

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

### **Policy Information**

Name of the policy	Automated charge parking for the Council's four forest and country parks
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	<p>Revised. Council introduced Charged Parking at all 4 Forest and Country Parks in April 2024, with the same payment system implemented across all 4 Parks. Charged Parking was already in place at Castlewellan and Delamont Park. The new system operated on the basis of manual collection by staff at each site either by paying a daily charge or presenting annual permit which can be obtained via FREE entry into one park of choice with a 'single-park permit' available to each registered household address within the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area or purchasing an annual or multi park permit. The system was reviewed following a six-month period trial period and it was agreed to continue with the current system and prepare a business case to introduce an automated charging system.</p>
What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)	<p>While there is no change to payment amount or the free permit criteria, Council is proposing to introduce an automated charging system. This will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply and install access barriers, ticketing/payment systems, and Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology.</li> <li>• Facilitate access for third parties – café and activity provider staff, event staff, contractors, deliveries and on-site home owners.</li> <li>• Facilitate access for caravan/camping customers</li> <li>• Integrate intercom systems for visitor support</li> <li>• Carry out necessary civil works, including the installation of power and data infrastructure.</li> <li>• Provide an online platform for permit applications and payments.</li> <li>• Provide a structured maintenance plan, including estimated annual servicing and repairs.</li> <li>• Ensure timely replacement of damaged equipment, including barriers, ticket machines, and ANPR cameras.</li> <li>• Offer technical support, including remote assistance and on-site interventions when required.</li> </ul> <p>The aim of the new proposal is to integrate a new efficient payment system for visitors to the parks that do not hold</p>

	the free permits. This proposal is also more cost effective for Council and similar to public parks in the Republic of Ireland.
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?	Yes.
If so, explain how.	<p>The proposed update to the current payment system will ensure that visitors will have a more efficient experience when making payment for their visit to the park as the automated system will recognise car number plates and the barrier will automatically open when leaving the parks</p> <p>It also removes the requirement for cash management and handling onsite and enables resources to be deployed to facility management tasks, with less requirement for access management</p>
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	
Who owns and who implements the policy?	

### Implementation factors

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

### Main stakeholders affected

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

	Yes	No
Staff	x	
Service users	x	
Other public sector organisations		
Voluntary/community/trade		

unions		
Other, please specify:		

### Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they	
Who owns them	

### Available evidence

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

<b>Section 75 Category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>																							
Religious belief	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>LGD</b></th> <th><b>All usual residents</b></th> <th><b>Catholic</b></th> <th><b>Protestant and other Christian</b></th> <th><b>Other religions</b></th> <th><b>None</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Northern Ireland</b></td><td>1,903,178</td><td>869,753 (45.7%)</td><td>827,545 (43.5%)</td><td>28,514 (1.5%)</td><td>177,360 (9.3%)</td></tr> <tr> <td><b>Newry, Mourne &amp; Down</b></td><td>182,074</td><td>131,300 (72.1%)</td><td>39,970 (22.0%)</td><td>1,327 (0.7%)</td><td>9,477 (5.2%)</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Source: Census Data 2021).</p>	<b>LGD</b>	<b>All usual residents</b>	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Protestant and other Christian</b>	<b>Other religions</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	1,903,178	869,753 (45.7%)	827,545 (43.5%)	28,514 (1.5%)	177,360 (9.3%)	<b>Newry, Mourne &amp; Down</b>	182,074	131,300 (72.1%)	39,970 (22.0%)	1,327 (0.7%)	9,477 (5.2%)					
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Political opinion	<p>Elected political party representation is an approximate barometer of political opinion of people within the Council area.</p> <p>The party breakdown of the Council's elected members is as follows:</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sinn Féin</td> <td>20 seats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SDLP</td> <td>8 seats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independents</td> <td>2 seats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democratic Unionist</td> <td>5 seats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ulster Unionist</td> <td>1 seats</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alliance</td> <td>5 seats</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Councillors are elected within seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs) across the Council area. With respect to party political representation, democratic deficits exist within particular DEAs i.e three DEAs have no</p>						Sinn Féin	20 seats	SDLP	8 seats	Independents	2 seats	Democratic Unionist	5 seats	Ulster Unionist	1 seats	Alliance	5 seats						
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	PUL Councillor representation (Newry, Crotlieve and Downpatrick), two DEAs have one PUL (Slieve Croob and Slieve Gullion) Councillor and, one DEA has one CNR (Rowallane).																																																												
Racial group	<p>According to the 2021 Census, 3.4% (65,604) of the usually resident population of Northern Ireland belongs to minority ethnic groups. This is almost double the proportion in 2011 (1.8%).</p> <p>The minority ethnic language profile within the area serves as a possible indicator of the BME community profile. The composition of language groups in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area is noted by NISRA (2021) as follows:</p> <p><b>Minority Ethnic Language Profile of the Newry, Mourne and Down LGD Area</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Main language of residents in Newry, Mourne and Down District LGD</th> <th>Number</th> <th>Percentage %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>168,408</td> <td>96.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polish</td> <td>2,143</td> <td>1.22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lithuanian</td> <td>1,149</td> <td>0.66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Irish</td> <td>553</td> <td>0.32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Romanian</td> <td>347</td> <td>0.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Portuguese</td> <td>119</td> <td>0.06</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Arabic</td> <td>170</td> <td>0.09</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bulgarian</td> <td>677</td> <td>0.39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chinese (not otherwise specified)</td> <td>70</td> <td>0.04</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slovak</td> <td>98</td> <td>0.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hungarian</td> <td>106</td> <td>0.06</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spanish</td> <td>77</td> <td>0.04</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latvian</td> <td>279</td> <td>0.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Russian</td> <td>180</td> <td>0.10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tetun</td> <td>22</td> <td>0.01</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Malayalam</td> <td>51</td> <td>0.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tagalog/Filipino</td> <td>44</td> <td>0.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cantonese</td> <td>38</td> <td>0.02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other languages</td> <td>711</td> <td>0.41</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Main language of residents in Newry, Mourne and Down District LGD	Number	Percentage %	English	168,408	96.1	Polish	2,143	1.22	Lithuanian	1,149	0.66	Irish	553	0.32	Romanian	347	0.2	Portuguese	119	0.06	Arabic	170	0.09	Bulgarian	677	0.39	Chinese (not otherwise specified)	70	0.04	Slovak	98	0.05	Hungarian	106	0.06	Spanish	77	0.04	Latvian	279	0.15	Russian	180	0.10	Tetun	22	0.01	Malayalam	51	0.03	Tagalog/Filipino	44	0.03	Cantonese	38	0.02	Other languages	711	0.41
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15	23,220	2,254
16-17	46,641	4,923
18-19	43,343	4,024
20-24	111,383	10,022
25-29	116,407	10,354
30-44	375,518	34,970
45-59	381,910	36,612
60-64	113,043	10,755
65-74	176,934	16,922
75-84	110,149	9,872
85-89	25,877	2,344
90+	13,517	1,191

