

**Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council**

**Policy Screening Report**

**under**

**Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998**

**September 2020**

## 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 2019 to August 2020

Policy/Procedure	Policy/Procedure Aims	Ranking/ Screening Decision
Collection of Waste in the Borough	<p>The Council wants to increase the amount of waste recycled and composted throughout the Borough as well as providing an effective, efficient and harmonised service to all households. Options 1, 3 and 4 will better promote equality of opportunity for residents with limited mobility. If Option 2 is chosen it will require residents to bring glass to bottle banks. This may impact on residents with limited mobility and those that do not have access to private transport. Arrangements are already in place for those who require an assisted bin lift and for those that require an additional capacity bin. We will ensure that the communication programme takes into account the needs of a diverse population and promotes participation from BME groups. The public consultation and the communication programme will ensure that all groups are provided the opportunity to learn about the changes to the Waste Collection Service.</p> <p>The majority of staff in Environmental Services are male. Dependent on the final option chosen, staff may experience change in relation to tasks they are expected to carry out. However, the purpose of the Options Appraisal is to harmonise the collection system. It is not anticipated that there will be any reduction in staff.</p>	2

Financial Assistance Policy	<p>This Financial Assistance policy and the accompanying guidance manuals operated as a pilot project for six months and the policy was reviewed again following this period. The policy was developed as a result of a wide community consultation and comments were received from organisations that represent a broad cross section of section 75 consultees as detailed above. These comments have influenced the final policy.</p> <p>One of the overarching application principles is that the process will be inclusive and fair so that all sections of the community can apply for financial assistance if they are involved in meeting the needs which are the Council's priorities. Steps have been taken to ensure the availability of funding is promoted as widely as possible. All organisations will benefit as a result of the financial assistance policy as changes have been introduced to ensure that the application process is more user friendly and bureaucracy is minimised.</p> <p>During the consultation, transport needs for older and younger people in rural areas was raised as an issue. The introduction of a rural linkages grant sought to address this. However, as uptake was extremely low, and because groups could apply to other programmes for the same costs, the rural linkages grant was withdrawn with no impact on the intended beneficiaries.</p> <p>Organisations have been made aware of all the changes to the policy and procedures through information sessions which are delivered at the opening of any calls for applications. The Applicant Guidance Manuals also specifically highlight any changes since the previous year.</p>	2
Furlough Policy	The decision to furlough staff was taken in line with the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which is a government wide scheme. Staff affected are in income earning areas of the council, this includes a range of staff across	2

	<p>the section 75 categories.</p> <p>The council has decided to top up the furlough payment of 80% to 100%. There may be an impact if a decision is taken to reduce the level of payment from 100% to 80%; however this can be mitigated by staff using annual leave (all staff must aim to take half their annual leave by November.). Staff also have to agree to participate in the scheme, and can therefore refuse to be furloughed. The JRS is a UK government scheme and council is working within these guidelines. The return of operational services as part of recovery means that fewer staff will be furloughed moving forward and the scheme itself is temporary, ending in October 2020.</p>	
<p>Licensing of Pavement Cafés</p>	<p>This is a new guidance document. The Council's power to regulate pavement cafés in the Borough is contained in the Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (NI) 2014 and associated regulations. The Council's planning powers in relation to pavement cafés are contained in the Planning Act (NI) and associated Regulations. The Council has developed a Guidance document for Applicants and an application form to assist business owners prepare an application for a Pavement Café Licence.</p> <p>Following the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, District Councils were advised to proceed with the pavement café licensing regime and the Guidance for Applicants was streamlined in a document which would apply during the COVID-10 pandemic recovery with free pavement café licences issued during the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2021.</p> <p>The potential impacts on older people, disabled people and those with dependants have been mitigated by the incorporation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requirements into the Council's guidance. During the Department of Infrastructure's consultation a number of organisations</p>	<p>2</p>

	<p>including IMTAC, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and RNIB made their views known. The concerns they raised included issues such as pavement widths, the cordoning off of the pavement café area and its visibility.</p> <p>In order to further inform the Council's guidance a focus group was held with RNIB, Guide Dogs Northern Ireland and Council Officers and this included a walk around 6 premises in Armagh City. These considerations have also been incorporated into the Council's guidance. The Act requires that when the Council receives an application for a pavement café licence it must consult with Department for Infrastructure (Roads). They will advise Councils on issues around implications for pedestrians and public safety issues.</p>	
<p>Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy</p>	<p>The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) outlines the growth and development vision for the Mid South West region. It focuses on strengths, challenges, specific and targeted economic interventions and investments to drive productivity in the region over the longer term. The ambition is to 'supercharge' the growth of the collective economy and ensure inclusive prosperity in Mid South West (MSW).</p> <p>'Future Proofing' the skills base is one of the four intervention areas and there are potential actions/project concepts for further development that will have a positive impact on different section 75 categories. Whilst at this stage the RES is a 'direction of travel document', it is anticipated that by extending the range of higher-level apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships and the promotion of same, this will result in a positive impact on younger people and their parents/families of young people.</p> <p>As well as the workforce environment, businesses will be encouraged to increasingly offer different employment models. Inclusive workplaces will benefit many section 75 categories by removing barriers to participation in</p>	<p>2</p>

	<p>employment.</p> <p>The MSW region has a reliance on migrant labour and it is imperative that it continues to attract workers from outside the region. Further measures may be required in order to achieve this.</p>	
Remote meetings Protocol	<p>This Protocol has been developed in response to the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May which makes provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to Council meetings. The Protocol has been designed to provide a guide to remote formal meetings to help Members, Officers and the public and allow the Council to continue operating effectively while ensuring government requirements on social distancing are met.</p> <p>Having a Protocol in place which enables the Council to have remote meetings in place will particularly benefit those who are over 70, those who are disabled with underlying health conditions and need to self isolate as well as those with dependants that have caring responsibilities.</p>	3
Review of Toilet Services	<p>A review of toilet services was conducted. The review identifies and sets out options to improve the toilet service to the public throughout the Borough while harmonising councils working practices and ensure efficient futureproof service delivery. There are a total of 147 public conveniences in the Borough, in 40 separate locations.</p> <p>There are toilets provided for male, female, unisex and disabled residents/visitors. There will therefore be a positive minor impact for men, women and disabled customers/residents.</p>	2