



March 27th, 2026

**Chairperson:** Councillor C Kemp

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor J Harpur

**Aldermen:** J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, M Gregg and A McIntyre

**Councillors:** K Dickson, J Gallen, A Gowan, J Lavery BEM, D Lynch, U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready and T Mitchell

**Ex-Officio:** The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan  
Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

**Notice Of Meeting**

A meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee will take place on **Thursday, 2nd April 2026** at **6:00 pm** in the **Council Chamber and Remote Locations** for the transaction of business on the undernoted agenda.

A hot buffet will be available in Lighters Restaurant from 5.15 pm for those Members who have confirmed in advance.

**DAVID BURNS**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

# Agenda

## 1.0 APOLOGIES

## 2.0 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

📄 *Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf*

Page 1

## 3.0 REPORT FROM HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Job Fair

*For Decision*

📄 *1. LMP Jobs Fair.pdf*

Page 3

📄 *Appendix 1a Lisburn & Castlereagh infographic.pdf*

Page 5

📄 *Appendix 1b Equality Screen LMP Action Plan 25-27 (003).pdf*

Page 6

📄 *Appendix 1c - LMP Action plan 2025-27 RNIA.pdf*

Page 33

### 3.2 NI Enterprise Support Service - Go-Succeed – 2026/27 funding

*For Decision*

📄 *2. Go-Succeed-Update on Funding.pdf*

Page 43

📄 *Appendix 2a Go-Succeed Outputs Table 2026-27.pdf*

Page 46

📄 *Appendix 2b - LCCC 2024-25 DfE Jobs Performance letter.pdf*

Page 47

📄 *Appendix 2c NIESS Equality Screening Updated Nov23.pdf*

Page 48

📄 *Appendix 2d NIESS Rural Needs Impact Assessment Final SR 29 06 23 (1).pdf*

Page 73

### 3.3 Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) Potential Contingency

*For Decision*

📄 *3. DTFF Contingency - Comm Item - Apr2026.pdf*

Page 83

📄 *Appendix 3a LCCC - DTFF Grants.pdf*

Page 86

📄 *Appendix 3b Equality Screening Template - DTFF.pdf*

Page 87

📄 *Appendix 3c NMDDC Rural Needs Act Impact Assessment Template (revised) DTFF.pdf*

Page 98

### 3.4 Small Settlements update

*For Noting*

- 📄 4. Small Settlements (noting).pdf Page 107
  
- 📄 Appendix 4a Small Settlements update 26 02 26.pdf Page 110
  
- 📄 Appendix 4b - Small Settlements Regeneration Programme - Equality Screening.pdf Page 115
  
- 📄 Appendix 4c - Small Settlements Regeneration Programme - Rural Needs Impact Assessment.pdf Page 142

## 4.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

### 4.1 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & GROWTH

#### 4.1.1 Lagan Valley Island CCTV Control Room Upgrade

*For Decision*

Confidential due to:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

### 4.2 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### 4.2.1 Future City Fund Update

*For Decision*

Confidential due to:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

### 4.3 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM HEAD OF PLANNING AND CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 4.3.1 Letter from the Department for Communities in respect of a consultation for a proposed listing

*For Decision*

Confidential due to:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

### 4.4 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM HEAD OF ASSETS

**4.4.1 Knockbracken Healthcare Park Site, Stakeholder Group Update**

*For Noting*

Confidential due to:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

**4.4.2 Removal of Burden**

*For Decision*

Confidential due to:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)

**5.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

1. Pecuniary Interests

The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors under Section 6 requires you to declare at the relevant meeting any pecuniary interest that you may have in any matter coming before any meeting of your Council.

Pecuniary (or financial) interests are those where the decision to be taken could financially benefit or financially disadvantage either you or a member of your close family. A member of your close family is defined as at least your spouse, live-in partner, parent, child, brother, sister and the spouses of any of these. Members may wish to be more prudent by extending that list to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or even close friends.

This information will be recorded in a Statutory Register. On such matters **you must not speak or vote**. Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, if such a matter is to be discussed by your Council, **you must withdraw from the meeting whilst that matter is being discussed**.

2. Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests

In addition you must also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a Council meeting (please see also Sections 5.2 and 5.6 and 5.8 of the Code).

Significant private or personal non-pecuniary (membership) interests are those which do not financially benefit or financially disadvantage you or a member of your close family directly, but nonetheless, so significant that could be considered as being likely to influence your decision.

Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, you must declare this interest as soon as it becomes apparent and **you must withdraw from any Council meeting (including committee or sub-committee meetings) when this matter is being discussed**.

In respect of each of these, please complete the form below as necessary.

Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

\_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Pecuniary Interest:

**Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

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Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

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Nature of Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interest:

Name:

Address:

Signed:

Date:

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*If you have any queries please contact David Burns, Chief Executive,  
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council*



<b>Committee:</b>	Regeneration & Growth Committee
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2026
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Economic Development

<b>Item for:</b>	Decision
<b>Subject:</b>	Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) Job Fair

1.0 **Background**

- The Council has been working with the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership in the delivery of a Strategy and Action Plan to enhance local employability and skills, utilising funding from the Department for Communities.

**Key Issues**

- The approved action plan includes strategic priority 3, which is to promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.
- This can involve a range of events to include employer engagements/education, apprenticeships, partner events and local job fairs. The Partnership delivered its most recent job fair as outlined below:
 

*Lagan Valley LeisurePlex - Thursday 26th February 2026, 10.30am to 2.00pm.*  
There were 387 attendees at the event with 67 employers showcasing over 1,200 jobs on offer on the day.
- The job fair was well attended, with a high level of satisfaction confirmed from participating employers. Three local schools attended and student engagement was strong. While increasing school participation remains a challenge due to the continued emphasis on academic progression, the event provided a valuable opportunity to promote employment pathways.
- Members may note there has been a downward trend over the last three years in attendees. The reason for this has been how the job fairs are structured with a preference from the Labour Market Partnership to run smaller localised events. Officers will review the style, design and location with a view to having more targeted opportunities.
- As part of the LMP Action Plan 2026/27, the Partnership will continue to liaise with the Department for Communities (DfC), the local Jobs and Benefits Offices, employers and schools, to build a range of employment events to meet ongoing and emerging needs.
- Alongside the annual job fair, the Partnership is also working on developing a local Employability and Skills Conference later in 2026. This event would bring together educators, employers, communities and policy makers to help shape the future of careers and employability practice across the Council area.

	<p>7. The conference would provide an opportunity to reflect on how schools and training providers are preparing young people for the world of work, explore with Community Planning Partners how inclusive practices can help unlock potential for individuals furthest from the labour market, and hear directly from local employers on current and future skills needs as well as emerging talent requirements.</p>	
2.0	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agrees that the Council and the Labour Market Partnership collaborate on the development of a local Employability and Skills Conference, to be staged later in 2026.</li> <li>2. Notes the above update and statistics outlined in the attached infographic.</li> </ol>	
3.0	<p><b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The job fairs are fully funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) under the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP Action Plan 2025/26, as previously agreed.</p>	
4.0	<p><b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b></p>	
4.1	<p>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>It has been concluded that a detailed equality impact assessment is not necessary as all the potential impacts identified are minor and positive.</p>	
4.3	<p>Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>The LMP has been developed in order improve employability conditions for those who are economically inactive or unemployed regardless of their urban / rural location.</p>	

<p><b>Appendices:</b></p>	<p>Appendix 1a - Job Fair – Infographic                  Appendix 1b – Equality Screening                  Appendix 1c – Rural Needs Screening</p>
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# Lisburn & Castlereagh Job Fair

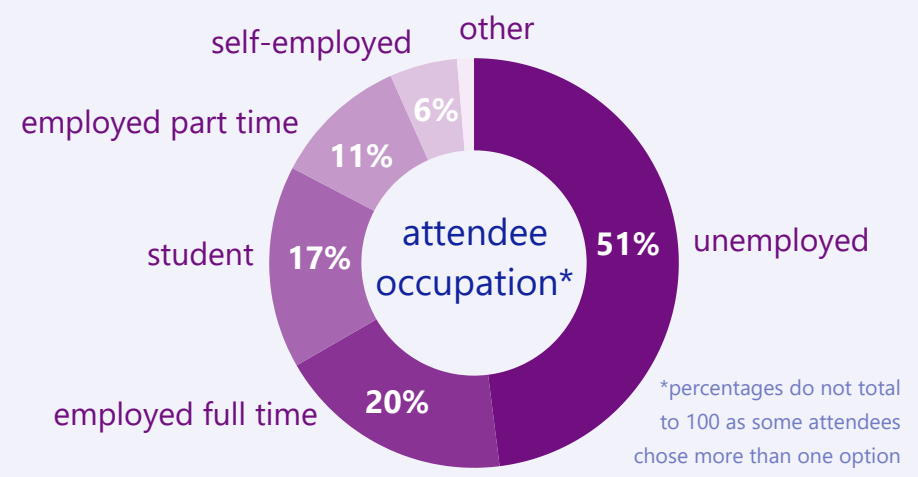
26 February 2026



over **1,200** jobs on offer

**387** total attendees   
(including **110** school pupils)

attendees educated to **44%** A-Level or above



**66%** male **33%** female

**67** employers

**85%** employers: event assisted with filling vacancies

**16** support organisations

**93%** attendees very satisfied or satisfied with event

employers very satisfied or satisfied with set up and organisation of event **94%**

**89%** attendees applied for/ may apply for jobs

## **Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

### **Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template (Oct 2022)**

#### **Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened**

##### **Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2025-27**

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) is a core partner within the Labour Market Partnership (LMP), responsible for helping to improve labour market conditions locally through co-ordinated, collaborative multi-agency action. LCCC provides the secretariat and resource support, for the operation of the LMP and supports the LMP in the delivery of the Action Plan, through marketing, communication, procurement, human resources and financial administration services.

In order to develop the 25-27 Action Plan for funding support from the Department for Communities (DfC); the LMP undertook a review of its one-year Action Plan 24-25 as well as conducting a Strategic Assessment of local labour market conditions in the LCCC area. This exercise highlights the key statistics about the labour market in Lisburn and Castlereagh and reflects local employability and labour market needs. The exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the LCCC area. It was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing engagement and consultation across the council area with Stakeholders, Employers and Elected Members. The LMP sits as an initiative under DfC's Employability NI Programme.

As a result of the Planning Exercise the following themes have been identified as local priorities for the Action Plan 2025-27:

1. Economic Inactivity
2. Disability
3. Skilled Labour Supply

Cognizance was taken of the strategic assessment outcomes and local current provision to ensure that the action plan developed is relevant to the challenges and opportunities particular to the residents of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and is informed by:

- Programme for Government (PfG)
- Lisburn and Castlereagh Community Plan (2017-2030)

- Belfast Regional City Deal Employability and Skills Framework

### **Name of the activity/policy/project**

Labour Market Action Plan 2025-27

### **Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?**

It is a revised Annual Action Plan

### **What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?**

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's vision is for an empowered, prosperous, healthy, safe and inclusive community. A target outcome of LCCC's Community plan is to reduce income inequality in this region. We aspire to grow our local economy so that it is a source of meaningful, rewarding work and reduces inequality. The Council is committed to working in collaboration with other agencies to secure these aspirations for example through the Strategic Community Planning Partnership. The opportunity to support the local labour market through multi- agency collaboration is welcomed by the Council for the opportunities it brings to support our local communities with interventions tailored to their needs. The LMP can improve fairness in the labour market by supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged while working to support local people back into work.

The LMP aims to contribute to strategic local objectives and the NI Executives strategic objectives, including achievement of targets set in:

**Lisburn and Castlereagh Community Plan (2017-2030):** Sets out a vision of “an empowered, prosperous, healthy, safe and inclusive society”. The Community Plan aspires to grow the local economy so that it is a source of meaningful, rewarding work and reduces inequality within the LCCC area. The work of the LMP has a key role in delivering on these Community Plan imperatives, by improving fairness in the labour market through actions to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged and working to support local people back into work.

**Programme for Government:** The key focus therein on delivering sustainable skills and employment for people. The ambition behind the PfG is to deliver a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy in order to give children and young people the best start in life. Government and partner agencies are tasked with increasing the proportion of the workforce qualified to higher levels, getting

more people working in better jobs, raising the number of graduates progressing into professional or management occupations and creating the conditions where people can achieve their potential. The work of the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP will deliver against several outcomes in the PfG aligned to the above ambitions.

The current relevant outcomes identified within the Programme for Government are:

- Outcome 3: ‘We have a more equal society’
- Outcome 6: ‘We have more people working in better jobs’
- Outcome 8: ‘We care for others and help those in need’

DfC is the lead department for a number of indicators, through which progress on these outcomes will be measured:

- Indicator 17: Economic inactivity rates excluding students
- Indicator 32: Employment rate of 16–64-year-olds by deprivation quintile
- Indicator 33: % of people working part-time who would like to work more hours
- Indicator 19: % of population living in absolute and relative poverty

**Belfast Regional City Deal Employability and Skills Framework:** This focuses on the employability and skills strand of Belfast Regional City Deal, including the challenges posed by economic inactivity, lower business productivity and youth unemployment, all relevant to the work of the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP. The latter stages of the framework pose interesting solutions based on a joined-up approach (e.g. re-skilling, higher level apprenticeships, work force planning models) which are also highly relevant to the LMP work.

Taking the above into consideration, the aim and objectives of the LMP have been summarised into 3 strategic priorities:

**Strategic Priority 1 – LMP Delivery and Development - To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area by:**

**1.1: Delivery and Development:** To support the effective partnership delivery of the LMP Action Plan and development of future Action Plans.

**1.2: Development of a 1-year Strategic Assessment and 2-year Action Plan:** Develop a 2-year Action Plan for 2025-27.

## **Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or Labour market conditions locally**

### **Economic Inactivity:**

- 2.1 Rapid Response Academies:** Provide support and training for those who are unemployed. The programme will prioritise those furthest from the labour market and who reside in areas of high deprivation. This programme will be targeted towards retirees, returners to work, newcomers to the area, young people, economically inactive and long term unemployed. 3 academies will be delivered which will be identified based on current trends and employment gaps i.e. female returners – classroom assistant academy.
- 2.2 Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme –** Provide support for participants who are economically inactive with no qualifications in literacy or numeracy. This programme will remove educational barriers to help move participants closer to the labour market/improve employability.

### **Skilled Labour Supply:**

- 2.3 Sector-Focused Employability Academies:** Deliver 3 x Sector-focused Employability Academies which will be positioned to address immediate gaps between demand for labour / skills and supply of the same in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Area.
- 2.4 Skills Boost for Business Growth Programme –** Improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by way of a small grant scheme to local businesses in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area to support industry training.
- 2.5 Employee Upskilling Programme –** Supporting employers to upskill staff to enable career progression for those underemployed or employed seeking career progression, creating employment vacancies for those entering the labour market.
- 2.6 Self-Employment Options Support Programme –** Provide Support and training for those identified as economically inactive, unemployed or underemployed. This programme will offer wraparound support for those looking to establish their own business.

**Disability:**

- 2.7 Pathways to Employment for Individuals with a disability** – Providing support and training for individuals with a disability who are unemployed or underemployed.
- 2.8 Accessible Graduate Apprenticeship Programme** – Providing support and training for graduates with a disability who are either currently out of work or unemployed. Candidates will receive a higher-level professional qualification.

**Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.**

**Increased Awareness:**

- 3.1 Job Fairs/Employability Events** – Promote the programmes and support/encourage employers and participants to access and implement the schemes through a range of events to include employer engagement/education, apprenticeships, partner events and local job fairs.

**Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.**

The Labour Market Partnership is intended to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions across Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. In order to ascertain the current position of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, a full strategic assessment was undertaken, this was to review the statistical evidence with regards to the labour market. A range of meetings, interviews and surveys were conducted with local stakeholders to understand the issues faced by LCCC employers, skills gaps and identify future needs. To enhance the research process, the LMP recruited a consultant to assist with the development of the 2025/27 Action Plan. To support the research and development of the Action Plan, the LMP also reviewed exit surveys from employer exhibitors and attendees at two Job Fairs.

The Action Plan submitted to Department for Communities provides a detailed summary of these findings, which were used to formulate a number of proposed schemes which are being considered to improve labour market conditions. The intended beneficiaries of the programme are residents that are experiencing barriers to employment due to economic inactivity, unemployment, underemployment, disability and those who reside in areas of high deprivation (SOA's as defined by NISRA). Many of the potential participants fall within the Section 75 categories. It is important to note that some Section 75 groups are more likely to be underrepresented in employment, under-employed and at greater risk of facing unemployment. For example, at 45.2% in 2023 Lisburn and Castlereagh has the 5th highest employment rates for disabled people across all LGDs in NI and is 3.1 % above the NI average (of 42.1%). This rate (of 45.2%) is however a significant drop from the 2022 figure of 55.8% when Lisburn and Castlereagh was top table and higher than the UK disability employment rate. With an employment rate of 86% for people without a disability this gives a Disability Employment Gap of 40.8 percentage points, slightly below the NI average.

A direct outcome of our findings indicates that the gender pay gap is still prevalent, while it is accepted that males work longer hours than females, it would appear that the differential hours is only be a partial contributor to the gender pay gap. Therefore, the work of the LMP should focus in two areas in this respect – (1) actions to address underemployment of females where they have the capacity (and aspiration) to take on additional hours of paid work or self-employment and (2) actions to help upskill females to support their career progression into higher paying roles.

The opportunity to support the local labour market through multi- agency collaboration is welcomed by the Council for the opportunities it brings to support our local communities with interventions tailored to their needs. LCCC as the secretariat to the LMP implemented a stakeholder engagement programme to inform the development of the 2025/27 Action Plan. This has entailed 1-1 meetings working to a structured topic list with LMP members and wider stakeholders including the following:-

- Head of Economic Development, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (Chair)
- Careers Service Lisburn
- Careers Service NI
- JBO Employer Advisors (DfC)
- JBO Universal Credit Managers (DfC)

- GEMS NI Social Enterprise
- Invest NI Southern Regional Team
- LCCC Economic Development Team
- Lisburn Area Learning Community
- Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
- Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
- Mencap NI
- NOW Group
- People 1<sup>st</sup>
- SE Health and Social Care Trust
- SERC
- The Princes Trust
- Ulster Supported Employment Ltd
- Inspire Business Centre

The Labour Market Partnership (LMP) can improve fairness in the labour market by supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged while working to support local people back into work.

An outcome-based approach has been used to address the following local priorities in 2025/27. The 'turning the curve' charts used, refer to the assessment of the most recently available data at the time of the review. The 'turning the curve' exercises demonstrate how the delivery of the academies and programmes will improve the employability of Lisburn and Castlereagh residents in priority areas.

All LMP Service Providers have to demonstrate their awareness and adherence to Section 75 within their procurement submissions and consequent delivery of services.

**A full list of proposed programmes can be found on page 3.**

### **Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?**

Economic Development Unit, Programmes Team, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)

**Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?**

The Programmes Team, within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's Economic Development Unit, provides the secretariat for the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership. The Head of Economic Development sits on the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership as one of the core partners. The programme is funded through Department for Communities (DfC) budget allocation and is administered by the LCCC Economic Development Department, Programmes Team.

**Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?**

Yes

**If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.**

Financial: The Labour Market Partnership initiative is dependent on funding being secured from the Department for Communities (DfC).

Other - Time - The project is required to be delivered within timeframes agreed between DfC and LCCC. We anticipate the Action Plan to be approved with a funding offer secured to commence delivery on 1 April 2025.

**Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon? Delete if not applicable**

**Staff: LCCC LMP Programmes Team**

**Service users:** Programme participants are recruited from those who reside in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area.

**Other public sector organisations**

The Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership (LMP) currently comprises representation from each of the following organisations:-

- Jobs and Benefits Office (DfC)
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Invest NI (DfE)
- Careers Service NI (DfE)
- Lisburn Area Learning Community Consortium
- Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
- SERC
- Disability Action

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Economic Development Department

**Voluntary/community/trade union include:**

The following contacts were consulted on the Action Plan Development:

- Atlas Women’s Centre
- Stepping Stones NI
- People 1st
- Youth Action NI
- Adapt NI
- The Princes Trust
- Ulster Supported Employment Ltd
- NOW Group
- NIACRO
- Mencap

**Other**

LCCC Elected Members were consulted for their input to support the development of the Action Plan.

