



May 1st, 2026

Chairperson: Councillor T Mitchell

Vice-Chairperson: Councillor A Givan

Aldermen: A McIntyre and S Skillen

Councillors: T Beckett, R Carlin, J Craig, K Dickson, J Gallen, B Higginson, C Kemp, S Lowry, G McCleave, G Thompson and The Hon N Trimble

Ex Officio:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor: Alderman A Grehan

Deputy Mayor: Alderman H Legge

Notice Of Meeting

A meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee will be held on Tuesday, 5th May 2026 at 6:00 pm for the transaction of the undernoted Agenda.

For those Members attending this meeting remotely, the Zoom link and passcodes are contained within the Outlook invitation that has been issued.

A hot meal shall be available in **Lighters Restaurant** from 5.15 pm.

David Burns

Chief Executive

Agenda

1.0 APOLOGIES

2.0 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- (i) Conflict of Interest on any matter before the meeting (Members to confirm the specific item)
- (ii) Pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest (Member to complete the Disclosure of Interest form)

📄 *Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf*

Page 1

3.0 REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEISURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING

3.1 Proposed Winter Programme 2026

For Decision

📄 *Draft Winter Programme - Cover Report 29.04.26.pdf*

Page 3

📄 *Appendix 1 - Christmas Evaluation 2025 - Redacted_30.04.26.pdf*

Page 7

📄 *Appendix 2 - Draft Winter Programme 2026_29.04.26.pdf*

Page 139

3.2 Community Investment Fund

For Decision

📄 *CIF Awards Approval Process - Cover Report 29.04.26.pdf*

Page 148

📄 *Appendix 1 CIF - Phase 4 Equality Screening (Final).pdf*

Page 151

📄 *Appendix 2 RNIA CIF - Phase 4 V.1.pdf*

Page 168

3.3 Canal Boxing Academy - Fundraising Event

For Decision

📄 *Canal Boxing Fundraising Request - Cover Report_28.04.26.pdf*

Page 177

📄 *Appendix 1 - Canal Boxing REDACTED.pdf*

Page 179

📄 *Appendix 2 Equality Screening - Canal Boxing_August 24.pdf*

Page 180

4.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

4.1 Community Bursary Scheme 2025/26 - Table of Outcomes

For Noting

📄 *Community Bursary Scheme update_23.04.26.pdf* **Page 187**

📄 *Appendix 1 - Community Bursary Scheme 25-26.pdf* **Page 189**

4.2 Addressing Poverty and Social Exclusion Fund

For Decision

📄 *Cover Report - Addressing Poverty & Social Exclusion Grant Programme_29.04.26.pdf* **Page 193**

📄 *Appendix 1 - Equality Screening DEA Local Investment Programme.pdf* **Page 197**

📄 *Appendix 2 - RNIA DEA Programme.pdf* **Page 211**

5.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF PARKS & AMENITIES (ACTING)

5.1 Request to use Hillsborough Forest Carpark

For Decision

📄 *Request to use Hillsborough Forest Carpark_29.04.26.pdf* **Page 220**

📄 *Appendix 1 -HWT Booking form REDACTED_28.04.26.pdf* **Page 222**

📄 *Appendix 2 - LCCC parks open spaces screening Jan 2025.pdf* **Page 225**

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

1. Pecuniary Interests

The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors under Section 6 requires you to declare at the relevant meeting any pecuniary interest that you may have in any matter coming before any meeting of your Council.

Pecuniary (or financial) interests are those where the decision to be taken could financially benefit or financially disadvantage either you or a member of your close family. A member of your close family is defined as at least your spouse, live-in partner, parent, child, brother, sister and the spouses of any of these. Members may wish to be more prudent by extending that list to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or even close friends.

This information will be recorded in a Statutory Register. On such matters **you must not speak or vote**. Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, if such a matter is to be discussed by your Council, **you must withdraw from the meeting whilst that matter is being discussed**.

2. Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests

In addition you must also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a Council meeting (please see also Sections 5.2 and 5.6 and 5.8 of the Code).

Significant private or personal non-pecuniary (membership) interests are those which do not financially benefit or financially disadvantage you or a member of your close family directly, but nonetheless, so significant that could be considered as being likely to influence your decision.

Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, you must declare this interest as soon as it becomes apparent and **you must withdraw from any Council meeting (including committee or sub-committee meetings) when this matter is being discussed**.

In respect of each of these, please complete the form below as necessary.

Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

Date of Meeting: _____

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

Nature of Pecuniary Interest:

Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

Date of Meeting: _____

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

Nature of Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interest:

Name:

Address:

Signed:

Date:

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*If you have any queries please contact David Burns, Chief Executive,
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council*

Committee:	Communities and Wellbeing
Date:	05 May 2026
Report from:	Director Leisure and Community Wellbeing

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Proposed Winter Programme 2026

1.0 **2025 Winter Programme Feedback**

- 1.1 In 2025, a successful winter programme was delivered across the Council that supported both communities and businesses, whilst having inclusion firmly embedded across the calendar of events.
- 1.2 Key highlights saw visitors enjoy a diverse and busy programme, with Light Festival events across the Lisburn city centre, Carryduff and Dundonald. 165,746 people were recorded as visiting the free 4-week event at Castle Gardens, (an increase of 19,474 on the previous year). We had record numbers attend the annual Switch-On event with over 7000 people enjoying the evening.
- 1.3 The Lisburn Light Festival and Programme of Events was well received with businesses reporting an uplift in sales and positive visitor feedback. Visitors attending specifically for the Christmas events generated an estimated £3.66 million in additional spend in the city, which is a 107% increase from the previous year.
- 1.4 Community involvement saw almost 350 local people taking part in the lantern parade workshops having over 7000 people in attendance at the Christmas Switch-On. The programme offered something for everyone - from a Virtual Reality Sleigh ride, a Christmas Hub and festive wooden huts creating a Christmas market feel along Bow Street to the fabulous flash mob in Bow Street Mall.
- 1.5 The collective approach to corporate branding in 2025 worked well; with the engagement on social media increasing by 96.5%. The *behind the scenes 'reels'* were very popular, building excitement and anticipation whilst achieving a reach of over 900,000 views on Facebook.
- 1.6 Inclusion was a central thread running throughout the programme, which included the provision of sensory activities, quiet evenings and availability of accessible facilities.
- 1.7 The 2025 programme included the following activities:
- Christmas Switch-On and Enchanted Walk (Market Square, Lisburn);
 - Lisburn Light Festival (with installations in Castlereagh);
 - 20 Community Christmas Tree Switch-On Events (across the Council areas);
 - Christmas Light Trail (Castle Gardens);

- e) A number of creative and inclusive programmes across the Council area, such as art workshops, Santa at the Ice Bowl, tea dance and a Santa's Grotto at Castle Gardens;
- f) Christmas Markets (Dundonald, Royal Hillsborough and Carryduff);
- g) Pole mounted lights (across the Council);
- h) Virtual Santa Sleigh ride, a family friendly Christmas Hub and pop-up markets;
- i) The 40ft real tree was welcomed back to Market Square against the backdrop of the museum wrapped in twinkling lights. This key attraction created a "wow factor" *instagrammable* opportunity, with visitors posting their photos across social media.

1.8 An evaluation on the winter programme 2025 is attached for Members information at **Appendix 1**.

2.0 **Proposed Winter & Christmas Programme 2026**

2.1 It is recommended that the 2026 Winter Programme maintains the key principles of supporting business and community with accessibility remaining intrinsic in all that is delivered, coupled with a refresh of activities and key attractions.

2.2 The proposed Winter Programme for 2026 proposes to serve and attract local communities and visitors across the Borough to enjoy an inclusive and festive array of programmes, kicking off with the Christmas Switch-On in Lisburn on Thursday 19th or 26th November. Following that, there would be a host of engaging events peppered across the Council area. The successful 4-week Light Festival would run in Castle Gardens and continue to be free of charge, making Christmas festivities affordable and assessable. As in previous years, there will be a number of inclusive events to ensure the festivities can be enjoyed by all.

2.3 The proposed 2026 programme activity is captured in **table1** below for Members consideration, along with a detailed programme attached at **Appendix 2**.

2.4 The budget for the Winter Programme has been largely agreed within the 2026/27 estimates and ring-fenced Christmas reserves. Members previously agreed a budget of £500,000, from reserves, for the Winter Programme, over a three-year period. There is a remaining balance of £265,000 in these reserves. For the 2026 Winter Programme a draw against these reserves, of £150,000, will be required. For any spend above this amount Members will need to consider additional budgets.

2.5 **Proposed Winter Programme 2026**

Table 1

Programme Activity	Details
a) Traditional Switch-On Thursday 19 th or 26 th November	In person event to launch Christmas Programme
b) Enchanted Walk and Flash Mob	300-500 community lantern walk & flash mob
c) Community Programmes	Diverse & inclusive programme across a host of community settings. Including community Switch-On events

d) Lisburn Light Festival	Animated lights across LCCC
e) Lisburn Light Trail	4-week free light trail castle gardens
f) Sports Services Christmas Programme	Range of activities across various sites, such Skate with Santa, Breakfast with Santa and Supper with Santa events throughout Nov/Dec
g) Christmas Markets	3 x Christmas Markets 2 days x Royal Hillsborough 1 x Dundonald 1 x Carryduff
h) Wrapping of the museum and real Christmas Tree (Market Square, Lisburn)	Real Christmas tree to be installed at the front of the museum. Museum to be wrapped in sparkling lights with bow
i) City Centre programme	Innovative & animated city centre activities, including music, festive workshops, dancing, festive treats and Christmas movie days
j) Elfie tour	Interactive walking tour of the City Centre Lights
k) VR experience	Santas VR Sleigh or similar animation
l) Classic Christmas Movie	Arts Centre, with Age Friendly Forum.
m) Victorian Christmas at Museum	An interactive learning experience of a Victorian Christmas
n) Additional infrastructure	Across sites in LCCC, to enhance the festive offering.

- 2.6 As in previous years, it is anticipated that the Mayor may run some Christmas themed events, such as the Christmas movie day and Santa Dash.
- 2.7 It must be noted that all costs are estimates at this stage and Officers will endeavour to work within the relevant budgets to deliver this ambitious and inclusive programme. The current contract for light provision will cease this year, so a new procurement exercise will be required following presentation of a business case to a future Regeneration and Growth Committee.
- 2.8 If Members are minded agreeing this programme, Officers will liaise with Health & Safety colleagues and Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to ensure event planning meets legislative and guidance standards/regulations. Should there be any changes to the programme, due to health and safety considerations or budgets, the Committee would be notified via email. With regards to car parking, a report will be tabled at a future Environmental Services Committee.

2.9 The branding of the Winter and Christmas programme worked extremely well for 2025, and it is recommended that this continues into 2026, along with the website. In order to ensure that ticketed events can be advertised in a timely fashion, these will go live before the launch of the Christmas programme.

2.10 For ease the 2025 Winter Programme Committee report can be found here: [Christmas Programme - lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk](https://lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/ChristmasProgramme)

3.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members agree:

1. The Draft 2026 Winter Programme and
2. A draw against the ringfenced reserve of £150,000

4.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

1. As per previous programmes, the main elements of the programme have been agreed in the 2026/27 estimates
2. Christmas Reserves – a draw against the Christmas reserve of £150,000, is required for the 2026 programme. The current remaining balance is £265k.
3. Any additionality or movement in anticipated costs to be sourced in-year
4. Subject to agreement of this report consideration will be given through Corporate Services Committee to increase the Winter Programme reserves for future years.

5.0 **Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

5.1 Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out? Yes

5.2 Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out

Screening previously carried out and can be accessed using the following link:

https://lcc.decisiontime.online/new/document_library?folder=15455

5.3 Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed? No

5.4 Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out.

The programme covers a number of rural events and screened through the community programme

Appendices:

Appendix 1 –Winter Programme Evaluation 2025
Appendix 2 - Draft Winter Programme 2026

LCCC

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council



Light Festival and Programme of Events

Christmas Evaluation 2025

CONTENTS

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	PAGE NO.
	KEY BENEFITS DELIVERED	
1	SUMMARY	5
2	CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH-ON AND ENCHANTED WALK (LISBURN CITY CENTRE)	7
3	LIGHT FESTIVAL (LISBURN, CARRYDUFF & DUNDONALD)	8
3.1	LISBURN TO LAPLAND: A WALKING TOUR OF LISBURN LIGHTS (LISBURN CITY CENTRE)	9
3.2	VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) SLEIGH RIDE (VACANT UNIT, MARKET SQUARE)	11
3.3	THE CHRISTMAS HUB AND FESTIVE WORKSHOPS (BOW STREET MALL)	12
3.4	TRAILER TRAMPOLINES (MARKET SQUARE)	13
3.5	MINI CHRISTMAS MARKET (BOW STREET)	14
3.6	PRIMARY SCHOOL CAROLLING (MARKET SQUARE)	15
4	LIGHT TRAIL (CASTLE GARDENS)	16
5	CHRISTMAS MARKETS	20
5.1	CARRYDUFF CHRISTMAS MARKET	
5.2	DUNDONALD CHRISTMAS MARKET	
5.3	ROYAL HILLSBOROUGH CHRISTMAS MARKET	
6	MONITORING & EVALUATION	25
6.4	PARKING IN THE CITY CENTRE	
6.5	SPEND IN THE CITY CENTRE	
6.6	PUBLIC FEEDBACK	
6.7	FEEDBACK CARDS	
7	FOOTFALL	31
7.1	LISBURN CITY CENTRE FOOTFALL	
7.2	LIGHT TRAIL FOOTFALL	
8	ADVERTISING AND MARKETING	34
8.1	OUTDOOR ADVERTISING	
8.2	DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING	
8.3	TV ADVERTISING	
8.4	RADIO ADVERTISING	
8.5	OTHER ACTIVITIES	
8.6	IMPACT OF ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN	
9	COUNCIL POLICIES	38
10	CONCLUSION	40
11	APPENDICES	42
11.1	APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE FOR LIGHT FESTIVAL AND PROGRAMME OF EVENTS	43

11.2	APPENDIX 2: FEEDBACK (SOCIAL MEDIA, COMPLIMENTS AND SMART SURVEY)	45
11.3	APPENDIX 3: CHRISTMAS MARKETS – MARKETING AND ADVERTISING (CONDUCTED BY BABBLE)	47
11.4	APPENDIX 4: PRE AND POST EVALUATION RESULTS (CONDUCTED BY CARD RESEARCH)	73

Key Benefits delivered

Economic

- *The Lisburn Light Festival and Programme of Events was well received with businesses reporting an uplift in sales and positive visitor feedback. Visitors attending specifically for the Christmas events generated an estimated **£3.66 million** in additional spend **in the city**.*
- ***39%** of visitors during November and December said they came to Lisburn specifically **because** of the Christmas events.*
- *Footfall to this year's Castle Gardens light Trail was **165,938** a **13%** increase on last year.*

Business Engagement

- ***49 %** of businesses changed their opening hours over the festive period, mainly by staying open later.*
- ***59%** of business who stayed open longer reported increased sales*
- ***56%** of business who stayed open longer saw more customers.*
- ***42%** of businesses surveyed said the events helped them attract new customers*

Community & Accessibility

The Council is committed to ensuring that the Christmas Events Programme is accessible and inclusive for all residents and visitors. This year's Light Festival featured several dedicated accessibility-focused initiatives, including:

- *A specially programmed evening of **BSL-supported performances** of the Lisburn Lights Elfie Tour.*
- *A **BSL interpreter** accompanying **Santa in his grotto** every Thursday evening.*
- *A '**Special night with Santa**' was hosted in the museum, allowing young children with additional sensory needs to enjoy time with Santa without the need to queue.*
- *Enhanced accessibility at Castle Gardens through the installation of a **Changing Places toilet**, available throughout the duration of the Light Trail.*
- *The programme delivery over **20 Community Switch on events***
- *Christmas Markets were held in Hillsborough, Carryduff and Dundonald with footfall up on average **36%** across all 3 markets.*

Supporting the Mayor's Charity

- *Santa's Grotto operated Wednesday to Saturday each week, offering free visits with every child receiving a selection box. Visitors were invited to support the mayor's chosen charity, **Action Cancer**, raising **over £1,600**.*

1. SUMMARY

The Council's Christmas programme for 2025 commenced with the Christmas Light Switch-On event at 6pm on Thursday, 20th November 2025 and ran until Tuesday, 23rd December 2025. This year's Christmas programme was very well received by residents and visitors to the area travelling from as far away as Enniskillen, Donegal Town and Portrush.

The Light Canopy and Mini Christmas Market on Bow Street, Christmas Hub in Bow Street Mall, Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride in Market Square and the Light Trail at Castle Gardens returned as tried and tested highlights of the Light Festival. The differing variety of amusements in Market Square and Castle Gardens further enhanced the visitor's festive experience.

The Lisburn Light Festival, initially launched in 2018, has subsequently developed a strong identifiable brand synonymous with Lisburn. The Light trail in Castle Gardens, now in year four, has become a significant feature of the Christmas programme and draws visitors from across Northern Ireland and beyond. This year the light trail attracted an unprecedented footfall of 165,938 an increase of 19,666 on the previous year which represents an 13% increase.

The Council's objectives remain focused on strengthening and enhancing the Christmas brand and events programme, positioning the Council area as a must-visit destination and to encourage repeat visits. The marketing was consistent across the programme which resulted in a successful campaign across both traditional and digital media promoting a strong recognisable brand.

The Christmas spirit was brought Council wide with over 20 community switch-on events, additional Christmas pole mounts and festoon lighting installed in our urban centres and rural villages, Christmas Markets in Royal Hillsborough, Dundonald and Carryduff and light installations in the urban centres of Lisburn, Carryduff and Dundonald.

The key focus of the Christmas programme is Lisburn City Centre, the heart of the Council area's commercial offering. The city centre programme is designed to provide an extensive animated offer in the city centre with the aim of increasing spend in the local businesses, attracting footfall and increasing dwell time.

The Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride, hosted in a vacant unit in Market Square, was one of the few charged for attractions in the programme. The ride which costed at £5 per person was extremely popular with slots selling out on most nights. The income generated by the sleigh ride resulted in this attraction being cost neutral to the council. Hosting the sleigh in a vacant unit increased footfall to the area and attracted many visitors from outside of the Council area. The unit was decorated with temporary outdoor signage which helped reduce the perception of vacancy in Market Square.

Following its success last year and due to the lack of a suitable vacant unit in Market Square, the Christmas hub was relocated to an un-used area in Bow Street Mall to support the businesses and to encourage footfall towards the bottom end of Bow

Street. It was open from Friday, 28th November 2025 until Tuesday, 23rd December 2025 and facilitated free drop-in Christmas craft workshops, festive films, and Santa letter writing.

The council aims to provide a Christmas Events programme that is accessible to all. There is a Changing Places facility in Castle Gardens, and a sign language interpreter on selected nights to support Santa's Grotto and the Elfie Tour, as well as sensory and relaxed events.

The programme of events was designed to ensure that activities promoted the whole of the City Centre with experiences available for visitors to enjoy from Castle Gardens, Market Square, Lisburn Square, Bow Street, and Bow Street Mall. Events included the Lisburn to Lapland Elfie Tour, which started at Bow Street Mall and collaborated with business throughout the City Centre, finishing at Castle Gardens. The Mini Christmas Market on Bow Street further enhanced the festive atmosphere in the City Centre. This was managed by Lisburn Creatives and provided crafters with the opportunity to promote their small business and sell unique Christmas gifts, artworks and bespoke decorations.

This evaluation will provide an analysis of the Council's Christmas programme and associated marketing campaign. It will also provide market research analysis, business and visitor feedback and recommendations for improvements for next year.

2. CHRISTMAS SWITCH-ON AND ENCHANTED WALK

The Christmas Light Switch-On, organised by the Parks and Amenities Events Team, marked the official commencement of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's festive events programme on Thursday, 20th November 2025 in Market Square, Lisburn City Centre.

Approximately 7,000 attendees enjoyed the evening event, which began with entertainment from U105's Frank Mitchell at 6:00 pm. At 7:00 pm, Mayor Amanda Grehan took to the stage to introduce the planned activities, followed by a musical performance by the Live Life Well Being choir and a stunning solo performance by [REDACTED] from Orchardville. Santa arrived at 7:20 pm, leading an interactive sing-along before the official light switch-on at approximately 7:30 pm.

Following the switch on, the Enchanted Lantern Walk proceeded from Market Square along Castle Street and towards Castle Gardens. The Christmas Enchanted Walk featured over 300 participants from local community groups and schools, who began in Market Square and culminated by "lighting up" the trail at Castle Gardens as they filtered through the gates. This also marked the opening of the Light Trail for the Christmas period.

Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees describing it as a "nice festive family event," noting that the "city centre looks great," and appreciating the "free entertainment, especially at this time of year."



PHOTO: CHRISTMAS SWITCH-ON EVENT, MARKET SQUARE

Lessons learned from this year's event:

- This year the site was reviewed and the stage relocated to further along Market Square, it was agreed the new layout was a success. This will be used again next year with some minor amendments. Event site restrictions may limit dramatic changes
- Keep numbers around 300 for the Enchanted Walk. Future considerations involve budget revisions to accommodate potential enhancements. While deliverable constraints related to budget.

The Parks and Amenities team facilitated the switch-on, with the Arts team delivering the Enchanted Walk and the Regeneration City Centre team overseeing the Light Trail element of the evening.

3. LIGHT FESTIVAL

The Lisburn Light Festival continues to animate Lisburn City Centre during the Christmas period, by increasing sales and footfall in retail and hospitality destinations. Despite some adverse weather, the event remained highly popular. Many scheduled events proceeded unaffected, benefiting from indoor locations such as Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride and the Christmas Hub. The feedback from the public was overwhelmingly positive.

The Light Festival is the overarching brand name for all the activity delivered across the Council's urban centres and in some rural areas. This includes pole mounts, festoon lighting, light installations in Lisburn City Centre (e.g. Christmas Bauble in Market Square), Dundonald (Reindeers) and Carryduff (Foxes), the Light Trail in Castle Gardens, the City Centre events programme, family friendly Christmas hub, Virtual Reality experience, light canopy and the Mini Christmas Market on Bow Street.

As part of the Light Festival, family friendly events were scheduled in Market Square and were free to attend. Events included the NI Fire Services (NIFRS) Fire Cadets, Sensory Night and Play Bus and Rock Around the Christmas Tree family Disco. The exception was the Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride, which was £5 per person. See appendix 11.1 Appendix 1 Schedule of light festival programme events for further info.

As part of the council's commitment to accessibility, this year's Light Festival included a number of dedicated inclusive activities. We delivered a dedicated evening of BSL-supported performances of the Lisburn Lights Elfie Tour. This evening was well attended and very positively received with strong engagement from the Deaf Community. A BSL interpreter also accompanied Santa every Thursday evening in his Grotto.

A special night with Santa was hosted in the museum which allowed young children with additional sensory needs to spend time with Santa colouring and playing without the need to queue and allowed them to enjoy a quite relaxing time with Santa.

Accessibility provision was extended to Castle Gardens with the installation of Changing Places toilet for visitors throughout the duration of the Light Trail. The

AccessoLoo was very successful in terms of users, with both disabled and baby changing facilities being made available to those visiting the event. Over the four-week period, there were 256 disabled users of those 64 needed to use the actual changing places functionality. There were 192 baby changes. Feedback continues to support the provision of a Changing Places facility being made available year on year.

Below is a summary of some of the key events and activities offered as part of the programme of events.

3.1 Lisburn to Lapland: A Walking Tour of Lisburn Lights, Lisburn City Centre

The much-loved festive family walking adventure Lisburn to Lapland produced by Three's Theatre Company, returned for its third year and sold out following record-breaking demand.

The magical walking theatre experience returned with a brand-new storyline titled 'The Great Christmas Pudding Hunt'. Audiences met Ari, Mrs Claus's ultra-organised special assistant, and Elfie, the silliest elf in Lapland, who made a very festive mistake. With help from the children and local businesses, they had to put things right before Mrs Claus found out.

Beginning at Bow Street Mall and finishing in the enchanting Castle Gardens, families enjoyed a 40-minute festive journey filled with laughter, puzzles, rhymes and surprises. The route included a hot chocolate stop and finished at the spectacular Light Trail, making it a perfect festive outing for all ages. Due to the overwhelming interest, six additional shows were added across December.

Participants visited local cafes and shops along the route, with businesses welcoming families as part of the experience. The Glasshouse Coffee and Deli returned for its third year on the trail, providing hot chocolate to families as they passed through their festively decorated café.

Event Statistics

- **Total Performances:** 48
- **Total Audience Members:** 877
- **Total Businesses Involved:** 14

Tickets were sold online via Visit Belfast and shows ran three days a week from 4.00pm until 8.00pm, from 21st November– 22nd December 2025. Due to exceptional demand, Council were delighted to facilitate 2 extra dates with 6 extra shows of the tour.

The opportunity to collaborate with the Walking Tour was presented to all businesses within Lisburn City Centre.

Feedback from The Glasshouse based in Lisburn Square: "Being part of Lisburn to Lapland is always a highlight of our Christmas season. It is wonderful to see so many families coming by Lisburn Square, full of excitement and Christmas cheer. The trail

brings such a great atmosphere into the city centre, and it is lovely to be able to play a small part in creating those special memories for children and their families.”



PHOTO: LISBURN TO LAPAND: A WALKING TOUR OF LISBURN LIGHTS, BOW STREET

Audience Feedback

Audience response was overwhelmingly positive, with families commenting on both the quality of performance and the festive atmosphere created throughout the town.

Feedback included:

- *“Doesn’t the town just look fabulous!”*
- *“Those guys are hilarious – so good.”*
- *“It’s just lovely for the kids to have something like this.”*
- *“The elves were brilliant and engaging.”*
- *“It was a lovely experience.”*
- *“This is the best event, and we look forward to it every year.”*
- *“Our ones love it – I really didn’t expect them to!”*
- *“I’ve just moved to Lisburn and love it. I went to the Elfie Tour, and it was fantastic - I really enjoyed it. I’ll check the Council website to see what’s happening, as I was surprised at how good tonight was”*

Several parents noted that they would recommend the experience to friends and family, even those without children, a testament to the broad appeal of the production.

Facebook Message received;

“Hiya, I just wanted to thank you so so much for an absolutely incredible evening. The show and the walking tour were amazing. Your actors were so engaged with every single child. My 4 year old had an amazing time and my 9 month old was laughing her head off. It was absolutely wonderful. I have shared the link with family and friends hoping they can grab some of the last remaining bookings because this is an experience that's not to be missed. I will definitely be keeping an eye out for this next Christmas. Thank you so much for an unforgettable evening. Enjoy the remaining shows and have a wonderful Christmas.”

This type of feedback demonstrates the strong emotional impact of the event and its value to families within the community.

3.2 Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride – Vacant Unit, Market Square

The Virtual Reality (VR) Sleigh Ride was located in a vacant unit in Market Square, Lisburn. This exclusive experience offered visitors a five-minute VR ride with DASH the robot as you flew over the world, soared into space, and felt every twist and turn as Santa’s sleigh prepared for Christmas Eve.

Now in its second year as part of the festive offering, the attraction continued to receive positive feedback, with 3,744 tickets sold through walk-ins and online sales, reflecting its success and popularity.

Visitor feedback:

“Big thanks to the girls working on the VR Sleigh they were so patient with my son, and he has not stopped talking about the ride! Amazing, thank you”.

“Was there with my family and grandchildren they absolutely loved it can highly recommend!”

“We done this last night and it was amazing, think adults had more fun lol 😊”



PHOTO: VR SLEIGH RIDE, VACANT UNIT, MARKET SQUARE

3.3 The Christmas Hub and Festive Craft Workshops – Bow Street Mall

The Council and Bow Street Mall collaborated to provide visitors with the perfect pit stop during Christmas shopping, lunch, and exploring other elements of the Light Festival to enjoy Santa letter writing, festive films, sensory toys and craft workshops in this year's Christmas Hub in Bow Street Mall. The hub was well-used by the public and many local families as a space to meet, relax, and enjoy festive activities.

This was the second year of the Christmas Hub and the new location in the mall worked well. The feedback from visitors was positive, and the mall reported an uplift in footfall with the inclusion of the hub. We would be keen to include this again next year.

Feedback from Bow Street Mall Manager;

“The hub worked really well and we loved having it. We would perhaps tweak the opening hours a bit now that we've seen how and when it was used. Maybe open later as it was quiet until around 11.30/12pm during the week”.

Festive Craft Workshops were held on Friday, 12th December 2025 and Friday, 19th December 2025 between 6.30pm and 8pm. **Workshop 1:** 12 families and 16 children altogether. **Workshop 2:** 8 families and 15 children altogether.



PHOTO: CHRISTMAS HUB, BOW STREET MALL

3.4 Trailer Trampolines - Market Square



PHOTO: TRAILER TRAMPOLINES, MARKET SQUARE

The Trailer Trampolines made great use of the public realm area in front of the Museum further connecting and engaging footfall towards Bow Street and Castle Street. These were provided by an independent supplier at no cost to Council. The provision worked well and created a sense of continuous activity/ entertainment from

Castle Gardens, Market Square and through to Bow Street. It is the intention to have similar attractions next year. In the last week of the Christmas programme, we utilised the side of the museum to facilitate extra amusements. There were very well received and next year we would like to use this space for the 5-week period.

Feedback from the surveys: *“The lights were beautiful, Santa was excellent, trampolines were loved, food stalls were good value. Will return and recommend.”*

3.5 Mini Christmas Market - Bow Street



PHOTO: MINI CHRISTMAS MARKET, BOW STREET

The Mini Christmas Market on Bow Street ran from 20th November until 22nd December and supported local crafters, artists and gift-based traders. The festive wooden huts attracted footfall to the lower end of Bow Street and encouraged visitors to dwell longer in the City Centre. The provision of the festive market successfully complemented the Lisburn Christmas Lights Festival and Castle Gardens programming, contributing to a strong festive atmosphere within the city centre.

The huts were open from 4pm - 8pm Tuesday through to Friday and 12 noon to 8pm on Saturdays. Some of the traders opened on Sundays the last few weeks before Christmas. The market was successful and aligns with LCCC's objective of promoting local enterprise and enhancing the Christmas visitor experience. The opening hours were Tuesday – Friday, 4pm - 8pm and Saturday 12 noon – 8pm

- All huts were occupied by artisan crafters, artists and traders offering hand-made and unique gifts. With only one artisan patisserie, this ensured a clear focus on craft, novelty and gifting, as requested.

- Traders reported strong sales, repeat custom and commission-based sales, with customers travelling from across Northern Ireland.
- 6 traders booked the full trading period with the other 3 huts changing over daily or weekly.

Public & Trader Feedback Highlights

- Many traders reported repeat customers returning with friends and family.
- Several traders described Lisburn as having a stronger Christmas atmosphere than Belfast in 2025 highlighting: Castle Gardens programming, Festive actors and light shows, Family-focused activities, Visibility of local vendors
- One Sunday (14 December), when Bow Street trading aligned closely with Castle Gardens activity, was described as one of the busiest days of the entire period.

The Bow Street Mini Christmas Market was a success, enhancing the Lisburn Christmas festival and supporting local, creative businesses.

Trader satisfaction was high; sales performance was good during peak periods and the market contributed positively to the overall festive experience within the city centre. Traders were positive and engaging with visitors.

There is strong appetite from 2025 traders to return in future years, with several requesting full-period participation again in 2026. With minor operational improvements - particularly around facilities and evening promotion - the market has clear potential to grow further as a core element of LCCC's Christmas programme.

3.6 Primary School Carolling - Market Square

Council provided the opportunity to local school choirs to serenade Christmas shoppers with their beautiful carol singing voices throughout the Christmas period to enhance the festive atmosphere and increase footfall to the area. We will continue to work with the schools next year to ensure this entertainment continues.

PHOTO: BALLYMACASH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHOIR, MARKET SQUARE



4. CASTLE GARDENS LIGHT TRAIL

The Light Trail in Castle Gardens has attracted record-breaking footfall in its 5th year, drawing visitors from as far away as Dublin, Enniskillen, Donegal Town and Portrush.

The 2025 Light Trail was a great success and feedback was very positive. In total, over 165,000 people visited Castle Gardens over a nearly 5-week period, a 13% increase on 2024. This year saw an unprecedented rise on the number of visitors' videos and selfies of the Light Trail shared across social media platforms. The trail attracted a high number of Social Media influencers who chose to share their Christmas experience at the light festival on their social media pages which had high volumes of followers.

Due to the high volume of anticipated visitors, officers continued to implement a one-way entry and exit system through the park to manage the capacity of Castle Gardens. Weekends in December saw high numbers of visitors and a queuing system along Castle Street was implemented to manage the numbers inside the gardens. This worked well with officers moving along the queue to give visitors assurance that the wait wasn't too long. Whilst very few complaints were received with the majority of people saying it was worth the wait as they left, consideration will need to be given to improving the queuing system if visitor numbers increase again next year.

The Light Trail continued to be free entry and featured Light Installations, Santa's Grotto, Live Music Stage, Amusements and a Christmas Market. Most traders were local city centre businesses, who reported successful periods throughout the event, selling out regularly. Traders operated Wednesday through to Sunday with the option

to open additional evenings. As a minimum, there was hot drinks and traybakes available every night.

Feedback received through the customer care portal;

- *Girls this is a lovely wee display & it's free. It's not massive but great & there's few wee rides & Christmas music piped thru the gardens. There're small sheds like the Christmas market selling food & few Christmas stalls. It's open from 4 to 8.30. Well worth wee visit & best of all its free.*
- *Well done Lisburn as there is a lot of parents under pressure to take their children to Christmas light displays that usually cost a fortune. I took the grandchildren yesterday definitely worth a visit.*
- *'Thank you- The City is fantastic and a privilege to be part of.'*

Santa's Grotto was open Wednesday - Saturday each week, offering free visits to Santa with each child receiving a selection box to take home. Officers provided the opportunity for visitors to donate to the Mayor's Charity; Action Cancer and raised over £1,600. Officers continued to manage the Santa queue each evening by informing those queuing of the estimated wait times to manage expectations.

The Live Music Stage was in a new location this year which offered more room for people to sit and enjoy the music. The location worked well however additional promotional signage highlighting the line-up was required to ensure visitors knew it was available. This will be reviewed for next year. The live stage featured a diverse lineup of local talent, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere. Performances included choirs, energetic bands, and music schools, showcasing the rich musical talent within the community. The Council ensured that each act was paid, reinforcing its commitment to supporting and valuing local artists. The hospitality provision in the gardens encouraged visitors to purchase a hot drink, something to eat and use the seating area in front of the stage, to enjoy the entertainment.

Traders within the Christmas Market Huts were charged accordingly for the size of pitch and electricity requirements, which covered the cost of fuelling the generators. The fee for the use of the huts is reviewed year on year to cover overheads. The traders have expressed an interest in returning the following year.

Following feedback received last year, the following elements were implemented in 2025 to enhance the Light Trail and visitor experience:

- **Extended operating hours for the Christmas Market Huts**, Santa's Grotto and the Live Music Stage. Additionally, many traders chose to open seven days a week, ensuring that visitors could avail of hospitality elements every day.
- **Expanded capacity for additional food van pitches** with an aim to prolong visitor stay and enhance the overall experience. The Christmas Market Huts grew from 12 traders in 2024 to 16 in 2025.
- **Increased provision of amusements** was made available in Castle Gardens this year to further enhance the visitor experience. These new attractions proved highly popular, with charges paid directly to the operator.

- **Traffic Management on Castle Street and Seymore Street** was implemented this year following concerns from businesses and residents in relation to cars parking at residents/business entrances and on yellow lines causing congestion and disruption. This year the Council employed Greenbank Traffic management company to cone out Castle Street and Seymore street from 3.30pm until 8.30pm Wednesday through to Sunday. The measures were very effective and worked well alongside staff and event sec to ensure traffic flowed and resident/ business access remained. This will be employed again next year.

Resident Feedback;

- *I would like to thank you on the behalf of myself and the Residents of Seymour Street and Seymour Court for helping with the traffic at the Christmas lights at Castle Gardens this year. All the staff at Lisburn and Castlereagh done a fantastic job controlling the traffic this year. It was Greatly appreciated. Thank you and hope all involved have a great Christmas. Kind regards*
- *The customers at Seymour Court/Street definitely felt there was a major improvement this year with the management of traffic, parking and access to our carpark. The driveway into our private carpark was kept clear and customers where not impacted when they came and went from the building. The three safety barriers worked very well.*

I know some carers had trouble parking so this is something Clanmil can look at next year to see if we can provide a temporary carpark fob or another means of accessing the carpark. We greatly appreciate your efforts and input.

The lightshow itself was brilliant! I actually went on a Saturday night and it wasn't too busy, the queues where not too long and we had a lovely evening. Thanks (from a member of staff at Clanmill Housing)



PHOTOS: LIGHT TRAIL, CASTLE GARDENS

5. CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Christmas Markets were held in Carryduff, Dundonald and Royal Hillsborough. All markets were received positively by residents, visitors' and traders alike. Footfall figures were very positive across all 3 markets with the Royal Hillsborough Christmas market on Friday, 12th and Saturday, 13th December 2025 attracting 7,545 visitors. Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market attracted sponsorship support of £1,500 from The Plough, bar and restaurant towards costs.

The markets primarily focused on providing local businesses in the urban centres and rural villages with an opportunity to trade in the evening and use the events to promote their businesses. The markets also provided an additional activity that was free of charge for families and friends to enjoy, as part of an evening out in the run up to Christmas.

Any traders that featured from outside of the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area were Northern Ireland-based market traders, who tend to work mainly through Farmers' Markets. These markets are professionally delivered through Babble Marketing, a contracted agency.

5.1 Carryduff Christmas Market

This was the fifth consecutive year of the Carryduff Christmas Market. This year the market took place on Wednesday, 17th December 4pm – 8pm in the car park of the Lidl store in Carryduff. Lidl also supported the market with £1,500 towards costs. There were 26 traders, a diverse mix of local artisan food, art, craft, skin care and dog treat stalls, as well as street food and hot drinks. Santa was also present and there were additional activities such as children's crafts and face painting. Performances were given by the Henderson School of Irish Dancing and Johnston school of Highland Dance, with Kaleidoscope and Just Stage It.

Footfall was 4,106 which was an increase of 20% on last year. 62% of traders in the market completed the feedback survey and responded positively with encouraging sales. Visitor feedback was also positive.

Trader Feedback - 66% of traders responded to the survey (16 responses)

- ✓ Positive Sales with 75% of respondents (12) with sales of over £500
- ✓ 69% of traders responded that footfall was higher than expected; 31% reported footfall was as expected
- ✓ 44% reported that they gained indirect sales as a result of trading at the market
- ✓ 100% of respondents rated organisation at a 5 (very good)

Visitor Feedback - 19 respondents of the Visitor Feedback Form

- ✓ 84% of respondents were from Carryduff
- ✓ Spend at time respondents completed survey
 - 37% spent between £11-£20
 - 16% spent between £21-£30

- 26% spent between £31-£40
- 5% spent £50+
- ✓ Reasons for visiting market
 - 19% shopping for Christmas gifts
 - 25% supporting local traders
 - 56% curiosity
- ✓ 63% discovered a new producer or maker
- ✓ 74% responded that they felt events like the market encourages people to live, work or invest in the area
- ✓ 70% rated their experience as 'very good' and 26% as 'good'

In order to build on the success of this year's market it would be the Council's intention to hold the Carryduff Market again next year making this a much looked forward to community event.



PHOTO: CHILDREN CAROLLING, CARRYDUFF CHRISTMAS MARKET

5.2 Dundonald Christmas Market

This event was held on Thursday 4th December 2025 from 4.00pm until 8.00pm in Moat Park for the second year. The previous location on the Comber Road in the car park in front of the Spar shop was not available. 25 Traders attended featured a mix of food, art, craft, skin care and pet treats, street food and hot seasonal drinks. The market venue gained positive feedback from the local community with 2,193 visitors attending, which is a 68% increase on last years 1,300. Visitors commented that it was

safe, had good parking and traders noted the ease of set up for their stall. There was a walkabout Santa and Children's crafts.



PHOTO: FAMILY MEETING SANTA, DUNDONALD CHRISTMAS MARKET

Trader Feedback - 60% of traders responded to the survey (15 out of 25 traders)

- ✓ 47% responded that footfall was higher than expected
- ✓ Turnover
 - 7% respondents had sales of between £701 and £800
 - 28% respondents had sales of between £501 and £800
 - 20% respondents had sales of between £101 and £200
 - 40% respondents had sales of between £201 and £400
- ✓ 100% of respondents said they had a mostly positive response from visitors
- ✓ 80% rated organisation as very good /20% as good
- ✓ 93% of respondents rated communication at a 5 (very good)

Visitor Feedback - A technical glitch on the night of the market meant that the visitor surveys did not save.

The new Moat Park location worked well in terms of the market set up and potential for the space. The increase in visitor numbers, whilst certainly impacted by the weather, demonstrates a demand for the market. It would be the Council's intention to build on this for next year's market.

