Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Screening Form

Policy Information

Name of the policy	Bilingualism Policy
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	Revised
What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)	The Council's commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English Language in the Council area.
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.	Language is not a specific Section 75 equality category. However, using proxy indicators people who might be expected to benefit from the intended policy are predominantly people of different religious belief (from a Catholic community background) and people of different political opinion (from a nationalist background). The Bilingualism policy sets out the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity for those who wish to access Council services through the medium of Irish. Based on the available data, the policy may have a positive impact on younger people and on people from a Catholic background due to the fact that people aged 12-15 are most likely to be fluent speakers of Irish.
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy
Who owns and who implements the policy?	Colin Moffett, Head of Corporate Policy Corporate Policy / Irish Language Unit

Implementation factors

	Yes	No
Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract	X	
from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?		
If yes, are they Financial	X	
If yes, are they Legislative	X	
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?

Vec	No
1 5	INO

Staff	X	
Service users	X	
Other public sector organisations	X	
Voluntary/community/trade unions	X	
Other, please specify:	Irish Language Community	

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they	o Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Development Naming
Who owns them	Postal Numbering and Erection of Nameplates Policy and
	Procedures
	○ Irish Language Strategy 2024-2027
	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Brand Identity
	Guidelines
	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Bilingualism
	Procedures
	o Guidelines for the Use of the Irish Language in Newry, Mourne
	and Down District Council
	 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)
	 The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
	 The Belfast Agreement / Good Friday Agreement 1998
	o St Andrews Agreement
	New Decade, New Approach (2020)
	o Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022

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	needs/exp	eriences/	priorities		
Religious						
belief	LGD	All usual residents	Catholic	Protestant and other Christian	Other religions	None
	Northern	1,903,178	869,753	827,545	28,514	177,360
	Ireland	, ,	(45.7%)	(43.5%)	(1.5%)	(9.3%)
	Newry,	182,074	131,300	39,970	1,327	9,477
	Mourne & Down	,	(72.1%)	(22.0%)	(0.7%)	(5.2%)
	(Source: Ce	ensus Data 2	021).	l	l	ı
			_	having a posit background.	ive impact f	or
European Charter for Regional or Minority L 'adoption of special measures in favour of r languages aimed at promoting equality bets languages and the rest of the population is act of discrimination against the users of m languages' (Source: Council of Europe (201 Committee of Experts on the Charter (UK 3 21.04.10, para. 123).				vour of regionality between clation is not to ers of more wope (2010) – F	al or minorit the users of be conside idely used Report of the	ty these ered an
Political opinion	Elected political party representation is an approximate barometer of political opinion of people within the Council area.				eter of	
	The party breakdown of the Council's elected members is as follows:				ollows:	
	Sinn Féin			20 seats		
	SDLP			8 seats		
	Independent	ts		2 seats		
	Democratic			5 seats		
	Ulster Union			1 seats		
	Alliance	•		5 seats		
	across the C	ouncil area.	With respe	District Electo ct to party pol cular DEAs i.e	itical reprès	entation,

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).

This breakdown is taken as an approximate representation of the political opinion of the people resident within the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area.

The Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all of its service users and it is not anticipated the policy will adversely impact users from Unionist or other political perspectives i.e. providing access to services and information in the Irish language does not adversely impact upon the rights of others to access services and services in their preferred language(s) and positive actions to promote the Irish language do not constitute discrimination against others (Source: Council of Eutrope, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for National Minorities (Third Opinion on the UK) ACFC/OP/III(2011)006, para.28, June 2011.

Racial group

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%).

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:

Minority Ethnic Language Profile of the Newry, Mourne and Down LGD Area

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

This policy will not adversely impact people from different racial backgrounds or people with different language requirements. Positive action for one language does not constitute discrimination against another language or language user, and has potential to positively contribute to a greater understanding of the linguistic diversity which exists within the Council area.

