

# Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00978 (Version 1)

## SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

<b>Service &amp; Division:</b>	Place Services Environment & Operations	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b>	Lesley Scott
		<b>Team:</b>	Waste Services
		<b>Tel:</b>	01324590420
		<b>Email:</b>	lesleyd.scott@falkirk.gov.uk
<b>Proposal:</b>	Garden Waste Permit - price increase 2025/26	<b>Reference No:</b>	

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	No	No	No

**Other, please specify:**

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

05/02/2025	Increase charge for garden permits for financial year 2025/26 to £52.50 per permit. Maintain discount eligibility of residents who are in receipt of Council Tax reduction (excluding single occupancy) at point of purchase receive a 50% reduction in permit charge.

## SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	£487K	Current spend includes both collections and disposal costs for all garden waste
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:	N/A	
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	£1,510K	The current and expected annual income figures are the same as the price increase is to close the income underachievement.
	Expected Annual Income Total:	£1,510K	2024/25 charges for garden waste service in neighbouring authorities is Stirling – £50.00; Clackmannanshire £48.00, and West Lothian – £50. Falkirk Council permits are valid from 1 May - 30 April
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	01/04/2025	
	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.

Approximately 70K household are on brown bin collections (4 weekly). The Council currently provides a pull-out service for around 5284 residents.

In the 2022 census, 13.4% of Falkirk residents would describe themselves as having a disability.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020 provides insights into levels of deprivation across Scotland, including the Falkirk Council area. The SIMD measures multiple aspects of deprivation, including income, employment, health, education, access to services, crime, and housing. In 2020, approximately 15% of Falkirk residents lived in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

**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**

The proposed fee has been informed by evidence from other Councils that have implemented a charge – 23 authorities currently have a charge (2024/25) which range per bin from £30 to £60. Charges have been proposed based on the need to ensure the financial sustainability of this non-statutory, discretionary service.

The garden waste service has operated successfully for two years using Council Tax Reduction as the eligibility criterion for the 50% discount, ensuring support is targeted at those with the greatest financial need. Expanding the discount model, such as including single occupancy households, would inevitably increase costs for non-qualifying residents. While free recycling at Household Waste Recycling Centres remains an alternative, the council acknowledges accessibility challenges for some residents and continues to provide assisted collections where needed. Maintaining the current discount structure balances financial viability with equitable support for those most in need. Those who qualify for the Council's free Garden Aid service would not be affected by this proposal.

**Best Judgement:**

<b>Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?</b>	Yes
<b>Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?</b>	Waste Manager, Council Officers and benchmarking with other local authorities.
<b>What gaps in data / information were identified?</b>	There is currently no data on the protected characteristics of service users.
<b>Is further research necessary?</b>	No

**If NO, please state why.**

Information available from other Councils to refer to. Kerbside garden waste collections are non-statutory and the Council is required to cover the cost of service provision.

**SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT**

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

<b>Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?</b>	Yes	
<b>If YES, please state who was engagement with.</b>	Service users via public consultation in 2019 on Council's savings options.	
<b>If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.</b>		
<b>How was the engagement carried out?</b>	<b>What were the results from the engagement? Please list...</b>	
<b>Focus Group</b>	No	
<b>Survey</b>	Yes	The majority of consultees were not in favour of a charge.
<b>Display / Exhibitions</b>	No	
<b>User Panels</b>	No	
<b>Public Event</b>	No	
<b>Other: please specify</b>		
<b>Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?</b>	No	
<b>Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?</b>	No	
<b>Is further engagement recommended?</b>	No	

## 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.
<b>Age</b>			✓	Census data highlights that a significant proportion of the local population may face challenges in accessing alternative waste disposal methods, such as older adults and individuals with disabilities. However, free recycling at Household Waste Recycling Centres remains an alternative for those who choose not to subscribe. The council will continue to monitor service accessibility and uptake whilst balancing the financial sustainability of the service.
<b>Disability</b>			✓	Census data highlights that a significant proportion of the local population may face challenges in accessing alternative waste disposal methods, such as individuals with disabilities. However, free access is available to dispose of material at Household Waste Recycling Centres, with 7 day opening available across HWRC provision. Residents in need of assistance to dispose of materials at HWRC can request onsite assistance at point of site arrival. Kerbside assistance for qualifying assistance is available via the wheeled bin pull-out service.
<b>Sex</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Ethnicity</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Religion / Belief / non-Belief</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Transgender</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Marriage / Civil Partnership</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified

**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:**

				opening available across HWRC provision. The brown bin (garden waste) collection is a non-statutory service, opt in service with the price of a permit designed to cover service provision as per the Council fee and charging policy. Promotion of home composting options via the Council website also reduces the requirement for permit purchases.
<b>Care Experienced</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Other, health, community justice, carers etc.</b>	✓			No negative impacts identified
<b>Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)</b>				

	<b>Evidence of Due Regard</b>
<b>Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):</b>	The proposals will not lead to any unlawful discrimination. Whilst potential for negative impacts has been identified, there are a number of mitigations in place to support service users who may struggle to access the service. The 50% discount for residents receiving council tax reduction remains in place, minimising financial disadvantage for low-income households. Assisted collections for disabled residents continue, ensuring accessibility. The charge applies universally, mitigating risks of direct or indirect discrimination.
<b>Advance Equality of Opportunity:</b>	Free access to Household Waste Recycling Centres for disposal of garden waste is still available, with assistance available as required to deposit collected garden waste. Accessibility of pull-out kerbside service enables participation in kerbside garden waste recycling service for scheme eligible householders.
<b>Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):</b>	The proposals do not offer much scope to improve relations, tackle prejudice or promote understanding between different protected characteristic 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.
<b>Business</b>	Yes	Businesses that can uplift garden waste material may have an interest in collecting this from households at a lower rate
<b>Councils</b>	No	
<b>Education Sector</b>	No	
<b>Fire</b>	Yes	Fire Service may have an interest if the impact of the proposal leads to a drop in people having their garden waste collected.
<b>NHS</b>	No	
<b>Integration Joint Board</b>	No	
<b>Police</b>	No	
<b>Third Sector</b>	No	
<b>Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.</b>		

## 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
Chargeable service	Lower income groups	Householders can still dispose of material for free at Household Waste Recycling Centres or choose to compost garden waste from home. Some householders may also qualify for the free garden aid scheme.	Barry Neill	31/12/2025	Supporting a thriving economy and green transition  Financial Sustainability
Participation	Disability	On-site operative assistance is available to residents at Household Waste Recycling Centres. Some householders may also qualify for the kerbside pull-out collection service to enable garden waste recycling participation.	Barry Neill	31/12/2025	Supporting a thriving economy and green transition  Financial Sustainability
General	Service Users	The service will explore opportunities to improve collection of equalities data on service users.	Barry Neill	31/12/2025	Supporting a thriving economy and green transition  Financial Sustainability
Communications	Service Users	The service will continue to promote and advise service users of the existing assistance and concessionary schemes already in place.	Barry Neill	31/12/2025	Supporting a thriving economy and green transition  Financial Sustainability

### No Mitigating Actions

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

<b>Are actions being reported to Members?</b>	Yes
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<b>If yes when and how ?</b>	At Council Budget Meeting 2025
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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	Free access to Household Waste Recycling Centres for disposal of garden waste is still available, with assistance available as required to deposit collected garden waste. Accessibility of pull-out kerbside service enables participation in kerbside garden waste recycling service for scheme eligible householders. Home composting is a sustainable method of managing garden waste. Brown bin (garden waste), is a non-statutory service.
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

**SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF**

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Barry Neill</i>	Date:	05/02/2025
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**SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY**

<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:</b>	<b>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?</b>	Yes
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<b>ASSESSMENT FINDINGS</b>	The EPIA is based on benchmarking with other local authority services and draws on available data.	
<b>If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA</b>		
<b>If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA</b>		

<b>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></b>	Yes / No	If YES, please describe:

**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	

**SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF**

<b>Director / Head of Service:</b>		
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>Malcolm Bennie</i>	<b>Date:</b> 07/02/2025