

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Policy Screening Report

under

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998

September 2025

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. The report includes published screening for the period April 2025 to August 2025.

Policy/Procedure	Policy/Procedure Aims	Ranking/ Screening Decision
Conflict of Interest Policy	<p>The main aim of this policy is to promote high standards in public life and especially to follow the key characteristics of propriety as defined in the ‘Seven Principles of Public Life’ known as the Nolan Principles. These seven principles underpinning public life are: Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Honesty and Leadership.</p> <p>This policy is aligned to the Code of Conduct guidelines for Local Government (revised in 2020/2021). It is to ensure that conflicts of interest are identified and managed in a way that safeguards the integrity of staff and maximises public confidence in the Council’s ability to deliver public services properly.</p> <p>This 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
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	<p>The Council is committed to providing and promoting equality of opportunity, good relations and respect for diversity for all i.e. all persons will be afforded equality of opportunity with regard to recruitment and selection, training, promotion etc. being purely</p>	3

	<p>based on merit and ability. It seeks to be a place where all employees feel safe and welcome regardless of their identity or background and is opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion to employees and applicants for employment. • Define responsibility and the actions needed to ensure a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion. <p>We are currently engaged in a People & Culture Improvement Programme (Our People Programme) and have identified Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as one of the key workstreams of this programme.</p> <p>We would foresee that in the promotion of this policy there is likely to be a positive impact on equality, diversity and inclusion generally.</p>	
<p>Financial Regulations</p>	<p>This policy provides guidance and controls for officers across Council regarding financial management.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to set out the financial procedure rules of the Council having due regard to the overall regulatory framework pertaining to Local Authorities within Northern Ireland, including the CIPFA Financial Management Code as well as the organisation's own approach to financial management.</p> <p>This is a technical policy with no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people</p>	<p>3</p>

	within the equality and good relations categories.	
Hybrid Working Procedure	<p>This is a new procedure which aims to set out the ways in which hybrid working will be managed by the Council.</p> <p>This procedure provides the opportunity for staff to work more flexibly and potentially create a better work/life balance and for some this may improve health and wellbeing.</p> <p>It can benefit a range of section 75 categories including disabled staff and staff with caring responsibilities where a commute to the office everyday may act as a barrier to participation in employment.</p> <p>As stated in the procedure it is important that there are regular check-ins so that staff do not feel isolated, and productivity is not negatively impacted by the arrangement. This may be more likely for new employees.</p> <p>It is important that line managers understand the potential wellbeing implications of hybrid working and they have appropriate wellbeing conversations. The Council has a wellbeing hub which includes a range of policies and support services for staff.</p>	3
Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26	Each year the Council is required under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 (Part 12) to develop a Performance Improvement Plan (the Plan). This legislation provides a framework from which the Plan for 2025/26 is developed to support continuous improvement in the delivery of our services. The draft performance improvement objectives subject of this screening will	3

form the main part of the plan, and they have been aligned with the Borough Community Plan and support our Corporate Plan.

The 4 Performance Improvement Objectives are:

PIO 1: We will reduce the average number of days' sickness absence lost per employee.

PIO 2: We will reduce Council's environmental impact through the development and implementation of a Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.

PIO 3: We will improve our Waste Management Services through the implementation of technological solutions and continued communication.

PIO 4: We will improve Communications with our customers on Council services and responsibilities.

An 8-week consultation was conducted between 6 February and 3 April 2025 and section 75 consultees were advised of the consultation.

The development of our annual Performance Improvement Plan and these draft objectives is central to ensuring 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

	<p>categories. E.g. PIO1 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 relates to communications, and this has the potential to positively impact on disability, where customers will have improved accessible information on council services. Improvements in communications is also likely to also be a positive impact for the 6.8% of our Borough who don't have English as their first language.</p>	
<p>Tak£500 Participatory Budgeting</p>	<p>The Tak£500+ project aims to ensure that all Section 75 groups can 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 requires an intensive promotional exercise to reach small groups from across the borough. It draws 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 is checked against a predetermined criteria e.g.: Safe, legal, feasible, deliverable.</p> <p>Advice and clarification on applications is provided to help groups to move through the next stage.</p>	<p>2</p>

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 Participatory Budgeting Working Group (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 youth services

Disability

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

Dependents

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

Racial Group

- Bespoke targeted information sessions are developed and delivered to support groups to apply
- Interpretation services are made available if required.

Additional support

	<p>The PB WG members' phone numbers are included on promotional material so that they can provide additional support with applications if necessary.</p> <p><u>Community Engagement Standards – Inclusion & Support</u> The community planning partnership has adopted the Scottish Community Engagement Standards which include standards on inclusion and support. The PB WG evaluate how inclusive the project is and whether adequate support is 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+.</p> <p><u>PB Charter for Northern Ireland – Inclusive and Supported</u> The community planning partnership has adopted the PB Charter for Northern Ireland. The PB working group evaluates how inclusive and supported the project is. For the previous Project the PB working group assessed themselves as scoring 4/5 for being inclusive and 4.5/5 for being supported.</p>	
<p>Tree Management Policy</p>	<p>This is an existing policy which has been reviewed. It outlines the Council's processes and guidelines for the management of the tree stock across the borough which falls under Council control.</p> <p>The aim of this policy is to ensure that a consistent approach to tree management is adopted across the Council area and will apply to those tree stocks managed by Council. It has a neutral impact on the equality categories.</p>	<p>3</p>