

Appendix 1 Equality Screening Form

Policy Scoping

Policy Titles: (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol & the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings)

Brief Description of Policy (please attach copy if available). Please state if it is a new, existing or amended policy.

These are amended Policies. The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol was previously titled 'Supplementary Standing Orders regulating the proceedings of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council in holding remote meetings'. The Policies outline the practical handling arrangements for the holding of remote meetings at the Council.

Intended aims/outcomes. What is the policy trying to achieve?

The Policies outline the practical handling arrangements for the holding of remote meetings at the Council to help Members, Officers and the public.

Policy Framework

Has the policy been developed in response to statutory requirements, legal advice or on the basis of any other professional advice? Does this affect the discretion available to The Council to amend the policy?

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings have been developed in response to The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, please outline.

The holding of hybrid meetings will benefit those with dependants and those with caring responsibilities as well as those with disabilities who may find it difficult to attend meetings in person.

Who initiated or wrote the policy (if The Council decision, please state). Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

Who initiated or wrote the policy?	Legal, Governance and Monitoring Officer
Who is responsible for implementation?	The Council

Are there any factors which might contribute to or detract from the implementation of the policy (e.g. financial, legislative, other)?

No

Main stakeholders in relation to the policy

Please list main stakeholders affected by the policy (e.g. staff, customers, other statutory bodies, community or voluntary sector, private sector)

Elected Members, Officers, members of the public

Are there any other policies with a bearing on this policy? If so, please identify them and how they impact on this policy.

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings have been developed in response to The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Available Evidence

The Council should ensure that its screening decisions are informed by relevant data. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories. For up to date [S75 Borough Statistics](#)

Section 75 category	Evidence
Religious belief	The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings have been developed in response to The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.
Political opinion	
Racial group	
Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	During the COVID-19 Pandemic the Council operated meetings remotely and it ensured a range of section 75 categories could continue to participate.
	Hybrid meetings will provide more flexibility and allow those with dependants and those with caring responsibilities either for older people or young children as

	<p>well as those with disabilities to participate in all meetings as required.</p> <p>The Department for Communities previously carried out a public call for evidence on remote meetings (from December 2021 to February 2022). The Council has been informed (by the Department) that the responses received indicated general support for the arrangements made by the legislation previously in place for remote meetings and for permanent provision on remote meetings being made.</p>
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Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information gathered above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories in relation to this particular policy/decision?

Section 75 category	Needs, experiences and priorities
Religious belief	N/A
Political opinion	N/A
Racial group	N/A
Age	Older people that have acquired a disability may find it more difficult to attend all meetings in person. Hybrid meetings will provide greater flexibility.
Marital status	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A
Men and women generally	N/A
Disability	Those with disabilities may find it more difficult to attend all meetings in person. Hybrid meetings will provide greater flexibility.
Dependants	Those with dependants and those with caring responsibilities either for older people or young children will have the choice of attending some meetings remotely where it may be difficult for them to attend all meetings in person.

Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 categories?

Category	Policy Impact	Level of impact (Major/minor/none)
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None
Age	Older people that have acquired a disability will have the choice of attending some meetings remotely if their disability makes it more difficult for them to attend all meetings in person.	Positive minor

Marital status	None	None
Sexual orientation	None	None
Men and women generally	None	None
Disability	Those with disabilities will have the choice of attending some meetings remotely if their disability makes it more difficult for them to attend all meetings in person.	Positive minor
Dependants	Those with dependants and those with caring responsibilities either for older people or young children will have the choice of attending some meetings remotely where it may be difficult for them to attend all meetings in person.	Positive minor

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		<p>The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings have been developed in response to The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.</p> <p>They will provide flexibility in how Members, Officers and the public access meetings. They 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>
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		

Disability		
Dependants		

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?

Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact (major/minor/none)
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No

Multiple Identity

Generally speaking, people fall into more than one Section 75 category (for example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; young lesbian, gay and bisexual people). Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant s75 categories concerned.

This Policy will have a positive impact on older disabled people

Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

Is there an opportunity for the policy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

As stated above the Policies will provide greater flexibility for those with disabilities who find it difficult to attend every meeting in person.

Is there an opportunity for the policy to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

As stated above the Policies will provide greater flexibility for those with disabilities who find it difficult to attend every meeting in person.

