

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

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

All Council owned parks & open spaces within the remit of Parks & Amenities Service Unit are being considered under this process. These spaces are used by members of the public, contractors, 3rd party event organisers and our own Council staff.

The facilities managed by the Parks and Amenities unit include **Parks/open spaces** incorporating Childrens play areas, Outdoor gyms, Multi Use Games Areas, Bike and pump tracks, indoor tennis, Caravan pitches, Dog exercise areas.

Sports turf Senior Football, Junior football pitches, Baseball diamond, Gaelic pitch, Cricket Square, Cross country course, Golf course, Outdoor Bowling greens.

Facility users

Allotments: Allotment holders, Disability groups, Horticultural workshops

Cemeteries: Mourners, cemetery visitors

Council events Mayors' parade and Family fun day. Park life, Music /Jazz Twilight night, Christmas lights, Teddy bear picnic, ceremonial events. Colour runs. Biodiversity projects, Woodland and Bat walks.

Externally organised events Car show meets, Royal black chapter. Orange order, Lisburn Feile, food festivals, IFA Disability football, IFA Grassroots football, Dawn church services, corporate days, Park runs, schools' sports days, Football leagues.

Name of the activity/policy/project

Parks & Amenities parks & open spaces

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

This is a new policy.

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

To ensure that our parks & open spaces have taken consideration of S.75 equality and good relations. Many of our open spaces are utilised by 3rd party event organisers and therefore consideration must be given to this process.

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.

Council owned/managed open spaces and amenities are intended for everyone to enjoy. This includes residents and visitors to the district. Our aim is to provide amenities and facilities that will be attractive and accessible to all ages and categories, including the Section 75 categories. Open spaces provide opportunities to all for informal recreation, or to walk, cycle or scoot within parks and open space or exercise along paths, bridleways and riverbanks. Allotments may provide physical exercise and other health benefits. It has been proven that the use of open green spaces can provide physical and mental health benefits to users, no matter which section 75 group they belong to. The Council recognise that facilities must be promoted so that everyone will wish to use them, so that they know about provision and accessibility to open space areas.

Open spaces within the Council area will particularly benefit certain groups whose needs have been taken into account, in terms of accessibility. Many parks, trails and greenways have been designed with particular groups in mind, for example they are suitable for those with mobility issues, including those who look after or care for children using buggies/pushchairs, those who have disabilities and older people who are using rollator walking aids or walking sticks. The council are keen to continue this in the future, taking consideration of certain Section 75 group needs, in the design and construction of new open spaces.

In local equipped areas for play, any new play equipment will be introduced for children with disabilities, so that they have the ability to use the same equipment as those without disabilities e.g. accessible ground level trampolines.

The Council wish to make green open spaces as accessible for as many section 75 groups as possible. At a number of sites, where it is appropriate, tactile maps and braille signs will be installed. This means that many more sites will be accessible for those who are blind and partially sighted.

Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play and Local Equipped Areas for Play will be installed in local communities, so that residents can access these areas in their own community. This will have a positive effect on those with particular political opinions, within racial groups and who have differing religious beliefs.

These sections of the community can access open spaces which are convenient to them, without having to travel into another community where they may not feel comfortable to play or carry out physical activity.

The Council recognises the need for creating accessible places for everyone to experience the great outdoors. Where opportunities arise the Council will explore new ways to access the countryside. If this is through obtaining formal planning permissions or permissive path agreements, with local land owners, the Council will pursue all avenues, to create new trails which are accessible to all.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Community & Wellbeing management team

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

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council owns the activity.

Parks & Amenities Service Unit within Communities & Wellbeing Directorate will implement the activity.

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.

Limited budget, unsuccessful funding bids, government policy including planning restrictions. Dependency on partners in some areas, for example Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the schedule will impact upon? Delete if not applicable.