5.3 Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market

Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market is a Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council event. The Market was held on the Dark Walk at Royal Hillsborough Fort, on 12th and 13th December 2025, trading 3.00 pm to 8.00pm on the first evening and 12.00 to 6.00pm on Saturday, 13th December 2025.

Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market featured a diverse mix of artisan food and craft stalls, with a small artisan street food offering and hot drinks. 85 traders took part over the two days. Traders reported substantial sales with over 8,845 visitors to the market, this is a 20% increase on last year's footfall. Retailers, Pubs and Cafes also opened for late night shopping, of those surveyed the majority agreed the Market is very good for business. Festive lighting was strung along the 63 stalls, down both sides of the Dark Walk and a section of the area in front of the fort. The market had an array of live music which included a choir, brass collectives, and local bands. Further to this, Santa browsed the market stalls talking to families and children's fun activities took place in the area in front of the fort which included crafts.

Based on the 50 trader survey responses received average total sales generated a spend of approximately **£51K on Friday** and **£45K on Saturday**.

Traders Feedback

- ✓ **Direct / Indirect sales** 52% gained new leads via direct or indirect sales as a result of trading at RHCM
- ✓ **Shortening supply chain** 60% collaborate with other NI producers / businesses
- ✓ **Sales - Friday**
 - 23% of respondents had sales over £1000
 - 21% of respondents had sales between £700-£1000
 - 16% of respondents had sales of under £300
- ✓ **Sourcing**
 - 38% of respondents source all materials / ingredients from NI
 - 58% source some materials / ingredients from NI

Visitor Feedback

- ✓ Respondents visiting from a diverse range of places outside of Lisburn & Castlereagh including Glenarm, Derry, Magherafelt, Cavan, Shropshire, Scotland
- ✓ 86% of respondents visited the village that day to attend the market (main reason)

- ✓ 40% heard about the market via social media. 29% word of mouth.
- ✓ 79% of respondents discovered new food producers
- ✓ Visitor spend of respondents (at the time of the survey)
 - 35% spent £20 or over,
 - 15% spent £30 or over
 - 14% spent between £41 and £75
 - 8% spent between £76-£100
 - 3% spent between £100-£200
- ✓ 94% rated the experience as 'Good' (20%) Very Good (74%)
- ✓ 55% said they would visit businesses in the village

The Christmas market in Hillsborough has a positive economic impact on the village as a whole with local businesses reporting an uplift in footfall and sales. 50% of those surveyed believe that events like RHCM benefit local businesses with all businesses surveyed responding that they opened late on the Friday to coincide with the market. 50% of businesses report an uplift of between 21% and 40% in sales compared to a normal Friday.

Officers are currently investigating how the Christmas programme in Hillsborough can be expanded to maximise opportunity in partnership with local businesses.

See **Appendix 11.3 Appendix 3** for more information on the Christmas markets and Babble research.



PHOTO: CROWDS AT ROYAL HILLSBOROUGH CHRISTMAS MARKET

6. MONITORING & EVALUATION

Council is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of its Christmas programme and associated promotional activity to ensure value for money and inform future programming. To assess the impact on visitor experience, behaviour and engagement, CARD Group Research & Insight was commissioned to undertake independent pre- and post-Christmas visitor surveys.

Visitor opinions were gathered through face-to-face, on-street surveys at Bow Street, Market Square and Castle Gardens between 21st November and 20th December 2025. A follow-up survey was conducted between 13th and 29th January 2026 in the city centre. In total 927 responses were gathered, comprising 492 responses in December and 435 in January.

Some Notable Findings

- 51% of pre-Christmas respondents visited Lisburn specifically for the Christmas events, demonstrating the programme's role as a primary driver of city centre visits.
- Word of mouth was the main source of awareness, with Facebook and Instagram also influential. Council advertising encouraged 49% of pre-Christmas respondents to visit.
- 98% of respondents reported a positive experience in Lisburn during their visit.
- The Christmas Garden Light Trail and Light Festival were the most popular attractions among respondents.
- The number of people surveyed who said they hadn't seen the Christmas campaign was down 5% on last year.
- 39% of respondents Pre-Christmas reported that their visit to Lisburn was particularly influenced by the advertising campaign compared with 24% last year.

Evaluation Highlights

- Visitors attending specifically for the Christmas events generated an estimated £3.66 million in additional spend in the city.
- 39% of visitors during November and December said they came to Lisburn specifically because of the Christmas events.
- The Net Promoter Score (NPS) was +34 pre-Christmas and -7 post-Christmas. The pre-Christmas positive score reflects high levels of satisfaction and future intent. The lower post-Christmas score reflects broader city centre perceptions outside the peak festive period rather than event quality.
- Bow Street and Bow Street Mall recorded the highest proportions of visitor spend.
- While many visitors combined events with shopping and dining, a significant proportion continued to undertake most Christmas shopping elsewhere due to retail choice.
- Visitors were recorded from across Northern Ireland and beyond, including from Strabane and Limavady, indicating a widening catchment and regional appeal.

Further information on the Monitoring & Evaluation report can be found in the full CARD Group report attached at **Appendix 11.4 Appendix 4**.

6.1 Business Survey Evaluation

The business survey carried out by CARD Group gathered feedback from 103 businesses across Lisburn City Centre, including a mix of retail, foodservice, hospitality and service-based businesses. Almost half of respondents (48%) were retail businesses such as grocery, gift and homeware stores, alongside cafés, bars, health services and other independent traders. This provides a broad picture of how the Christmas programme was experienced across different sectors.

Overall, feedback shows that the 2025 Christmas programme had a positive impact on city centre trade. Almost half of businesses (49%) changed their opening hours over the festive period, mainly by staying open later. Among those who did, 59% reported increased sales and 56% saw more customers. Many businesses also prepared in advance, with 37% purchasing additional stock and 30% bringing in extra staff.

Trading conditions were steady or improved for most traders. 91% of businesses reported the same or higher sales than usual, and 88% reported the same or higher footfall. In addition, 42% said the events helped them attract new customers, showing the programme's role in bringing people into the city centre.

Awareness of free parking was high at 78%, and some businesses felt this supported visits. When reflecting on the season, 62% said there was nothing more they could have done to maximise the opportunity, and 57% felt the Council could not have done more to improve the impact.

Businesses suggested areas to build on, including wider promotion, earlier communication with traders and spreading activity across more areas of the city centre. These comments were generally about strengthening what is already working.

Business feedback in 2025 shows continued positive impact from the Christmas programme, with clearer evidence of sales uplift from extended hours and improved satisfaction with delivery compared to 2024. The findings suggest the programme is becoming an established and reliable trading opportunity for many businesses.

6.2 Visitor Feedback and Demographics

Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many respondents describing the events as enjoyable, family-friendly and well-organised. The Light Festival and Castle Gardens Light Trail were frequently highlighted as standout attractions, with visitors valuing the free, accessible and safe nature of the programme. Families responded positively to the festive atmosphere and activities on offer.

Alongside this positive feedback, visitors also identified opportunities to further strengthen the overall city centre experience. Common themes included a desire for more shops to open during major event evenings, concern about vacant units, and support for additional market huts to provide opportunities for small and start-up businesses. Visitors also noted that greater availability of food and beverage outlets and expansion of festive activity further into the city centre could encourage longer dwell time and repeat visits.

6.3 Visitor Rationale

The events attracting the highest proportion of visitors were:

- Castle Gardens Light Trail
- Light Festival and canopy shows.

These continue to act as flagship attractions within the programme

6.4 Parking in the City Centre

Accessibility and convenience remain important factors in supporting city centre visits during the festive period. To encourage footfall and dwell time, Council provided free off-street parking in Council-owned car parks on weekends throughout December and January.

This local provision was complemented by a regional initiative from the Department for Infrastructure, which introduced a festive pilot scheme across Lisburn's Controlled Parking Zones. From 29 November 2025 until 10 January 2026, motorists were granted a one-hour grace period after their paid on-street parking session expired. The measure was designed to reduce time pressure on visitors, encourage more relaxed visits to the high street, and support retail and hospitality businesses during the festive period.

Visitor research indicates that parking initiatives played a supporting role in city centre access.

- **66%** of visitors surveyed **pre-Christmas** were aware of the free parking promotion.
- Among those pre-Christmas respondents interviewed, 60% said that the free parking promotion encouraged them to visit Lisburn.
- 72% of respondents interviewed who were aware of the promotion, said they chose to visit at the weekend because of the promotion and 25% reported they chose to stay longer.

The above indicated that the promotion not only influenced the timing of visits but also had a positive impact on dwell time and car park usage.

- **48%** of **post-Christmas** respondents who used Council car parks were aware of the free parking offer before arriving in Lisburn.

- Among those aware, 19% indicated that the initiative influenced their decision to stay longer in the city or to travel by car when they otherwise might not have done so.
- Awareness of the parking offer was mostly driven by word of mouth and social media.

While parking was not the primary driver of visits compared with the events programme itself, the findings suggest that flexible and supportive parking arrangements can positively influence dwell time and visitor convenience, particularly when combined with a strong events offering.

6.5 Spend in the city centre

96% of additional visitors who came specifically because of the events spent money during their visit. According to CARD Group's visitor survey and spend modelling, this equated to 77,632 additional spending parties, generating an estimated £3.66million in additional spend, (last year additional spend was £1.765 million) with an average spend of £47.15 per party, this is an increase on last year's average spend of £34.33 per party. The higher additional spend compared to last year reflects a larger share of additional visitors and family groups in this sample.

CARD Group's analysis also combined footfall counter data with reported visitor spend to estimate overall economic impact. On this basis, total spend linked to the festive period was estimated at approximately £12.15 million, reflecting spend both at events and across the wider city centre. This is an uplift of last year's estimated total spend of £11.95 million.

Some visitors expressed disappointment where retailers did not open during major event evenings, noting that this limited their opportunities to spend more locally. However, it must be noted that more traders opened late on the last Thursday and Friday before Christmas.

More detail is available in the Card Group surveys in appendix 11.4 Appendix 4.

6.6 Public Feedback

Feedback from visitors indicates that the Lisburn Christmas programme was widely welcomed and positively received. Many respondents described the events as enjoyable, festive and family-friendly, with particular praise for the Light Festival and the Castle Gardens Light Trail. The free and accessible nature of the programme was frequently highlighted as a strength, particularly for families and those seeking low-cost seasonal activities.

Visitors noted that the events helped create a strong festive atmosphere in the city centre and gave people a reason to visit Lisburn during the Christmas period. For some, the programme encouraged repeat visits and contributed to a more positive

perception of Lisburn as a Christmas destination. Safety and the welcoming environment for children and young people were also mentioned as positive aspects.

Alongside this strong positive sentiment, visitors provided constructive suggestions for future development. Common themes included a desire for more shops and food outlets to open during major event evenings, additional market-style stalls to support small and start-up businesses, and expansion of festive activity into more areas of the city centre. Some visitors also suggested earlier start times for attractions to allow more time to enjoy the offer.

Overall, the feedback reflects strong public support for the Christmas programme. Suggestions provided by visitors were generally focused on building on the success of the events and maximising the wider benefits for the city centre, rather than criticism of the programme itself.

Visitor Quotes

“Positive Experience and Atmosphere”

“The town has a buzz about it, really Christmassy.”

“Christmas lights and Civic Centre are beautiful.”

“Really good free event for families.”

“The kids are really enjoying themselves.”

“Fun, magical and well organised.”

“Safe place to be.”

“Fair play to the Council, the events are good.”

Constructive Suggestions

“Why are the shops not open late when this is all on?”

“Need more of those wee market huts to give new businesses a chance.”

“Atmosphere would improve if more places were open.”

“Would love to see more festive activity further into town.”

6.7 Feedback Cards



To support continuous improvement and capture visitor experience in real time, Council officers designed and distributed visitor feedback cards throughout the festival. Each card included a QR code linking directly to an online survey, allowing visitors to easily share compliments, suggestions and comments during or after their visit.

Visitor feedback for the 2025 Lisburn Light Festival was overwhelmingly positive, with respondents consistently describing the event as “brilliant”, “beautiful”, “magical” and “well run”. Many highlighted the festival as the best to date and stated they would return next year and recommend it to others.

Attendance was drawn from across Northern Ireland, with visitors travelling from Belfast, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Ards & North Down, Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down, as well as strong local attendance from within Lisburn & Castlereagh. Several respondents noted that the event encouraged them to visit Lisburn for the first time or reconsider it as a destination for shopping and dining.

The Light Trail in Castle Gardens was the most visited and most positively reviewed attraction, supported by strong engagement with the Mini Market on Bow Street, the Christmas Tree in Market Square, the Bow Street canopy and the Christmas Hub. Families particularly valued the range of free activities available for children.

Key strengths identified include the quality of the light displays, family-friendly atmosphere, free entry, helpful staff, cleanliness of facilities, value for money food stalls and effective crowd management with minimal queuing.

Constructive suggestions included reinstating the children’s train from previous years, improving signage between Castle Gardens and the city centre to further support traders, moderating music volume in some areas and introducing more activities aimed at teenagers.

Overall, the feedback demonstrates that the festival continues to grow in reputation, delivers strong social and economic value, and plays an important role in enhancing Lisburn's profile as a regional visitor destination.

Full responses can be reviewed on 11.2 Appendix 2 for feedback (social media, compliments and smart survey.)

7 FOOTFALL

7.5 Lisburn City Centre Footfall

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council own two footfall counters in Lisburn City Centre – one in the lower end of Bow Street and one in Market Square.

Daily Footfall 03/11/2025 – 04/01/2026 (Provided by Springboard)

On the week of the Switch on, there was a decrease in footfall in Lisburn City Centre although Thursday 20th November, the evening of the Switch On, was extremely busy. Compared to last year footfall was down by 6.7% for the month of November with no change UK wide for the same period.

High footfall figures were recorded for the month of December with an increase of 11.6% on last year, (see comparison table below) with UK increasing by 2.2%.

An additional 13% of visitors to Castle Gardens this year reflects the survey results that the majority of visitors, especially from further afield, visited the attractions within the city centre. The figures reflect that visitors came to Lisburn to enjoy the Christmas events and the festive ambience in the run up to Christmas.

Footfall for the City Centre from 1st December – 4th January 2025 was 504,745 with the final full week of the Light Festival being the busiest at 131,027 visitors.

To note: Weather was unsettled, with periods of heavy winds and rain resulting in two Yellow Weather Warnings throughout the duration of the Light Festival. This had a significant impact on footfall to Castle Gardens, and in turn the City Centre, as the Light Trail was closed on Friday 5th December and Tuesday 9th December. There were cancellations of outdoor events across Northern Ireland.

Friday 19th December polled the highest number of visitors to Castle Gardens at over 11,800 with the final consecutive three evenings polling over 31,000.

Across the UK footfall trends increased to around an average of 2.2% on previous years.

Lisburn City Centre Footfall Figures Comparison 2024 - 2025 (November - December)		
w/c 3 rd November	91,737	102,845
w/c 10 th November	102,845	82,177
w/c 17 th November	114,007	84,348
w/c 24 th November	117,334	112,001
w/c 1 st December	90,677	102,515
w/c 8 th December	120,721	122,451
w/c 15 th December	125,429	131,027
w/c 22 nd December	63,307	90,590
w/c 29 th December	40,059	58,164

It should be noted there was a decrease in footfall and on Friday 5th and Tuesday 9th December, Castle Gardens Light Trail was closed due to Storm Darragh. These were weather warnings, implemented by the MET office and the closures were in the interests of public health and safety.

7.2 Light Trail Footfall

Footfall counting for the light trail in Castle Gardens was undertaken by Eventsec Staff using manual tally counters. They staffed the entrance and exit gates on Castle Street and the side gate from the car park on Queens Road. Visitor numbers for the Light Trail amounted to a total of **165,938** over approximately 5 weeks. This reflects a 13% increase on last year's figures.

Due to adverse weather conditions the Light Trail had to close on Friday 5th December 2025 and Tuesday, 9th December 2025 which impacted the overall footfall figures.

Light Trail Footfall Figures (November - December 2025)		
w/c 3 rd December	N/A	N/A
w/c 10 th December	N/A	N/A
w/c 17 th November	5,500	11,622
w/c 24 th November	9,000	27,447
w/c 1 st December	8,762	25,377
w/c 8 th December	10,766	38,332
w/c 15 th December	11,247	53,801
w/c 22 nd December	N/A	9,359 (Monday 22 nd Only)
w/c 29 th December	N/A	N/A

8 ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

The Council undertook a uniformed campaign of marketing and advertising for the Light Festival and the programme of Christmas events. The integration of multiple teams through the working group, ensured a professional and polished execution, reinforcing Lisburn's position as a key Christmas destination. The media channels were selected for their ability to raise awareness across visitor audiences targeting families, couples, outdoor enthusiasts, and eventgoers across Northern Ireland and the ROI border counties. Each campaign with dedicated creative and copy focused to drive messaging with a mixture authentic video and static imagery used across social media, digital and above the line channels.



8.1 Outdoor Advertising

Council strategically selected a diverse mix of outdoor media to maximise visibility and impact across key consumer touchpoints. The use of large format out of home advertising created a high-impact, visible brand presence in 32 high-traffic locations within a 35-mile radius of the city, reinforcing Lisburn as a prime Christmas shopping and activity destination.

Digital small format located at bus shelters and key shopping centres targeted shoppers in 99 high-dwell locations, allowing for dynamic messaging that aligns with peak footfall times. Recognising the importance of new and high-footfall locations, we have also introduced digital display advertising at the visitor information point in Grand Central Station, to reach commuters and visitors as they plan their festive outings. This multi-channel approach ensured a broad yet targeted reach, engaging local, regional and visitor audiences at multiple points in their journey.



8.2 Digital and Social Media Advertising

Council implemented a strategic social media and digital advertising approach, leveraging Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Google Search, Google Display, YouTube and Stackadapt Ads to maximise reach and engagement. The top performer was the Facebook/Instagram video of the Lisburn Lights Trail at Castle Gardens which generated 1,093,186 plays with 1 in every 5 users watching 15 seconds of the video, significantly boosting awareness of Lisburn’s Christmas offering.

Across all digital ads, we achieved 8,133,997 impressions driving 57,993 web visits, an outstanding result that outperformed expectations relative to the allocated budget. The Lisburn Lights Trail continued to gain significant traction on TikTok, performing strongly in reaching new and engaged users. A large number of festival visitors and unpaid influencers took to the platform to share their own positive reviews and personal experiences, creating organic, user-generated content that resonated with a wider audience. These posts were not only reaching local followers but were also landing on the "For You Page" (FYP) of users across Northern Ireland. This organic content helped amplify the event's reach and generated buzz beyond the immediate attendees, contributing to the overall success of the festival. The virality of these TikTok posts showcased the power of authentic, community-driven promotion, allowing the festival to organically spread awareness and attract even more visitors.



programme of



Evaluation

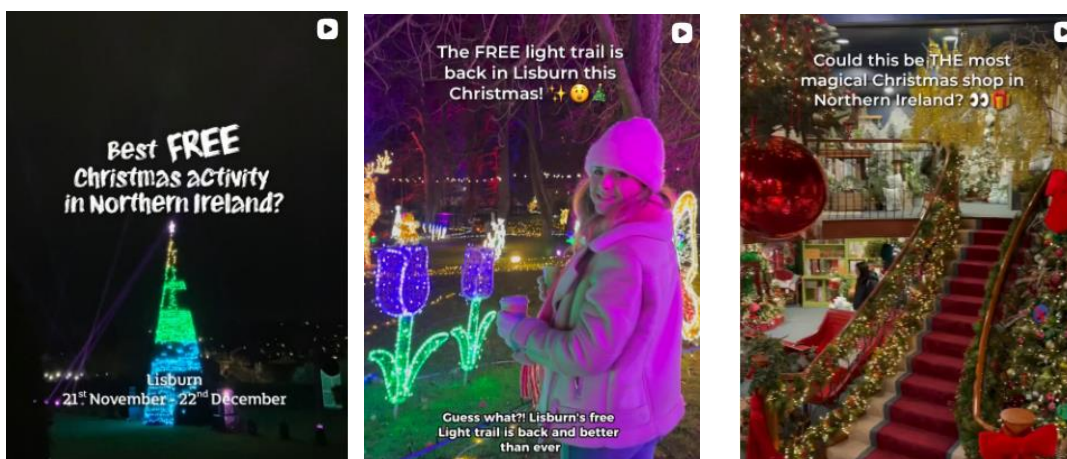




8.21 Organic Social Media

In-house teams across Corporate Communications, Tourism Development and City Centre Management also worked hard on producing an effective and successful content plan to promote the Christmas programme organically.

Collaboration with businesses and industry partners, including Tourism Northern Ireland and Visit Belfast, provided extensive promotional reach through these wider channels.



8.3 TV Advertising



Council leveraged a mix of TV and digital streaming advertising to reach audiences during key seasonal programming. Advertising on UTV and Sky allowed us to engage viewers during primetime shows for a 4-week period throughout November/December.

To expand our impact, Council also partnered with View on Demand streaming with ITVX and All4 for a 2-week period, securing slots during major peak shows such as “I’m a Celebrity” and “Say Nothing”. This benefited LCCC with unskippable full-screen ads delivering high completion rates for viewer retention and recall. This strategic combination of traditional TV and digital streaming ensured that Lisburn remained top of mind for Christmas shopping and festive activities among a broad yet highly engaged audience.

8.4 Radio Advertising

The LCCC radio campaign delivered 3 weeks of 20 second scripted ads broadcasted across NI’s dominating commercial radio stations, reaching 1.2M weekly listeners with Cool FM targeting the family market, Downtown Radio & U105 reaching an older demographic and Q Radio extending the reach in areas less saturated by Bauer stations, with robust FM and digital coverage. With the addition of a 5-week promotion on Spotify, we are able to refine the targeting across NI & ROI border counties increasing awareness across all audiences, connecting with mobile first users and reaching listeners during key moments of their day.



8.6 Impact of Advertising Campaign



The “Think Christmas, Think Lisburn” 2025 campaign successfully delivered a high-impact, multi-channel marketing strategy that aligned with best-in-class industry standards. The campaign drove significant awareness, as evidenced by 61% of pre-Christmas and 74% of post-Christmas visitors recalling the advertising, and 36% and 52% respectively stating it influenced their decision to visit Lisburn City Centre.

The campaign’s broad media mix spanning TV, radio, out of home, digital, social media, influencer engagement and print advertising, ensured high visibility across diverse demographics and consumer habits. Particularly strong performance was noted across:

- Social media advertising, which drove nearly 3 million impressions across Facebook, Instagram and TikTok;

- TV and digital streaming ads, which over-delivered on TV ratings (290.6 TVRs vs a 238 target);
- Influencer engagement: LCCC benefitted from 5 unpaid influencers posting reels from the Lisburn Light Trail achieving over 275,000 views and positive engagement;
- Radio and print advertising, which effectively targeted both younger and older demographics with tailored messaging.

This omni-channel approach is reflective of best practices in modern destination marketing, ensuring high-frequency visibility, emotional resonance, and multi-platform audience reach.

9 COUNCIL POLICIES

The proposed event programme contributes to several of the Council's strategic themes including the following in brief:

- **Corporate Plan and Ambitions 2024-2028**

Strategic Theme No 4 – Prosperity

Outcome: We benefit from a growing and vibrant economy

'drive sustainable economic growth in our urban and rural areas.' through the creation of a vibrant attraction that encourages visitor footfall and increased retail spend in support of local businesses.

- **Lisburn City Centre Masterplan 2019**

The City Centre Masterplan aims to transform the physical, social and economic fabric of the city. The final proposals for future regeneration objectives laid out in the document include:

The masterplan will guide development and ensure that Lisburn is able to compete with other major towns and cities while maintaining its distinctiveness and environmental heritage for generations to come.

- **Open Spaces (Green) Strategy 2022-2026**

'The city, towns, villages and suburbs of Lisburn and Castlereagh will enjoy a range of attractive and accessible parks and open spaces close to where people live. "Flagship" parks, greenspaces and play areas will draw local residents and visitors to both urban and rural centres, providing places for social interaction, play, sport, recreation and quality of life for all'.

- **Lisburn Orientation & Walkability Strategy 2024**

'The emerging Local Development Plan - setting out the strategy for sustainable growth and the direction of development in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Area until 2032. This includes three objectives (D, E and F) which inform policies to make Lisburn- An Attractive Place by Promoting Sustainable Tourism, Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation- A Green Place by Protecting and Enhancing the

Historic and Natural Environment- A Connected Place by Supporting Sustainable Transport and Other Infrastructure`.

- **Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2030**

`The Lisburn and Castlereagh Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2025 – 2030 is a strategic roadmap for raising the profile of Lisburn and Castlereagh as an exemplary, sustainable and socially inclusive tourism destination with a vibrant community spirit at its heart.

The ambition of the strategy is to position Lisburn & Castlereagh as a renowned tourism destination with a unique identity and unparalleled experiences like Royal Hillsborough – Northern Ireland’s only designated Royal residence. The purpose of this plan is to maximise social and economic benefits for tourism providers and communities across urban and rural areas in our city, towns, villages and hamlets.’

- **Community Plan 2017 – 2032**

`The Local Development Plan aims to influence sustainable communities and drive economic growth and employment through appropriate city, urban and rural growth and development. It will be a ‘spatial representation’ of the Community Plan contributing to the outcomes through physical development. Moving away from a narrow land-use focus towards a ‘place-shaping’ approach, the Local Development Plan will focus on the provision and promotion of retailing, tourism, recreation, leisure and open space with supporting key infrastructure and transport corridors that enhances and protects both the built and natural environment for those who work, live and visit our area, now and in the future`.

10 CONCLUSION

The Council's Christmas programme for 2025 commenced with the Christmas Light Switch-On on Thursday 20th November 2025 and ran through to 23rd December 2025. Feedback from visitors, businesses and on-the-ground operational delivery demonstrates that the programme continues to strengthen Lisburn's Christmas offer, attract visitors from across Northern Ireland and beyond, and generate positive economic and social impact.

The city centre programme provided a strong and varied festive offer across Castle Gardens, Market Square, Bow Street and Bow Street Mall. Key elements including the Light Canopy, Mini Christmas Market on Bow Street, Christmas Hub, Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride and the Light Trail at Castle Gardens were well used and consistently referenced as highlights. The Light Trail continued to grow, attracting 165,938 visitors across its operational period. This represents an increase of 19,666 on the previous year, equating to 13% growth. The Christmas Light Switch-On was also well attended, with approximately 7,000 people in Market Square, and the Enchanted Lantern Walk successfully managed participation at scale while supporting the opening night of the Light Trail.

Independent research supports the programme's effectiveness as a driver of trips to the city centre. CARD Group gathered 927 visitor responses across December and January, with 51% of pre-Christmas respondents indicating they visited Lisburn specifically for the Christmas events. Visitor satisfaction remained very high, with 98% reporting a positive experience. Crucially, CARD's spend modelling indicates that visitors who came specifically because of the events generated an estimated £3.66 million in additional spend, with total festive period spend in the city centre estimated at approximately £12.15 million. These figures reinforce the programme's role in supporting local trade and the wider evening economy.

Business feedback also supports the value of the programme. CARD Group gathered responses from 103 city centre businesses across a wide mix of retail, foodservice, hospitality and service providers. Almost half of respondents changed their opening hours, and those who did were more likely to report improved sales and footfall. While feedback continues to highlight the importance of collective late opening to strengthen the evening economy, the results show that where businesses engaged with the programme, benefits were realised.

The programme also continued to demonstrate Council's commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Provisions such as Changing Places facilities in Castle Gardens, sign language interpretation on selected dates, and sensory and relaxed activities supported a welcoming experience. The AccessoLoo facility recorded strong use, including disabled and baby changing provision, and feedback continues to support this investment being provided year on year.

Footfall data provided by Springboard further evidences city centre performance during the festive period. November footfall was down year on year, while December increased by 11.6% compared with the previous year, outperforming the UK trend for the same period. It is important to note that adverse weather conditions, including warnings and storm-related closures of the Light Trail on two evenings, affected both city centre and Castle Gardens footfall during the programme. The post-Christmas period was also impacted by exceptional weather conditions, which is likely to have influenced behaviour and perceptions in January.

Overall, the evaluation supports the continued delivery and development of the Lisburn Light Festival and wider Christmas programme. The events are now well established as a recognisable brand for Lisburn and continue to contribute to destination appeal, visitor experience and local economic impact. The key opportunities for improvement remain consistent and practical, including strengthening collective business participation during major evenings, improving wayfinding and connectivity between Castle Gardens and the wider city centre, ensuring activity is distributed across a wider footprint, and continuing to refine the offer for different age groups, including teenagers.

Potential learning points for LCCC

- The demand for free Santa visits continues to increase year on year and this can lead to long queues, with visitors queuing before the gardens opened at 4.00pm. When the queue builds up it can impact visitors' ability to move along that section of the gardens and can lead to congestion. There would be a potential opportunity to relocate Santa from Castle Gardens into a vacant unit within the city centre to address this issue.
- Given that 2026 will be year 8 of the Light Festival programme and year 6 of the Light Trail element, the contract now needs retendered. This provides an opportunity to refresh and build upon the Christmas programme in the city centre.
- Due to the success of the amusements in public areas, officers will consider additional locations for amusements across the city centre, such as further down Bow Street, the SERC carpark on Castle Street and potentially bringing back the mini train on Bow Street.
- Given the number of visitors to the Christmas Programme offering, it would be beneficial to increase promotion of the car parks across the city centre through the Councils website, signage and the Christmas advertising campaign to assist in reducing congestion and potential traffic bottlenecks at key locations.

LCCC Staff will continue to work collaboratively across departments to build upon and improve the planning, delivery and management of The Lisburn Light Festival.

11 APPENDICES

11.1 APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE FOR LIGHT FESTIVAL AND PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

11.2 APPENDIX 2: FEEDBACK (SOCIAL MEDIA, COMPLIMENTS AND SMART SURVEY)

11.3 APPENDIX 3: CHRISTMAS MARKETS – MARKETING AND ADVERTISING (CONDUCTED BY BABBLE)

11.4 APPENDIX 4: PRE AND POST EVALUATION RESULTS (CONDUCTED BY CARD RESEARCH)

11.1 APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE FOR LIGHT FESTIVAL AND PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Event	Location	Dates/Times
Light Festival (including Light Canopy and Mini Christmas Market Huts - Bow Street, Light Installations – Lisburn Square, Bow Street Mall, Carryduff and Dundonald, Trailer Trampolines – Market Square)	Lisburn City Centre, Carryduff and Dundonald	Friday, 21 st November 2025 – Tuesday, 22 nd December 2025 from 4-8.30pm
Light Trail (including Light Installations, Amusements, Christmas Food Huts, Live Music Stage and Santa’s Grotto)	Castle Gardens, Lisburn	Friday, 21 st November 2025 – Tuesday, 22 nd December 2025 from 4-8.30pm
The Christmas Hub and Festive Craft Workshops (e.g. Christmas Bauble making)	First Floor, Bow Street Mall	Friday, 28 th November 2025 – Tuesday, 22 nd December 2025 – Open Daily Festive Craft Workshop 1, 6.30pm – 8pm on Friday, 12 th December 2025. Festive Craft Workshop 2, 6.30pm – 8pm on Friday, 19 th December 2025.
Virtual Reality Sleigh Ride	Vacant Unit, 26 Market Square, Lisburn	Friday, 21 st November 2025 – Tuesday, 22 nd December 2025 from 4-8pm
Lisburn to Lapland: A Walking Tour of Lisburn Lights (Elfie Tour)	Lisburn City Centre	Friday, 21 st November 2025 – Tuesday, 22 nd December 2025 from 4-8.30pm (Thursday, Friday and Saturday)

		Extra Shows held on the Wed 17 th and Monday 22 nd of December.
Christmas Character Walkabouts including Buddy the Elf, The Grinch & Toby Pinecone	Lisburn City Centre	Friday, 21 st November 2025 – Tuesday, 22 nd December 2025 from 4-8.30pm
NIFRS Fire Cadets	Market Square, Lisburn	Due to a weather warning this event was cancelled
Sensory Night	Market Square, Lisburn	Tuesday 2 nd December 4-8pm
Rock Around the Christmas Tree	Market Square, Lisburn	Thursday 18 th December 6-8pm

11.2 APPENDIX 2: FEEDBACK (SOCIAL MEDIA, COMPLIMENTS AND SMART SURVEY)

Lisburn Light Festival – Visitor Comments via Feedback Cards

#	Visitor Comment
1	Absolutely the best ever. The whole experience was lovely from start to finish, very well organised with no queues. Clean toilet facilities too. Will be back next year.
2	Amazing place to take your kids, my little boy loved all the lights and the music.
3	We visited the light festival today, it was beautiful and so colourful. We had a great time.
4	Brilliant. Fantastic array of free activities for all ages. Missed the choo choo train from last year. Better signage from Castle Gardens to the city centre would help. Overall a great show.
5	Took my 2-year-old grandson and he absolutely loved it. We will be back next year.
6	Light trail was well worth the visit for our 2 year old and the food stalls were good.
7	Wonderful light display, the children really enjoyed it. Great that entry is free.
8	Thank you to the fairground owner who helped my non-verbal son during a meltdown and let him back on the ride. Really kind and appreciated.
9	Great job. Great to see it getting better every year.
10	Great experience.
11	Best night ever. Beautiful lights.
12	Best Christmas night out at the lights with family and friends. Beautiful lights.

13	The lights were great and it's free which is really appreciated. Music was a bit loud at times, festive music on the trail would be better. Would return.
14	Amazing.
15	First time at the festival, would definitely recommend and go back.
16	A beautiful event for all the family and great that it's free and dog friendly. So magical.
17	Brilliant Christmas experience, well run.
18	This event changed my view of Lisburn, I'd come back for shopping and restaurants now.
19	Our second year visiting and it's now a family tradition.
20	Very helpful staff.
21	Wonderful experience.
22	The light trail is beautiful and great for younger children. Free entry couldn't be better.
23	The lights were beautiful, Santa was excellent, trampolines were loved, food stalls were good value. Will return and recommend.
24	Impressive display and a great idea for the season.
25	The town's hospitality and welcome was wonderful.
26	Great for kids aged 3-11, maybe add more for teenagers. Overall great lights and music.

11.3 APPENDIX 3: CHRISTMAS MARKETS – MARKETING AND ADVERTISING (CONDUCTED BY BABBLE)

Title of Project / Event:	Carryduff Christmas Market
Address / Location:	Lidl Car Park, Church Road, Carryduff
Date of Event:	Wednesday 17th December 2025
New Event Repeat	Repeat Event - 5th year
Name of Organisation:	Babble Belfast Ltd
Budget Reconciliation	To follow

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Footfall	3000	2054	3425	4106
Stalls	34	34	21 ¹	26
LCCC Traders	12	14	9	9

Scorings²	2022	2023	2024	2025
Organisation score (Traders)	89% scores 5	83% scored 5	100% scored 5	100% scored 5
Market quality score (Visitors)	95% scored 4	66% scored 5	77.5% scored 5 20% scored 4	70% scored 5 26% scored 4

Total Running Cost	Traders Fees	Cost to Budget
£12,900	£1050	£11,850

Figures rounded off

² Ratings 0-5 where 0 is poor and 5 is very good

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carryduff Christmas Market took place on **Wednesday 17th December from 4pm-8pm** in the car park of the newly opened Lidl store on Church Road, Carryduff.

The market featured a **diverse mix of local artisan food, art, craft, skincare and dog treat** stalls as well as **street food and hot drinks**. A total of 26 traders took part.

62% of traders in the market completed the feedback survey and they responded positively with encouraging sales. Visitor feedback was also positive.

Footfall to the market was counted at 4106 with counting at 3 access points.

Community involvement Carryduff primary schools, dance and performance arts schools provided entertainment and gave the event a truly community feeling. Local community groups were communicated in the lead up to the market.

Children’s entertainment There was also festive ‘Fun with Drums’ workshops and arts and crafts with Santa’s elves. Santa visited too browsing the market and talking to families.

Sponsorship Lidl provided the following sponsorship contribution:

- ✓ use of the car park space free of charge
- ✓ [REDACTED] financial contribution

EVENT OBJECTIVES

1. To recruit a minimum of 20 vendors
2. To recruit businesses in the locality with vendors from outside the area to be selected only if a local business was not available or did not meet the criteria.
3. To target local businesses and give them the opportunity to showcase their product offering in the heart of their community.
4. To create a market for the community by involving the community.
5. To foster good relations with existing permanent business owners in the Carryduff area.
6. To deliver a creative PR & Marketing campaign that promoted the event and the Council in a positive manner

ACTUAL OUTPUTS AT EVENT COMPLETION – SUMMARY

Target Output	Actual Output & Any comment
20 Traders	26 Traders
Preference to LCCC traders	9 Traders were LCCC area businesses. Those that applied were selected, apart from a surplus of bakery offering applications.

	Babble wrote a 'Case for Permission' to DfC Social Policy Unit to enable Hinch Distillery to sell at the market.
Deliver creative PR & Marketing campaign that reflects the event and Council in a positive manner	Creative graphics for market using the Council-wide Christmas campaign graphics. Personalised to market using imagery from previous years. Marketing assets produced as listed below.
Community Involvement	There was a full music and dance programme for the 4 hours of the market from local groups. Carryduff Primary School choirs invited to perform with 4 taking part. Local dance and performance schools performed.
Foster good relations with businesses in Carryduff	Babble contacted all businesses by email and visited premises also. Contacts updated for future correspondence and improvements in strengthening business communications.
Footfall	4106

Marketing & PR

An integrated marketing and PR campaign was created and implemented. Creative graphics creating using the Council-wide Christmas Campaign templates. The following outputs were achieved:

- ✓ Banners (2 x 1m correx) fitted at Lough Moss Leisure Centre and at Lidl facing outwards to road
- ✓ 7500 A5 leaflets printed
 - ✓ 5000 distributed via residential door drop
 - ✓ Posters & leaflets distributed to local businesses and public buildings
- ✓ Organic Social Media campaign on Visit Lisburn Castlereagh channels
 - ✓ Assets and info also sent to local community groups and schools to share on their socials
 - ✓ Assets / generic market graphics and key info sent to traders to share on their platforms to promote market and their attendance.

- ✓ Blog to provide more information on the market written and published on the Visit Lisburn Castlereagh website
- ✓ E-zine – included in Visit Lisburn Castlereagh subscribers Christmas event ezine
- ✓ PR – event listing distribution to local press and event included in main Press Release for Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market

Social Media

Creative social media campaign designed with key images of traders were chosen for this market.

- ✓ 4 organic social posts created and scheduled for Facebook & Instagram. The number of posts was cut down due to volume of output on the Visit Lisburn Castlereagh social channels. In the end only 2 posts were published as the other 2 were taken off schedule as no space.
- ✓ Combined Facebook/Instagram total reach 63,575 combined.³
- ✓ On **Instagram this equates to an average reach rate of 16%**.
- ✓ Traders provided with story graphics to post and promote their attendance at the market
- ✓ Traders provided with generic graphics to post and promote the market and their attendance

Reach	Reach	Views	Impressions
Facebook	60,047	89,789	1.5
Instagram (not including Story reach)	3528	9284	2.6
Total	13,927	27008	

What the metrics indicated on the table measure

- Reach is the metric of the audience breadth
- Views indicate the content frequency and visibility
- Impressions are the number of times a person saw a post about the market

PR

Coverage performance

³ Compared to a reach of 43.5k in 2024 partially due to change in algorithm and partly lack of space on the VLC social channels schedule for posts.

Total pieces of coverage	3 with 2 pieces pending
Estimated views prediction of lifetime views of coverage based on audience, reach & engagement rate on social	1,046
Audience (combined total of publication-wide audience figures for all publications covering story)	114,000
Average domain authority (0-100 authority measure of websites sharing story)	59
Sentiment	Positive throughout

Publication
NI World
Tyrone Page (Facebook)
Ulster Star (Facebook)
South Side Advertiser – Additional coverage expected in February edition
Carryduff Focus – Additional coverage expected in February edition

Carryduff Christmas Market was also included in the main Press Release (i.e. for Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market)

Carryduff remained the most difficult market to gain coverage for because of the lack of designated local media for the area. Carryduff Focus and South Side Advertiser are both monthly publications so pre-event coverage was not an option, whereas Dundonald has local online media like Bloom who were able to give us added pre-event uplift to a hyper-local audience.

Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation methodology was conducted using a mix of in-person and emailed questionnaires. Feedback surveys were designed for each stakeholder group using the Google forms template and app. Surveys were issued to the following three stakeholder groups:

1. Visitors to the market
2. Traders
3. Carryduff businesses – no-one responded to this despite a reminder being sent.

Access to form can be provided for verification purposes.

Where qualitative questions were asked, we have added detail from respondents for review. We have summarised the feedback from Traders and Visitors below. Access to each feedback form can be provided for verification purposes.

