Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Screening Form

Policy Information

Name of the policy	NMDDC Planning Department Validation Checklist
Is this an existing,	Revised
revised or new policy?	
Is this an existing, revised or new policy? What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)	The validation checklist sets out revised procedures to be implemented to request additional information to make a planning application valid. The Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 empowers councils to publish a Planning Application Validation Checklist that specifies the level of information/ evidence to be submitted with a planning application to make it a valid application. This will apply to all applications for full planning permission, outline planning permissions and the associated approval of reserved matters. This will require all the necessary information/evidence that would previously have been submitted at various stages during the processing of planning applications to be submitted at the outset at validation stage. The legislation was made on 01 October 2024 by Dfl and comes into operation on 01 April 2025. The purpose of the planning application validation checklist is to set out the necessary information/evidence required to make a planning application valid and ready for processing. The Validation Checklist sets out the information/evidence generally required at the outset when submitting a planning application to improve the quality of the planning applications submitted and ensure applications are complete and capable of being processed. This will enable the front-loaded planning application to be processed in a more efficient and effective manner, improving the processing times of planning applications at validation stage. The benefits of a validation checklist are generally set out as follows: • it sets out the scope of information required at the outset to ensure a 'fit for purpose' application submission; • it minimises the potential for all the necessary
	 it sets out the scope of information required at the outset to ensure a 'fit for purpose' application submission; it minimises the potential for all the necessary information not being available to the planning authority to
	enable it to determine the application; • it minimises the need for further submissions of

	additional information during the lifetime of an application
	which avoids unnecessary delay in the determination of applications and reduces costs to councils through a reduction in re-advertisements and re-neighbour notification;
	 it provides applicants with certainty as to the level of information required and the likely overall investment needed prior to the application submission; and it ensures that the appropriate information is provided with an application to assist interested parties, including consultees, in their consideration of development
	proposals.
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?	No
If so, explain how.	
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	NMDDC Planning Department
Who owns and who implements the policy?	NMDDC Planning Department

Implementation factors

	Yes	No
Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract		No
from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?		
If yes, are they Financial		
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	Yes	
Service users	Yes	
Other public sector organisations		
Voluntary/community/trade unions		

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

regional ranning rolley statements.	What are they? Who owns them?	Strategies: The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011; The Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024; the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017; The Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, The Northern Ireland Planning Statistical Bulletins, NIAO Planning in Northern Ireland 2022; Public Accounts Committee Planning in Northern Ireland 2022; The Council's Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025; The Northern Area Plan 2016; Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland; suite of regional Planning Policy Statements.
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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/experiences/priorities					
Religious						
belief	LGD All usual Catholic Protestant Other residents Christian					
	Northern Ireland	1,903,178	869,753 (45.7%)	827,545 (43.5%)	28,514 (1.5%)	177,360 (9.3%)
	Newry, Mourne & Down	182,074	131,300 (72.1%)	39,970 (22.0%)	1,327 (0.7%)	9,477 (5.2%)
	(Source: Ce	ensus Data 2	021).			
	Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity. There is no evidence to indicate that this policy/procedure will have an adverse impact on any of this Section 75 group. However, the planned Council public consultation process will support the identification of any currently unknown impacts. The consultation will include an online questionnaire (also available to be completed on hard copy or over the telephone), and targeted engagement with key stakeholders. The public consultation will run for six weeks from 31 March 2025 to 12 May 2025. Responses received within this timeframe will be considered in finalising the Planning Application Validation Checklist.				ating to Il have r, the Ition will ed on with key rom 31 s ation	
Political opinion	Elected political party representation is an approximate barometer of political opinion of people within the Council area.					
	The party breakdown of the Council's elected members is as follows:					
	Sinn Féin SDLP Independen Democratic Ulster Union Alliance	Unionist		20 seats 8 seats 2 seats 5 seats 1 seats 5 seats		
	Councillors are elected within seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs)			EAs)		

across the Council area. With respect to party political representation, democratic deficits exist within particular DEAs i.e three DEAs have no 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).

The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.

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

DOWII LGD AI Ca		
Main language of residents in	Number	Percentage %
Newry, Mourne and Down		
District LGD		
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	70	0.04
specified)		
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

	The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.					
Age	According to the 2021 Census, the age profile of the Newry, Mourne and Down LGD is as follows:					
	Age Profile	NI	Newry Mou	rne & Down		
	0-4	113,825		722		
	5-7	73,456		593		
	8-9	51,020		259		
	10-14	126,919		151		
	15	23,220		254		
	16-17	46,641	•	923		
	18-19	43,343)24		
	20-24	111,383		022		
	25-29	116,407		354		
	30-44	375.518		970		
	45-59	381,910		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	1,1	191		
	According to the Digital Skills in Northern Ireland report, nearly half of those aged 65 and over lack digital skills, compared to less than 10% individuals aged 16 to 49. To mitigate this inequality for older people, paper or large print copies of the Planning Application Validation Checklist will be made available on request. Additionally, applicants can arrange a meeting with a planning officer for general advice. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a 3 rd party submit on their behalf. The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023 Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.					
Marital status	Newry, Mourne and Do	The table below provides an overview of the marital status profile of the Newry, Mourne and Down area: Marital Status Newry, NI				
			Mourne and			

