

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Policy Screening Report

under

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998

September 2024

Equality Scheme Policy Screening Report

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has developed a number of new policies. In complying with the Council's Equality Scheme Duties, these policies have been screened for any possible adverse impact that they may have under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998. The nine groups are:

Age; Marital status; Women (including girls) and Men (including boys); Persons with a disability and Persons without; Persons with dependants and Persons without; Political Opinion; Racial Group; Religious belief; and Sexual Orientation.

The policies have been screened against the questions below and have been ranked 1,2 or 3

1	'screened in' for equality impact assessment, including date of EQIA
2	'screened out' with mitigation
3	'screened out' without mitigation

Screening Questions

- A What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- B Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- C To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- D Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

The attached schedule is being published for consultees information. Comments may be submitted in writing, by telephone, e-mail, or in person and should be forwarded to the address below.

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This document is available in alternative formats on request

Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998 – Policy Screening Exercise

Policies have been assessed against the four screening questions and a ranking allocated. For each of the policies detailed below, a more comprehensive ‘screening’ document is available on the Council website or on request. Copies can be found at <https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/policies/> The report includes published screening for the period March 2024 to August 2024.

Policy/Procedure	Policy/Procedure Aims	Ranking/ Screening Decision
Charity Music Concert – Lurgan Park	The Council granted permission for a local music group to organise and host a charity music concert in Lurgan Park on Saturday 27 July, 4-9pm. It is likely that this event would appeal to a wide range of people within the community.	3
Corporate Plan	<p>The Corporate Plan is a high-level document which outlines the Council’s priorities for the period 2023-2027. It reflects how we as an organisation commit to the long-term outcomes identified in our Community Planning Process, as well as the work we will do to ensure we continue to provide high quality services.</p> <p>It has been developed to meet the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories.</p> <p>There are a number of initiatives, plans, strategies and programmes that will have a positive impact on a range of section 75 categories. These include for example the Play Strategy, the Good Relations Action Plan and events and programmes organised for the community. However, it will be</p>	2

	<p>important as part of the mitigation to screen all strategies, plans, projects, services detailed in the Council's departmental business plans in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity and good relations is fully considered. This will be particularly important where the Council faces budget reductions which may lead to a change in service provision.</p>	
<p>Disability Action Plan</p>	<p>Equality screening of the proposed Disability Action Plan concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment was not necessary. This is because the plan is actively intended to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people and should only have positive impacts. No negative impacts have been identified for any equality group.</p> <p>However, efforts will be made to ensure that the outworking of the Plan is monitored so that disabled people with different personal characteristics benefit equitably from the measures it proposes.</p> <p>The plan needs to be promoted widely, including to those disabled people who do not have English as a first language and to disabled people who face other barriers in accessing information about Council provision or barriers to participation. It can be made available in alternative languages and formats on request.</p> <p>As a result of the feedback received regarding the importance of consultation and engagement a further action has been added to the plan under the theme of Partnership Working and it is to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event in</p>	<p>2</p>

	partnership with AccessAble. This will provide us with the opportunity to engage with the public as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.	
Dog Control Enforcement Policy	This policy contains a range of measures in the form of offences and powers regarding dog control activities. This is an enforcement policy and is reflective of a number of relevant guidance documents such as the Regulators Code, Code for Prosecutors, etc., which sets out the principles of enforcement which will be followed. There should be a positive impact on Disabled People who have assistance dogs with the enforcement of this policy, in protecting their safety and that of their dogs.	3
Equality Action Plan	<p>Equality screening of the draft Equality Action Plan concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment was not necessary. This is because the draft plan is actively intended to promote equality of opportunity for the section 75 categories and should only have positive impacts. No negative impacts have been identified for any equality category.</p> <p>However, efforts will be made to ensure that the outworking of the Plan is monitored so that we can assess the effectiveness of the actions proposed.</p> <p>The plan needs to be promoted widely, including to those who do not have English as a first language and to those who face other barriers in accessing information about Council provision or barriers to participation. It can be made available in alternative formats on request.</p>	2

