

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Process

STEP 1 - Screening

As early as possible as the policy is being developed, screen it!

- Describe the policy
- Is an EFSIA needed?



STEP 2 – Scoping - Determine what is needed for the EFSIA

- What do you already know?
- What further information do you need?

STEP 3 – As the policy is being developed

- Review the information already available
- Gather any additional information needed
- Consult with stakeholders

STEP 4 – Decision

- Review findings
- Revisit the policy and make a decision/recommendation:
 - Option 1: No major change
 - Option 2: Adjust the policy
 - Option 3: Continue the policy
 - Option 4: Stop and remove the policy
- Record the reasons for the decision/recommendation

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Screening

Title of Policy:	Clackmannanshire Council Budget 2022/23
Service:	Clackmannanshire Council
Team:	N/a

Will the policy have to go to Council or committee for approval	Yes
Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	Yes
Does it relate to functions that previous involvement activities have identified as being important to particular protected groups?	Yes
Does it relate to an area where the Council has set equality outcomes?	No
Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?	No
Does it relate to a policy where there is significant potential for reducing inequalities or improving outcomes?	Partially

IF YES - Move on to an Equality & Fairer Scotland Assessment

IF NO - Explain why an Equality & Fairer Scotland Assessment is not required

APPROVAL

NAME	DESIGNATION	DATE
Cherie Jarvie	Senior Manager Partnership and Transformation	24/01/2022

NB This screening exercise is not to be treated as an assessment of impact and therefore does not need to be published. However, if you decide not to assess the impact of any policy, you will have to be able to explain your decision. To do this, you should keep a full record of how you reached your decision.

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Scoping

Purpose of the proposed policy or changes to established policy

The purpose of the change is to ensure that Clackmannanshire Council is able to set a balanced budget, as required by statute, for the year 2022/23. Clackmannanshire Council is consulting on proposals which require a policy change and this Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment scoping document sets out the Council's initial assessment on any impacts arising from proposals. Feedback from our consultation process will inform the final Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment which will be published on the Council's webpages.

Transforming our local economy and tackling poverty and inequality lies at the heart of the Council's transformation journey and whilst our ambitions are firmly focused on a strong future for Clackmannanshire, local government is not immune from the realities of dealing with rapidly increasing costs and demands for services and we continue to face tough choices within tight financial constraints.

Recognising that the pandemic and inflation are placing strains on our communities, we have sought as much as possible to make any savings through further internal management efficiencies and using other potential options with a view to minimising direct impacts on citizens, and in particular services for our most vulnerable. Whilst we are doing as much as we can in that regard; it is unlikely that these will be sufficient to set a balanced budget. Therefore there are two proposals that we are seeking to consult communities on.

Clackmannanshire Council is seeking to understand the equality impacts on the following proposals:

- An increase in Council Tax in line with inflation based on the Consumer Price Index at Dec 2021 which is 5.4%
- An increase in fees and charges in line with inflation based on the Consumer Price Index at Dec 2021 which is 5.4%

Details on the current rate of Council Tax can be found here <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/council/counciltax/>

The current register of charges 2021/22 can be accessed here <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/document/6472.pdf>

Which aspects of the policy are particularly relevant to each element of the Council's responsibilities in relation to the General Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty?

General Equality Duty -

- **Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct**

Impacts are assessed as low, however data and evidence on any possible impacts is invited as part of the consultation process.

➤ **Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not**

The proposed changes may have an impact on those with protected characteristics, however as these are universal charges further information is required to better understand any direct impacts on protected groups and how these could be mitigated. Clackmannanshire Council is seeking to consult with protected groups to gather information on likely or possible impacts arising from the proposals.

➤ **Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

Impacts are assessed as low, however data and evidence on any possible impacts is invited as part of the consultation process.

Fairer Scotland Duty -

➤ **Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage**

The proposed changes will increase the amount of Council Tax residents would pay and some residents would also be impacted by increases in fees and charges for some services. This may impact residents who are vulnerable or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. There are a number of services in place which seek to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are not impacted by financial crisis and many residents will continue to be protected through these services. This includes Council Tax Reduction schemes and crisis and financial welfare schemes. Concessionary rates are also offered for some services that carry a fee/charge.