Screening Decision

A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY

Please identify reasons for this below

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings have been developed in response to The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Having the Protocols in place 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.

B: MINOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AS IMPACT CAN BE ELIMINATED OR MITIGATED

Where the impact is likely to be minor, you should consider if the policy can be mitigated, or an alternative policy introduced. If so, an EQIA may not be considered necessary. You must indicate the reasons for this decision below, together with details of measures to mitigate the adverse impact or the alternative policy proposed.

C: MAJOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA REQUIRED

If the decision is to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

Timetabling and Prioritising

If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment, please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3 with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Policy Criterion

- Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations
- Social need
- Effect on people’s daily lives

Rating (1-3)

- Choose an item.*
- Choose an item.*
- Choose an item.*

The total rating score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the Council in timetabling its EQIAs.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? If yes, please give details.

Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help the authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy. It is recommended that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced to mitigate adverse impact, monitoring be undertaken on a broader basis to identify any impact (positive or adverse).


Further information on monitoring is available in the Equality Commission’s guidance on monitoring (www.equalityni.org).

Identify how the impact of the policy is to be monitored

The Policies will be subject to review by the Monitoring Office.

Approval and Authorisation

A copy of the screening form for each policy screened should be signed off by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The screening recommendation should be reported to the relevant Committee/The Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Kate McCusker	Legal, Governance and Monitoring Officer	30/06/2024
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date
	Chief Executive	Click or tap to enter a date. 10th September 2024

Please forward a copy of the completed policy and form to:

Equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

who will ensure these are made available on the Council’s website.

The above officer is also responsible for issuing reports on a quarterly basis on those policies “screened out for EQIA”. This allows stakeholders who disagree with this recommendation to submit their views. In the event of any stakeholder disagreeing with the decision to screen out any policy, the screening exercise will be reviewed.

Appendix 2 Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

SECTION 1

Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings

1C Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to:

Developing a *Choose an item.*

Adopting a *Choose an item.*

Implementing a *Choose an item.*

Revising a **Policy**

Designing a Public Service

Delivering a Public Service

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings.

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

The Policies outline the practical handling arrangements for the holding of remote meetings at the Council to help Members, Officers and the public.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

- Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition)
- Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below)
- A definition of 'rural' is not applicable

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

SECTION 2

Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes No If response is No go to 2E

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Remote Meetings Protocol and the Protocol for Remote Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meetings will enable members, officers and the public to participate in hybrid Council meetings. However, slower broadband speeds in rural areas may mean that those living in rural areas may find it more difficult to connect. However, where there is adequate broadband connection, members, officers and the public will be able to access meetings more easily.

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

Slower broadband speeds in rural areas may mean that those living in rural areas may find it more difficult to connect. However, members, officers and the public have the choice of attending the meetings in person. There are the environmental and cost benefits of reduced travel and the ability of rural participants to access meetings more easily.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

- Rural Businesses
- Rural Tourism
- Rural Housing
- Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas
- Education or Training in Rural Areas
- Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas
- Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas
- Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas
- Poverty in Rural Areas
- Deprivation in Rural Areas
- Rural Crime or Community Safety
- Rural Development
- Agri-Environment
- Other (Please state)

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

SECTION 3

Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes No If response is No go to 3E

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

- Consultation with Rural Stakeholders
- Consultation with Other organisations
- Published Statistics
- Research Papers
- Surveys or Questionnaires
- Other Publications
- Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below)

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

The Department for Communities previously carried out a public call for evidence on remote meetings (from December 2021 to February 2022). The Council has been informed (by the Department) that the responses received indicated general support for the arrangements made by the legislation previously in place for remote meetings and

for permanent provision on remote meetings being made.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

Access to broadband in rural areas

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

SECTION 4
Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

The ability to access Council meetings remotely

SECTION 5
Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes No If response is No go to 5C

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

Members, officers and residents living in rural areas will benefit from being able to access meetings online.

If the response to Section 5A was YES go to 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT

been influenced by the rural needs identified.

SECTION 6

Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained, and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by: (Kate McCusker)

Position: (Monitoring Officer)

Department / Directorate: (Monitoring Office)

Signature: *Kate mccusker*

Date: 30/06/2024

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by: (Roger Wilson)

Position: (Chief Executive)

Department / Directorate: (Chief Executive)

Signature: *R Wilson*

Date: 10th September 2024