

Appendix – Policy Screening

Policy Scoping

Policy Title: Performance Improvement Objectives/Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26

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

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

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

The aim of our Performance Improvement Plan which will contain the performance improvement objectives is to set out what we will do in the year ahead to deliver on our statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in service delivery and bring about improvement against at least one of the following seven improvement areas as stipulated in Section 84 (2) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014:

1. Strategic effectiveness
2. Service quality
3. Service availability
4. Fairness
5. Sustainability
6. Efficiency
7. Innovation

Statutory performance indicators and standards, as set out in the Local Government Order (NI) 2015 will also be included within the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

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 Council to amend the policy?

Yes. 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 2025.

The Performance Improvement Plan is directly informed by ongoing work with Council departments aligned to the Corporate Plan 2023-27.

The 4 draft 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.

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

The consultation papers will include the relevant equality screening and rural needs impact assessment. Equality monitoring information may also be collected during the public consultation exercise so Council can monitor the reach of our consultation exercises to Section 75 categories.

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

Who initiated or wrote the policy?	Denise Girvan, Improvement Manager in conjunction with other Council departments
Who is responsible for implementation?	Council Departments are responsible for implementation of the actions within the performance improvement objectives and Plan.

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

Potential financial and human resource constraints.

Main stakeholders in relation to the policy

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

Citizens, customers, Elected Members, Council staff, statutory agencies, community and voluntary organisations, businesses, those who work in /visit the Borough.

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

Community Plan 'Connected'
 Corporate Plan 2023-2027
 Annual Departmental Business Plans
 Performance and Quality Management Framework
 Managing Attendance Policy
 Climate and Sustainability Action Plan

The Performance Improvement Plan sits within Council's Strategic Management Approach which guides our strategic planning process and service delivery arrangements. Whilst this plan focuses mainly on key Performance Improvement Objectives, we are still seeking to bring about improvement in other areas of service delivery. Planned improvements in our day-to-day business are set out in our other Strategies and Departmental Business Plans.

Available Evidence

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.

Section 75 category	Evidence
	A range of information was collated and analysed, a summary of the information for the Borough is shown below, further details and tables of statistical results are available in the Council's Audit of Inequalities
Religious belief	The 2021 Census showed that 43.8%-identified as Catholic, and 46.7% identified as either belonging to Protestant, other Christian or Christian-related denominations. A further 1.2% belonged to other religions, while 8.2% didn't belong to a religion.
Political opinion	<p>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has 41 elected members, the breakdown of seats by political party is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democratic Unionist Party – 13 • Ulster Unionist Party - 6 • Sinn Fein - 15 • Social Democratic and Labour Party - 1 • Alliance - 4 • Independent – 1 • TUV - 1 <p>This breakdown is taken as an approximate representation of the political opinion of people within the Borough.</p>
Racial group	<p>The 2021 Census showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96.7% of the usually resident population of the Borough were White and 3.3% were from minority