Trader Feedback

66% of traders responded to the survey (16 responses)

A summary of qualitative feedback below

- ✓ Positive Sales with 75% of respondents (12) with sales of over £500
- ✓ 69% of traders responded that footfall was higher than expected; 31% reported footfall was as expected

- ✓ 44% reported that they gained indirect sales as a result of trading at the market
- ✓ 100% of respondents rated organisation at a 5 (very good)

Visitor Feedback

19 respondents of the Visitor Feedback Form

- ✓ 84% of respondents were from Carryduff
- ✓ Spend at time respondents completed survey
 - 37% spent between £11-£20
 - 16% spent between £21-£30
 - 26% spent between £31-£40
 - 5% spent £50+
- ✓ Reasons for visiting market
 - 19% shopping for Christmas gifts
 - 25% supporting local traders
 - 56% curiosity
- ✓ 63% discovered a new producer or maker
- ✓ 74% responded that they felt events like the market encourages people to live, work or invest in the area
- ✓ 70% rated their experience as 'very good' and 26% as 'good'

Summary of some visitor comments

"Very glad the market is here"

"More Christmas music. Mulled wine"

"Could be bigger"

"Wires cover on ground struggle for wheelchair"

"Have a market more often. Carryduff lacks coffee shop/bakeries. Nice to see so many people here"

"Market more often"

"More stalls"

"Bigger a bit busy"

"Lovely market, well organised"

Carryduff businesses feedback

No responses to Carryduff business survey

Direct feedback from a couple of the businesses that they would consider taking part in the

██████████ expressed interest and we discussed a suitable offering. It was explained that as it was being held on Lidl property and they were sponsoring, that as a matter of courtesy we would consult with them. Lidl did not have any issue however ██████████ decided against taking part this time but would consider again in 2026.

██████████ expressed disappointment that the promotion of the market was very late and they had not been given enough notice as they had planned their staff night out for night of the market. This is the first year that they expressed any interest in taking part. Also previously

we would not have gotten to speak to a decision maker and the email address provided before and on all their online listings is different from the one provided to us in the last discussion. We updated email addresses for all Carryduff businesses in 2024.

We think that the Lidl venue looks smart and is now more appealing to the local businesses and they see the value. This will be harnessed by the organisers in the early part of the year for the 2026 event.

Learnings

- ✓ Very popular event, well attended by residents of Carryduff
- ✓ Location of event in heart of the town is ideal
- ✓ Carryduff businesses are now starting to see value of the market and are more interested in getting involved.
- ✓ Carryduff can support a bigger market / range of traders from both traders and public perspective.
- ✓ A larger footprint would be desired to accommodate seating and to ensure a good flow through the market when busy – currently there isn't room for seating
- ✓ The performance stage was pushed back onto the grass (in the previous year that was not possible as the ground was still in clay after the build). This freed up some space and prevented a bottleneck. Pushing the stage back further again would be a help but it would require matting of the ground so more expense.
- ✓ More space is probably not an option on the Lidl site
- ✓ The local community are very keen to take part which contributes to a great turnout, community feel and sense of place.
- ✓ With the smart new Lidl facility, getting involved with the market in some capacity appears to be more appealing to the local businesses.
- ✓ Overflow parking – currently (presumably until new units are built) there is overflow parking behind the fence in the car park grounds. The locals know this is there and park there. It is important that they park to the left hand side and not towards the loading bay so the lorries have space to turn. This is a note to brief for the car park stewards (EventSec) at start of their shift.
- ✓ Performance stage for dancers is always a challenge at time of year. Stage can be slippery. Covering it may not make any difference – it could still be slippery. Only failsafe option is to not host the dancing performances.
- ✓ Campaign assets needed in September to ensure sufficient distribution to all stakeholders.

Recommendations

- ✓ Keep same location for future markets
- ✓ Keep local entertainment programme managed by dedicated musician (experienced at sound)
- ✓ Keep performance stage on grass to reduce spectators congesting path around the market. If budget available, push the stage further back and matt the grass for spectators to stand on
- ✓ Earlier consultation with local businesses to get involved in the 2026 market

- ✓ Marketing to start earlier. Marketing materials to be available earlier (in 2025 they were especially late due to delayed receipt of campaign assets to create artwork and marketing assets).

INTRODUCTORY EVENT DETAILS

Title of Project / Event:	Dundonald Christmas Market
Address / Location:	Moat Park, Dundonald
Date of Event:	Thursday 4th December 2025
New Event Repeat	Repeat Event - 5th year
Name of Organisation:	Babble Belfast Ltd
Budget Reconciliation	To follow

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Footfall	3000	2000	1300	2193
Stalls	30	26	15	26
LCCC Traders		9	7	5

Scorings ⁴	2022	2023	2024	2025
Organisation score (Traders)	85% scores 5	100% rated 5	100% rated 4 and above (66.7% rated 5 and 33.3% 4)	80% rated 5 20% rated 4
Communication score (Traders)	N/A	100% rated 5	83.3% rated 5 16.% rated 4	93.3% rated 5 6.7% rated 4
Market quality score (Visitors)	50% rated 5 33% rated 4	75% rated 5	50% rated 3 37.5% rated 4 12.5% rated 5	N/A

Budget

Total Running Cost	Trader Fees	Cost to Budget
£12,750	£930	£11,850

Figures rounded up

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dundonald Christmas Market took place on **Thursday 4th December from 4pm-8pm** in Moat Park (Play Park side).

⁴ Ratings 1-5 where 1 is very poor; 2 is poor; 3 is average; 4 is good; 5 is very good

60% of traders who took part in the market completed the feedback survey.

Footfall to the market was counted at 2193.

Community involvement Dundonald Primary School opened the market with a short set of Christmas songs. Michelle Johnston Highland Dancers performed. Local acoustic musician performed during the times between the primary school and dancers.

Children’s entertainment There was also festive ‘Fun with Drums’ workshops, balloon modelling and arts and crafts with Santa’s elves. Santa visited too browsing the market and talking to families.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

- To recruit a minimum of 20 vendors
- To recruit businesses in the locality with vendors from outside the area to be selected only if a local business was not available or did not meet the criteria.
- To target local businesses and give them the opportunity to showcase their product offering in the heart of their community.
- To create a market for the community by involving the community.
- To foster good relations with existing permanent business owners in the Dundonald area.
- To deliver a creative PR & Marketing campaign that promoted the event and the Council in a positive manner

ACTUAL OUTPUTS AT EVENT COMPLETION – SUMMARY

Target Output	Actual Output & Any comment
20 Traders	25 traders
Preference to LCCC traders	5 Traders were LCCC area businesses. All who applied were accepted.
Deliver creative PR & Marketing campaign that reflects the event, and Council in a positive manner	Creative graphics for market using the Council-wide Christmas campaign graphics. Personalised to Dundonald Christmas Market using imagery from previous years. Marketing assets produced as listed below.
Community Involvement	Dundonald Primary School opened the market with a short set of songs. Local school of dance, ‘Michelle Johnston Highland School of Dance’ performed.

	Other local dance studios invited to perform committed but then failed to respond to our many communications when finalising details.
Foster good relations with businesses in Dundonald	Babble contacted all businesses by email and visited premises also with leaflets and posters. ⁵ Contacts updated for future correspondence and improvements in strengthening business communications.
Footfall	2163

Marketing & PR

An integrated marketing and PR campaign was created and implemented. Creative graphics creating using the Council-wide Christmas Campaign templates. The following outputs were achieved:

- ✓ Banners (2 x 1m correx) fitted at Corder's Spar car park and Billy Neill Playing fields
- ✓ PVC Banner at Moat Park pavilion / changing rooms
- ✓ 5000 A5 leaflets printed
 - ✓ 3000 distributed via residential door drop
 - ✓ Posters & leaflets distributed to local businesses and public buildings
- ✓ Organic Social Media campaign on Visit Lisburn Castlereagh channels
 - ✓ Assets and info also sent to local community groups and schools to share on their socials
- ✓ Blog to provide more information on the market written and published on the Visit Lisburn Castlereagh website
- ✓ E-zine – included in Visit Lisburn Castlereagh subscribers Christmas event ezine
- ✓ PR – event listing distribution to local press and event included in main Press Release for Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market

Social Media

Creative social media campaign designed with key images of traders were chosen for this market.

⁵ Leaflet and poster distribution to businesses was too late to be really effective. Christmas campaign assets were provided to Babble too late for effective promotion of the market. The time frame to produce designs, approval, print and distribution was too short.

- ✓ 4 organic social posts on Facebook & Instagram. 7 posts created but there wasn't space on the VLC channels schedule.
- ✓ Combined Facebook/Instagram total reach 14K. *TikTok analysis not available.*
- ✓ Facebook Event also created.
- ✓ Traders provided with campaign story graphics to post and promote their attendance at the market

Reach	Reach	Views	Impressions
Facebook	12102	19974	1.65
Instagram (not including Story reach)	1825	7034	1.4
Total	13,927	27008	

What the metrics indicated on the table measure

- Reach is the metric of the audience breadth
- Views indicate the content frequency and visibility
- Impressions are the number of times a person saw a post about the market

PR

An event listing was issued to local media accompanied by a photo taken in Moat Park featuring local traders alongside Cllr Claire Kemp, Chair of the Regeneration & Growth Committee.

Dundonald Christmas Market was also included in the main press release for the Christmas Markets (leading with Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market). This was deemed as the most effective way to get publicity for the community market in a busy period when lots of markets and other Christmas events are vying for publicity.

Coverage performance	
Total pieces of coverage	13
Estimated views prediction of lifetime views of coverage based on audience, reach & engagement rate on social	6,007
Audience combined total of publication-wide audience figures for all publications covering story	1.1mn
Average domain authority 0-100 authority measure of websites sharing story	49
Sentiment	Positive throughout

Publication
Newsletter / NI World

Bloom Magazine
Eating Ideas (Blog)
Eating Ideas (Insta Story, screen grab included)
The Gourmet Boys (Blog)
The Gourmet Boys (Facebook)
The Gourmet Boys (Insta Story, screen grab included)
NI World
Tyrone Page (Facebook)
Ulster Star (Facebook)
We Eat Local Lisburn (Facebook)
East Side Advertiser - Additional coverage expected in February edition

Feedback Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation methodology was conducted using a mix of in-person and emailed questionnaires. Feedback surveys were designed for each stakeholder group using the Google forms template and app. Surveys were issued to the following three stakeholder groups:

- Visitors to the market
- Traders
- Dundonald businesses – no-one responded to this despite a reminder being sent.

Where qualitative questions were asked, we have added detail from respondents for review. We have summarised the feedback from Traders below.

Trader Feedback

60% of traders responded to the survey (15 out of 25 traders)

A summary of qualitative feedback below

- ✓ 47% responded that footfall was higher than expected
- ✓ Turnover
 - 7% respondents had sales of between £701 and £800
 - 28% respondents had sales of between £501 and £800
 - 20% respondents had sales of between £101 and £200
 - 40% respondents had sales of between £201 and £400
- ✓ 100% of respondents said they had a mostly positive response from visitors
- ✓ 80% rated organisation as very good /20% as good
- ✓ 93% of respondents rated communication at a 5 (very good)

Sample Trader comments

“It was a well run event and we look forward to hopefully participating in future events! Staff very helpful and professional :)”

“Excellent and well organised event. Exceeded our expectations.”

“No music could be heard from the stalls at the back, this created a very difficult atmosphere when trying to engage with people. I find a bit of music etc tends to make people more approaching”

“This is a great wee market which customers are glad to see. Several have asked me if it could be put on more than once a year! My only question would be why the change in location from the shop car park? It was a better location in terms of visibility and getting passing foot fall.”

“This was my first market with (LCCC) and I was really impressed, the advertising of the event was first class, it ran really smooth well laid out I had so many customers comment what a great market it was.”

Visitor Feedback

A technical glitch on the night of the market meant that the visitor surveys did not save.

Business Feedback

There were no responses to the business feedback request despite reminders being sent.

Learnings

What worked well

- ✓ The Moat Park location worked well in terms of the market set up and potential for the space.
- ✓ The layout of gazebos grouped as they were worked well as it gave more cohesion to the market.
- ✓ The opening of the market by Dundonald Primary School worked well as it brought their parents and grandparents so a lively opening to the market.
- ✓ Michelle Johnston School of Highland Dancing scheduled at 6pm worked well as it brought another group of public halfway through.
- ✓ Set up and breakdown worked well. We had an agreement with Corder's Spar to store hire equipment overnight which is very helpful (although challenging to get all kit over before 10pm when gates are locked for the night).

What could be improved

- ✓ Earlier promotion of the market to wider community and businesses with printed materials. Despite digital assets being issued and social media, many people still report they didn't know about the market early enough.
- ✓ Greater interest from traders for Dundonald Christmas Market – the impact of the poor trading conditions at the 2024 market resulted in fewer applications for this market. The positive trading for most traders at the 2025 event should help interest for the next market.

- ✓ Parking arrangements for traders – they were asked to park at the sports pavilion but their parking time coincided with Dundonald PS parent pick up so it proved difficult for some.

Recommendations

- ✓ Continue endeavour for local businesses to get involved /stay open late
- ✓ When date is agreed, issue to businesses. Send reminder to businesses in September.
- ✓ The Moat Park location worked well in terms of the market set up and proved there is potential for the space to be used for further markets.
- ✓ In addition to the event signage at Corder's Spar car park and the parks, more event signage was put up on the day of the event in the village to direct the public to where the market was located within Moat Park. However, this may need to go up a couple of days earlier to be really effective – although there are issues with putting signs on signposts. Resources for this also needed.
- ✓ Rescheduling policy or contingency on date should be discussed especially with increasing frequency of weather warnings.
- ✓ Ensure visitor survey is available on an offline mode.

INTRODUCTORY DETAILS

Title of Project / Event:	Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market
Address / Location:	The Dark Walk & Hillsborough Fort
Date of Event:	Friday 12th & Saturday 13 th December 2025
New Event Repeat	Repeat Event - 7th year
Name of Organisation:	Babble Belfast Ltd
Budget Reconciliation	To follow

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Footfall	Circa 6500	Circa 5500	Circa 7000	circa Fri 4966 circa Sat 3879 Total 8845
Stalls	64	61	63	Fri 70 Sat 66
LCCC traders	16	18	17	Fri 26 Sat 23

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Organisation score (Traders)	72% rated a 5	88% rated a 5	96% rated a 5 4% rated a 4	92% rated a 5 ⁶ 8% rated a 4
Communication score (Traders)	N/A	75% rated a 5	82% rated a 5 18% rated a 4	94% rated a 5 6% rated a 4
Market quality score (Visitors)	50% rated a 5 33% rated a 4	75% rated a 5	90% rated a 5 10% rated a 4	

Budget

Total Running Cost	Traders Fees	Cost to Budget
£47,750	£9,750	£38K*

*Rounded up figures

Budget breakdown to follow.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market was held on Friday 12th & Saturday 13th December 2025 along The Dark Walk at Hillsborough Fort. On Friday the market was open from 3pm - 9pm and on Saturday from 12pm-6pm. This was the seventh year the event was held.

⁶ Scoring scale 1-5 where 5 is Very Good

The event by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council benefits with support funding from DAERA's Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme (NIRFP). Sponsorship of £1500 was secured from [REDACTED].

Key features:

- ✓ Festive lighting along the stalls down both sides of The Dark Walk and a newly formatted craft section of the Front Field. *There are more traders in the area at the bottom of The Dark Walk towards the church.*
- ✓ The idyllic backdrop of the location is enhanced with simple festoon lighting and the festive stall dressing by the stallholders.
- ✓ Street food and hot drinks were positioned in the rectangular area at the Church exit from The Dark Walk.
- ✓ Music - the main music area was in the **Front Field at the Fort** with local school choirs, adult choirs, ukele collectives and acoustic musicians performing.
- ✓ Santa browsed the market talking to families on Friday with Mrs Claus and Elf deputizing on Saturday.
- ✓ Children's fun comprised of art and crafts and also festive 'Fun with Drums' workshops.
- ✓ The market footprint was designed to ensure a good visitor and trader experience, maximizing budget and working within the confines of a historical site of archaeological importance.
- ✓ The market extended into the Front Field at the Fort with a new layout to form an extension of 'The Dark Walk' avenue. This extension formed a new craft village with the central walkway floored and covered with carpet as a measure to reduce slippiness in damp conditions.
- ✓ The 'avenue' of the craft village could be viewed through the archway from the top of The Dark Walk, drawing interest from the moment visitors entered the market.
- ✓ Retailers and cafes in the village stayed open late for late night shopping. Pubs and restaurants were very busy.
- ✓ Weather
 - ✓ Friday the weather was perfect Christmas market weather.
 - ✓ Saturday there were periods of rain, and it was a bit windy. However, the wind did not materialise as strongly as it was forecast. People visited the market despite the rain and naturally was busier during the periods it wasn't raining.
- ✓ In light of the weather that was forecast for Saturday, the decision was made mid-week to change the makeup of the market infrastructure to all 3x3m marquees from AR marquees. This proved to be a very good decision.

- ✓ The market looked very smart with the all-white 3x3m structures as opposed to a mix of types and structures.

Marketing and PR

- ✓ Marketing and PR started 3 weeks out from event⁷
- ✓ An extensive integrated market and PR campaign across print and digital including an organic social media campaign, event listings on advocate websites (Visit Lisburn Castlereagh, Visit Belfast, Discover NI etc), launch photocall and press release to media, placed features in key media (print and broadcast).
- ✓ Paid Out-of-Home media with billboard at Sprucefield and 6 x adshels. Small budget for meta-advertising (social media).

Local Engagement

Businesses

Village businesses – retailers and cafes - opened late (until 9pm) on the night of the Christmas Market. This enhances the experience of visiting the market for visitors.

As part of our marketing efforts, we captured images (photography and videography), creating videos/reels to convey a journey through the village, encouraging the audience to make a visit to the market and the village part of their Christmas experience and tradition.

Community

The **Hillsborough Fort Guards** are invited to take part in the market with a prominent position on The Dark Walk. They attend in their ceremonial dress.

Downshire Primary School once again opened the market for us with a short performance. It is now a tradition in the school that the children and teacher look forward to.

Event Objectives

- To raise awareness of the type, range and quality of food and high-quality gifts produced in NI, giving vendors the opportunity to sell directly to the public.
- To allow producers and crafters to showcase their products and tell their story of how, why and where they are produced.
- To create a Christmas Market experience that would play host to a range of family friendly experiences. It should deliver a real Christmas ambience, generating the sights, sounds and smells of the season.
- To recruit vendors, curating a market with a diverse offering of handmade arts, crafts and vintage items and locally sourced foods.
- To strengthen the cultural identity of the region and add to the region's sense of 'place'.
- To promote the importance of food provenance to the public with the aim of increasing

⁷ This is a short lead in for promoting the market, especially at such a busy time of year.

the consumption of quality regional food through direct sales.

- To garner customer / public feedback on many platforms including interest in this type of regular event in Royal Hillsborough.

Objectives specific to the NIRFP funding 2025:

- Achieve 70 NI regional food producers to meet their eligibility criteria of food being grown / produced or processed in NI.
 - Exhibitors feedback via an evaluation form to assess the commercial success of the event with details on direct and indirect sales generated
- Food sectors must be represented with farm-to-market and value-added products featuring locally grown / produced meat, dairy, bread, fruit and vegetables, fish and seafood.
- Achieve visitor numbers of 7000-10,000.
 - A sample of visitor feedback via a survey to assess the success of the event and raised awareness of local NI produce.
- Generate sales / orders of £48,000.

Outputs Overview – Actual vs Targets

Target Output	Actual Output
70 traders	85 traders took part over the 2 days
Achieve footfall of 7,000-10,000 visitors	8845 visitors recorded over 2 days
Conduct surveys to exhibitors (traders) and visitors and village businesses to ascertain success of event and commercial success	Surveys conducted with exhibitors (traders), visitors and village businesses. Questions posed to assess economic impact.
Showcase artisan, quality and speciality food produced in NI to create a marketplace as per NIRFP funding conditions.	Meat, fish, vegetables, bakery and dairy categories represented as farm to market and locally produced produce used in value added products.
Generate positive marketing and PR campaign	Integrated Marketing & PR campaign implemented across multiple channels achieving very positive results.
To provide a family-focused free-entry event that would appeal to all the family and attract visitor numbers.	Free entry event with musical entertainment and children's festive fun as ancillary activities to the market.
To achieve at least £48,000 in orders / sales. (NIRFP requirement)	Based on the 50 trader respondents we calculated average total sales generated figure of £51K on Friday and £45K on Saturday .

Marketing & PR

Royal Hillsborough Christmas Market (RHCM) fell in with the Council-wide Christmas campaign. A dedicated red palette was assigned to RHCM to give it more presence among the other Christmas campaign events.

An integrated market campaign was developed and implemented which included:

- ✓ A5 leaflets distributed to businesses, public buildings, at events and via a residential door drop to local residents
- ✓ Posters to village businesses
- ✓ Banner displayed at Council-managed parks

- ✓ **Advertising**
 - **Outdoor Media** - Sprucefield Park Billboard, Adshels x 6 at carefully chosen sites
 - **Paid social media** - £100 on meta advertising
 - **Grand Central Station** - Prominent display on the digital ‘Tourist & Travel’ Information totem
 - **Visit Belfast Welcome Centre** – Advertised on external facing digital screen and display panel inside Welcome Centre as well as on screen at Info Desk

- ✓ **Digital Marketing**
 - **Organic Social Media campaign** comprising a mix of post formats carefully planned and based on data
 - **Blog post** on Visit Lisburn Castlereagh (VLC) website to boost Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and also one central place for the public to find all information on the market
 - **Ezine** to VLC database
 - **Event Listing** on several websites including Visit Lisburn Castlereagh, Visit Belfast, Discover NI, Food NI

Social Media performance

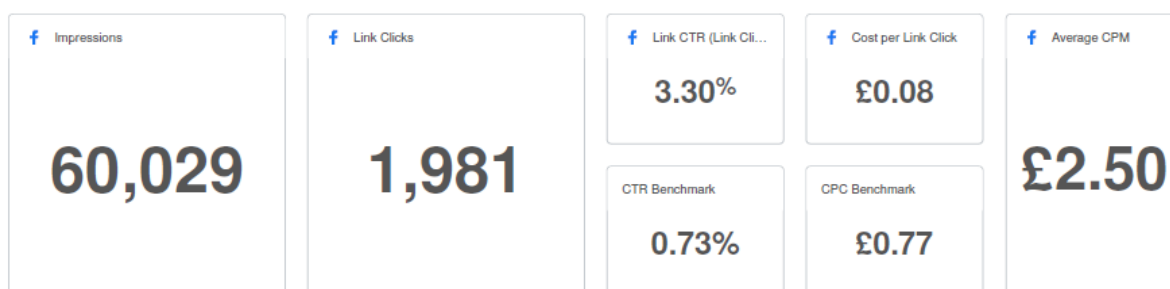
Reach	Reach	Views	Impressions
Facebook	48,498	75,701	1.56
Instagram newsfeed	19,994	38,618	1.93
Instagram Stories	20,452	25,857	1.26
Total	88,944	140,176	

What the metrics indicated on the table measure

- Reach is the metric of the audience breadth
 - Views indicate the content frequency and visibility
 - Impressions are the number of times a person saw a post about the market
-
- ✓ 89k reach through organic social media (N.B This number may now be bigger as people keep rewatching Reel videos)
 - ✓ For Facebook we achieved an average of 26% reach rate. On Instagram we achieved a 27% reach rate. The average reach rate* is about 2.6% on Facebook and 4% for Instagram according to [Social Insider](#), so this is a fantastic result for this campaign.

Paid Meta Ad

Meta (Facebook/Instagram)



This was an impressive return on a small advertising spend of £100.

PR

Coverage performance	
Total pieces of coverage	20 with 1 piece pending
Estimated views prediction of lifetime views of coverage based on audience, reach & engagement rate on social	394,000
Audience (combined total of publication-wide audience figures for all publications covering story)	84.5mn
Average domain authority (0-100 authority measure of websites sharing story)	59
Sentiment	Positive throughout

Online publications - links
Northern Ireland Chamber
Down News
Farming Life
Farm Week (Facebook)
Belfast Live (Facebook)
Belfast Live (Threads)
Belfast Live (X)
Belfast Live
Belfast Live

Eating Ideas (Facebook)
Belfast Times
Belfast Times (Facebook)
Belfast Times (Insta Story, screen grab included)
Gourmet Boys
Gourmet Boys (Facebook)
Gourmet Boys (Insta Story, screen grab included)
Northern Ireland World
Ulster Star (Facebook)
We Eat Local Lisburn (Facebook)
Lisburn Advertiser – Additional coverage expected in February edition

Features

- **2 Features secured which showcase elements of LCCC Christmas Programming that spanned across events**
- **Estimated Views** (prediction of lifetime views of coverage based on audience, reach & engagement rate on social) – 6,370
- **Audience** (combined total of publication-wide audience figures for all publications covering story) – 640,000
- **Average domain authority** (0-100 authority measure of websites sharing story) - 86

Coop Coffee

[Irish News](#)

[Irish News \(Ezine\)](#)

[Irish News \(Facebook\)](#)

U105 (Chair’s Interview on Frank Mitchell)

Radio interview and digital coverage

Influencer Activity

Partnership with locally based blogger Majella McGuinness

[@sixatno.5 on Instagram](#) 20K followers

- 17,061 story views across 6 Instagram stories
- A [bonus reel](#) stitched together post-event (this was not included in her agreed fee)
- 2,057 accounts reached through LCCC content
- Additional, added value reels post-event sharing her ‘haul’ at home
- 41 likes on her story content
- 4 sticker taps on the [@visitlisburncastlereagh](#) tag
- Total watch time of 12h 32mins of LCCC content through Majella’s channels

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation methodology was conducted using a mix of in-person and emailed questionnaires. Feedback surveys were designed for each stakeholder group using the Google forms template and app. Surveys were issued to the following three stakeholder groups:

- Traders / exhibitors taking part in the market
- Visitors to the market
- Village

We have summarised the feedback from Traders and Visitors below. The full feedback has been copied into Appendices attached. Access to each feedback form can be provided for verification purposes.

TRADER SURVEY OUTCOMES

59% response rate (50 out of 85 traders responded)

Below is a brief summary of Trader responses.

Trading success measures

- ✓ **Direct / Indirect sales** 52% gained new leads via direct or indirect sales as a result of trading at RHCM
- ✓ **Shortening supply chain** 60% collaborate with other NI producers / businesses
- ✓ **Sales - Friday**
 - 23% of respondents had sales over £1000
 - 21% of respondents had sales between £700-£1000
 - 16% of respondents had sales of under £300
- ✓ **Sourcing**
 - 38% of respondents source all materials / ingredients from NI
 - 58% source some materials / ingredients from NI

Organisation & Communication

On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is poor and 5 is very good:

- ✓ 92% scored the organisation of the event a 5 (very good)
- ✓ 94% rated communication a 5 (very good)

Key comments

- ✓ “An extremely very well run event in a perfect location which is great for small local businesses like ourselves to be involved in”
- ✓ “Best yet and very well attended as always. Impressed with contingency measures considering poor weather.”
- ✓ “An amazing market, existing customers chose not to buy from my website but to attend and support in person- great community event!

- ✓ “It was my first time selling at the Christmas market and found that customers were genuinely interested in more healthier food products (i.e. less sugar & less processed) not only for themselves but to give as gifts.”
- ✓ “The event is very well organised, Particularly the unloading and loading is very handy and being given time slots to do so is very good.”
- ✓ “I was so impressed with how well organised the event was. The set-up was very well coordinated, and I felt like a lot of care had gone into making the event safe and dry for the stall holders. The team communication was excellent, there was no confusion about the plan, and the team were all on site and available checking to make sure that everything was going to plan. Furthermore, the market was very well advertised and well attended by customers. Fantastic!”
- ✓ “Always a joy to attend. Locals tend to support local and this provides the platform for my jewellery to be seen.”
- ✓ “Really well organised event. Lots of very positive feedback from the visitors.”
- ✓ “more activities of different types could be introduced to attract a larger crowd, such as small fairground rides or family-friendly attractions. Additional tents could be set up to serve as designated seating and dining areas. More Christmas lights and decorations could also be added to enhance the festive atmosphere.”

VISITOR FEEDBACK

65 visitors completed the Visitor Feedback form

Below is a brief summary of Visitor responses.

Visitor success measures

- ✓ Respondents visiting from a diverse range of places outside of Lisburn & Castlereagh including Glenarm, Derry, Magherafelt, Cavan, Shropshire, Scotland
- ✓ 86% of respondents visited the village that day to attend the market (main reason)
- ✓ 40% heard about the market via social media. 29% word of mouth.
- ✓ 79% of respondents discovered new food producers
- ✓ Visitor spend of respondents (at the time of the survey)
 - 35% spent £20 or over,
 - 15% spent £30 or over
 - 14% spent between £41 and £75
 - 8% spent between £76-£100
 - 3% spent between £100-£200
- ✓ 94% rated the experience as ‘Good’ (20%) Very Good (74%)
- ✓ 55% said they would visit businesses in the village

Visitor comments – a selection

- ✓ “Travelled and thought may be a little bigger but enjoyed the local suppliers”
- ✓ “More craft stalls”

- ✓ “More covered areas. For bad weather. No pigout van this year. A highlight Hillsborough old guard. Also offer local businesses paying rates free stands as well. Good Rapport With businesses”
- ✓ “More disabled parking”
- ✓ “Two late nights would be good”
- ✓ “More cover from rain”
- ✓ “More Christmas decorations”
- ✓ “Better parking facilities”
- ✓ “Parking can be a problem. Some stalls seem to be closing at 5 and packing up”
- ✓ “Maybe some more things for autistic people / autism. Continue the good work”
- ✓ Very Well organised
- ✓ “just keep going”

BUSINESS FEEDBACK – VILLAGE

4 businesses completed the survey

Key respondent outcomes

- ✓ 50% of respondents believe that events like RHCM benefit local businesses
- ✓ 75% of respondents believe that events like RHCM benefit the local community

Economic Impact

- ✓ Mixed response on benefit to footfall from respondents as to whether the market benefited them or not on either day
 - One respondent (25%) reported a 11-20% **increase** in sales on the Saturday
 - One respondent (25%) reported a 41-50% **decrease** in sales on the Friday
 - One respondent (25%) reported a 50%+ **decrease** in sales on the Saturday
- ✓ All 4 respondents opened later / late night shopping on Friday to coincide with the market

Positive Economic Impact – sales increase compared to usual on a Friday⁸

- ✓ 25% had sales increased by between 31-40%
- ✓ 25% had sales increase of 21-30%
- ✓ 25% had sales increase of 6-10%

Negative Economic Impact – sales decrease compared to usual on a Friday

- ✓ 25% of respondents (1) had decrease in sales on day of RHCM 2024

Communication

We asked businesses to propose ways of communicating with the businesses for better collaboration. Responses were as follows:

4 responses

WhatsApp group for village businesses

Nice to be consulted more advertisement that we're open yet more advertisement for each business that is opened I find when the markets are on people do not come down to Lisbon Street parking is a nightmare and it makes my customers not come on those days chatting to locals in the village, they feel the same

Please give us a lot of advance notice.

No you do a great job

9

Key Learnings

- The full market set up with the AR Marquees 3x3m marquees is a prudent measure for the Christmas Market. It also elevates how the market looks.
- Set up needs another day thereby starting on Wednesday 9th December 2026.
- Breakdown may need another day also with the volume of equipment that needs to be moved off site.

What worked well

- Full market set up with AR Marquees white 3x3m marquees¹⁰. These provided the necessary robustness in infrastructure to withstand the rain and wind. The market also looked very smart with it all the same.
- Craft village – second year of the craft village set up on the ‘front field’ with improved ramp access with handrail. Front field ‘avenue’ of stalls to form the Craft Village – this is the best format we have tested and have set up this way for two years now. It has proved very popular with traders and visitors and presents a great view of the market from the entrance from the Main Street.
- Logistics of bringing trader’s in and out each day in the tricky site – a process that was communicated in pre-event briefing to traders via email, on arrival and again before breakdown.
- The two-day format worked well although the weather on Saturday affected footfall. There is an appetite for it on two-days. We tested the opening times of 12pm-6pm on Saturday to straddle daytime and twilight hours which brings a more magical feel to the market. It worked well. Question as to whether it should start earlier or finish later.

⁹ Note the respondent who asked for lots of advanced notice – dates were provided early 2025. Also, the respondent received the application form to apply as well as reminder email to businesses re the Christmas Market. There was correspondence directly with the respondent / staff member when the application process opened.

¹⁰ As opposed to mix of these with LCCC pop-up gazebos and trader’s own

What could be improved

- The **Live Music** area is tricky to get right at the Christmas Market with the weather a factor in how successful it is or not. It is also tricky for the sound to be 'distributed' further than the immediate area.
- **Seating** is another tricky area to get right. We have been relying on pop-up gazebos, but they are subject to being wrecked if there is a sudden gust of wind.
- **Signage in street food area** to ensure that the public are aware there is seating -we do have some signage, but more may be helpful. Difficult to know where to put it for people to see – maybe a sign for each street food trader's unit would be a solution. Again, this is a budgetary matter.
- **Children's activities** some years the children's activities work well and some years they don't. There is no rhyme or reason to it. Potentially a fresh approach to it for Christmas is needed, potentially with more animation/street theatre in the market.

Recommendations

1. **Early announcement of market** – there are a lot of Christmas events to compete with so getting date out and into people's diaries / plans is key.
2. **PR effort** – further to above, features and event listings are planned and published much earlier than when we are allowed to announce the markets. Maybe we need to **adapt the PR approach for 2026 to harness these opportunities** and weave the activity as best we can with the wider Council Christmas Campaign launch dates. As there are more and more events at Christmas for the public to choose from, it is harder to work within the time constraint we are given. **People tend to make their Christmas plans earlier and earlier.**
3. **Village businesses** – more support needed for the village businesses so that they can benefit from the additional footfall to the market. Is there anything that can be done to attract visitors to all the shops?
4. **Keep the two-day format.** Discuss best timing for Saturday.
5. **Create an enclosed social hub** that would house live music and seating. However, **consideration as to how to distribute the music** to create ambience to rest of market is a challenge.
6. **Reconsider the children's / family entertainment and activities.** Maybe more street theatre is better at Christmas which would create more colour in the heart of the market. This is a budgetary factor too.
7. **Parking is a limiting factor.** Encouraging Hillsborough Castle to open up their car park / accessibility through the Castle grounds to the village would be a massive help and of mutual benefit.
8. **Timing of promotion in lead up to event** – earlier announcements needed. Efforts to secure media features earlier to be explored. Media outlets plan Christmas earlier than ever with more Christmas events happening each year.

11.4 APPENDIX 4: PRE AND POST EVALUATION RESULTS (CONDUCTED BY CARD GROUP RESEARCH & INSIGHT)

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Christmas Events Research - Project Report

January 2026



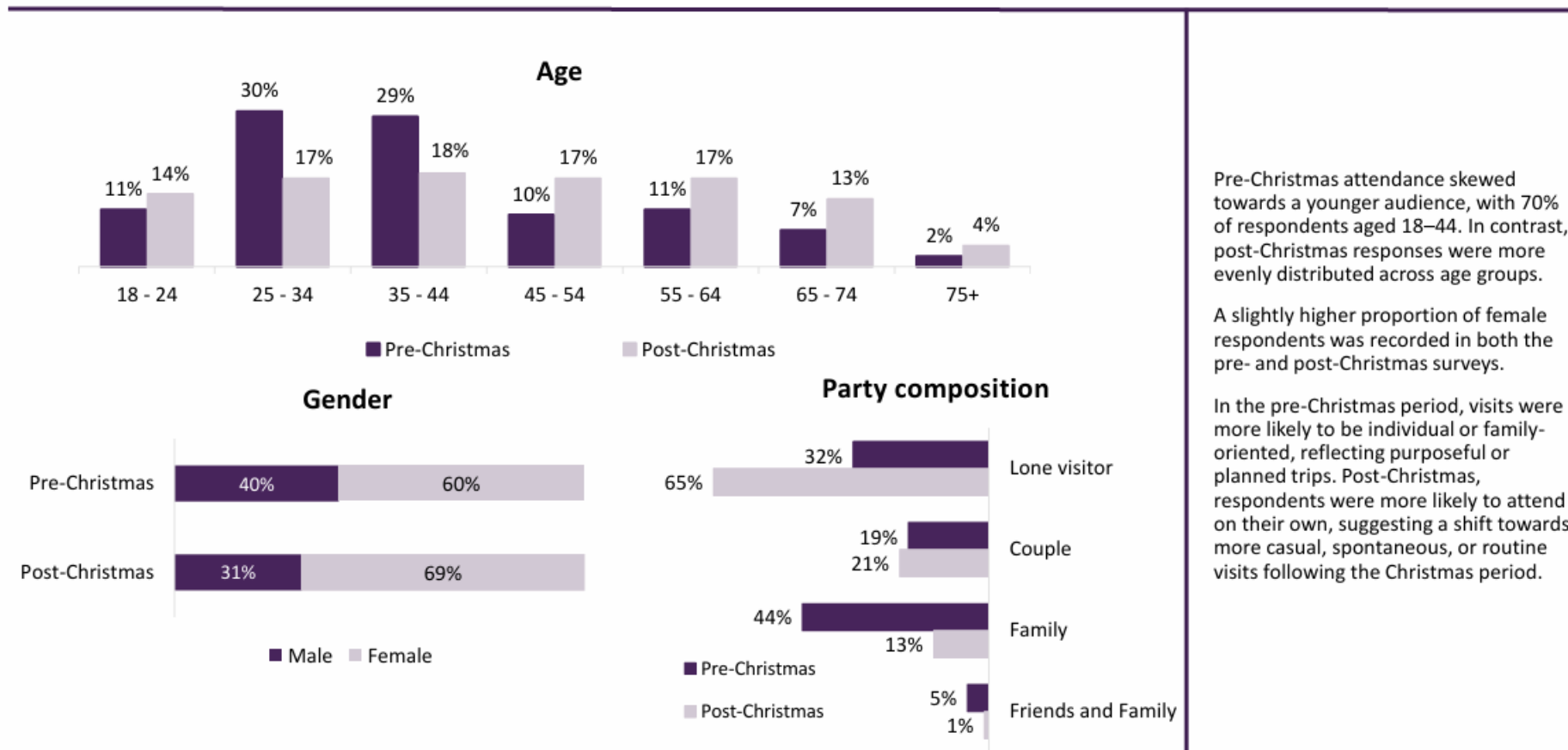
●●● Introduction

- CARD Group Ltd. was commissioned by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to evaluate the impact of the Christmas Events and decorations in Lisburn over the Christmas period of 2025.
- Visitor opinions were gathered in Lisburn City Centre between 21st November and 20th December 2025, and again in the New Year, between 13th and 29th January 2025.
- Respondents were recruited face-to-face, at Bow Street, Market Square or in Castle Gardens, using 'next-available-person' methodology.
- This report analyses respondents' opinions of the Lisburn Light Festival and the free parking initiative in Council-owned car parks during weekends in December and January, as well as overall perceptions of Lisburn City Centre throughout the Christmas period.
- In total **927 responses** were gathered (492 in December and 435 in January).

●●● Executive Summary

- 51% of pre-Christmas respondents came to Lisburn specifically for Christmas events.
- Word of mouth was the main source of awareness, with Facebook and Instagram also influential. Pre-Christmas. LCCC advertising campaign encouraged 49% of pre-Christmas respondents to visit Lisburn , and 35% of post-Christmas respondents.
- Parking was identified as a barrier for some visitors, awareness of free parking promotions increased visit timing, dwell time, and car park usage.
- Overall satisfaction was high, with 98% of respondents reporting a positive experience in Lisburn.
- Pre-Christmas NPS was +34, and post-Christmas fell to -7, indicating reduced post-festive recommendation.
- The Light Festival and Christmas Garden Light Trail were the most popular Christmas events.
- Visitors engaged with shopping and dining, but most Christmas shopping occurred elsewhere due to greater retail variety. Bow Street and Bow Street Mall recorded the highest spend.
- Visitors attending specifically for the Christmas events contributed an additional £3,660,197 to the city during the festive period, with a higher proportion of family visitors attending specifically for the event contributing to the increase in spend compared with last year.