Local employers in the LCCC area to identify skills gaps

**Delivery Agents:**

- Workforce Training Services
- People 1<sup>st</sup>
- Stepping Stones NI
- SERC
- Tangible Consulting Ltd
- Studyseed CIC

**Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project**

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership – 2024/25 Action Plan	Developed under DfC’s new Employability NI Framework (100% funded by DfC)  <a href="https://lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/sharepoint.com/sites/LCCCDData/Datashares4/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FLCCCDData%2FDatashares4%2FRuralDe v_GF_Prog%2FLabour%20Market%20Partnership%202024-2025%2FAction%20Plan">lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/sharepoint.com/sites/LCCCDData/Datashares4/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FLCCCDData%2FDatashares4%2FRuralDe v_GF_Prog%2FLabour Market Partnership 2024-2025%2FAction Plan</a>

	<a href="#">Development%2FAction Plan Public Facing%2FLabour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024 Summary Doc%2Epdf&amp;parent=%2Fsites%2FLCCData%2FDatashares4%2FRuralDev_GF_Prog%2FLabour Market Partnership 2024-2025%2FAction Plan Development%2FAction Plan Public Facing</a>
Equality and Disability Action Plans	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland <a href="https://www.equalityni.org/Employers-Service-Providers/Public-Authorities/Section75/Section-75/Equality-Schemes-(1)">https://www.equalityni.org/Employers-Service-Providers/Public-Authorities/Section75/Section-75/Equality-Schemes-(1)</a>
Local Development Plan	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/resident/planning/local-development-plan">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/resident/planning/local-development-plan</a>
LCCC Corporate Plan	LCCC Corporate Plan Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/lccc-corporate-plan-2024-2028-web">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/documents/d/guest/lccc-corporate-plan-2024-2028-web</a>
Interim Equality Scheme	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75/policies-section-75-screening">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75/policies-section-75-screening</a>

### Available evidence

**What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.**

The aim of the partnership is to improve employability outcomes and labour conditions across the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council District. Therefore, persons who are long term unemployed, underemployed, economically inactive or located in an area that has increased levels of deprivation will be targeted with an aim of increasing fairness in the labour market by supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged while working to support local people back into work.

In developing the Labour Market Partnership, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research initiatives were undertaken. The goal in this activity was to spread the net as wide as possible in terms of understanding the issues faced by LCCC employers and the local community, current provision in the field of employability and skills and gain a view of future needs.

Secondary research consisted of a review of the following publications:

- Programme for Government
- Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Plan
- Council Corporate Plan
- NI Industrial Strategy (Draft)
- Belfast Regional City Deal Employability and Skills Framework
- Economic Profile and Forecast for LCCC by Oxford Economics (May 2019)
- Annual Further Education Activity Reports produced by DfE
- The Labour Market Profile for Lisburn Castlereagh by DfE 2021,
- The Employment Outcomes and Challenges for Disabled People NI (DfC August 2021)
- Lisburn Castlereagh Labour Market Statistics (Oxford Economics July 2021)
- Locality Plans for a number of LCCC District Electoral Areas (LCCC June 2023)
- DfE Skills Barometer Reports 2021
- NISRA and Census documents

LCCC as the secretariat to the LMP implemented a consultation and engagement programme to gain insight into the specific priorities and needs of the labour market in Lisburn and Castlereagh area. The results were used to inform the development of strategic priorities over the period 2025-27 Action Plan.

The research was implemented through a structured survey sent via the Smart Survey Platform to employability and skills partners as below.

- Head of Economic Development
- Careers Service Lisburn
- Careers Service NI
- JBO Employer Advisors (DfC)
- JBO Universal Credit Managers (DfC)
- GEMS NI Social Enterprise
- LCCC Community Planning Team
- Lisburn Area Learning Community
- Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
- Atlas Women's Centre
- Stepping Stones NI
- Workforce Training Services
- People 1<sup>st</sup> Training
- Youth Action NI

- Adapt NI
- The Princes Trust
- Ulster Supported Employment Ltd
- Tangible Consulting Ltd
- Profile Tree Web Design and Digital Marketing Agency

The aims and objectives of Labour Market Partnerships were generally discussed and the creation of Labour Market Partnership collaborations was broadly welcomed by the organisations consulted. Each stakeholder was invited to provide a summary of their current provision, the successes and failures of various programmes were discussed and proved very informative. Barriers and obstacles to success experienced were considered. Finally, identified needs, potential opportunities and gaps in the current provision were examined. Therefore, a full examination was undertaken in order to understand the current situation and make recommendations based on the findings and gaps in labour market conditions.

**Most up to date NISRA population data from Census 2021 (published 22/09/22)**  
[Lisburn and Castlereagh Census Data](#) Information below is from the 2011 Northern Ireland Census which takes into account the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council Area.

Sec 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
<b>Religious Belief</b>	<p>The 2021 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to religious belief in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 58% Protestant (or other Christian)</li> <li>• 27% Catholic</li> <li>• 4% Other</li> <li>• 13% None</li> </ul>
<b>Political Opinion</b>	<p>The 2021 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to political opinion in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area;</p> <p>41% indicated that they had a British only national identity, 16% had an Irish only national identity and 21% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p>

<p><b>Racial Group</b></p>	<p>The 2021 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to racial groups in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area;  <b>4%</b> were from an ethnic minority population and the remaining <b>96%</b> were white (including Irish Traveller).</p>
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<p>In 2021 NI Census statistics with regard to age in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area were recorded to inform the Corporate plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19% Children were aged 0-14 years</li> <li>• 30% of people aged 15 -39 years</li> <li>• 33% aged 40 – 64 years</li> <li>• 18% aged 65+ years and older</li> </ul> <p>The population of the Council area aged 65 and over will increase by 9% by 2025 and 13% by 2030.</p>
<p><b>Marital Status</b></p>	<p>The 2021 census records the following statics with regard to the marital status of persons over the age of 16 for the LCCC area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single – 33%</li> <li>• Married or in civil partnership– 52%</li> <li>• Same-sex civil partnership – 0.1%</li> <li>• Separated– 3%</li> <li>• Divorced or formerly in civil partnership– 6%</li> <li>• Widowed or surviving partner in civil partnership– 6%</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p>ONS figures (2016) suggest at least 2% of the NI population identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bi-sexual. However, LGB support groups suggest this is a significant under-estimate based on lack of willingness/confidence to identify as LGB and the fact sexual orientation categories is now more inclusive of other categories and is referred to as LGBTQ+</p> <p>Government Equalities Office research suggests over 4% of the 18-25 year age group identify as</p>

	<p>LGB, confirming that younger people are more likely to be open about sexual orientation.</p>
<p><b>Men &amp; Women Generally</b></p>	<p>The 2021 NI Census report the population of Lisburn and Castlereagh Local Government District at 149.106, of which 49% were male and 51% were female.</p> <p>There is no official statistic on the number of people in N Ireland who identify as Transgender, non-binary or part of the LGBTQ+ population but referrals to advice services are increasing year on year which suggests a growing minority.</p> <p>During a Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) human rights, equalities and diversities workshop (April 2021) some of the main findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women constitute 79% of the part time workforce.</li> <li>• 1/3 of working age women are economically inactive.</li> <li>• In 2019/20 70% of apprenticeships were male, Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA's) are 69%.</li> <li>• Occupational segregation is problematic; men tend to be more involved in engineering, manufacturing and construction. Women more involved in business, administration and law. One possible related solution is women only training programmes in non-traditional sectors, i.e., construction and engineering.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>The rate of disability in Northern Ireland is higher than the other UK regions with the exception of Wales. The rates of disability among older age groups is higher than other regions of the UK. The 50-64 year old age group accounts for 33.4% of our disabled population compared to 26.9% of the UK disabled population as a whole. The most striking finding was that 60.2% of disabled people in Northern Ireland are economically inactive while the comparative figure for the UK as a whole stands at 42.5%.</p> <p>The pay gap was also highlighted in this report. Northern Ireland compared favourably with other parts of the UK in this regard however there is still a difference in median pay between disabled and non-disabled employees which needs to be addressed.</p> <p>The concerns expressed by disabled participants engaging with this research were articulated in the report on their behalf. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for investment and support for individuals with disability</li> <li>• The need for a more holistic approach based on needs to support individuals into employment.</li> <li>• The LMP should seek to fill gaps that may arise through the loss of EU(ESF) funding schemes and the transfer to the UKSPF. This transition will create gaps in support schemes</li> <li>• Implement broader based supports such as pre-employment engagement, pre-interview visits, money management to assist participants coming off benefits.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dependants</b></p>	<p>Dependants can include children, older people and those with disabilities.</p>

	<p><b>12.4%</b> of people in the 2021 Census stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others. On that basis, people with dependants are less likely to be employed or face greater barriers when seeking employment.</p> <p>According to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, lone parents, 91% of whom are women, also experience occupational segregation in employment, with lone parents with dependent children mostly employed in ‘Personal Service’ and ‘Elementary’ occupations. Caregiving has been identified as one factor influencing occupational segregation with women and lone parents choosing occupations.</p> <p>Allowing sufficient flexibility to balance the demands of caregiving. This may have a potential impact on the sustainability of employment, with women and lone parents having to consider pay and career progression with flexibility in employment and childcare provision.</p>
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**Needs, experiences and priorities**

**Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories**

Labour Market Partnership is intended to improvement the employability outcomes and labour market conditions across the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council district, irrespective of background or circumstance. Those who will be directly targeted will either be economically inactive unemployed or underemployed, have barriers to employment due to disability or reside in areas of high deprivation. This scheme will have direct and indirect benefits for some groups of service users, however, the aim of the LMP is to improve fairness in the

labour market by supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged while working to support local people back into work. Ultimately, this programme will benefit a wide range of groups, particularly groups that experience disadvantage or inequality, as it endeavours to provide them with a range of fully-funded initiatives, which will remove barriers and improve fairness in the labour market

**Part 2. Screening questions**

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	There is no evidence that people from particular religious or political backgrounds are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed or economically inactive.	None
Political Opinion	There is no evidence that people from particular religious or political backgrounds are more likely to be unemployed, underemployed or economically inactive.	None
Racial Group	Extensive research was undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders across the Lisburn and Castlereagh Province. Research and consultations did not identify that people from a particular racial group are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive. There may be increased barriers to entry, the gamified learning programme will identify those	Minor Positive

	who require literacy / numeracy support to find employment. This can include specific classes for newcomer communities.	
Age	Young people (aged 16-24) are more likely to be unemployed and require targeted intervention in order to build new skills in fields representing current and emerging labour market opportunities.	Minor Positive
Marital Status	There have been no specific needs identified for people of different marital status.	None
Sexual Orientation	There have been no specific needs identified for people of different sexual orientations in relation to this policy.	None
Men & Women Generally	Some women need more interventions/support to enable them to take up or remain in employment. Women may be more likely to need/want flexible work opportunities	None
Disability	Disabled people need specific advice and to help them apply and be successful in the labour market. They require targeted intervention, training, understanding employers and flexible working conditions. 2 programmes have been developed to specifically address the disability employment gap.	Minor Positive

<p>People with and without Dependants</p>	<p>People with dependants require specific support to enable them to undertake training and the right kind of job opportunities that they can balance work and care responsibilities i.e. classroom assistant job opportunities, self-employment.</p>	<p>Minor Positive</p>
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\* See Appendix 1 for details.

**2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?**

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
<p>Religious Belief</p>		<p>No groups will be targeted based on their employment status, regardless of their Section 75 Categories</p>
<p>Political Opinion</p>		<p>No groups will be targeted based on their employment status, regardless of their Section 75 Categories</p>
<p>Racial Group</p>	<p>Yes – The programme will target unemployed people across all racial groups.</p>	
<p>Age</p>	<p>Yes – Young people and the 55+ age group will be particularly targeted as this age group show high levels of unemployment and barriers to employment however, many of the programmes will be open to all.</p>	
<p>Marital Status</p>		<p>No – groups will be targeted based on their employment, regardless of their Section 75 categories.</p>

Sexual Orientation		No – groups will be targeted based on their employment status, regardless of their Section 75 categories
Men & Women Generally	Yes – while the majority of programmes are open to everyone, there are a few academies that have been developed specifically for female returners i.e. classroom assistant academy.	
Disability	Yes – People with a disability will be particularly targeted as this Section 75 group show high levels of unemployment and inequality in the labour market.	
People with and without Dependents	Yes – Programme will be promoted equally to ensure that carers and those from all backgrounds with dependents are aware of LMP opportunities	

### Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

N/A

### 2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

Yes - the Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2025/27 aims to support disabled people back into training, education and employment. It also works closely with the Lisburn and Castlereagh business community to address barriers into and retaining employment for those who are disabled.

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

<b>Good Relations Category</b>	<b>Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]</b>	<b>Level of impact – minor/major*</b>
Religious Belief	The scheme is aimed at improving the employment landscape across Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area.	No direct impact identified in relation to religion, political opinion or racial group. By providing employment opportunities for those facing unemployment, it will bring people from different backgrounds together.
Political Opinion	As Above	As Above
Racial Group	As Above	As above

\*See Appendix 1 for details.

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

<b>Good Relations Category</b>	<b>IF Yes, provide details</b>	<b>If No, provide details</b>
Religious Belief		The partnership is a financial assistance scheme that will address employment inactivity across the Lisburn and

		<p>Castlereagh Council area. It doesn't lend itself to promoting good relations. The programme aims to reduce inequality and remove barriers for those who are furthest from the labour market by providing fully funded opportunities to access qualifications, funding and mentoring.</p> <p>If any opportunities arise, they will be addressed.</p>
Political Opinion		As above
Racial Group		As Above

**Multiple identity**

**Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.**

LCCC recognises that all individuals are not exclusive to just one designated group. "Multiple identity" has been given consideration within this screening exercise in order to ensure benefit to all groups. Some people who are the targets of this project will experience disadvantage on a number of grounds, e.g., age, race, gender and disability.

If additional issues/impacts not already covered above arise, they will be addressed.

**Part 3. Screening decision/outcome**

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project.

There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
- 2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
- 3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

**Choose only one of these** and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
Option 1 <b>Screen out</b> – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	N/A
Option 2 <b>Screen out with mitigation</b> – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	It has been concluded that a detailed equality impact assessment is not necessary as all the potential impacts identified are minor and positive. The Partnership overall is intended to address identified needs of particular target groups. Each element of the programme will also be considered for potential impacts.  Prior to the appointment of a delivery agent to manage the programmes under the LMP Action Plan, ensuring equality of opportunity and the ability to provide reasonable adjustments is built into each contract and managed accordingly. Programme syllabus and materials can

	<p>be provided in alternative formats and languages if required.</p> <p>The Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP also conduct in-depth programme evaluations each year to understand the benefits and limitation of each programme. By applying lessons learnt, each year we are able to actively build upon the programmes to ensure equality of opportunity. For example, ensuring that the classroom assistant academy coincides with the school calendar is integral to the success of the programme, this enables female returners to engage with the programme whilst having childcare in place and also to ensure adequate timing with regards to employment opportunities within a school setting.</p> <p>In order to best deliver equality of opportunity, the core partnership is made up of 9 core partners with the knowledge and experience needed to deliver on the objectives of the Labour Market Partnership. The Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP currently comprises of a representative from each of the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jobs and Benefits Office (DfC)</li> <li>● South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust</li> <li>● Invest NI (DfE)</li> <li>● Careers Service NI (DfE)</li> <li>● Lisburn Area Learning Community Consortium</li> <li>● Lisburn Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>● SERC</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Economic Development Department</li> <li>• Disability Action NI</li> </ul> <p>A full research exercise was undertaken using a combination of primary and secondary research to develop an accurate portrayal of the current strengths, weaknesses, limitations and opportunities available across Lisburn and Castlereagh employment market. LCCC will continue to assess the situation and be more proactive especially mitigating risk surrounding promotion across all Section 75 categories etc.</p>
<p>Option 3  <b>Screen in</b> for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)                  [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]</p>	<p>N/A</p>

**Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)**

As detailed above

**Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?**

N/A

**Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)**

N/A



**Part 4. Monitoring**

**What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:**

The delivery of the Labour Market Partnership will be monitored on a quarterly basis via reports which are to be returned to DfC. The monitoring will focus on the delivery outcomes of the Action Plan itself i.e. the impact the partnership is

having on the local labour market. The individual programmes will be monitored on a quarterly basis by their respective project officers and monitoring returns will be made to DfC. The actual performance indicators to be monitored vary according to programme but are listed on the Action Plan.

## Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Melissa Cunningham 	Programme Officer	09/02/2025
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	12/02/2025
Approved by: Paul McCormick 	Head of Service	13/02/2025

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

## Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

\*Major impact:

- a) The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

#### Minor impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

#### No impact (none)

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Updated Template @ Oct 2022

## Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

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

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City 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.

Labour Market Partnership

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

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input 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.

Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2025-2027 and Strategic Assessment 2024-2027

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

The aim of the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions by working through a coordinated, collaborative and multi-agency partnership. Thus, achieving regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localized conditions and helping to connect employers with employees.

The Lisburn and Castlereagh (L&C) Labour Market Partnership (LMP) currently comprises representation from each of the following organisations:-

- Jobs and Benefits Office (DfC)
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Invest NI (DfE)
- Careers Service NI (DfE)
- Lisburn Area Learning Community Consortium
- Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
- SERC
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Economic Development Department
- Disability Action NI

There are a multitude of benefits associated with this approach. LMPs sit as an initiative under DfC's Employability NI Programme.

The Partnerships will be expected to provide an integrated approach to address labour market challenges by bringing together, in a single body, the necessary local knowledge and expertise to build on existing structures locally, operating in a holistic, streamlined and joined up way. The aim is to contribute to strategic local objectives and the NI Executives strategic objectives, including

**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).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).	<input type="checkbox"/>
A definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Details of alternative definition of ‘rural’ used.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of ‘rural’.*

N/A

*Reasons why a definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.*

N/A

## 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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

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

In order to ascertain LCCC's position in the labour market and to identify appropriate measures to put forward for development into incentives to boost the labour market, consultation and stakeholder survey was undertaken and this formed the basis of the LMP Action Plan. The thematic areas which require attention are:

- 1) To form and successfully deliver the functions of the Labour Market Partnership for Lisburn and Castlereagh
- 2) To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions
- 3) To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally

A number of programmes are currently being planned and created which will be implemented across LCCC in order to combat the challenges facing the labour market. These are documented in Section 2C.

### 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.

The Labour Market Partnership is responsible for improving employability outcomes and labour market conditions across Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. The Partnership aims to tackle the rising unemployment levels across the province regardless of location. The work carried out by the Partnership will not impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a positive impact as the town and rural dwellers will all reap the benefits from improved labour market conditions.

Programmes under the 2024/25 Action Plan include:

- 1) Rapid Response Academies x 3 –prioritizing those who are long term unemployed, economically inactive and hardest to reach.
- 2) Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme
- 3) Sector Focused Employability Academies x 3
- 4) Skills Boost for Business Growth: Small Grants Programme supporting local businesses offer industry related training
- 5) Employee Upskilling: For those under-employed or seeking career progression
- 6) Self-Employment Support Options Support Programme
- 7) Pathways to Employment for Individuals with a Disability
- 8) Accessible Graduate Apprenticeship Programme for Individuals with a Disability
- 9) Public events such as 2 x Jobs Fair and 2 x Employability Events

**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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**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.**

N/A - The work carried out by the Partnership will not impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a positive impact collectively, as both town and rural dwellers will all reap the benefits from improved labour market conditions.

## 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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section **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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**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.**

Research was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect employability and labour market issues in the LCCC area and are informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing engagement and consultation across the council area. Cognizance was taken of the strategic assessment outcomes and local current provision to ensure that the action plan is relevant.

A desk-based analysis of the LCCC area/region was undertaken, including LCCC Corporate and Community Plan, NISRA, Office for National Statistics, Programme for Government, DfC, NI Census 2021, Labour Market Insight (IDBR data) 2024.