	<p>ethnic groups. The main ethnic minorities were Mixed (1,652 individuals), Black African (1,132 individuals) and Chinese (683 individuals).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85.5% of residents in the Borough were born in Northern Ireland. The Borough had 8.6% of residents or 18,836 individuals who were born outside the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland. • 6.8% of residents aged 3+ years or (14,376 individuals) spoke a language other than English as their main language. Apart from English, the most common other main languages were Polish (3,551 residents aged 3+ years), Lithuanian (2,611) and Portuguese (1,777).
Age	<p>The population of the Borough was estimated to be 218,656 at 21 March 2021. The profile by age group is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-15 years – 22.06% • 16 – 24 years 9.96% • 25 – 49 years 32.94% • 50 – 64 years 19.04% • 65 and over 16% <p>This represented a 26.7% increase in the 65+ age group and a 25.62% increase in the 50-64yr age group since the last census in 2011.</p>
Marital status	<p>The 2021 Census provides information on the marital and civil partnership status of those aged 16 and over. Almost half of residents aged 16+ in the borough were married (49.0%).</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The question on sexual orientation was new for the 2021 Census and was asked of all people aged 16 and over. However, while completing the census is a legal obligation, there was no statutory penalty for those people who failed to provide an answer to the question on sexual orientation. The results for the Borough were as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am 'gay' or 'lesbian' (homosexual) – 0.8% • I am heterosexual or 'straight' – 90.5% • I am bi-sexual – 0.5% • Other answer – 0.1% • Not stated – 3.1% • I do not wish to answer this question – 4.9% <p>Note figures may not sum due to rounding.</p>
Men and women generally	<p>The 2021 Census showed that in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 49.5% (108,268) of usual residents were males and 50.5% (110,388) were females.</p>
Disability	<p>2021 Census results identified 22.3% of Borough citizens as having a limiting long term health problem or disability, affecting 36,488 households. Of those citizens in the Borough with a limiting long term health problem or disability, 56.8% are in the 65+ age group.</p> <p>Benefit statistics from the Department for Communities showed as of November 2022 there were:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,510 or 5.2% of under 16 population and 5,030 or 15.2% of 66 and over population claiming Disability Living Allowance • 5,930 or 17.9% of 66 and over population claiming Attendance Allowance • 18,540 Personal Independence Payment claims in payment (experimental statistics).
Dependants	The 2021 Census showed that 32% or 27,827 households in the borough contained dependent children. Census 2021 results identified approximately 12% of Borough citizens aged over 5 years old provide unpaid care (which covers looking after, giving help or support to anyone because they have a long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age). Of the 24,741 residents aged 5+ providing unpaid care, 46% provide between 1-19 hours per week while 30% provide 50 or more hours per week.

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	<p>The Performance Improvement Plan 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. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is fully considered.</p> <p>PIO1 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on all Section 75 groups and in particular 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>
Political opinion	
Racial group	
Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

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	No adverse impact is currently anticipated on any Section 75 category. There is the potential for a positive impact for Race and Disability.	None
Political opinion		None
Racial group		None
Age		None
Marital status		None
Sexual orientation		None
Men and women generally		None
Disability	<p>This plan has been developed with the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in mind. It has been informed by a strong evidence base, an understanding of our citizens' needs, correspond directly with Council's priorities, and areas for improvement selected on basis of critical self-analysis.</p> <p>Furthermore, a public consultation process will commence February 2025 for a minimum of 8 weeks.</p> <p>Direct positive outcomes, should include for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contribute to the overall health and well-being of our Borough, as a large majority of our employees reside in the Borough. - better continuity of service delivery. - reduction in energy and resource consumption. - In the long term there will be a positive impact on the health and well-being of our citizens. - Increased customer satisfaction with council services. - Providing customers with improved accessible information on council services and responsibilities. 	Minor
Dependents		None

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	The PIP is a high level document; its aim is to set out what we will do in the year ahead to deliver on our statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in service delivery and bring about improvement.	
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependents	<p>The Strategy & Performance Dept is responsible for leading in the development of the performance improvement plan. Council's Policy & Diversity function is also within this Dept and provides guidance and advice in the development of the Plan.</p> <p>There is the potential for a positive impact for Race and Disability.</p> <p>Equality screening of all strategies, plans, projects services detailed in the Council's departmental business plans will ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote equality and good relations for all section 75 categories.</p>	

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
Political opinion		None
Racial group		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		N/A
Political opinion		N/A
Racial group		N/A

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.

No additional Impact relating to this policy.

Any potential negative impact will be addressed by equality screening all future strategies, plans, projects and services and equality impact assessments undertaken where necessary.

Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

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

The draft performance improvement objectives /Plan have been developed with the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in mind. They have been informed by a strong evidence base, an understanding of our citizens' needs, correspond directly with Council's priorities, and areas for improvement selected on basis of critical self-analysis. Furthermore, a public consultation exercise will be undertaken commencing in February 2025 for a minimum of 8 weeks, whereby there will be a direct consultation communication seeking views from a range of stakeholders including those on the Council's Section 75 Consultation List including disability.

