

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00453 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Corporate & Housing Services Housing & Communities	Lead Officer Name:	Crawford Bell
		Team:	Communities
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Proposal:	Grangemouth Unit - SPR	Reference No:	453

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

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

Other, please specify:	Falkirk Council - During the SPR process, this building was selected to host Council meetings until the new Town Hall venue is constructed which may prolong the decision for closure of this building.
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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.

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 - 1,216 users 4 week sample

This venue is busy and actively used by persons with Protected Characteristics. It is likewise used by public services to provide services to person with Protected Characteristics.

Community Led: CG Step Forth walking group, CG Recreation club, CG Keep fit, Braveheart walking group, CG Indoor Bowling, Alcoholic Anonymous, CG share a craft, CG Chess club, Go youth group, CG Centre Art, PHAB Group, Friends of Zetland park, Bird meetings, AA Intergroup.

Private sector: Judo CG, First aid.

Public sector: FC Social Work support 6-7 sessions per week , FC ESOL Language class, NHS, Community Council.

Religious meeting – church.

A specific disabled children's programme run by FAB takes place here during school holidays: 3rd- 7th April and 10th -14th April 9am -5pm daily and 3rd July - 11th August 2023 (Monday to Friday only): Meet, have lunch entertain children with disabilities. Take some children out for a time , swimming, parks, day trips but this is also used as a base. Stay in if they do not want to take part in other activities.

15 Of 35 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**Comments from those who identify as having a Protected Characteristic:**

Alcoholics Anonymous meet here 3 times a week along with other groups such as chess and various groups of younger people. where will they go if this unit is closed. If AA have no where to meet what happens then, at what cost would that be to the community. How about the other groups what would happen if our young people have no where to go and meet up safely what damage to them and the community then. A very large car park for plenty of organisations to use this unit.

This building for years has hosted a weekly meeting of AA. This meeting is essential and life saving believe meZ there are now 3 AA meetings that take place there in this buildings. We have always paid our way.

"The loss of the Grangemouth Education Unit would be a great effect to our Share a Craft group and the local community. As our craft group presently has 18 Membership who have contributed to local community events for over 20 years. The Education Unit provides an accessible area and storage facilities for our Share A Craft group. Our 18 members are greatly impeded without local access to the Education Unit area as the group includes elderly with some disabilities who cannot not access outwith Grangemouth with limited public transport. The Education Unit room and table facilities for participation in promoting Craft artisan educational opportunities would prove difficult to obtain elsewhere. The Education Unit activities enables supportive fellowship encourage learning promoting opportunities retaining physical and mental activity reducing local inequalities providing a thriving community facility.

The Education Unit reduces individual members of Share A Craft Group carbon omission and provides benefits from a warm hub for in these economical challenging times.

The Education Unit Main Hall facilities provide venue for the public to attend a Coffee Mornings for Share A Craft fund raising with craft sales. Funds that provide fees for Falkirk Council and that have raised and donated funds to local and National charities.

With Grangemouth Education Unit Our Group is meeting the Falkirk Council Plan 2022 - 2027 with ""strong and healthier communities. Promoting educational attainment"". Also meets the People & Communities Towards a Fairer Falkirk 2019 - 2024 "" inclusive and fairer Falkirk"". The Grangemouth Education Unit closure will result in Falkirk Council not meeting their own statement aims,".

Share a craft group has been running for 25 years. This group offers support and tackles isolation and mental health.

As an older person I use this building for company and social reasons. I use this over 3 times a week and see this as essential for me at my age now and especially after COVID restrictions kept me at home. Can library services be used in this building, other services use this i.e.social Work for access and meetings, one stop shop, health meetings, dss assistance etc.

school holiday activity programme for young people with a disability in the full of the Falkirk Council area.

Please explain 'disproportionate'. Taxpayers use this facility for a variety of reasons/needs. Each as important to them.

I run a weekly walk for vulnerable people and use this venue as a base/ tea and coffee venue. We would be out on the street literally drinking out tea and coffee and these are lonely vulnerable people.