LCCC as the secretariat to the LMP implemented a stakeholder engagement programme to inform the development of the 2024-25 Action Plan. This has entailed 1-1 meetings working to a structured topic list with LMP members and wider stakeholders including the following:-

LCCC Head of Economic Development	People 1 <sup>st</sup> Training
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (Chair)	SEHSCT
Careers Service Lisburn	SERC
Careers Service NI	The Princes Trust
JBO Employer Advisors (DfC)	USEL
JBO Universal Credit Managers (DfC)	Inspire Business Centre
GEMS NI Social Enterprise	Lisburn Area Learning Community
Invest NI Southern Regional Team	Mencap NI
LCCC Economic Development Team	Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
NOW Group	Disability Action NI
Lisburn Chamber of Commerce	

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

The Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) has identified the following as key areas;

- Rural Businesses
- Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas
- Education or Training in Rural Areas
- Poverty in Rural Areas
- Deprivation 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?**

N/A

## 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 LMP is responsible for improving the labour market across Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council regardless of location. The 2021 Census highlighted that Lisburn & Castlereagh had a population of 149,106 up 11% since 2011. With respect to age profile:

- 19% of population were between 0-14 years,
- 30% between 15-39 years,
- 33% between 40-64 years, and
- 18% 65 years plus.

The critical issue for the labour market is the proportion of younger people decreased and the proportion of older people increased which could present increasing challenges to satisfy labour market demand looking ahead. There was also an increase in the number of people born outside of UK/Ireland from 5,800 in 2011 to 8,900 in 2021 which reflects an increasingly diverse local population.

Occupational segregation is problematic; men tend to be more involved in engineering, manufacturing and construction. Women more involved in business, administration and law. One possible related solution is women only training programmes in non-traditional sectors, i.e., construction and engineering.

The most deprived SOA within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area is Old Warren which is ranked 118 (which is amongst the top 15% most deprived in Northern Ireland).

In 2021, Lisburn & Castlereagh had the highest employment rate for women in Northern Ireland at 74.5% which is 6.4% higher than the Northern Ireland average of 68%. The Gender Employment Gap in 2021 was 1.4%, 75.9% male employment rate compared to female employment rate of 74.5%

Female returner programmes are needed to support women (including in the 50+ bracket) to reconnect with employment. Particularly given the impact of inactivity on health and wellbeing including earlier onset of age-related conditions.

At 45.2% in 2023 Lisburn and Castlereagh has the 5th highest employment rates for disabled people across all LGDs in NI and is 3.1 % above the NI average (of 42.1%). This rate (of 45.2%) is however a significant drop from the 2022 figure of 55.8% when Lisburn and Castlereagh was top table and higher than the UK disability employment rate. With an employment rate of 86% for people without a disability this gives a Disability Employment Gap of 40.8 percentage points, slightly below the NI average.

**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 the response is **NO GO TO Section 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.**

The synopsis of the programme has been identified in Section 2B, fully considering the needs of the rural population. There have been no detrimental impacts identified.

The programmes overarching principle is working towards alleviating unemployment and improving the labour market across the province. Therefore, both urban and rural dwellers will benefit collectively.

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES GO TO Section 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.**

N/A

## 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.

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Melissa Cunningham
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Programmes Officer
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Economic Development
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>M. Cunningham</i>
<b>Date:</b>	09/02/2025
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Paul McCormick
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Head of Service
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Economic Development
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>Paul McCormick</i>
<b>Date:</b>	13/02/2025

<b>Committee:</b>	Regeneration & Growth
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2026
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Economic Development

<b>Item for:</b>	Decision
<b>Subject:</b>	NI Enterprise Support Service - Go-Succeed – 2026/27 funding

## 1.0 **Background**

1. The Go Succeed Business Support service prioritises early-stage engagement, high-value enterprise development, innovation, business growth and effective scaling to support long-term sustainability. The delivery of this programme provides the outputs that contribute to the achievement of the Council's statutory jobs targets.
2. The current 2025-2026 programme is funded across Northern Ireland by Councils and match funded in the sum of £9.2m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (revenue and capital funding). The Council's annual contribution is in the sum of £119,153.
3. The UKSPF funding will end at the end of March 2026. The UK government has confirmed replacement match funding from the new Local Growth Fund but at a reduced amount.

### **Key Issues**

1. The UK Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG) has offered a one-year (2026-27) allocation of £2.53m from the Local Growth Fund to the NI Go Succeed service, which is a significant reduction from the current £7.2m revenue allocation, representing a £4.67m reduction across NI.
2. As previously reported, Belfast City Council's Project Management Office (PMO) has requested that Councils consider increasing their annual individual financial commitment in light of the funding gap. Discussions are also ongoing between Belfast City Council and the NI Department for the Economy (DfE) to potentially secure funding to assist with the financial deficit.
3. DfE confirmed £1m (March 2026), conditional on matched Council contributions. Combined with expected underspend (currently £300,000), this results in 70% of the 2025/26 budget.
4. This position was agreed in principle by the eleven Councils following SOLACE engagement, subject to consideration by Members at individual Council level. It would increase LCCC's 2026-27 annual contribution of £119,153 by a further £68,187 to match the DfE funding offer.

5. Councils will acknowledge the £1m offer while seeking enhancement due to links to statutory job targets. If not increased, Councils will request a review of targets and continued consideration of funding opportunities.
6. It should be noted that Go Succeed may form a core pillar of the draft NI entrepreneurship strategy. Further engagement with DfE is required on long-term funding approach to Go Succeed.
7. The PMO advises a 20% reduction in service delivery (outputs, marketing and communications), with programme structure largely unchanged. The revised output profile is detailed in **(see Appendix)**. The PMO has indicated that individual Councils have the ability to increase their annual contribution beyond the amounts required to match the DfE funding offer should they wish to increase their output profile.
8. Councils will explore further funding opportunities, including LEP Action Plan funding (subject to Invest NI and DfE agreement). While Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council remain committed to maintaining high-quality business support services, the reduced funding position will require a review of the delivery model, with a more fundamental assessment needed over the medium to long term.
9. It is not proposed to increase the overall Economic Development budget estimates to accommodate an increased contribution towards Go Succeed. Funding will be reprioritised within existing resources Economic Development programme by taking advantage of opportunities arising from the Council's LEP funding.
10. Finally, as referred to above, DfE monitors job creation performance against statutory targets set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015. For the 2024/25 reporting period, Lisburn and Castlereagh City exceeded its statutory target, achieving 118 new jobs created against a target of 116 **(see Appendix)**.

## 2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

1. To increase the Council's contribution to the Go Succeed programme to match the current offer of funding from the Department for the Economy.
2. To note a further report on Go Succeed will be provided when a response has been received from DfE on the request for enhanced funding and to consider a review of the statutory jobs targets.

## 3.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

£119,153 has been included in the 2026/27 Economic Development budget to support continued enterprise support activity. An additional contribution of up to £68,187 is required to match the DfE contribution on an apportioned basis. This would be met through the reprioritisation of the existing Economic Development budget estimates, and/or possible support from the LEP programme as previously outlined to Committee.

4.0	<b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out on the proposal/project/policy?	Yes
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>Summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening was carried out by Belfast City Council on behalf of all eleven Councils. There are no major levels of impact, and no negative impacts have been identified during the screening process. Any issues re ensuring accessibility and equal participation in business support programmes ca proposed for the programmes.</p>	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>No key issues identified - the Go Succeed Programme will not impact differently on businesses in rural areas. Businesses which are eligible may apply for support and benefit regardless of urban or rural location.</p> <p>RNIA for Go Succeed also completed by Belfast City Council (Lead Council)</p>	

<b>Appendices:</b>	<p>Appendix 2a - Go Succeed Key Outputs Table 2026-27</p> <p>Appendix 2b - DfE Letter re LCCC Business Start-Up Performance 2024/25</p> <p>Appendix 2c – Equality/Good Relations assessment</p> <p>Appendix 2d – Rural Needs assessment</p>
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## LCCC – Go-Succeed – Three Pillars Summary

### Key Outputs & Outcomes: Adjusted Targets for 2026/27 (20% Reduction Applied)

Pillar	Indicator Type	Activities	Yr. 4 of Go-Succeed (12 mths.)
ENGAGEMENT	Output	Indicative number of participants engaged across all 'Engage' activities	230
ENGAGEMENT	Output	No. of participants completing 1-to-1 advice sessions to support entrepreneurial intentions (ENGAGED Clients)	230
ENGAGEMENT	Output	Number of business plans created	147
ENGAGEMENT	Outcome	Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	79
<b>ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Number of new Jobs created (FTE) as a result of support</b>	<b>48*</b>
ENGAGEMENT	Outcome	Number of participants supported that progress to Foundation Element i.e. demonstrate potential to become employer enterprises	37
FOUNDATION	Output	Number of business plans created	53
<b>FOUNDATION</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Number of referrals to the NIESS grants through the Foundation Element</b>	<b>TBC</b>
FOUNDATION	Outcome	Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	29
<b>FOUNDATION</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Number of new Jobs created (FTE) as a result of support</b>	<b>34*</b>
GROWTH	Output	Indicative number of participants engaged across all 'Growth' activities per year	136
GROWTH	Output	Number of Established Entrepreneurs provided assistance to support entrepreneurial intentions through one-to-one mentoring sessions	136
<b>GROWTH</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Number of referrals to the NIESS grants through the Growth Element</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>GROWTH</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Number of jobs created (FTE) following support through Growth interventions</b>	<b>43</b>

\*Jobs linked to Statutory Targets

Mr Donal Rogan  
Director of Economic Development  
Lisburn & Castlereagh Council  
[donal.rogan@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:donal.rogan@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)



Department for the

**Economy**

An Roinn

**Geilleagair**[www.economy-ni.gov.uk](http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk)**Date:** 03 December 2025

Dear Mr Rogan

### **Lisburn & Castlereagh Council NI Business Start-up Programme Performance 2024/25**

As you are aware the Department has the responsibility of monitoring performance in relation to the NI Business Start-Up Programme against statutory targets set out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. I am now writing to confirm your audited performance for 2024/25.

#### **2024/25 Performance**

Your council's performance for 2024/25 against your statutory target is set out below.

<b>Statutory Jobs Target</b>	<b>Total Jobs Created 2024/25</b>	<b>Target Variance</b>
116	118	+2

If you have any queries about the content of this letter, please contact my team by email at [SocialandRegionalEconomyDivision@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:SocialandRegionalEconomyDivision@economy-ni.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Leeman**  
**Social and Regional Economy Division**

# Equality Screening Template



The Council has a statutory duty to screen. This includes our strategies, plans, policies, legislative developments; and new ways of working such as the introduction, change or end of an existing service, grant funding arrangement or facility. This screening template is designed to help departments consider the likely equality impacts of their proposed decisions on different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors.

Before carrying out an equality screening exercise it is important that you have received the necessary training first. To find out about the training needed or any other queries on screening, contact the Equality and Diversity Officer Lorraine Dennis on extension 6027 or by email [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk)

The accompanying **Screening Guidance** note provides straightforward advice on how to carry out equality screening exercises. Detailed information about the Section 75 equality duties and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission's website<sup>1</sup>.

The screening template has 4 sections to complete. These are:

**Section A** - provides details about the policy / decision that is being screened

**Section B** - gives information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts on all equality groups.

**Section C** - has 4 key questions in relation to obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order

**Section D** - is the formal record of the screening decision.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

## **Section A**

### **Details about the policy / decision to be screened**

#### **1. Title of policy / decision to be screened:-**

##### **Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS)**

This screening is for the regional Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) and considers each Council's needs. It will be at the discretion of individual Councils as to whether local screening exercises need to take place.

The NIESS aligns to the Programme for Government, 10x Economic Strategy, DfE Economic Recovery Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, and the Community Plans of local Councils.

Since 2015, Councils have been responsible for economic development, including responsibility for supporting business start-ups and the growth of micro/small businesses. NIESS will support the Councils to deliver on statutory responsibilities for delivering enterprise and business start-up support.

#### **2. Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-**

The Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) aims to deliver a connected enterprise support service that enables individuals and businesses to access the relevant support services to meet their needs, and the growth ambitions of their businesses.

NIESS offers the opportunity for greater systematic collaboration across Council areas where embedded business start-up (and business growth) ambitions will underpin the creation of a more effective ecosystem of support. In turn offering the scope for greater connectivity and simplification for clients. This collaboration can be geared to/aligned to priorities, such as the economic vision for a '10x Economy' - where a culture of entrepreneurship and support for new business development will drive place-based growth, including through new / emerging technologies and priority clusters.

This emphasis on 'place-based growth' within the '10x Economy' vision uniquely places Councils to contextualise this vision within local support ecosystems enabling each Council to tailor provision to prevalent local needs. For instance, to align to different ambitions for Innovation Driven Enterprises (IDE) within City/Growth deals, different sectoral priorities, female entrepreneurship priorities, and varying needs within rural and urban areas.

In addition to 10x, the NIESS aligns/contributes to a range of national, regional, and local strategic/ policy including -

- UK Industrial Strategy - The NIESS will contribute to the fourth component of the strategy, which is making the UK the best place to start and grow a business in addition to building an innovative economy, supporting high quality job creation; earning potential and place-based growth.
- 10X Economy - The NIESS will play a key role in fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and supporting new business development to drive place-based growth in Northern Ireland's decade of innovation. Overall, it will make a significant contribution to the 10x vision and the forthcoming Entrepreneurship Strategy/ Action Plan.

- New Decade/New Approach – The NIESS offers the potential for skills and capability development amongst a diverse range of entrepreneurs and enterprise types, with scope to flex delivery to sub-regional needs (contributing to the development of a ‘regionally balanced’ economy).
- Draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework - The NIESS will impact on the outcome area of *‘our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon-neutral’* which has a core focus on helping companies engage in innovation and research; develop creativity and entrepreneurship; build inclusion and pathways to economic activity, contributing to outcome areas of *‘we have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect’* and *‘everyone can reach their potential’*.
- Economy 2030/the Industrial Strategy for NI – The NIESS and the focus on entrepreneurship and innovation will contribute across 4 of the 5 key pillars of the strategy.
- Invest NI business plan (21/22) - The NIESS will contribute to three of the drivers highlighted in the plan in particular - entrepreneurship and commercialisation, skills, and innovation. The narrative recognises the Business Plan will provide, not just a pathway to recovery, but also build strong foundations for 10X Economy transformative growth.
- DAERA Rural Policy Framework - The NIESS offers strong potential for the core offer to be flexed by Councils to rural constituencies of need, thus contributing directly to the above policy imperatives.
- DfC’s Employability NI policy - The NIESS will specifically cater for the needs of those distant from the labour market (for whom entrepreneurship may be a ‘pathway’ to the same). This will be delivered via engagement, community-outreach and early stage supports that can be flexed/ tailored to needs prevailing within each Council area.
- City/Growth deals - The NIESS can be tailored sub-regionally to the match the bespoke ambitions of each City/ Growth deal - whether it be via creating inclusive entrepreneurship as a pathway to the labour market or supporting IDE creation linked to sectors with global market potential.
- Community Planning – The 11 Councils that are partners in this project, as created in the reform of Local Government in 2015, were given the responsibility of leading the community planning process for their district. All Councils now have Community Plans in place as a result of extensive consultations undertaken with their local communities and are currently in implementation and oversight/ monitoring mode. Therefore, it is important as part of the sub-regional policy context to also review how the service will help reinforce the ambition within these Community Plans. The plans are all shaped around delivering against priority outcomes for their districts – and all have a focus/ theme on enabling inclusive economic growth in their district which means levels of support may need to be differentiated to reflect local needs. There is a strong focus on the future proposals for Council-led Enterprise Support Services i.e., building in the ability for Councils to ensure their local support ecosystems can cater for a wide range of entrepreneurs and enterprise types. As such it will contribute strongly to the economic imperatives and related outcomes in the Community Plans in each of the Councils.
- The NIESS will also complement all 11 Councils current Corporate and Economic Departmental strategies which have a key focus on growing an inclusive economy, encouraging business start-ups, growth ambitions and creating new opportunities for our residents.

The scope of the service includes activity to be delivered under four elements, (engage, foundation, enabling growth, accelerated scaling) representing a continuum of support that will be required from pre-start support, through start-up and the growth journey thereafter. Each element may comprise of a range of projects or initiatives, each with their own area of focus and expertise to help individuals, entrepreneurs, and businesses in addition to the provision of grant funding.

KPMG have provided procurement guidance to Councils to ensure the new service offers flexibility; provide comprehensive regional coverage; aligns to community plans and regional strategic objectives; and can maximise regional investment programmes.

Each of the Councils have sought approval for delivery of the service for the first 2-year period. Links to each individual Councils' approval is included in Appendix A.

### **3. Aims and objectives of the policy / decision to be screened:-**

The key objectives of the NIESS align to the 10x Economic Strategy, Programme for Government, DFE Economic Recovery Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, and the Community Plans of local Councils, in particular:

- Creating employment and opportunity
- Fostering business growth
- Strengthening business relationships and making it easy to conduct business
- Reducing economic inequalities
- Address barriers to employment at structural and personal levels
- Address educational inequalities and increase skills attainment
- Reduce poverty and economic inactivity
- Requirement for a long-term business start interventions
- UK government drive to push out the “levelling up” agenda, and need to consider models for local delivery of targeted interventions
- Development of new ways of working such as Labour Market Partnerships, which create templates for alternative partnership approaches with Councils at the core in “bridging” local need with regional/national policy

The NIESS will provide an offer than can meet future ambitions whilst ensuring an inclusive approach, where local ecosystems in each Local Government District will be able to cater for a diverse range of entrepreneurs and enterprise types.

Delivery of the NIESS will consist of 4 key elements representing a continuum of support that will be required from pre-start support, through start-up and the growth journey thereafter. The support aims to engage with 22,050 individuals/businesses at its peak.

Whilst this is a regional service, Belfast City Council have led on the development of the service and are the nominated lead Council for the ongoing development and delivery. As such, BCC will lead on procurement for the service with each individual Council contributing to ensure the service meets the local needs of each Council. There are four proposed elements of provision:

<b>ENGAGE - Early aspiration and support (for would be entrepreneurs)</b>	<i>Reaching 12,000 per annum and working more intensively with c3.5K per annum to refine and support a start-up idea. To achieve a minimum of 1,500 individuals achieving a wider range of start-up outcomes, outside of formal business registration data as well as a range of other impacts.</i>
<b>FOUNDATION - Support for early founding (employer enterprises/ start-ups)</b>	<i>To work with c1,200 individuals/ businesses per annum to work towards target of 750 registered start-ups</i>
<b>ENABLING GROWTH – Aligned to aspirations and potential</b>	To work with c4000 businesses per annum arising both from the start-up pool above and entry of existing businesses from LGDs that meet eligibility criteria
<b>ACCELERATED SCALING - for start-ups typically over 2 years old</b>	To work with 10 organisations to achieve the indicative target of 30 by 5 years

**4. On whom will the policy / decision impact?**

Staff	YES
Service users	YES
Other public sector organizations	YES
Voluntary / community groups / trade unions	YES
Others, please specify	YES, Delivery Agents, Stakeholders

The NIESS will specifically target individuals with entrepreneurial intentions or those who haven't previously considered entrepreneurship (particularly those in underrepresented groups), those interested in starting a business or becoming self-employed, and existing businesses across the region. Through our previous work and evidence available we envisage NIESS will impact positivity on those indicated above. Belfast City Council will assess the impact of the service through ongoing monitoring and evaluation across the region. Belfast City Council as Lead Partner will glean evidence from key stakeholders/ delivery agents/clients at set intervals through ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This information will be obtained through monitoring returns against KPIs, Focus Groups, questionnaires etc.

**5. Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?**

The NIESS is being led by Belfast City Council and involves all 11 Councils across Northern Ireland. The engagement of and alignment with the work of key partners across the public, private and third sectors will be central to its effectiveness.

Through the development of the initial research, options analysis, and Outline Business Case (OBC) we have undertaken an extensive engagement and consultation process with individuals, other agencies/departments and partners across the region. This has included, over and above regular and ongoing engagement with all 11-Councils Working Group members, SOLACE Economic Recovery Group, Department for Economy, Invest Northern Ireland, DAERA, Department for Communities, InterTrade Ireland, Young Enterprise NI, Princes Trust, Women in Business, Catalyst Inc, Queens University Belfast, University of Ulster, Social Enterprise NI, Enterprise NI, [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk) team and Max Impact (provide support for refugees and migrants).

