

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00920 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services Housing & Communities	Lead Officer Name:	Louise Graham
		Team:	Library Services
		Tel:	01324 503612
		Email:	louise.graham@falkirk.gov.uk
Proposal:	Libraries Fees & Charges - to increase library fees and charges, including photocopying, printing, events and room hire.	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	No	No

Other, please specify:	The proposal is to increase the costs charged by library services. This includes photocopying and printing, room hire and attending events and activities.
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Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	
24/12/2024	The proposal is to increase the costs charged by library services. This includes photocopying and printing, room hire and attending events and activities.

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:		
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:	£31,000	
	Expected Annual Income Total:	£35,000	
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.

These annual proposed increases in charges are in line with the objectives of our Libraries Strategic Action Plan 2023-2028.

From April 2023 - March 2024, Falkirk Libraries have had:

- 361,987 visits to buildings - an increase of 14% from 2023.
- 1,738 events and activities attended by 28,039 people - a 9% increase in activities and events and a 12% increase on people attending from 2023.
- 44,604 members - a 13% increase from 2023.

We do not collect details of the protected characteristics of library members and visitors, nor of the various groups who pay to use our spaces. We do not collect details of the protected characteristics of library members and visitors, nor of the various groups who pay to use our spaces.

Analysis of the public engagement on our strategic plan provided the following information on the protected characteristics of those who took part in that engagement.

Survey responses:

2,679 responses.

2671 answered if individuals (98%) or community organisations representatives (1.5%).

2676 responded to using a library: 95% in the last 4 years; 5% had not.

2539 responded to how often used library: 45% once a month; 25% once a week; 1.6% online services only.

2512 responded to time of day using a library: 56% afternoon; 42% morning; 26% evening. Figures include where customers have used more than one time of the day.

2502 responded to using online services: 10% at least once a week; 11% at least once a month; 28% not very often; 38% never.

2664 responded to how far they travelled to local library: 81% between 0-2 miles.

2656 responded to how they travelled to library: 53% car; 37% foot; 2.4% online services only or home library service.

2652 responded to home location: 97% live in Falkirk.

2513 responded to employment status: 52% employed/self-employed; 31% retired; 4% unemployed and no seeking work; 1.5% unemployed and seeking work.

2637 responded to location of employment (those employed): 37% work in Falkirk area.

2608 responded to further and higher education: 5% students and 3.4% school students.

2547 responded to parent/guardian: 47% parent/guardian.

1117 responded to ages of children: 15% pre-school; 21% primary school; 14.5 secondary school; 8% not at school (16-18 years).

2338 responded about being a carer: 14% identified as a carer.

2561 responded to sex: 71% female; 24% male; 5% no response.

2572 responded to age: 4% under 24; 31% 25-44 years; 34% 4-64 years; 27% 65 or over; 4% no response.

2393 responded to sexual orientation: 85% heterosexual or straight; 2% gay or lesbian; 2% bisexual and 2% other. 11% declined to answer.

2520 responded to marriage/legal status: 60% married; 13% single; 7% widowed; 7% co-habiting; 5% divorced; 1% separated; 6% declined to answer.

2429 responded to physical or mental health condition or illness, or a learning disability, which they expect to last for 12 months or more: 20% having condition or illness. 887 of those respondents responded to whether their condition or illness reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities: 5% yes a lot; 12% yes, a little.

2554 responded to British/United Kingdom citizenship: 93% British/UK; 2% non-British/UK; 5% declined to answer.

2454 responses to ethnicity: 69% White Scottish; 21% White British/Irish/other; 0.5% Polish. Further breakdown is available in the Libraries Community Engagement Survey results.

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

As we reviewed our fees and charges across library services we considered the impact on those living on a low income in line with the Fairer Scotland duty. Research also indicates that various protected characteristic groups are more likely to experience poverty including households with disabilities, women and some ethnic minority groups.