The proposals may also compound the wider financial impacts resulting from the Covid pandemic as well as cost of living increases associated with the rise of inflation rates. Covid Test and Protect arrangements are in place to assist our most vulnerable residents and various financial support arrangements are available as a safety net for those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage. More information on these services and support available can be accessed here <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/coronavirus/worriedaboutmoney/>

Recognising these mitigating services, further information is sought to understand any wider impacts on protected groups and any additional mitigations that Clackmannanshire Council should consider.

To which of the equality groups is the policy relevant?		
Protected Characteristic	Yes/No*	Explanation
Age	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Disability	Yes	There may be disproportionate impacts on people with disabilities, particularly where unemployment and low incomes are prevalent. There are a number of mitigating services already in place which seek to ensure disabled residents are not disproportionately impacted by the proposals, however information is sought to understand if there are remaining impacts and the additional mitigations that Clackmannanshire Council should consider.
Gender Reassignment	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Race	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Religion and Belief	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Sex	Yes	There may be disproportionate impacts on sex. Our poverty and economic baseline assessment indicates that weekly incomes for women are relatively low. Women also represent the majority of lone parent families in Clackmannanshire. There are a number of mitigating services already in place which seek to ensure residents are not disproportionately impacted by the proposals, however information is sought to understand if there are remaining impacts and the additional mitigations that Clackmannanshire Council should consider.
Sexual Orientation	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.

* Delete as required

What evidence is already available about the needs of relevant groups, and where are the gaps in evidence?

Our analysis indicates that low incomes, poverty and women's inequalities are significant issues for Clackmannanshire possibly exacerbated in 2020 as a result of the ongoing global Covid pandemic. Whilst data shows that incomes have increased over the past 2 years, they have not risen at the same level when compared with other geographic areas. A poverty and equality impact assessment carried out by the Community Planning Partnership identified ongoing pressures on families with low incomes. Health and wellbeing inequalities also continue to present challenges across communities in Clackmannanshire.

Data and evidence from previous consultations on Council Tax increases and increases in fees and charges, has indicated that no significant impacts are identified on Clackmannanshire residents as a whole and that vulnerable residents are not disproportionately impacted given the various schemes in place to mitigate against socioeconomic disadvantage.

Which equality groups and communities might it be helpful to involve in the development of the policy?

The Council is seeking views from protected groups, and in particular from the following: disability; sex and economically disadvantaged or low income families and/ or communities. We are seeking information on any impacts arising from the proposals and any additional mitigation that we should consider.

We will update and publish this impact assessment following completion of the budget consultation exercise and analysis of feedback.

Next steps

We are seeking views on impacts in writing to:
customerservice@clacks.gov.uk

or

Customer Services
Kilncraigs
Greenside Street
Alloa
FK10 1EB

If you require this document in an alternative language or format please contact Clackmannanshire Council on 01259 450000 or email customerservice@clacks.gov.uk

Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Decision

Evidence findings		
This section will be completed following review of information and feedback received on the proposal.		
Details of engagement undertaken and feedback received		
Decision/recommendation		
Having considered the potential or actual impacts of this policy, the following decision/ recommendation is made:		
Tick	Option 1: No major change The assessment demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for unlawful discrimination and that all opportunities have been taken to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.	
	Option 2: Adjust the policy – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality or to foster good relations. It may be possible to remove or change the aspect of the policy that creates any negative or unwanted impact, or to introduce additional measures to reduce or mitigate any potential negative impact.	
	Option 3: Continue the policy – this means adopting or continuing with the policy, despite the potential for adverse impact. The justification should clearly set out how this decision is compatible with the Council’s obligations under the duty.	
	Option 4: Stop and remove the policy – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, consideration should be given to stopping the policy altogether. If a policy leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.	
Justification for decision		
APPROVAL		
NAME	DESIGNATION	DATE