As part of the ongoing development of the service, further research was commissioned to refine and shape content and marketing strategies to form a brand awareness strategy, that focuses on the customers, the language used to identify and engage potential clients and help to shape enterprise awareness activities to assist recruitment targets. Individuals from a range of different backgrounds were engaged through email surveys and facilitation of focus groups around the perceptions of the current support provision from Councils. This included representatives from each of the 11-Councils, relevant business stakeholders e.g., local enterprise companies, consultants and delivery agents for current ERDF programmes, stakeholders from priority groups including female entrepreneurs; young people; individuals with a disability; individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Over 300 were contacted and 55 responses received citing a lack of flexibility; the need for one point of contact; inconsistency of information / delivery across Councils; lack of joined up thinking and duplication – the new service will redress these within the various elements of support.

BCC as lead Council facilitated a pre-market engagement event in January 2023 for all interested parties presenting the proposed procurement framework for feedback on the model. Attended by over 120 stakeholders/potential suppliers to inform and finalise the procurement framework documents. The purpose and likely evolution of stakeholder engagement around this service has been developed following engagements with key stakeholders and factored as part of the Management and Governance structure. Through the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the service client and stakeholder engagement will be factored in to ensure the service continues to meet the needs of target groups and is embedded as a core element of the enterprise ecosystem across the region.

#### External

Ref list above (paragraph 2)

Department for the Economy (DfE)

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

DfC

Invest NI

Local enterprise and business support partners

Universities and Colleges

#### Internal

Ref list above (paragraph 2)

Individual Councils community plans

Individual Councils corporate and economic strategies

## **Section B**

### **Information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts for equality and good relations**

54

#### 6. Outline consultation process planned or achieved

##### **Consultation achieved:**

- As referenced previously, through the development of the initial research, options analysis and Outline Business Case (OBC) we have undertaken an extensive engagement and consultation process with individuals and partners across the region. This has included, over and above regular and ongoing engagement with all 11-Councils Working Group members \*(see below) - SOLACE Economic Recovery Group, Department for Economy, Invest Northern Ireland, DAERA, Department for Communities, InterTrade Ireland, Young Enterprise NI, Princes Trust, Women in Business, Catalyst Inc, Queens University Belfast, University of Ulster, Social Enterprise NI, Enterprise NI, [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk) team and Max Impact (provide support for refugees and migrants). Feedback and further details of engagement can be viewed within the OBC. Some of the key points arising from these engagements include; the need for a different approach enabling a more customised entrepreneur centric solutions catering for difference types of entrepreneurs/enterprises; the awareness that the successful implementation of the new arrangements is likely to need the involvement of several partners from across the enterprise/innovation support ecosystem and the proposal offer scope for a strong partnership approach through co-design, co-development and implementation.
- In addition to this engagement, the 11 Councils commissioned an external research agency to undertake a survey around perceptions of the current business support programme (Go For It) available across the region, to identify gaps in provision and to understand market needs with the aim of supporting the development of a future delivery model. This report completed in September 2022, collated 501 local entrepreneurs' feedback on how the programme was delivered. Furthermore, as part of the marketing strategy and brand development, an appointed contractor conducted focus groups in January 2023 specifically with females and young people and invited their participation in sense-checking decisions around visibility and awareness raising. 17 people took part in the focus groups and responded to questions on barriers to entrepreneurial success in addition to service considerations. These were incorporated into the brand development and concept review ahead of final recommendations.
- As the service mobilises, we have planned 6 month and 12-month evaluations whereby target groups will be engaged in our qualitative research through focus groups and structured interviews. These will temperature check the level of receptivity to the service within each group and further investigate barriers that exist between the groups and their entrepreneurship goals. NIESS will use the 12-month evaluation stage to flex the offer where possible to further support these needs across NI. Through our Programme Management Office, qualitative and quantitative evidence will be gathered to support decision making between the 11 Councils on the methods to achieve this.
- In November 2022, the lead Council, Belfast City Council, facilitated the event 'Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland: Inspire, Inform, Include,' which directly engaged with persons with disabilities. The All-Party Parliamentary Working Group for Inclusive Entrepreneurship were also engaged along with other

stakeholders who have influence in the sector. Recommendations and next steps were developed as a result of this event, covering partner inclusion, funding, engagement and promotion, and strategy/policy development.

- Through the community planning process each of the Councils across the region have developed individual plans which aim to set out long-term priorities for improving the social, economic, and environmental well-being of districts and the people who live there. Through these plans Councils work to ensure that there are shared and improved outcomes for everyone across the region.
- Each of the partner Councils have made a commitment to delivering on Equality and Good Relations aiming to create places which are tolerant and fair, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated, in an inclusive manner. Promoting equality and good relations are key to improving the quality of life for everyone - making the region a better place to live, work, and do business. Each of the partner Councils have developed an equality scheme, links to which are included below –

ANBC	<a href="https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/equality/">https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/equality/</a>
ABCBC	<a href="https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/equality/">https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/equality/</a>
BCC	<a href="https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-scheme-and-equality-action-plans">https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-scheme-and-equality-action-plans</a>
CCGBC	<a href="https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/council/publications-policies/causeway-coast-and-glens-district-council-draft-equality-scheme">https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/council/publications-policies/causeway-coast-and-glens-district-council-draft-equality-scheme</a>
DSDC	<a href="https://www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/equality">https://www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/equality</a>
F&ODC	<a href="https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/policies/equality/equality-scheme/">https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/policies/equality/equality-scheme/</a>
LCCC	<a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75</a>
MEABC	<a href="https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/council/equality-good-relations/equality-scheme">https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/council/equality-good-relations/equality-scheme</a>
MUDC	<a href="https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality">https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/equality</a>
NMDDC	<a href="https://www.newrymournedown.org/equality">https://www.newrymournedown.org/equality</a>
ANDBC	<a href="https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality">https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality</a>

### Consultation planned:

- From programme initiation, to support the development and delivery of the Service – Officers will undertake regular consultation with stakeholders and service users.
- Several focus groups and consultations are planned to support the service design ensuring the support in place is accessible for all user groups across the region. These focus groups will include as a minimum; individuals who have accessed business support services previously, students and young people, females, persons with a disability, ethnic minority groups, existing businesses, and the general public. Focus groups will take place across the region.
- As the service mobilises, we have planned 6 month and 12-month evaluations whereby target groups will be engaged in our qualitative research through focus groups and structured interviews. These will temperature check the level of receptivity to the service within each group and further investigate barriers that exist between the groups and their entrepreneurship goals. NIESS will use the 12-month

evaluation stage to flex the offer where possible to further support these needs across NI. Through our Programme Management Office, qualitative and quantitative evidence will be gathered to support decision making between the 11 Councils on the methods to achieve this.

## 7. Available evidence

*What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Set out all evidence below to help inform your screening assessment.*

*It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as: monitoring information; complaints; research surveys; consultation exercises from other public authorities.*

As outlined above the service has been informed and shaped by research and consultation. In addition to the specific research for the service it has also been shaped through local intelligence at an individual Council level including –

- Belfast City Council Labour Market Partnership Strategic Assessment
- Data captured through the regional “Go for It” programme
- Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) - Maximising potential: A review of labour market outcomes for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland  
[https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1275811/Disability-and-the-labour-market.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1275811/Disability-and-the-labour-market.pdf)
- UUEPC and FSB – Business start-up support in Northern Ireland; a critical review and future perspectives  
[https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/831226/Back-to-the-Start-up-Full-Report.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/831226/Back-to-the-Start-up-Full-Report.pdf)
- UUEPC – Regional Analysis of under-represented groups engaged in entrepreneurship: 2017
- GEM – Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Northern Ireland Report 2021  
<https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/global-entrepreneurship-monitor-northern-ireland-report-20212022>
- NMD Labour Market Partnership Strategic Assessment (available upon request to [business@nmandd.org](mailto:business@nmandd.org))
- BRCD – Decade of Opportunity [Belfast Region City Deal](#)

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information and engagement																																																																																																																																																																																						
Religious belief	<p>Currently data on religious belief for participants is not monitored</p> <p>The 2021 Census indicates that 45.7% per cent of NI residents are from a Catholic community background and 43.5% per cent are from a Protestant and other Christian community background. 1.5% of the population are from other religions and 9.3% of residents state they are of no religious persuasion (NISRA Census 2021).</p>																																																																																																																																																																																						
Political opinion	<p>Currently data on participant political opinion is not monitored.</p> <p>Composition of District Councils Based on May 2023 NI Local Elections</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="301 647 1536 1149"> <thead> <tr> <th>District</th> <th>SF</th> <th>DUP</th> <th>UUP</th> <th>SDLP</th> <th>APNI</th> <th>GP</th> <th>TUV</th> <th>PBP</th> <th>PUP</th> <th>Aontú</th> <th>Militant</th> <th>Ind</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Antrim and Newtownabbey</td> <td>9</td> <td>13</td> <td>7</td> <td>1</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ards and North Down</td> <td>0</td> <td>14</td> <td>8</td> <td>1</td> <td>12</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon</td> <td>15</td> <td>13</td> <td>6</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belfast</td> <td>22</td> <td>14</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>11</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Causeway Coast and Glens</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derry City and Strabane</td> <td>18</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fermanagh and Omagh</td> <td>21</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lisburn and Castlereagh</td> <td>4</td> <td>14</td> <td>6</td> <td>2</td> <td>13</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mid and East Antrim</td> <td>4</td> <td>14</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mid Ulster</td> <td>19</td> <td>11</td> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>3</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newry Mourne and Down</td> <td>20</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>2</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>TOTAL</b></td> <td>144</td> <td>122</td> <td>54</td> <td>39</td> <td>67</td> <td>5</td> <td>9</td> <td>2</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>20</td> <td>462</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Each Council approves the annual programmes of work, and they support the promotion of the support into their local communities.</p>	District	SF	DUP	UUP	SDLP	APNI	GP	TUV	PBP	PUP	Aontú	Militant	Ind	Total	Antrim and Newtownabbey	9	13	7	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	40	Ards and North Down	0	14	8	1	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	40	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	15	13	6	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	41	Belfast	22	14	2	5	11	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	60	Causeway Coast and Glens	12	13	4	3	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	40	Derry City and Strabane	18	5	3	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	40	Fermanagh and Omagh	21	6	7	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	Lisburn and Castlereagh	4	14	6	2	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	40	Mid and East Antrim	4	14	8	0	7	0	5	0	0	0	0	2	40	Mid Ulster	19	11	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	40	Newry Mourne and Down	20	5	1	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	41	<b>TOTAL</b>	144	122	54	39	67	5	9	2	0	0	0	20	462
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Racial group	<p>Ethnicity of participants will be monitored in the NIESS</p> <p>Ethnic groups per 100 as detailed in the NI 2021 Census reported 97% selected white – 3% selected other.</p> <p>A UUEPC report on underrepresentation in business start-up across the region identified that ethnic minority groups are underrepresented, therefore these groups are actively targeted through the umbrella organisations such as Max Impact.</p> <p>Ethnic minority businesses are estimated to contribute £25-£32 billion to the UK economy per year according to the Economic and Social Research Council which should not be underestimated, and more support needs to be provided.</p>																																																																																																																																																																																						
Age	<p>Participant age will be monitored, the service targets those 16 plus.</p> <p>Age demographic as per 2021 Census for the NI Population is as follows: 0–14-year-olds (NI 19%) 15-39-year-olds (NI 31%) 40-64-year-olds (NI 32%) 65+-year-olds (NI 17%)</p> <p>According to GEM 2019, the majority of people starting a business are between 25 and 44. After the age of 44, the level of start-ups drops significantly down, which also means that there should be a support for young people in business and those over 44.</p>																																																																																																																																																																																						

	<p>The UUEPC report (Analysis of under-represented groups engaged in entrepreneurship) suggests that young people are underrepresented when it comes to enterprise. The main barriers tend to be around access to finance, skills and knowledge base.</p> <p>The service will seek to reach and support young people.</p>
<p>Marital status</p>	<p>Data on marital status is not currently monitored.</p> <p>Of the 1,514,743 'usual residents aged 16 and over' – 45.59% are married, 0.18% are in a civil partnership, 3.78% are separated (still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership) 6.02% are divorces or formally in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved and 6.36% are widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership.</p> <p>Over the last six censuses there has been a fall in the percentage of adults (aged 16 and over) who are 'Married' - down from 61% in 1971 to 46% in 2021, with a rise in the percentage who are 'Single' - up from 31% in 1971 to 38% in 2021.</p> <p>Over the same time period the percentage of adults who are 'Separated, widowed or divorced' has risen from 9% in 1971 to 16% in 2021. The number of divorced adults has risen from 3,000 in 1971 to over 90,000 in 2021;</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Currently data on sexual orientation is not monitored.</p> <p>A sexual orientation question was included for the first time in Census 2021. In total 2.1% of people aged 16 and over (31,600 adults) identified as LGB+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other sexual orientation), 90% of adults identified as 'Straight or Heterosexual' and 8% of adults either ticked 'prefer not to say' or did not answer the question; the proportion of adults who identified as LGB+ varied by area and age. By area, this ranged from 4.1% of adults in Belfast to 1.1% in Mid-Ulster and by age from 4.6% of people aged 16 to 24 to 0.3% of people aged 65 and over.</p>
<p>Men and women generally</p>	<p>All programmes and support are available to men and women; however, the service will put in place specific provision to target females and includes specific female outreach targets. The aim of this is to increase the number of female entrepreneurs across the region.</p> <p>General gender breakdown of the Population of Northern Ireland according to the 2021 census is: Females (NI 51%) Males (NI 49%)</p> <p>The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) highlights that NI has historically lagged behind the rest of the UK in terms of enterprise start-up activity. It uses the Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) index to measure the propensity of individuals in particular countries to be entrepreneurial and shows that in 2019 (pre-Covid-19) the NI TEA rate was 6.6% compared to 9.9% for the UK as a whole. TEA fell across all areas during the pandemic.</p> <p>In 2021, the GEM results suggest that both male (NI 11% vs. UK 13.2%) and female (NI 3.1% vs. UK 7.7%) entrepreneurship rates are lower in NI compared to the UK average. In 2021 the gap between females and males in NI widened, after being the smallest among the UK nations in 2020.</p> <p><a href="https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/GEM-Report-NI-2022.pdf">https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/GEM-Report-NI-2022.pdf</a></p>

	<p>According to the 2022 Gender Index - Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of female-led companies at 13.5% and the highest share of male-led companies at 65.1%. This means that if Northern Ireland had a similar rate of female-leadership to that in England (at 18.3%), it would translate to an additional 3,134 female-led companies in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Women in Northern Ireland publication 2020, found the number of employees in NI was evenly split between males and females in 2019, though the number of self-employed males was more than double the number of self-employed females.</p>
Disability	<p>Disability will be monitored as part of the service</p> <p>The 2021 Census showed that 79% of the NI Population rate their health as 'good or very good' 14% as 'fair' and 8% as 'bad or very bad' Additionally, it is reported that 463,000 (24%) people have their day-to-day activities limited by a health problem or disability. 76% of the population are not limited.</p> <p>All 11 Local Government Districts (LGDs) had levels of 'Good or very good' general health above 75% in 2021, with four Councils Mid Ulster, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh, Newry, Mourne &amp; Down and Armagh City, Banbridge &amp; Craigavon having levels above 80%.</p> <p>In 2021, Belfast and Derry City &amp; Strabane LGDs had the highest percentage of their population with 'Bad or very bad' general health (at 10.0% and 9.5% respectively). Indeed, over the decade to 2021, every LGD has seen an increase in the percentage of its population with 'Bad or very bad' general health.</p> <p>From the 2011 Census to the 2021 Census, all Local Government Districts had a rise in the number and percentage of people with a limiting long-term health problem or disability in the decade to 2021. The increase was highest in Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey at 32.0% and lowest in Belfast at 17.6%.</p> <p>EU and US data shows that self-employment rates are higher for disabled people than for those without a disability. For example, in the UK, 18% of disabled men and 8% of disabled women are self-employed, versus 14% and 6% respectively for people without a disability (Boylan and Burchart, 2002).</p> <p>For the first time - Census 2021 included 'Autism or Asperger syndrome' as a listed health condition and 35,000 people were recorded with this condition. Of this, 19,000 children (or one child in twenty) had 'Autism or Asperger syndrome' recorded.</p> <p>A few key results for other listed conditions are 'Emotional, psychological or mental health' 165,100 people (8.7%), 'Deafness or partial hearing loss' 109,500 people (5.8%), 'Learning difficulty (for example dyslexia)' 59,900 people (3.1%) and 'Blindness or partial sight loss' 34,000 people (1.8%).</p> <p>The GEM NI report notes that people with a disability are more likely to start their own business (than people without a disability) and are also more likely to set up a social enterprise. The research does however note various challenges faced by entrepreneurs with a disability which included: ▪ Lack of awareness and understanding of accessibility, both physically and virtually; ▪ Inconsistent support available across the UK; ▪ Lack of integration of disability and entrepreneurship supports; ▪ The inaccessibility of the mainstream start-up space, which often glorifies burnout or focuses on building a business alongside 9-5 work; ▪ Co-designing all programmes of</p>

	<p>support (mainstream or disability-specific) with people with lived experience of disability, and recompensing disabled people for their expertise and time, as with all other professions.</p> <p>The research highlighted that supports for disabled entrepreneurs needs to tackle multiple areas, including mentorship, specific expertise, and support extended to co-founders. It also noted the possibility of business accelerator facilities, rather than being generalised in approach, taking more of an elective approach that centres on disabled entrepreneurs and attracts people interested in supporting them. The key issue here is again, ensuring that the enterprise ecosystem in NI and the services provided through the NIESS can be aligned to these specific needs, as part of an overall inclusive approach</p> <p>Across the NIESS, support will be provided in order to ensure that all of our activities are accessible to all people with disabilities. NIESS will engage with organisations such as Disability Action to share programmes/academies with their network. Programme information is regularly distributed to disability support groups. Tailored awareness initiatives are in place to encourage individuals with a disability to consider starting a business and reasonable adjustments will be made where required/requested.</p>
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>Caring responsibility will be monitored as part of the service</p> <p>On Census Day, 2021, within NI there are 768,809 households. 44.86% of households reported having one or more dependent children.</p> <p>Census 2021 recorded that one person in eight of the population aged 5 or more (or 222,200 people) provided unpaid care to a relative or friend who had a health condition or illness. • Census 2021 also recorded how many hours the carer provided each week. One person in twenty-five (68,700 people) provided 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week. • While people of all ages provided unpaid care, it was most common among those aged 40 to 64, at one person in five (or 124,600 people). • The census also found that 2,600 children aged 5 to 14 provided unpaid care. • The overall number of people providing unpaid care has not changed markedly from Census 2011 to Census 2021. However, the number of people providing 50 or more hours unpaid care each week has increased (up from 56,300 people in 2011 to 68,700 people in 2021</p> <p>The NIESS recognises that individuals with a caring responsibility may have their own barriers in starting up a business and we are in the process of looking into how they can be better supported through providing access to childcare, offering hybrid access to the service with both in person and online events/training and mentoring. ('Autism or Asperger syndrome' as a listed health condition and 35,000 people were recorded with this condition. Of this, 19,000 children (or one child in twenty) had 'Autism or Asperger syndrome' recorded.) NIESS will be flexible to the varying needs of individuals.</p>

**8. What is the likely impact (indicate if the policy impact is positive or negative) on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact?**

Section 75 category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	There is no data available which indicates a positive or negative difference between groups of different religious belief. All programmes are open to all Section 75 groups to attend and with the aim to promote and support enterprise and business activity, any impacts are likely to be positive.	None
Political opinion	No data available which indicates a positive or negative difference between groups of different political opinion	None
Racial group	<p>In the UK, the self-employment rate among the migrant population is slightly higher than the UK-born population. However, the UUEPC report on under-represented groups states that ethnic minorities face certain barriers in terms of money, markets and management. Increasing awareness of the programmes through the Migrant Forum and the provision of additional supports such as translation services, qualification mapping to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is likely to have a positive impact on those from different racial groups.</p> <p>Support will include the provision of interpreters if required.</p> <p>As part of NIESS, each Council will complete an Annual Service Plan which incorporates identified needs within the Council area for specific ethnic minority groups. This will take into account socio-economic climate and the business eco-system within each Council area, as each will have distinct characteristics. Councils will engage where appropriate with their Good Relations units to support this work</p>	Minor
Age	Individuals aged 16 plus are targeted for our start-up programmes. There is no maximum age limit. However, the evidence from UUEPC suggests that the self-employment rates for young people (15-24, or 18-30) are generally much lower than for the total working age population.	Minor

