



February 11th, 2026

Chairperson: Councillor C Kemp

Vice Chairperson: Councillor J Harpur

Aldermen: J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, M Gregg and A McIntyre

Councillors: K Dickson, J Gallen, A Gowan, J Lavery BEM, D Lynch, U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready and T Mitchell

Ex-Officio: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan
Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

Notice Of Meeting

A meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee will take place on **Thursday, 12th February 2026 at 6:00 pm** in the **Council Chamber and Remote Locations** for the transaction of business on the undernoted agenda.

DAVID BURNS
Chief Executive
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

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 or non-pecuniary interest (Member to complete disclosure of interest form)

📎 *Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf*

Page 1

3.0 REPORT FROM HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 2026/27 Tourism Major Events

For Noting

📎 *1. Tourism Major Events 26_27 - noting (003).pdf*

Page 3

📎 *Appendix 1a Major Events Summary - 2025-26.pdf*

Page 6

📎 *Appendix 1b Major Event Summary - 2026-2027.pdf*

Page 7

📎 *Appendix 1c Equality policy EQ.pdf*

Page 8

📎 *Appendix 1d Rural needs Impact assessment for Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme 2025.2026.pdf*

Page 23

3.2 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme funded by DAERA under the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI)

For Noting

📎 *2. TRPSI Final - noting.pdf*

Page 32

📎 *Appendix 2a - Assessment Panel Recommendations.pdf*

Page 34

📎 *Appendix 2b TRPSI - Equality Screening 2025-26.pdf*

Page 39

📎 *Appendix 2c Rural Needs - TRPSI Programme.pdf*

Page 55

4.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & GROWTH

4.1 Change of Lease (Lisburn Rangers)

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular

person (including the Council holding that information).

4.2 Variation to Lease (Ballymacash Sports Academy)

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

4.3 Dundrod Pits Tenure Arrangements

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

4.4 PPM & RM 07 – Fire Doors and Emergency Exits – Tender Evaluation Criteria

For Decision

Confidential due to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

5.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

1

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:

--	--

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

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth
Date:	12 February 2026
Report from:	Head of Economic Development

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	2026/27 Tourism Major Events

Background

1. Each year, the Council supports third-party event organisers through the Tourism Major Events Funding Programme, providing grants of up to £10,000 per event. The programme supports the delivery of a range of tourism events across the Council area which contribute positively to the visitor economy through increased day visitors, overnight stays, tourism spend, and positive destination profile.
2. Members agreed in April 2024 a revised reporting approach for Tourism Major Events funding. This approach allows for a summarised presentation of outcomes and assessments, in lieu of detailed background appendices.
3. The following information is now provided to Members as part of the assessment summary for each funding round:
 - Event promoter
 - Brief event description
 - Event target outputs
 - Total number of applications received
 - Number of unsuccessful or withdrawn applications, supported by a high-level summary narrative where applicable
4. As requested by Committee, officers have introduced additional programme requirements for event organisers. These include making all reasonable endeavours to undertake event-related activity within the Council area (eg event dinners, accommodation for judges or staff). In addition, and following advice from Internal Audit, claims for eligible expenditure will not be accepted if submitted more than three months after the end of the grant period.
5. For information, the total grant funding awarded to six successful third-party applicants under the 2025/26 Tourism Major Events Programme amounted to £33,450.

Key Issues

1. A total of seven applications has been received for the 2026/27 Tourism Major Events Programme. Following assessment there were six eligible applications. The total potential grant commitment, should all successfully assessed events receive their full allocation, is £40,905. A summary of the events that have been applied for and been assessed to receive funding is provided below.

Event Promoter	Event	Funding Allocated
Peter Corry Productions	Hillsborough Summer Concerts 2026	£8,250
Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (NI Branch)	Lisburn and Castlereagh Pipe Band & Drum Major Championships 2026	£7,250
NI International Ploughing Championships	NI Ploughing Association	£3,900
Down Royal Racecourse	NI Festival of Racing	£7,000
Lynne McCabe & Joanne McErlain	National Antique Show	£7,755
Athletics NI	International Cross Country	£6,750
Belfast Dog Show	Dog Show at Eikon Centre	Not successful
Total		£40,905

2. Members are advised that one application was deemed unsuccessful during the 2026/27 assessment process, due to their hospitality event being contracted for another year outside of the Council area. Officers have been in communication with Belfast Dog Show and they are aware that they do not fully meet the criteria despite their evidential impact on our dog friendly accommodation providers. It is our understanding that the event is not at risk at this time nor is the dog show organisers indicating that the event will not happen.
3. A summary of evaluation outcomes from the previous year's (2025-2026) Tourism Major Events Programme is attached to this report for noting.