External Customers –

Other public sector organisations –

Voluntary/community/trade unions –

Other

Staff	Yes.
Service Users	Yes. Particularly those with access issues.
Other Public Sector Organisations – please list	Yes. Belfast City Council who are partners in the management of Lagan Valley Regional Park.

	Athletics NI, Belfast hills, Lough Neagh partnership
Voluntary/Community/Trade Unions – please list	Yes. The voluntary and community sector who wish to use open spaces and 3 rd party event organisers.
Other – please list (eg, Elected Members, delivery partners, contractors, etc)	Elected Members, delivery partners and contractors during construction works.

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Community Planning Partners
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Corporate Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Regional Development Strategy	NI Executive
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Connect, Invest, Transform investment Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Local Development Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
LCCC Open space strategy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Health & Safety Policies	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
LCCC local Biodiversity Action Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Pitch strategy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

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 Council recognises the importance of creating a healthy, active and accessible environment connecting places and people. We also recognise that as part of this, biodiversity, conservation and adapting to climate change are key. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a huge upsurge in people exercising outdoors. This, coupled with a desire from Council for more local DEA projects, has increased the opportunities for the development of open spaces for recreation throughout the Council area.

We have engaged with partners such as RNIB to identify areas for improvement in our Parks and then sought to avail of grant opportunities

through the Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme to install tactile maps and braille signs.

The Council's Customer Care interface provides a regular source of useful user feedback, which we consider, when making changes to open space areas.

Most up to date NISRA population data from Census 2021 (published 22/09/22) [Lisburn and Castlereagh Census Data](#)

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information					
Religious Belief	2021 Census data indicates that 27% of the LCCC population were brought up in the Catholic religion while 73% were brought up in the Protestant & Other Christian religion					
Political Opinion	The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the Borough’s political opinion. Note: only 52% of those eligible submitted a vote.					
	DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)
	35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5
Racial Group	Using the same Census/boundary data indicates that just over 4% of the population were from an ethnic minority group					
Age	The population in 2021 totalled 149,106: 28,331 (0-14 years) 44,731 (15-39 years) 49,205 (40-64 years) 26,839 (65+ years)					
Marital Status	For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 33% single 52% married or civil partnership 3% separated. 6% Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership. 6% Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership					

Sexual Orientation	The Census 2021 data indicates that 91% identified as Straight or heterosexual, 2% of the household population in identified as Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation, while 7% Prefer not to say or not stated.
Men & Women Generally	The LCCC population (2021) was 51% female and 49% male. This reflects the overall NI position
Disability	Using the same census data as above indicates that 32% of the population had a long-term health problem or disability. Several studies have shown a positive association between access to natural environments and increased rates of physical activity for all ages. Physical activity can help reduce obesity, improve mental health and overall health and well-being. We need to make sure that our open spaces are inclusive to all.
People with and without Dependents	In 2021, of the 60,143 households in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City council area 14.4% (8,661) had dependent children. 10.98% of the population on average provide unpaid care, with 3.4% providing more than 50 hours per week.

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.

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	Accessibility to open spaces in their own, local community, where they feel safe.
Political Opinion	Accessibility to open spaces in their own, local community, where they feel safe. The Council

	recognises the diverse community celebrations and cultural traditions within Northern Ireland. For all events, Council takes a positive action approach, working with communities, agencies, and individuals to address any potential environmental or social impacts of planned events as appropriate and to ensure community cohesion. All community celebrations/events will be considered and assessed in line with event booking process.
Racial Group	Accessibility to open spaces in their own, local community, where they feel safe. Some ethnic minorities, who are new to the area, may need access to translation of information, and their knowledge of open spaces may be limited.
Age	Older people may be less mobile than others and will need safe level surfaces in order to use open spaces. They may also need rest areas (seating or shelter) and well-lit areas, where they will feel safe. Accessible toilets will also be required for some older people.
Marital Status	No particular needs identified for people of different marital status
Sexual Orientation	No particular needs identified for people of different sexual orientation
Men & Women Generally	Need for safe spaces with areas which are well-lit, especially at night.
Disability	Paths, trails and greenways accessible for wheelchair users and those with other mobility conditions. . Signage and information available in formats that those with visual/hearing impairments can access. Accessible toilet provision. Other disabled people (for example neurodivergent people, those with mental health conditions) may also benefit from the provision of more quality open spaces that are convenient to where they live.
People with and without Dependents	Carers of children/older people/disabled people need accessibility for buggies/wheelchairs/walking aids so that they can enjoy open spaces as a family group. The Council recognises the diverse community celebrations and cultural traditions

