funding impacts the ability to maintain and expand services such as children's counselling, which is vital for the mental well-being of children who have experienced trauma or discrimination.

Overall, the reduction in funding to GREC can lead to a decrease in the availability and quality of support services for children, potentially leaving them without the necessary resources to cope with and recover from their experiences.

DeafBlind

Cutting funding to Deafblind Scotland could have negative impacts on the rights of children and young people, particularly those with dual sensory impairments. The services provided by Deafblind Scotland are crucial for supporting children and young people with dual sensory impairments in Aberdeen City.

Here are some key impacts:

1. **Access to Essential Services:** Children and young people with dual sensory impairments rely on the support provided by Deafblind Scotland to access essential services such as healthcare, education, and social activities. Without this support, their ability to navigate their local community and access these services could be limited.
2. **Mental Health and Well-being:** The emotional support and well-being services provided by Deafblind Scotland are crucial for maintaining the mental health of children and young people with dual sensory impairments. The lack of support could lead to increased social isolation, mental health issues, and a decline in overall well-being.
3. **Educational Support:** Deafblind Scotland provides training and support to help children and young people with dual sensory impairments develop essential skills such as Braille, British Sign Language (BSL), and tactile communication. Without this support, their educational opportunities and ability to communicate effectively could be impacted.
4. **Social Inclusion:** The services provided by Deafblind Scotland help children and young people with dual sensory impairments participate in social activities and engage with their peers. Cutting funding could reduce their opportunities for social inclusion and community engagement.
5. **Future Opportunities:** The lack of support from Deafblind Scotland could limit the future opportunities for children and young people with dual sensory impairments, affecting their ability to pursue higher education, employment, and independent living.

Overall, cutting funding to Deafblind Scotland could negatively impact the rights of children and young people with dual sensory impairments by limiting their access to essential services, reducing their educational and social opportunities, and affecting their mental health and well-being.

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)?

If the Council wishes to continue offering to the community the service provided by equalities grant funding, it would need to work in partnership to identify alternative funding opportunities, though this won't mitigate the negative impact on direct service delivery and community engagement.

The mitigations set out above are not part of this option, so the negative impacts set out in the rating scale remain.

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

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?

Shopmobility - Direct Impact on the Environment

- Reduction or elimination of Shopmobility service could increase the usage of personal vehicles and taxis, leading to higher carbon emissions.
- Absence of accessible mobility options could deter individuals with mobility impairments from visiting public parks, gardens, and other outdoor spaces, reducing opportunities for environmental awareness and stewardship.
- Lack of Shopmobility's sustainable practice of reusing and recycling mobility equipment could lead to increased disposal of such items, contributing to landfill waste.
- Families might purchase and later discard equipment that is no longer needed, whereas Shopmobility ensures that wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids are used to their fullest extent, conserving resources.
- Shopmobility plays a critical role in environmental sustainability by reducing emissions, encouraging the use of public spaces, and minimizing waste through the reuse of mobility equipment.
- Any reduction in funding or services will have a direct and adverse impact on these environmental benefits.

Indirect Impact on Environment

Reduced funding for services like Shopmobility can lead to several indirect environmental impacts:

- **Increased Vehicle Use:** If Shopmobility services are reduced, individuals who rely on these services may need to use personal vehicles or taxis more frequently. This increase in vehicle use can lead to higher fuel consumption and an increase in carbon emissions.
- **Reduced Use of Public Transport:** Many people using Shopmobility services also use public transport to get to central locations where they can borrow mobility equipment. If these services are cut, these individuals might no longer be able to access public transport, leading to increased car dependency.
- **Higher Energy Consumption at Home:** With reduced mobility options, individuals are likely to spend more time at home. This extended stay can lead to higher energy consumption for heating, lighting, and electronic devices, thus increasing household energy use.
- **Waste Management Issues:** Shopmobility services often maintain and reuse mobility equipment for extended periods, promoting sustainability. Without these services, individuals might purchase their own equipment, leading to higher turnover and more waste as equipment becomes obsolete or unused.
- **Local Ecosystem Impact:** Reduced access to mobility equipment can limit individuals' ability to visit parks and green areas, thereby reducing their connection to nature and potentially decreasing public support for local environmental initiatives and preservation efforts.

GREC – Impacts

By diminishing direct service delivery, the capacity to support and inform specific groups in an inclusive manner in relation to financial inclusion and how to ensure access to basic services (e.g., recycling, housing, efficient use of heating, etc) would be curtailed.

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?

See 2.3

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.

See 2.3.

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)?

Even if Aberdeen City Council were to take the ShopMobility service in-house and purchase their own vehicles (which would negate the financial benefit of reducing the grant), this could mean that the vehicles in use by Shopmobility may need to be scrapped as maintenance no longer possible, and this could increase waste.

The mitigations set out above are not part of this option, so the negative impacts set out in the rating scale remain.

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

8: Sign Off

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

A reduction in funding could have an impact on the two Shopmobility employees.

GREC: The reduction in funding will significantly impact mental health services. Counselling capacity will decrease, preventing the intake of new clients and reducing service hours for current clients, thereby increasing waiting times, and making it more complex to apply to other funding streams Support for marginalized and vulnerable populations will be reduced, and overall, there will be an increase in unmet mental health needs in the community, negatively affecting the well-being of clients currently in service. In addition, the capacity to improve community engagement with people with protected characteristics would also be curtailed.

Does the policy relate to the Council's [Equality Outcomes](#)? If yes, how.

Yes, this policy relates to reducing the funding available to support Aberdeen City Council's Equality Outcomes. Any reduction in funding could have a negative impact on our ability to deliver these outcomes.

Overall summary of changes made to the policy as a result of impact assessment.

N/A

Outline how the impact of policy will be monitored.

N/A

If there are any remaining negative impacts after mitigation, what is the justification for why this policy should proceed.

Adding additional strain on other services with the council, third sector and NHS.

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Date	19/2/2025
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Date	24/02/25