Grangemouth Community Education Unit is located at a place where I can take my disabled child safely and quickly. There my child and her disabled peers are involved in different activities with social care providers, and they can meet and interact socially in a safe space. The location is very beneficial as the groups can go swimming together or use the café at the Grangemouth Sports complex. Being so close to Zetland park allows the children to go to the park, especially those in wheelchairs. As the funding for social care and the caregivers' availability have been receding during the last few years, and socially vulnerable groups like disabled young people/children have suffered the severe impact of the coronavirus lockdowns, I think that closing facilities which provide care and are suitable

for disabled people/children is utterly inappropriate. This will cause additional issues for families who are already struggling financially, as they will have to travel farther and spend more time and money on travel. Many of them will have issues with the increased traffic and getting to a different location (some of the disabled children suffer deeply if their routine has been changed), and this add more stress on top.

I attend the bowling and the keep fit . I am 82 and it's the only way I get to see my friends and stay active

I use the facility to keep me from getting lonely.

The club will struggle to move due to issues like equipment etc should the club be forced to move it would be expected that this will become more expensive to run we are aware that families at be unable to absorb rising costs and this will put the club which is a charity at risk of needing to close disadvantaging the community.

It would take away a vital community resource and affect scores of families who use the facilities every week

The unit provides outstanding facilities for kids and adults alike of all backgrounds, it's closure would inevitably lead to the folding of a longstanding sports club who would be forced to find a costly alternative which would definitively lead to a significant number of members deem judo unaffordable leading then away from the health and social enjoyment currently being benefited from.

I attend a group within this building . If this closes I will not be able to go. The group helps with my mental health and done so for many years.

I am a member of Deanburn Judo Club, who run adult and children classes on a Monday and Friday evening. The club offers not just judo training, but a hub for support and friendship, boosting mental health and wellbeing, boosting self confidence, and improving fitness. The club coach is a former competitor in the Commonwealth Games and wants to offer a place for all, no matter their fitness or ability, to come and practice Judo. The club trains for and attends multiple development camp and competitions al over the UK - most recently to the British Judo Council National Championships in Kettering where multiple medals were won (this has been reported in the Falkirk Herald). This would not be possible without the club having a central place to gather and train at Grangemouth Community Education Unit. The closure would not just affect myself, but the other members of the club and their families who have come together to create such a wonderful club.

A general meeting in this unit to see how the people who use it can get together and keep it for the good of all the community.

If the Council can identify and let us know where this could be held jnstead without any cost increase. I cant think of another facility as the SNP are closing them. Whilst the council want to make better use of schools many of our members would be uncomfortable especially if you have children attending there

Retaining Grangemouth Education Unit will help mitigate any specific impacts as stated above.

Alternative suitable accommodation with accessible entry within the local community.

Shorten open hours, share use of building. Asset transfer will be difficult n could see them all close as people struggle to run and operate buildings in the long term. Don't try and close all halls and centres,.

Support ideas-

Keep open. The building is a small part of the whole Sports Complex so why are it's running cost/maintenance so prohibitive that you are considering closure? Is the main saving staffing costs? How many staff will lose their jobs, across the whole Council as a result of these closures?

Additional funding for social care and carers, as well as more means and funding for transport.

Keep building open

Do not close it.

"Keep the education centre open

Don't close the building - failing this find an adequate alternative which can be used by all members - not just those who can afford it

The facility must remain open!

Keeping the Centre open for training

Comments from those who do not identify as having a Protected Characteristic but have made comments on impact of closure on those who do:

We are the only Chess Club in the Falkirk Council area. We have had a significant influx of young players (from 8 to 16year old) since resuming face to face activity last year. Three of these juniors have now represented Scotland. It will be very difficult for the club to continue if the centre closes.

Loss of this facility will impact on the many groups who use the premises. There are no other properties in Grangemouth that could cater for the diverse groups that use the CEU. Closure would result in loss of a social meeting point for older members groups and a place for the younger members to learn new skills and social responsibility.

I attend an art club in the unit and have done so for many years. It is a great source of community, skills development and caring for mental health. The closure of the unit would throw this routine into disarray and have a negative impact on groups who use this facility.

We use the hall for our local judo club, closing this we will find it difficult for the club to find a new hall. This club has provided kids in a deprived area for 30 years somewhere they can have fun, gain skills, increase fitness levels and make friends and recently one member gain a gold British medal. The costs at the moment for the kids covers license fees for BJC, new premises means increasing costs for parents already struggling in the cost of living crisis. Without this kids will be roaming streets on Monday and Friday nights, may increase anti social complaints leaving policing with a higher workload.

