Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00452 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services Housing & Communities	**Lead Officer Name:**	Crawford Bell
		Team:	Communities
		Tel:	+447483919745
		Email:	crawford.bell@falkirk.gov.uk
Proposal:	Kersiebank Community Education Centre - SPR	**Reference No:**	452

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	Yes	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 and 2024
07/01/2025	Expression of interest in Community Asset Transfer received.

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 - 747 users.

Community Activity: Community Pantry & Café, Change Grow Live, Men's Group, Toddler Group, Line Dancers, Gem Community Café, Grangemouth community Pantry, Youth Club, CLD Older People's Lunch, Fibromyalgia Group, Wildlife Conservation.

Public Sector: E.S.O.L. Group, Digital Skills

11 of 14 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:

The centre is in a top ten % deprived area , huge mental health and associated disorders, poverty and low income is prelavent in the area accompanied with high % of flatted accommodation

We use the centre to provide support to ethnic minorities living in the Grangemouth area. At this time we have a large number of Ukrainian refugees as well as members of the settled population. In the centre we deliver ESOL classes for adults and one evening group for families who would otherwise not be able to have ESOL classes. At the moment we have 5 groups there but with the increasing numbers of Ukrainian and other refugees this could rise. Kersiebank is also a vibrant community centre where our learners feel safe and welcomed and they get other support through other staff at the centre and the food pantry. Some of them have taken up volunteering opportunities which is a fantastic way to feel that they are integrating into he local community and not outsiders any more.

We are a self help group who have been using this centre for many years. It is important for the individual and group well-being that we continue to meet here, for the parking and ease of use and access.

I attend a support group here and would be lost without it.

As I use the centre for group for fibromialgia.

this centre provides decent access for wheelchair users etc and young people from grangemouth can attend.

Centre provides fully accessible and affordable hall hire to groups of vulnerable aging adults with disabilities who live locally. Groups prevent social isolation amd promote health and well being.

Kersiebank Community Education Centre is a safe place where my disabled child and her peers meet and attend a club. As far as I am aware, the centre is being used by many different groups that are socially vulnerable, and there they find a warm and safe space where they can learn new skills and find new friends.

The Kersiebank CEC is socially very important for the local community. If closed, this will hurt the vulnerable groups that find there their safe space for interacting with others. I understand that the Council needs to save money, but in this case, the negative social impact will be much more significant than the savings. Suppose vulnerable groups of young people are deprived of their safe space for gathering and interacting with each other - in that case, the likelihood of youngsters being involved in illegal actions and crime will increase.

I use Kelsie bank project facilities. I attend group meetings twice a month and have been doing so for the past 19years. Our group is for fibromyalgia/me, people with disabilities. Closing our premises would mean a lot of people would have no where to go and meet up with other users.

Keep centre open and utilise it to its maximum potential with let's and community engagement to improve health and wellbeing, this also reduces costs in NHS and social care.

I don't know - another centre? As the carpet is pulled from under our feet it becomes harder to deliver our services to the people who need them most and they become more isolated.

A location with similar ease of access and parking for our members. Plus the storage and access to utilities.

Keep it opened as it is used for all different groups.

If this and nearby alternative centres close … there is no other affordable venues.. we have researched all alternatives.

It must be difficult for the council to budget and find the right balance. Still, if buildings/facilities which support vulnerable groups/young people are closed, the risk of negative impact on society and the community itself in the future will be significantly increased. Closing sports, cultural and educational facilities might solve some temporary budget problems but will create many more in the time of a whole generation.

Businesses may be invited to help and support the communities and patronise the different facilities for a certain period.

Keep building open and engage directly with centre users.

I'm not answering this question as it's up to you to sort out.

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

I believe many people (all ages) within the community will be disadvantaged if this centre closes as it provides a space for many groups, including many disadvantaged and hard to reach groups/individuals including refugees, young people living in poverty, reducing isolation for young and old people by providing

community cafe, youth club etc.

Closing a building with a food pantry in an area of deprivation is morally wrong.

We live in a deprived area and we really need to keep this building open , we have a Community cafe which is a great place with affordable prices to meet friends and new friends, they have a lunch club and they also provide hot drinks and snacks to people who attend the community pantry on a Wednesday. Toddlers groups are there twice a week and various other groups and learning groups too , along with Fibromyalgia group and a line dancing class, a music room and a computer room, also language class and a community garden are available, this is a great wee community place and everyone is so friendly towards each other, so many people benefit from this small building and it would be sorely missed by everyone who uses it , we need places like this in our community , somewhere to go to with friendly faces about and everyone made to feel welcome.

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.	14 Respondents in relation to Kersiebank Community Education Centre 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 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	14 respondents in relation 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			✓	Older persons and young people access groups here that reduce isolation and provide support with cost of living and low income.
Disability			✓	Substance use support and a health disability group meet in this venue.
Sex				
Ethnicity			✓	ESOL classes take place in this venue and these have created opportunities for integration of an increasing number of Ukrainian refugees to participate in other activities in the building as well as volunteer.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief				
Sexual Orientation				
Transgender				
Pregnancy / Maternity				
Marriage / Civil Partnership				
Poverty			✓	This building is in an area with high levels of deprivation measured by the SMID Index. Many of the activities in this building support low income households with access to low cost of free food, warmth and activities for socialisation.
Care Experienced				
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.			✓	Comments note potential for anti-social behaviour and crime if the activities in this building were stopped due to closure.
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 used by a wide range of groups closure would reduce the ability of a number of groups of people to achieve and reach full potential.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	Closure of this facility would impact on the opportunity for people to come together and meet 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	Yes	Adult Learning Classes are delivered from this building.
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	No	
Integration Joint Board	Yes	Prevention and substance use support delivered from this building.
Police	No	
Third Sector	Yes	Potential 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. This is a busy building with high levels of community led activity taking place.
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.	Older People Younger People Adults	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 Falkirk Plan: - 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
Ethnic minority users who do not speak English would be impacted by closure of this building	Ethnic Minorities Ukrainian refugees.	Prioritise these groups if alternative location is required. Alternative Delivery Model – Community Asset Transfer.	Places 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
Low income households would be affected by closure of this building.	Low Income Households	Prioritise the most vulnerable in this group 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 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

If yes when and how ?	Strategic Property Review reported to Members in March 2023, and an updated report to Members in 2024. Further report in January 2025.

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:	Crawford Bell	**Date:**	22/01/2024

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**	The evidence shows that closure would negatively impact on a wide range of groups and in particular age (younger people), disability and poverty. Centre is in an area of deprivation.	
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: The proposed mitigation is to progress to a Community Asset Transfer. The impacts need to continue to be assessed and monitored as this proposal is developed.

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	An expression of interest has been received to progress to a Community Asset Transfer solution. This mitigation avoids impacting a large number of groups through any potential closure.
LOW	Yes / No	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	Karen Algie	**Date:**	09/01/2025