3.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members agree to:

1. Note the proposed recipients for funding support for the 2026/27 Tourism Major Events programme,
2. Note the evaluations of recipients for the 2025/26 Tourism Major Events programme.

3.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

An allocation of £40,905 has been included in the 2026/27 Tourism Development budget estimate.

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

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 <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
	LCCC does not anticipate that the Tourism Events Funding Policy will impact adversely on any Section 75 group, but instead, through an open and transparent	

	application process for funding requests, will promote equality of opportunity and good relations.	
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. Considering that almost half of the L&CCC district is rural, the economic benefits of tourism development will be realised across all the LCCC area. Economic development initiatives such as the Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme will benefit the local rural population and visitors to the area. The programme will contribute towards the Council's overall strategic objective of increasing economic development in the L&CCC area for the benefit of all citizens.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1a – Tourism Major Events 2025/26 summary Appendix 1b - Tourism Major Events 2026/27 summary Appendix 1c - Equality/ Good Relations Screening Appendix 1d – Rural Needs Assessment
--------------------	---

Major Grants Summary - 2025/2026

Organizer	Event Name	Date From	Date to	Number of Days	Venue	Amount Applied for	Amount Awarded	Brief Description of Event	Visitor Target	Visitor Achieved	Participant Target	Participant Achieved	Expected Bed Nights	Actual Bed Nights	Expected Expenditure	Actual Expectative	Expected Income	Actual Income	Impact on local Businesses
Belfast Dog Show Society	Belfast Dog Show Society Championships	27/09/25	28/09/25	2	Eikon Centre	£ 10,000.00	£ 7,200.00	Major dog championship show for approx. 2800 exhibits	1400-1500	1500	2800	2800	400	350	£ 81,500.00	£ 85,823.67	£ 71,000.00	£ 78,196.00	Local hospitality businesses reported being busy over the period of this event (Including, The Plough Inn and Vintage rooms, Parson's Nose, Gowdy's of Down Royal, Arthur's and Paul Hampton Cafes). Spectators and Exhibitors able to access booking of accommodation via links to the Visit Lisburn and Castlereagh Website Feedback from local accommodation providers was very positive and confirmed high bed nights for the area
Lisnagarvey Hockey Club	EuroHockey Club Trophy 1 (Men) 2025	18/04/25	21/04/25	4	Lisnagarvey Hockey Club	£ 10,000.00	£ 6,000.00	Competition is an 8-team tournament with teams across Europe.	1200	1301	250	680	1020	623	£ 38,000.00	£ 29,347.92	£ 20,200.00	£ 29,347.92	Local accommodation availed of including Haslem Hotel, Homestead, Ivanhoe hotel, Premier Inn, Self-catering, and B&B's. 623 bed nights across the council area Visit Lisburn and Castlereagh Website was main hub shared to visiting teams to help aid in booking accommodation. Higher percentage of NI spectators from prior years experienced 1 x team withdrew affecting overall numbers. Officials were very complimentary of the Haslem Hotel.
Showjumping Ireland, Ulster Region	National Balmoral Championships 2025	17/07/25	20/07/25	4	Eikon Centre	£ 10,000.00	£ 3,500.00	4 Day premier showjumping competition	450	700	1000	1150	100	80	£146,500.00	£ 145,532.00	£ 136,500.00	£ 141,702.00	Entry numbers were up from 2024, and visitor numbers exceeded expectations. Accommodation providers across the LCCC area shared the uplift of 80 bed nights across the 4 days. Note that bed night numbers were affected due to the timing on event as it coincided with The Open in Portrush so limitations of bed nights available and cost increases during this period. This event drew visitors from all over Ireland, reinforcing the Eikon Centre's role as a premier venue for high profile equestrian sport. Throughout the championship period increased football was noted in cafes, and shops, in both Lisburn and Royal Hillsborough
Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association	Lisburn & Castlereagh Pipe Band & Drum Major Championships 2025	14/06/25	14/06/25	1	Moirra Demesne	£ 10,000.00	£ 4,500.00	The event will feature performances of Pipe Bands and Drum Majors	3000	800	1400	1200	60	51	£ 14,525.00	£ 15,618.00	£ 4,270.00	£ 3,260.00	Weather was extremely wet and due to this 3 Bands withdrew from competing which slightly affected participant numbers. Venue, facilities and parking worked extremely well and the decision was taken to change location of the award ceremony from out on the demesne to inside a marquee. Shops, cafes, bars and restaurants were all positively impacted by this event
Athletics NI	Bobby Rea Cross Country International NI & Ulster Even Age-Group Championships	26/10/25	26/10/25	1	Billy Neill MBE Country Park	£ 10,000.00	£ 5,750.00	Annual International cross country race	1250	1500	1250	1017	60	40	£ 19,227.21	TBC	£ 8,900.00		2025 saw highest entry records for this event (963 Age group athletes and nearly 400 adult entries) High spends were reported for local shops and restaurants post event. All feedback from internal and external partners, suppliers, athletes, clubs, officials, and spectators were very supportive and welcoming of this event to the LCCC area. While in the area, visitors made use of nearby Dundonald, Lisburn and Royal Hillsborough with reported higher than average bed nights in the Ivanhoe Hotel and the La Mon Hotel at the time of this event in particular.
Down Royal Racecourse	N.I. Festival of Racing	31/10/25	01/11/25	2	Down Royal Racecourse	£ 10,000.00	£ 6,500.00	Event Officially starts the National Hunt Season.	10000	9708	700	362	450	1000	£388,500.00	£366,705.76	£ 357,875.00	£322,899.26	Hospitality and General Admission sales were up 5% from 2024. The event was affected by bad weather which impacted effected travel plans. Accommodation providers demonstrated an uplift this year on bed nights with the Haslem Hotel offering a package that included transport to and from the event and several smaller providers benefiting from influx to the area. Meanwhile, hospitality businesses in Royal Hillsborough reported increased trade during the same timeframe.
				14		£ 60,000.00	£ 33,450.00			15509		7209		2144	£688,252.21	£ 643,027.35	£ 598,745.00	£ 575,405.18	