- The *Access to Cash Review* found that 17% of the UK population (over 8 million adults) would struggle in a cashless society.
- Northern Ireland remains the most cash-reliant part of the UK. In 2024, customers here withdrew on average £2,274 each
- Across the UK, 12% of all payments (6 billion out of 48 billion) are still made in cash.
- One-third of adults now use mobile contactless payments. According to UK Finance, contactless reached a new milestone in 2024, accounting for 94.6% of eligible in-store card transactions.
- Access to physical banking services remains limited in some areas. For Newry, Mourne and Down, only 23.3% of the population live within 1km of a bank branch, rising to 43.6% within 2km and 93.7% within 16km.

#### Summary:

Most people now use cards (contactless in particular) as their main method of payment. However, there is clear evidence that older residents and those who continue to rely primarily on cash could face barriers if a card-only system were implemented.

Marital status	The table below provides an overview of the marital status profile of the Newry, Mourne and Down area:		
Marital Status	Newry, Mourne and Down LGD	NI	
All usual residents: Aged 16+ years	141,996	1,514,743	
Single (never married or never registered a same-sex civil partnership) Aged 16+ years	52,128 (36.7%)	576,708 (38.1%)	

	Married: Aged 16+ years	68,076 (47.9%)	690,509 (45.6%)									
	In a registered same-sex civil partnership: Aged 16+ years	201 (0.14%)	2,742 (0.19%)									
	Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership): Aged 16+ years	4,975 (3.5%)	57,272 (3.8%)									
	Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	7,704 (5.4%)	91,128 (6.0%)									
	Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership: Aged 16+ years	8,912 (6.3%)	96,384 (6.4%)									
	Census 2021											
Sexual orientation	<p>Analysis of the Census 2021 indicates that between 2% and 10% of the population may be lesbian, gay or bisexual.</p> <p>There are no official statistics in relation to the number of gay, lesbian or bisexual people in Northern Ireland. However, research conducted by the HM Treasury shows that between 5% - 7% of the UK population identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual or 'trans' (transsexual, transgendered and transvestite) (LGBT). This is a sizeable proportion of the population here in Northern Ireland.</p>											
Men and women generally	<p>The gender profile for the Newry, Mourne and Down LGD is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>LGD</th> <th>Male</th> <th>Female</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Northern Ireland</td> <td>936,132</td> <td>967,043</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newry, Mourne and Down LGD</td> <td>90,063</td> <td>92,011</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Census 2021</p>			LGD	Male	Female	Northern Ireland	936,132	967,043	Newry, Mourne and Down LGD	90,063	92,011
LGD	Male	Female										
Northern Ireland	936,132	967,043										
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Disability	<p>According to the 2021 Census 22.88% of people in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area has a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>LGD</th> <th>All usual residents</th> <th>Long-term health problem or disability:</th> <th>Long-term health problem or disability:</th> <th>Long-term health problem or disability:</th> </tr> </thead> </table>			LGD	All usual residents	Long-term health problem or disability:	Long-term health problem or disability:	Long-term health problem or disability:				
LGD	All usual residents	Long-term health problem or disability:	Long-term health problem or disability:	Long-term health problem or disability:								