	<p>Support was given to our proposed actions with all of the actions receiving 71% to 94% support.</p> <p>Following further review by officers the first action within the Plan which relates to section 75 monitoring has been amended.</p>	
FE McWilliams Refurbishment	<p>The FE McWilliam Gallery and Studio Extension and refurbishment works are being carried out following the successful bid for funding to the Round 2 Levelling Up Fund. The renovations will see the extension of exhibition space to create a more open and engaging area to host events as well as multi-use space to enable a diverse range of educational programmes. This additional space will lead to increased visitor capacity and enhance the facility as an internationally renowned cultural space.</p> <p>The redevelopment will enhance the existing facility making it more accessible ensuring the needs of all users are catered for. Section 75 groups have been engaged as part of the consultation and this has informed the design stage. They have offered a number of suggestions around signage and staff training which is being considered by Council. The design has been undertaken by experienced designers and consideration given to accessibility of the facility and movement internally.</p>	3
General Enforcement Policy	<p>The purpose of this policy is to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement, which improve regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens on business and others subject to regulation.</p> <p>This is a technical policy which sets out the principles of enforcement which will be followed. There is no impact on</p>	3

	equality of opportunity or good relations.	
Legal Fees Policy	<p>This Policy relates to charging for the Legal Service's Team's time and reasonable expenses incurred in relation to the following types of transactions involving third parties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land 2. Property 3. Planning Agreements <p>However, where the third party is a charity, community group or not for profit entity no fee will be charged.</p> <p>The purpose of this Policy is to set out the Council's approach to charging fees to third parties and to provide a list of the applicable fees to be applied. The re-charging of legal fees is to assist with protecting departmental budgets and the rate payer base. The policy has no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.</p>	3
Northern Ireland Centenary Stones	<p>In December 2020, Members agreed the NI 2021 Centenary programme and in 2021 a NI Centenary Programme was delivered which commemorated 100 years of Northern Ireland. The proposed programme of events was subject to an equality screening exercise. Members subsequently agreed to the inclusion of commemorative centenary stones to be installed at</p>	2

various locations across the borough. A screening exercise accompanied the Committee report in September 2023 to support the Officer recommendation to have commemorative stones placed in twelve council owned parks and three Council Civic Buildings-

- The Palace Demesne
- Banbridge Civic Centre
- Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre.

Members approved a different option which included the three civic buildings and twelve other locations on sites with a mix of land ownership. They were advised a further screening exercise would be required if these additional locations were agreed.

The proposed locations are:

- Lurgan
- Portadown
- Dromore
- Tandragee
- Rathfriland
- Donaghcloney
- Waringstown
- Richhill

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loughgall • Magheralin • Gilford • Dollingstown <p>In December 2023 commemorative stones were placed at the civic buildings in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon. In order to determine the equality and good relations impact of these remaining locations a survey was conducted on the Council’s Consultation Hub. It commenced on 8 January 2024 and closed on 1 March 2024 and a range of views were expressed.</p> <p>The Council is mindful of the need to sensitively consider the location of the centenary stones and the duty to promote equality and good relations.</p>	
Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025	<p>Under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (Part 12) Council is required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (the Plan) and to consult on draft performance improvement objectives which makes up the main part of the Plan required to be published by 30 June 2024.</p> <p>The Performance Improvement Plan is directly informed by ongoing work with Council departments aligned to the Draft Corporate Plan 2024-25.</p> <p>The 5 draft Performance Improvement Objectives are:</p> <p>PIO 1: We will reduce the average number of days’ sickness</p>	3

	<p>absence lost per employee.</p> <p>PIO 2: We will improve the processing times for planning applications.</p> <p>PIO 3: We will reduce Council’s environmental impact through the implementation of the Net Zero Roadmap Analysis and associated Action plan.</p> <p>PIO 4: We will continue to improve Communications with our customers on Waste management.</p> <p>PIO 5: We will improve Communications with our customers on Council services and responsibilities.</p> <p>The development of our annual Performance Improvement Plan and these draft objectives is central to assuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. E.g. PI01 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability, for example by offering additional support/advice to staff including Health & Wellbeing initiatives. PIO4 and PIO5 relates to communications, and this has the potential to positively impact on disability, where customers will have improved accessible information on council services.</p>	
<p>Remote Meetings Protocol</p>	<p>This is an amended Policy. The Policy outlines the practical handling arrangements for the holding of remote meetings at the Council. The Remote Meetings Protocol has been developed in response to The Local Government (Remote Meetings)</p>	<p>3</p>