	<p>According to GEM 2019, majority of people starting a business are between 25 and 44. After the age of 44, the level of start-ups drops significantly down, which also means that there should be a support for young people in business and those over 44.</p>	
Marital status	<p>No data available which indicates a positive or negative difference.</p>	None
Sexual orientation	<p>No data available which indicates a positive or negative difference.</p>	None
Men and women generally	<p>Women in Northern Ireland publication 2020, found the number of employees in NI was evenly split between males and females in 2019, though the number of self-employed males was more than double the number of self-employed females.</p> <p>Specific supports for women will be available within the NIESS.</p>	Minor (positive)
Disability	<p>According to the UUEPC, there is limited data on self-employment by disabled people. Some data suggests that disabled men are more likely to be self-employed than disabled women. However, research indicates that people with disabilities are likely to face more barriers to enterprise. Tailored support and increased awareness raising of business start support and programmes is likely to have a positive impact.</p>	Minor (positive)
Dependants	<p>No data available which indicates a positive or negative difference between groups with dependents. However, people with caring responsibilities tend to face more barriers and ESS is working towards addressing those.</p>	Minor (positive)

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

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	<p>Information is disseminated via many different social media channels, Council websites, e-shots to mailing lists, occasional radio advertising and advertising to ensure all communities across the region are aware of the Service regardless of their religious belief.</p> <p>Equality of opportunity will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.</p>	<p>People of different religious beliefs are likely to benefit equally: there is no perceived impact on equality of opportunity.</p>
Political opinion	n/a	<p>There is no perceived impact on equality of opportunity.</p>
Racial group	<p>Language and translation services are available to ensure those whose first language is not English can access programmes. There is an opportunity to promote this support more widely and via the targeted channels.</p> <p>The Service will have provision of interpreters.</p> <p>Equality of opportunity will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.</p>	n/a
Age	<p>There is scope to target our marketing campaigns for programmes to target specific age groups to encourage participation.</p> <p>Equality of opportunity will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.</p>	n/a
Marital status	n/a	<p>People of different marital status are likely to benefit equally: there is no perceived impact on equality of opportunity.</p>
Sexual orientation	n/a	<p>People of different sexual orientation are likely to benefit</p>

		equally: there is no perceived impact on equality of opportunity.
Men and women generally	<p>As outlined previously, women are underrepresented with regards to enterprise; there is scope to tailor some of our programmes to specifically target women.</p> <p>Equality of opportunity will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.</p>	n/a
Disability	<p>There is evidence that disabled people are underrepresented when it comes to enterprise so the service will aim to be more proactive with people with disabilities and include them in the programmes. Accessible venues are used for our programmes. The Councils' inclusive events guide will also be introduced in our contracts. NIESS will consult with Disability Action and other umbrella groups.</p> <p>The Service will have provision of interpreters/ BSL signers and make other reasonable adjustments as required.</p> <p>The team will also work with DfC to understand changes to welfare reform and impacts. Equality of opportunity will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.</p>	n/a
Dependants	<p>There is an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity especially for those with caring responsibilities by putting in place additional supports that help to address the barriers in accessing programmes, i.e., childcare arrangements, running programmes at different times.</p> <p>ESS will promote equality of opportunity and good relations are addressed and communicated throughout our programmes.</p>	n/a

**10. To what extent is the policy likely to impact (positive or negatively) on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? What is the level of impact?**

<b>Good relations category</b>	<b>Likely impact?</b>	<b>Level of impact? Minor/Major/None</b>
Religious belief	Programmes are open to everyone over 16 regardless of their religious belief. This encourages those of different religious beliefs to meet and develop, therefore promoting good relations between people of different religious beliefs.	Positive Minor
Political opinion	Data on political opinion is not monitored, but the service is inclusive of people with different political opinions. Programmes are designed for those 16plus from various backgrounds, religious beliefs and political opinions, they are mixed and is therefore likely to provide an opportunity to promote good relations.	Positive Minor
Racial group	Programmes are designed for those 16plus from various backgrounds, religious beliefs and political opinions, they are mixed and is therefore likely to provide an opportunity to promote good relations.	Positive Minor

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

<b>Good relations category</b>	<b>If Yes, provide details</b>	<b>If No, provide reasons</b>
Religious belief	Programmes are designed to be inclusive but by delivering the programmes in different locations across the region, there may be an opportunity to promote good relations.	n/a
Political opinion	As above, programmes are designed to be inclusive and by delivering the programmes in different locations across the region, there may be an opportunity to promote good relations.	n/a
Racial group	As above, programmes are designed to be inclusive and by delivering the programmes in different locations across the region, there may be an opportunity to promote good relations.	n/a

## Section C

All Councils have legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order** and Questions 12-13 relate to these two areas.

### Consideration of Disability Duties

#### **12. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for the Councils to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?**

As part of the new governance structure, the NIESS working group will seek to establish a forum which includes representatives across a range of enterprise and business support organisations, including those umbrella organisations that engage directly with underrepresented groups. This will include representatives from organisations that engage with people with disabilities who can assist with providing opportunities for the Councils to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. This engagement is important to ensure that the needs of individuals with a disability are factored into initiatives. As part of this engagement, information is regularly distributed on programmes which is distributed to disability support groups. The NIESS has also put in place tailored awareness initiatives to encourage individuals with a disability to consider starting a business as well as support to enable growth. All meetings, workshops and events will be held in venues across the region that are accessible. We will ensure full accessibility to this service by providing information in alternative formats, easy read and/or large font information as required. Reasonable adjustments will be addressed as appropriate.

#### **13. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life?**

Yes. Marketing activity targeted at individuals with a disability will be enhanced. Individuals who have previously participated in support will be offered the opportunity to become a role model to further increase participation.

### **14. Multiple Identities**

#### **Provide details of data on the impact of the policy with multiple identities**

It is unclear based on the research available, but it is likely that women with disabilities and caring responsibilities are likely to face multiple barriers.

In addition, it is recognised that the cumulative impact of multiple sources of disadvantage – low incomes, benefit dependency, low skills levels and qualifications – are likely to combine together to impact on an individual's opportunity and capacity to participate in business start-up/growth programmes.

**Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.**

**15. Monitoring Arrangements**

*Section 75 places a requirement Councils to have equality monitoring arrangements in place to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity.*

*Outline what data you will collect in the future to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.*

<b>Equality</b>	<b>Good Relations</b>	<b>Disability Duties</b>
Information will be collated by delivery partners/All Councils through the CRM system and reported to Belfast City Council as lead partner on a six-monthly basis. This will enable close monitoring of the programme in the initial stages and timescales can be reviewed as the programme progresses.	Information will be collated by delivery partners/ All Councils through the CRM system and reported to Belfast City Council as lead partner on a six-monthly basis. This will enable close monitoring of the programme in the initial stages and timescales can be reviewed as the programme progresses. emerge.	Ensure there are no physical barriers for disabled people in accessing events and programmes, so they can participate fully.  Participation levels of disabled residents and take-up levels of accessing support.  Information will be collated by delivery partners/All Councils through the CRM system and reported to Belfast City Council on a six-monthly basis This will enable close monitoring of the programme in the initial stages and timeframes can be reviewed as the programme progresses.
Complaints to be considered (across all Council areas)	Complaints to be considered (across all Council areas)	Complaints to be considered (across all Council areas)
Unusual trends will be considered and taken into account as relevant	Unusual trends will be considered and taken into account as relevant	Unusual trends will be considered and taken into account as relevant

We monitor and track engagement on all activity; however, the main purpose of this is to address operational issues. It has not been a compulsory requirement for participants to provide Section 75 data. However, to increase the level of data we are gathering through our contracts we will revise the Equality Monitoring Form to ensure that the data we are gathering is relevant and the form is user friendly and easy to complete. It is envisaged that this data will be collected electronically at the initial contact stage. All data will be anonymized at the point of collection. This will enable us to compare/measure the impact of the NIESS on underrepresented groups across the region, specifically in each Council area.

**Section D**

**Formal Record of Screening Decision**

**Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened**  
**Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS)**

I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

x	equality of opportunity and good relations
x	disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is – *(place an X in the appropriate box below)*

	* <b>Screened In</b> – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
--	---

	* <b>Screened Out</b> – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:
--	---

X	<p>* <b>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions</b> (minor impacts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</li> <li>• Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:</li> </ul> <p>All impacts are minor and positive (i.e. not negative) therefore we can screen out. The NIESS will introduce an electronic monitoring system for Section 75 and review it annually across Council areas. NIESS will proactively target, young people, females, individuals with a disability, individuals with dependents, ethnic minorities and will provide access to tailored support to target the most under-represented groups.</p>
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Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk). The screening form will be placed on the BCC website and a link provided to the Council's Section 75 consultees.

For more information about equality screening contact:–

**Lorraine Dennis**

**Equality & Diversity Officer**

**Belfast City Council**

**City Hall**

**Belfast**

**BT1 5GS**

**Telephone: 028 9027 0511**

**[equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk)**

## Appendix A

72

## Committee approval

ANBC	Full Council meeting on 27 March 2023 - Item 12.6 covers ESS participation: <a href="https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/getmedia/f0b9bc8d-0f54-4359-a17f-d1253be0893/Meeting-27-March-2023.pdf.aspx">https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/getmedia/f0b9bc8d-0f54-4359-a17f-d1253be0893/Meeting-27-March-2023.pdf.aspx</a>
ABCBC	Presented under confidential business on the 14th Feb to the Economic & Regeneration Centre . Subsequently approved at the full Council meeting on the 27th February. Minutes available upon request
BCC	Restricted Report - Strategic Policy and Resources committee, 17th February 2023 Minutes available upon request
CCGBC	<a href="https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/uploads/minutes/230221_Leisure_and_Development_Minutes.pdf">https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/uploads/minutes/230221_Leisure and Development Minutes.pdf</a>
DSDC	<a href="http://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/mgAi.aspx?ID=33275">http://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/mgAi.aspx?ID=33275</a>
F&ODC	Minutes available upon request Approval granted : Regeneration and Community Committee, Tuesday 14 February 2023 at 7pm
LCCC	Title of Committee Item: 'New Entrepreneurship Support Service proposals – UK Shared Prosperity Fund' LCCC Restricted: Confidential Committee Item Date: 2 March 2023 – Lagan Valley Island Availability: On request
MEABC	Restricted Report Monday 20 February 2023 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, The Braid, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena and via remote access. Minutes available upon request
MUDC	Approved under closed business by Council's Development Committee on 16 February 2023
NMDDC	<a href="#">minutes_enterprise_regeneration_tourism_committee_minutes_16_january_2023.pdf (new)</a>
ANDBC	Restricted Report – Place and Prosperity Committee Meeting was 5th January 2023 at 7pm

# Rural Needs Impact Assessment Template (RNIA)

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

### 1A. Name of Public Authority

**Belfast City Council as Lead for 11 Council Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS)**

This Rural needs Impact Assessment is for the regional (NIESS) and considers each Council’s needs. It will be at the discretion of individual Councils as to whether local screening exercises need to take place. The NIESS aligns to the Programme for Government, 10x Economic Strategy, DfE Economic Recovery Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, and the Community Plans of local Councils. Since 2015, Councils have been responsible for economic development, including responsibility for supporting business start-ups and the growth of micro/small businesses. NIESS will support the Councils to deliver on statutory responsibilities for delivering enterprise and business start-up support.

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

The new Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) aims to deliver a connected enterprise support service that enables individuals and businesses to access the relevant support services to meet their needs and the growth ambitions of their businesses.

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

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
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 for Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS)

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

The key objectives of the NI Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) is aligned to the 10x Economic Strategy, Programme for Government, DFE Economic Recovery Action Plan, City & Growth Deals, and the Community Plans of local Councils, in particular:

- Creating employment and opportunity,
- Fostering business growth,
- Strengthening business relationships and making it easy to do business,
- Reducing economic inequalities,
- Addressing barriers to employment at structural and personal levels,
- Addressing educational inequalities and increasing skills attainment,
- Reducing poverty and economic inactivity,
- “Bridging” local need with regional/national policy.

The NIESS will provide an offer than can meet future ambitions whilst ensuring an inclusive approach, where local ecosystems in each Local Government District will be able to cater for a diverse range of entrepreneurs and enterprise types.

Delivery of the NIESS will consist of 4 key elements representing a continuum of support that will be required from pre-start support, through start-up and the growth journey thereafter. The support aims to engage with 22,050 individuals/businesses at its peak.

Whilst this is a regional service, Belfast City Council have led on the development of the service and are the nominated lead Council for the ongoing development and delivery. As such, BCC will lead on procurement for the service with each individual Council contributing to ensure the service meets the local needs of each Council. There are four proposed elements of provision:

<b>ENGAGE - Early aspiration and support (for would be entrepreneurs)</b>	<i>Reaching 12,000 per annum and working more intensively with c3.5K per annum to refine and support a start-up idea. To achieve a minimum of 1,500 individuals achieving a wider range of start-up outcomes, outside of formal business registration data as well as a range of other impacts.</i>
<b>FOUNDATION - Support for early founding (employer enterprises/ start-ups)</b>	<i>To work with c1,200 individuals/ businesses per annum to work towards target of 750 registered start-ups</i>
<b>ENABLING GROWTH – Aligned to aspirations and potential</b>	<i>To work with c4000 businesses per annum arising both from the start-up pool above and entry of existing businesses from LGDs that meet eligibility criteria</i>
<b>ACCELERATED SCALING - for start-ups typically over 2 years old</b>	<i>To work with 10 organisations to achieve the indicative target of 30 by 5 years</i>

## 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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section 2E.

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

The NIESS is expected to impact positively all those who live in, work in, study, invest in or visit Northern Ireland. It will specifically target individuals with entrepreneurial intentions or those who haven't considered entrepreneurship (particularly those in underrepresented groups), those interested in starting a business or becoming self-employed, and existing businesses across the region.

It is likely to impact rural communities positively as it enables equal access to support service.

Supporting individuals and businesses located in rural areas may require an adjusted delivery to meet specific rural needs.

**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.**

It is unlikely that the NIESS will impact the rural communities differently as the programme will be delivered to all areas with mixed delivery for some elements of the programme. Councils have invested in digital infrastructure to ensure that digital services are available across the whole Region and that rural areas are serviced. This, coupled with wider regional programmes such as Project Stratum, increases accessibility for participants. The programme will propose in-person/online activities and events that can be rotated across areas to ensure that rural communities have equal access to such services.

The NI Entrepreneur Support Service will have the same beneficial impact on both the rural and urban areas. The support service is open to individuals and businesses, regardless of geography or background. The service will be made available to enable access to all within the Councils' areas. Services will also be offered online to help people overcome barriers of attending in person if this is not option. Where broadband issues arise, individuals or businesses will be signposted to the closest available wi-fi centres or in person events. The service will also be

flexible in terms of appointments so that individuals or businesses can work around transport and/or childcare constraints.

(Recent positives in terms of Digital delivery below)

[Link to Ofcom Report DEC 22](#)

The Northern Ireland Executive, in partnership with Ofcom, has committed to addressing the disparity in the proportion of NI premises unable to receive a ‘superfast’ service. The Project Stratum initiative is currently being undertaken by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to improve access to fast, reliable broadband in rural areas, as outlined in Outcome 11 in the draft Programme for Government. The project is funded by £150m from the UK Government and £15m from the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

In terms of digital connectivity, NI having the highest availability of full fibre services of the four devolved administrations (85%) compared to England (41%), Scotland (41%) and Wales (40%).

Superfast broadband (at least 30 Mbit/s), is available to 94% of premises in Northern Ireland, 3 percentage points higher than last year.

Average broadband download speeds in Northern Ireland have increased by 40% to 115 Mbit/s, up from 82 Mbit/s in 2021, and reflects increasing availability and take-up of faster broadband services. Average download speeds are lower in rural areas but have increased to 68 Mbit/s in 2022, compared to 50 Mbit/s in 2021.

One of the main difficulties for broadband users in rural areas, is achieving high enough speeds for basic use. There has been a trend of decline from 2016 to 2022 in the proportion of properties unable to achieve a minimum acceptable speed in rural areas. As of December 2022, just 1% of rural properties do not have access to decent broadband from either a fixed or FWA network.

**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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.**

N/A

### **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 the response is **NO GO TO Section 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**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 Service have been informed and shaped by research and consultation. In addition to the specific research for the service it has also been shaped through local intelligence at an individual Council level, and through previous experience of delivering enterprise support programmes.

Specific research includes:

- <https://www.ruralcommunitynetwork.org/>
- Belfast City Council Labour Market Partnership Strategic Assessment
- Interim Local Rural Development Strategy for Ards and North Down – Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme, 2014-2020
- Big Plan Part II
- <https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/community-planning/collecting-the-evidence>
- <https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/community-planning/the-big-conversation-panel>
- Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/news/new-ni-multiple-deprivation-measures-2017-lookup-tool#:~:text=The%20updated%20NIMDM%202017%20were%20published%20on%2023,along%20with%20an%20overall%20multiple%20deprivation%20measure%20%28MDM%29.>
- Ards and North Down District Council -Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development, 2018-2030.
- [https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/downloads/Integrated\\_Tourism\\_Regeneration\\_Economic\\_Development\\_Strategy\\_2018-2030\\_v2.pdf](https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/downloads/Integrated_Tourism_Regeneration_Economic_Development_Strategy_2018-2030_v2.pdf)
- Data captured through regional Go For It programme
- UUEPC - Maximising potential: A review of labour market outcomes for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1275811/Disability-and-the-labour-market.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1275811/Disability-and-the-labour-market.pdf)
- UUEPC and FSB – Business start-up support in Northern Ireland; a critical review and future perspectives [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/831226/Back-to-the-Start-up-Full-Report.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/831226/Back-to-the-Start-up-Full-Report.pdf)
- UUEPC – Regional Analysis of under-represented groups engaged in entrepreneurship: 2017
- GEM – Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Northern Ireland Report 2021 <https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/global-entrepreneurship-monitor-northern-ireland-report-20212022>
- NMD Labour Market Partnership Strategic Assessment (available upon request to [business@nmandd.org](mailto:business@nmandd.org))
- BRCD – Decade of Opportunity [Belfast Region City Deal](#)
- A Socio-Economic Profile of the Fermanagh and Omagh District co-authored by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Ulster University Economic Policy Centre - [www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/keystatisticsanddata/your-council-projects/](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/keystatisticsanddata/your-council-projects/)

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

More than a third (36%) of Northern Ireland's (NI) population lives in a rural area. Despite similarities in many aspects of urban and rural life, there are also challenges which tend to be more pronounced in rural areas outside of Belfast.

The nature of rural industry and employment differs from that of towns and cities.

Difficulties with access to services, and issues with connectivity, social and digital, tend to have a disproportionate impact on rural dwellers. The programme delivery structure will be developed in recognition of these issues. The service will be delivered via a hybrid approach and therefore offers flexibility and ease of access to participants and will include support for females, young people and grant support for eligible rural micro-businesses and SME's, to assist with sustainability and growth. Rural enterprises will also be supported in respect of embracing digital technologies.

Delivery of DAERA Rural Development Investment Schemes have sought to increase economic activity and employment rates within the wider rural economy by encouraging and supporting the creation and development of micro and smaller enterprises including on-farm diversification into non-agricultural activities and tourism.

Local consultation and analysis through Councils indicate issues/priorities for rural dwellers include:

- Access to services
- Digital Connectivity
- Demand for Rural Housing
- Opportunities for young people
- Opportunities for women
- Social Inclusion
- Job Creation/Increased employment rates
- Poverty Reduction
- Rural business sustainability

This is similar to the findings of DAERA in their Key Rural Issues 2020 report that found:

- Rural workers (91%) are also much more likely to use private transport to commute than those from urban areas (74%)
- Broadband speed and availability, though improving, is still much lower in rural than in urban areas
- Access to public transport in rural areas is much lower than that in towns and cities - journey times to key services by car are on average twice as long for rural dwellers

Source: DAERA Key Rural Issues 2020

The 11 Councils that are partners in this Service, as created in the reform of Local Government in 2015, were given the responsibility of leading the community planning process for their district. All Councils now have Community Plans in place as a result of extensive consultations/research undertaken with their local communities and are currently in implementation and oversight/ monitoring mode. Therefore, it is important as part of the sub-regional policy context to also review how the service will help reinforce the ambition within these Community Plans. The plans are all shaped around delivering against priority outcomes for their districts – and all have a focus/ theme on enabling inclusive economic growth in their district which means that levels of support may need to be differentiated to reflect local needs including rural communities.