Tourism Development
Major Event Summary - 2026-2027

Event Name	Organiser	Date From	Date to	Amount Awarded	Brief Description of Event	Visitor Target	Participant Target	Expected Bed Nights	Expected Expenditure	Expected Income
Hillsborough Summer Concerts 2026	Peter Corry Productions	26/06/26	28/06/26	£ 8,250.00	3 Nights 3 Different events Evening Entertainment	4500	27	372	£ 153,684.39	£ 142,200.00
Lisburn & Castlereagh Pipe Band and Drum Major Championships 2026	RSPNANI	13/06/26	13/06/26	£ 7,250.00	Event features performances from Pipe Bands and Drum Majors	3600	1400	68	£ 20,355.00	£ 3,660.00
NI International Ploughing Championships	NI Ploughing Association	25/09/26	26/09/26	£ 3,900.00	Ploughing competition event	1500	200	200	£ 20,000.00	£ 13,500.00
Northern Ireland Festive of Racing	Down Royal Racecourse	30/10/26	31/10/26	£ 7,000.00	Marks official start of National Hunt Season	10000	700	998	£ 377,500.00	£ 353,000.00
National Antique Show	Lynne McCabe & Joanne McErlain	05/09/26	06/09/26	£ 7,755.00	Aims to flagship event for Antiques dealers	8000	160	100	£ 62,200.00	£ 52,800.00
International Cross Country	Athletics NI	18/10/26	18/10/26	£ 6,750.00	International Cross Country Running event both men and women	1000	1310	330	£ 31,600.00	£ 22,000.00
				£ 40,905.00		28600	3797	2068	£ 665,339.39	£ 587,160.00

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

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

Name of the activity/policy/project

Tourism - Major and Small Events Grants

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

An existing policy?		A revised policy?	x	A new policy?	
---------------------	--	-------------------	---	---------------	--

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

The Economic Development Unit within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is involved in a number of distinct areas of operation aimed at developing prosperity throughout Lisburn and Castlereagh. This is achieved through creating opportunity, supporting local businesses and encouraging new investment. The Council recognises the importance of economic development initiatives to drive forward the local economy across the region and the Unit has played a pivotal role in securing significant investment.

It delivers its services through four sub-units: -

- 1. Business Solutions
- 2. Regeneration
- 3. Tourism
- 4. Rural Development

The aim of this policy is to outline the procedure for all future Tourism Major and Small Grant initiatives within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area. Grants are issued to organisations planning to stage events and are issued in two categories:

- Major Grants up to the value of £10,000
- Small Grants up to the value of £1,000

The number of grants issued may vary on an annual basis and the level of funding is limited by the resources available.