Age

According to the 2021 Census, the age profile of the Newry, Mourne and Down LGD is as follows:

Age Profile	NI	Newry, Mourne & Down
0-4	113,825	11,722
5-7	73,456	7,693
8-9	51,020	5,259
10-14	126,919	13,151
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

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	52,128 (36.7%)	576,708 (38.1%)

	I F			<u> </u>
	same-sex civil	_		
	partnership) Aged 16	5+		
	years	60.076	600 500	
	Married: Aged 16+	68,076	690,509	
	years	(47.9%)	(45.6%)
	In a registered same		2,742	,
	sex civil partnership:	(0.14%)	(0.19%)
	Aged 16+ years	4.075	F7 272	
	Separated (but still	4,975 II (3.5%)	57,272 (3.8%)	
	legally married or sti	` `	(3.070)	'
	civil partnership): Ag			
	16+ years	Jeu		
	Divorced or formerly	in 7,704	91,128	
	a same-sex civil	(5.4%)	(6.0%)	
	partnership which is	-	(0.070)	
	now legally dissolved			
	Widowed or survivin		96,384	
	partner from a same	(6.3%)	(6.4%))
	sex civil partnership:			
	Aged 16+ years			
	Census 2021			
Sexual	Analysis of the Censu			10% of the
orientation	population may be les	bulan, gay or bisext	ldi.	
	There are no official statistics in relation to the number of say, locking			
	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			
	transgendered and tra			
	the population here in	, , ,		
	There is no qualitative	e or quantitative da	ta available to sugge	est the
	policy would have an	adverse impact for	people of different s	exual
	orientation.			
Men and	The gender profile for	or the Newry, Mour	ne and Down LGD is	as
women	follows:			
generally	LCD	Mala	Te1	1
	LGD	Male	Female	
	Northern Ireland	936,132	967,043	
	Newry, Mourne	90,063	92,011	
	and Down LGD Census 2021]
	CCHSuS ZUZI			

Disability

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.

LGD	All usual residents	Long-term health problem or disability: Day-to-day activities limited a lot	Long-term health problem or disability: Day-to-day activities limited a little	Long-term health problem or disability: 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 Sigh 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)

This policy will not adversely impact people with different language requirements. Positive action for one language does not constitute discrimination against another language or language user and has potential to positively contribute to a greater understanding of the linguistic diversity which exists within the Council area.

As set out within the Council's Equality Scheme Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community.

To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. (NMDDC Equality Scheme, Chapter 6, Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to

	information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f)))
Dependants	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.
	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.
	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.
	In 2019-21, the teenage birth rate (under 20 years old) was 6.5 per 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.

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	The policy reflects the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which is founded upon the concept of non-discrimination i.e. the majority language user group is not discriminated against by the implementation of actions designated to protect and promote the minority language (Irish Language).
	Although it is assumed the policy may positively impact upon people identifying as Catholic, as greater numbers of Catholics are fluent in the Irish language, the policy does not discriminate against, or have a detrimental impact upon, people with other religious beliefs, nor does it adversely affect the ability and/or opportunities for people from other religious backgrounds to use their preferred language to access Council services and information. Therefore the potential positive impact of this policy for Catholics who speak the Irish language does not automatically create an adverse negative impact for people with other religious beliefs.
Political opinion	While it may be assumed the policy may positively impact upon people from a Nationalist and/or Republican political opinion, conversely it cannot be assumed to adversely impact people with any other political opinion as the focus of the policy is a commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish and English language in the Council area rather than the promotion of any specific political perspective or opinion.
Racial group	This policy will not adversely impact people with different language requirements. Positive action for one language does not constitute discrimination against another language or language user and has potential to positively contribute to a greater understanding of the linguistic diversity which exists within the Council area.
	As set out within the Council's Equality Scheme Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community.
	To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we

	provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. (NMDDC Equality Scheme, Chapter 6, Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f)))
Age	No specific needs, experiences or priorities have been identified.
Marital status	No specific needs, experiences or priorities have been identified.
Sexual orientation	No specific needs, experiences or priorities have been identified.
Men and women generally	No specific needs, experiences or priorities have been identified.
Disability	This policy will not adversely impact people with different language requirements including Braille, large print, sign language etc. Positive action for one language does not constitute discrimination against another language or language user and has potential to positively contribute to a greater understanding of the linguistic diversity which exists within the Council area.
	As set out within the Council's Equality Scheme Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community.
	To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. (NMDDC Equality Scheme, Chapter 6, Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f)))
Dependants	No specific needs, experiences or priorities have been identified.