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

Council is undertaking a public consultation exercise on our draft Performance Improvement Objectives which forms the main part of the Performance Improvement Plan commencing in February 2025.

The consultation paper appendices a hard copy of the questionnaire.
Feedback is available to be submitted online via Council's Consultation Hub:
<https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.citizenspace.com>

We will also use other communication methods, including social media, email and intranet promotion, and make hard copies of the consultation papers available in each of our 3 main civic buildings in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon. The consultation will be made available in alternative formats on request. This includes targeted communication with stakeholder groupings e.g. database of Section 75 stakeholders

Screening Decision

A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY

Please identify reasons for this below

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. 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.

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

A mid-year report (covering the period April 2025 - September 2025) on progress against the current year's performance improvement objectives will be presented to the Performance and Audit Committee. This provides details of performance year to date, detailing how well we are meeting our improvement objectives and performing against the statutory indicators/standards. In terms of this assessment, where possible, we will look at how performance compares with previous years and with other councils.

6 monthly and Annual Progress Reports on Departmental Business Plans are also presented to relevant service committees.

Council also publishes a retrospective Annual Report Performance Self-assessment report setting out details of achievements throughout the year and how we have performed against our 2025-26 Performance Improvement Plan. (Statutory deadline: 30th Sept)

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/Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Denise Girvan	Improvement Manager, Strategy & Performance	29/01/2025
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date
Martina McNulty	Head of Dept, Strategy & Performance	29/01/2025

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.

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:

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.

Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2025/26

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

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Developing a | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plan |
| Adopting a | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Choose an item.</i> |
| Implementing a | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Choose an item.</i> |
| Revising a | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Choose an item.</i> |
| Designing a Public Service | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Delivering a Public Service | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

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

Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2025/26 for inclusion in the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26

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

The aim of our Performance Improvement Plan (the Plan) is to set out what we will do in the year ahead to deliver on our statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in service delivery and bring about improvement against at least one of the following seven improvement areas as stipulated in Section 84 (2) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014: Strategic effectiveness / Service quality / Service availability /Fairness /Sustainability/ Efficiency/ Innovation. This is set out in a number of performance improvement objectives which will be detailed within the Plan and the draft objectives are subject of this RNIA. Statutory performance indicators and standards, as set out in the Local Government Order (NI) 2015 are also included within the Performance Improvement Plan.

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.

The Performance Improvement Plan, as legally required, is developed to support continuous improvement in the delivery of our services across the borough. It **will not impact on people in rural areas differently** to those people in urban areas.

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.

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.

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.

The Performance Improvement Plan, as legally required, is developed to support continuous improvement in the delivery of our services across the borough. **It will not impact on people in rural areas differently** to those people in urban 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.

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

No specific needs have been identified in relation to the 4 improvement objectives at this stage.

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?

Council is undertaking a public consultation exercise on our draft Performance Improvement Objectives which forms the main part of the Performance Improvement Plan commencing February 2025.

The consultation paper appendices a hard copy of the questionnaire.

Feedback is available to be submitted online via Council's Consultation Hub:

<https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.citizenspace.com>

We will also use other communication methods, including social media, email and intranet promotion, and make hard copies of the consultation papers available in each of our 3 main civic buildings in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon. The consultation will be made available in alternative formats on request. This includes targeted communication with stakeholder groupings via our database of rural stakeholders.

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.

We will consider the details of any matters raised during the public consultation exercise in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

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.

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.

The Performance Improvement Plan will not impact on people in rural areas differently to those people in urban areas.

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: (Denise Girvan)

Position: (Improvement Manager)

Department / Directorate: (Strategy & Performance)

Signature: (D Girvan)

Date: 29/01/2025

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by: (Martina McNulty)

Position: (Head of Dept)

Department / Directorate: (Strategy & Performance)

Signature: 

Date: 29/01/2025