

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00455 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Corporate & Housing Services Housing & Communities	Lead Officer Name:	Jennifer Kerr
		Team:	Communities
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Proposal:	Avonbridge Community Hall - SPR	Reference No:	455

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	Yes
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	No	No
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	
01/04/2023	Considering closure or alternative delivery model of this community building.
22/01/2024	Ongoing support to explore a Community Asset Transfer throughout 2023

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:		Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	Financial savings detailed in the report; Strategic Property Review Update, Falkirk Council, 31st January 2024
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	
	Expected Annual Income Total:	
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	
	End Date (if any):	

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.

Monthly usage sample - no information provided by the Management Committee.
Of 22 survey respondents, expressed they have a protected Characteristic that disadvantaged them.

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

From respondents who identified as having a protected Characteristic:

I am an oap who is visually impaired. I suffer with agrophobia (fear of going out) the hall is all I can manage. I love to watch my grandson at shows and parties there and it's the only time I see others outside of my family.

If the community hall closes then theres nowhere for the community to meet up, especially for elderly who may only get out once a week for the Wednesday lunchtime cafe. As a newcomer to the area, it helped me to get to know my neighbours in a nice and welcoming atmosphere.

No feasible other building.

"Wednesday cafe place to get together with other over 60's.
Place locally to hold birthday parties & social get togethers".

The Avonbridge hall offers our children lots of activities that without the hall to hold them in will all have to stop. When all the kids are running around board trying to entertain themselves the anti social behaviour in the village will rise again to the rate it was before the hall started to offer an alternative to them.

The hall is used all year round by residents for different occasions. One most recently is a soup kitchen offering free meals for families who are struggling. I am attending both a Christmas and new year party there this year too.

Keep the hall. Give it to the community.

Refrain from closing building None to keep activities on site.

The only thing that can stop the impact of closing the existing hall is for another hall to be built. Which isn't going to happen.

I only moved to Avonbridge 1 year ago. I have only had reason to visit there on 2 occasions during that period. I am unaware of the costs to Falkirk Council on the upkeep of the centre. There is an active community group that facilitates different services, e.g. part time community cafe, book bug sessions, family fun day. I know the group are active in their fund raising efforts and are able to secure monies from private sources. In terms of the young people of the village I firmly believe they are being let down in that there are little or no activities directed towards them. I appreciate that staff in the form of youth workers would be required or at the very least volunteers. I think this is particularly relevant given that Avonbridge is somewhat isolated for young people in terms of transport facilities. It may be that different people could be invited to interact with the young people, e.g. health & fitness and other topical interests. In conclusion, as I said before, I have no idea of the costs involved in running the hall so I am limited in what I can say. What I would like to add is some comments relating more to staffing issues as opposed to selling of Council owned buildings, although I do firmly believe that bleeding money from retaining buildings should positively not be allowed to continue. First of all I feel compelled to say that I have no axe to grind - so to speak. However, I could quote a few examples where I feel staff time / resources could be more efficient and cost effective.

Comments made by respondents that do not identify as having a Protected Characteristic but commented on the impact on others who do.

Necessary part of local life. Village support and emergency centre for less fortunate residents. Local food outlet.

It's a social hub and meeting place for many. May be the only interaction some people get.

Best Judgement:	
Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	Yes / No
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.	20 Respondents in relation to Avonbridge Hall identifying as users and local affected residents. A series of public events were held in libraries and schools across Falkirk during January 2023 and one online event. Members of the Management Committee Attended the session Braes Highschool, 10th January 2023. Ongoing support to explore a CAT throughout 2023	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	Yes	20 Respondents in relation to this building.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	Yes	Members of the Management Committee Attended the session Braes Highschool, 10th January 2023.
Other: please specify	Discussions with the management committee of this hall have indicated that the current management committee are not interested in taking over this building as they do not see it as a feasible financial plan. There are many survey respondents commenting on a new building that is eco friendly and requesting support and guidance to do an asset transfer. The current Management Committee did not respond to requests for usage information limiting the ability to asses impact.	
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, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age			✓	Older persons will be isolated if the building closes as there will not be a meeting place in the village. Children's activities would stop but no impact information provided by respondents.
Disability			✓	Isolation.
Sex				
Ethnicity				
Religion / Belief / non-Belief				
Sexual Orientation				
Transgender				
Pregnancy / Maternity				
Marriage / Civil Partnership				
Poverty			✓	Free meal provision provided in the community café would stop if the building closed.
Care Experienced				
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.				
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				

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):	Inclusive consultation and engagement to include protected characteristics groups and individuals
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	This facility is used by older people who would be isolated in the village if the hall was to close.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	Closure would have a negative impact on opportunities for people to come together in an informal community setting.

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	No	
Councils	No	
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	No	
Integration Joint Board	No	
Police	No	
Third Sector	No	
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.	Unknown as the Management Committee did not provide any usage information.	

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
Isolation impact on older persons and young children should the building close.	Older Persons Children Disabled Person	Prioritise these groups if alternative venues are required. Alternative Delivery Model- Community Asset Transfer	Place Services	01/04/2024	Council Plan: - Supporting stronger and healthier communities - Supporting a thriving economy and green transition Falkirk Plan: - Theme 1: Working in Partnership with Communities
Lack of access to emergency food provision in the areas would impact on low income households should the building close.	Low Income Households	Prioritise this service if alternative venues are required. . Strategic Property Review Report March 2023	Place Services	01/04/2024	Council Plan: - Supporting stronger and healthier communities - Supporting a thriving economy and green transition Falkirk Plan: - Theme 1: Working in Partnership with Communities - Theme 2: Poverty

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
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If yes when and how ?	Strategic Property Review reported to Members in March 2023, and an updated report to Members in 2024.
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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	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	Yes	Mitigations identified.
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Crawford Bell</i>	Date:	22/01/2024
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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
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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS	Information gathering of groups who use this facility has been recorded, with further opportunity of participation through a survey.	
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		

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: It is proposed that a Community Asset transfer be taken forward to mitigate against closure. The impacts of this need to continue to be monitored and assessed as project develops.
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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	The consultation showed that both older and young people would be disadvantaged by closure, as would those with a disability.
LOW	Yes / No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Karen Algie</i>	Date:	24/01/2024