

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00480 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Place Services Growth, Planning & Climate	Lead Officer Name:	Emily Brown
		Team:	Energy and Climate Change Team
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Proposal:	Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (Strategy & Delivery Plan)	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	No	Yes	No	No
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	No	Yes	Yes	No
Other, please specify:				

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	
31/12/2028	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies will provide a long term strategic framework for the decarbonisation of heat, and the improvement of energy efficiency within buildings across the Falkirk Local Authority area. In turn, resulting in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions occurring from the heating of such buildings.
31/12/2028	Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies will provide an indication of the scale of the challenge for energy efficiency retrofit, in particular support for households where energy efficiency may be a driver of fuel poverty.
31/12/2028	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies will set out at a strategic level what needs to be done to change buildings and relevant local infrastructure over the next 15-20 years to fulfil the Scottish Government's objectives and local priorities relating to heat and energy efficiency in buildings. An examination of core data indicators across the Strategic Zones will be included, structured around building characteristics, energy efficiency, heating fuel type and tenure characteristics.

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	
31/12/2028	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies will form a key part of public engagement surrounding energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation. Targeted awareness and engagement campaigns in prioritised Strategic Zones and Delivery Areas (for both the public and key stakeholders) will be highlighted and acted upon.
31/12/2028	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies will highlight zones within the local authority where heat networks present a potential decarbonisation option. Heat demand density will be considered, including the proximity of large heat demands that could form the basis of a network, and any opportunities or constraints relating to development potential.

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:		
	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.

The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) covers the whole Falkirk Council area and there will be people from the protected characteristics group within this scope. The Delivery sets out a list of actions/ projects that are ongoing or future potential projects to achieve the outcomes of the strategy. Many of these actions such as the flood Callander Park Heat network Extension etc. will require their own EPIA on how it impacts on people from the protected characteristics group. The Delivery is a list of actions and projects that we are aware of going on throughout Falkirk Council alongside potential decarbonisation projects for the future.

An online survey was carried out between June and August 2022 and received 34 responses. Several demographic questions were asked to ensure that the protected characteristic groups were represented. There were some who did not answer these questions, more notably sexual orientation and nationality.

The questionnaire asked a range of questions about energy efficiency. The questionnaire also focused on the environmental impacts of heat, in an attempt to understand the knowledge base of the community. Individuals were asked to indicate whether they had an awareness of the impacts of fossil fuel powered heating systems and whether they understood how their actions could help. The results showed that 94% of people were aware of the impacts of fossil fuels, however 50% of these people were not aware of how their actions could help. 6% of respondents were unaware of the impacts that fossil fuels have on the environment. The questionnaire also asked what tools people would require to assist them in making changes to the energy efficiency of their property. The answer selection included advice, funding and access to information regarding low carbon options, noting that respondents could select more than one answer. The results highlighted that of those who would be willing to change their system, they would like to see access to funding opportunities and advice to assist with this change. This information will then assist in how we tackle our engagement going forward.

A summary of results can be found below:

Tenant Type:

Homeowner – 87%

Social Tenant – 10%

Private Tenant – 3%

Heating Type: (Count)

Gas – 29

Electric – 7

Coal – 1

Cost Efficiency of Heating: (Count)

Efficient – 15

Inefficient – 7

Not sure – 10

Awareness of Fossil fuels on the environment:

I am aware of the impact that fossil fuel (gas & oil) powered heating systems have on the environment and I aware of the actions I can take to help – 44%

I am aware of the impact that fossil fuel powered (gas & oil) heating systems have on the environment, however I am unsure on the actions I can take to help – 50%

I am unaware of the impact that fossil fuel (gas & oil) powered heating systems have on the environment – 6%

Willingness to change heating system:

Yes – 53%

No – 13%

Not sure – 34%

What tools individuals would like to see available to assist wth the change to low carbon heat: (count)

Access to information: 9

Access to Advice: 17

Access to funding: 18

Although there was a low number of responses, there are clear trends within the results. This information will then assist in how we tackle our engagement going forward.

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 mentioned above the LHEES Strategy covers the whole Falkirk Council area and sets out our approach to tackling energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of heat in Falkirk and achieving our climate change obligations. The accompanying LHEES Delivery Plan sets out a number of actions/projects that Falkirk Council will carry out to support the transition low carbon heat and energy efficiency, as an organisation and area wide. There are projects within the Delivery Plan such as the Callander Park Heat network Extension that will require it's own individual EPIA.