		Down		
		LGD		
	All usual residents: Aged 16+ years	141,996	1,514,743	
	Single (never married or never registered	52,128	576,708	
	a same-sex civil partnership) Aged 16+ years	(36.7%)	(38.1%)	
	Married: Aged 16+ years	68,076	690,509	
		(47.9%)	(45.6%)	
	In a registered same-sex civil	201	2,742	
	partnership: Aged 16+ years	(0.14%)	(0.19%)	
	Separated (but still legally married or still	4,975	57,272	
	legally in a same-sex civil partnership): Aged 16+ years	(3.5%)	(3.8%)	
	Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil	7,704	91,128	
	partnership which is now legally dissolved	(5.4%)	(6.0%)	
	Widowed or surviving partner from a	8,912	96,384	
	same-sex civil partnership: Aged 16+ years	(6.3%)	(6.4%)	
	Census 2021			
	The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.			
Sexual orientation	Analysis of the Census 2021 indicates that between 2% and 10% of the population may be lesbian, gay or bisexual.			
	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. The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the			
	Department for Infrastructure during Novem Its consultation exercise did not identify any 75 categories or equality of opportunity.	issues relati	ng to Section	
Men and women generally	The gender profile for the Newry, Mourne a follows:	and Down LO	GD is as	

LGD	Male	Female
Northern Ireland	936,132	967,043
Newry, Mourne	90,063	92,011
and Down LGD		

Census 2021

The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.

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)

The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.

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.

The proposed validation checklist has been consulted on by the Department for Infrastructure during November 2022 to January 2023. Its consultation exercise did not identify any issues relating to Section 75 categories or equality of opportunity.

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	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified.
Political opinion	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified.
Racial group	To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, the Planning Service will provide the Validation Checklist in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.
	Additionally, applicants can arrange a meeting with a planning officer for general advice. An interpreter can be requested for attendance at these meetings if necessary. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.
Age	To mitigate a lack of digital skills for older people, and to ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, the Planning Service will provide the Validation Checklist in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.
	Additionally, applicants can arrange a meeting with a planning officer for general advice. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.
Marital status	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified.
Sexual orientation	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified.
Men and women generally	No specific needs, experiences or priorities identified.
Disability	To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, the Planning Service will provide the Validation Checklist in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the

	exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.	
	Applicants can arrange a face-to-face meeting with a planning officer for general advice. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.	
Dependants	To assist individuals who provide care there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.	

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	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Political opinion	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Racial group	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Age	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Marital status	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Men and women generally	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Disability	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Dependants	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	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	If No , provide details
	details	
Religious belief		There is no evidence to indicate that this
		procedure will have an adverse impact.
Political opinion		There is no evidence to indicate that this
		procedure will have an adverse impact.
Racial group		There is no evidence to indicate that this
_ '		procedure will have an adverse impact.
Age		There is no evidence to indicate that this
		procedure will have an adverse impact.
Marital status		There is no evidence to indicate that this

	procedure will have an adverse impact.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence to indicate that this
	procedure will have an adverse impact.
Men and women	There is no evidence to indicate that this
generally	procedure will have an adverse impact.
Disability	There is no evidence to indicate that this
·	procedure will have an adverse impact.
Dependants	There is no evidence to indicate that this
	procedure will have an adverse impact.

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	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Political opinion	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	None
Racial group	There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.	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		There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.
Political opinion		There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.
Racial group		There is no evidence to indicate that this procedure will have an adverse impact.

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).

The needs of individuals with multiple identities have already been considered in the mitigation measures implemented.

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:

The outcome of equality screening is that the process not be subject to an EQIA (with no mitigating measures required).

As stated:

 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, the Planning Service will provide the Validation Checklist in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Additionally, applicants can arrange a meeting with a planning officer for general advice. An interpreter can be requested for attendance at these meetings if necessary. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.

 To mitigate a lack of digital skills for older people, and to ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, the Planning Service will provide the Validation Checklist in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Additionally, applicants can arrange a meeting with a planning officer for general advice. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.

- Applicants can arrange a face-to-face meeting with a planning officer for general advice. In addition, there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.
- To assist individuals who provide care there are opportunities for individuals to nominate a third party to submit on their behalf.

If 2. (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), in what ways can identified adverse 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/alternates / No. If No, please explain why	itive policy?
If 3. (i.e. <u>to conduct an EQIA</u>), please provide details of the reasons:	
Timetabling and prioritising EQIA	
If 3. is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant publications? NO If YES, please provide details:	lic
Please answer the following questions to determine priority for timetabline On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest 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 ran with other policies screened in for EQIA. This list of priorities will assist yetimetabling the EQIA. Details of your EQIA timetable should be included in quarterly Section 75 report.	ou in

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:

The procedure will be reviewed in line with the Council's agreed policy review cycle i.e. every four years or sooner in respect to legislative changes.

The review will be against statutory targets regarding the speed of processing, Retain a Policy issues log.

Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Pat Rooney	Principal Planner	19 March 2025
Approved by:		
Jonathan McGilly	Assistant Director Regeneration	23 April 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.