

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Policy Screening Form

Policy Information

Name of the policy	(Practise or decision) – decision not to agree to a request by a band to allow them to carry the four provinces flags (Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connacht) at the St Patricks Day Parade.
Is this an existing, revised or new policy?	Rules and Conditions of entry to the Parade is existing guidance.
What is it trying to achieve (aims/outcomes)	An inclusive cross-community event celebrating the life of St Patrick
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?	n/a
If so, explain how.	
Who initiated or wrote the policy?	n/a
Who owns and who implements the policy?	n/a

Implementation factors

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

Main stakeholders affected

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

	Yes	No
Staff	Events Staff	
Service users	Participants and attendees at the St Patricks Day event	

Other public sector organisations	Potential law and order issue (PSNI)	
Voluntary/community/trade unions	Community and sporting groups participating in the event	
Other, please specify:		

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they	Equality Action Plan, NMD Good Relations Audit and Strategy 2021
Who owns them	Corporate

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 residents	Catholic	Protestant and other Christian	Other religions	None										
	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: Census Data 2021).															
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><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></table>						Sinn Féin	20 seats	SDLP	8 seats	Independents	2 seats	Democratic Unionist	5 seats	Ulster Unionist	1 seats
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	<p>Alliance 5 seats</p> <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 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).</p> <p>Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition Report.</p> <p>9.47 The Commission discussed use of symbols and emblems in public spaces, which promote proscribed organisations. The Commission believes that event organisers should be mindful of the potential for symbols/emblems to cause offence.</p> <p>NMDDC Good Relations Audit and Strategy</p> <p>7.8 Sectarianism and Cultural Expression Creating welcoming environments, which are not intimidating, and which feel shared, is crucial to creating a vibrant and thriving Newry, Mourne and Down. Encouraging the promotion and celebration of culture in a way that does not appear triumphalist and engenders respect among others, as well as promoting understanding of the different cultures that exist in the area is a key priority for Good Relations in Newry, Mourne and Down.</p> <p>6.5 Parades Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in partnership with a range of community, voluntary, business and statutory organisations organises two cross community annual St Patrick's Festivals in March each year (one in Downpatrick and the other in Newry). The festivals encourage and assist a cross-community celebration of St Patrick where his life and achievements are the central inspiration for the week-long programme of events.</p> <p>Building a sense of belonging and place for all: Newry Mourne and Down Council continue to support festivals and events as a means of building a sense of belonging, highlighting cultural expression and encouraging community cohesion.</p>
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</p>

	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
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 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	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.		
Men and women	The gender profile for the Newry, Mourne and Down LGD is as follows:		

generally	<table><tr><td>LGD</td><td>Male</td><td>Female</td></tr><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></table> Census 2021					LGD	Male	Female	Northern Ireland	936,132	967,043	Newry, Mourne and Down LGD	90,063	92,011						
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Newry, Mourne and Down LGD	90,063	92,011																		
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><tr><td>LGD</td><td>All usual residents</td><td>Long-term health problem or disability: Day-to-day activities limited a lot</td><td>Long-term health problem or disability: Day-to-day activities limited a little</td><td>Long-term health problem or disability: Day-to-day activities not limited</td></tr><tr><td>Northern Ireland</td><td>1,903,179</td><td>217,964 (11.45%)</td><td>245,057 (12.88%)</td><td>1,440,158 (75.67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Newry, Mourne and Down</td><td>182,074</td><td>19,789 (10.87%)</td><td>21,868 (12.01%)</td><td>140,417 (77.13%)</td></tr></table> <p>In Northern Ireland the profile of people with a disability is cited as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <p>(Source: Disability Action)</p>					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%)
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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</p>																			

	<p>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 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.</p>
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Needs, experiences and priorities

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

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	<p>Historically there has been some negative publicity regarding St Patricks day events (particularly in Belfast) where individuals have carried Tricolours in a triumphant manner. This has created an alienation of the protestant community from St Patrick Day celebrations, even though both Christian faiths celebrate the life of St Patrick.</p> <p>Both the Catholic and Protestant/Christian denominations celebrate St Patricks day, and the Council have been mindful to develop an event that is inclusive and cross community in nature.</p> <p>Adhering to the rules and conditions of entry and not allowing a band to carry the four provinces flags ensures we have met the needs of all religious beliefs.</p>