	within Northern Ireland. For all events, Council takes a positive action approach, working with communities, agencies, and individuals to address any potential environmental or social impacts of planned events as appropriate and to ensure community cohesion.
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Needs

The main need is for accessibility for all. This includes those with disabilities, those with dependents and those who are older. People in these groups often have different needs from other groups. They may find access to the countryside difficult or limiting. If paths have steps, steep gradients, gates or small entrances, those in wheelchairs, using walking sticks, partially sighted, using pushchairs or those who are unsteady on their feet would find these obstacles difficult to overcome. Traditionally parks have been designed for able-bodied children. It has been recognised that there is also a great need for play equipment for those children who have disability so that they too can access this play space.

There is also a need for some communities to access open spaces in their local area. If those with particular religious beliefs, political opinions or racial groups find it difficult to go into areas where people have different beliefs, opinions or are a different race, then the council has endeavoured to introduce Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play and Local Equipped Areas for Play. These play areas are usually convenient to residential areas. The council will ensure that the strategy provides equitable open space provision across all communities and supports community cohesion towards celebrations in line with normal event booking practices. Open spaces convenient to residential areas, also provides space for children and young people to play, who may not have access to transport.

It became apparent throughout the Covid 19 lockdown period that there is a need for additional suitable walking trails within the Council area. Some of the current paths are not suitable for those with limited mobility. The Council realise that appropriate path provision is necessary, so that people with disabilities, those with dependents and older people, also have access to the countryside and a place to exercise. Due care has been taken by the Council to consider these groups and many new open spaces have been designed with these groups in mind. There has also been a focus on opening local walking paths and trails. This has enabled those living in cities and towns to walk to the

open space that they wish to use for exercise. This also has a positive effect on climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of individual households. Where appropriate, tactile maps and braille signs have been installed in parks to provide improved access for those who are visually impaired.

The Council also recognises a need on occasions to support some event organisers that use our open spaces with certain infrastructure, such as barriers, toilets and Gazebos.

Experiences

The experience of those with disabilities, buggies/pushchairs or rollators is that at many open space areas, they may not have full access to a site due to poorly planned walkways or barriers to using them. The Council wants to avoid this, and so all greenways, paths and parks have been carefully pre-planned to take all end users into account. Tactile maps and braille signs have also been installed at a number of sites to enable access for those who are partially sighted. Children with disabilities have experienced a lack of play equipment that is suitable for their use, in traditional playparks.

Priorities

The priorities of the groups that could be affected by access (as stated in the table above), will be full accessibility to open spaces within the council area, so that they can achieve the same benefits as those who are not in these groups.

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	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor
Political Opinion	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor

Racial Group	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor
Age	<p>Positive – more older people, particularly those with mobility issues, will be able to safely access and use open space areas, due to enhanced accessibility measures.</p> <p>Children will have access to open spaces which are convenient to where they live, encouraging participation in physical activity.</p> <p>Teenagers will be able to access open spaces designed with their needs in mind – pump parks, skate parks.</p>	Minor
Marital Status	No differential impact identified	None
Sexual Orientation	No differential impact identified	None
Men & Women Generally	No differential impact identified	None
Disability	<p>Positive - People with certain disabilities, including those who are wheelchair users, use mobility aids, and who are visually impaired will find open spaces more accessible.</p> <p>Those who are visually impaired, can use tactile maps and braille signage.</p>	Minor

	Those who have mental health disabilities can access safe open spaces where they can relax and feel close to nature.	
People with and without Dependants	Positive - People with dependants, including those who use buggies or wheelchairs, will find open spaces easier to use. Open spaces will have improved facilities which whole families can enjoy – with this comes social benefits.	Minor

* 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 for any of these groups.
Political Opinion		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Racial Group		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Age		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Marital Status		No opportunities identified in relation to

		this policy for any of these groups.
Sexual Orientation		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Men & Women Generally		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Disability		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
People with and without Dependents		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.

