

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Policy Screening Report

under

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998

March 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 December 2023 to February 2024.

Policy/Procedure	Policy/Procedure Aims	Ranking/ Screening Decision
Banbridge Place Plan	<p>The Banbridge Place Plan is a new locality plan for Banbridge. Its aim is to develop a new integrated local plan for the town, incorporating and updating any existing strategies and policies for the town. The plan identifies a series of strategically aligned outcomes and actions for taking forward in the town to help build sustainability, health, connectivity and engagement by residents.</p> <p>The new plan contains 5 key outcomes and 56 actions and is built on a diverse engagement process throughout its development.</p> <p>The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and employment • Accessibility of walking routes • Traffic dominance within town centre <p>These are reflected in the actions in the plan and the</p>	2

	<p>partnership commits to ongoing dialogue with S75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.</p> <p>Minor impact in relation to disability and accessibility will be addressed within the Banbridge Place Plan via actions AHL3, SP1, SP2, SP6, LH12, HSI3</p> <p>Play actions will be improved via AHL2, LH5</p> <p>Action HSI9 focuses on the employability and skills agenda to meet the future needs of the labour market.</p>	
Clean Neighbourhoods Enforcement Policy	<p>This policy contains a range of measures in the form of offences and powers to improve the quality of the local environments using the measures outlined in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The policy covers areas such as litter, fly-posting and graffiti, dogs, noise, statutory nuisance, nuisance alleyways, abandoned and nuisance vehicles as well as abandoned shopping trolleys etc.</p> <p>This is a technical policy which sets out the principles of enforcement which will be followed. 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>	3
Community Facility Charges	<p>This is a facility charges booklet reflecting the proposed increase for the 24/25 calendar year. The new facility charges will reflect the 50p increase in hourly room hire as well as the clarification regarding the concession rate criteria which now requires all eligible groups to be constituted with appropriate</p>	2

	<p>insurances in place.</p> <p>This policy will have a minor impact on all user groups of our facilities due to a small increase in facility charges. These charges are necessary due to increased cost to provide the service but still remain below the inflation rates.</p> <p>The concession rates apply to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Citizens Groups (over 60s) • Parent and Toddler Groups • Disability Groups • Youth Groups <p>The above section 75 groups will be able to avail of reduced room hire rates, so long as the groups meet the criteria of having a constitution and appropriate insurance in place.</p> <p><u>Mitigations</u> To mitigate the impact, we will communicate with user groups and stakeholders over the period of 3 months prior to the change in rate.</p>	
Corporate Complaints Policy	<p>This is the revised Complaints Policy developed to align with <i>NIPSO Model Complaint Handling Procedure for Government Bodies June 2023 (MCHP)</i>.</p> <p>This policy is to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. It is not likely to have a negative impact</p>	2

	<p>on any of the Section 75 categories.</p> <p>Council's Staff Guidance will make it clear complaints may be made verbally or in writing, including face to face, by telephone, letter, email or via councillor. Council staff will be as flexible as possible to remove any barriers to customers submitting complaints.</p> <p>Alternative formats will be available upon request if required. Staff assistance will also be available where required.</p>	
Efficiency Plan	<p>A robust programme to drive financial efficiency across the organisation is necessary to support the ongoing management of Council finances, in order to continue to meet our corporate requirements in line with the Local Government (Finance) Act and CIPFA guidance. The Council is facing significant cost pressures, most notably in relation to national pay arrangements, continued cuts to central Government funding and other inflationary pressures, for example in relation to a number of contracts. It is therefore necessary to deliver a significant efficiency programme that reduces the impact upon the ratepayer while protecting Council's reserves position for 2024/25.</p> <p>The programme is seeking to reduce Council spend and maximise income to maintain sustainable Council budgets that reduce the impact on rate payers.</p> <p>Individual directorates have identified areas where savings can be made and income can be maximised and as part of this process section 75 impacts have been considered. For the vast</p>	3

	<p>majority of service areas impacts have not been identified. However, minor impacts were identified for the categories of age, disability and dependants for proposed increases in community facility charges, so a separate screening exercise was conducted.</p> <p>This community facility charges will have a minor impact on all user groups of our facilities due to a small increase in facility charges. These charges are necessary due to increased cost to provide the service but still remain below the inflation rates.</p> <p>The concession rates apply to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Citizens Groups (over 60s) • Parent and Toddler Groups • Disability Groups • Youth Groups <p>The above section 75 groups will be able to avail of reduced room hire rates, so long as the groups meet the criteria of having a constitution and appropriate insurance in place.</p>	
Environmental Health Fees Policy	<p>This is an existing policy dealing with the legislative and guiding principles to be applied in relation to the setting of discretionary fees. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on matters that should be considered when deciding discretionary fees to ensure a consistent approach which includes all relevant variable factors within the final charge.</p> <p>This is a technical document which implements legislative</p>	3

	requirements.	
Fee Setting of a Street Trading Policy & Procedure	<p>This policy relates to the setting of discretionary level of fees under the Street Trading Act (NI) 2011 by Council considering the factors which will provide the Council with a means of covering its costs in relation to the administration of the legislation. The aim of this document is to ensure that the setting of discretionary fees for street trading licences under The Street Trading Act (NI) 2001 is carried out in a consistent manner and includes all relevant factors within the charge.</p> <p>This is a technical document which implements legislative requirements.</p>	3
Food Sampling	<p>This policy aims to provide a template for a consistent and effective approach to food sampling. It is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice to prepare a Food sampling Policy. The policy is reflective of a number of relevant guidance documents issued by the Food Standards Agency.</p> <p>This is a technical policy which provides guidance on development of sampling programmes as part of the Council food Service Plan. 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>	3

<p>Light Up for Israel and book of condolence for all the innocent victims in the Middle East</p>	<p>The Lord Mayor called a special Council meeting on the 16 October 2023. There was a decision taken at this meeting which was subsequently “called in” and following the receipt of legal advice was reconsidered by Council at its meeting on 27 November 2023 and approved. It included the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The three main Civic Buildings are lit up white and blue as soon as practical, for a seven day period, as an expression of support and sign of solidarity with Israel following the Hamas terror attacks on Saturday 7 October. 2. A Book of Condolence is opened by the Lord Mayor which would afford an opportunity to those within the wider community to pay tribute to all the innocent victims in the Middle East at this time. <p>The Council is mindful of its duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between those of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.</p> <p>The Council is also aware of the sensitivities in the community and that tensions have arisen in some parts of the UK.</p> <p>The two limbs of the decision are distinct. The key distinctions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first limb of the decision relates to an attack, carried out by Hamas, which is a proscribed organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000, on Israel on the 7 October 2023. The decision is an expression of support and sign of 	<p>2</p>
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	<p>solidarity with Israel in that specific and narrow context. There is no wider support expressed in the first limb of the decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second limb of the decision is a Book of Condolence for all people who have suffered in the Middle East and it is not limited to any particular individual or any particular group of society. <p>Based on the evidence and reasoning set out above and the two limbs of the decision the impact [of the decision] will be minor and no mitigations are proposed.</p>	
Test Purchasing	<p>This policy sets out the Council's commitment to the use of test purchasing as a way of ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, reducing the level of offending in relation to the sale, use or hire of age restricted products and fulfilment of Council's statutory duty.</p> <p>This is a technical document which implements legislative requirements.</p>	3