There is a strong focus for Councils to ensure that their local support ecosystems can cater for a wide range of entrepreneurs and enterprise types. As such, it will contribute strongly to the economic imperatives and related outcomes in the Community Plans in each of the Councils.

The NIESS will also complement all 11 Councils current Corporate and Economic Departmental strategies which have a key focus on growing an inclusive economy, encouraging business start-ups, growth ambitions and creating new opportunities for our residents both rural and urban.

**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?**

N/A

**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.**

Issues considered in relation to the socio-economic needs of people in rural areas include promotion, access to support services/training etc, adjustments to delivery to facilitate attendance for young people, older people, women, etc who may live in rural areas and experience travel challenges, childcare challenges, etc. Providing support via a variety of means – online, in person, hybrid, different locations, timing etc, have been considered.

**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 the response is **NO GO TO Section 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?**

The core nature of the programme has not been influenced significantly by rural needs but consideration of the specific issues that may affect individuals and businesses in rural areas allow adjustments to be made to the modes of delivery to ensure equal access and participation.

Further consideration/ongoing evaluation will be given to each element of the service to ensure that the programme reacts and responds to issues and needs at a local level, both in rural and urban communities.

The service will be delivered to all areas with an emphasis on online delivery for some elements of the programme. Councils have invested in digital infrastructure in order to ensure that digital services are available across the whole region and that rural areas are serviced. The programme will propose in person activities and events that can be rotated across the region to ensure that rural communities have equal access to such services. The service will be made available to enable access to all within all Council areas. Services will also be offered online to help people overcome barriers of attending in person if this is not an option. Where broadband issues arise, individuals or businesses will be signposted to the closest available wi-fi centres. The service will also be flexible in terms of appointments so that individuals or businesses can work around transport and/or childcare issues.

**If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 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.**

N/A

**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.



<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Sarah Rafter
<b>Position / Grade:</b>	EDA
<b>Division / Branch:</b>	Enterprise and Business Growth - Place and Economy
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	08/06/2023
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	John Greer
<b>Position / Grade:</b>	Director
<b>Division / Branch:</b>	Place and Economy
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	04/07/2023

<b>Committee:</b>	Regeneration & Growth Committee
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2026
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Economic Development

<b>Item for:</b>	Decision
<b>Subject:</b>	Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) Potential Contingency

## 1.0 Background

1. The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) is a key project within the City and Growth deals digital ecosystem which is managed and administrated by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council on behalf of all Councils within the FFNI Consortium.
2. It has been designed to stimulate Digital Transformation and Innovation in small and micro businesses. These types of business generally do not have the capital reserves or resources to start to experiment, prototype and deliver new products or services using new and emerging technologies.
3. The Council provide a match funding revenue contribution of £69,644 from the economic development budget estimates as follows. The Council's revenue contribution is expected to leverage up to £600,000 in capital grant funding for local businesses.

	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>LCCC Total Revenue Costs</b>
LCCC	£4,800	£22,043	£23,735	£19,066	<b>£69,644</b>

4. The Council continues to play a pivotal role in driving the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund forward, with performance strengthening significantly across each call. A total of 147 Expressions of Interest, 86 invitations to apply were received with 47 full applications submitted, and 30 businesses passed across Calls 1–6, with Call 7 still in progress.
5. Interest in the grant programme from SMEs was limited at the start of the programme but has increased substantially over time as a consequence of a targeted marketing campaign by the Economic Development team.
6. With an overall target of supporting 48 businesses, the Council has already enabled 30 businesses to secure Letters of Offer. This success has been driven by the Council's proactive approach, including targeted marketing, coordinated PR activity, monthly ezines, case study promotion, and dedicated 1-1 support for EOIs and applications, resulting in consistently strong engagement and growing interest call after call.
7. For information, a list of the businesses that have received Letters of Offer to date is appended to this report (**see Appendix**).

**Key Issues**

1. The ongoing indicative timeline to completion for the programme was 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 but it appears more likely that a three month extension period into 2027/2028 will be required to wrap up the programme.
2. The programme has experienced substantial growth, with demand exceeding initial expectations, particularly across Calls 4–6. There has been a marked increase in Expressions of Interest (EOIs), full applications, Letters of Offer (LoOs), and subsequent claims. In later calls, claim values have risen significantly above the levels projected in the original business case which has resulted in funding available for the final Call 7 being substantially reduced.
3. As the programme cannot commit expenditure beyond the approved capital budget, the DTFF eleven Council Steering Group has agreed a consensus decision to manage the remaining funds for Call 7. Council representatives on the DTFF Steering Group have endorsed proceeding immediately with Call 7 applications, on the basis that applicants clearly acknowledge the risk associated with limited remaining funding.
4. Adopting this approach avoids any interruption to programme delivery. Should the programme extend beyond March 2027, each Council will be required to contribute a sum of £4,800 towards additional associated revenue costs based on the original business case calculation.

2.0

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

1. The DTFF Steering Group’s consensus position allowing Call 7 to proceed without delay as outlined in the report.
2. The contingency revenue costs, should the programme extend beyond March 2027.

3.0

**Finance and Resource Implications**

If the programme extends beyond March 2027, an additional revenue contribution will be required from each Council to support delivery and close-down. LCCC’s contribution to revenue costs for this contingency is £4,800.

This amount can be accommodated in the Economic Development budget estimates because of savings generated elsewhere in the programme by virtue of the LEP funding.

4.0

**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

4.1

Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?

Yes

4.2

Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out

	Equality and good relations screening carried out for initial DTFF programme	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.  RNIA carried out for initial DTFF programme	

<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 3a - LCCC DTFF Letters of Offer received by businesses Appendix 3b – Equality Screening Appendix 3c – Rural Needs Screening
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**Appendix 3a - LCCC DTFF Grants**

\*Please note – Call 6 is still ongoing so this is subject to change

LCCC DTFF Businesses			
Name	Call	Value	Project
Draynes Farm	1	£13,230	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
Skout Skills	2	£13,300	Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
Draynes Farm	2	£20,000	Process automation via robotics / cobotics
Game Locker	3	£11,620	Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
Aethergy	3	£20,000	Distributed ledger systems/ blockchain technologies
Knox & Clayton	3	£11,936	Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
Fire Safety Solutions	3	£18,470	Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
Larchfield	3	£19,895	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
4Beauty Group	4	£14,076	Big-data and analytics
Photonic Measurements	4	£7,155	Big-data and analytics
Listo	4	£6,615	Distributed ledger systems/ blockchain technologies
CILNI	4	£8,575	Artificial intelligence and machine learning
Sugar Flower Cake	5	£14,000	Artificial intelligence and machine learning
Maghberry Pharmacy	5	£20,000	Process automation via robotics / cobotics
McKee Engineering	5	£20,000	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
Morrison Dental Clinic	6	£20,000	Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
C&K Gibson Ltd	6	£20,000	Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
Cameron Magee	6	£13,976	Big-data and analytics
Senergy Innovations Ltd	6	£20,000	Big-data and analytics
MCG Secure	6	£6,174	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
Plastics 2000 Ltd	6	£14,163	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
Ralphs Moira	6	£10,232	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
Blow Moulding Technologies	6	£20,000	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
BenergyNutrition Ltd	6	£20,000	Process automation via robotics / cobotics
Kieran Gilmurray and Company Limite	6	£20,000	Big-data and analytics
Kitchen Pod Hire	6	£15,120	Big-data and analytics
D.G.Green and Sons Limited	6	£18,270	Big-data and analytics
King Comms NI ltd	6	£10,000	Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
Speed Motion Films Limited	6	£12,311	Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
C&A Davidson Associates NI Ltd.	6	£4,500	Big-data and analytics
		£443,618	

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

### Policy Information

Name of the Policy / Decision	Digital Transformation Flexible Fund
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	<p>This Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) is a new initiative emerging through the Department for the Economy’s Complementary Fund . The BRCD successfully applied to the Fund with an outline of the need for a DTFF to stimulate innovation and transformation among businesses within the City Deal region. As neither a programme nor a project (but rather a Fund) the DTFF OBC may not come within the definition of a ‘policy’ as defined for the purposes of equality screening , and relates to businesses rather than individuals, it has been subjected to this process at the request of Invest NI.</p> <p>The DTFF concept was initially developed in response to the low levels of innovation and digital transformation taking place across the region - particularly among the small business community and social enterprises. The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions (e.g., hardware, software, bespoke system development).</p> <p>The capital grant fund of £7.5m to which businesses can apply on a competitive basis comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £6m ring-fenced through the NI City &amp; Growth Deal Complementary Fund</li> <li>• £1.1m committed by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)</li> <li>• £450k from Derry City &amp; Strabane Growth Deal</li> </ul> <p>The Outline Business Case submitted to DfE and INI for approval is supported by all 11 local Councils. It has been designed in continuous engagement with relevant council representatives and with other relevant stakeholders and informed by data and analysis to explore and understand the barriers to small and micro businesses innovating and transforming and the opportunities for addressing these barriers.</p> <p>This has highlighted a particular need for capital funding to promote investment in certain transformative technologies. The OBC has been endorsed and approved by the BRCD E&amp;S Board, the BRCD Executive Board and individual Councils through their normal Committee approval arrangements (Dec 22).</p>

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

88

	<p>It is important to note that this Fund is not open to individuals but only to businesses/social enterprises and is not therefore likely to create any adverse impact to any individual from a Section 75 category.</p>
<p>What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)</p>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>It is anticipated that circa 600 businesses will be supported over the delivery timeframe of the project – on the basis of average grant rates. This represents a significant investment in local businesses throughout Northern Ireland. Through this it is expected that more employment opportunities will be created which will lead to an increase in the turnover of participating businesses. It is expected that this will result in an overall return on investment of £1: £2.24.</p> <p>Delivery and management of the DTFF has taken account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Eligibility</b> Micro and small businesses and social enterprises (up to 50 employees) across all sectors that can demonstrate at least one year of trading history, will be eligible. The only exception will be primary agriculture and fisheries<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• <b>Grant funding levels</b> Will range from £5,000 - £20,000 with a grant subvention rate of 70% of total project costs</li> <li>• <b>Eligible expenditure</b> Will be limited to the purchase of capital equipment and/or resources for software or bespoke system development. It will be aligned to advanced digital technologies<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• <b>Application Process</b> Up to 7 funding calls will be opened across the 2.75 year delivery period.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre application</b></p> <p>Workshops will be held in local council areas in advance of calls to help stimulate demand among businesses</p> <p>Businesses will be required to submit a digital</p>

<sup>1</sup> As advised by DAERA due to issues around State Aid

<sup>2</sup> Including; smart technologies (Internet of Things), process automation, big data and analytics, immersive technologies, artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies;

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

	<p>transformation plan to demonstrate the strategic fit and economic return of their proposed investment projects through a competitive application process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Management of the Fund:</b>                      The project will be managed on a cross council basis through existing governance structures and led by Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council (FFNI Consortium). Local Council Economic Development Teams will play a key supporting role to animate and promote the Fund, assess funding applications etc.                 </li> </ul>
<p>Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?</p> <p>If so, explain how.</p>	<p>This Fund should benefit all section 75 groups equally. Evidence for the Fund came from the consultation and engagement process as outlined above which revealed a need for the Fund among small businesses and social enterprises.</p> <p>The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions (e.g., hardware, software, bespoke system development).</p>
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	NMDDC C/O DTFF
Who owns and who implements the policy?	NMDDC

### Implementation factors

	Yes	No
Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?		<b>No</b>
If yes, are they Financial		<b>No</b>
If yes, are they Legislative		<b>No</b>
If yes, and they are Other please specify:		<b>N/A</b>

### Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

	Yes	No
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## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

90

Staff	No Impact	No direct impact on Staff
Service users	No Impact	
Other public sector organisations	Yes	This is a shared approach among the BRCD partners, FFNI Consortium of Councils, and DAERA. It will also influence the work of relevant government departments (DoF and DfE re: Growth deals)
Voluntary/community/trade unions	Yes	No direct or specific impact – social enterprises will be eligible to apply
Other, please specify:	Yes	This programme is designed to offer support to small and micro businesses and social enterprises across all 11 Council areas. The above categories of people will therefore be impacted only insofar as they are members of the general public within those organisations.

### Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they	N/A
Who owns them	N/A

### Available evidence

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for relevant Section 75 categories.

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence / information
Religious belief	<p>Evidence for the Fund came from the consultation and engagement process as outlined above which revealed a need for the Fund among small businesses and social enterprises.</p> <p>The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions (e.g., hardware, software, bespoke system development).</p>
Political opinion	
Racial group	
Age	

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

Marital status	<p>The business case has been informed by detailed and continuous engagement with a range of stakeholders including more than 40 businesses and organisations such as Digital Catapult Catalyst, Innovate UK, Intertrade Ireland and Invest NI.</p> <p>Workshops with Council partners and INI have taken place throughout the process of business case development.</p> <p>A review of best practice models - such as the Leeds City Region Digital Enterprise and the Scottish Digital Boost initiatives – has been used to supplement this work.</p> <p>Ongoing feedback to a Reference Group will inform the need for any future refinement of the programme to optimise its benefits.</p>
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

### Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?  
Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the religious belief of people within those businesses
Political opinion	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the political opinion of people within those businesses
Racial group	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the racial group of people within those businesses
Age	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the age of people within those businesses
Marital status	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the marital status of people within those businesses
Sexual orientation	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the sexual orientation of people within those businesses
Men and women generally	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the gender of people within those businesses
Disability	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the ability or disability of people within those businesses

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

Dependants	Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the dependant status of people within those businesses
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### Screening questions

1. 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**

Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact Major/minor/none
Religious belief	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Political opinion	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Racial group	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Age	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Marital status	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Sexual orientation	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Men and women generally	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Disability	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>
Dependants	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>None</b>

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

Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide details
Religious belief		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the religious belief of people within those businesses
Political opinion		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

93

		and will take no account of the political opinion of people within those businesses
Racial group		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the racial group of people within those businesses
Age		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the age of people within those businesses
Marital status		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the marital status of people within those businesses
Sexual orientation		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the sexual orientation of people within those businesses
Men and women generally		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the gender of people within those businesses
Disability		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the ability or disability of people within those businesses
Dependants		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

		dependant status of people within those businesses
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3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? **Minor/Major/None**

Good relations category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact Major/minor/none
Religious belief	Neutral	None
Political opinion	Neutral	None
Racial group	Neutral	None

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

Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious belief		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the religious belief of people within those businesses
Political opinion		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the political opinion of people within those businesses
Racial group		Eligibility to the Fund will be strictly controlled by the agreed criteria. It will be

# Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

		open to all eligible organisations equally and will take no account of the racial group of people within those businesses
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### Additional considerations

#### Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

#### Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should (please underline one):

- 1. Not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required)
- 2. Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)
- 3. Not be subject to an EQIA at this time
- 4. Be subject to an EQIA

If 1. or 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

1 – This Fund should benefit all section 75 groups equally. As neither a programme nor a project (but rather a Fund) the DTFF OBC does not come within the definition of a ‘policy’ as defined for the purposes of equality screening , and relates to businesses rather than individuals.

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse impacts attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?

In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative policy? Yes / No. If No, please explain why

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

No

If 3. or 4. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

### Timetabling and prioritising EQIA

If 3. or 4, is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? YES / NO

If YES, please provide details:

Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabling the EQIA. 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 EQIA.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	N/A
Social need	N/A
Effect on people’s daily lives	N/A
Relevance to a public authority’s functions	N/A

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist you in timetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in the quarterly Section 75 report.

Proposed date for commencing EQIA:   N/A  

### Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

**In addition to outlining proposed monitoring arrangements on how the impact of the policy’s implementation will be assessed, the following comment should be included:**

“The policy will be reviewed in line with the Council’s agreed policy review cycle i.e. every four years (as per Council’s Equality Scheme commitment 4.31), or sooner as necessary, to ensure that it remains up-to-date with legislative advancements etc.”

# Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Equality Screening Form

### Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Michael Forster	FFNI Operations Lead (DTFF)	13/05/23
		
Approved by:		
Jonathan McGilly	Assistant Director of Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration.	13/05/23
		

Note: The completed policy screening template, signed off by the appropriate policy lead within the Council, and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, should be forwarded to the Head of Corporate Policy who will arrange for it to be included in the Council's Quarterly Report on Screening and made available on the Council's website.

## NMDDC Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

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

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council leads the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund. It is delivered through the FFNI Consortium on behalf of all Council partners.

#### 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.

The DTFF will play a role in supporting small and micro businesses (Urban and Rural) across Northern Ireland to be active in digital transformation. It will provide a capital grant fund to successful applicants to support investment in capital equipment that is critical to the strategic digital transformation ambitions of SMEs and microbusinesses.

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

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input 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.

None of the above – The DTFF is a fund aligned to all Council strategies and will complement the wide range of Digital Transformation and Innovation initiatives support currently available in for businesses in NI. It will also contribute to the City/Growth deal ambitions particularly under the digital and innovation pillars.

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

The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions.

**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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

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

DTFF is open to all micros, small and social enterprises in Northern Ireland both in urban and rural areas.

Through a balanced approach to promotion and delivery the NI wide fund will support businesses across the region from both urban and rural settings. To ensure the benefits of the fund are fairly distributed across the region a robust and proactive approach to the promotion and monitoring of the fund will be undertaken. A combination of regional and local marketing activities will be undertaken to proactively increase awareness of the fund, local pre-call workshops sessions will also be undertaken to promote local understanding and access to the fund. Monitoring arrangements will track applications and successful awards to businesses on a regional, local council and urban/rural basis, with mechanisms in place to target and respond to any geographical areas of underperformance.

**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.**

DTFF will not impact rural areas differently. The Fund is open to all eligible applicants across the province. Although the Fund is open to micro and small businesses and social enterprises (up to 50 employees) across all sectors in NI that can demonstrate at least one year of trading history, primary agriculture, forestry and fisheries <sup>1</sup> will be exempt. These businesses are more likely to be located in rural areas. These sectors were excluded as requested by DAERA due to wider interventions already / previously in place for these sub-sectors and potential issues around State Aid.

**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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**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.**

N/A

## 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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section **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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**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.**

Business soundings were taken with a wide range of stakeholders including direct and specific engagement with DAERA.

Information has been gathered from all Councils to facilitate development of the OBC in relation to the social and economic needs of people within urban and rural areas. This sets out information including that related to population, multiple deprivation, access to services, economy, income and transport, housing, crime, and health and wellbeing.

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

Information has been gathered from all Councils to facilitate development of the OBC in relation to the social and economic needs of people within urban and rural areas. This sets out information including that related to population, multiple deprivation, access to services, economy, income and transport, housing, crime, and health and wellbeing.

The nature of the proposed fund is that it will attract all eligible businesses from across NI on a competitive basis. There will be no adverse impact on any community/section of the community.

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 DTFF concept was developed in response to the low levels of innovation and digital transformation taking place across the region - particularly among the small business community and social enterprises.

The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that micro/small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions (e.g., hardware, software, bespoke system development).

Successful applicants to the Fund are likely to be advantaged by it but it is an open and competitive process to which rural businesses (with the noted exception) are equally eligible to apply provided they meet other criteria.

**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 the response is **NO GO TO Section 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.**

The Fund was developed in response to an identified need across NI small businesses which includes those in rural areas which are therefore equally eligible to apply for it. It is not directed towards individuals.

Following recommendations from DAERA and State Aid Teams within DfE, eligibility to the Fund to certain sectors (agriculture, forestry and fishing) in rural communities was restricted.

As the Fund is rolled out, engagement will be localised across all Council areas to increase awareness and improve accessibility to the Fund in all communities and all parts of NI. Funding Call workshops will be alternated between urban and rural for each call.