Open spaces have been designed to accommodate all S.75 groups. LCCC owned spaces are shared spaces and not specifically aimed to accommodate one particular S.75 group. No further opportunities have been identified at this time as the needs of different groups have been considered fully in this activity. However, if further issues arise, they will be addressed.

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.

No

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:

1. to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

Open spaces will allow improved access so that more people with disabilities will be able to use the Council's parks and greenways. Through this, there will

be more interaction between disabled people and non-disabled people, and so this may work towards promoting more positive attitudes towards disabled people. There is also the potential for use of images of disabled people in promotional material for council facilities and spaces, which will also raise awareness and promote positive attitudes.

2. to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

LCCC open spaces encourage the participation of disabled people in public life, by providing opportunities for those with disabilities to enjoy outdoor spaces, by giving them access to these spaces. When planning new sites and refurbishing existing sites, the views of those with disabilities will be sought, to ensure improved accessibility.

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	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor
Political Opinion	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor
Racial Group	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor

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	Encouraging delivery of programme to promote inclusivity across all categories.	
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.

The Council recognises that no individual sits in one group and this has been given consideration.

Increased accessibility may particularly benefit older people with disabilities, younger people with disabilities, people who have dependent children or dependants who are disabled.

The development of the Council's open spaces may be considered to be designed with people with disabilities, dependents and older people in mind, however these areas can be used by anyone in the community. Is it also recognised that those using parks, trails and greenways, for example those with disabilities, will fall into other groups. They may be young or old, male or female or from a specific religious background.

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.
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
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Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	
Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – 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]	This policy will be screened out with mitigation. We have concluded that the impacts will be minor and should generally be positive for all groups. However, in developing plans for open spaces, due consideration will be given to some issues identified, including accessibility and inclusion.
Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	

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?

Mitigation factors – the geography of the council area will be studied closely and open spaces will be designed taking into account path width, path incline, seating provision and rest places at points around open spaces. Entrances to parks and greenways are designed to be accessible for wheelchair users and those pushing buggies. New playparks, and those which are being refurbished, will be designed to provide play equipment for those in wheelchairs. The allotment site provides access for those with disabilities, in terms of accessible raised beds and potting benches and accessible toilets.

The screening has identified some needs and potential positive impacts on the following three groups – those with dependents, those with disabilities and those in the older age category. The impacts on these groups are now taken into consideration during construction works and the redevelopment of open spaces, and those impacts are minor or none. All measures have been taken to mitigate any potentially negative impacts on these groups.

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

Two elements to monitoring:

1. Monitoring the activity generally as part of normal review and evaluation or service improvement

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.

Where possible 'Access Counters' will be fitted to monitor footfall and use of the open spaces.

Periodic spot surveys will also take place to gather qualitative feedback from users and to gather comments for further improvement. This can take place at Council organised events etc.

The Council's Customer Care policy is advertised on all Park signage to encourage feedback – good or bad. All communication is responded to.

2. 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:

Play equipment for those with disabilities will be monitored and kept in working order. Weekly and quarterly inspections by Assets unit followed up full independent annual inspection with report.

Accessibility to facilities will be constantly reviewed and improved when identified.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: William Torrens	P&A Manger	21 Jan 2025
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	22 Jan 2025
Approved by: Gareth Lennox	HoS P&A (Acting)	22 Jan 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 (none)

Minor impact (none)

No impact (none)