Demographics

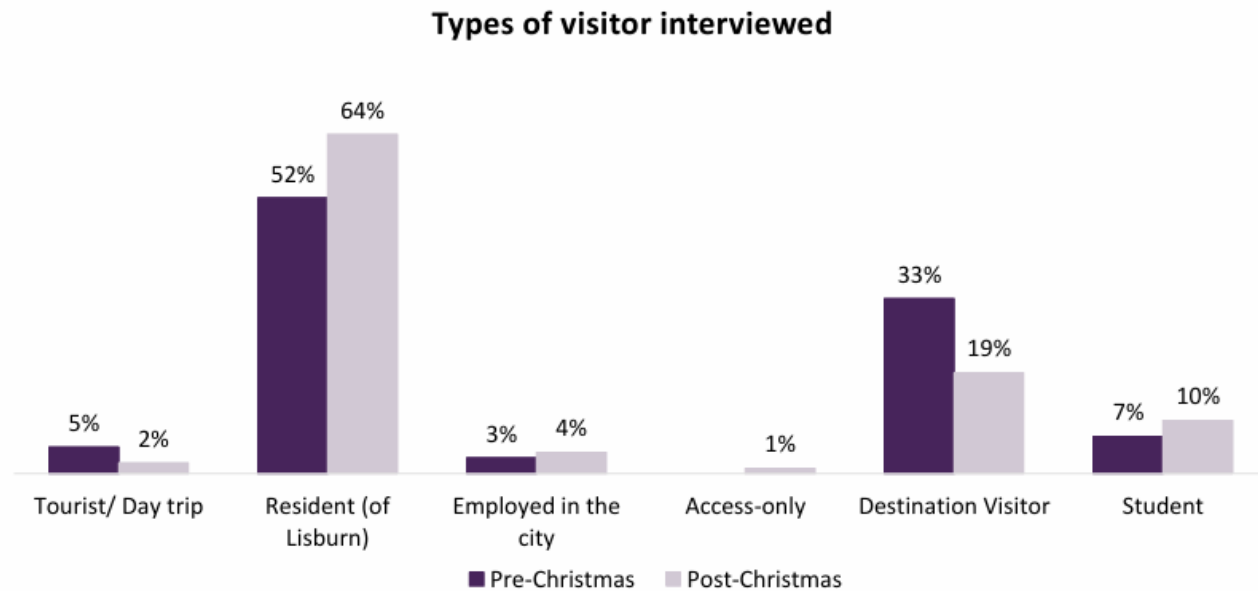


Pre-Christmas attendance skewed towards a younger audience, with 70% of respondents aged 18–44. In contrast, post-Christmas responses were more evenly distributed across age groups.

A slightly higher proportion of female respondents was recorded in both the pre- and post-Christmas surveys.

In the pre-Christmas period, visits were more likely to be individual or family-oriented, reflecting purposeful or planned trips. Post-Christmas, respondents were more likely to attend on their own, suggesting a shift towards more casual, spontaneous, or routine visits following the Christmas period.

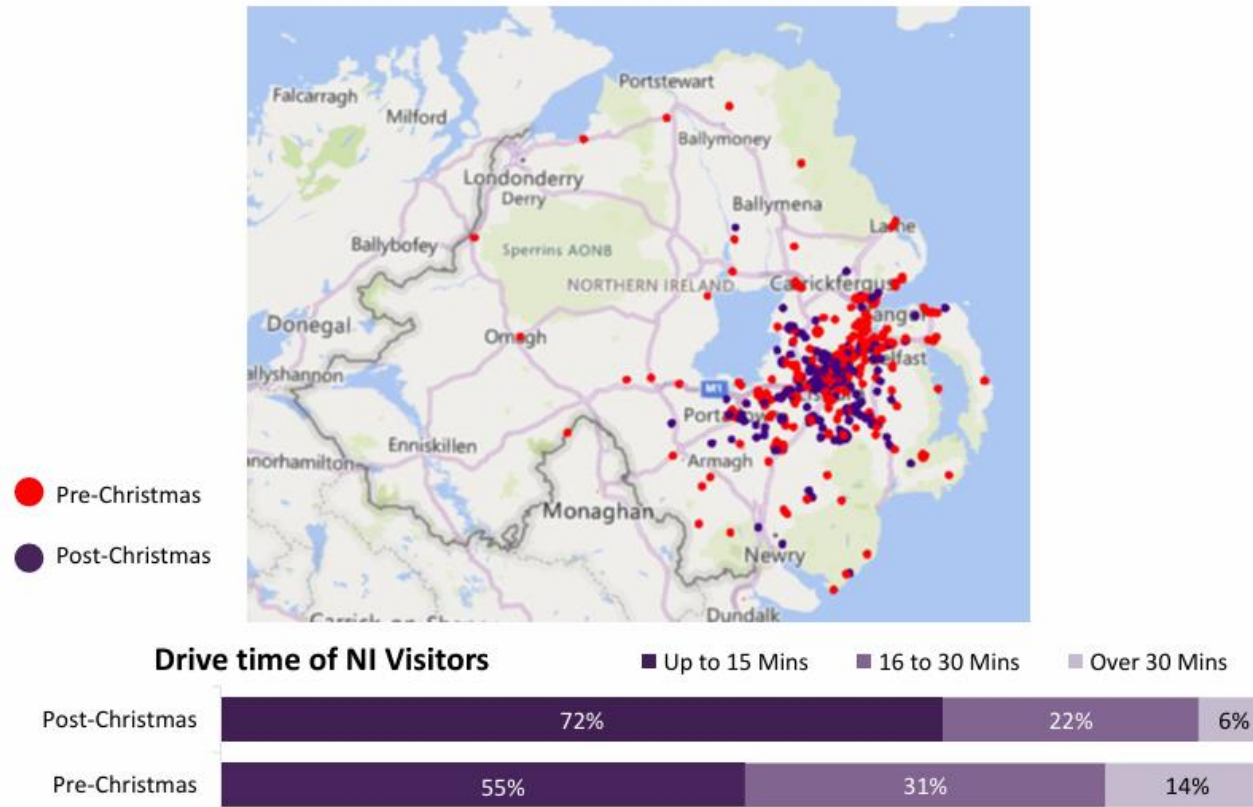
Respondent Profile



Respondents in the 'Destination visitor' category represent gains to the Council, since they live further from the city and have a choice to visit other towns that are more local to them (e.g. Antrim, Armagh, Belfast, Craigavon, & Newry). There were also visitors from further afield (Omagh, Fermanagh) in the area to visit friends & family and some from out of state (e.g. Ireland and England). These are in the Tourist / Day Trip category.

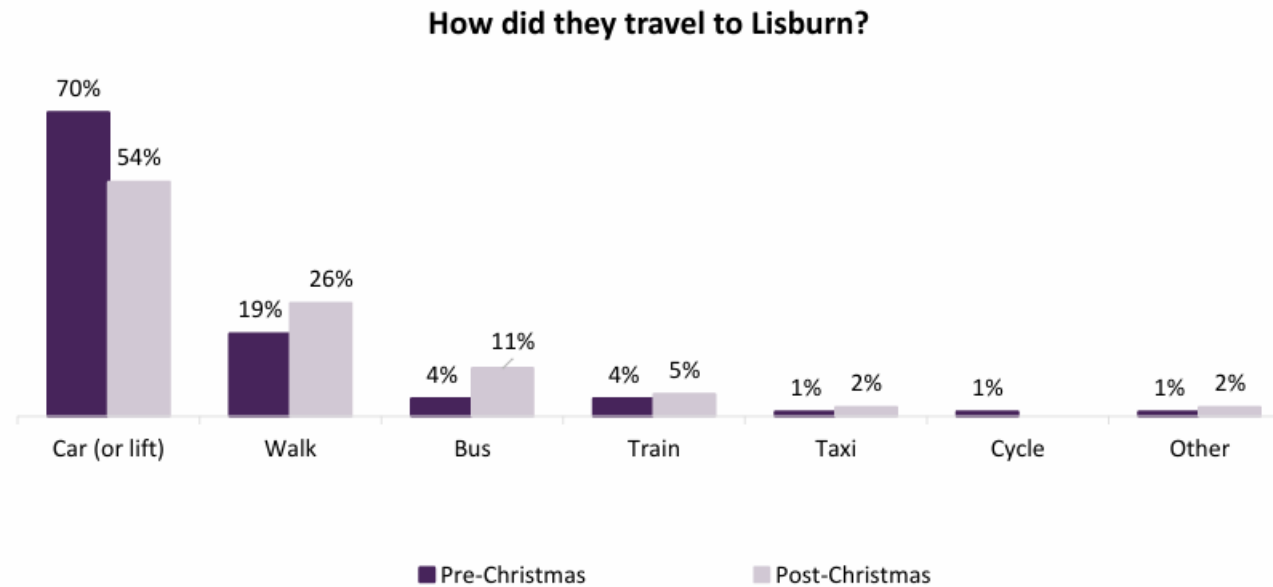
Respondent Profile

Where did visitors come from?



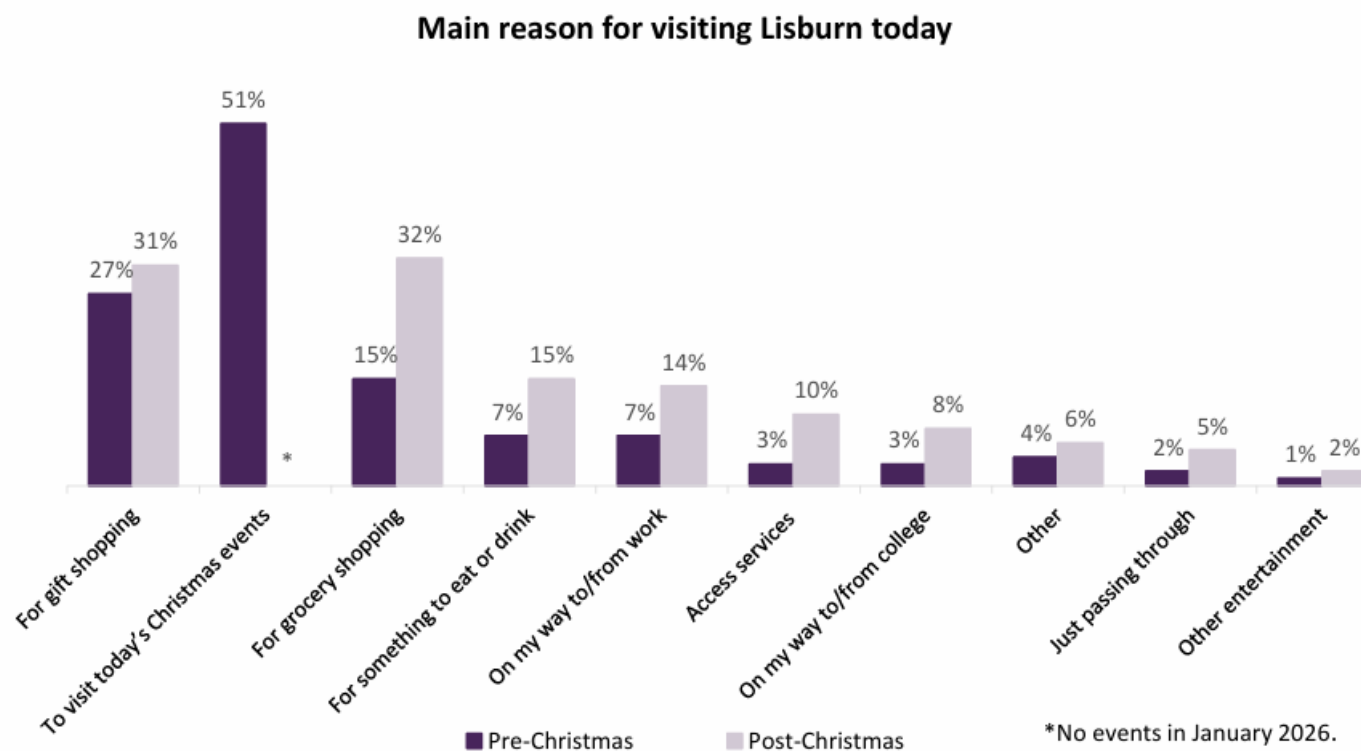
Visitors came from as far as Strabane and Limavady, however most lived in and around Greater Lisburn.

Respondent Profile



The majority of both pre- and post-Christmas respondents travelled to Lisburn by car. However, a notable proportion of visitors lived close enough to walk, accounting for 19% of pre-Christmas and 26% of post-Christmas respondents.

Reason for Visiting



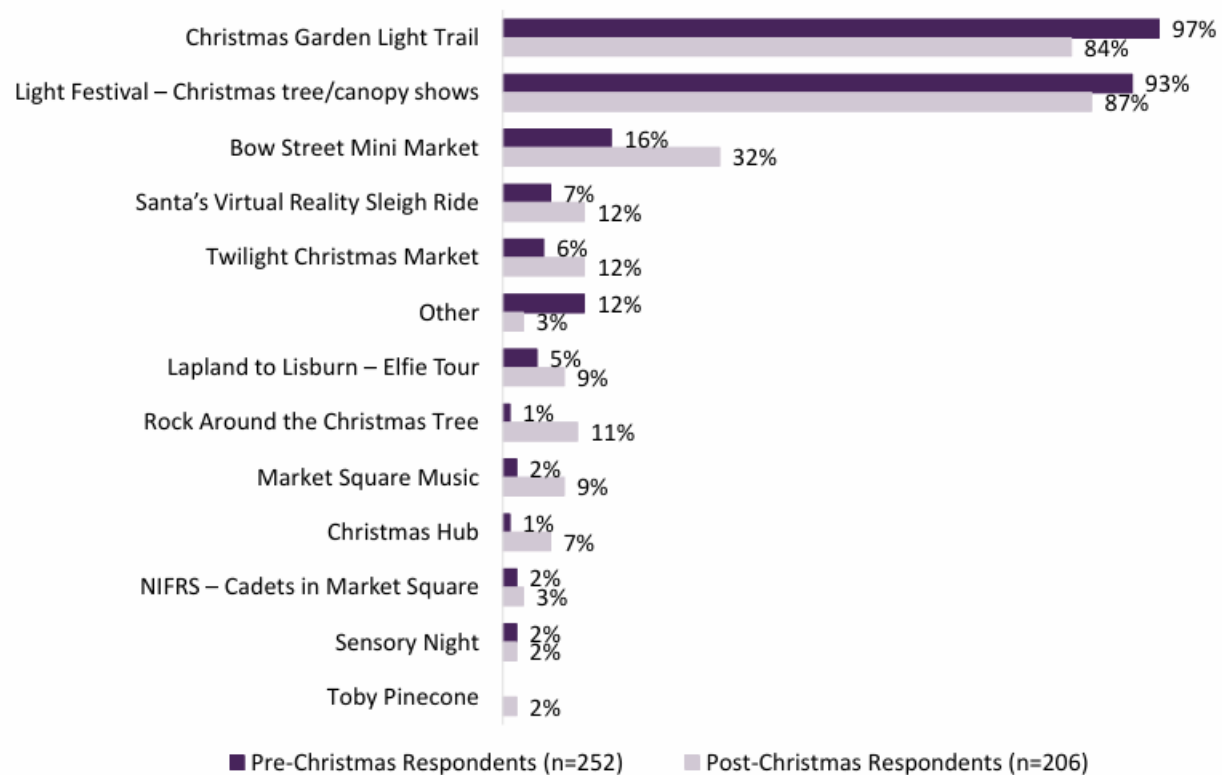
Shopping for gifts was a key driver of visits in both periods, with 27% of pre-Christmas and 31% of post-Christmas respondents travelling to Lisburn for this purpose.

In the pre-Christmas period, visits were strongly event-led, with over half of respondents (51%) attending specifically for the Christmas events. This highlights the role of festive programming in driving footfall and attracting visitors into the city centre ahead of Christmas.

Post-Christmas, visit motivations shifted towards more routine and practical reasons, with almost a third of respondents (32%) visiting Lisburn primarily for grocery shopping. This suggests a transition from event-driven visits to more functional, day-to-day use of the city centre following the festive period.

Christmas Events Attended

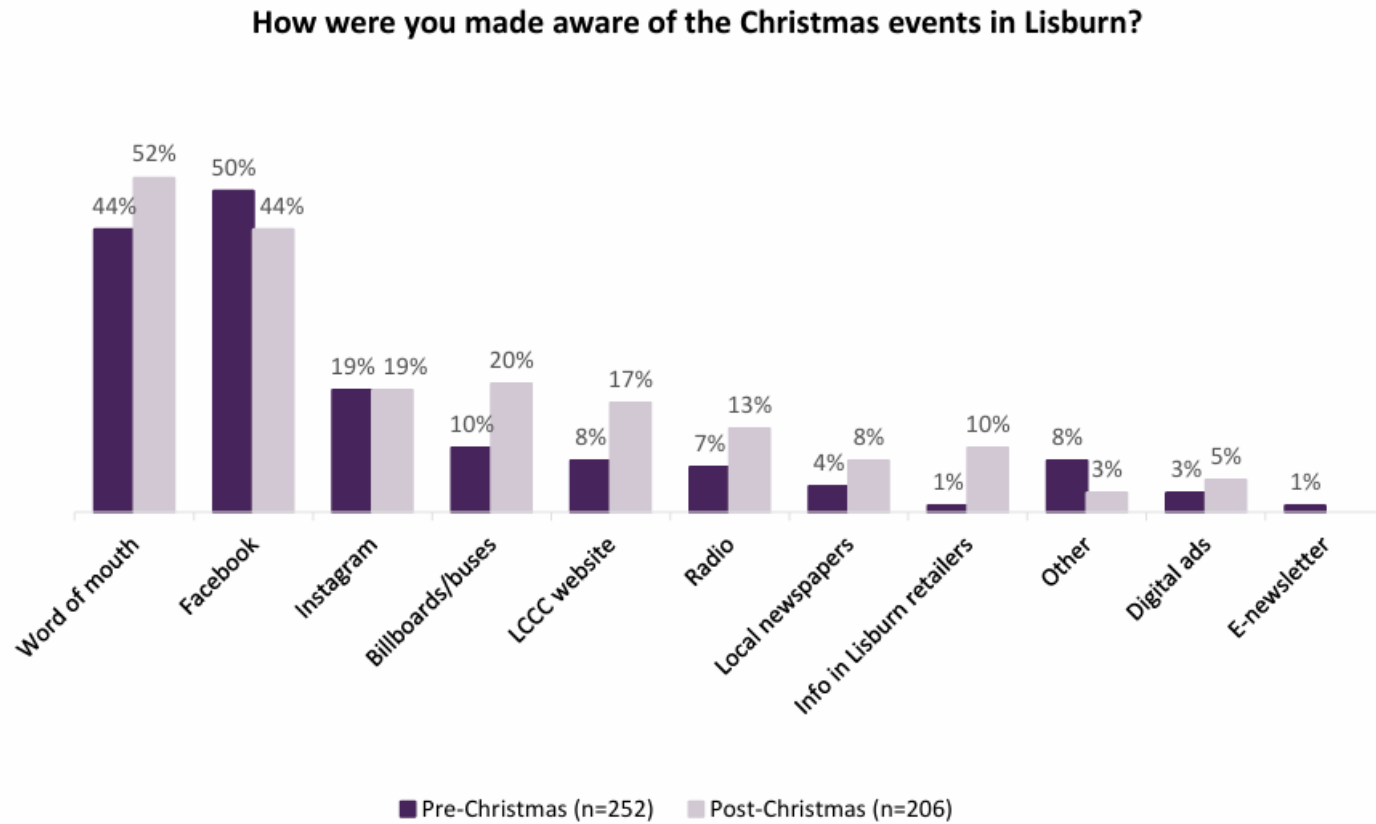
Which Christmas events did you attend?



Among respondents who attended Christmas events, the Christmas Garden Light Trail and the Light Festival were the most popular attractions in both the pre- and post-Christmas periods. This demonstrates consistent engagement with these flagship events across the festive season.

Respondents who selected Other most commonly mentioned meeting Santa, indicating that this was also a popular activity among attendees.

How did you hear about the Christmas events? (Attendees only)

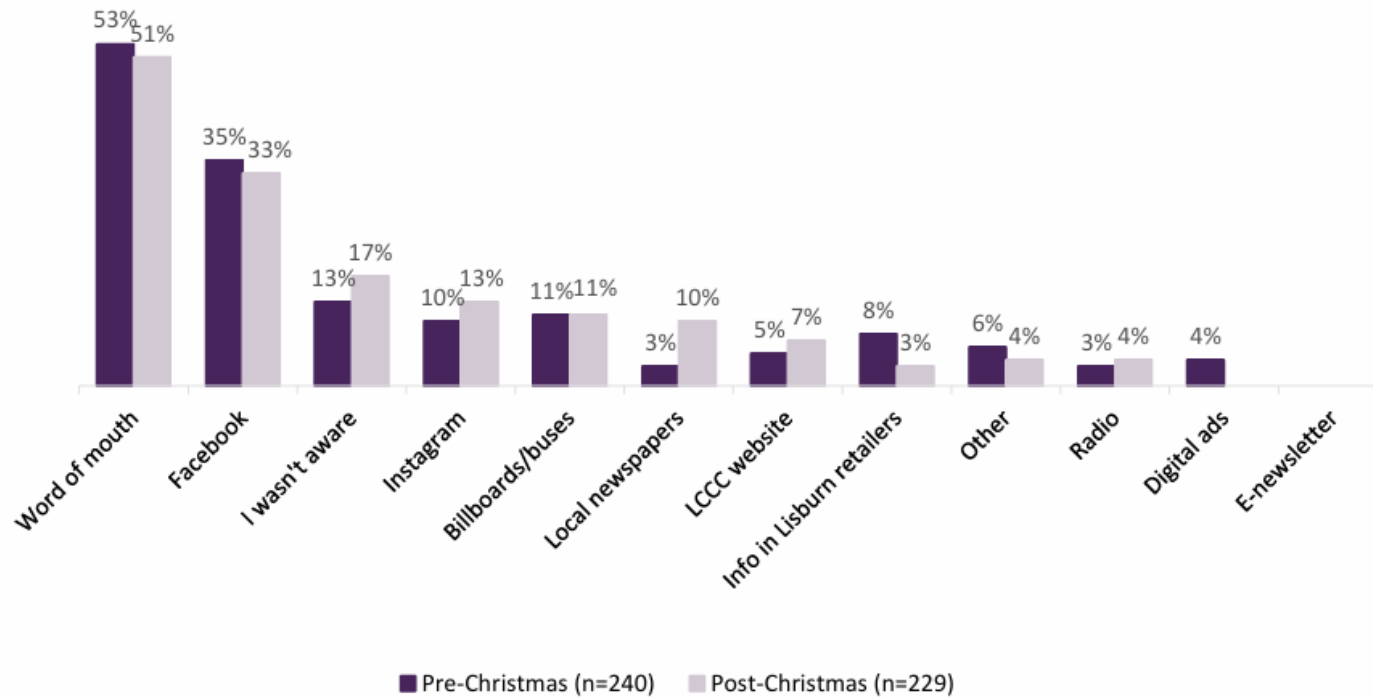


Among those who attended the Christmas event, awareness was primarily driven by word of mouth, cited by 44% of pre-Christmas and 52% of post-Christmas respondents.

Social media also played a key role in generating awareness. Facebook was the most influential platform, mentioned by 50% of pre-Christmas and 44% of post-Christmas attendees, while a further 19% cited Instagram as a source.

How did you hear about the Christmas events? (Non-attendees)

How were you made aware of the Christmas events in Lisburn?

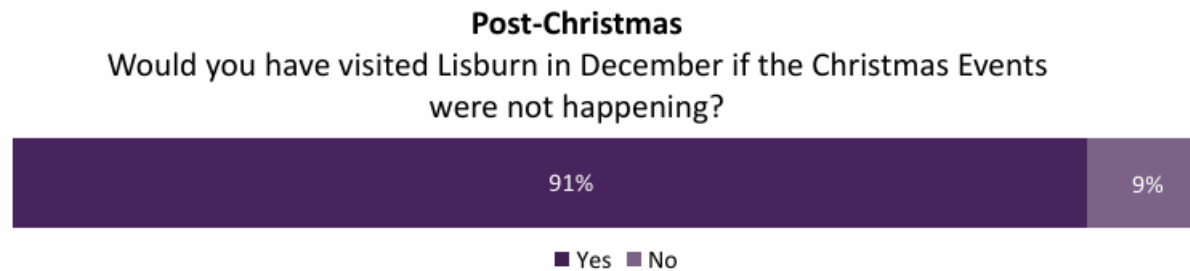
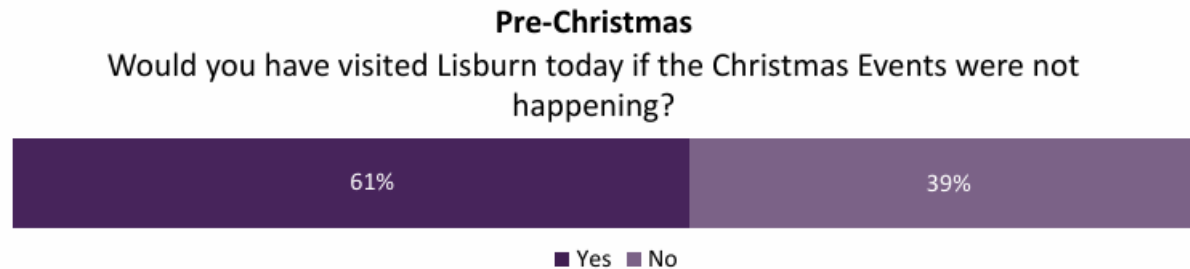


Among respondents who did not attend, awareness was primarily driven by word of mouth, cited by 53% of pre-Christmas and 51% of post-Christmas respondents. Social media was also an important source of information, with Facebook reaching 35% of pre-Christmas and 33% of post-Christmas non-attendees.

A small proportion of non-attendees reported that they were unaware of the events entirely: 13% of pre-Christmas respondents and 17% of post-Christmas respondents.

Parking was also identified as a significant barrier. Some visitors, particularly those unfamiliar with the city, attempted to attend but ultimately chose to go elsewhere due to difficulties finding available parking.

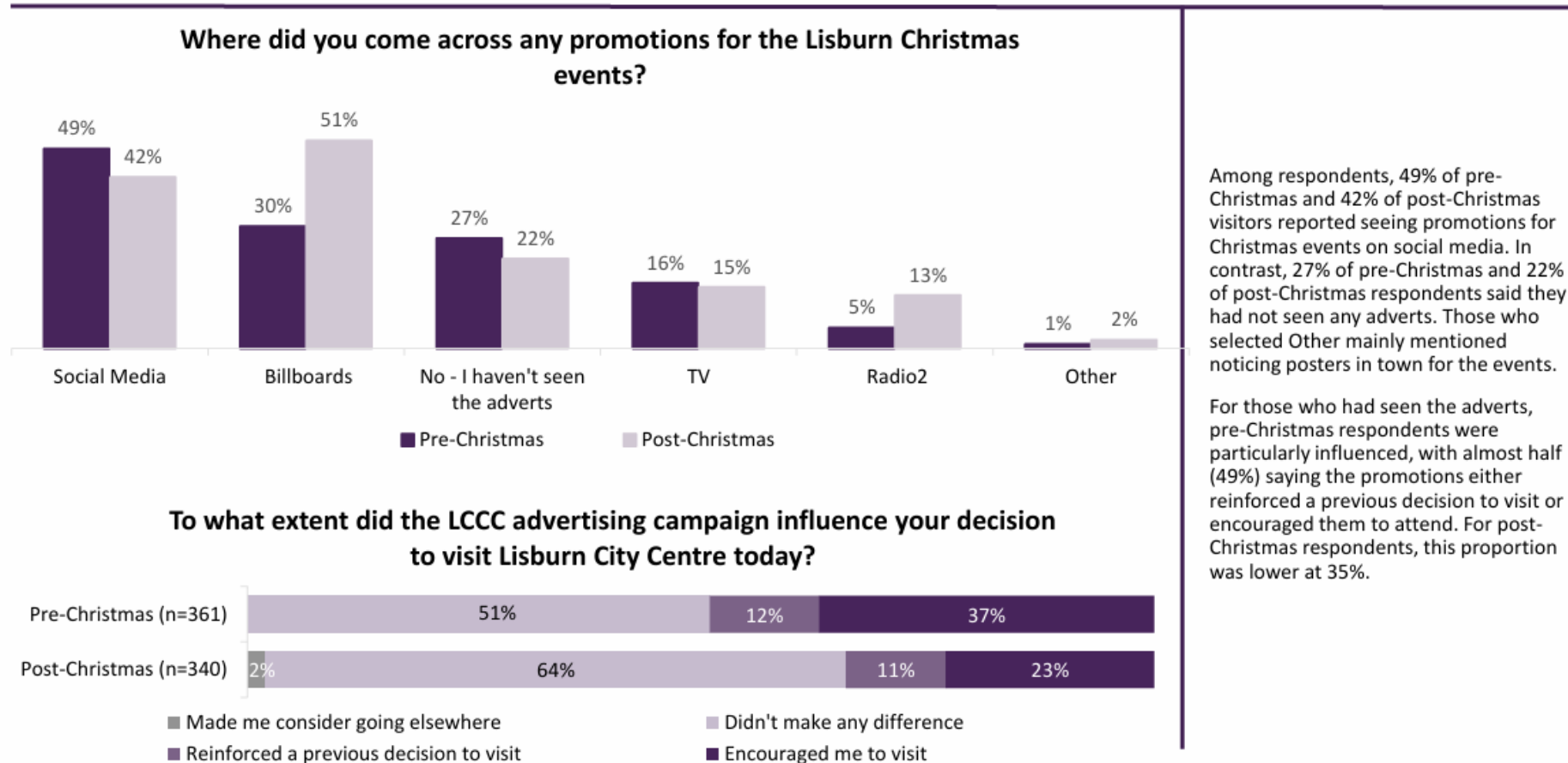
Impact of Christmas events on December visits



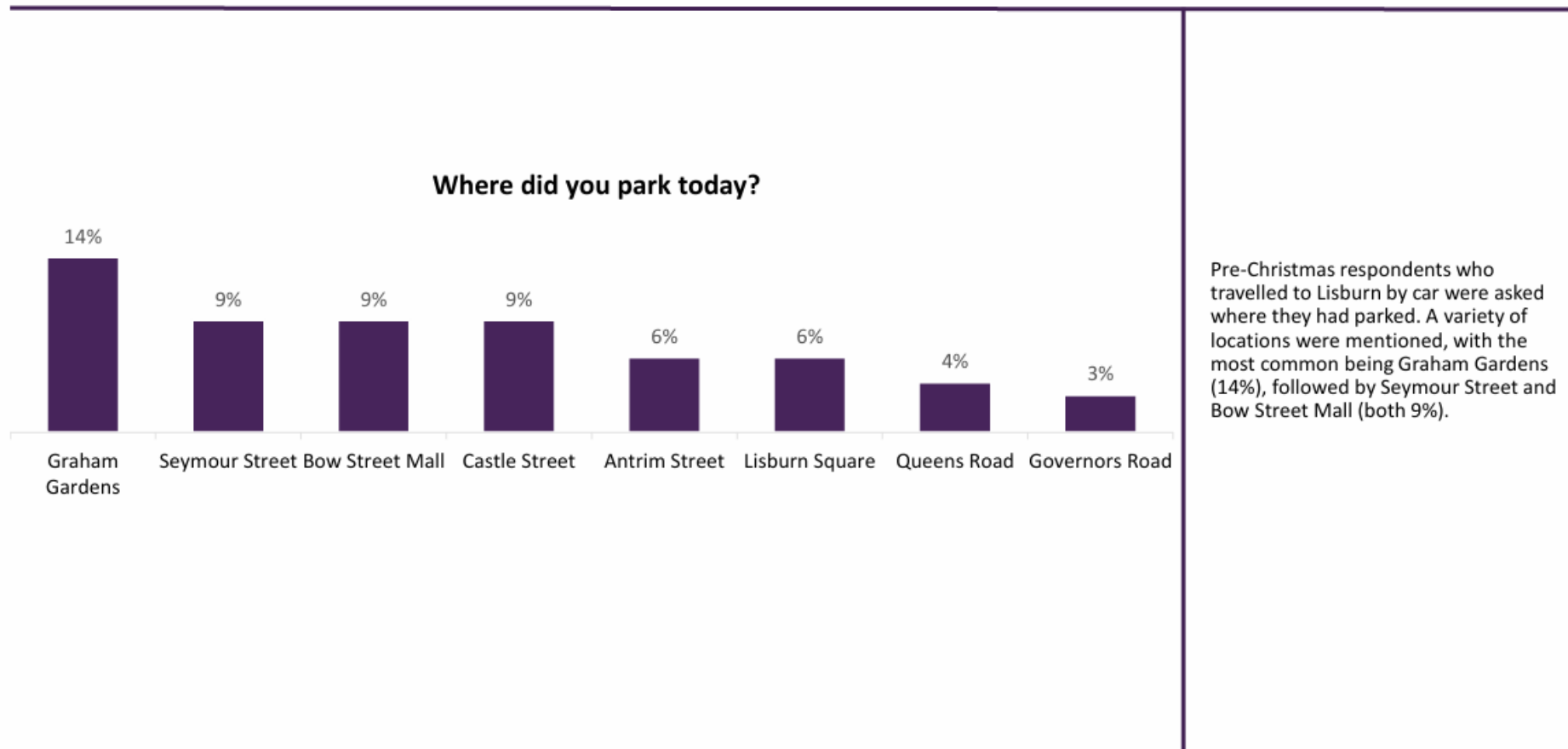
Among pre-Christmas respondents, 39% indicated that they would not have visited Lisburn if the Christmas events were not taking place, highlighting the strong role of festive programming in driving footfall during this period.

Among post-Christmas respondents asked whether they would have visited Lisburn in December, only 9% said they would not have done so without the Christmas events, suggesting the events were not the primary driver of their visit.

Where did you see the LCCC advertising campaign?

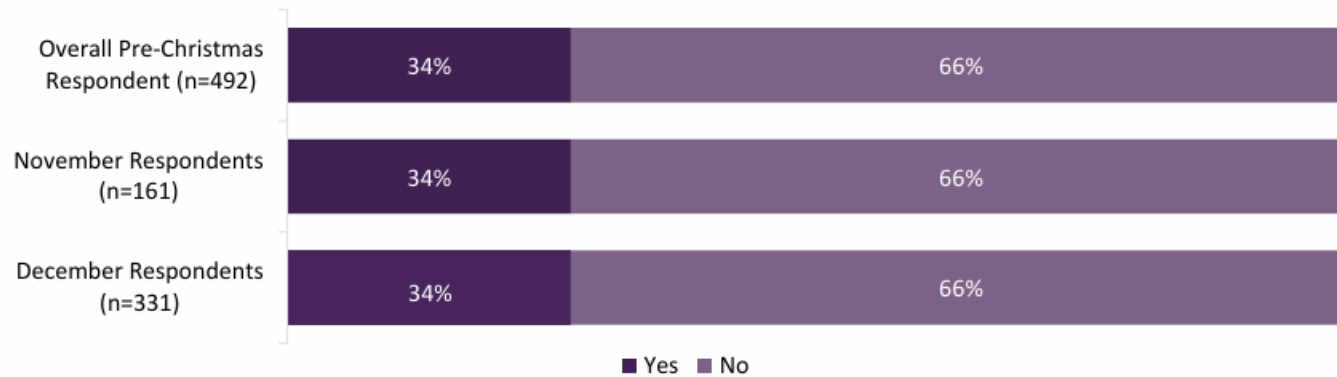


Free Parking Pre-Christmas Respondents (n=346)



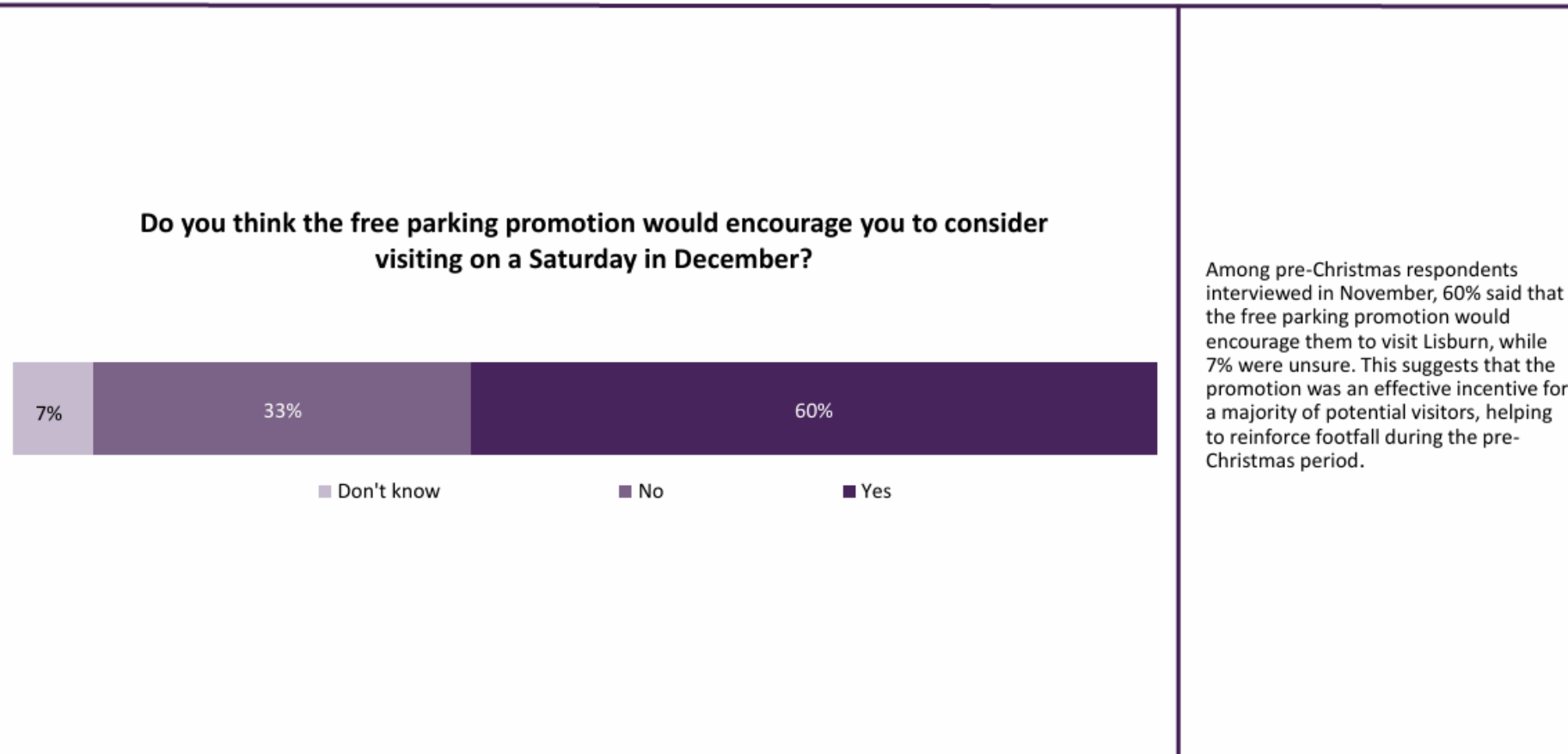
●●● Free Parking on Saturdays and Sundays Awareness Pre Christmas

Were you aware of the free parking promotion in Council car parks in Lisburn on Saturdays and Sundays In December and January?



When asked about the free parking promotion across council car parks, two-thirds (66%) of pre-Christmas respondents reported that they were aware of it.

●●● Impact of free parking on visits (November respondents, n=161)



●●● Impact of free parking on those aware (December respondents, n=114)

Do you think the free parking promotion would encourage you to consider visiting on a Saturday in December?



Did the free parking promotion have any influence on how long you stayed in Lisburn City Centre?



Did the free parking promotion have any influence on where you parked in Lisburn City Centre?



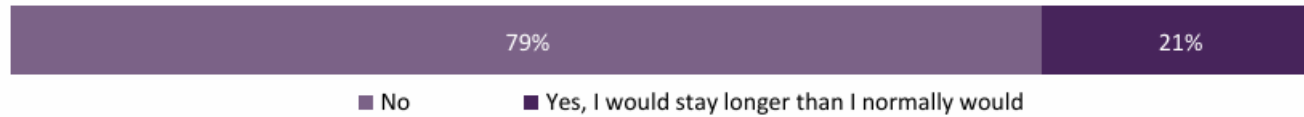
Among pre-Christmas respondents interviewed in December who were aware of the free parking promotion, 72% said they chose to visit Lisburn at the weekend because of the promotion. Additionally, 25% reported that they stayed longer as a result, and a further 25% said they specifically chose to park in a council car park because of the offer. This indicates that the promotion not only influenced the timing of visits but also had a positive impact on dwell time and car park usage.

●●● Impact of free parking on those not aware (December respondents, n=217)

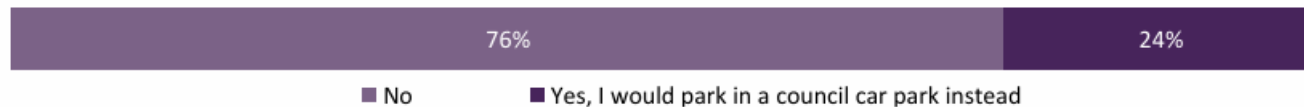
Would the free parking promotion would encourage you to consider visiting on a Saturday in December?



Would the free parking promotion have any influence on how long you stayed in Lisburn City Centre?

