

# 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

<b>Title of Policy:</b>	Clackmannanshire Council Budget 2025/26
<b>Service:</b>	Clackmannanshire Council
<b>Team:</b>	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?	Yes
Does it relate to a policy where there is significant potential for reducing inequalities or improving outcomes?	Potentially

**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	08/01/2025

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 Council is required under the Public Sector Equality Duty, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This includes a legal requirement to assess the equality impact of proposed and revised policies. There are nine protected characteristics covered within the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership. Further information on the duty and Equality Impact Assessments can be found here <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>

The Fairer Scotland Duty (2018) places a legal responsibility on the Council to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. Further information on the Fairer Scotland Duty can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies>

The purpose of the policy change relating to this assessment, is to ensure that Clackmannanshire Council can set a balanced budget, as required by statute, for the year 2025/26 and to meet a funding gap of £13.01m.

Clackmannanshire Council is consulting on proposals which require a policy change, and this Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment scoping document sets out our initial assessment on any potential 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 Councils website and will be included as part of the final decision-making process on the 2025/26 budget by Council.

As in previous years, a budget engagement process is being undertaken to inform decisions for the 2025/26 budget, and to assist Council to gather data on potential impacts and any possible mitigations that should be considered. We are consulting on a range of policy proposals which seek to contribute to reducing the Councils funding gap.

The proposals are summarised below:

- a) Increase in Fees and Charges by 3%
- b) Increase in Council Tax by 8, 12 or 15%
- c) Implement new planning charges
- d) Increase in price of brown bin permits
- e) Reduce level of funding available for voluntary organisations
- f) Removal of discretionary relief for charity sports clubs
- g) Removal of three temporary outreach worker posts
- h) Extending primary school breaks
- i) Reduce school resource budgets
- j) Closure of Alva and Tullibody libraries
- k) Let out space in Kilncraigs
- l) Reduce revenue expenditure through sale of key properties
- m) Reduce land maintenance services
- n) Reduce street cleaning

Through the budget engagement exercise we are seeking to consult with protected groups to identify specific equality and Fairer Scotland impacts and any mitigations that we need to consider under our equalities duties. Details on the proposals are set out in the Budget Engagement Booklet 2025/26 which can be accessed on our website.

Copies of previous equality and Fairer Scotland impact assessments can be accessed here <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/council/eqia/> and information on previous budget consultations can be found here <https://clackmannanshire.citizenspace.com/>

The current rate of fees and charges and information on council tax charges can be found on our website <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/>

**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 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 and further information is required to better understand any direct impacts on protected groups and how these could reasonably be mitigated. Clackmannanshire Council is seeking to consult with protected groups to gather information on likely or potential impacts arising from the proposals.

A number of proposals are identified which may have impacts on protected groups. These include:

- Increase in Fees and Charges by 3%
- Increase in Council Tax by 8, 12 or 15%
- Reduce level of funding available for voluntary organisations
- Removal of three temporary outreach worker posts
- Extending primary school breaks
- Reduce school resource budgets
- Closure of Alva and Tullibody libraries

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

There may be potential impacts, however data and evidence are invited as part of the consultation process.

**Fairer Scotland Duty -**

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

Residents experiencing socio economic disadvantage may be disproportionately impacted by proposals included in the budget engagement for 25/26, however a range of mitigations are already in place to protect these residents. Further information, data and evidence is invited as part of the consultation process to understand impacts and any additional reasonable

mitigation that can be put in place.

A number of budget proposals are identified which may have impacts on residents experiencing or likely to experience social or economic disadvantage. These are:

- Increase in Fees and Charges by 3%
- Increase in Council Tax by 8, 12 or 15%
- Increase in price of brown bin permits
- Reduce level of funding available for voluntary organisations
- Reduce school resource budgets
- Closure of Alva and Tullibody libraries

The proposed changes may increase the charges residents pay for services including Council Tax. Whilst these are universal charges affecting all residents, the change may disproportionately impact residents who are vulnerable or experience socio-economic disadvantage. A range of support schemes are already in place to ensure that the most vulnerable residents are protected from financial crisis including Council Tax Reduction, crisis and financial welfare and payments and concessionary schemes. However, we are mindful of the current cost of living pressures and as such further information is sought from protected groups on impacts and any additional mitigation that the Council should consider.

The proposed changes include funding to the voluntary sector, predominantly Community Councils. This change may impact residents experiencing socio economic disadvantage and also potentially fall under one or more protected characteristic. Further information is sought on impacts and potential mitigation.

