

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00116 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Corporate & Housing Services Finance	Lead Officer Name:	Bryan Smail
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Proposal:	To balance the Council's budget for 19/20	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	No

Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Other, please specify: This EPIA reflects an assessment of the impact of the Council's potential decisions on service delivery, users etc. in 19/20. This EPIA is drafted on the basis of the report going to Council on 27 Feb 2019. If there are variations to options then this EPIA will be revised to reflect those.

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

23/01/2019	This exercise is to ensure the Council allocates its budget in line with its statutory obligations and in furtherance of achieving the priorities set out in the five year Corporate Plan. It takes account of reductions in funding, increases in costs, nationally agreed priorities, the Council's transformation programme and also changes in the expectations of our communities.

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	339,993	The report on the Council's budget is published on the Council's web site. This notes spend, gaps and changes proposed in the budget for 19/20. http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/Agenda.asp?meetingid=2936
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	13,4	The original budget gap is £22.9m but with adjustments such as rebasing, Council tax increase etc. reduces to £13.4m.
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		Income figures are included in the figures above and are set out more fully in the budget report.
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	01/04/2019	
	End Date (if any):	31/03/2020	

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE

Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence

This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

The Council in reviewing its Corporate Plan set out a clear context statement that included population projections, understanding about the economy of the area and changes in demand for service delivery. The preparation of the plan also looked at issues that are impacting on the Council such as legislative changes etc. In addition, the Council's equality mainstreaming report was considered in preparing the Corporate Plan and the Council's response in terms of resource allocation.

<https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/policies-strategies/docs/equality/Equality%20Outcomes%20and%20Mainstreaming%20Report.pdf?v=201704281534>

A profile of the area and its protected characteristics has been used to reflect on the people and communities the Council has to consider in delivering services and taking decisions.

In order to take account of the Fairer Scotland Duty the Council has recently refreshed our poverty strategy. This outlines the groups of people more likely to suffering for socio economic disadvantage, the numbers within the area and the where there concentrations of

[disadvantage.http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=15658](http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=15658)

In addition to profiling our area, we have looked to understand the lived experience of people in poverty. This has informed our strategy and then the decisions as an organisation we take.

<https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/statistics-census/docs/area-settlement-profiles/Falkirk%20equality%20profile%202018.pdf?v=201811221032>

B - Qualitative Evidence

This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

See Corporate Plan context statement along with the consultation exercise prepared for this budget. This is published as part of the main budget report.

<http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/coins/Agenda.asp?meetingid=2936>

We have also sought to understand the needs of those covered by the equalities legislation and Fairer Scotland Duty. To this end we have engaged with groups such as gypsy travellers, LGBT Youth etc. This has not be done to inform our savings but rather the priorities, strategies etc that the Council pursues with the resources we have.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	Yes
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	Best judgement is based on the cummulation of individual equality and poverty impact assessments, public consultation and consideration of the Councils overall spend.
What gaps in data / information were identified?	Information on existing customers is missing thus the exact impact is best guess.
Is further research necessary?	Yes
If NO, please state why.	

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	The budget was subject to public consultation. The majority of Individual options have been informed by the views of service users. The main budget report summarises the consultation undertaken and the results of this at included within that budget report. Approximately 1200 people replied to the survey - this is considered statistically significant.
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	
How was the engagement carried out?	
Focus Group	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...
No	
Survey	Yes <p>Some of the key findings are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of respondents (69%) supported an increase in Council Tax. • The majority of respondents (54%) agree that low income households should receive a discount on service charges. • Over half of respondents think the Council should sell buildings it is no longer able to afford to operate and upkeep. 41% of respondents visit a Council building once a year or less. • Although there is interest in community asset transfer, few respondents are willing to volunteer to manage and run these buildings (28%). • Respondents are in favour of communities taking on more responsibility for managing and maintaining services, such as flowerbeds and litter picks (59%). • Respondents are strongly in support of providing more services online (83%). • The vast majority of respondents (77%) think funding for gala days and community events should be withdrawn or reduced. • There is strong support (74%) for merging schools which are less than 50% full. • Respondents are not supportive of paying new or increased charges to protect services such as car parking, garden waste, bulky uplifts, music tuition and garden aid. They do not want changes made to the provision of child care and school meals but would be willing to pay new or increased charges to protect these services.

Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	
Other: please specify		
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	Yes	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes	
Is further engagement recommended?	Yes	

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, public protection etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age				The majority of services to older people are now provided by the Health and Social Care Partnership. These areas of service has been protected in the budget.
Disability			✓	There is a small disproportionate impact on those with a disability. There is mitigation proposed.
Sex			✓	There is a small disproportionate impact on women in the proposals made.
Ethnicity			✓	There is a small disproportionate impact on gypsy travellers and those from a minority ethnic community. There is mitigation proposed.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief				
Sexual Orientation				
Transgender				
Pregnancy / Maternity				There is a small impact on services to babies thus a potential on maternity. There are alternative providers.
Marriage / Civil Partnership				
Poverty			✓	The biggest impact is on those in poverty. Most of the options can be mitigated by people choosing to purchase services from other providers if a service is being reduced. There are mitigations proposed through the new poverty strategy and through the Council's new charging and concessions strategy..
Other, health, community justice, public protection etc.				
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	There are risks to the Council if we do not consider the options for change against our current spend and provision.			

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	The Council has considered its approach to eliminating unlawful discrimination.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	The strategies and policies that are priorities for the Council are designed to enhance equality of opportunity.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	The Council seeks to foster good relations and has at the heart of a number of its strategies promoting understanding and reducing prejudice.

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	Yes	The outcome of the Council's budget decisions has an impact on those organisations that are based in the area.
Councils	Yes	Other Councils will be impacted in that we may change our service delivery arrangements with them. In addition there may be displaced service delivery.
Education Sector	Yes	Education sector is impacted on by the Councils budget decisions and thus will be affected by the decisions taken.
Fire	No	
NHS	Yes	Some proposals impact on services provided by NHS Forth Valley.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The budget gives the Council's allocation to the IJB in addition to setting the charging strategy for the Board.
Police	Yes	Some proposals impact on the services provided by Police Scotland.
Third Sector	Yes	Some proposals impact on the services provided by the 3rd Sector.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.	The Council uses its budget not only to provide direct services but to promote the well being and prosperity of the area, its communities and citizens. Some of the decisions on spend have a long term impact that it is difficult to assess. In addition the place shaping and leadership role of the Councils means that this longer term approach significant in the priorities of the Council.	

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
The most significant impact of the budget is on people in poverty. Their choice is limited in terms of purchasing services that might be affected by change.	Mainly people in poverty	The impact of the individual options have been assessed as part of the EPIA process that informs budget decisions. In addition the approval of the poverty strategy, the charges and concessions strategy ensures most negative impacts are mitigated.	Chief Executive	31/03/2020	This budget underpins the corporate priorities of the Council as set out in the Corporate plan. It takes account of our mainstreaming equalities commitments and also our commitment to addressing the impact of poverty on individuals, families and communities.

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?

Yes

If yes when and how ?

These are reported as part of the budget report to Council on the 27th February 2018.

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	No	
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	Yes	Options to increase or reduce spend in certain areas are considered by Members as part of the budget process. The impact of those changes are noted in each EPIA.
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Fiona Campbell</i>	Date:	25/02/2019
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:	Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes
ASSESSMENT FINDINGS If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA	Evidence used to assess impact is noted with links provided in section 3 of this EPIA.	
Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u>?	Yes	If YES, please describe: Mitigations are clearly noted for the overall budget and for each individual option.

LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes	The impact is low if mitigations are actioned.

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:

Signature:	<i>Stuart Ritchie</i>	Date:	25/02/2019
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