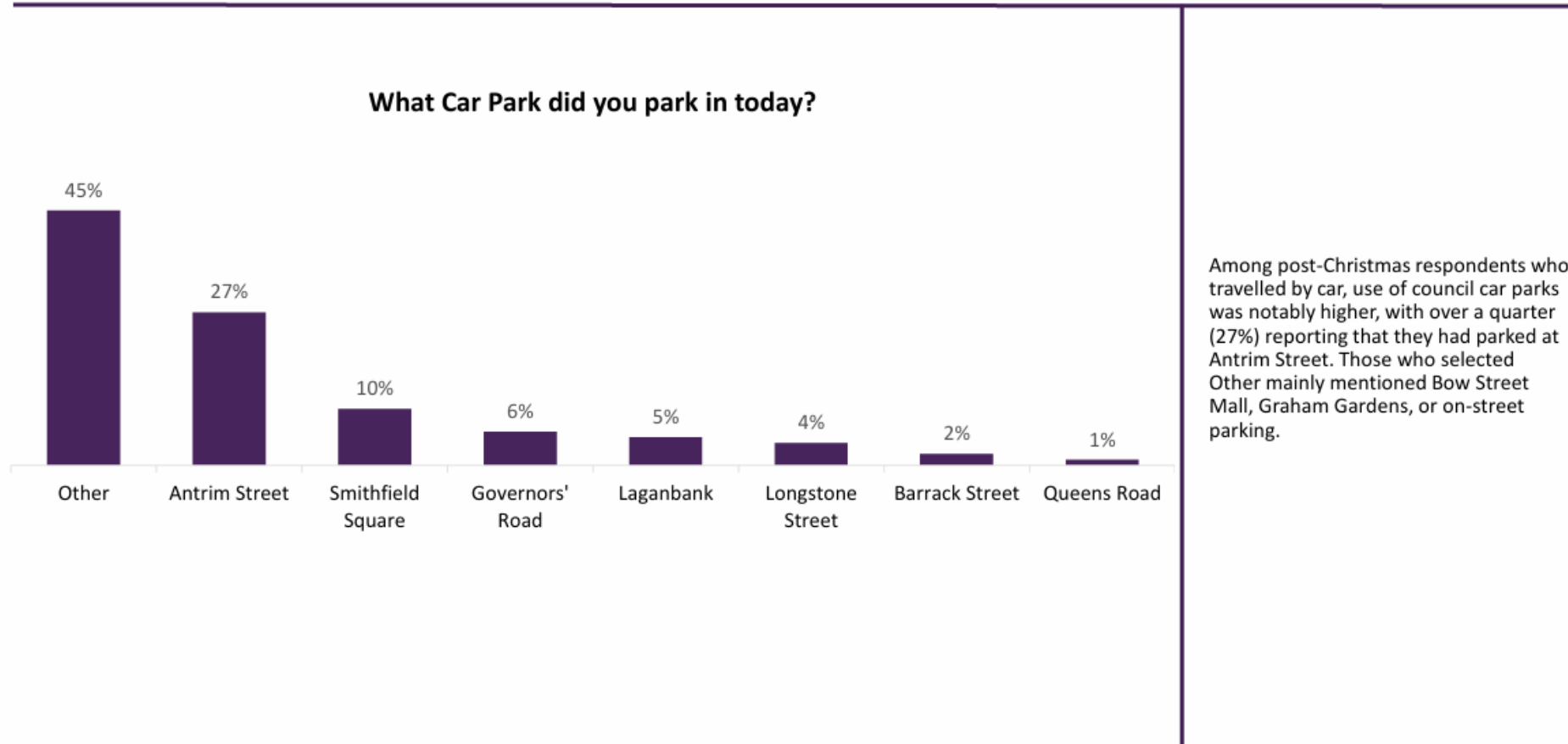


Would the free parking promotion have any influence on where you parked in Lisburn City Centre?

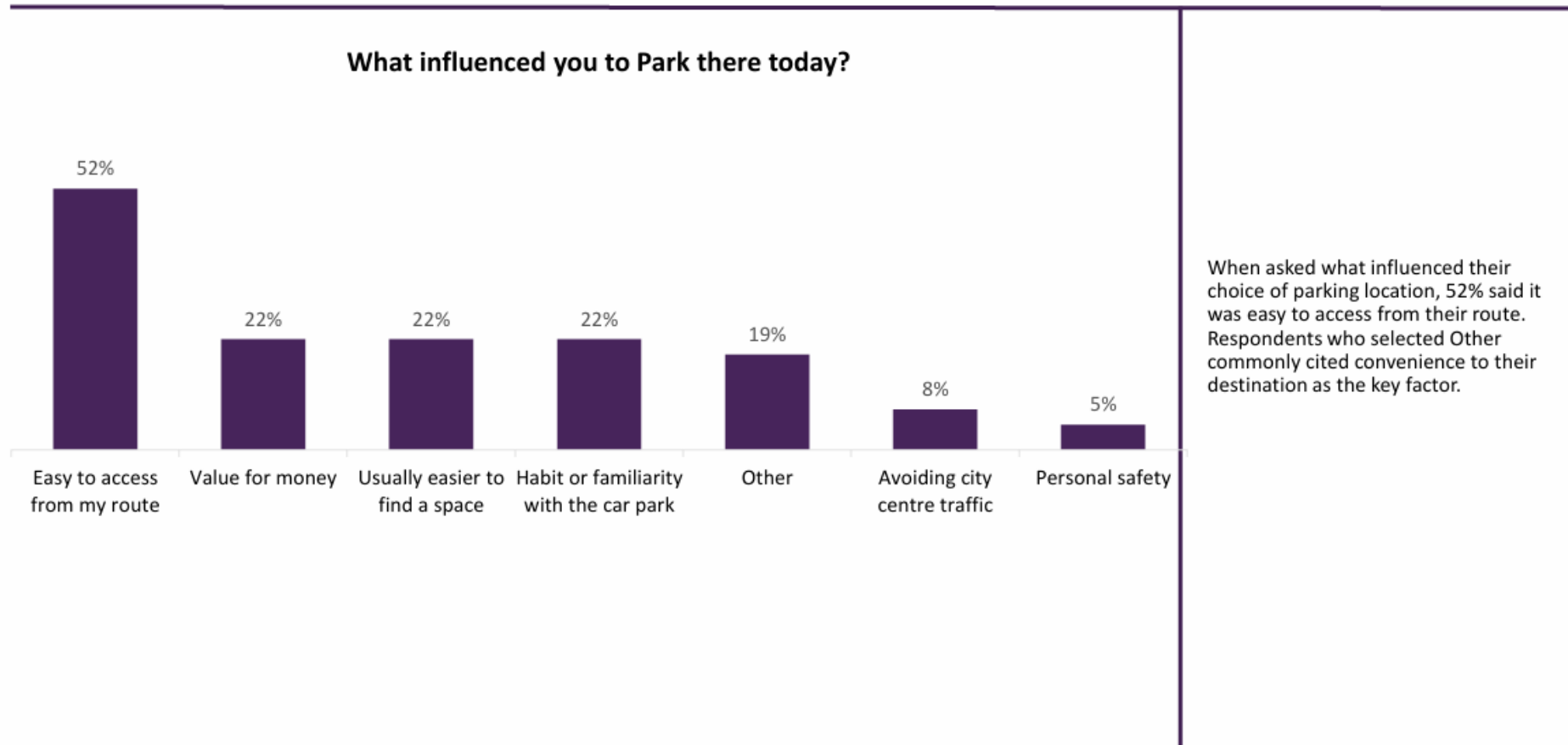


Among respondents interviewed in December who were not aware of the promotion, 16% said they would choose to visit Lisburn at the weekend because of it, 21% indicated they would stay longer, and 24% said they would use a council car park. This suggests that even among those initially unaware, the free parking promotion has the potential to influence visit timing, dwell time, and car park usage.

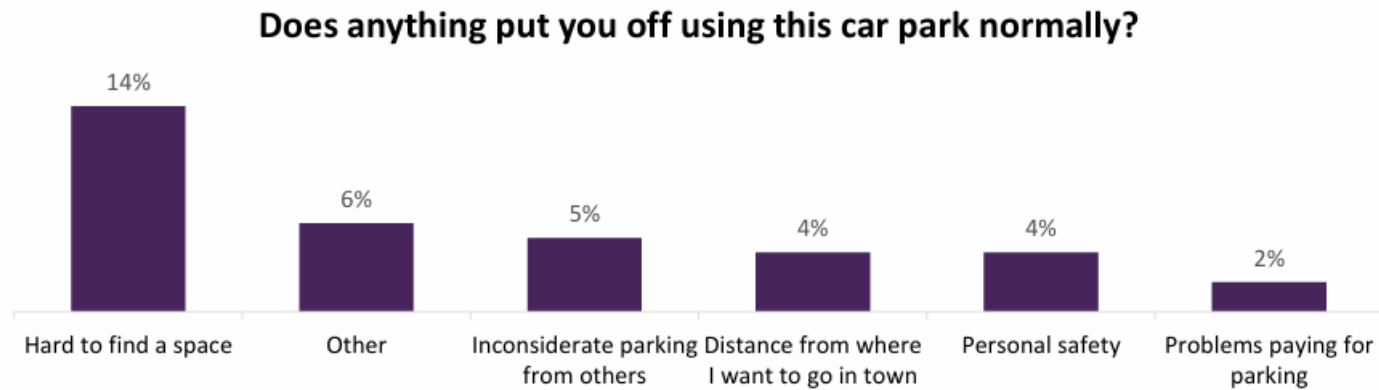
●●● Free Parking Post-Christmas Respondents (n=236)



Free Parking Post-Christmas Respondents (n=236)



Free Parking Post-Christmas Respondents (n=236)

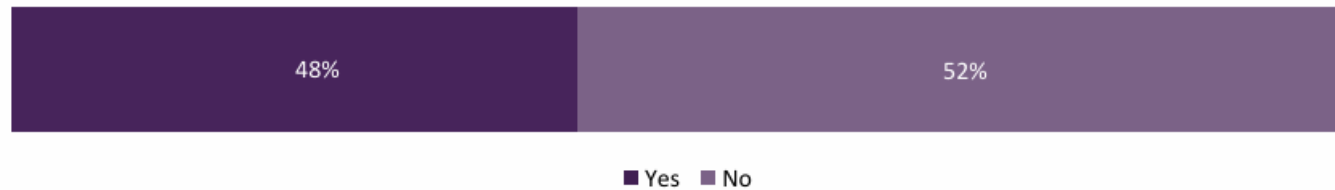


When asked if anything would normally put them off using car parks, 14% of post-Christmas respondents cited difficulty finding a parking space as a deterrent.

Respondents who selected Other commonly mentioned the cost of parking as a factor throughout the year.

●●● Free Parking on Saturdays and Sundays Awareness Post Christmas

Were you aware before you arrived that you could park for free on Saturdays and Sundays at council owned car parks (n=130)



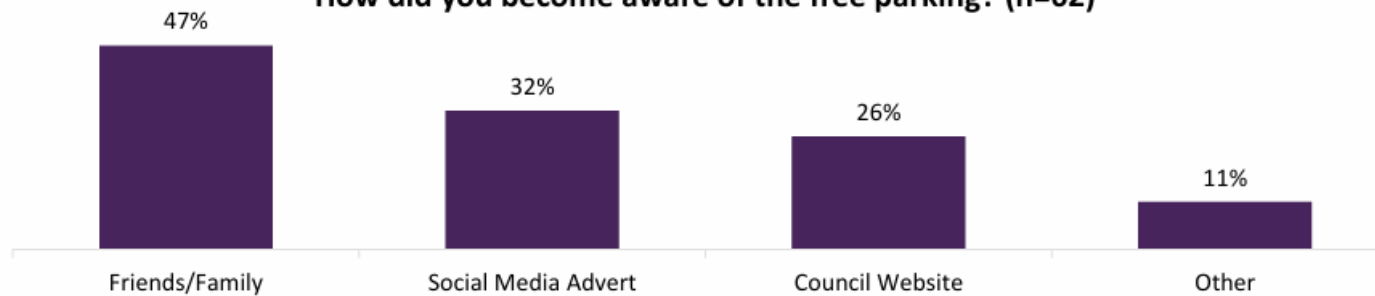
48% of post-Christmas respondents who had used a council owned car park said they were aware of the free parking promotion before arriving in Lisburn.

Free Parking on Saturdays and Sundays Awareness Post Christmas

Of those aware, in what way did the free parking influence your visit to Lisburn (n=62)



How did you become aware of the free parking? (n=62)



Among post-Christmas respondents who were aware of the free parking promotion, 19% said that it either encouraged them to stay longer in town or that they would not have visited by car otherwise.

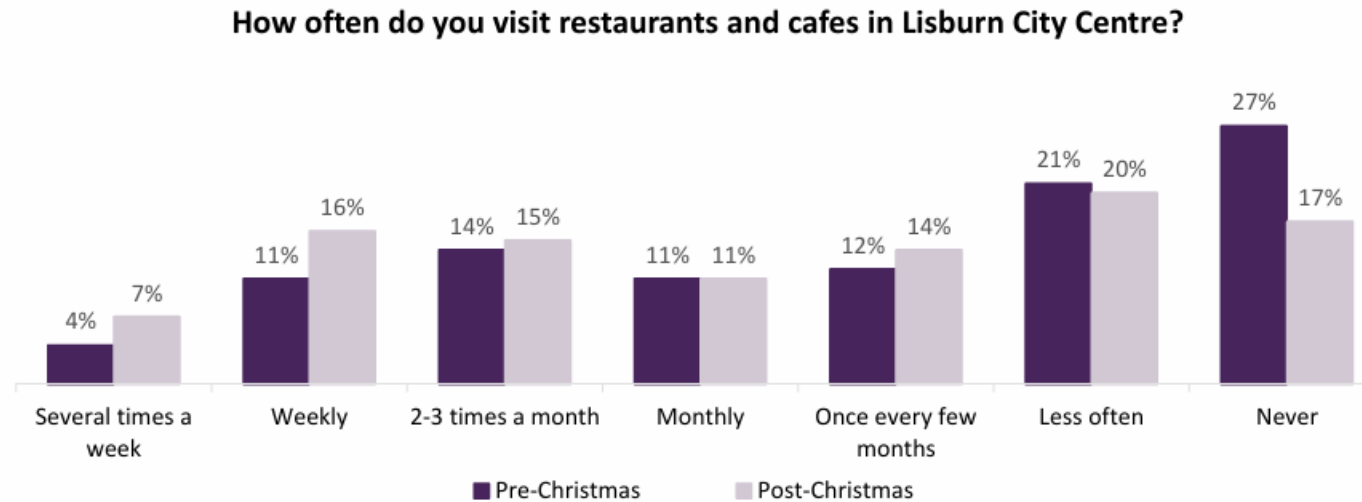
In terms of how they found out about the promotion, 47% cited family and friends, while 32% reported becoming aware through social media.

●●● Frequency of Visit



Among pre-Christmas respondents, 63% reported visiting Lisburn for retail and shopping at least once a month. This increased to 81% among post-Christmas respondents, suggesting that the post-Christmas sample includes a higher proportion of regular shoppers, which may reflect seasonal shopping patterns or greater engagement with the city centre after Christmas.

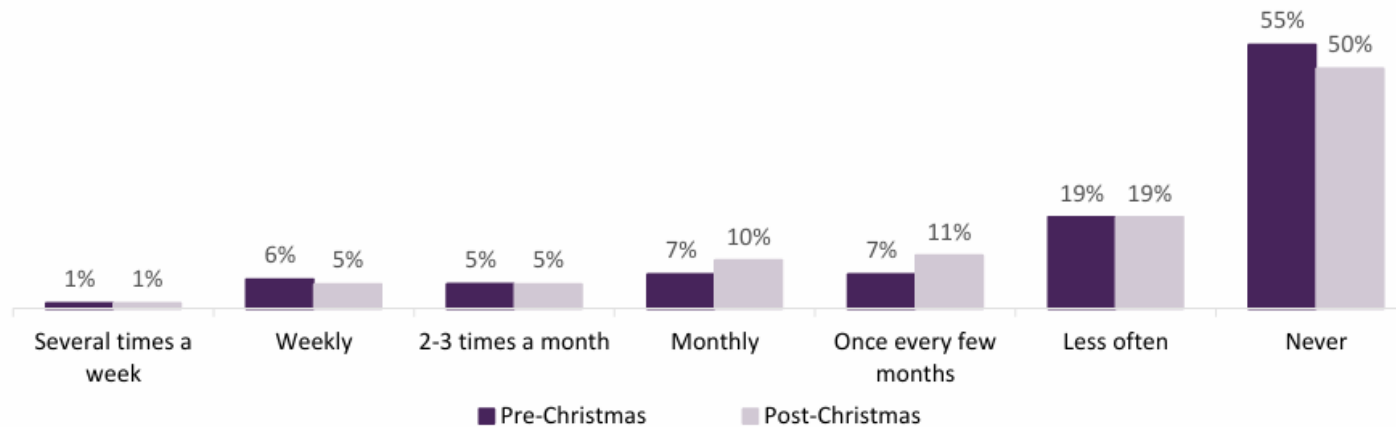
●●● Frequency of Visit



For visits to restaurants and cafés, 40% of pre-Christmas respondents reported going at least once a month, increasing to 49% among post-Christmas respondents. This suggests slightly higher engagement with food and beverage outlets after the Christmas period, potentially reflecting increased social or leisure activity in the city centre.

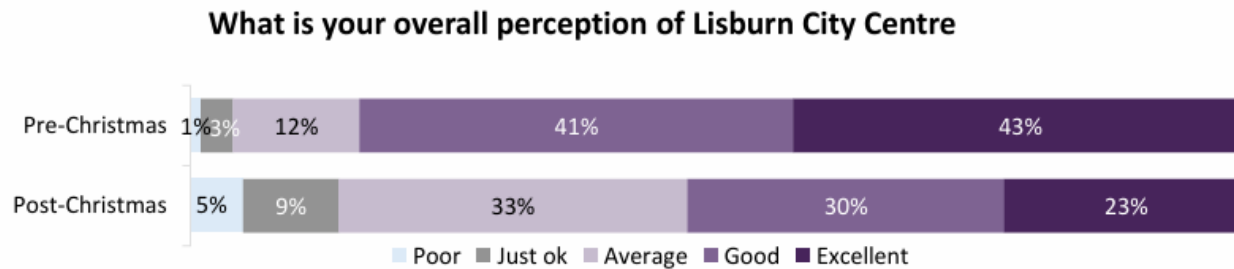
●●● Frequency of Visit

How often do you visit Lisburn City Centre to meet friends for drinks?



Visits to meet friends for drinks were lower than other activities, with 19% of pre-Christmas and 21% of post-Christmas respondents reporting monthly visits. This indicates that social drinking is a less frequent driver of footfall compared with shopping or dining in Lisburn.

●●● Perceptions of Lisburn City Centre



Respondents who gave a negative rating provided the following comments:

“Could do with more entertainment”

“It has no shops; the area has declined since I moved here”

“Nowhere decent for a night out in Lisburn”

“Empty shops and a poor atmosphere”

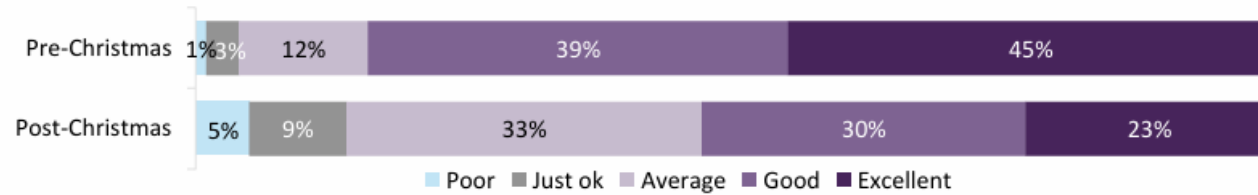
“Very deprived and lacking retail choices, restaurants, and bars”

Among pre-Christmas respondents, 84% rated Lisburn as good or excellent, compared with 53% of post-Christmas respondents. The lower post-Christmas score may reflect a higher proportion of local residents, whose perceptions tend to be less positive than those of visitors from outside the city.

Respondents giving negative ratings commonly cited a lack of evening options, a number of empty shops, and limited variety in the retail offer.

●●● Perceptions of Lisburn City Centre

How would you rate the level of vibrancy and vitality in Lisburn City Centre



Among pre-Christmas respondents, 84% rated the level of vibrancy and vitality in Lisburn as good or excellent, compared with 53% of post-Christmas respondents.

Those giving negative responses commonly cited the lack of variety in shops and noted that other towns and cities offered more in comparison.

Respondents who gave a negative rating provided the following comments:

“Not enough on offer, so I tend to go elsewhere.”

“Empty shops, a lack of places to go in the evenings, and a lack of good pubs and eateries.”

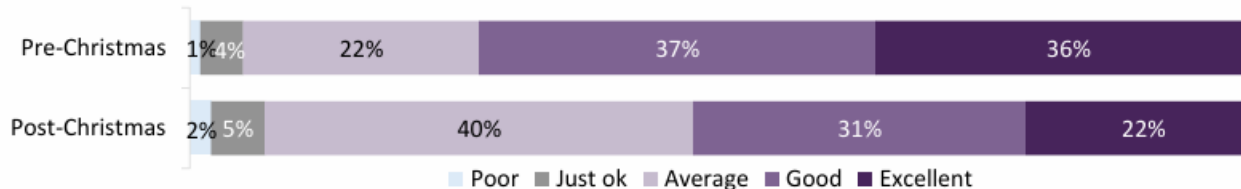
“Bleak, with empty shops.”

“Compared to other towns, it lacks vibrancy.”

“Too many empty shops and not enough variety.”

●●● Perceptions of Lisburn City Centre

How would you rate the level of civic pride in Lisburn City centre currently?



Among pre-Christmas respondents, 73% rated the level of civic pride in Lisburn as good or excellent, compared with 53% of post-Christmas respondents.

Those giving negative ratings commonly felt that the city had been neglected, with the presence of empty premises contributing to a run-down appearance.

Respondents who gave a negative rating provided the following comments:

“Housing isn’t great, and I think money could be better spent. It doesn’t feel like there’s much of a community now.”

“Lack of high-end shops and too many vacant premises.”

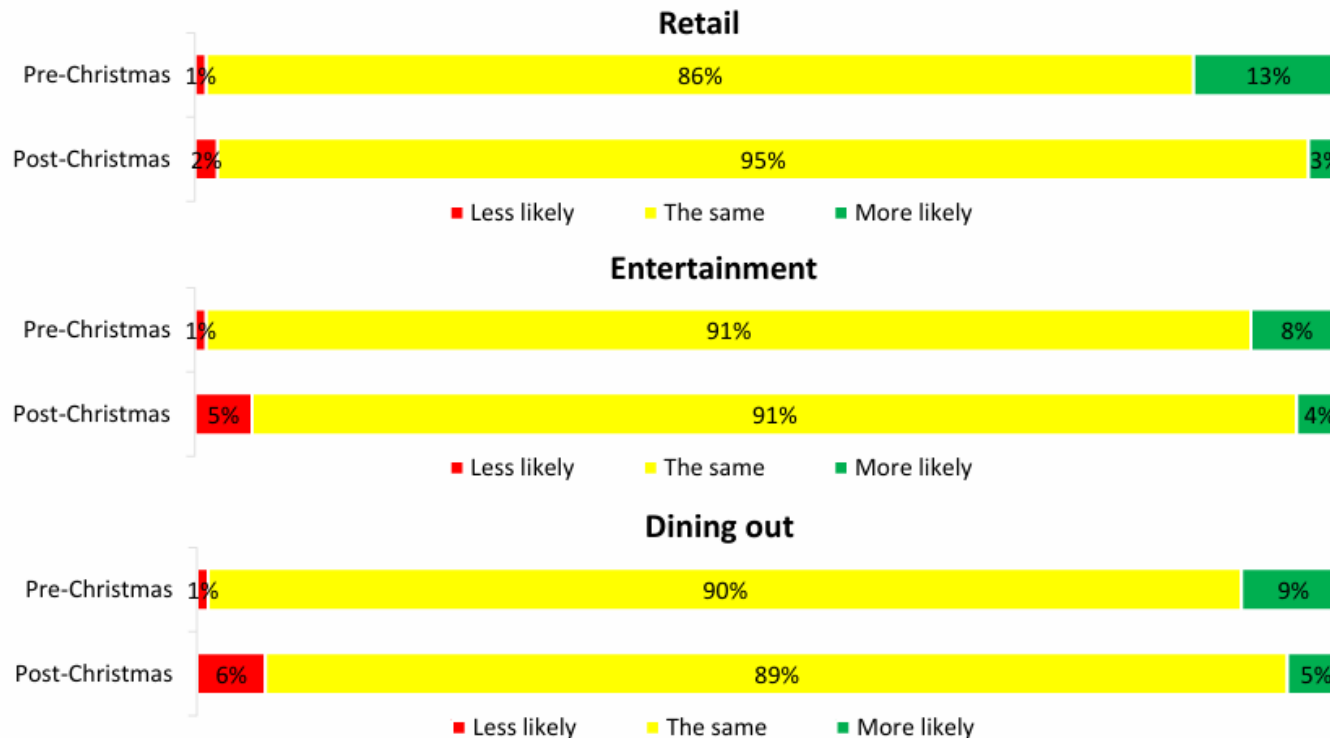
“People don’t generally have a high opinion of Lisburn.”

“The Christmas events are very good, but civic pride is low. Money needs to be spent on upgrading the city.”

“Everything is run down, and no money is being invested.”

How did the event change visitors' perceptions?

On the basis of your experience today, how likely are you to visit the area in future for ...

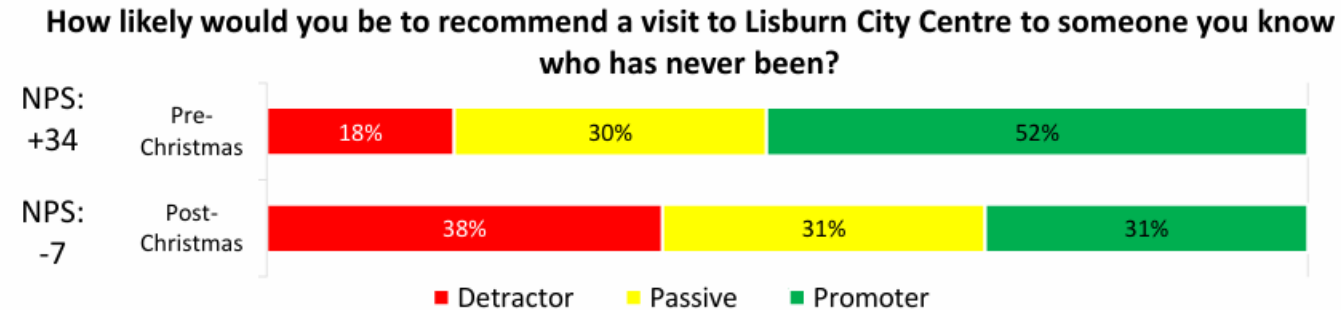


A strong majority of pre-Christmas respondents reported that, as a result of their experience in Lisburn, they would be as likely or more likely to visit the area again for retail (99%), something to eat or drink (99%), and entertainment (99%).

Post-Christmas respondents reported similarly positive intentions, with 98% indicating they would be as likely or more likely to return for retail, 95% for entertainment, and 94% for dining out. This suggests consistently high levels of satisfaction and positive future intent across both periods.

Overall, 98% of respondents in both pre- and post-Christmas periods said they had a positive experience in Lisburn on the day of their visit.

How did the event change visitors' perceptions?



Net Promoter Score (NPS)

The Net Promoter Score is a simple way to gauge the sentiment of visitors. Respondents are asked to rate their likelihood of recommending a visit to Lisburn on a scale of 0 to 10.

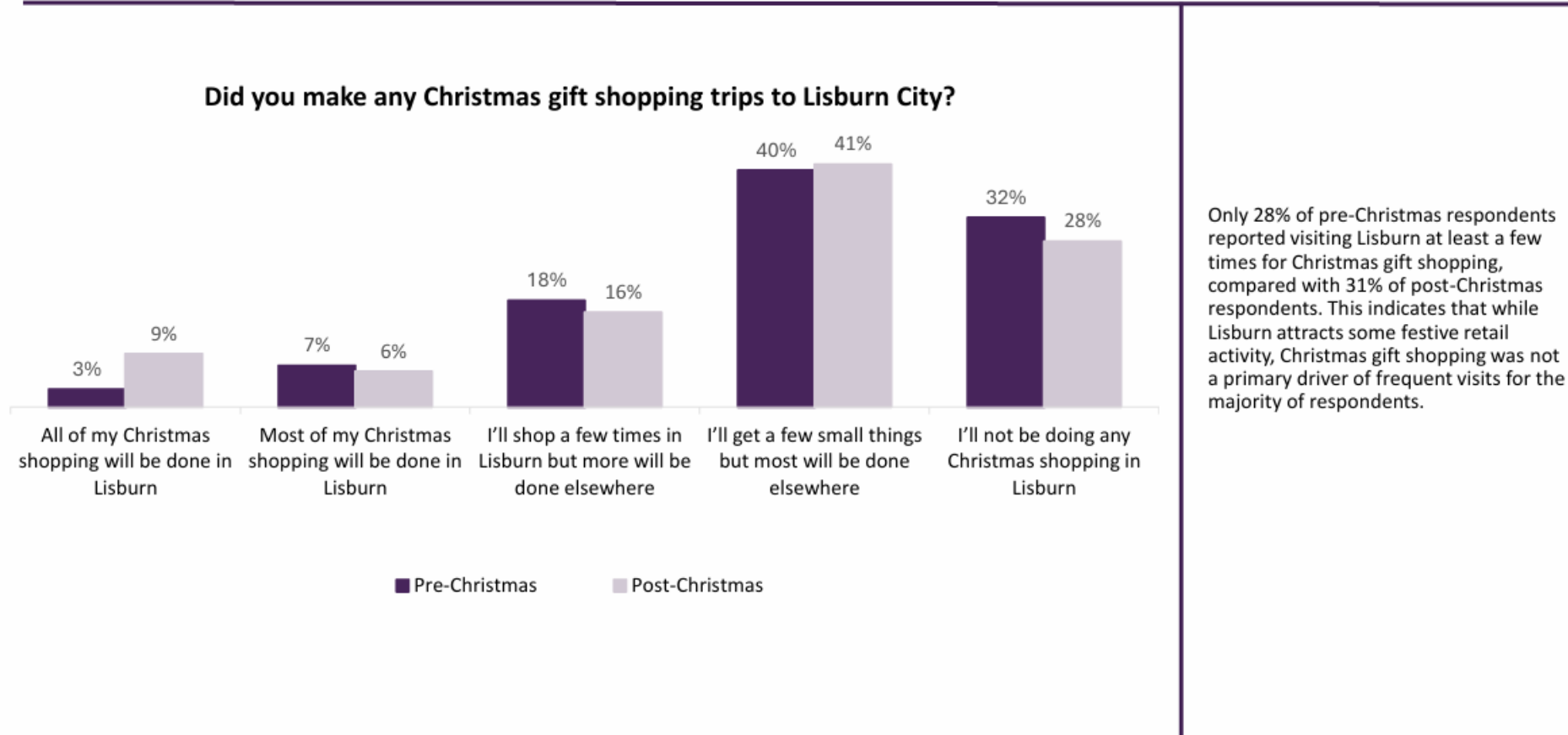
- Scores between 0-6 are classed as 'Detractors' as these participants are more likely to recommend people to go somewhere other than Lisburn (e.g. Sprucefield or Belfast).
- Scores of 7 or 8 are categorised as 'Passives', as these participants are as Lisburn as not.
- Scores of 9 or 10 are classed as 'Promoters' as these participants are likely to proactively recommend Lisburn to others.

The Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the proportion of Detractors from Promoters. It can range from +100 to -100.

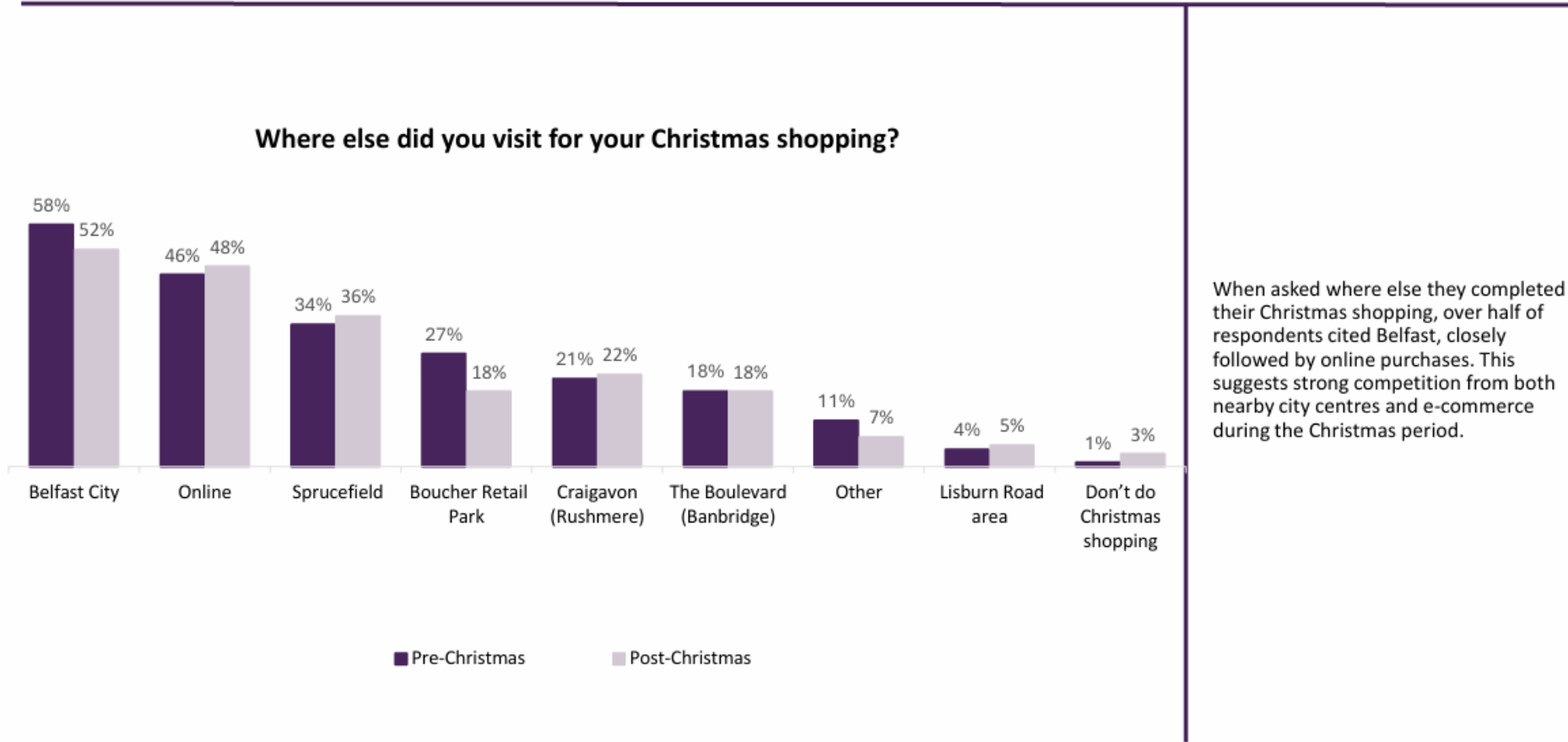
The pre-Christmas NPS was strongly positive at +34, reflecting the high levels of satisfaction and future intent reported during this period. In contrast, the post-Christmas NPS fell to -7, indicating a more critical overall assessment of the Lisburn experience after the Christmas period.

This shift suggests that while visitors continue to express a willingness to return, post-Christmas respondents were less inclined to actively recommend Lisburn to others, potentially reflecting reduced vibrancy, fewer events, or more locally driven perceptions outside the peak festive period.

●●● Where are you doing your Christmas shopping this year?

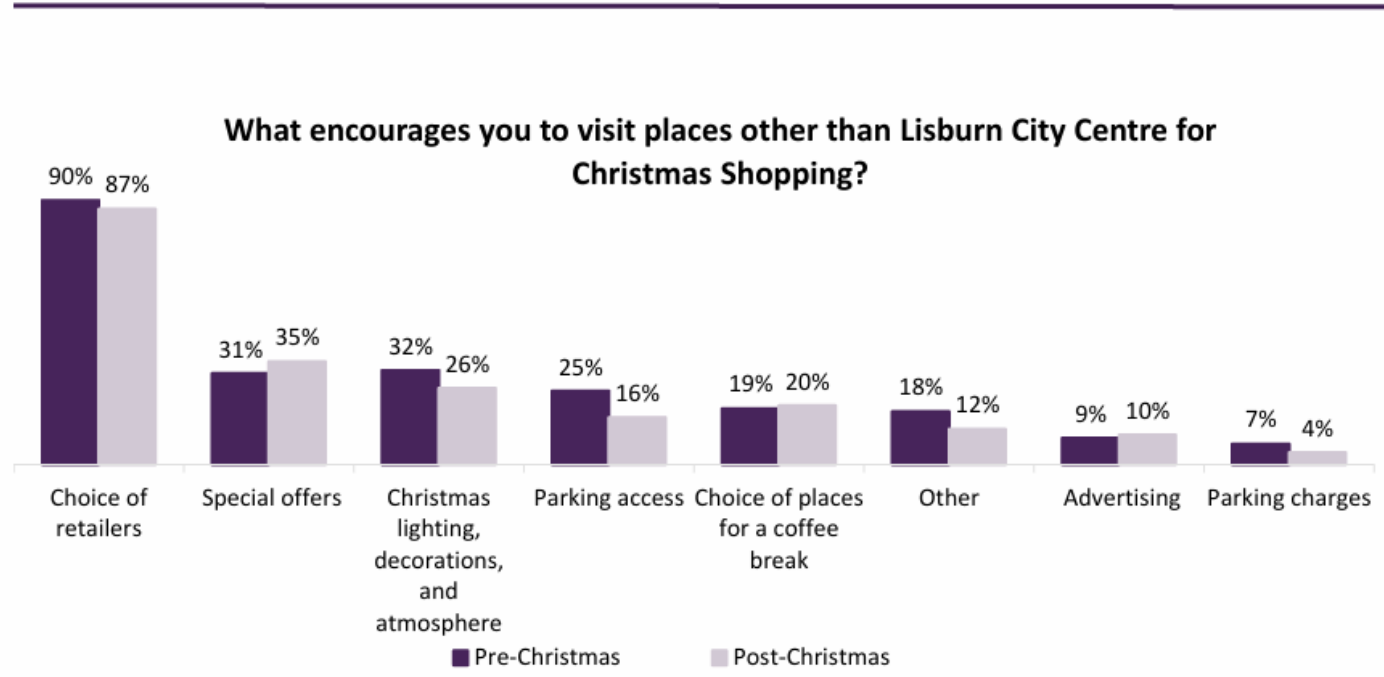


●●● Where are you doing your Christmas shopping this year?



When asked where else they completed their Christmas shopping, over half of respondents cited Belfast, closely followed by online purchases. This suggests strong competition from both nearby city centres and e-commerce during the Christmas period.

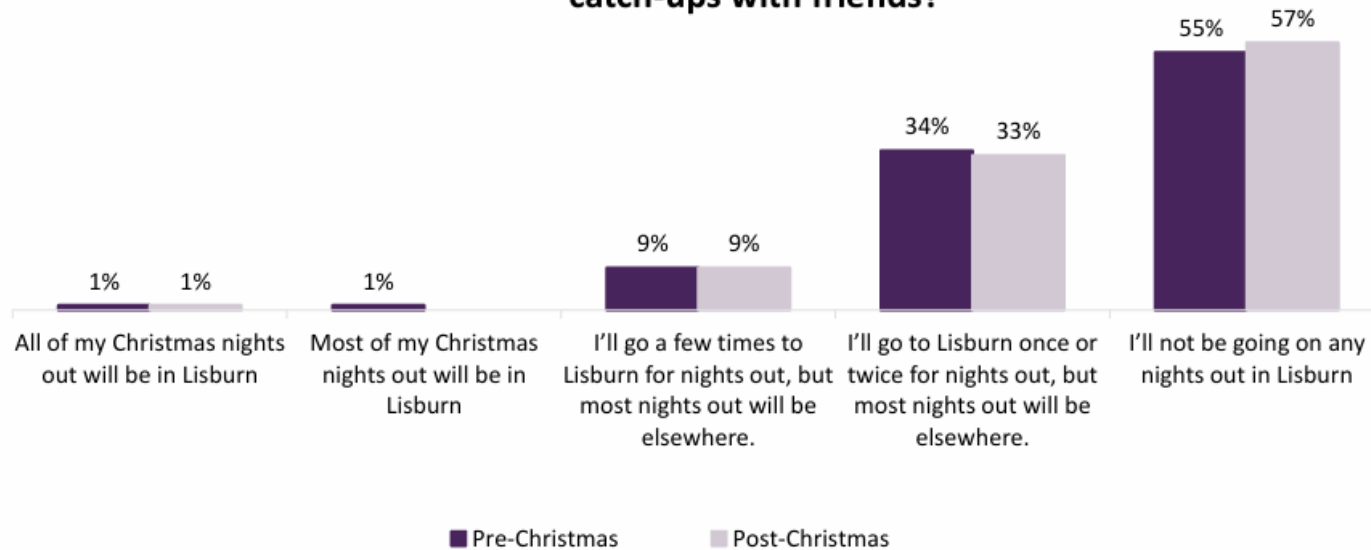
●●● Why do you visit other locations for shopping?