Proposals on the closure of Alva and Tullibody library provision could potentially have a disproportionate impact on protected groups and those already experiencing or likely to experience socio economic disadvantage, however further information is sought from protected groups on impacts and any mitigation that the Council should consider.

Proposals relating to the removal of temporary outreach worker posts in Clackmannanshire Secondary School Support and reduction of school resource budgets may potentially impact protected groups and those already experiencing or likely to experience socio economic disadvantage. Again, information is sought from groups on how these proposals may impact them and any mitigation that the Council should consider.

Proposals relating to the reduction of grounds maintenance and street cleaning may have a disproportionate impact on protected groups however further information is sought to understand the extent of any impact and potential mitigation.

<b>To which of the equality groups is the policy relevant?</b>		
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Yes/No*</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Age	Yes	There may be disproportionate impacts on certain age groups. Removal of temporary outreach worker posts in Clackmannanshire Secondary School Support and reduction of school resource budgets are likely to impact children and young people. Proposals relating to Alva and Tullibody libraries and funding to the voluntary sector may disproportionately impact older and/or younger residents.
Disability	Yes	There may be disproportionate impacts on people with disabilities arising from proposals. Proposals relating to street cleaning and land maintenance may impact people with a disability. Proposals relating to the removal of temporary outreach worker posts may impact on people with a disability. Further information is sought to understand impacts and to identify mitigation.
Gender Reassignment	Potentially	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	Proposals relating to the closure of Alva and Tullibody libraries may impact residents for whom English is not their first language. Further information is sought to understand impacts and to identify mitigation.
Religion and Belief	No	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Sex	Yes	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.
Sexual Orientation	Potentially	There is no indication at this stage that this protected characteristic would be impacted.

<b>What evidence is already available about the needs of relevant groups, and where are the gaps in evidence?</b>
<p>Our analysis indicates that low incomes, poverty and inequality and health inequality are significant and ongoing issues for Clackmannanshire residents. Previous data deep-dives and impact assessments have been carried out to help inform our understanding of Clackmannanshire and we continue to improve the ways that we use data to help with strategic decision making.</p> <p>In addition, data, and evidence from previous budget engagement activity, as well as other consultation, is retained on record and is reviewed as part of the Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment process. Previous Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessments are published on the Councils website and consolidated evidence from budget engagement activities is held and reviewed when considering impacts and mitigations.</p>

Whilst the Council has data and evidence on proposals which have been included in previous engagement, we recognise that there remain evidence gaps relating to the full set of proposals set out in this document. We also recognise that circumstances change and as such seek to gather additional information on the needs of relevant groups, impacts relating to the proposals and any reasonable mitigation that the Council should consider. This information will be used, alongside existing data to inform decisions on the proposals contained in this assessment.

#### **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 particularly from young and older residents; those with a disability; those from ethnic minority groups and groups or organisations representing the views of these protected groups. We are also seeking views from individuals and groups experiencing economic disadvantage, low-income families, and/or communities and from organisations supporting residents with protected characteristics. We are also seeking views from residents in deprived communities or areas which have high levels of social or economic disadvantage. We are seeking information on any impacts arising from the proposals and any additional reasonable mitigation that we should consider.

We will update and publish this impact assessment following completion of the budget consultation exercise and analysis of feedback. The final impact assessment and all feedback and evidence will be considered by Council as part of its budget setting process for 2025/26.

#### **Next steps**

We are seeking views through our online engagement which can be accessed here: <https://www.clacks.gov.uk/>

Alternatively views on impacts can be sent in writing to:

[customerservice@clacks.gov.uk](mailto: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, email [customerservice@clacks.gov.uk](mailto:customerservice@clacks.gov.uk) or write to us at the above address.

## Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment - Decision

Please note:

This section will be updated following decision from Council on the 2025/26 budget. The updated Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment will be published on the Council's website.

<b>Evidence findings</b>		
<b>Details of engagement undertaken and feedback received</b>		
<b>Decision/recommendation</b>		
Having considered the potential or actual impacts of this policy, the following decision/recommendation is made:		
<b>Tick</b>	<b>Option 1: No major change</b> 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.	
	<b>Option 2: Adjust the policy</b> – 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.	
	<b>Option 3: Continue the policy</b> – 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.	
	<b>Option 4: Stop and remove the policy</b> – 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.	
<b>Justification for decision</b>		
<b>APPROVAL</b>		
<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>DATE</b>