		Day-to-day activities limited a lot	Day-to-day activities limited a little	Day-to-day activities not limited	
Northern Ireland	1,903,179	217,964 (11.45%)	245,057 (12.88%)	1,440,158 (75.67%)	
Newry, Mourne and Down	182,074	19,789 (10.87%)	21,868 (12.01%)	140,417 (77.13%)	

In Northern Ireland the profile of people with a disability is cited as follows:

- More than 1 in 5 or 21% of the population in Northern Ireland has a disability. The incidence of disability is higher in Northern Ireland than any other part of the UK
- 1 in 7 people in Northern Ireland have some form of hearing loss
- 5,000 sign language users who use British Sign Language (BSL) and/or Irish Sign Language (ISL)
- In Northern Ireland there are 57,000 blind people or people with significant visual impairment
- 52,000 people with learning disabilities

(Source: Disability Action)

Dependants	<p>Persons with dependents may be people who have personal responsibility for the care of a child (or children), a person with a disability, and / or a dependent older person.</p> <p>According to the Census 2021, there are 68,396 households in Newry, Mourne and Down, 33.9% of which have dependent children. With regard to these figures, dependents are defined as those aged 0-15 years or those aged 16-18 years who are in full-time education and living with their parents or grandparents. Similar to the regional trend, the proportion of households with dependents in the District has declined from 50% in 1981 to 33.9% in 2021.</p> <p>There are 5,639 lone parent households with dependent children in Newry, Mourne and Down which equates to just over 8% of number of total households in the District and is the fourth highest in Northern Ireland, after Belfast (17,292), Derry and Strabane (7,639) and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (6,556). Half of the parents in lone parent households in Newry, Mourne and Down are unemployed, almost a quarter are in full time employment and over a quarter are in part time employment. 93% of the parents in lone parent households in the District are female compared to 11% who are male.</p> <p>In 2019-21, the teenage birth rate (under 20 years old) was 6.5 per</p>
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	1,000 mothers, which is the fourth highest in Northern Ireland after Belfast (11.4); Antrim & Newtownabbey (6.9) and Mid and East Antrim (6.8) but below the regional average of 6.8 per 1,000 births.
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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 policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

<b>Section 75 Category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>
Religious belief	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Political opinion	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Racial group	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Age	In relation to this section 75 category, it is acknowledged that there is some evidence to suggest that older people may find it more difficult with an automated payment system. Statistics show that while 17% of the UK population would struggle in a cashless society with 12% of payments are made in cash.
Marital status	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Sexual orientation	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Men and women generally	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Disability	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.
Dependants	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified in relation to this section 75 category.



## Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds?

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of policy impact</b>	<b>Level of impact? Major/minor/none</b>
Religious belief	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
Political opinion	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
Racial group	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
Age	<p>It is recognised that some older people could have difficulty with an automated payment system.</p> <p>While most people now use cards (contactless in particular) as their main method of payment, there is evidence that older people and those who continue to rely primarily on cash could face barriers if a card-only system were implemented.</p>	<p>Minor – It is important to acknowledge that free permits will continue to be available for residents of the district</p> <p>In addition, there will be integrated intercom assistance for visitor support and technical support for on-site interventions as required.</p> <p>Signage will be erected on entry to advise of card only payment</p>
Marital status	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
Sexual orientation	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
Men and women generally	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
Disability	No adverse policy impact	None

	identified.	
Dependants	No adverse policy impact identified.	

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

<b>Section 75 category</b>	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide details
Religious belief		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service
Political opinion		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service
Racial group		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service
Age	While it is anticipated the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service, extending this to also include cash payments would have potential to improve access for older people who continue to rely primarily on cash for payments.	
Marital status		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service
Sexual orientation		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service
Men and women generally		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service

Disability		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service
Dependants		It is proposed that the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service

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

Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Major/minor/none
Religious belief	It is not anticipated that this proposal will have a negative impact on people of different religious beliefs	None
Political opinion	It is not anticipated that this proposal will have a negative impact on people of different political opinions	None
Racial group	It is not anticipated that this proposal will have a negative impact on people of different racial groups	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 <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide details
Religious belief		No, it is proposed that the new automated approach will be a more efficient service for all who visit the parks.
Political opinion		No, it is proposed that the new automated approach will be a more efficient service for all who visit the parks.
Racial group		No, it is proposed that the new automated approach will be a more efficient service for all who visit the parks.

## 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).

None

### **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. Be subject to an EQIA

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

It is anticipated the new automated payment system will offer a more efficient service, and the outcome of the proposal to initiate automated charge parking for the Council's four forest and country parks is that it not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required).

While it is acknowledged some older people who use cash may have difficulty with an automated payment system this is mitigated by the provision of free permits for residents of the district, integrated intercom assistance for visitor support and technical support for on-site interventions as required.

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

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

## **Timetabling and prioritising EQIA**

If 3. is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? 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.

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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

## **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:

A review will be undertaken following 6 months of implementation and identify any issues which may require amendment.

## Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
<b>Approved by:</b>	M Boyle	7.1.26
	Head of Tourism Product Development & Visitor Experience	

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.