When asked why they chose to visit other locations for Christmas shopping, the overwhelming majority of respondents cited the greater choice of retailers available elsewhere (90% of pre-Christmas and 87% of post-Christmas respondents). This reinforces the perception that retail variety is a key competitive challenge for Lisburn during the festive period.

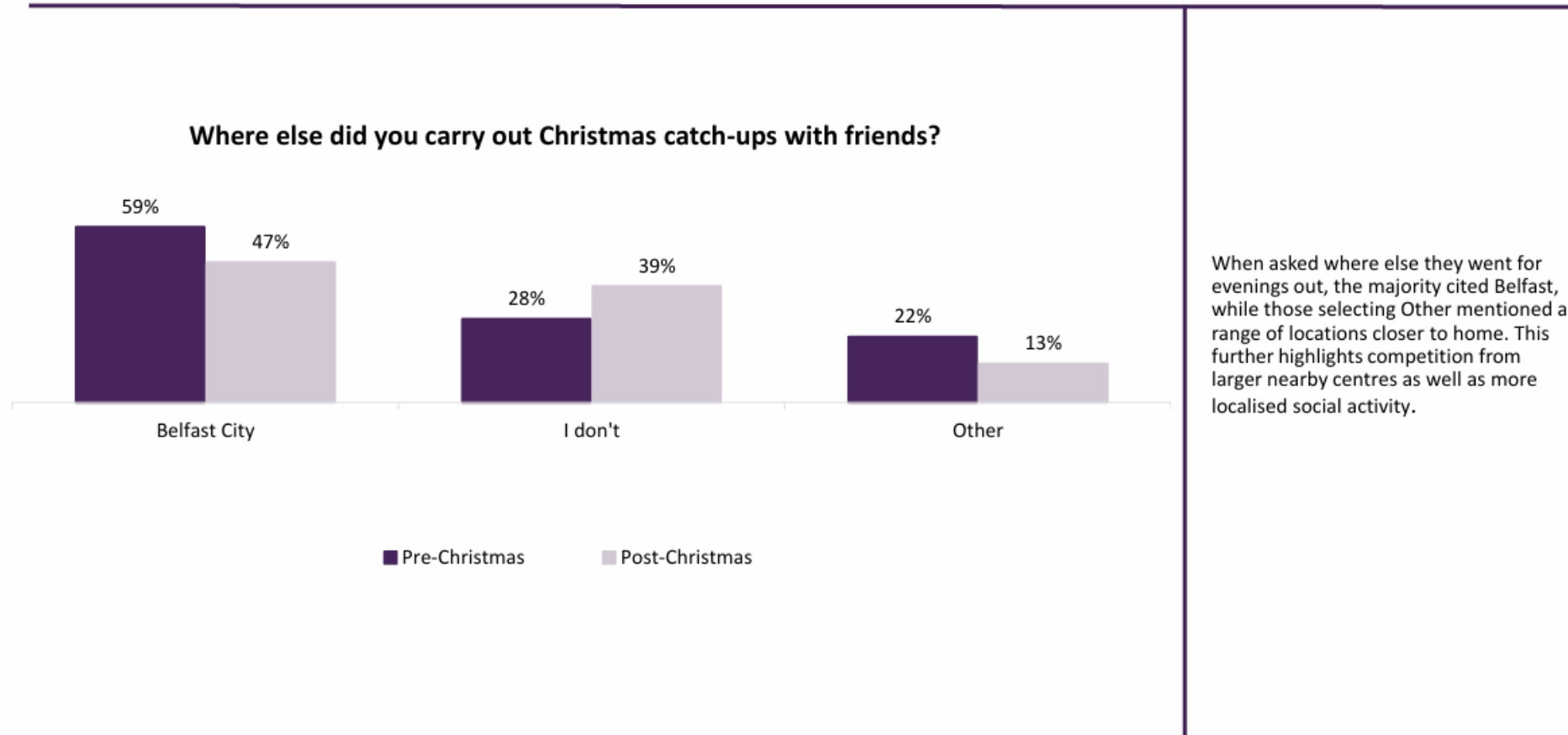
●●● Christmas evenings out in Lisburn

Did you visit Lisburn City last year for any Christmas evenings out or catch-ups with friends?



When asked about Christmas evenings out, the majority of respondents indicated that they either visited Lisburn only once or twice or did not go there for any nights out (89% pre-Christmas and 90% post-Christmas). This suggests that Lisburn is not a primary destination for festive evening activity for most respondents.

●●● Christmas evenings out in Lisburn



●●● Other feedback

"Lisburn is not what it used to be. All the wee boutique shops have gone - there's no more one-of-a-kind clothing. These need to be brought back to attract people into the town."

"Lisburn lacks character and things to do at night."

"There's not much to do in Lisburn in the evenings. Bow Street Mall has vacant premises, which is not a good look, and banks and building societies are relocating."

"I would like to use the offer of free parking on Saturdays, but I would never get a space as it's so busy."

"I really like Lisburn, but I miss the big brand names that used to be here."

"The Council should be praised for the Christmas light attractions - they were magnificent."

"I was extremely impressed with the light display in Castle Gardens."

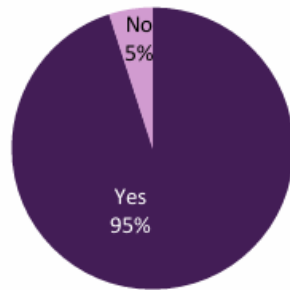
"I've just moved to Lisburn and love it. I went to the Elfie Tour and it was fantastic - I really enjoyed it. I'll definitely check the Council website to see what's happening, as I was surprised at how good tonight was."



Projections on Net Additional Spend

What did visitors spend? (Pre-Christmas sample)

Did you spend money in Lisburn when you attended a Christmas event?

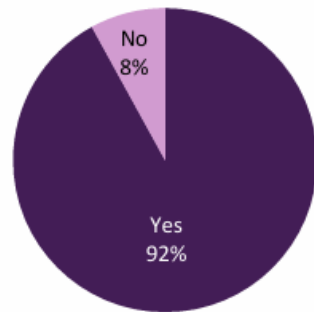


	Spend	% visitors spending there
Average spend incl travel & parking	£61.12	95%
Market Stalls In the City	£24.00	3%
Bow Street	£41.42	54%
Market Square	£25.63	6%
Bridge Street	£21.00	1%
Castle Street	£29.13	24%
Smithfield Street	£33.25	1%
Market Place/Chapel Hill	£36.92	3%
Antrim Street	£36.08	5%
Bachelor's Walk	£33.25	2%
Bow Street Mall	£59.59	28%
Lisburn Square	£46.44	2%
Travel & Parking	£8.24	58%

95% of respondents in the pre-Christmas sample spent money in Lisburn across various locations, with an average spend of £61.12.

What did visitors spend? (Post-Christmas sample)

Spent money in Lisburn



	Spend	% visitors
Average spend	£57.57	92%
Market Stalls in the City	£18.50	1%
Bow Street	£29.19	65%
Market Square	£42.51	11%
Bridge Street	£30.00	4%
Castle Street	£43.78	4%
Smithfield Street	£24.00	2%
Market Place/Chapel Hill	£30.53	4%
Antrim Street	£25.60	10%
Bachelor's Walk	£32.64	3%
Bow Street Mall	£45.38	39%
Lisburn Square	£34.25	2%
Travel & Parking	£6.17	47%

For the post-Christmas respondents 93% spent money in Lisburn across various locations, with an average spend of £57.57.

Visitor numbers

Visitor party type	As % of total footfall	Estimated total footfall
Lone visitor	12%	66,968
Couple	14%	79,338
Family	59%	326,308
Friends and family	15%	79,764
Total	100%	552,378

Visitor party type	Average party size	Estimated visiting groups by party type	% of visitors who were 'additional' by party type	Estimated 'additional' visiting groups
Lone visitor	1	66,968	7%	4,692
Couple	2	39,669	30%	11,943
Family	3.6	91,707	62%	56,731
Friends and family	6.9	11,517	67%	7,678
Total	2.6	209,861	39%	81,044

'Additional' visitors and groups are those who identified that they came specifically for the event and were not planning to come to the area anyway.

39% of visitors in November and December came to Lisburn specifically for the Christmas events.

●●● Net additional visitor spend

Visitor party type	% of additional visitors who were spenders	Estimated number of additional spending parties
Lone visitor	100%	4,692
Couple	89%	10,664
Family	98%	55,451
Friends and family	89%	6,825
Total	96%	77,632

Visitor party type	Average party spend of additional visitors	Estimated additional spend
Lone visitor	£36.82	£172,751.42
Couple	£42.24	£450,433.33
Family	£49.42	£2,740,562.66
Friends and family	£43.44	£296,449.97
Total	£47.15	£3,660,197.39

96% of additional visitors – those who came specifically for the event – spent money during their visit.

This equates to 77,632 additional spending parties, with an estimated total additional spend of £3,660,197.39.

This gives an average spend of £47.15 per additional spending party.

The higher additional spend compared to last year reflects a larger share of additional visitors and family groups in the sample.

●●● Net additional visitor spend

Visitor party type	Non-additional Spend	Additional spend	Total
Lone visitor	£3,324,505.12	£172,751.42	£3,497,256.54
Couple	£2,811,369.42	£450,433.33	£3,261,802.75
Family	£2,127,615.03	£2,740,562.66	£4,868,177.69
Friends and family	£224,790.12	£296,449.97	£521,240.09
Total	£8,488,279.69	£3,660,197.39	£12,148,477.08
Total number of visiting parties	128,817	81,044	209,861
Number of parties that spent money	121,139	77,632	198,771
Average spend			
Per all visiting parties	£65.89	£45.16	£57.89
Per all visiting parties that spent money	£70.07	£47.15	£61.12

Based on footfall data for Lisburn City Centre from the week commencing 17 November to Sunday 21 December (inclusive), totaling 552,378 visitors, we estimate an overall spend of £12,148,477.08.

This equates to an average spend of £57.89 per visiting party, or £61.12 per spending visiting party. These figures reflect spend both at the event and within Lisburn more broadly.



For further information please contact:

CARD Group head office

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Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Christmas Events Research with Businesses Project Report

January 2026



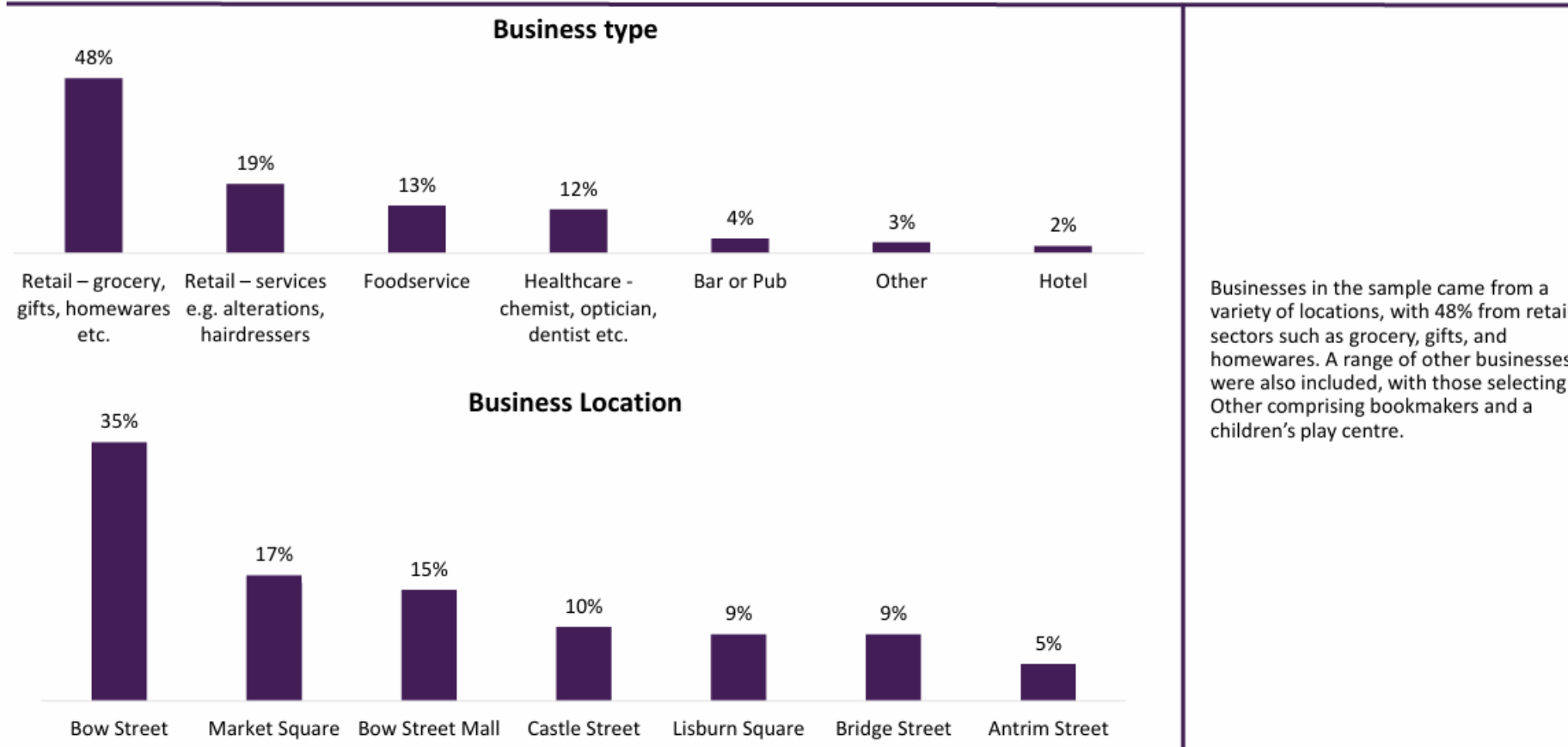
●●● Introduction

- CARD Group Ltd. was commissioned by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to evaluate the impact of the Christmas Events in Lisburn over the Christmas period of 2025.
- Responses were gathered from businesses operating in Lisburn City Centre between 9th and 21st January 2026.
- Business responses were gathered face-to-face with business owners and managers in their premises.
- This report analyses businesses opinions on the impact of the Lisburn Light Festival, the measures they implemented, and their assessment of whether they would do anything differently.
- In total 103 responses were gathered from businesses in the area.

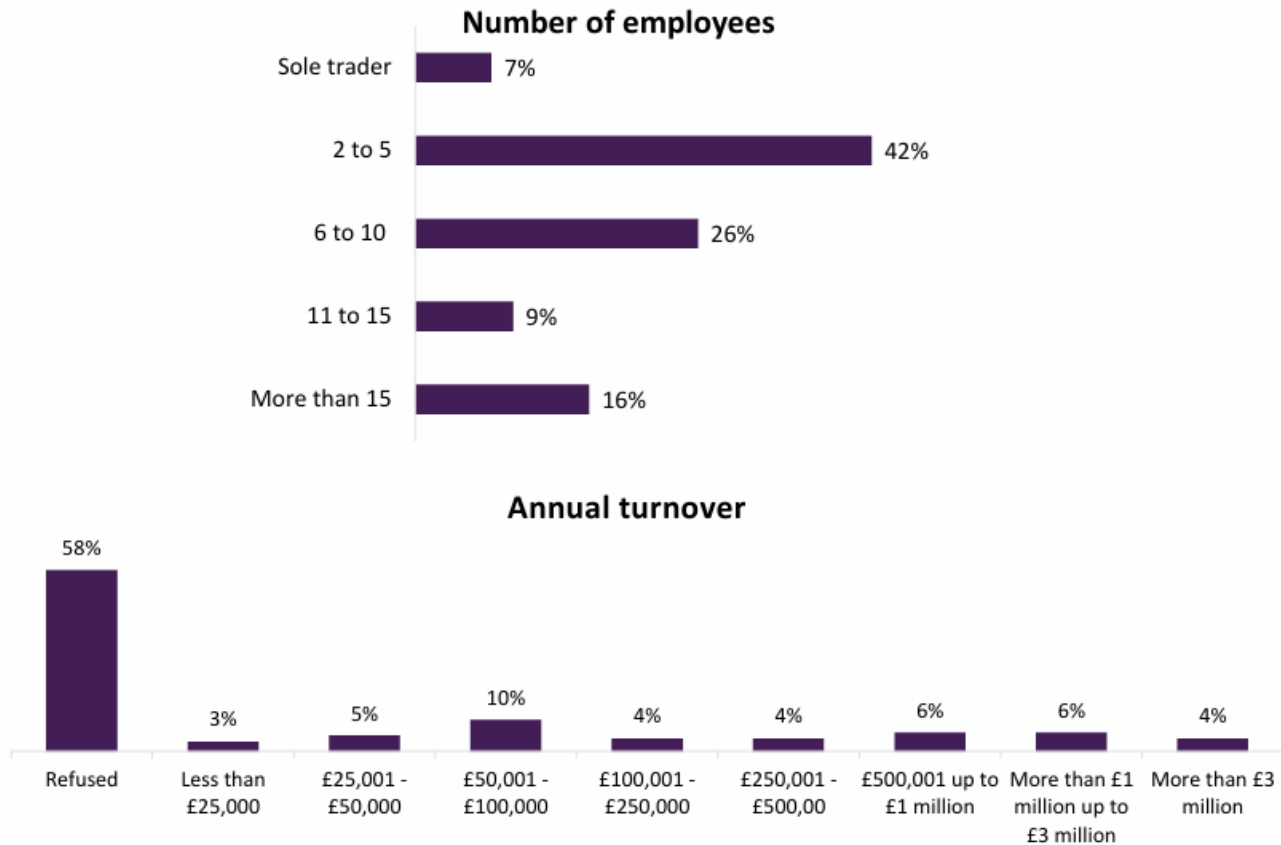
●●● Executive Summary

- 49% of businesses changed their opening hours over Christmas, with later openings resulting in 59% reporting increased sales and 56% seeing more customers.
- 37% of businesses purchased extra stock and 30% brought in additional staff, while 91% reported the same or higher sales and 88% reported the same or higher footfall.
- 42% of businesses gained new customers from the Christmas events and 26% attracted visitors unable to shop during the day, while 37% saw no direct benefit.
- 78% of businesses were aware of the Council's free parking promotion, with some suggesting it should be offered throughout the year, alongside improvements in marketing, trader awareness, traffic management, and daytime activities.
- Businesses commented that events boosted footfall and sales but were short-term gains and competition from nearby cities and infrastructure issues limited impact.

Business Profile

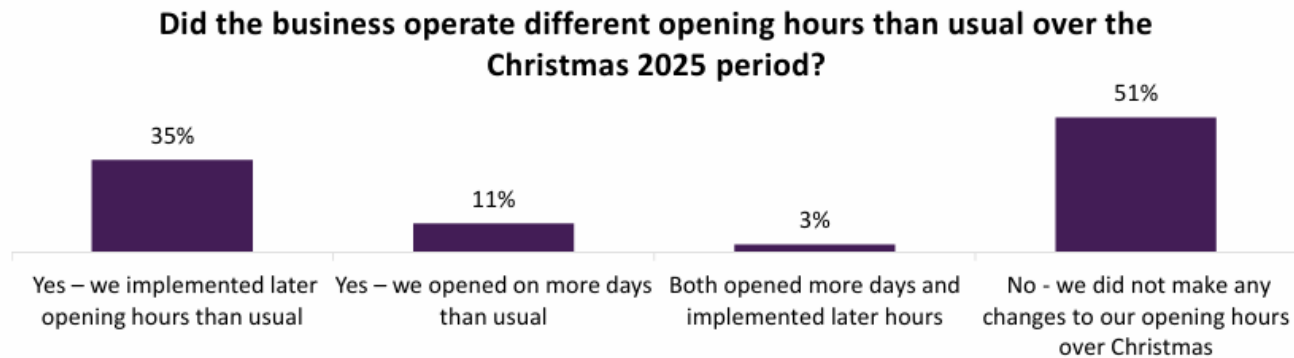


Business Profile



The sample included a variety of business types, with differing numbers of employees and levels of annual turnover.

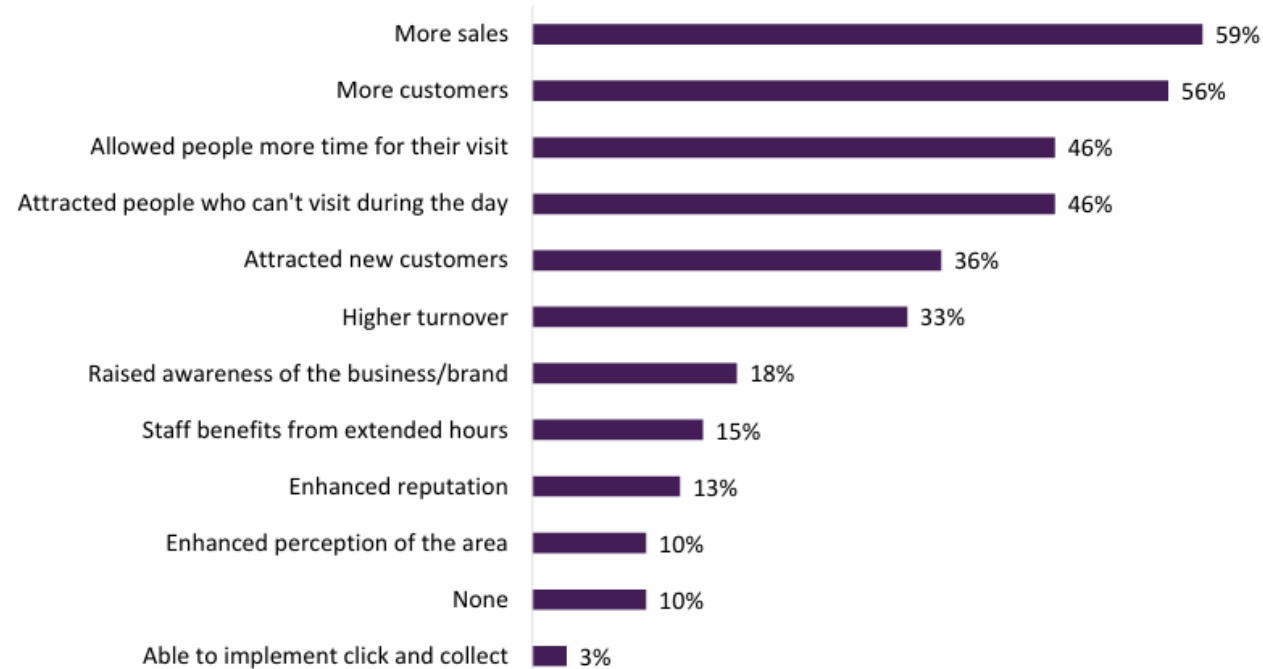
Business Opening Hours During the Festive Period



49% of businesses reported operating under different opening hours during the Christmas period. Of these, 35% implemented later opening hours than usual, 11% opened on additional days, and 3% did both.

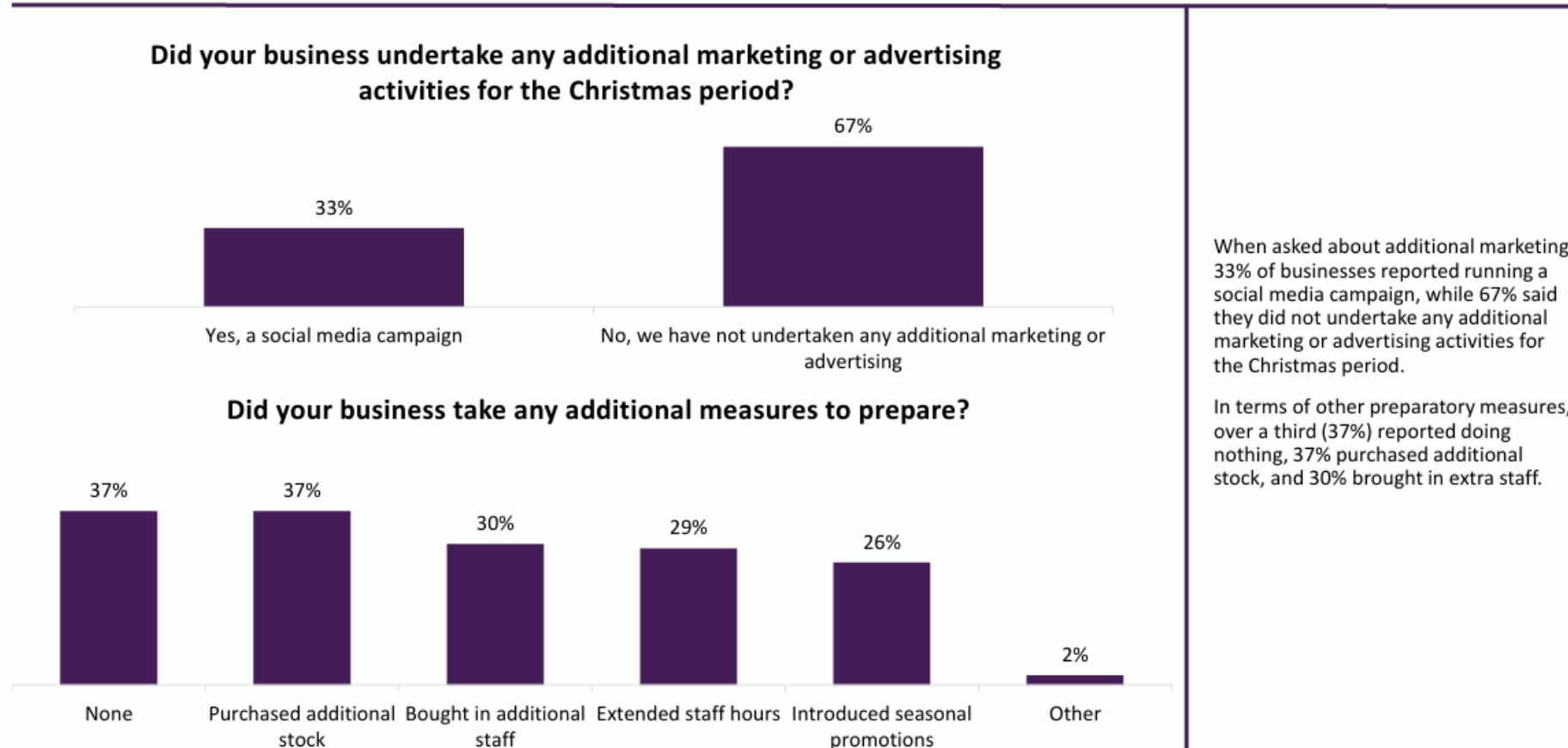
Impact of Business Opening Hours During the Festive Period

What benefits, if any, did the business experience as a result of opening late? (n=39)



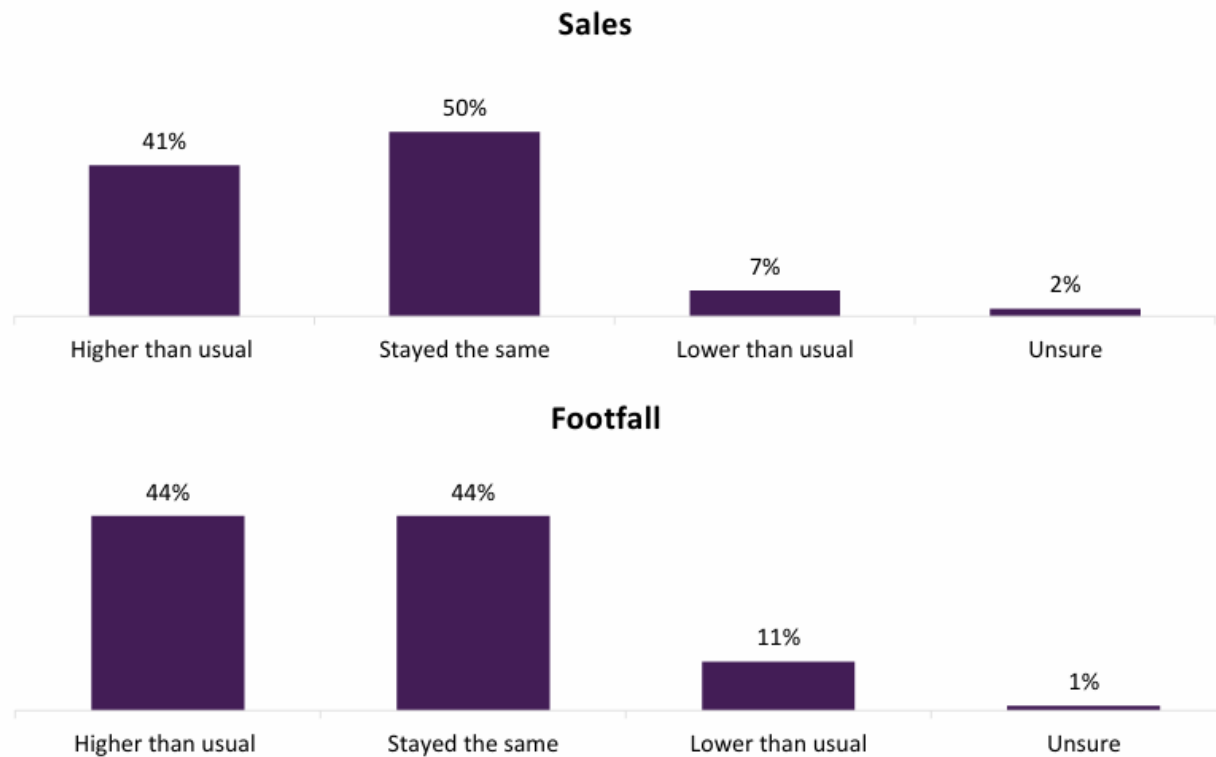
Of the businesses that operated under later hours, 59% reported increased sales, and 56% noted a higher number of customers as a result. Additionally, 46% indicated that later hours allowed people more time for their visit and attracted customers who were unable to shop during the day.

Christmas Marketing and Preparations



Impact of Christmas Events on Business

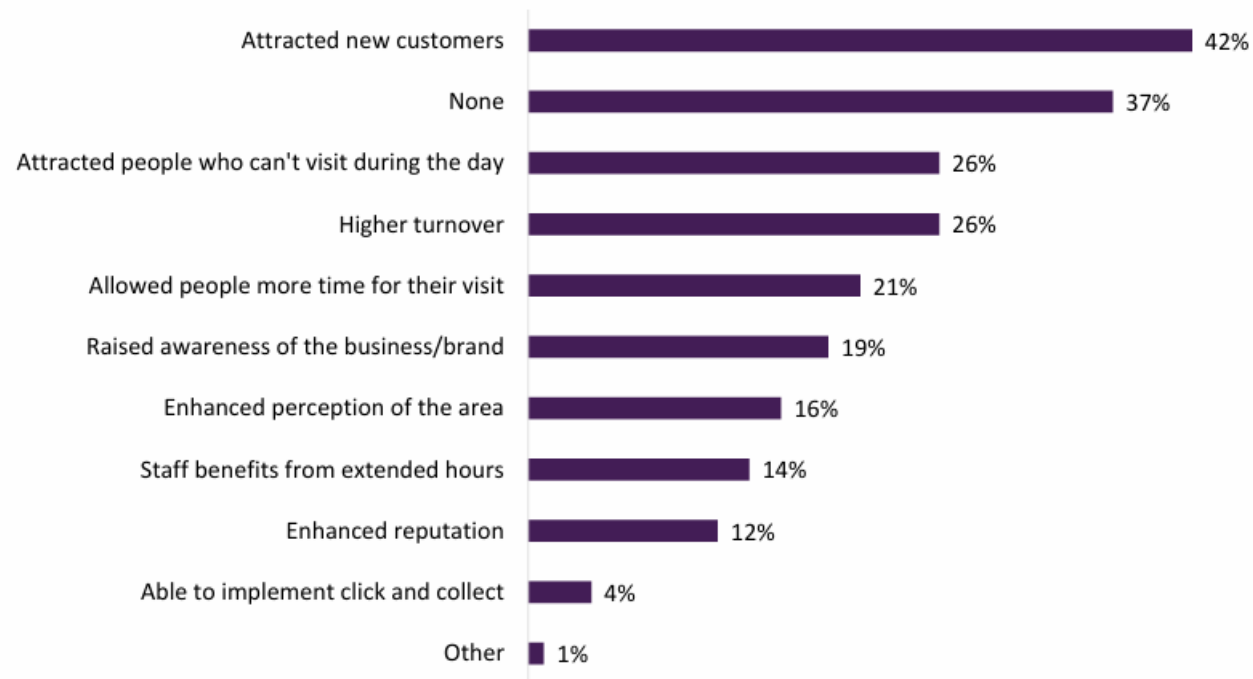
Based on your experience of the Christmas events, how, if at all, do you feel it affected your business in terms of ...



Based on their experience of the Christmas events, 91% of businesses reported the same or increased levels of sales. Similarly, 88% of businesses experienced the same or higher levels of footfall during this period.

Impact of Christmas Events on Business

What benefits, if any, did you experience as a result of the Christmas event?



When asked about the benefits of the Christmas events, 42% of businesses said it attracted new customers, 26% reported it brought in people who cannot visit during the day and increased turnover. However, 37% of businesses said they experienced no benefits from the events. The 1% of businesses that selected Other indicated that the events provided no benefits due to traffic congestion issues on the street where they were located.

●●● Free Parking Awareness

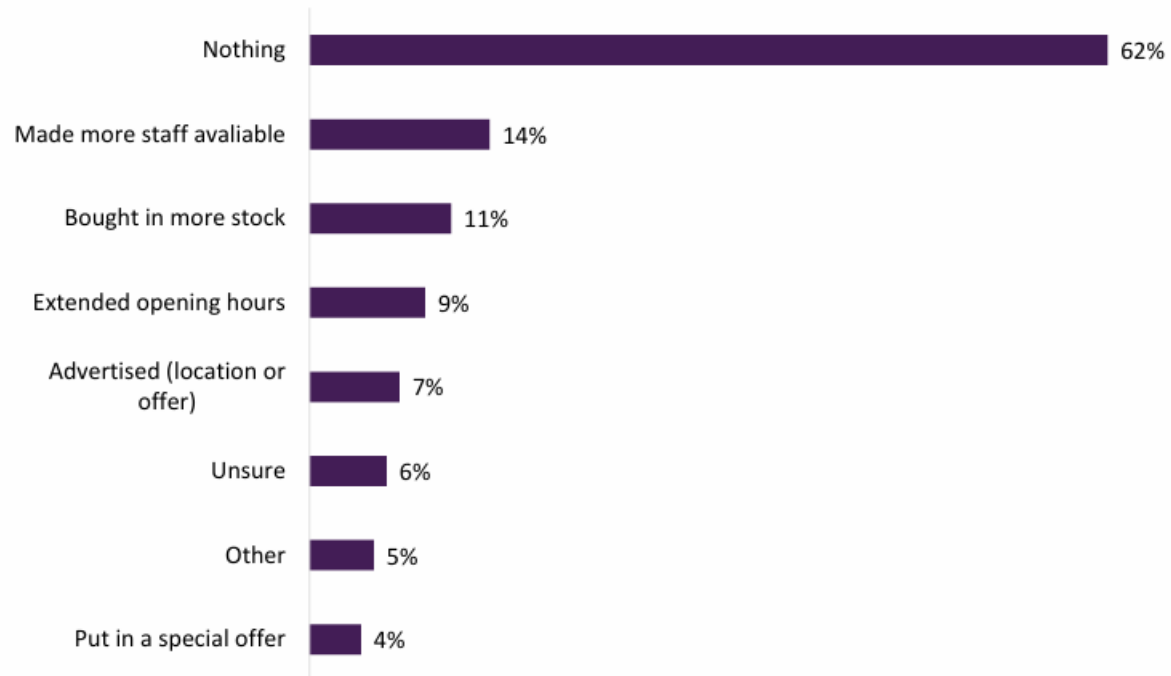
Are you aware of the free parking in Lisburn on Saturdays and Sundays?



78% of businesses reported being aware of the free parking promotion in Council car parks on Saturdays and Sundays during January and February. One business commented that they would like to see this promotion offered throughout the year.

Reflections on Maximising Christmas 2025 Impact

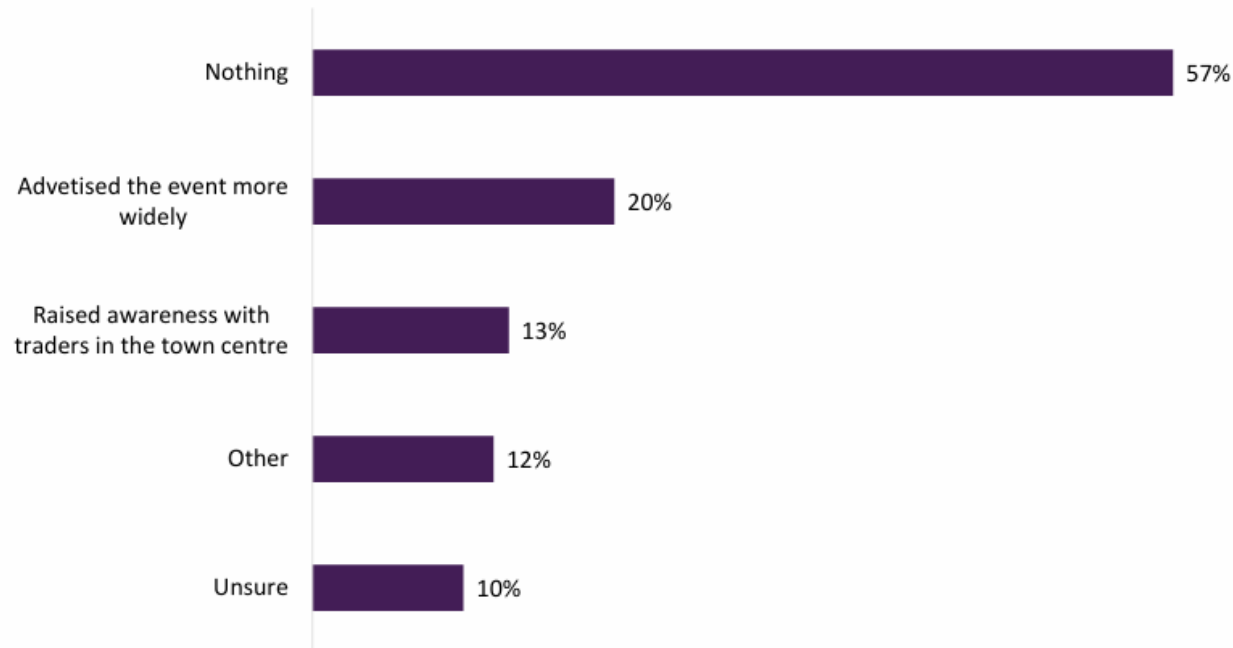
In hindsight, could you have done anything to improve the impact of the Christmas 2025 events on your business?



On reflection, 62% of businesses felt there was nothing more they could have done to improve the impact of the Christmas events on their business. However, 14% said they would have made more staff available, and 11% said they would have purchased additional stock. Of the 5% that selected Other, some mentioned hosting events to align with different Christmas activities.

●●● Reflections on Maximising Christmas 2025 Impact

In your opinion, what could the Council have done to improve the impact of the Christmas 2025 events on your business?



When asked what the Council could have done to improve the impact of the Christmas events, 57% of businesses said nothing. However, 20% felt the events could have been advertised more widely, and 13% suggested raising awareness with traders in the town centre. Those that selected Other highlighted issues and suggestions around parking and traffic management, timing and location of events, additional daytime activities, event costs, quieter music, and improved marketing through social media.

●●● General Feedback

"The pop-up shop at Market Square was great. This part of Lisburn needs something to draw people in."

"The special events helped with footfall and sales."

"Christmas events are beneficial for the city, but only a short-term boost. More council input is needed throughout the rest of the year."

"Improved infrastructure is needed to manage traffic and footfall. Before Christmas, for the light switch-on, the council cordoned off Market Square, making it less desirable to visit retailers."

"The council does what it can, but it is naturally difficult to compete with Belfast and similar cities."

"I'd like to see more emphasis on lower part of Lisburn rather than castle gardens."



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Appendix 2 – Proposed Christmas Programme 2026

City Centre activities and events

A) Traditional Christmas Switch on Market Square, Lisburn

Last year the traditional Christmas Switch on took place in Market Square on Thursday 20th November, with over 7,000 in attendance. Spectators enjoyed pre-event entertainment from U105's Frank Mitchell followed by a singalong with Santa, the Mayor and her chosen groups, Live Life Well Being and Orchardville. Overall, the event was a success with feedback being very positive.

It is recommended that the traditional switch on event remains, as it draws large crowds to the city centre and opens the Christmas programme with a festive and largely anticipated event. Proposed date is Thursday 26th November 2026.