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES GO TO Section 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.**

N/A

### 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.



<b>Rural Needs Impact</b>	Michael Forster
<b>Assessment undertaken by:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>	FFNI Operations Lead (DTFF)
<b>Department / Section:</b>	NMDDC- Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism.
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	01/05/2023
<b>Rural Needs Impact</b>	Jonathan McGilly
<b>Assessment approved by:</b>	
<b>Position:</b>	Assistant Director
<b>Department / Directorate:</b>	Enterprise, regeneration and Tourism
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	8 June 2023



<b>Committee:</b>	Regeneration and Growth
<b>Date:</b>	2 April 2026
<b>Report from:</b>	Head of Economic Development

<b>Item for:</b>	Noting
<b>Subject:</b>	Small Settlements update

1.0	<p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funding to the value of £2,393,000 was secured through the Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to deliver a Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration programme. Council match funding of £232,333 was ear marked from the general funds. The total value of the programme is £2,625,333.</li> <li>2. DfC has agreed to extend the letter of variance to cover the delivery of the remaining projects, officers have requested an extension until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2026. The current DfC business case remains valid.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Key issues</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Attached (<b>see Appendix</b>) is an update on the completion and ongoing progress of projects and associated spend.</li> <li>4. To date the Council has delivered a total of 25 projects to the value of £2,170,040. This includes the Rural Investment Fund which supported 21 businesses with one remaining to complete, the Heritage Shop Front scheme which supported 44 businesses and the Rural Shop Front Scheme which supported 10 businesses.</li> <li>5. All funding has been allocated as agreed at Committee in September 2025. Outlined below is an update on the status of the four remaining agreed projects:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Glenavy Village pedestrian crossing - funding has been allocated to DfI to deliver a pedestrian crossing on main street in Glenavy. DfI confirmed in February that it is on their schedule of works but have not confirmed a date for completion.</li> <li>- Hospitality provision at Navigation House – a planning application has been submitted. Officers are currently working through queries raised as part of the planning process.</li> <li>- Greenway Investment Framework - draft document being reviewed by officers with recommendations to Committee in due course.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further phase of Royal Hillsborough Historic Moira (RHHM) – Destination Tourism Packages for Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira.</li> </ul> <p>6. DfC have confirmed that there is no further opportunity to bring forward any additional projects under this programme. It is anticipated that the new Shaping Sustainable places programme, when finalised, will provide new opportunities for both urban and rural settlements.</p> <p>7. Officers are working with Corporate Comms to design a short social media video to promote the success of the programme and highlight the benefits to our rural villages.</p>	
2.0	<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee notes the update report provided on completed and in-progress projects.</p>	
3.0	<p><b><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Council match funding of £232,333 was ear marked from the general funds.</p>	
4.0	<p><b><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></b></p>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening was carried out for the Small Settlements Regeneration Programme. There are no major levels of impact. No negative impacts have been identified during the screening process. Any issues re ensuring accessibility and equal participation can be addressed as the programme progresses with each individual project being screened individually.</p>	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <b><u>or</u></b> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>No key issues identified - the Small Settlements Regeneration Programme is delivered in a rural environment. An overarching RNIA has been undertaken but each individual project will be assessed accordingly.</p>	

<b>Appendices:</b>	<p>Appendix 1a – Small Settlements update by project</p> <p>Appendix 1b – Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening</p> <p>Appendix 1c – Rural Needs Impact Assessment</p>
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## Appendix - Small Settlements Project Update

Small Settlements Regeneration Programme			
Completed Projects			
Project Name	Project Update	Indicative Timeframe	Final Spend
Traffic Calming Measures in Glenavy Village	Speed cushions were installed on the Belfast and Gobrana Road in Glenavy in August 2023.	Completed	<b>£59,308.99</b>
Traffic Calming Measures in Aghalee Village	A new footpath and several speed cushions were installed along Lurgan Road in Aghalee. Minor adjustments have recently been undertaken to facilitate compliance with Dfl standards.	Completed	<b>£92,441.51</b>
Gateway Signage in Moira Village	3 heritage gateway signs have now been installed in Moira. The first two signs were installed in December 2022 and the third sign that was requested for the Claire Hill Road was installed in September 2023.	Completed	<b>£14,253.00</b>
Improvements to dedicated open space and walking trails in Moneyreagh Village	Social Enterprise Café: The groundworks including mechanical and electrical connections (funded through Small Settlements) are complete, the kiosk has been installed and repaving and landscaping work is completed. The café is open every week Tuesday to Saturday. Improvements to the Village Green: A new planting scheme is complete, and the reading corner has been upgraded. A second book box has been installed at the social enterprise cafe. Gateway Signage: The entrance signs and community noticeboard sign were refurbished to include the council's LCCC logo.	Completed	<b>£56,593.47</b>
Community Markets Pilot	Gazebos and storage units to facilitate the community markets in Poundbridge and District Community Association and Annahilt and	Completed	<b>£49,529.08</b>

	Magherconluce Community Association were procured, and two markets have taken place in each area. These markets have been very well received by residents and visitors to the villages and will continue to be organised by the community groups.		
Destination Tourism Packages	49 businesses signed up to the Royal Hillsborough Historic Moira programme and a RHHM leaflet has been produced. Marketing, PR and good news stories continue to be rolled out.	Completed	<b>£84,995.00</b>
Improved planting at Gateways	This project is complete with planting carried out across all eligible small settlements.	Completed	<b>£42,180.00</b>
Parklets	The Parklets in Annahilt and Moira are complete.	Completed	<b>£47,743.03</b>
Pedestrian Crossing in Maghaberry Village	The pedestrian crossing has been installed and is now operational. This was led by the Department for Infrastructure.	Completed	<b>£20,000.00</b>
Resurfacing of the Car Park in Maghaberry Village	This project was completed in February 2025 and was very well received by businesses and residents of Maghaberry Village. In particular, Maghaberry Pharmacy expressed their gratitude via a compliment towards the works. Following the resurfacing, businesses further invested in white lining the parking bays throughout the car park to improve accessibility and usability.	Completed	<b>£25,897.00</b>
Killultagh Play Park in Glenavy Village at Killultagh Grange	The refurbishment of the Killultagh Play Park took place between March and June 2025.	Completed	<b>£106,816.05</b>
Bus Shelter, Culcavy Road, Hillsborough	The infrastructure for the bus shelter was installed in July 2025.	Completed	<b>£12,247.29</b>
Greenway Enhancement scheme - Drumbridge Car Park	The enhancements were made to Drum Bridge Car Park in November 2024, followed by the installation of signage in March 2025.	Completed	<b>£84,446.54</b>

Access to Lagan Towpath from Navigation House	This project included the introduction of a path from Union Locks on the Tow Path to Navigation House with the addition of directional, historic and biodiversity signage.	Complete	<b>£158,626.86</b>
Environmental Improvement Scheme in Annahilt Village	This project included the resurfacing of footways and the carriageway along Ballynahinch Road in Annahilt Village. A puffin crossing was also installed to improve safety around pick up and drop off during the school term. This was made operational in July 2025.	Complete	<b>£362,670.52</b>
Heritage Shopfront Scheme	44 businesses have completed their shopfront improvements	Completed	<b>£319,773.72</b>
Rural Shopfront Scheme	10 businesses have completed their shopfront improvements	Completed	<b>£79,959.20</b>
Community Hub, Moira Demesne	Community hub completed and in active use	Complete	<b>£89,705.00</b>
Bus Shelter on Crumlin Road in Glenavy Village	The infrastructure for the bus shelter was installed in January 2026.	Complete	<b>£9,359.89</b>
Hanging Basket Trees	The purchase of Hanging baskets to be installed at the entrance to selected Rural Villages	Complete	<b>£79,970.00</b>
Rural Investment Fund	21 businesses have completed their works to date and there is 1 project remaining	September 2026	<b>£353,544.70</b>
Hillsborough Parish Church	Hillsborough Parish Church requested financial support for the cost of the repair work to the church façade due to loose masonry.	Complete	<b>£19,980.00</b>
<b>Total paid to date (completed projects)</b>			<b>£2,170,040.85</b>

<b>Small Settlements Regeneration Programme</b>		
<b>Projects in Progress</b>		
<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Update</b>	<b>Indicative Timeframe</b>
Rural Investment Fund	1 project remaining	September 2026
Hospitality Provision at Navigation House	The feasibility study for this project is complete and an application has been submitted to planning.	September 2026
Pedestrian Crossing in Glenavy Village	DfI confirmed in February that it is on their schedule of works but have not confirmed a date for completion.	September 2026
Greenway Investment Framework	The delivery team was appointed in July 2025, and the project is underway.	May 2026
Royal Hillsborough Historic Moira Destination Tourism Packages	Second phase of the programme. Residual funding following programme completion being allocated to the ongoing Destination Tourism Packages for Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira	September 2026
<b>Total Project Budget Estimates (Ongoing projects)</b>		<b>£384,287.15</b>

<b>Completed projects</b>	<b>£2,170,040.85</b>
<b>Projects in progress</b>	<b>£384,287.15</b>
<b>marketing &amp; resources</b>	<b>£71,005.00</b>
<b>Committed Costs</b>	<b>£2,625,333.00</b>



## Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

### Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

#### Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened

The COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme is funded collaboratively by the Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The funders approached LCCC in December to request a plan which would include initiatives that may be eligible to be funded through this programme. LCCC arranged a workshop with officers and members to discuss any projects (preferably shovel ready) that could be brought forward through this programme. Once the plan was confirmed by LCCC and agreed by the funders, a letter of offer was then received in January 2022.

A report was taken to Development Committee on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 in order to progress the programme and receive delegated authority in order to deliver within the set timeframe.

We are screening this programme from the outset to ensure that all section 75 Equality and Good Relations groups have been considered.

#### Name of the activity/policy/project

COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme

(Further information attached as Appendix 2)

#### Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?

New

#### What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?

The Programme aims to deliver on these objectives through realising a range of benefits including:

1. Physical regeneration of small settlements in order to improve place making and aid recovery from COVID-19
2. Improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23
3. Improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other associated facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.

**Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.**

The COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme is not directly targeting specific Section 75 Equality and Good Relations groups although there may be incidental benefits for some groups.

For example; environmental improvements such as resurfacing of footpaths, creation of a new car park to include family and disabled parking spaces and improvements to shop fronts and signage to will be of benefit the elderly, those with dependants as well as those with disabilities.

All the projects taken forward will have taken all of these benefits into consideration to ensure inclusivity.

### **Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?**

The funders (Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)) initiated this programme.

The plan was developed by officers and members of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

The lead directorate in delivering this programme is Service Transformation (Economic Development – Regeneration) in collaboration with Parks & Amenities, Assets, Communities and Marketing.

### **Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?**

This programme is owned by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and will be implemented by Service Transformation (Economic Development – Regeneration) in collaboration with Parks & Amenities, Assets, Communities and Marketing.

Capital works projects will be managed by an external Employers Agent who will commission contractors to design and construct each project.

### **Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?**

Yes

#### **If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.**

Financial – Funded Programme – A the programme is funded through Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Other – Time Constraints – Council have been given a timeframe to deliver the project by which has been agreed between funders and LCCC. If there is any slippage this may run over/unable to be delivered.

### **Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon? Delete if not applicable**

**Staff**

Chief Executive, Directors, Head of Service and officers of the following: Economic Development (Regeneration – Programme Lead), Parks & Amenities, Assets, Communities and Marketing.

**Service users**

Residents, Visitors and Business Owners.

**Other public sector organisations**

Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

**Voluntary/community/trade unions [please list]**

Relevant voluntary and communities who are consulted in the process of delivering each project.

**Other**

Elected members – more specifically the Chair and Vice Chair of Development Committee (Lead Committee)

Consultants and Contractors appointed to carry out the design, construction and installation of the project works.

**Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project**

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Equality and Disability Action Plans	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75</a>
Corporate Plan 2021-24	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/ICP_2021_Final.pdf">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/ICP_2021_Final.pdf</a>
Local Development Plan	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/resident/planning/local-development-plan">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/resident/planning/local-development-plan</a>
Community Plan 2017 – 2032	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/Community_Plan_2017-2032_EMAIL.pdf">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/Community_Plan_2017-2032_EMAIL.pdf</a>
Economic Development Action Plan 2015 – 2017	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/3_Employment_and_Economic_Development_-_Final.pdf">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/3_Employment_and_Economic_Development_-_Final.pdf</a>

Regeneration and Investment Action Plan	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/LCCC_Investment_Programme_2019_.pdf">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/LCCC_Investment_Programme_2019_.pdf</a>
Tourism Strategy	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council <a href="https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/planning/SUBDOC-073%20LCCC%20Tourism%20Strategy%202018.pdf">https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/planning/SUBDOC-073%20LCCC%20Tourism%20Strategy%202018.pdf</a>

## Available evidence

### What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

This programme considers a Small Settlement as having a population of between 1,000 and 4,999. The Small Settlements include: Moneyreagh (resident population of Moneyreagh Settlement was 1,384 accounting for 0.08% of the NI total), Annahilt (resident population of Annahilt Settlement was 1,051 accounting for 0.06% of the NI total), Dromara (resident population of Dromara Settlement was 1,006 accounting for 0.06% of the NI total), Drumbeg (resident population of Drumbeg Settlement was 817 accounting for 0.05% of the NI total), Blaris (resident population of Blaris was 3,375 accounting for 0.19% of the NI total), Hillsborough (resident population of Hillsborough Ward was 3,758 accounting for 0.21% of the NI total), Moira (resident population of Moira Settlement was 4,591 accounting for 0.25% of the NI total), Aghalee (resident population of Aghalee Settlement was 873 accounting for 0.05% of the NI total), Ballinderry (resident population of Ballinderry was 5,128 accounting for 0.28% of the NI total), Glenavy (resident population of Glenavy Settlement was 1,784 accounting for 0.10% of the NI total), Maghaberry (resident population of Maghaberry Settlement was 2,450 accounting for 0.14% of the NI total), and Milltown (resident population of Milltown Settlement was 1,499 accounting for 0.08% of the NI total).

Key information has been considered using the following:

- Strategies/Plans/Policies outlined in the section above
- Rural Village Renewal Plans
- Community Action Plans
- Consultations carried out Community Groups and Residents of the areas
- Issues raised by Councillors, Community Groups and Residents of the areas
- Census 2011 data found on NINIS

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	Moneyreagh - 2.24% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 90.39% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 83.31% indicated that they had a

	<p>British national identity, 2.53% had an Irish national identity and 29.77% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Annahilt – 7.14% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 85.54% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 77.16% indicated that they had a British national identity, 8.37% had an Irish national identity and 34.06% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Dromara – 21.77% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 68.89% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 67.50% indicated that they had a British national identity, 12.13% had an Irish national identity and 29.22% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Drumbeg – 67.07% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 62.42% indicated that they had a British national identity, 21.66% had an Irish national identity and 35.01% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Blaris – 16.30% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 74.34% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 71.91% indicated that they had a British national identity, 9.72% had an Irish national identity and 28.30% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Hillsborough – 10.72% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 83.40% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 71.93% indicated that they had a British national identity, 10.75% had an Irish national identity and 29.99% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Moira – 19.45% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 71.55% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 66.30% indicated that they had a British national identity, 12.85% had an Irish national identity and 32.04% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Aghalee – 15.23% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 74.68% belong to or were brought up</p>
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	<p>in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 73.65% indicated that they had a British national identity, 10.88% had an Irish national identity and 29.21% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Ballinderry – 21.70% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 70.75% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 66.85% indicated that they had a British national identity, 13.46% had an Irish national identity and 31.71% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Glenavy – 84.19% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 11.94% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 19.79% indicated that they had a British national identity, 57.51% had an Irish national identity and 28.36% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Maghaberry – 7.55% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 82.49% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 77.96% indicated that they had a British national identity, 5.02% had an Irish national identity and 32.61% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Milltown – 37.69% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 53.30% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 53.97% indicated that they had a British national identity, 22.75% had an Irish national identity and 27.62% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p>
<p>Political Opinion</p>	<p>Moneyreagh - 2.24% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 90.39% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 83.31% indicated that they had a British national identity, 2.53% had an Irish national identity and 29.77% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Annahilt – 7.14% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 85.54% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 77.16% indicated that they had a British national identity, 8.37% had an Irish national identity and 34.06% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p>

	<p>Dromara – 21.77% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 68.89% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 67.50% indicated that they had a British national identity, 12.13% had an Irish national identity and 29.22% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Drumbeg – 67.07% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 62.42% indicated that they had a British national identity, 21.66% had an Irish national identity and 35.01% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Blaris – 16.30% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 74.34% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 71.91% indicated that they had a British national identity, 9.72% had an Irish national identity and 28.30% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Hillsborough – 10.72% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 83.40% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 71.93% indicated that they had a British national identity, 10.75% had an Irish national identity and 29.99% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Moira – 19.45% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 71.55% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 66.30% indicated that they had a British national identity, 12.85% had an Irish national identity and 32.04% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Aghalee – 15.23% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 74.68% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 73.65% indicated that they had a British national identity, 10.88% had an Irish national identity and 29.21% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Ballinderry – 21.70% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 70.75% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 66.85% indicated that they had a</p>
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	<p>British national identity, 13.46% had an Irish national identity and 31.71% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Glenavy – 84.19% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 11.94% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 19.79% indicated that they had a British national identity, 57.51% had an Irish national identity and 28.36% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Maghaberry – 7.55% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 82.49% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 77.96% indicated that they had a British national identity, 5.02% had an Irish national identity and 32.61% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p> <p>Milltown – 37.69% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 53.30% belong to or were brought up in a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' religion; and 53.97% indicated that they had a British national identity, 22.75% had an Irish national identity and 27.62% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p>
<p>Racial Group</p>	<p>Moneyreagh - 99.71% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; and 1.04% had some knowledge of Irish; 9.07% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 0.30% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Annahilt – 99.90% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 2.61% had some knowledge of Irish; 10.05% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 0.97% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Dromara – 98.81% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; and 4.85% had some knowledge of Irish; 6.65% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 1.48% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Drumbeg – 97.80% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 26.81% belong to or were brought up in the Catholic religion; and 6.85% had some knowledge of Irish; 8.09% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 1.62% did not have English as their first language.</p>

	<p>Blaris – 98.04% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 3.50% had some knowledge of Irish; 7.99% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 2.69% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Hillsborough – 99.39% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 2.60% had some knowledge of Irish; 10.27% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 0.83% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Moira – 97.78% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 4.04% had some knowledge of Irish; 6.66% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 2.71% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Aghalee – 99.89% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 2.73% had some knowledge of Irish; 5.93% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 1.07% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Ballinderry – 99.45% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 5.19% had some knowledge of Irish; 7.73% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 1.12% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Glenavy – 99.22% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 22.43% had some knowledge of Irish; 2.77% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 1.74% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Maghaberry – 99.88% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 1.68% had some knowledge of Irish; 6.63% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 0.47% did not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Milltown – 98.33% were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group; 9.14% had some knowledge of Irish; 4.96% had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots; and 1.98% did not have English as their first language.</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Moneyreagh - 17.92% were aged under 16 years and 13.37% were aged 65 and over; and 44 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Annahilt – 17.70% were aged under 16 years and 15.79% were aged 65 and over; and 45 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p>

	<p>Dromara – 25.45% were aged under 16 years and 12.03% were aged 65 and over; and 33 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Drumbeg – 19.58% were aged under 16 years and 19.34% were aged 65 and over; and 46 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Blaris – 16.15% were aged under 16 years and 18.81% were aged 65 and over; and 42 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Hillsborough – 17.43% were aged under 16 years and 21.79% were aged 65 and over; and 46 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Moira – 22.98% were aged under 16 years and 13.53% were aged 65 and over; and 39 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Aghalee – 25.43% were aged under 16 years and 9.16% were aged 65 and over; and 37 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Ballinderry – 20.57% were aged under 16 years and 11.49% were aged 65 and over; and 39 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Glenavy – 31.95% were aged under 16 years and 6.00% were aged 65 and over; and 30 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Maghaberry – 25.35% were aged under 16 years and 6.86% were aged 65 and over; and 33 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Milltown – 25.95% were aged under 16 years and 10.27% were aged 65 and over; and 35 years was the average (median) age of the population.</p> <p>Any improvements to accessibility, visibility and places to rest will benefit this group.</p>
<p><b>Marital Status</b></p>	<p>No information/evidence readily available to inform screening of Small Settlements.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p>No information/evidence readily available to inform screening of Small Settlements.</p>

<p><b>Men &amp; Women Generally</b></p>	<p>Moneyreagh - 50.29% of the usually resident population were male and 49.71% were female</p> <p>Annahilt – 48.33% of the usually resident population were male and 51.67% were female</p> <p>Dromara – 48.01% of the usually resident population were male and 51.99% were female</p> <p>Drumbeg – 47.86% of the usually resident population were male and 52.14% were female</p> <p>Blaris – 49.57% of the usually resident population were male and 50.43% were female</p> <p>Hillsborough – 48.00% of the usually resident population were male and 52.00% were female</p> <p>Moira – 48.94% of the usually resident population were male and 51.06% were female</p> <p>Aghalee – 49.37% of the usually resident population were male and 50.63% were female</p> <p>Ballinderry – 53.98% of the usually resident population were male and 46.02% were female</p> <p>Glenavy – 48.21% of the usually resident population were male and 51.79% were female</p> <p>Maghaberry – 50.45% of the usually resident population were male and 49.55% were female</p> <p>Milltown – 49.23% of the usually resident population were male and 50.77% were female</p>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>Moneyreagh – 18.21% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; 80.64% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Annahilt – 19.79% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; 82.02% of people stated their general health was either good or very good.</p> <p>Dromara – 16.80% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; 82.70% of people stated their general health was either good or very good.</p>

	<p>Drumbeg – 12.00% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; 89.23% of people stated their general health was either good or very good.</p> <p>Blaris – 19.32% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; 81.07% of people stated their general health was either good or very good.</p> <p>Hillsborough – 16.74% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; and 85.13% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Moira – 15.03% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; and 85.93% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Aghalee – 16.95% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; 83.96% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Ballinderry – 17.02% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; and 84.03% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Glenavy – 13.12% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; and 87.84% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Maghaberry – 12.65% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; and 86.78% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Milltown – 17.68% of people had a long-term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities; and 82.05% of people stated their general health was either good or very good</p> <p>Any improvements to accessibility, visibility and places to rest will benefit this group.</p>
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<p>People with and without Dependants</p>	<p>Moneyreagh – 17.99% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 5.01% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Annahilt – 12.27% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 5.65% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Dromara – 11.13% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 8.77% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Drumbeg – 16.16% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 3.41% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Blaris – 12.24% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 5.83% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Hillsborough – 13.94% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 2.90% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Moira – 10.52% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 5.18% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Aghalee – 10.88% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 7.24% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>Ballinderry – 13.48% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others, and 4.58% were lone parent households with dependent children.</p> <p>Glenavy – 11.21% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others, and</p>
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	<p>15.32% were lone parent households with dependent children.</p> <p>Maghaberry – 11.14% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others; and 4.88% were lone parent households with dependent children.</p> <p>Milltown – 9.67% of people stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others, and 10.86% were lone parent households with dependent children</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Cllr Gowan raised concerns over Health &amp; Safety of parents and children outside the school in Annahilt during morning drop off and afternoon pick up. There isn't enough car parking or visibility. An Environmental Improvement Scheme is being considered in order to create more car parking bays, safer access routes, resurfacing of footpaths and the addition of traffic calming measures.</p>
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## Needs, experiences and priorities

**Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories** [This section is easier to complete if you actually have gathered and analysed some information/material to help inform the planning and your screening. It is intended to draw out any particular needs and different experiences of the various equality groups that are pertinent to the policy or project being screened. Sometimes you will be saying 'No evidence of specific needs identified in relation to this project/policy'. However, it may be necessary to consult with stakeholders or take advice to establish whether there are in fact some issues we need to take account of. If we don't have the information, we're supposed to try to get it and not make assumptions or just say 'no information available'.]