The Energy and Climate Change Team attended several community engagement events over 2022 and 2023 to engage with the public surrounding LHEES commitments. We used these events to communicate our 'Decarbonise Falkirk' campaign.

2022 Events: Zetland Park Opening 28th August, Emergency Services Day (Town centre), 10th August, Stunt Bike Day (Stenhousemuir) July.

2023 Events: Stem at Helix on 20th May, Wild Science at Muiravonside on 27th May and Bo'Ness

At the Zetland Park opening day we had over 150 families visit our stall, with numbers at the stunt bike and emergency services day significantly lower at around 50 families per day. At the Helix we had around 75 families visit our stall. These events had attendees with a range of ages, gender and ethnic background. People were, mostly, very supportive on what the Council were trying to achieve on climate change and felt that these actions would lead to a better quality of life through reduced air pollution from switching to EVs/sustainable transport. When discussing energy efficiency people were unsure about what actions they could take and were often uneasy about the prospect of new technology. Many parents highlighted their concern for their children and future grandchildren's future if we do not act. We asked for opinions from young people in attendance what they think we should do to improve energy efficiency, many of them had great ideas about turning lights off and other energy saving techniques. It was evident that children were more educated than the adults in this field.

The Wild Science event seen around 20 families visit the stall, again supportive comments. Nature was more of a feature in these conversations due to the type of event. This and the STEM event were both science events with families in attendance likely engaged with climate change and energy efficiency, so cannot draw a conclusion on this one.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?

Yes

<p>Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?</p>	<p>Best judgement has been used to supplement the LHEES survey results and supplementary evidence from the community engagement events that we attended.</p> <p>In utilising best judgement we have researched equality impact assessments from other local authorities where their strategy is broadly similar to Falkirk's. While attending the monthly LHEES Local authority forum, EPIA is a common subject where we were able to gain findings from other LA's EPIA. Since LHEES is a new strategy it can be difficult to come to conclusions and base decisions on similar or previous strategies, however information sharing with other councils has been helpful.</p> <p>We have also looked at a number of reports to help draw conclusions on impact, one of them being the EPIA for the Local Transport strategy and Active Transport strategy that recently went to Executive.</p> <p>The LHEES Strategy has a series of outcomes and the accompanying Delivery Plan contains actions and projects which will achieve the outcomes of the strategy. For example:</p> <p>Outcome: LHEES will highlight zones within the local authority where heat networks present a potential decarbonisation option. Heat demand density will be considered, including the proximity of large heat demands that could form the basis of a network, and any opportunities or constraints relating to development potential.</p> <p>Action: LHEES work has highlighted zones for potential heat networks, one of these zones has been carried through to the delivery plan to kickstart the Callander park heat network extension project.</p> <p>Many of the actions within the LHEES Delivery Plan, which accompanies the Strategy will have separate EPIAs.</p>
<p>What gaps in data / information were identified?</p>	<p>LHEES requires the use of 'raw' domestic and non-domestic data to complete the building analysis needed for the strategy. Home Analytics data is used for this analysis, however it is known that this data is not always 100% accurate or up to date. Therefore it was necessary to 'top this up' with local knowledge and LA data. In terms of EPIA, there are no gaps in public engagement data at this stage.</p>
<p>Is further research necessary?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>If NO, please state why.</p>	<p>We have utilised best judgement and referred to other LAs for advice.</p>

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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Stakeholders including Transport, Planning, Communications, Community Engagement, Housing, Adult Services, Economic Development, Fairer Falkirk and Children's Services Teams. - External Stakeholders including Registered Social Landlords, Falkirk's Children's and Young Peoples Group, Environmental Organisations, Forth valley College, Community Councils, Businesses and Private Landlords. - General Public 	
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	Two Survey's have been conducted for the Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registered Social Landlord Survey. We received 6 responses (out of 12 contacted) giving a 50% response rate. Questions asked about their objectives, timeline and communication plans relating to energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation. We received a good range of answers helping us tailor further engagement with respective RSLs. -Public Consultation Survey. We conducted a public questionnaire survey in summer 2022, we promoted this via leaflets at a number of events. We received 43 completed questionnaires (out of around 300 leaflets), so only a 14.5% response rate. Questions asked about individuals current heating systems, whether they found then efficient, if they would consider changing to a low carbon heating source and what tools they would like to see from the Council to support them in doing this. We recieved a good range of answers, which followed a clear trend line. Demographic questions were also asked as part of this survey.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	