B) Enchanted walk (following Switch On)

Following last year's success, the Christmas Enchanted Walk will return with enhanced animation, including performers, interactive characters, and illuminated elements including lanterns to create a more immersive experience.

The event is expected to attract up to 400 participants. Delivery will be coordinated by an external provider to ensure high-quality production and event management.

Taking place during the Official Christmas Switch-On, led by the Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the event will involve local schools and community groups.

A choreographed Christmas flash mob will also be introduced engaging local community choirs, adding a high-impact, engaging highlight.

C) Community Programmes

Community Christmas Tree 'Switch On' Events and Funding Policy -

There are 20 approved sites in different community areas across the council area at which the Council provide, install, and maintain a Christmas tree. The funding available annually is up to £1,000 per group/event and are subject to the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

ISLAND Christmas Themed Creative Arts Workshops and Live Events

Delivery of a range of Christmas-themed Creative Arts Workshops and live family, adult, and children's events.

Date/s: Nov and Dec 2026

Community Christmas Wreath Making/Festive Table Setting workshops in partnership with Parks and Amenities

A range of free Christmas Wreath Making or Festive Table Setting workshops in various locations across the 7 DEA areas in partnership with local communities, to ensure an all-inclusive approach to the overall event. Last year's workshops received highly positive feedback with many workshops oversubscribed. The venues have been reviewed to ensure a wider and varied uptake.

Date/s: Nov and Dec 2026

Christmas Silver Screen Time Social, Studio Theatre

A free screening of a Christmas Classic for 50+ years.

Date/s: Mon 7 Dec

Christmas Cracker Tea Dance, ISLAND Hall

A chance to reminisce and enjoy dancing to Christmas favourites by a live band as well as an offering of festive fare.

Date/s: Mon 14 Dec

Christmas Switch on Enchanted Walk pre workshops

Drop-In free lantern making workshops at ISLAND Arts Centre to create community lanterns for the Enchanted Walk on Thursday 26th November.

Date/s: Early November

Community Drop-In Christmas Bauble / Reindeer Antlers Workshop

In the Christmas Hub, as part of the Light Festival. The Christmas Bauble element will complement the wider corporate marketing theme. This programme will be enhanced by delivering workshops across a range of community centres to increase opportunities for participation.

Date/s: TBC

Saturday Music Day Big Sing, Castle Gardens

A gathering of community group choirs to celebrate the festive season in song lead by a professional singer who will work with groups in advance to produce the performance. The public can view and also join in.

Date/s: TBC

Big Crafty Make, City Centre Christmas Hub

A celebratory ticketed event as part of the Light Festival with up to 100 people designing and making Christmas Paper served with a Festive tippie.

Date/s: TBC

Classic Christmas Movie

Mayors Family Movie day in aid of the Mayors chosen charity.

Date/s: TBC

Communities Outreach Programme

The DEA Christmas Outreach Programme will offer a warm and inclusive series of creative and cultural sessions designed to bring communities together during the festive season. Through hands-on arts & crafts workshops and storytelling sessions participants can enjoy expressive and accessible activities.

Date/s: Throughout November & December

D) Lisburn Light Festival 2026 (with light installations in Castlereagh and Dundonald)

The provision of Installations and build of the Light Festival, to include Castle Gardens is currently out to tender. A procurement exercise will be undertaken to support this element and whilst costs are estimated at this stage, given market pressures it is anticipated there may be an increase in costs

The procurement specification includes (but is not limited to):

- a) Lighting and sound canopy over Bow Street
- b) Digital Christmas tree in Castle Gardens
- c) City Centre pole mounts and light festival branded signage
- d) Light Installations in Bow Street Mall, Lisburn Square, Dundonald and Carryduff
- e) LVI Christmas Trees with associated decoration of the rotunda and function suite in LVI.

- f) Christmas lighting display pole mounts across the Council area including local community installations.

E) Christmas Light Trail at Castle Gardens (Free 4x week event)

The 2025 light trail experienced a 13% increase in footfall recording 165,746 visitors to this free event. Taking on feedback from last year's evaluation the event saw extended opening days for Santa's Grotto and the Mini Festive market which grew from 13 stalls in 2024 to 16 stalls in 2025. The return of the popular performers stage drew in additional footfall and extended visitor dwell time.

The 2026 light trail will again see a variety of illuminated installations across the gardens creating a magical and atmospheric experience as visitors walk through the event. The trader's village, which did extremely well last year, will be back with many of our local businesses very keen to return. If possible, we may increase the number of traders.

Santa will return to his Grotto, and it is proposed to re-install the 3D interactive Christmas Tree within the gardens linked to the light beams to provide a specular light beam music show.

The live music stage will return to its new location and will again feature a varied selection of musicians from the local college, community groups, choirs and the ever-popular Lisburn Ukes appealing to a wide audience. It is proposed to increase the advertising of the music line-up across all social media platforms and include additional signage across the park and city centre.

The fairground provision was increased in 2025 from 3 rides to 4 rides. Officers are in discussion with SERC to look at the potential to utilise the SERC car park to facilitate a larger provision such as a big wheel. This would be managed by the fairground contractor.

The digital tree will again return to Castle Gardens to enhance the offering at Castle Gardens as the traditional Christmas Tree and wrapping of the museum returns to the City Centre

The light trail is part of the ITT for a provider, and we have requested in the specification that they consider what elements of the existing offer could be revised to create a different offer this year that still delivers impact and innovation.

F) Accessoloo at Castle Gardens

An Accessoloo Changing Places facility will be available in Castle Gardens, providing accessible toilet and changing facilities to ensure a more inclusive experience for visitors with additional needs.

G) Sports Services Christmas Events Programme 2026

The following table outlines the draft Christmas events schedule for Sports Services. All events and timings are provisional and are subject to change. Details will be confirmed in due course.

Facility	Draft Event	Proposed Date
Lagan Valley Leisureplex	Sensory Friendly Silent Disco Facilitated by MayWe, children receive a pair of wireless headsets where they can choose between music channels. This quiet session ensures customers can enjoy a Christmas experience to suit everyone	Friday 11 December
	Christmas Leisure Pool Party DJ entertainment pool side, festive music, prize giveaways and Christmas characters	Saturday 12 December
	Christmas Roller Disco Skate with Christmas characters and enjoy prize giveaways and face painting	Friday 18 th December, 7pm-8pm
	Santa Experience Visit Santa in his grotto with Christmas themed family inflatables and entertainment.	Saturday 19 th December
Dundonald Ice Bowl	Christmas Experience Visit Santa in his Grotto Decorate a Ginger Bread Man Make Reindeer Food Visit the Elf Sweet Stand Hot Chocolate Choose an Activity of your choice NB) This event will replace the traditional Breakfast & Supper with Santa which has declined in popularity over recent years.	Saturday 5 th , 12 th & 19 th December. Sensory Friendly Indiana Land Session Christmas experience Friday 11 th December
	Santa on the Ice	Saturday 5 th , 12 th & 19 th December.

	Visit Santa on the ice in his famous red sleigh. Available as part of the public ice-skating session	Afternoon session only
	Rudolph's Rockin' Disco DJ entertainment with music, prize giveaways and a visit from Santa	Friday 18 th December, 5.45pm – 7.15pm
	Terrific Tots Disco Festive music and visit from Santa. Includes toast and juice. Available as part of the normal session	Friday 18 th December 10am-1pm
	Christmas Eve PJ Party Come tenpin bowling in your favourite PJs with DJ entertainment, prize giveaways and karaoke	Due to demand for session, we are proposing to extend the session from 11am – 5pm for 2026
Sports Development	Santa Dash Santa Dash including festive family entertainment. Examples from 2025 included DJ entertainment, giant snow globe, inflatables and Santa's grotto. A neurodivergent Santa's grotto session was also available Activities for 2026 TBC	Friday 11 December 6.30pm onwards

H) Christmas Markets

Royal Hillsborough Christmas Farmers Market x 2 days

Location: Dark Walk and Hillsborough Fort site.

Date: Friday 11 Dec/ Saturday 12 Dec

Up to 65 artisan vendors will be invited to showcase local food, drink, and craft offerings. Live music and local school choirs will provide entertainment as well as Santa on foot entertaining attendees. In 2025, the event attracted 8845 visitors further marking Royal Hillsborough as an attractive family destination that continues to grow.

Given the success of the Royal Hillsborough Christmas market elected members have asked that this event is increased to a two-day event.

Dundonald Christmas Market

Location: Moat Park, Dundonald.

Date: Wednesday 2 December

Up to 30 traders will be invited to showcase a mix of artisan food and crafts, alongside street food and children's entertainment to create an ambient event. Local businesses will be encouraged to extend their opening hours. In 2025, over 2,200 people attended the event which offered entertainment from local school choirs, musicians, children's craft and face painting and a visit from Santa.

Carryduff Christmas Market

Location: Lidl car park site

Date: Wednesday 16 December

Up to 26 vendors will be invited to showcase a mix of local artisan food and craft stalls, a selection of street food and coffee will also be available. Local primary school choir performances and local dance and musical elements will be programmed to attract families creating a festive atmosphere. In 2025, over 4,100 visitors enjoyed this event.

I) Wrapping of the Museum

Wrapping of the museum and real Christmas Tree in Market Square

The festive wrapping of the Museum and real tree became a popular photo and selfie spot, serving as a standout feature of the Lisburn Light Festival with its traditional Christmas charm. The museum wall will be the backdrop for the launch event and the Christmas events programme, bringing a blanket of magical lights and adding festive cheer to the hugely successful Festival of Light. It is recommended that the wrap of the museum and real tree return to Market Square this year.

J) City Centre Events Programme 2026

The City Centre Events Programme for 2026 will again bring a programme of animation to enhance the festive atmosphere and attract footfall into our City Centre. 2026 will see the return of popular activities such as the mini-Christmas market and Lisburn Twilight Market, Christmas hub and live music in Market Square and Castle Gardens.

In order to enhance the offering in Castle Gardens and the return of the Mini Christmas market along Bow Street we aim to deliver additional Christmas activity across the City

Centre such as interactive selfie stations, pop up theatre and potential TikTok opportunities if budget is available:

- a) A provision of additional Christmas lighting will be considered across the Council area. This will include new Pole mounts.
- b) Additional interactive activity to include pop up theatre and interactive selfie/ TikTok opportunities.
- c) Live music stage in Castle Gardens and Festive busking hub in Market Square. Includes cost of paying the musicians.
- d) Rent, rates and decoration of vacant units to facilitate the delivery of the Christmas Hub/VR sleigh Ride/ Santas Grotto. A 'Christmas Hub,' will continue as part of the programme, utilising vacant shop space where possible, in the heart of the City Centre to replace the need for the marquee in Market Square and open the entire space. The hub will be decorated in a festive theme and will host elements of the City Centre events programme such as the ever-popular tea dances, Splat Messy Play for kids, Christmas Story time and Christmas movie days.
- e) Lisburn Twilight Market in Lisburn City Centre with location tbc featuring local traders, artisan food, and festive entertainment.
- f) Mini Festive Market – The pop-up wooden huts will remain, along the lower end of Bow Street to host artisan crafts and gifts which could be purchased as Christmas presents. This area will also enjoy additional activities to animate this space.
- g) Branded Christmas event signage, including directional and informational displays to guide visitors through the festivities. These signs will improve navigation and highlight key attractions.
- h) Additional funding towards marketing the City Centre Christmas Programme, allowing for greater promotion across digital, print, and outdoor channels
- i) Refreshing the Light Canopy playlist with new songs, adding to the magical atmosphere in the city centre.

K) Elfie Tour (Lisburn Lights and City Centre businesses)

The Elfie Tour is now coming into its 3rd year and has become a very popular event in the City Centre. This interactive walking experience takes visitors on a magical journey through the City Centre's dazzling Christmas lights. This year the shows ran three days a week from 4.00pm until 8.00pm, from 21st November– 22nd December 2025. Due to exceptional demand, Council were delighted to facilitate 2 extra dates with 6 extra shows of the tour. This engaging experience encourages visitors to fully immerse themselves in the holiday atmosphere while discovering different areas of the city centre, supporting local businesses and attractions along the route.

L) VR Animation Activity

A new virtual reality experience will again be sourced for 2026 similar to what was delivered in 2024/2025. This is a very popular experience which continues to receive positive feedback, with 3,744 tickets sold this year through walk-ins and online sales, reflecting its success and popularity.

In 2025 the VR Santa Sleigh was cost neutral due to being extremely popular, it is proposed to have either the sleigh or something similar in 2025. Based on the 2024 and 2025 income this event has the potential to be cost neutral.

M) Classic Christmas Movie

A Christmas movie showing to be held in the Arts centre for the Age Friendly Forum.
Dates: TBC

N) Victorian Christmas at the Museum

An interactive learning experience of a Victorian Christmas. Dates: TBC

O) Additional infrastructure

Across sites in LCCC, to enhance the festive offering.



Committee:	Community and Wellbeing
Date:	06 May 2025
Report from:	Director Leisure and Community Wellbeing

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Community Investment Fund (CIF)

1.0 **Background**

1.1 In 2019 the Council consulted on *Connect – Invest – Transform*, a proposed Investment Plan of up to £250m across our Council area over 10 years. This plan followed the framework of the Community Plan and subsequent principles of Sustainable Development, Equality and Participation.

1.2 The priority scheme proposed in the Investment Plan, namely the Community Investment Fund, was incepted through the delivery of 2 pilot phases in April 2021 and March 2022. In total 3 organisations were successful in securing funding up to a level of £250,000. Following a review of the Community Investment Fund pilot phases, Council agreed to close the pilot and further launch the Fund with an upper limit of £350,000 per organisation. Now in Phase 4, there are now 12 organisations progressing through the programme, detailed in **Table 1**.

1.3 **Table 1**

Organisation	Detail	Budget
Ballymacash Sports Academy	Upgrade of Facilities	£250,000
Crewe United Football Club	New Facilities	£195,000
Lisburn Rugby Football Club	New Facilities	£225,000
Hillhall Regeneration Group	Hillhall Community Hall	£350,000
Carryduff GAC	New Facilities	£290,000
Ballinderry War Memorial Hall	Rand Regeneration of Hall	£350,000
Canal Boxing Academy	New Sports Hub	£247,576
Live Life Wellbeing Centre	Grove Activity Centre Capital Development	£350,000
Lisburn Recreation and Community Hub	New & Improved Facilities	£310,000
Seymour Hill And Conway Residents Association	New Community Hub	£350,000
St Josephs GAC	New Community Sports Hub	£350,000
Holy Trinity Parish Church	Creation of Community Space	£182,424

The total budget allocated to CIF from the commencement of the programme was £3,675,000 of which all is currently committed.

1.4 **Key issues**

2.0 To make a bid for funding under this capital improvement scheme, organisations complete an application as part of an open call process. Following the assessment of applications, Members are asked to approve the outcome and agree that a 'Letter of Offer In-principle', go to the successful applicants. The in-principle letter incepts a robust due diligence process that considers statutory approvals, deliverability, financial health, legal governance and community impact. It is only once this is completed that a formal Letter of Offer is released, following another approval by Members at Committee.

2.1 In order to ensure timeliness of process, whilst maintaining prudence with public funds, it is recommended that Members approve the following updated process:

1. Member approval of the In-Principle Letter of Offer, within the agreed budget limit and
2. That subject to robust due diligence processes, the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing sign the formal Letter of Offer in agreement with the Chief Finance Officer

2.2 In considering this, Officers have looked at various work streams such as the Accounting Manual, Standing Orders and The Scheme of Delegation. The later allows the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing to approve Grants up to a maximum of £10,000 as long as it is reported regularly to Committee. This updated process would ensure that the formal letter of offer aligns with the Scheme of Delegation and would come back to this Committee for noting.

2.3 If the updated CIF process is agreed, Members will still approve the budget allocation and in principle agreement to award the successful applicant the funding award. Officers will then undertake the due diligence and if all assurances are in place release a formal letter of offer.

2.4 If the due diligence revealed any change in budget or compliance issues this would be reported back to Committee for consideration.

3.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members agree to:

An update to the Community Investment Fund approval process to include:

1. Member approval of the In-Principle Letter of Offer, within the agreed budget and
2. that subject to robust due diligence processes, the Director of Leisure and Community Wellbeing sign the formal Letter of Offer, in agreement with the Chief Finance Officer and
3. with noting reports to follow.

4.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>As detailed in the report.</p>	
5.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>	
5.1	<p>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</p> <p>Please refer to appendix 1.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
5.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p>	
5.3	<p>Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?</p> <p>Please refer to appendix 2.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
5.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p>	

<p>Appendices:</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Equality Screening Document Appendix 2 – RNIA Document</p>
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Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template (Oct 2022)

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

In 2019 the Council consulted on Connect – Invest – Transform, a proposed Investment Plan of up to £250m across our Council area over 10 years. This plan followed the framework of the Community Plan and subsequent principles of sustainable development, equality and participation.

In May 2021, Council agreed to take forward one of the priority schemes proposed in the Investment Plan, namely the need for a capital Community Investment Fund. This fund would span across community, sporting and interest groups with a view to providing match funding towards new or revitalised community facilities. It aims to modernise what we do and how we do it by strategically targeting investment along with key partners and those who share our vision.

Since that time, Community Investment Fund – Phase 1 & Phase 2 Pilot Extension have concluded with 3 groups awarded funding. A review has been undertaken and a number of amendments agreed.

Community Investment Fund – Phase 3 was agreed by Council in February 2024 and the two pilot phases closed out. The upper limit available to an applicant has been raised by £100k to £350k with a minimum of 50% match funding being a mandatory pre-requisite.

Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 was agreed by Council in June 2025 with 4 community groups being awarded funding. The upper limit available to an applicant is £350k with a minimum of 50% match funding being a mandatory pre-requisite.

Name of the activity/policy/project

Community Investment Fund – Phase 4

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

This is an existing one - Phase 4 of the Community Investment Fund Programme

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

The total budget allocated to the Community Investment Fund from the commencement of the programme is £3,450,000 which includes the committed expenditure from the previous 3 phases of £1,945,445.

The aim of Phase 4 delivery of the programme is to further embed a co-design approach to community funding so that the funding allocated will have maximum benefit to citizens and will make a significant contribution to council objectives.

The aim of the funding overall is to enable community organisations to deliver projects which will benefit citizens and contribute to LCCC corporate objectives as set out in our key strategic documents which include the Community Plan, 10 Year Investment Plan and corporate plan.

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

The Phase 4 fund will be open to all eligible organisations within the LCCC area. The ultimate beneficiaries of the funding will depend on who the successful organisation is and on the detail of their proposal but there is expected to be an overall benefit to all citizens of the council area in general terms.

This funding opportunity is not being targeted at any particular Section 75 group but in scoring applications, cognisance will be taken of who the beneficiaries of any capital investment are likely to be.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

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

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council owns the project. It will be delivered by a cross departmental team comprising Leisure & Community Wellbeing, Regeneration & Growth & Organisational Development & Innovation.

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

Yes/~~No~~

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

~~Financial~~

~~Legal~~

Other

The success of the Phase 4 Community Investment Programme is dependent on expressions of interest being received for relevant quality proposals. It is anticipated that there is potentially a limited number of eligible community organisations that will apply as there is a specific timeframe on the opening and closing of the application call as well as those in a position to manage a major capital project.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon? Delete if not applicable

Service users - Potentially as beneficiaries of the successful applicant

Other public sector organisations - Not quantifiable at this point

Voluntary/community/trade unions - N/A

Other - Elected members in the selected area will be involved.

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
1 LCCC Community Plan	LCCC https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/Community_Plan_2017-2032_EMAIL.pdf
2 LCCC DEA Investment Programme	LCCC
3 LCCC Corporate Plan	LCCC Corporate plan and ambitions 2024/2028 - Lisburn & Castlereagh (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)
4 LCCC 10 Year Investment Plan	LCCC

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

In developing this Phase 4 of the Community Investment Fund, we have considered a wide range of publications and plans and models for community infrastructure funding to ensure as open an environment as possible for individuals & groups who may wish to apply. There has been widespread previous consultation on how the community sector would like to be funded and this has been taken into account in developing this project. We have also analysed what other councils are doing in terms of the roll out of similar investment plans. Learning and experience from the pilot has informed the roll-out of this phase across all DEAs in the council area.

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

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information																					
Religious Belief	<table border="1" data-bbox="528 360 1358 696"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="528 360 967 472">NI Census 2021</th> <th data-bbox="967 360 1134 472">N. Ireland (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1134 360 1358 472">LCCC (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="528 472 967 510">Catholic</td> <td data-bbox="967 472 1134 510">42.3</td> <td data-bbox="1134 472 1358 510">23.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="528 510 967 584">Protestant and Other Christian</td> <td data-bbox="967 510 1134 584">37.7</td> <td data-bbox="1134 510 1358 584">48.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="528 584 967 622">Other</td> <td data-bbox="967 584 1134 622">17.3</td> <td data-bbox="1134 584 1358 622">1.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="528 622 967 660">No Religion</td> <td data-bbox="967 622 1134 660">17.3</td> <td data-bbox="1134 622 1358 660">24.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="528 660 967 696">Not Stated</td> <td data-bbox="967 660 1134 696">1.6</td> <td data-bbox="1134 660 1358 696">1.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)	Catholic	42.3	23.9	Protestant and Other Christian	37.7	48.7	Other	17.3	1.8	No Religion	17.3	24.1	Not Stated	1.6	1.4			
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Not Stated	1.6	1.4																				
Political Opinion	<p data-bbox="469 703 1442 808">The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the council area's political opinion. Note: only 52% of those eligible submitted a vote.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="469 815 1315 1084"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="469 815 604 965">DUP (%)</th> <th data-bbox="604 815 780 965">Alliance (%)</th> <th data-bbox="780 815 916 965">UUP (%)</th> <th data-bbox="916 815 1035 965">SF (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1035 815 1187 965">SDLP (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1187 815 1315 965">Ind (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 972 604 1084">35</td> <td data-bbox="604 972 780 1084">32.5</td> <td data-bbox="780 972 916 1084">15</td> <td data-bbox="916 972 1035 1084">10</td> <td data-bbox="1035 972 1187 1084">5</td> <td data-bbox="1187 972 1315 1084">2.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)	35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5									
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Racial Group	<table border="1" data-bbox="469 1135 1402 1285"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="469 1135 812 1173">NI Census 2021</th> <th data-bbox="812 1135 1099 1173">N. Ireland (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1099 1135 1402 1173">LCCC (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1173 812 1211">White</td> <td data-bbox="812 1173 1099 1211">96.6</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1173 1402 1211">96.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1211 812 1249">Irish Traveller</td> <td data-bbox="812 1211 1099 1249">0.01</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1211 1402 1249">0.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1249 812 1285">Other/Not Recorded</td> <td data-bbox="812 1249 1099 1285">3,39</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1249 1402 1285">3.86</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)	White	96.6	96.07	Irish Traveller	0.01	0.07	Other/Not Recorded	3,39	3.86									
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Marital Status	<p data-bbox="469 1659 1442 1733">For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 30.65% single; 53.78% married; 0.10% same sex partnership;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="469 1740 1406 2011"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="469 1740 788 1778">NI Census 2021</th> <th data-bbox="788 1740 1099 1778">N. Ireland (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1099 1740 1406 1778">LCCC (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1778 788 1816">Single</td> <td data-bbox="788 1778 1099 1816">38</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1778 1406 1816">33.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1816 788 1854">Married</td> <td data-bbox="788 1816 1099 1854">43</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1816 1406 1854">51.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1854 788 1892">Civil Partnership</td> <td data-bbox="788 1854 1099 1892">0.3</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1854 1406 1892">0.19</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1892 788 1930">Separated</td> <td data-bbox="788 1892 1099 1930">4</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1892 1406 1930">3.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1930 788 1968">Divorced</td> <td data-bbox="788 1930 1099 1968">6</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1930 1406 1968">5.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="469 1968 788 2011">Widowed</td> <td data-bbox="788 1968 1099 2011">6</td> <td data-bbox="1099 1968 1406 2011">6.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="469 2011 1442 2040">3.27% separated; 5.52% divorced; 6.68% widowed.</p>	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)	Single	38	33.07	Married	43	51.4	Civil Partnership	0.3	0.19	Separated	4	3.1	Divorced	6	5.9	Widowed	6	6.2
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Divorced	6	5.9																				
Widowed	6	6.2																				

Sexual Orientation	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)
	Straight or heterosexual	90.04	91.36
	Gay or lesbian	1.17	1.21
	Bisexual	0.75	0.69
	Other sexual orientation	0.17	0.15
	Prefer not to Say	4.58	3,72
	Not Stated	3.30	2.87
Men & Women Generally	2021 Census Information - The population of the LCCC Council Area is 49% male and 51% female.		
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 50,121 disabilities or residents with 1 or more long-term health conditions were reported within the 149,107 residents' population in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area that are over 16.</p> <p>66.84% of the council area reported they experienced no condition. In 2021, 3% of the eligible population in the council area were claiming Disability Living Allowance, 7% were claiming Personal Independent Payments and 3% were claiming Attendance Allowance.</p>		
People with and without Dependents	<p>2021 Census Information – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is just slightly above the mid – point Northern Ireland in relation to dependent children in household between ages of 0 - 4; 5 – 9; 10 – 14 but is in bottom position in relation to children & young adults aged 15 – 19 years.</p> <p>In 2021, of the 60,143 households in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City council area 14.4% (8,661) had dependent children; 10.98% of the population on average provide unpaid care, with 3.4% providing in excess of 50 hours per week.</p>		

Mid-Year Population Estimates 2019 & 2021 – District Electoral Areas

DEA	Population - Census 2019	% 2019	Population Census 2021	% 2021
Killultagh	21450	14.6	22,013	14.8
Downshire West	17110	11.6	17,190	11.5
Lisburn North	23050	15.7	23,449	15.7
Lisburn South	23610	16.0	24,321	16.3
Downshire East	16720	11.3	16,746	11.2
Castlereagh South	24010	16.3	23,488	15.8
Castlereagh East	20860	14.2	21,899	14.7
	146,810		149,106	100

Source: NISRA/NINIS

Needs, experiences and priorities

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

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	Given the nature of the funding stream, projects that have some impact on the needs, experiences, and priorities of those that hold religious beliefs may be considered for funding.
Political Opinion	Given the nature of the funding stream, projects that have some impact on the needs, experiences, and priorities of those that hold political opinions may be considered for funding.
Racial Group	<p>There is some evidence from DfC to suggest that asylum seekers and migrant workers are more reliant on benefits or are employed in low-paid jobs, so access to community funding may have a disproportionate benefit on these groups in terms of the needs & priorities.</p> <p>There is also evidence from the TEO that identifies language issues as a potential barrier to usage of services and the accessing of grant funding by new migrants and asylum seekers. Those aspects of the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 that concern</p>

	<p>language and literacy, and those that deal with accessibility to services may need to pay particular regard to these needs when individual screening is conducted on any resultant policies.</p>
Age	<p>In respect of grant aid, there is evidence from Government generally and DfC more specifically to suggest that the skills and experience required to access grant aid and to navigate an online environment are not as well developed within an older age group as they may be in others. Differences in educational attainment across the years may also pose a particular difficulty to older people’s ability to get their needs and priorities across in a manner commensurate with the stated grant criteria.</p> <p>There is also some anecdotal evidence from DoF and the Charity Commission for NI that poor design of grant aid portals can be a barrier to people who have limited knowledge or experience of the use of online tools in terms of clearly stating their needs and priorities.</p> <p>This has previously been identified as being a long-standing issue for a range of Section 75 identities but one which has particular relevance to those whose experience was gained prior to the commencement of the digital age.</p> <p>The Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 outlines further developments in these areas where appropriate. Actions already outlined within the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 will however see improvements implemented to these areas and are likely to have a positive benefit to people of all ages.</p>
Marital Status	<p>No additional needs identified that won’t be covered in the programme.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>No additional needs identified that won’t be covered in the programme.</p>
Men & Women Generally	<p>There is evidence to suggest that gender has some relevance to provision of grants and grant aid more generally. Actions already outlined within the plan will however see improvements implemented to these areas and are likely to have a positive benefit to men and women generally.</p>
Disability	<p>There is evidence to suggest that disability has some relevance to provision of some grants & grant aid more generally. In respect of grant provision DfC suggest that a lack of online skills, experience and/or verbal communication patterns pose a particular difficulty to</p>

	<p>disabled peoples’ ability to put forward their needs and priorities in such a way as to be able to access grants and grant aid.</p> <p>There is also some anecdotal evidence from DoF and the Charity Commission for NI that poor design of grant aid portals can be a barrier to people who have disabilities. This has previously been identified as being a long-standing issue for a range of Section 75 identities but one which has particular relevance to those with disabilities.</p> <p>Overall, there is evidence to suggest that those aspects of the Community Investment Plan - Phase 4 which deal with the communication, provision and monitoring of grants and grant aid may need to pay particular regard to these factors when individual screening is conducted on any resultant policies.</p> <p>Actions already outlined within the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028, will however see improvements implemented to these areas and are likely to have a positive benefit to people with disabilities.</p>
<p>People with and without Dependants</p>	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that having dependants has a specific relevance to the provision of the council’s Community Investment Plan – Phase 4.</p>

Part 2. Screening questions

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

<p>Section 75 Category</p>	<p>Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none</p>	<p>Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below</p>
<p>Religious Belief</p>	<p>The Community Investment Fund priorities aim at improving opportunities for enhanced access to grants, and to developing a network of mutually dependant groups across the council area, including groups bound by religious belief, all of which have a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction for S75 people to mix positively and build relationships beyond their own identity groups.</p>	<p>Minor Positive</p>
<p>Political Opinion</p>	<p>The Community Investment Fund priorities aim at improving opportunities for enhanced access to grants, and to developing a network of mutually dependant groups across the council area, all of</p>	<p>Minor Positive</p>

	<p>which have a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction for S75 people to mix positively and build relationships beyond their own identity groups.</p>	
Racial Group	<p>As noted in the previous section, racial group may have some relevance – particularly in respect of accessing grants and grant aid across different racial communities.</p> <p>Provision of accessible information and language difficulties can be a common barrier to understanding and successfully accessing grants and grant aid across time. Those aspects of the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4, which concern accessibility to information and provision of information in different formats and languages, may need to pay particular regard to these factors when individual screening is conducted on particular policies.</p>	Minor Positive
Age	<p>As noted in the previous section, there are some issues identified relating to accessing information and the skill and experience levels necessary posing particular challenges to older people, especially those with age related impairments such as vision and hearing loss. Those issues highlighted in the previous section in relation to disability will also apply to older people since a greater proportion of this cohort will have access issues.</p> <p>There are also a range of issues relating to access to transport, to attend information events, progress and other meetings, and award ceremonies.</p> <p>Overall, there is evidence to suggest that those aspects of the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 which concern the needs of older people particularly, should pay particular regard to these factors when individual screening is conducted on the respective policies.</p>	Minor Positive
Marital Status	<p>This strategy is not expected to have any impact on people with different marital status.</p>	None
Sexual Orientation	<p>This strategy is not expected to have any impact on people with different marital status.</p>	None

Men & Women Generally	This strategy is not expected to have any impact on people with different marital status.	None
Disability	<p>As noted in the previous section, there are issues relating to access and poor design of new online portals as well as more traditional application formats, posing particular challenges to disabled people and those with mobility impairments.</p> <p>There are also a range of issues relating to access to transport, to attend information events including alternative means of transport, which have a particular relevance to those who are disabled.</p> <p>Disabled people make use of public & alternative transport means significantly less than the general population due to a range of barriers including physical accessibility of vehicles and transport facilities, lack of provision of accessible travel information, and inconsistencies in service levels.</p> <p>Overall, there is evidence to suggest that those aspects of the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4, which concern access to grants and grant aid for disabled people and those with mobility issues generally may need to pay particular regard to these factors when individual screening is conducted on the respective policies.</p>	Minor Positive
People with and without Dependents	This strategy is not expected to have any impact on those with dependants generally	None

* See Appendix 1 for details.

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

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief	The Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 has been designed to support groups seeking aid as well as improving access to grant aid for community and other groupings infrastructure within the	
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Age	council area. It will improve connectivity across the community and deepen the links between the council and its residents, which in turn will have a positive impact on social inclusion, integration, and good relations. Good community communications across the council area, in particular has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities, including those who fall within each of the S75 categories. Further equality screenings will result from the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 and these will inform the detail of any opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for those within Section 75 categories.	
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men & Women Generally		
Disability		
People with and without Dependants		

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/~~No~~ If yes, specify which action.

Theme 2: Access to Information

2.1 Some individuals/ groups may be disadvantaged by not having full access to information provided by us (Ensure information is accessible to all)

Theme 3: Our Community

3.2 Some individuals/ groups may find the location of our facilities a deterrent to use or may find certain buildings and premises inaccessible

3.3 Some groups may feel that they can't access available grants (Access to grants)

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

Yes - If yes, give details/specify which action.

Promotion & Engagement

- 3.1 Identify relevant opportunities and encourage participation of disabled people through targeted promotion
- 3.2 Ensure disabled people and representative groups are targeted proactively in all council consultations and engagement events/ initiatives
- 3.3 Continue to work with disabled individuals and their representative groups.

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	The Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 will stimulate communication and the development of communication networks across different groups by providing an incentive for each to cooperate and at least partially, to rely on each other. This will have a positive impact on social inclusion, integration, and good relations. Access to grants and grant aid has a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction and engagement between communities, including those with and without religious and/ or political beliefs, and those from differing racial groups	Moderate positive impact
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

*See Appendix 1 for details.

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	Yes - the Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 is an illustration of how the council can help enhance the lives of all communities through our services. The funds investment priorities aim at improving opportunities for enhanced access to grants, and to developing a network of mutually dependant groups across the council area, all of which have a role to play in removing barriers and creating opportunities for interaction for S75 people to mix positively and build relationships beyond their own identity groups. As programmes roll forward individual screening will be carried out as required.	
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

The Community Investment Fund – Phase 4 rules will apply to all internal council actors and external groups involved in the processing & receiving of grants and grant aid with a throughput which has yet to be determined, but which will build on previous phases of the programme. Therefore, there should be no impact on people with multiple identities.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project.

There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
- 2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
- 3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	
Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	It is considered that it is not necessary to carry out a full equality impact assessment on this pilot programme. This is because the scheme has been developed as the result of widespread community consultation and is open to all eligible community organisations in the area. No adverse impacts have been identified as a result of this screening. However, should any issues arise at a later stage, further consideration can be given.
Option 3	

<p>Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)</p> <p>[If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]</p>	
--	--

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

This is Phase 4 of a programme which has implemented the lessons learned from two pilot phases. To ensure there is representative take up across the community, the funding opportunity will be promoted widely, and a significant level of support will be provided to prospective applicants if necessary to ensure equality of opportunity in the application process. As programmes roll forward individual screening will be carried out as required.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3) – Not Applicable

If the activity/policy has been '**screened in**' for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? **No**. If yes, please provide details.

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:

Each Phase will be subject to ongoing evaluation to inform the proposed wider funding programme. It will be reviewed on an annual basis with final approval by Louise Moore, Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing (SRO).

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Colin McKenna	Programme Co-Ordinator	
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	02.09.25
Approved by: Sally Courtney	Head of Service	

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and ‘signed off’ by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact:

- a) The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are

- complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
 - d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
 - e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
 - f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Minor impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

No impact (none)

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Updated Template @ Oct 2022

Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Community Investment Fund Phase 4 – 2025 – 2026 - This policy is concerned with investment of over £1 million contribution to successful applicants across the council area. It is a further phase of three initial phases awarding over £1.9M to 7 local groups:

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Community Investment Fund – Phase 4

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

This policy is concerned with investment of £3.3 million throughout each of the seven District Electoral Areas of Council.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

N/A

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

N/A

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

N/A

SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The programme will focus on local concerns as well as continue to address the legacy of Covid 19 and pro-actively support communities going forward. The programme will impact equitably in both rural and urban areas within the Council area and specifically within the 7 DEA areas identified below, many of which have a rural/urban mix.

DEA	Population Census 2019	% 2019	Population Census 2021	% 2021
Killultagh	21,450	14.6	22,013	14.8
Downshire West	17,110	11.6	17,190	11.5
Lisburn North	23,050	15.7	23,449	15.7
Lisburn South	23,610	16.0	24,321	16.3
Downshire East	16,720	11.3	16,746	11.2
Castlereagh South	24,010	16.3	23,488	15.8
Castlereagh East	20,860	14.2	21,899	14.7

Source: NISRA/NINIS

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

It is not envisaged that the plan will advertently impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The focus of the Community Investment Fund is to ensure that there is balanced investment, subject to need, throughout the Council area with a specific focus to respond to the needs and demands identified by each of the 7 DEA areas to take in both urban and rural considerations equitably.

SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

LCCC Corporate Plan 2018 – 2022
LCCC Departmental Plans
LCCC Investment Plan
LCCC Equality Scheme
LCCC Community Plan 2017 – 2032

According to the L&CCC Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas and the population forecast is set to grow by 8,300 residents between 2018-2032 (0.4% per annum, twice that of the NI equivalent). L&CCC's population growth outlook between 2018-2032 on average will be 1.65% making it the third highest across NI districts and 0.35 points above the NI rate.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

The Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) has identified the following as key areas.

Rural Businesses

Rural Tourism

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas

Education or Training in Rural Areas

Poverty in Rural Areas

Deprivation in Rural Areas

Rural Development

Agri-Environment

If the response to Section 3A was **YES** GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

N/A

SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

As previously identified in Section 2B, the Scheme proposed will have a positive impact on the local rural business community and the Council area as a whole.

According to the Interim Local Area Plan (2019), approximately 85% of the total population of the council area reside in settlements and 15% outside settlements in the rural area.

In 2023, 58% of businesses were based in rural area in Northern Ireland. The business base in the region as a whole is predominantly small to medium enterprises with a dominance of micro business. In terms of businesses located only in rural areas, 94% are defined as micro (having less than 10 employees). Agriculture plays a more important role in the economy of NI than is the case in the rest of the UK, it generates a higher proportion of total GVA (Gross valued added) in the economy and accounts for a higher proportion of our employment. Furthermore 78% of the total NI land area is in agricultural use. Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions e.g. the slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, whilst 14% of tourism expenditure takes place in rural areas (compared with 86% in urban) are further examples of challenges facing the small rural businesses in Northern Ireland.

In 2021 there were 5,170 VAT/PAYE registered businesses in the L&CCC area (NISRA). The close proximity to Belfast puts the L&CCC area in an advantageous position whereby the population density is a way to generate an increase in sales and revenue.

Considering that almost half of the L&CCC district is rural, the regeneration of the LCCC area, is a key priority for the Council whom over the next 10 years will continue to invest in regeneration initiatives.

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes No If the response is **NO GO TO Section 5C.**

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2032 has been given due consideration when developing this Community Investment Fund along with engagement by the council's Senior Management Team with Heads of Service and Elected Members during July and August 2020 with a view to the consideration of measures that would assist recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic. There was a comprehensive review of the full programme which was presented to the Full Council in June 2025. This informed the decision to agree the recommendations for the implementation of this Phase 4 of the programme. This also included, importantly, contact with and feedback from local communities, both urban and rural.

The subsequent list of activities/projects that was compiled by urban and rural stakeholders across the DEAs (see table below) ensured that each DEA would benefit from relevant activities/projects and that in the main these should be quick delivery, short-term projects of (relatively) low value. The necessity of this approach it was considered would deal with local concerns as well as continue to address Covid 19 and pro-actively support communities going forward.

Mid-Year Population Estimates 2021 – District Electoral Areas

DEA	Population Census 2019	% 2019	Population Census 2021	% 2021
Killultagh	21,450	14.6	22,013	14.8
Downshire West	17,110	11.6	17,190	11.5
Lisburn North	23,050	15.7	23,449	15.7
Lisburn South	23,610	16.0	24,321	16.3
Downshire East	16,720	11.3	16,746	11.2
Castlereagh South	24,010	16.3	23,488	15.8
Castlereagh East	20,860	14.2	21,899	14.7

Source: NISRA/NINIS

If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

N/A

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Colin McKenna
Position/Grade:	Programme Co Ordinator
Division/Branch	Portfolio, IT & Commercialisation
Signature:	<i>Colin McKenna</i>
Date:	03 September 2025
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Sally Courtney
Position/Grade:	Head of Communities
Division/Branch:	Communities
Signature:	
Date:	

Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	06 May 2026
Report from:	Director of Communities & Wellbeing

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Canal Boxing Academy – Fundraising Event

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 Correspondence has been received from Canal Boxing Academy requesting that Council consider supporting a fundraising event taking place on Saturday 23 May 2026 by way of attendance, ticket purchase, sponsorship or donations and the likes. It is noted that tickets are at a cost of £80 per person/ticket. A copy of the correspondence can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The purpose of the event is to raise funds towards completion of the new boxing club facility at the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields. Council has been supporting this project through the Community Investment Fund and PEACEPLUS workstreams, along with approval of a community asset transfer of the land. The project aims to bring people together through the medium of boxing and exercise. It is cross community in nature and works with people of all ages and abilities.
- 1.3 The Communities and Wellbeing Committee considered a similar request from Canal Boxing Club (September 2024) in relation to a fundraising gala and agreed to sponsor a table for 10 people for the charity event on 14 September 2024 at the Europa Hotel, Belfast at a cost of £800.
- 1.4 **Key Issues**
Council deliver several funding workstreams through targeted programmes and governance, it is therefore recommended that financial support is limited to the purchase of two tickets. The tickets will be for the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, or their nominees.
- 1.5 There have been times when requests have missed Committee deadlines and Members may wish to consider that going forward requests will be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair, through delegated authority in consultation with the relevant Head of Service. The outcome of this will be brought back for noting.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Member agree to:

1. The purchase of two tickets for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, or their nominees to attend the event and that
2. Delegated authority is granted to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, in consultation with the relevant Head of Service for future requests of this nature to be agreed.