<b>Section 75 Category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>
Religious Belief	No evidence of specific needs identified in relation to this project/policy
Political Opinion	No evidence of specific needs identified in relation to this project/policy
Racial Group	No evidence of specific needs identified in relation to this project/policy
Age	<p>Things to consider that would benefit this group when designing physical environment: Improved and/or additional seating areas, improved surfaces e.g. footpaths to prevent accidents, clearer signage and improved accessibility e.g. shop front schemes in order to encourage use, larger spacing e.g. new car park to include family and disabled spaces etc.</p>
Marital Status	No evidence of specific needs identified in relation to this project/policy
Sexual Orientation	No evidence of specific needs identified in relation to this project/policy
Men & Women Generally	<p>There have been no specific needs identified for men although it is anticipated that more women may benefit from improvements carried out through this project as majority of are out during the day when with their children/dependants.</p> <p>Things to consider that would benefit this group when designing physical environment: Improved and/or additional seating areas, improved surfaces e.g. footpaths to prevent accidents, clearer signage and improved accessibility for buggies e.g. shop front schemes in order to encourage use, larger spacing e.g. new car park to include family friendly spaces due to use of buggies etc.</p>
Disability	<p>People with disabilities may need suitable places to rest and some require spaces that are accessible for wheelchairs, assistance dogs, etc. Project designs need to be safe and not present hazards for people with disabilities, e.g. blind or partially sighted or those with mobility problems.</p> <p>Things to consider that would benefit this group when designing physical environment: Improved and/or additional seating areas, improved surfaces e.g. footpaths, clearer signage and improved accessibility e.g. shop front schemes in</p>

	order to encourage use, larger spacing e.g. new car park to include disabled spaces etc.
Dependants	<p>Some people with dependants may require spaces to rest and that can accommodate buggies/prams etc. Space for prams and buggies needs to be taken into account during project design.</p> <p>For example; family spaces in car parks provide space for buggies, removing children from car seats etc.</p>

## Part 2. Screening questions

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	No direct impact identified	None
Political Opinion	No direct impact identified	None
Racial Group	No direct impact identified	None
Age	<p>The Small Settlement Regeneration Programme is expected to have some positive benefits for this group. For example; improved surfaces, accessibility and signage.</p> <p>The needs of those who are elderly will be taken into account in the designs.</p>	Minor Positive
Marital Status	No direct impact identified	None
Sexual Orientation	No direct impact identified	None
Men & Women Generally	The Small Settlement Regeneration Programme is expected to have some positive benefits for this group.	Minor Positive
Disability	The Small Settlement Regeneration Programme is expected to have	Minor Positive

	<p>some positive benefits for this group. For example; improved surfaces, accessibility and signage.</p> <p>The needs of those with disabilities will be taken into account in the designs.</p>	
<p>People with and without Dependants</p>	<p>The Small Settlement Regeneration Programme is expected to have some positive benefits for this group. For example; family car parking spaces that can accommodate buggies/prams.</p> <p>The needs of those with dependants will be taken into account in the designs.</p>	<p>Minor Positive</p>

\* See Appendix 1 for details.

**2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?**

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy/project/activity for any of these groups.
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men & Women Generally		
Disability		
People with and without Dependants		

**Equality Action Plan 2021-2025**

**Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes - If yes, specify which action.**

Theme 2: Access to Information

Action 2.1: Some individuals/ groups may be disadvantaged by not having full access to information provided by Council. (Ensure information is accessible to all)

Theme 6: Development of all strategies

Action 6.2 – policy development

**2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025) [new]**

**Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:**

- To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- To encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

**Yes - If yes, give details/specify which action.**

Yes – Both.

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	None - No direct impact on religious belief, political opinion or racial group identified although it is hoped that all projects will be seen as neutral shared spaces for all.	None
Political Opinion		None
Racial Group		None

\*See Appendix 1 for details.

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

<b>Good Relations Category</b>	<b>IF Yes, provide details</b>	<b>If No, provide details</b>
Religious Belief		No opportunities identified at this time but if any arise e.g. through feedback from consultation, they will be addressed.
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

### **Multiple identity**

**Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.**

LCCC recognises that all individuals are not exclusive to just one designated group. Multiple identity has been given consideration within this screening exercise.

### Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project.

There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
- 2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
- 3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

**Choose only one of these** and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
<p>Option 1</p> <p><b>Screen out</b> – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]</p>	<p>It has been concluded that a detailed equality impact assessment is not necessary as all the potential impacts identified are minor and positive. The appointed design team will be required to ensure that the projects are accessible for older people and disabled people, etc. and that they will not present any barriers for them.</p>
<p>Option 2</p> <p><b>Screen out with mitigation</b> – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or</p>	

<p>good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]</p>	
<p>Option 3</p> <p><b>Screen in</b> for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)</p> <p>[If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]</p>	

**Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)**

**Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?**

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

**N/A**

**Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)**

If the activity/policy has been ‘**screened in**’ for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

**N/A**

## Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

**What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:**

The delivery of each individual project will be monitored accordingly.

The projects included in this programme vary from grant funding, revenue and capital works therefore the monitoring will differ for each of these.

A project board has been set up to ensure the Programme is delivered on time and on budget.

Grant funding will be advertised via the council website and social media channels. The application process will involve the completion of an 'Expression of Interest' and 'Application Form' before the eligible business receive a letter of offer which will inform them regarding the grant amount they have secured. There is a working policy called 'Grant Policy for Funding Initiatives' that ensures compliance of officers and applicants.

The following will be recorded: number of applicants who applied, relevant business details, number of applicants invited to participate, how much grant funding they will receive etc. If the grant funding was targeted at specific 75 groups then information on this would also be collected.

Revenue projects are being delivered in-house and will go through the normal monitoring procedures set out by the team delivering.

Capital works will be project managed by an external employer's agent who will then follow our procurement regulations in order to appoint contractors.

## Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
<b>Screened by:</b> Becky Gamble & Yvonne Burke	Project Support Officer & Regeneration Manager	10/05/22
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Mary McSorley	Equality Officer	01/07/22
<b>Approved by:</b> Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development	18/10/22

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

### Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

\*Major impact:

- a) The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

#### Minor impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

#### No impact (none)

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Revised Template @ April 2022

## Appendix 2 –

**Screening Policy**

## Small Settlements

**Project Description and Background:**

The COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme follows on from the successful collaborative approach of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme. That saw DfC, DAERA, and DfI contribute to the establishment of objectives, jointly fund and oversee the delivery of the programme.

Council was required to submit a draft Small Settlement Regeneration Investment Plan which sets out its proposed projects.

Initiatives may include the following:

- **Rural Investment Fund (RIF)**  
Grant aid to encourage new business into the area or support existing businesses to diversify their current offer through repurposing of vacant units (this must include unused areas of their current premises).
- **Improved Transport and Walkability Infrastructure**  
Infrastructure to support Traffic Calming Measures and increase safety across a number of villages.
- **Environmental Improvement Scheme**  
Improvements to footpaths, lighting, roads etc.
- **Greenway Enhancement Schemes**  
Increase the accessibility of Greenway links across Small Settlements to include improvements to sections of the Lagan Towpath linking the tow path to villages and creating walking loops for residents of the villages, resurfacing to allow for better navigation and the installation of benches, bins, sign posting and bicycle racks, improving usability of these linkages (Bike lock ups where possible).
- **Access to the Lagan Tow Path from Navigation House**  
Reopen access from the Navigation House to the Lagan Tow Path. Historically there were steps from the Navigation House site through a gate down to the path.
- **Implementation of an Active Travel Network Strategy (ATNMS)**  
To identify existing walking and cycling routes and to investigate where upgrades or new routes can be anticipated over the next 15 years (Future Routes). The Strategy will be publicised on the Council Website.
- **Parklets**  
Identify areas across rural settlements that can be cleared and suitably landscaped to create a community Parklet/ seating area. The implementation of a Parklet will create a central space for villagers and shoppers alike to relax and enjoy a coffee contributing to the improved mental health of the village and also provide local hospitality businesses with extended space to facilitate customers.
- **Heritage Shop Front Scheme (Moira/Hillsborough)**  
The scheme aims to support business, whose shop fronts currently sit outside of planning regulations, from a heritage perspective, and help the businesses to replace their shop front façade and signage in order to conform to the guidelines as per the Lisburn Conservation area guide. The aim of the scheme is to create a more pleasing village centre environment by improving heritage shop fronts, resulting in wider benefits for the public realm and civic pride.

- **Improved Planting at Gateways and improving arterial routes**  
A range of interventions have been identified through the village Renewal Plans and consultation with members that would improve the environment of the gateways and along the main arterial routes through small settlements. This would include improved planting and creating more accessible walking routes from just outside of the villages to the core of the village community. It would also create an improved central community space to support the wider community and related commercial activity.
- **Small Settlements Shop Front Scheme**  
This grant will be offered to small business owners with premises in hospitality/ retail units on the main street within small settlements, to enhance the appearance and condition of their shop fronts and signage, making the area a more attractive place for both occupiers and visitors.
- **Improvements to dedicated open space and walking trails**  
To include signage, digital signage, maps, capital infrastructure.
- **Community Markets pilot**  
Supporting community groups to deliver 'Farmers style' markets in the small villages. Based on the success of the markets in Hillsborough, Moira and Newtownbreda it is proposed to offer the option to local communities to take on the responsibility of delivering a monthly market in their area. This could be an option for a number of community groups from different settlements to come together to increase the offering across a larger radius.
- **Destination Tourism Packages based around Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira**  
Council have been working closely with 39 rural business who have agreed to act as Local Champions for 'Royal Hillsborough and Historic Moira' creating a series of Destination packages to promote the villages as tourism and hospitality destinations. These packages are aimed at boosting the visitor economy within these areas.

It is anticipated that projects will be strategic and support outcomes that have a substantial impact on local communities.

A Small Settlement is defined as having a population of between 1,000 and 4,999.

These has been agreed with Department for Communities as:

1. Hillsborough
2. Moira
3. Glenavy
4. Maghaberry
5. Moneyreagh
6. Dromara
7. Annahilt
8. Ballinderry
9. Aghalee
10. Drumbeg
11. Milltown

Although not every initiative will be delivered in all of the Small Settlements outlined above.

Council plan for an even spread of deliverable initiatives across DEAs.

- **Aims of the Scheme:**

The Programme aims to deliver on these objectives through realising a range of benefits including:

1. Physical regeneration of small settlements in order to improve place making and aid recovery from COVID-19
2. Improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23
3. Improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other associated facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.

### **Programme Objectives**

1. To agree a costed COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Plan for each district council and enable programme spend by March 2022.
2. To support each district council to deliver the project outcomes identified in its Regeneration Plan by March 2023.
3. By March 2024, 70% of residents surveyed, in smaller settlements where projects have been delivered, agree that funded works would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.
4. By March 2024, 70% of people surveyed while using smaller settlements where projects have been delivered for work, tourism or leisure, agree that the improvements to the area would encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area.
5. By March 2024, attitudinal surveys completed by businesses indicate that 70% believe that schemes funded through this Programme will have positively impacted on sales figures.
6. By March 2024, attitudinal surveys indicate 40% of the public (residents and visitors) agree that projects supported would encourage people to change from car use to more environmentally friendly choices such as walking and cycling for journeys of under two miles.
7. By March 2024, each Regeneration Plan will support projects which increase the use of land for active travel (i.e. extended footways, cycle ways, and connecting pathways) which connects people with key services and ensures accessibility for all including those with disabilities.

- **Contract Duration:**

It is intended that the programme would commence in 2021/22 and run over 2 years. March 2022 – March 2024.

## Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

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

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City 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.

COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme

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

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input 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.

COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme

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

The Programme aims to deliver on these objectives through realising a range of benefits including:

1. Physical regeneration of small settlements in order to improve place making and aid recovery from COVID-19
2. Improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23
3. Improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other associated facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.

**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.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

N/A

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

N/A

## 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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

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

The COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme is likely to impact positively on people in rural areas as it is being delivered in those areas.

The Small Settlements include: Moneyreagh (resident population of Moneyreagh Settlement was 1,384 accounting for 0.08% of the NI total), Annahilt (resident population of Annahilt Settlement was 1,051 accounting for 0.06% of the NI total), Dromara (resident population of Dromara Settlement was 1,006 accounting for 0.06% of the NI total), Drumbeg (resident population of Drumbeg Settlement was 817 accounting for 0.05% of the NI total), Blaris (resident population of Blaris was 3,375 accounting for 0.19% of the NI total), Hillsborough (resident population of Hillsborough Ward was 3,758 accounting for 0.21% of the NI total), Moira (resident population of Moira Settlement was 4,591 accounting for 0.25% of the NI total), Aghalee (resident population of Aghalee Settlement was 873 accounting for 0.05% of the NI total), Ballinderry (resident population of Ballinderry was 5,128 accounting for 0.28% of the NI total), Glenavy (resident population of Glenavy Settlement was 1,784 accounting for 0.10% of the NI total), Maghaberry (resident population of Maghaberry Settlement was 2,450 accounting for 0.14% of the NI total), and Milltown (resident population of Milltown Settlement was 1,499 accounting for 0.08% of the NI total).

### 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.

The COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently than people in urban areas.

This is because the programme is being directed specifically on Small Settlement which happen to be situated in rural areas.

The programme includes physical regeneration in order to improve place making and aid recovery from COVID-19, improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23 and improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other associated facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.

**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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**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.**

N/A

## 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 the response is **NO** GO TO Section **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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**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 programme is funded through Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The funders outlined a number of initiatives that could be delivered as part of this programme and this was used to create a final plan which was agreed upon by the funders and confirmed via a letter of offer to the council in Jan 2022.

The council have previously developed 'Rural Village Renewal Plans (2016)' that have been used to help inform the improvements required in rural villages within the council area and the named Small Settlements. External consultants helped the council to deliver this initiative and consultations were organized at the time to inform the final plans.

The council's Communities team are developing village plans through a consultation process in order to inform environmental improvements.

Statistics from Census 2011 had also helped to inform the programme and the equality needs of the people who live in the highlighted areas.

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

The Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) has identified the following as key areas;

- Rural Businesses
- Rural Tourism
- Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas
- Education or Training in Rural Areas
- Poverty in Rural Areas
- Deprivation in Rural Areas
- Rural Development
- Agri-Environment

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?**

N/A

## 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.

As identified in Section 2 B, the COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme is likely to impact positively on people in rural areas as it is being delivered in those areas.

The Small Settlements include: Moneyreagh (resident population of Moneyreagh Settlement was 1,384 accounting for 0.08% of the NI total), Annahilt (resident population of Annahilt Settlement was 1,051 accounting for 0.06% of the NI total), Dromara (resident population of Dromara Settlement was 1,006 accounting for 0.06% of the NI total), Drumbeg (resident population of Drumbeg Settlement was 817 accounting for 0.05% of the NI total), Blaris (resident population of Blaris was 3,375 accounting for 0.19% of the NI total), Hillsborough (resident population of Hillsborough Ward was 3,758 accounting for 0.21% of the NI total), Moira (resident population of Moira Settlement was 4,591 accounting for 0.25% of the NI total), Aghalee (resident population of Aghalee Settlement was 873 accounting for 0.05% of the NI total), Ballinderry (resident population of Ballinderry was 5,128 accounting for 0.28% of the NI total), Glenavy (resident population of Glenavy Settlement was 1,784 accounting for 0.10% of the NI total), Maghaberry (resident population of Maghaberry Settlement was 2,450 accounting for 0.14% of the NI total), and Milltown (resident population of Milltown Settlement was 1,499 accounting for 0.08% of the NI total).

The Programme aims to deliver on these objectives through realising a range of benefits including:

1. Physical regeneration of small settlements in order to improve place making and aid recovery from COVID-19
2. Improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23
3. Improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other associated facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.

All of which will positively impact on the social and economic needs of people in the rural areas highlighted above.

People who live in these Small Settlements will benefit from new jobs, improved shop fronts and signage which in turn should improve sales, physical regeneration to the area creating a better place to live and visit and increased tourism.

According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth – Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).

In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area. The business base in the region as a whole is predominantly small to medium enterprises with a dominance of micro business. In terms of businesses located only in rural areas, 94% are defined as micro (having less than 10 employees). Agriculture plays a more important role in the economy of NI than is the case in the rest of the UK, it generates a higher proportion of total GVA (Gross valued added) in the economy and accounts for a higher proportion of our employment. Furthermore 78% of the total NI land area is in agricultural use. Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions. The slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 14% of tourism expenditure takes place in rural areas (compared with 86% in urban) are further examples of challenges facing the small rural businesses in Northern Ireland.

Considering that almost half of the L&CCC district is rural, the regeneration of the LCCC area, is a key priority for the Council whom over the next 10 years will continue to invest in regeneration initiatives. Economic development initiatives will not only increase rural businesses growth potential but will also create new jobs in the Council area.

**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 the response is **NO GO TO Section 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.**

As mentioned previously in section 3C, the implementation of the plan has been influenced by the rural needs identified through consultations with residents of the areas, discussions with funders, village renewal plans, 2011 Census data, other department findings and through as issues raised to us through the members who represent the areas in question.

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES GO TO Section 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.**

N/A

## 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.

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Becky Gamble
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Project Support Officer
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>B Gamble</i>
<b>Date:</b>	11/05/22
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Yvonne Burke
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Regeneration Manager
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>Yvonne Burke</i>
<b>Date:</b>	11/05/22