Public Event	Yes	'Decarbonise Falkirk' is the name of our engagement campaign for Falkirk's Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy. The Energy & Climate Change Team attended four events over July and August 2022 and a further 4 events in June 2023, where we had a banner, games for the children and freebies and leaflets to hand out. The leaflets had information on the Strategy, tips for energy efficiency practices and a link to the questionnaire. We also took this opportunity to speak to the community about energy efficiency discuss the concerns of the public. These events were really successful, although we did not have a large number of respondents to our questionnaire, we spoke to a wide range of people about the topic.
Other: please specify	<p>Online Engagement Tool.</p> <p>As part of the Decarbonise Falkirk Campaign, the team worked with a local company called Crunchy Carrots, to create online engagement tool in the form of an interactive map of Falkirk. the map takes you to a range of stakeholder pages, including Homeowners, Landlords, Private Landlords, Businesses, Schools, Community groups, Energy Providers, housing developers and social landlords. The stakeholder page then provides tailored information, advice and funding opportunities relevant to that stakeholder. The idea behind the tool is to provide engagement on energy efficiency to a vast range of stakeholders at once. The tool is accessible on all devices and has a tool to assist those with colour blindness. The tool has been circulated around all internal and external stakeholders, including schools, Falkirk Children and Young Peoples Group, Businesses, landlords and council tenants.</p>	
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?	Yes	
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		✓		Positive impact from research and action taken on building energy improvements. One aim of the strategy is to support people to understand what actions they can take to become more energy efficient and where they can get financial support. Those over a certain age can often be more susceptible to the cold and therefore be eligible for additional help such as attendance allowance, making them eligible for Cold weather payment and the Home Energy Scotland Warmer Homes Scotland scheme, re-starts October 2023. This can help people lower energy bills through improved energy efficiency and even adding solar panels on the roof to mitigate some of the increased electricity costs.
Disability		✓		Positive impact from research and action taken on building energy improvements. One aim of the strategy is to support people to understand what actions they can take to become more energy efficient and where they can get financial support. Those with certain disabilities can often be eligible for benefits such as DLA or PIP, making them eligible for Cold weather payment and the Home Energy Scotland Warmer Homes Scotland scheme, re-starts October 2023. This can help people lower energy bills through improved energy efficiency and even adding solar panels on the roof to mitigate some of the increased electricity costs. A comment from the online survey highlighted the need for affordable and reliable warmth for those with certain disabilities.
Sex	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.

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:

				minority ethnic groups are twice as likely to experience poverty as the majority ethnic population. It is therefore, likely that minority ethnic groups in Scotland are also more likely to be in fuel poverty. The LHEES has a focus on reducing fuel poverty through improved energy efficiency and decarbonisation, and seeks to support individuals to improve energy efficiency so that it is no longer a driver of fuel poverty.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief				No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Sexual Orientation	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Transgender	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Poverty		✓		The Scottish Government's strategy for tackling fuel poverty highlights that the majority of households that are in fuel poverty are on a low income. As identified above those in receipt of certain benefits may be eligible for grant support through Home Energy Scotland's Warmer Home Scotland programme, this is paused for applications now but re-starting October 2023. This grant can help with energy efficiency improvements and the installation of renewable technology. The strategy aims to raise awareness of what households can do and where they can get support through linking to our Decarbonise Falkirk website.
Care Experienced	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.	✓			No strong evidence to identify an advantage or disadvantage to this group.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	<p>A number of risks have been identified with delivering the outcomes of this strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Low income households will find it difficult to afford costs of making energy related improvements to their homes. Awareness raising will be key to this as those in receipt of certain benefits can get grant support to help with energy efficiency etc. This is the case for those that privately rent their homes as well as homeowners. We will also make those who are not in receipt of benefits where they can access funding and advice. -The elderly, disabled and low income households are less likely to be able to access our online information of where to get support on improving energy efficiency. Finding alternatives to ensure that everyone is aware of what can be done and where to seek support is key. Libraries in Falkirk have been made aware of our engagement tool and are able to assist people on its use and abilities. 			