3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	£160. Provision for the expenditure, if approved, will be identified within current revenue budgets.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has equality and good relations screening been carried out? Please see Appendix 2.	Yes
4.2	Summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	N/A
4.4	Summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. Not required – this is an application for support from a sporting club within the Council's area.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Canal Boxing Club Letter (<i>redacted</i>) Appendix 2 – Equality Screening Documentation
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Canal Boxing Academy
20 Gregg Street
Lisburn
BT27 5AD
Phone: 07719657628
Email: canalboxing@outlook.com

To whom it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing on behalf of Canal Boxing Academy to invite you to support a very special fundraising event taking place on Saturday 23rd May 2026 at Down Royal Racecourse, helping us raise vital funds towards completing our new boxing club.

Canal Boxing Academy was founded in 2009, and the past 14 years we have worked tirelessly within the community, supporting young people and promoting discipline, confidence, and reaching this stage means a great deal to everyone involved.

Tickets for the event are £80 per person, with all proceeds going directly towards helping us finish the new club. The evening will bring together local businesses, supported, the members of the community for a memorable and meaningful event.

We would be honoured if you could support us by attending, purchasing tickets, offering sponsorship, donating raffle prizes, or helping to promote the event. We would also be happy discuss ways to recognise your business for its support.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this and for supporting local community initiatives. Your support would truly make a difference

If you're looking any more information, please don't hesitate to contact on

* REDACTED *

Canal boxing academy
Registered charity
Charity commission ni
Charity no. 108323

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template (Oct 2022)

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

Sponsor Requests – Canal Boxing Club.

Name of the activity/policy/project As above

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

No, one-off project.

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

To assist the boxing club in developing a community sports hub.

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

Open to all.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Community & Wellbeing Department.

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

Nominated officers within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, namely the Communities & Wellbeing department to deliver support the anniversary.

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

Yes/No

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

- Lack of funds available to contribute to the programme.

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

External Customers – Past & present players, family & friends, staff, volunteers and wider residents who may partake in anniversary programme.

Other public sector organisations - N/A

Voluntary/community/trade unions – Canal Boxing Club

Other

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Community Planning Partners
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Corporate Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Connect, Invest, Transform investment Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

Most up to date NISRA population data from Census 2021 (published 22/09/22)

Lisburn and Castlereagh Census Data

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	2021 Census data indicates that 27% of the LCCC population were brought up in the Catholic religion while 73% were brought up in the Protestant & Other Christian religion
Political Opinion	There would be a generally accepted link between religion and political opinion. In this instance the majority political opinion being Unionist
Racial Group	Using the same Census/boundary data indicates that just over 4% of the population were from an ethnic minority group
Age	The population in 2021 totalled 149,106: 28,331 (0-14 years) 44,731 (15-39 years) 49,205 (40-64 years) 26,839 (65+ years)
Marital Status	For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 33% single 52% married or civil partnership 3% separated. 6% Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership. 6% Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership
Sexual Orientation	The Census 2021 data indicates that 91% identified as Straight or heterosexual, 2% of the household population in identified as Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation, while 7% Prefer not to say or not stated.
Men & Women Generally	The LCCC population (2021) was 51% female and 49% male. This reflects the overall NI position
Disability	Using the same census data as above indicates that 32% of the population had a long-term health problem or disability
People with and without Dependants	Dependants would generally include three main categories: The care of a child or children The care of an elderly relative/person The care of someone with a disability

Needs, experiences and priorities.

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

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered
Political Opinion	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered
Racial Group	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered
Age	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered.
Marital Status	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered
Sexual Orientation	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered
Men & Women Generally	No different needs in relation to the programme being delivered
Disability	The programme and contribution from LCCC will be inclusive for those with disabilities
People with and without Dependants	It is acknowledged that those with dependants may have different needs to address this, LCCC will engage with Friends' School Lisburn to ensure consideration is given to these needs when implementing the Anniversary programme.

Part 2. Screening questions

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	No impact	None
Political Opinion	No impact	None
Racial Group	No impact	None
Age	Positive impact due to concession rates	Minor
Marital Status	No impact	None
Sexual Orientation	No impact	None
Men & Women Generally	No impact	None
Disability	Positive impact due to disability rates	Minor

People with and without Dependants	Positive impact to include all	Minor
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* See Appendix 1 for details.

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

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Political Opinion		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Racial Group		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Age		<u>No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.</u>
Marital Status		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Sexual Orientation		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Men & Women Generally		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Disability		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
People with and without Dependants		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

No

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

Yes/No [delete as appropriate] If yes, give details/specify which action.

The programme should be encouraged to include participation of those with disabilities.

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	No direct impact	None
Political Opinion	No direct impact	None
Racial Group	No direct impact	None

*See Appendix 1 for details.

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief	Encouraging delivery agent of programme to promote inclusivity across all categories	
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

No direct impact identified in relation to this.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

1. **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
2. **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate.
3. **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more

groups, so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	
Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	Programme is a 'one-off' request with delivery falling within the remit of the requestor. LCCC's contribution will be to support a larger programme of events. LCCC will continue to engage with all schools through various programmes such as Community Planning
Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended, or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

N/A

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)

If the activity/policy has been '**screened in**' for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

Two elements to monitoring:

- Monitoring the activity generally as part of normal review and evaluation or service improvement**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an

equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by:		
Reviewed by:		
Approved by: [normally a Head of Service]	Brendan Courtney	

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- Approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy.
- Included with Committee reports, as appropriate.
- Sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting, and publishing on the LCCC website.
- Shared with relevant colleagues.
- Made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact (none)

Minor impact (none)

No impact (none)

Updated Template @ Oct 2022

Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	05 May 2026
Report from:	Head of Communities

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Community Bursary Scheme 2025/26 – Table of Outcome

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Community Bursary Scheme forms part of the councils DEA Local Investment Programme aimed at supporting individuals and organisations with access to progression routes for sport, music, language and/or cultural activities. For the 2025/26 programme, Members approved a budget of £25,000 with an agreed underspend from 2024/25 of £3,364 being rolled into this financial year therefore making the total available grant aid of £28,364.
1.2	Members agreed the criteria for the Community Bursary Scheme in April 2024. Applications are assessed on an ongoing basis, as they are received, within the cycle of the fund. They are agreed under delegated authority by the Chair and Vice Chair, in consultation with the Head of Communities. As part of the ongoing arrangements, the outcome of applications is brought to committee meetings for noting.
1.3	Between January and March 2026, a total of 16 applications were received. Of these, 15 met the eligibility criteria and were approved, with awards totalling £12,073. The detailed outcomes are provided in Appendix 1 .
1.4	Following the issue of letters of offer, two applicants subsequently withdrew, creating capacity for additional applications to be supported. The overall expenditure for the Community Bursary Scheme in 2025/26 amounted to £27,768, with a remaining balance of £596. It is proposed that this underspend be carried forward and utilised within the 2026/27 programme.
1.5	Successful applicants are required to submit monitoring information upon completion of their activity, providing learning and demonstrating the range of initiatives supported through the fund.
1.6	Given the continuation of this fund for 2026-27, future updates will be provided to Members through the Information & Correspondence Schedule.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the attached Community Bursary Scheme outcomes for January – March 2026, and 2. Agree the remaining balance of £596 from the current year be rolled over into the Community Bursary Scheme for 2026/27.
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>

Full expenditure for April 2025 - March 2026 as outlined below:

- £6,775 awarded to 9 applicants (April – June 2025)
- £4,920 awarded to 6 applicants (July - September 2025)
- £4,000 awarded to 4 applicants (October – December 2025)
- £12,073 awarded to 15 applications (January – March 2026)

4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Outcome Report
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Outcome Report
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Community Bursary Scheme – Table of Outcomes 2025/26
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Community Bursary Scheme 2025/26

April - June 2025

Successful Outcomes

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome	Notes
1	Individual	£650	Participation at World Pipe Band Championships	Approved	
2	Ballymacash Sports Academy	£850	Level 3 Foundation Certificate in People Practice	Approved	Withdrawn
3	Individual	£1,000	World Drug Free powerlifting championships in Rome	Approved	
4	Individual	£780	Learning and development at work Course for Community Sector role	Approved	
5	Wallace School PTA	£600	Maths Challenge National Final, London - representing Northern Ireland as the regional finalists	Approved	
6	Individual	£400	Participation at Gaeltacht	Approved	
7	Individual	£345	Participation at Gaeltacht	Approved	
8	3rd Belfast Boys Brigade	£1,000	Kings Badge completion in South-End	Approved	
9	Individual	£1,000	Junior Darts Corporation World Championship representing NI	Approved	
10	2 Crew 4 U	£1,000	Dance group selected to perform on Broadway	Approved	

Unsuccessful Applications

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome
1	Individual	£1,000	Financial assistance towards commercial business	Ineligible as application did not meet eligibility criteria
2	You2Me Play	£1,000	Financial assistance towards regular programming costs	Ineligible as application did not meet eligibility criteria
3	Individual	£1,000	Edinburgh Cup football tournament	Ineligible as application was incomplete
4	Individual	£150	Participation at Gaeltacht	Ineligible due to retrospective request
5	Individual	£500	Participation at Gaeltacht	Ineligible as applicant previously received funding within the allocated timeframe

July - September 2025**Successful Applications**

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome
1	Individual	£470	Level 1,2 & 3 EDCL online course to support community role	Approved
2	Magheragall District No. 9	£500	Historical group visit	Approved
3	Derriaghy CC FC	£950	Participation at Foyle Cup to represent Lisburn & Castlereagh	Approved
4	Individual	£1,000	Representing Northern Ireland at horse riding competition in England	Approved
5	Hillsborough Ploughing Society	£1,000	Participation at World Ploughing Championships	Approved
6	Individual	£1,000	Participation in World Transplant Games	Approved

Unsuccessful Applications

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome
1	Individual	£532	National Diploma in Dental Nursing	Ineligible - Personal finance request with no direct community benefit
2	Individual	£529	Level 2 Counselling Course	Ineligible - Personal finance request with no direct community benefit
3	Individual	£1,000	Graduate Entry Medicine	Ineligible - Personal finance request with no direct community benefit
4	Pride of Ballybeen	£800	Attendance at four band parade competitions	Ineligible as does not meet eligibility criteria of scheme

October - December 2025

Successful Applications

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome	Notes
1	Lisburn Cricket Club	£1,000	Girls tournament - South Africa 2026	Approved	
2	Old Warren Primary School PTA	£1,000	Youth representation at UK Houses of Parliament	Approved	
3	Individual	£250	City & Guilds Level 3 Volunteer training	Approved	withdrawn
4	Individual	£1,000	National Highland Dance Competition	Approved	
5	Northern Cricket Union	£1,000	International Cricket competition	Approved	

Unsuccessful Applications

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome
1	Individual	£669	Level 4 Certificate in Teaching	Ineligible - Personal finance request with no direct community benefit
2	Happy Life Together CIC	£1,000	Arabic Language Classes	Ineligible as application did not meet eligibility criteria
3	Individual	£1,000	Undergraduate Degree in Social Work	Ineligible - Personal finance request with no direct community benefit
4	Individual	£1,000	Continuation of Ice Hockey participation	Ineligible as application did not meet eligibility criteria

January - March 2026

Successful Applications

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome
1	Individual	£1,000	Pre-professional Summer intensive at Steps on Broadway Academy	Approved
2	Kaleidoscope Dance	£1,000	Global Dance Competition San Sebastian, Spain	Approved
3	Individual	£500	World Irish Dance Championship, Chicago	Approved
4	Norney Henderson Magee School of Irish Dancing	£1,000	World Irish Dance Championships, Kilarney	Approved
5	Elite Dance Studios	£1,000	Global Dance Competition San Sebastian, Spain	Approved
6	Individual	£1,000	Representing NI in the Dance World Cup 2026 as individual dancer	Approved
7	Individual	£1,000	Attendance at the 26th World Scout Jamboree in Poland	Approved
8	Individual	£1,000	International/Inter-Regional Hockey Competition	Approved
9	Individual	£1,000	Dance World Cup World Finals 2026 Dublin as individual dancer	Approved
10	Individual	£1,000	Dance World Cup World Finals 2026 Dublin as individual dancer	Approved
11	Individual	£250	Dance World Cup World Finals 2026 Dublin as part of Ballet Group	Approved
12	Lisburn Young Defenders Flute Band	£1,000	Participation at music competition	Approved
13	Individual	£350.00	European U17 Netball Championships Aberdeen	Approved
14	Drumlough Pipe Band	£635	Volunteer Development Training	Approved
15	Individual	£337.50	Attendance at Colaiste Bhríde	Approved

Unsuccessful Applications

No	Applicant	Amount requested	Description of funding request	Assessment outcome
1	Magheragall District No. 9	£300	Educational visit	Ineligible as applicant previously received funding within the allocated timeframe



Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	5 May 2026
Report from:	Head of Communities

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Addressing Poverty & Social Exclusion Fund

1.0	<u>Background</u>
1.1	The DEA Local Investment Plan 2026/27 agreed by the Council in April 2026 proposed a grant aid programme to address Poverty & Social Exclusion with an indicative budget of £80,000.
1.2	The Funding Programme has a core purpose of supporting community-led initiatives that responds to local need and strengthens the wellbeing, resilience, and inclusion of residents.
1.3	<p>To achieve this aim, the fund seeks to support projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) enable local groups to strengthen resilience by providing inclusive spaces, activities, and supports that reduce isolation, hardship, and vulnerability among residents. b) reduce the impact of cost-of-living pressures through community-led initiatives that help alleviate financial strain on households and enhance access to essential supports c) deliver practical assistance to address exclusion and hardship such as the enhancement of clothing and uniform banks, school holiday sustenance, inclusive community activities, and other practical supports that ease financial and social pressures. d) promote inclusive resource-sharing initiatives such as strengthening community fridges, lending libraries, and similar initiatives that promote shared access to resources and reduce the effects of poverty e) support innovative approaches to addressing poverty and social exclusion that demonstrate new or creative ways of meeting local need, improving outcomes, or making more effective use of community assets.
1.4	The fund is designed to complement, rather than duplicate, existing foodbank and advice services, with priority given to applications that demonstrate effective partnership working and collaboration. The Fund cannot be used for activities claimed for in other funding streams such as Community Support Grant Aid, applicants must demonstrate additionality. Under the Funding Programme, applicants can apply for up to a maximum of £3,000.

2.0 **Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Addressing Poverty & Social Exclusion Fund is open to constituted community/voluntary organisations based in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area that meet the following criteria:
- 2.2
- a) Have an open and accountable governing document (Constitution or Articles and Memorandum of Association, or applicable governing document) that has been properly adapted;
 - b) Hold a bank account in the name of the organisation, which requires at least two (unrelated) signatories
 - c) Provide an annual set of independently examined financial accounts,
 - d) Have a Management Committee or Governing Board, elected by its membership, and elected Office Bearers
 - e) Have appropriate Safeguarding Policies for protecting Children and Vulnerable adults, who are involved as part of the group's programme
 - f) Have appropriate Health and Safety Policies
 - g) Have a relevant Public Liability Insurance, to cover all risk associated with the activities of the organisation.

3.0 **What the Fund Will Support**

- 3.1 The fund can support a wide range of activities and costs that directly address poverty and social exclusion, including but not limited to:
- 3.2
- a) Community based programme resources that address social exclusion and poverty
 - b) Volunteer support costs such as training or delivery of programmes
 - c) Equipment to address poverty and social exclusion
 - d) Light refreshments, transport support, or essential items that enable participation by people experiencing hardship
 - e) Resources to support inclusion both physical and revenue.

4.0 **What the Fund Will Not Support**

- 4.1 The Fund will not support activities or costs that fall outside its core purpose of addressing poverty and social exclusion, including the following:
- 4.2
- a) Activities or expenditure that duplicate or replace provision funded through other Council grant aid programmes
 - b) Statutory services or activities that are the responsibility of other public bodies
 - c) General fundraising activities
 - d) Individual financial assistance, including cash payments
 - e) Costs that do not represent value for money
 - f) Staffing or running costs that are not directly attributable to the delivery of agreed project outcomes.
- 4.3 Project outcomes should complement the Community Planning priorities and complement wider initiatives such as the Social Supermarket and Integrated Advice Services, supporting a coordinated approach to community hardship.

4.4	It is anticipated that the Fund will open in May and close for applications mid-June. At the April Communities and Wellbeing Committee Members requested that consideration be given to approving the outcomes of the assessment of applications in a timely fashion to enable successful applicants to avail of the funding to assist with programmes during the summer months.	
4.5	Similar to other funds in the Scheme of Delegation it is recommended that, to ensure release of funds over the summer months, that the Head of Communities agree the outcome of assessment and subsequent funding awards.	
5.0	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>It is recommended that Members consider and agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the details and eligibility criteria for the grant scheme and 2. that, following assessment against the agreed criteria, delegated authority is granted to the Head of Communities, to agree the award of grants, with the outcomes subsequently reported for noting to a future Community and Wellbeing Committee. 	
6.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>£80,000 as agreed through the DEA Local Investment Programme.</p>	
7.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>	
7.1	<p>Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?</p> <p>This has been screened as part of the DEA Local Investment Programme</p>	Yes
7.2	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out</p> <p>The programme has been reviewed and re-screened with continued mitigations in place to include support to those who require it regarding accessing financial assistance and also ensuring that applicants consider equality and diversity needs.</p>	
7.3	<p>Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?</p> <p>This has been screened as part of the DEA Local Investment Programme</p>	Yes
7.4	<p>Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.</p> <p>A Rural Needs Assessment has been undertaken and identifies that whilst the programme will not impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, continued monitoring and evaluation will be in place to ensure there is equitable delivery of projects and programmes according to the need and demand identified in rural areas across the DEA's.</p>	

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - EQIA DEA Local Investment Programme
Appendix 2 - RNIA DEA Local Investment Programme

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

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

This policy sets out investment plans across the seven District Electoral Areas (DEAs) for 2026/2027, as part of a wider £3.4 million programme over five years. It includes funding for projects, such as the Community Bursary Scheme, Community Facilities Fund, Sports & Open Spaces Fund, community conversations and initiatives to address poverty and social exclusion. While some variation in funding will occur based on local needs, all elements of this programme will be delivered across each of the seven DEA's. This approach supports fairness, addresses local priorities, and promotes community engagement, particularly in response to ongoing social and economic challenges.

Name of the activity/policy/project

Local District Electoral Area (DEA) – Investment Plan 2026-2027

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

This is an existing one being the fifth year of the programme however the 2026-2027 programme contains new elements.

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

1 Address local concerns/needs
2 Address poverty and social exclusion
3 Support community engagement and further build capacity
4 Improve corporate effectiveness
5 Addresses emerging needs

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

While the programme is inclusive and open to all, certain elements are expected to have particular positive impacts for specific groups: rural residents and people with disabilities - the grant-aid components are intended to enhance connectivity, accessibility, and availability of services and high-quality facilities within local areas. This is likely to deliver greater benefits to rural communities and individuals with disabilities, who may face higher barriers to accessing services; People on low incomes and those living in deprived areas- the programme's focus on addressing poverty and

promoting social inclusion will provide more substantial advantages for residents experiencing financial hardship or living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Overall, although the programme is universal in scope, its targeted design means that vulnerable or marginalised groups are expected to benefit, helping to promote equality of opportunity across all Section 75 categories.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council – Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

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

The policy is owned by LCCC and implemented through the Leisure & Community Wellbeing Directorate however the delivery of the overall programme will cross-departmental approach.

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

Yes

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

Financial

The budgetary position of this programme has been agreed through the standard governance process. Due to particular elements being demand-led, there is a risk of over demand resulting in financial implications of delivery – similar to under-demand of programmes. For the grant-aid programmes, there will be an open call for organisations across the council area with key area’s targeted through workshops whereby uptake had been low in previous years.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon? Delete if not applicable

Residents - Potentially as beneficiaries of successful applicants

Other public sector organisations - Not quantifiable at this point

Other - Elected members & residents within the DEA areas involved.

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
1 Corporate Plan 2024-2028	LCCC Corporate plan and ambitions 2024/2028 - Lisburn & Castlereagh (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)
2 Departmental Plans	LCCC Departments

3 Investment Plan	LCCC
4 Council's Equality Scheme	LCCC Equality Scheme - Lisburn & Castlereagh (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)
5 Community Plan 2017-2032	LCCC Community Planning - Lisburn & Castlereagh (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

The Council's Community Plan 2017-2032 has been given due consideration when developing this DEA Investment Programme along with engagement by the council's Senior Management Team with Heads of Service and Elected Members during September to December 2021 with updates during 2022 and the first part of 2023. This was with a view to the consideration of measures that would assist the continued recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic and address issues as they emerge from the cost of living crisis. This also included, importantly, regular contact with and feedback from local communities.

The subsequent list of activities/projects that was compiled and updated by stakeholders across the DEAs ensured that each DEA would benefit from relevant activities/projects and that in the main these should be quick delivery, short-term projects of (relatively) low value. The necessity of this approach it was considered would deal with local concerns as well as continue to address the aftermath of the Covid 19 pandemic and the issues emerging from the ongoing cost of living crisis, as well as pro-actively support communities going forward.

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

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information		
Religious Belief	NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)
	Catholic	42.3	23.9
	Protestant and Other Christian	37.7	48.7
	Other	17.3	1.8
	No Religion	17.3	24.1
	Not Stated	1.6	1.4

<p>Political Opinion</p>	<p>The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the council area’s political opinion. Note: only 52% of those eligible submitted a vote.</p>																							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>DUP (%)</th> <th>Alliance (%)</th> <th>UUP (%)</th> <th>SF (%)</th> <th>SDLP (%)</th> <th>Ind (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>35</td> <td>32.5</td> <td>15</td> <td>10</td> <td>5</td> <td>2.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)	35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5												
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<p>Marital Status</p>	<p>For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 30.65% single; 53.78% married; 0.10% same sex partnership;</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>NI Census 2021</th> <th>N. Ireland (%)</th> <th>LCCC (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single</td> <td>38</td> <td>33.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Married</td> <td>43</td> <td>51.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civil Partnership</td> <td>0.3</td> <td>0.19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Separated</td> <td>4</td> <td>3.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Divorced</td> <td>6</td> <td>5.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Widowed</td> <td>6</td> <td>6.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3.27% separated; 5.52% divorced; 6.68% widowed.</p>			NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)	Single	38	33.07	Married	43	51.4	Civil Partnership	0.3	0.19	Separated	4	3.1	Divorced	6	5.9	Widowed	6	6.2
NI Census 2021	N. Ireland (%)	LCCC (%)																						
Single	38	33.07																						
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Gay or lesbian	1.17	1.21																						

	Bisexual	0.75	0.69
	Other sexual orientation	0.17	0.15
	Prefer not to Say	4.58	3,72
	Not Stated	3.30	2.87
Men & Women Generally	2021 Census Information - The population of the LCCC Council Area is 49% male and 51% female.		
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 50,121 disabilities or residents with 1 or more long-term health conditions were reported within the 149,107 residents' population in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area that are over 16.</p> <p>66.84% of the council area reported they experienced no condition. In 2021, 3% of the eligible population in the council area were claiming Disability Living Allowance, 7% were claiming Personal Independent Payments and 3% were claiming Attendance Allowance.</p>		
People with and without Dependents	<p>2021 Census Information – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is just slightly above the mid – point Northern Ireland in relation to dependent children in household between ages of 0 - 4; 5 – 9; 10 – 14 but is in bottom position in relation to children & young adults aged 15 – 19 years.</p> <p>In 2021, of the 60,143 households in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City council area 14.4% (8,661) had dependent children; 10.98% of the population on average provide unpaid care, with 3.4% providing in excess of 50 hours per week.</p>		

Mid-Year Population Estimates 2019 & 2021 – District Electoral Areas

DEA	Population - Census 2019	% 2019	Population Census 2021	% 2021
Killultagh	21450	14.6	22,013	14.8
Downshire West	17110	11.6	17,190	11.5
Lisburn North	23050	15.7	23,449	15.7
Lisburn South	23610	16.0	24,321	16.3

Downshire East	16720	11.3	16,746	11.2
Castlereagh South	24010	16.3	23,488	15.8
Castlereagh East	20860	14.2	21,899	14.7
	146,810		149,106	100

Source: NISRA/NINIS

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

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	There is a need for all groups to have equal access to funding. No further differential needs identified that won't be covered in the programme.
Political Opinion	
Racial Group	There is a need for targeted promotion to different groups who may not be aware of funding opportunities and provide additional pre application advice and support. Information needs to be accessible, including information in languages other than English and access to translators if required.
Age	There is a need for older and younger people to have equal access to funding, a need for targeted promotion to different groups who may not be aware of funding opportunities and provide additional pre application advice and support. Information may need to be provided in alternative formats, such as hard copy rather than digital information.
Marital Status	No differential needs identified that won't be covered in the programme, there is a need for all groups to have equal access to funding
Sexual Orientation	
Men & Women Generally	
Disability	There is a need for disabled people to have equal access to funding and a need for targeted promotion to different groups who may not be aware of funding opportunities. Additional pre application advice and support should be available, including reasonable adjustments. Information

	may need to be provided in alternative formats, such as braille or easy read.
People with and without Dependants	There is a need for those with (and without) dependants to have equal access to funding and a need for targeted promotion to different groups who may not be aware of funding opportunities. Additional pre application advice and support may be required and there is a need to ensure this is offered in a manner which suits people with dependants (e.g. time of day / online options etc).

Part 2. Screening questions

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	No differential impact identified	None
Political Opinion	No differential impact identified	None
Racial Group	Targeted promotion, additional pre application advice and support will hopefully enhance equality of opportunity.	Minor
Age		Minor
Marital Status	No differential impact identified	None
Sexual Orientation		None
Men & Women Generally		None
Disability	Targeted promotion, additional pre application advice and support will hopefully enhance equality of opportunity.	Minor
People with and without Dependants	Targeted promotion, additional pre application advice and support will hopefully enhance equality of opportunity.	Minor

* See Appendix 1 for details.

2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		Successful applicants to the grant-aid programmes will be required to provide and comply with their organisations own Equal Opportunities Policy & procedures. This will be verified as part of the assessment process.
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men & Women Generally		
Disability		
People with and without Dependents		

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/~~No~~ If yes, specify which action.

Theme 2: Access to Information

2.1 Some individuals/ groups may be disadvantaged by not having full access to information provided by us (Ensure information is accessible to all)

Theme 3: Our Community

3.3 Some groups may feel that they can't access available grants (Access to grants)

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
- to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

Yes - If yes, give details/specify which action.

Promotion & Engagement

- 3.1 Identify relevant opportunities and encourage participation of disabled people through targeted promotion
- 3.2 Ensure disabled people and representative groups are targeted proactively in all council consultations and engagement events/ initiatives
- 3.3 Continue to work with disabled individuals and their representative groups.

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	It is expected that investments via the DEA programme will impact positively on good relations, by supporting interaction and collaboration between people of different political opinions. Specific impacts will be further assessed through equality screening of individual projects. Impacts will continue to be monitored to ensure there is balanced and equitable investment across all DEAs	Moderate positive impact
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

*See Appendix 1 for details.

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	Consideration will be given to promoting equality of opportunity for people of different religious beliefs, political opinions, and	
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

	<p>racial groups through the development of inclusive funding criteria and accessible promotional materials.</p>	
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Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

The Council recognises that no individual sits exclusively within one Section 75 category and that people with multiple identities (for example, disabled older people or individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds with dependants) may experience compounded barriers. The DEA Investment Programme will address this through inclusive design, targeted support, and ongoing monitoring of uptake and outcomes to assess impact across multiple identities.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

- 1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
- 2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
- 3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	
Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	The policy aims noted above includes mitigation as set out below which, negate the need for full EQIA.
Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

The use of grant-aid and engagement initiatives is expected to benefit positively each DEA. The equitable and proportionate approach taken by this policy acknowledges that equality of opportunity is not “treating all equally” and by so doing will help ensure each DEA is supported as required to meet local concerns/needs.

Mitigation includes individual projects to be Equality Screened to identify any impacts on Section 75 groups.

Targeted promotion to Section 75 groups and monitoring of uptake.

Supporting Section 75 groups as outlined (including providing additional support and adjustments) based on targeted need. The DEA Investment Programme will be monitored monthly by the relevant Officers. This ongoing review and monitoring will address any significant negative equality considerations that may arise on a regular basis.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3) Not applicable

If the activity/policy has been '**screened in**' for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? **No.** ~~If yes, please provide details.~~

Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:

The DEA Investment Programme will be monitored monthly through the allocated officers responsible for delivery.

This DEA Investment Programme is subject to ongoing evaluation to inform the proposed wider funding programme. It will be reviewed on an annual basis with final approval by Louise Moore, Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing (SRO).

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Alison Prentice	Acting Community Development & Resources Manager	19/03/2026
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	24/03/2026
Approved by: Victoria Jackson	Head of Communities	25/03/2026

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact:

- a) The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;

- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Minor impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

No impact (none)

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Updated Template @ Oct 2022

Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

DEA Local Investment Plan 2026-27

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

DEA Local Investment Plan 2026-27

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

As part of the five-year DEA Local Investment Plan, the key drivers identified to support prioritization include

- Supports community engagement/community capacity
- Proposal addresses local concerns
- Improves corporate effectiveness
- Addresses emerging needs
- Addresses poverty/social exclusion

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

n/a

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

n/a

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

n/a

SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The DEA Local Investment Plan is likely to have a positive and meaningful impact on people living in rural areas through its targeted workstreams, which include grant aid and localised initiatives designed to address specific community needs. Rural communities often experience greater challenges in accessing services, facilities, and opportunities due to factors such as limited public transport, reduced access to amenities, digital connectivity issues, and higher levels of social isolation.

Through the provision of grant aid and locally tailored interventions, the Plan supports the enhancement of community facilities, development of local infrastructure, and delivery of programmes that directly respond to identified rural needs. These investments will help strengthen the capacity of rural groups, improve access to local services, and create more opportunities for participation, connection, and community wellbeing. The focus on locally driven solutions also ensures that rural communities are empowered to shape services and activities that reflect their unique circumstances and priorities.

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

The grant aid elements will be available for each DEA and whilst these strands will benefit all areas, it is envisaged that rural communities may gain more direct outputs from this scheme as it is widely known that rural communities lack more services and amenities in comparison to urban dwellers (lack of transport , health care, school, digital poverty to name a few)

In developing the programme, we have been mindful of the importance/significance of local community facilities to the lives of people living in rural area who may find it challenging to access services in urban area due to issues with transport, cost, time, poverty, age/disability.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

N/A

SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

Direct consultation and local knowledge from stakeholders within a rural setting including community leaders, voluntary organisations and statutory partners will be considered when adopting any programme for delivery on behalf of council. The council's Community Services works with internal council teams such as Community Planning and Economic Development to obtain relevant information regarding statistics. Furthermore, council strategies such as the Peace PLUS strategy and Good Relations audit have been considered.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

Rural communities tend to be more socially isolated on a number of platforms. Often characterised by lack of amenities such as school, shops, limited public transport, limited access to medical care, poor broadband or mobile coverage, and cohesion; More often there is a lack of confidence and many folk experience lower self -esteem and suffer from mental health and poverty.

Key issues include the need for local services such as those that can be provided by community groups, especially for groups such as young people, older people, disabled people, carers to reduce barriers to participation such as cost and transport.

LCCC has considered the impact of poverty and social isolation on vulnerable groups in rural areas and how living in a rural areas can exacerbate the effects of poverty and social isolation. In particular it has looked at effects that living in a rural area can have on financial poverty, accessing key services and social isolation and at potential measures for alleviating the effects. Council has also recognised a need for more new and innovative approaches to dealing with the issues in rural areas which take account of particular circumstances which people in rural areas face. This programme therefore offers the opportunity, to reduce inequality and broaden community engagement with the ultimate objective to provide better access to community needs whilst improving community links and networks.

If the response to Section 3A was **YES** GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

N/A

SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

In considering the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, several key issues were examined. Rural dwellers often face distinct challenges compared with those living in urban locations. These include financial poverty, limited access to key services, reduced availability of public transport, and lower levels of digital connectivity. These factors can lead to increased social isolation, reduced opportunities for participation, and barriers to community engagement. The DEA Local Investment Plan has recognised that rural communities frequently have fewer accessible amenities—such as health services, shops, schools, and community facilities—which can disproportionately impact vulnerable groups including older people, young people, carers, and people with disabilities. Issues such as digital poverty and limited broadband/mobile coverage were also considered as they contribute to reduced access to information, services, and opportunities.

The Plan also took into account the importance of physical accessibility within local facilities and the need for investments that enable community groups to provide more inclusive services. Strengthening community infrastructure and capacity, improving access to local services, and addressing social isolation were identified as essential to supporting wellbeing and reducing inequalities faced by rural residents. These considerations have helped shape the focus of the workstreams, ensuring that the Plan responds effectively to the specific circumstances and barriers experienced by rural communities.

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes No If the response is **NO GO TO Section 5C.**

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

The development of the DEA Local Investment Plan has been directly influenced by the rural needs identified through consultation, local evidence and analysis of the challenges faced by rural communities. The Plan has been designed to ensure that rural dwellers—who often experience financial poverty, reduced access to services, limited transport options, and digital connectivity issues—are able to benefit fully from the workstreams and initiatives offered. The inclusion of grant aid and locally focused interventions reflects a recognition that rural communities require accessible, flexible and proportionate support to address deficits in local infrastructure, community facilities and service provision. The Plan therefore prioritises investment that enhances local facilities, strengthens community capacity and improves access to participation opportunities for those experiencing social isolation or barriers relating to cost, transport, disability or age.

During implementation, attention will be given to ensuring that rural groups are aware of funding opportunities and have appropriate support to engage with the programme. Monitoring arrangements will consider the balance of applications and outcomes across rural and urban areas, and any lower-than-expected uptake from rural communities will be reviewed to inform future design and delivery. This approach ensures that the Plan remains responsive to the specific needs of rural residents and continues to address inequalities experienced in rural areas.

If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Alison Prentice
Position/Grade:	Community Development & Resources Manager (Acting)
Division/Branch	Community Services
Signature:	Alison Prentice
Date:	15/03/2026
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Victoria Jackson
Position/Grade:	Head of Communities
Division/Branch:	Communities & Wellbeing
Signature:	Victoria Jackson
Date:	31/03/2026

Committee:	Communities and Wellbeing
Date:	05 May 2026
Report from:	Head of Parks and Amenities (Acting)

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Request to use Hillsborough Forest Carpark

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>	
1.1	A request has been received from Hillsborough Working Together to use Hillsborough Forest Car Park for one day to allow for accessible parking for their Twelfth of July Demonstration event to be held on Monday 13 th July 2026, along with infrastructure support. The main event will take place at the Fort Green within Hillsborough Forest Park.	
1.2	Council lease this site from the Forest Service, under DEARA. The lease allows for such a booking to be accepted. Officers have engaged with Forestry colleagues, and they have advised there are no planned works for that day.	
1.3	The organisers will be required to comply with all usual booking requirements such as providing adequate insurance and necessary risk assessments. They will also be responsible for ensuring take down of the event and associated site clear up and cleansing is actioned.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that Members agree to:	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of Hillsborough Forest Car Park and 2. Infrastructure support. 	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	To be managed via the Infrastructure Budget.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out	
	Please refer to appendix 2.	

4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. The RNIA has not been carried out as this is a third party booking request and mitigations would be out of our control.	

221

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Equipment Form Request (redacted) Appendix 2 – Equality Screening Documentation
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LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

Hillsborough Forest Car Park

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event to include set/take down time)

Monday 13th July 7am – 7pm

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; space required, content including vendors to be used, anticipated numbers attending etc)

Hillsborough Working Together are using the Fort for 12th July Demonstration and require use of the forest car park for accessible parking from 7am – 7pm on Monday 13th July.

4. Please tick the appropriate boxes to show the activities and facilities you intend to utilise.

Carnival/Procession	<input type="checkbox"/>	Live Music / Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairground Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-enactment Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marquees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lost Children Point	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	Barrier/Fencing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Portable Generator (Diesel Only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Power Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portable Staging	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food/Drink Concessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
PA System	<input type="checkbox"/>	On-Site Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stewarding/Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Market Stalls	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

The Council does not permit the use of the following on Council Property:

- Fireworks / Pyrotechnics
- Balloons
- Horses/Donkeys/Other Animals
- Petrol Generators
- Alcohol
- Barbecue
- Bonfire
- Agricultural Activities (e.g. Ploughing)
- Inflatables (e.g. Bouncy Castle)

5. Purpose of proposed Event (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

Community event for all.

6. **Facilities Required** (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

The fort has been booked with Historic Royal Palaces but HWT require use of the car park for accessible parking. Tourism have received approval from the forest service.

7. **Your Details**

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	Hillsborough Working Together
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	No
Community Group	Yes

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

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

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

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

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

Facility users

Allotments: Allotment holders, Disability groups, Horticultural workshops

Cemeteries: Mourners, cemetery visitors

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

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

Name of the activity/policy/project

Parks & Amenities parks & open spaces

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

This is a new policy.

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

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

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

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

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

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

The Council wish to make green open spaces as accessible for as many section 75 groups as possible. At a number of sites, where it is appropriate, tactile maps and braille signs will be installed. This means that many more sites will be accessible for those who are blind and partially sighted. Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play and Local Equipped Areas for Play will be installed in local communities, so that residents can access these areas in their own community. This will have a positive effect on those with particular political opinions, within racial groups and who have differing religious beliefs.

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

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

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Community & Wellbeing management team

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

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council owns the activity.

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

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

Yes

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

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

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

External Customers –

Other public sector organisations –

Voluntary/community/trade unions –

Other

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

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

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

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

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

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

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

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

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

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

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information												
Religious Belief	2021 Census data indicates that 27% of the LCCC population were brought up in the Catholic religion while 73% were brought up in the Protestant & Other Christian religion												
Political Opinion	<p>The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the Borough's political opinion. Note: only 52% of those eligible submitted a vote.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>DUP (%)</th> <th>Alliance (%)</th> <th>UUP (%)</th> <th>SF (%)</th> <th>SDLP (%)</th> <th>Ind (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>35</td> <td>32.5</td> <td>15</td> <td>10</td> <td>5</td> <td>2.5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)	35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5
DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)								
35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5								
Racial Group	Using the same Census/boundary data indicates that just over 4% of the population were from an ethnic minority group												
Age	The population in 2021 totalled 149,106: 28,331 (0-14 years) 44,731 (15-39 years) 49,205 (40-64 years) 26,839 (65+ years)												
Marital Status	For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 33% single 52% married or civil partnership 3% separated. 6% Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership. 6% Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership												

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

Needs, experiences and priorities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Experiences

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

Priorities

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

Part 2. Screening questions

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor
Political Opinion	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor

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

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

* See Appendix 1 for details.

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

Section 75 Category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Political Opinion		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Racial Group		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Age		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Marital Status		No opportunities identified in relation to

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

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

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

No

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

1. to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

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

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

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

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

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor
Political Opinion	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor
Racial Group	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief	Encouraging delivery of programme to promote inclusivity across all categories.	
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

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

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

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

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

1. **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
2. **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate.
3. **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups, so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
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<p>Option 1 Screen out – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]</p>	
<p>Option 2 Screen out with mitigation – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]</p>	<p>This policy will be screened out with mitigation. We have concluded that the impacts will be minor and should generally be positive for all groups. However, in developing plans for open spaces, due consideration will be given to some issues identified, including accessibility and inclusion.</p>
<p>Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]</p>	

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended, or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

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

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

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)

If the activity/policy has been 'screened in' for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring**Two elements to monitoring:****1. Monitoring the activity generally as part of normal review and evaluation or service improvement**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

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

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

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

2. What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:

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

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

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: William Torrens	P&A Manger	21 Jan 2025
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	22 Jan 2025
Approved by: Gareth Lennox	HoS P&A (Acting)	22 Jan 2025

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- Approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy.
- Included with Committee reports, as appropriate.
- Sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting, and publishing on the LCCC website.
- Shared with relevant colleagues.
- Made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact (none)

Minor impact (none)

No impact (none)

Updated Template @ Oct 2022