Protecting those on the lowest incomes from increased costs will in turn benefit those protected characteristic groups. The proposed charges include reduced concessionary rates and free rates for Go card holders.

Those who are eligible for a Go Card receive non-discretionary rates:

Eligibility Protected Characteristic Those aged 65+ Age Those on Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance or Carers Allowance Low income Those who receive Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Incapacity Benefit, Employment & Support Allowance and War Disablement Pension Disability Full Time Students Other Claimants of Widowed Parent's Allowance Other Asylum Seekers (Those supported under Part VI of the Immigrations and Asylum Act 1999). Race/Ethnicity Those on Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £660. Low income Those on Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, with an income of less than £17,005. Low income Those on both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £7,920. Low income Those who are looked after or under Kinship Care/guardianship order care-experienced Those who are housed in the Cladhan Hotel Other

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?	No
If NO, please state why.	No further research is required as the proposals are based on evidence gathered previously.

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?	No	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.		
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.	We have not consulted or engaged on this annual review of fees and charges as the proposals are in line with our Library Services Strategic Action Plan which was based on an extensive consultation exercise.	
How was the engagement carried out?	What were the results from the engagement? Please list...	
Focus Group	No	
Survey	No	
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?	No	
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	No	
Is further engagement recommended?	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.
Age		✓		Those aged 65+ are eligible for a Go Card and therefore can access free concessionary rates.
Disability		✓		Free concessionary rates are available to people on income-related benefits. As people with disabilities are more likely to be on income-related benefits than those without disabilities, the proposals will have a positive impact on people with disabilities.
Sex	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on any particular gender.
Ethnicity		✓		Asylum seekers are eligible for a Go Card and therefore can access free concessionary rates.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on any particular religion or belief.
Sexual Orientation	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on any particular sexual orientation.
Transgender	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on transgender people.
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on any particular gender. It is notable that Bookbug remains free of charge (in line with national guidance).
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on people with a specific marital status.
Poverty		✓		Throughout the review of fees and charges we have protected those living on a low income from increased costs by offering free access to those with a Go-Card. Additionally, where photocopying or printing relates to critical documents required to claim benefits or access housing this will be provided free of charge.

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:

				proposals will have a positive impact on care-experienced people.
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.	✓			The proposed changes are not expected to have a disproportionate impact on other group.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	The proposed changes to our fees and charges are not expected to have any impact on unlawful discrimination.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	The proposed changes to our fees and charges are designed to protect those on lowest incomes, those who are care experienced and people seeking asylum. In turn this can help advance equity of opportunity for some protected characteristic groups including age, ethnicity and disability.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	The proposed changes to our fees and charges are not anticipated to impact on understanding or 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	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact businesses who hire these spaces. This is likely to be mainly small businesses.
Councils	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact services who hire these spaces.
Education Sector	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact organisations that hire these spaces.
Fire	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact organisations that hire these spaces.
NHS	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact organisations that hire these spaces.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact organisations that hire these spaces.
Police	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact organisations that hire these spaces.
Third Sector	Yes	Increased costs of hire of spaces in library buildings will impact organisations that hire these spaces.
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

No Mitigating Actions

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

No mitigating actions are required as no negative impacts on any protected characteristic groups are expected. While the increased costs for hire of spaces within buildings will impact on partners and stakeholders these are in line with charges for other premises and are based on actual costs such as covering cost of utilities for use of libraries on Wednesdays when they are closed.

Are actions being reported to Members?

Yes

If yes when and how ?

Budget Meeting February 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	Yes	By offering concessions and removing charges for Go Card holders any potential negative impact on protected characteristic groups has been reduced.
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>Louise Graham</i>	Date:	24/12/2024
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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	The EPIA demonstrates use of relevant evidence on service users and data gathered in previous consultation, which informs the conclusions in the assessment.	
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>?	No	If YES, please describe: N/A - no adverse impact identified.
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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 / No	
LOW	Yes	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Karen Algie</i>	Date:	08/01/2025