	Evidence of Due Regard
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	Information and support will be provided to communities to help them understand what part they can play in improving the energy efficiency of their home and how to decarbonise their heating system. Our engagement tool has been through checks to ensure it is available on all devices and is accessible to those with colour blindness etc. The LHEES Strategy and Delivery Plan will be provided in other formats to support people for example who require screen readers.
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	Information and support will be provided to communities to help them understand what part they can play in improving the energy efficiency of their home and how to decarbonise their heating system. Our engagement tool has been through checks to ensure it is available on all devices and is accessible to those with colour blindness etc. Additionally, it has been in ensured that the information available on this tool encompasses all stakeholders, to ensure equality. The LHEES Strategy and Delivery Plan will be provided in other formats to support people for example who require screen readers.
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):	Information and support will be provided to communities to help them understand what part they can play in improving the energy efficiency of their home and how to decarbonise their heating system. Our engagement tool has been through checks to ensure it is available on all devices and is accessible to those with colour blindness etc. Additionally, it has been in ensured that the information available on this tool encompasses all stakeholders, to ensure equality. We are ware that this is a complex topic that can be daunting for many and we wish to make this as accessible as possible, providing as much support as possible. The LHEES Strategy and Delivery Plan will be provided in other formats to support people for example who require screen readers.

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	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies focus on decarbonising heat and improving the energy efficiency of buildings, this will include businesses. Businesses will be encouraged to improve the energy efficiency of their properties and undertake energy efficient practices. This will be at businesses best interest, due to rising energy costs, energy efficient practices will help businesses keep costs down.
Councils	Yes	All councils must publish their Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (Strategy & Delivery Plan) by 31st December 2023. There has been a degree of knowledge sharing between Local Authorities.
Education Sector	Yes	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies focus on decarbonising heat and improving the energy efficiency of buildings, this will include Education buildings such as schools and nursery's. The energy efficiency of educational buildings, including how they are heated is the responsibility of the Council. However, education centre staff and students will be encouraged to undertake energy efficient practices.
Fire	Yes	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies focus on decarbonising heat and improving the energy efficiency of buildings, this will include Fire buildings. The energy efficiency of these buildings, including how they are heated is the responsibility of the Council. However, Fire staff will be encouraged to undertake energy efficient practices.
NHS	Yes	Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies focus on decarbonising heat and improving the energy efficiency of buildings, this will include NHS buildings. The energy efficiency of some of these HSCP these buildings, including how they are heated is the responsibility of the Council. However, NHS staff will be encouraged to undertake energy efficient practices.
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The integration joint board are under council control and therefore will be impacted by the Local heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies. More specifically, through improving the energy efficiency of their buildings.
Police	Yes	As a public body the Police may look to Falkirk Council's strategy to inform their own energy efficiency practices.
Third Sector	Yes	The third sector are likely looking at what Public bodies are doing to tackle climate change and perhaps looking for support on their own climate change strategy. Additionally, third sector organisations have been a support mechanism for our community engagement.

Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.

Energy Suppliers - Low carbon heating is likely to involve an increased use of heat pumps, electricity suppliers must be aware of this increase in electricity use.
Housing Developers - As of 2024 regulation states that new homes must NOT have gas boilers installed and low carbon heating must be used as an alternative.

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
Accessing Information	Young and Elderly, disabled, low income households	Ensure that the strategy documents are accessible to everyone. Ensure that engagement tools are also accessible to everyone and provide links to funding and support that cover all protected characteristic groups.	Emily Brown		
Installing Energy Efficiency Measures	Low income, ethnic minorities	Ensure that the strategy and engagement tools are clear on what can be done to improve energy efficiency and links to where they can get financial support to help them.	Emily Brown		

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 ?	Executive 17th October 2023

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	Yes	Achieving the outcomes of the LHEES Strategy and Delivery Plan is not anticipated to disadvantage any particular type of protected characteristic. The benefits of the strategy and delivery plan and will endeavour to be positive.
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	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:	<i>Emily Brown</i>	Date:	17/08/2023
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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
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	Extensive consultation with public undertaken through online surveys and a number of community events. Research undertaken of both Scottish Government data/guidance and other impact assessments undertaken by other Local Authorities.	
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: Low potential impacts identified with appropriate mitigations.

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	Low impact. The strategy has been informed and guidance by the outcomes of extensive public engagement and wider research. A number of positive impacts have been identified resulting from delivery of the LHEES Delivery Plan. There is no strong evidence to support significant negative impacts on any protected characteristic groups. Proportionate mitigating actions have been agreed for the low potential impacts that have been identified.

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:			
Signature:	<i>Malcolm Bennie</i>	Date:	08/09/2023