	<p>Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.</p> <p>Having the Remote Meetings Protocol enables the Council to have hybrid meetings which will particularly benefit those with dependants and those with caring responsibilities either for older people or young children as well as those with disabilities to participate in all meetings as required.</p>	
<p>Smoking Policy</p>	<p>The aim of this policy is to detail the operating principles for employees and visitors as to the Council's requirements to smoking on its premises, including vehicles owned or leased by the council, other vehicles used for Council business, the use of vaporisers ('vapes') and Nicotine Containing Products (NCP's) which replicate smoking behaviour, such as 'electronic cigarettes'.</p> <p>This Policy ensures that smokers and non-smokers have a clear understanding of their rights and obligations and comply with the Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which came into effect on 30th April 2007. It is intended to promote a safe and healthy environment for Council employees and visitors and support employees who wish to give up smoking.</p> <p>It has no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.</p>	<p>3</p>

<p>Street Trading Policy & Procedure</p>	<p>The purpose of this policy and procedural document is to provide guidance on matters that should be considered by the Council when deciding whether or not to grant or renew a Street Trading Licence or Temporary Licence, or to vary or revoke an existing Licence, and also when designating locations for Stationary trading purposes. All relevant statutory bodies will be consulted prior to designating locations that might permit stationary street trading and prior to the issuing of all Street Trading and Temporary Licences.</p> <p>This is a technical policy which implements legislative requirements.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Tak£500+ Participatory Budgeting Project 2023</p>	<p>The Tak£500+ project aims to ensure that all Section 75 groups are able to contribute to decisions that will benefit the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and the people who live in it.</p> <p>The process is collaborative, it builds relationships and connections and will help foster links between groups.</p> <p>The project will require an intensive promotion exercise to reach small groups from across the borough. It will be required to draw on the reach of all our community planning partners including our Community and Voluntary Sector Panel and Elected Members to encourage groups to take part.</p> <p>The application form is short and straightforward with applicants providing details on their proposal and it will be checked against a predetermined criteria eg: Safe, legal, feasible, deliverable.</p>	<p>2</p>

Advice and clarification on applications will be provided to help groups to move through the next stage.

Mitigations include:

Age

- Children and young people aged 8 years and over can propose projects and vote
- Information sent to schools and youth services
- Age Friendly Officer is a member of the PB WG, the project is promoted through the Age Friendly Alliance and ABC Seniors Network
- Linking Generations NI is a member of the PB Working Group
- Play Development Worker also a member of the working group
- Targeted bespoke information session with minority ethnic communities and with older people.

Disability

- Online information event as well as in room events
- Guide to Accessible events will be used to plan events

Dependents

- Online information event during school hours
- Voting events will be child friendly and on Saturdays

Racial Group

- Bespoke targeted information sessions will be developed and delivered to support groups to apply

- Interpretation services will be made available if required.

Additional support

The PB WG members' phone numbers have been included on promotional material so that they can provide additional support with applications if necessary.

Community Engagement Standards – Inclusion & Support

The community planning partnership has adopted the Scottish Community Engagement Standards which include standards on inclusion and support. The PB WG will evaluate how inclusive the project is and whether adequate support was provided for everyone to be able to take part. The PB WG assessed themselves as scoring 5/5 for inclusion and 5/5 for support for the previous PB project Tak£500+.

PB Charter for Northern Ireland – Inclusive and Supported

The community planning partnership has adopted the PB Charter for Northern Ireland the PB working group will evaluate how inclusive and supported the project was. For the previous Project the PB working group assessed themselves as scoring 4/5 for being inclusive and 4.5/5 for supported.