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?

Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? Major/minor/none
Religious belief	The policy may positively impact upon people identifying as Catholic, as greater numbers of Catholics are fluent in the Irish language.	Minor
	The policy does not discriminate against, or have a detrimental impact upon, people with other religious beliefs, nor does it adversely affect the ability and/or opportunities for people from other religious backgrounds to use their preferred language to access Council services and information.	
	Therefore, the potential positive impact of this policy for Catholics who speak the Irish language does not automatically create an adverse negative impact for people with other religious beliefs.	
Political opinion	While the policy may positively impact upon people from a Nationalist and/or Republican political opinion, conversely it cannot be assumed to adversely impact people with any other political opinion as the focus of the policy is a commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish and English language in the Council area rather than the promotion of any specific political perspective or opinion.	Minor
Racial group	This policy will not adversely impact people with different language requirements. Positive	Minor

	action for one language does not constitute discrimination against another language or language user and has potential to positively contribute to a greater understanding of the linguistic diversity which exists within the Council area.	
	As set out within the Council's Equality Scheme Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community.	
	To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. (NMDDC Equality Scheme, Chapter 6, Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f)))	
Age	No adverse policy impact identified.	None
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	This policy will not adversely impact people with different language requirements including Braille, large print, sign language	None

	etc. Positive action for one language does not constitute discrimination against another language or language user and has potential to positively contribute to a greater understanding of the linguistic diversity which exists within the Council area.	
	As set out within the Council's Equality Scheme Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is committed to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community.	
	To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. (NMDDC Equality Scheme, Chapter 6, Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f)))	
Dependants	No adverse policy impact identified.	None

2. 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
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No
Age		No
Marital status		No
Sexual orientation		No
Men and women		No

generally	
Disability	No
Dependants	No

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	Details of policy impact	Level of impact?
category		Major/minor/none
Religious belief	The aim of the policy is to detail the commitment of the Council to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both Irish and English language in the Council area.	Minor
	While, the policy may positively impact upon people identifying as Catholic, as greater numbers of Catholics are fluent in the Irish language, the policy does not discriminate against, or have a detrimental impact upon, people with other religious beliefs, nor does it adversely affect the ability and/or opportunities for people from other religious backgrounds to use their preferred language to access Council services and information.	
	Therefore, the potential positive impact of this policy for Catholics who speak the Irish language does not automatically create an adverse negative impact for people with other religious beliefs.	
Political opinion	While the policy may positively impact upon people from a Nationalist and/or Republican political opinion, conversely it cannot be assumed to adversely impact people with any other political opinion as the focus of the policy is a commitment to	Minor

	facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish and English language in the Council area rather than the promotion of any specific political perspective or opinion.	
Racial group		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		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No

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 recommended not to proceed with conducting an equality impact assessment (with no mitigating measures required). This decision is based upon consideration of the intention of the policy statement, aim and scope.

In this regard it must be taken into account that:

- The policy sets out the Council's commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish and English language;
- It is to ensure linguistic equality for all who avail of and/or provide Council services as far as reasonably possible.

This policy approach is consistent with, and complements, Council's Equality Scheme commitment to ensuring the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community. To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided. (NMDDC Equality Scheme, Chapter 6, Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f)))

While it is the conclusion that the Bilingualism Policy would be designated as having minor positive impact for people predominantly from a Catholic community background and from a nationalist and/or republican political opinion, this does not automatically create an adverse negative impact for people of religious belief or political opinion.

In addition, it is acknowledged that any asymmetrical impacts of the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for a disadvantaged people.

attaching to the policy be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced?	ts
In light of these revisions, is there a need to re-screen the revised/alternative polyes / No. If No, please explain why	olicy?
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.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)		
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:		

Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Colin Moffett	Head of Corporate Policy	4 July 2025
Approved by:		
Colin Moffett	Head of Corporate Policy	4 July 2025

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.