Political opinion	<p>As set out above, St Patricks day events have traditionally been seen as having a strong connection to the nationalist community. The Council have positively designed the events in Newry and Downpatrick to be cross community and to achieve this, have developed a "rules and conditions of entry" document which includes the following.</p> <p>"The Parade attracts the support and participation of the two main community traditions in Northern Ireland. In the interest of maintaining and enhancing good community relations, NMDDC does not permit any Entrant to - (a) carry, wear or display flags, symbols, emblems, banners or any other material, (b) play music or (c) behave in a manner - which may (i) be considered inappropriate at a cross-community event such as the Parade, (ii) give cause for concern or (iii) bring the Parade and the Council's good name into disrepute."</p> <p>By adhering to these guidelines and not allowing a band to carry the four provinces flag we have ensured that there is no negative impact on any political grouping.</p>
Racial group	
Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	
Men and women generally	
Disability	
Dependants	

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	By refusing to allow the band to fly the four provinces flag, we have ensured that there would be no negative impact on equality of opportunity for any religious community (particularly those from a protestant faith). When the band in question is advised that they are not allowed to fly these flags, they might choose not to participate in the parade and they might perceive that this decision is not inclusive of the needs of the catholic community, however this would be their choice not to participate.	None
Political opinion	By refusing to allow the band to fly the four provinces flag, we have ensured that there would be no negative impact on equality of opportunity for any political community (the unionist community in particular). When the band in question are advised that they cannot fly the flags, they might choose to not participate in the parade and they might perceive that this decision is not inclusive of the needs of the nationalist community however that would be their choice not to participate.	None
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

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	By refusing to allow the band to fly the four provinces flag, and adhering to our rules and conditions of entry for the parade, we have ensured that the St Patrick's Day Parade is a positive opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people of all political beliefs.	
Political opinion	By refusing to allow the band to fly the four provinces flag, and adhering to our rules and conditions of entry for the parade, we have ensured that the St Patrick's Day Parade is a positive opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for people of all political opinions.	
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

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	Not allowing a band to carry the four provinces flags in the parade has ensured that no offense has been caused to the protestant community.	none
Political opinion	Not allowing a band to fly the four provinces flag in the parade has ensured that no offense has been caused to the Unionist community.	none
Racial group		

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	Positive design of the parade to include bands, community groups and cultural activity that represents all religious beliefs.	
Political opinion	Positive design of the parade to include bands, community groups and cultural activity that represents all political beliefs.	
Racial group	Positive design of the parade to include bands, community groups and cultural activity that represents all political beliefs.	

Additional considerations

The Rules and Conditions of Entry is a Council document that groups must agree to when participating in the St Patricks Day parade. It is not a legal document and therefore there is no legal basis to exclude someone from participating in the parade.

There is no document created by an organisation such as the Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition or the Executive Office that identifies which flags would be considered inappropriate at a cross community event. Any decision on whether a particular flag would “give cause for concern or bring the Parade and the Council’s good name into disrepute” would therefor be subjective.

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:

In making the decision to not allow the band to carry the four province flags the Council is being mindful of the potential for symbols/emblems to cause offence as recommended by the Commission on Flags, Emblems and Culture Traditions.

This decision is also in keeping with the NMD Good Relations Strategy; "encouraging the promotion and celebration of culture in a way that does not appear triumphalist and engenders respect among others".

It is therefore viewed that the decision not to allow the band to carry the four provinces flag should not be subject to an EQIA.

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.

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: _____

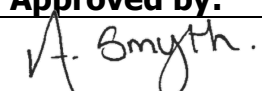
Monitoring

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:

Monitoring of social media commentary of the St Patricks Day Parades

Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Catriona Regan	Head of Culture, Arts, Heritage and Events	05/02/2025
Approved by:		
	Assistant Director, Economy, Growth & Tourism	05/02/2025

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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.

The Equality Commission recommends greater regulation of the display of flags. Regulation, and enforcement if appropriate, should aim to ensure that displays of flags and emblems promote mutual respect among the communities, while not allowing the display of emblems to be used to maintain, heighten or reignite sectarian tensions. While such regulations would differ depending on the various scenarios in which flags are displayed, the principles for regulation should be consistent and based on a strong equality and human rights framework.