There are many other groups who run out of this unit. Has this been looked at or even thought about. This will impact many peoples mental and physical health.

The unit has been running on a shoestring for many years now with problems caused by poor maintenance and neglect. The CEU Committee have been providing financial assistance over the years to purchase many items for the benefit of the groups without recourse to funding from the Council.

If closures are to go ahead, the council must support these groups in finding appropriate alternative accommodation so that they may continue to provide their invaluable services.

Keep the building open and to run as normal. Why would you give kids less opportunities by closing this building?

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.	35 Respondents in relation to Grangemouth Education Unit 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. While all events were open to anyone from any area, there was an event held locally to the Grangemouth Education Unit in Grangemouth Library January 17th 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	35 Respondents in regards to this building.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	Yes	Grangemouth Library January 17th 2023.
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, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age			✓	Isolation, opportunities and reduced mental health would affect older persons and young persons who participate in activities that currently take place in this building.
Disability			✓	Disabled service users would be more isolated without the activities they attend in this building. The holiday youth programmes would impact on the children and their carers and family during school holidays.
Sex			✓	Male specific walking groups operate from this building, reducing physical health of a male demographic with heart disease if stopped.
Ethnicity			✓	ESOL classes operate from this building reducing access to English language tuition and slowing integration for participants.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief				
Sexual Orientation				
Transgender				
Pregnancy / Maternity				
Marriage / Civil Partnership				
Poverty				
Care Experienced				
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.			✓	Alcoholics Anonymous operate several groups including a regional one from this venue. 34 service user would lose support with their substance use if this venue were to close. Activities for disabled person may provide respite time for Unpaid Carers.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	Further details about the accessibility of this building as a venue for activities and alternatives with accessibility for disabled persons is required to identify if there would be suitable alternative venues for this user group. More detailed user accessibility needs information would be required for this.			

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 provides a wide range of activities to a wide demographic who would have opportunities to live health active lives restricted by closure.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	Closure would prevent a wide range of people coming together in an informal community setting. this facility is used by a wide range of different groups.

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	Small businesses operate from this building.
Councils	Yes	Social Work and ESOL tuition operate from this building.
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	Yes	This building is used weekly by the NHS- unclear what for.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	Health equalities / prevention activities take place in this building for substance use. Reducing demand on IJB services.
Police	No	
Third Sector	Yes	Possible Positive impact -Alternative delivery model would create a third sector social enterprise business model for this building with the potential to grow the third sector in many ways, employment, size, income, social benefits, community leadership role.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.		

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
Persons of all ages would be impacted by the closure of this building.	Young People Older People	Prioritise the most vulnerable in these groups if alternative location is 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
Disabled persons attending services in the building would be impacted by its closure. So would carers for whom the activities are a form of respite.	Disabled Adults Disabled Children Carers Substance Use recovery	Prioritise these groups if alternative location is 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 Theme 4- Substance Use

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Men with health issues would be impacted by male specific walking group stopping	Men	Prioritise these groups if alternative location is 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
Ethnic minority users who do not speak English would be impacted by closure of this building	Ethnicity	Prioritise these groups if alternative location is 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

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.

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	Mitigations identified. However, should this building be the only suitable premise to accommodate disabled persons activities / services that take place within it, an alternative location may not be a suitable mitigation option. Further research is required to asses this fully and to asses the suitability of alternative options. Should this not be the case, then this proposal could continue without adjustment. Delaying the decision on this building due to Council meetings taking place there for an interim period, will provide additional time to further research and engage to asses this possible impact in more detail.
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>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	There is a lot of evidence highlighting the negative impact of closure on a wider range of groups relating to most protected characteristics - most notably sex, disability (children and people with an addiction) - as well as age (both older and younger) - and by services (NHS, Social Work, governance) - shows that closure would have a significant impact on all those that use this facility.	
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 / No	If YES, please describe: The mitigation of using building for Council meetings or the proposals for providing alternate delivery model or finding other buildings for groups to operate need to continue monitor and assess impact of closure.
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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	This evidence shows that closure of this facility would have a negative impact on a wide range of groups and people.
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes / No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

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