The Tourism Grants Policy will facilitate the structure for approving and administering grant requests through the various named group initiatives within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. This will be achieved through key themes of ensuring compliance, equality, delivering value for money through a commercial approach and supporting the local economy. Tourism Small Grants are typically issued to small community led events such as Table Tennis Championships and Harry Ferguson Lectures, whilst the Major Grants are usually awarded to larger events that have the potential to attract visitors from further afield and last longer such as the Festival of Racing and the Balmoral Championships.

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.

This policy is intended to attract applications from a wide range of organisations representative of all Section 75 categories. It therefore has the potential to benefit all groups. In the past, groups representing women, older people and children have benefitted and events that have attracted all sections of the community have been supported.

This policy will be open equally and be accessible to all organisations in the participating council area.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Tourism Development Unit of LCC

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

Owned by LCCC Service Transformation Directorate; implemented by the Tourism Development Unit

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

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

Financial - The delivery of the Tourism Major and Small Grants policy will be dependent on the annual budget estimates process. Some activity may be curtailed should budgets be tightened.

Legal - Tourism development is a non-essential service.

Other - Tourism Development supports economic development, generating jobs and economic wealth to the local area.

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

Staff - LCCC staff to administer and implement the policy.

Service users - Local businesses & organisations; wide range of local and out of state visitors.

Other public sector organisations: Tourism NI, Forest Service NI, DAERA etc

Voluntary/community/trade unions - All Local Voluntary and Community bodies within the LCCC area

Other - including Elected Members

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements policy?
Community Development Plan	LCCC
Tourism Masterplan	LCCC
Tourism and Development Strategy	LCCC
Corporate Plan	LCCC
Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22	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.

The primary aim of this policy is to promote the sustainability and competitiveness of local businesses and organisations through grant funding opportunities. These grants will be available through group initiatives being delivered as part of the overall annual Economic Development Programme of activity.

We have reviewed the previous operation of the Programme and have not identified any obvious gaps or missed opportunities from local businesses and organisations.

We have looked at research relevant to the Council’s economic development functions. Socio-economic research commissioned by LCCC and undertaken by Oxford Economics published its findings in June 2015. This research outlines key economic trends which have identified the need for public sector intervention at a local level across a range of areas. Examples include:

- Gaps in Business Support Provision
- Need to address the Low Value Sectoral Structure of the Local Economy
- Unemployment Levels
- Long Term Unemployment
- Skills Shortages.

The economic trends, outlined by the research, which require levels of intervention are all interlinked into the services of the department through four sub-units:

1. Business Solutions
2. Regeneration
3. Tourism
4. Programmes

We have also considered the 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	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from all sections of the community, regardless of religious beliefs.
Political Opinion	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from all sections of the community, regardless of political opinion.
Racial Group	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of racial group.
Age	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from adults regardless of age.
Marital Status	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of marital status.
Sexual Orientation	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of sexual orientation.
Men & Women Generally	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of gender.
Disability	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of disability.
People with and without Dependants	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of dependants.

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 identified by religious belief other than the need for grant programmes to be promoted to, and applications encouraged from, all sections of the community.
Political Opinion	No different needs identified by political opinion other than the need for grant programmes to be promoted to, and applications encouraged from, all sections of the community.
Racial Group	Potential applicants from racial minorities need to be aware of Council grant programmes and may need additional support to apply, particularly if there are language barriers.
Age	The application process needs to be fully accessible to those who may not be online or additional support provided if needed.
Marital Status	No particular needs identified
Sexual Orientation	.No particular needs identified other than the need to ensure that the process is open and welcoming for all groups who may wish to apply.
Men & Women Generally	No different needs identified by gender
Disability	Information about grant programmes needs to be fully accessible for potential applicants with different disabilities. Alternative formats need to be provided if necessary and additional support with the application process provided where required.
People with and without Dependants	No particular needs identified for this group

Part 2. Screening questions

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

The introduction of a Tourism Major and Small Grants Policy will have an all-inclusive approach to welcoming all Section 75 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 for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
Political Opinion	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
Racial Group	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
Age	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
Marital Status	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn &	None

	Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	
Sexual Orientation	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
Men & Women Generally	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
Disability	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None
People with and without Dependants	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	None

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

The different needs of each of the Section 75 categories will continue to be recognised and reflected in the distribution of resources.

The Tourism Major and Small Grant policy is promoted on the LCCC and Visit Lisburn Castlereagh websites and is available to all sides of the community. All previous applicants are contacted annually to advise when the Major and Small grants are open for applications.

The policy already recognises that some groups may face barriers to accessing grant funding. These are addressed in the way the programme is promoted and administered. For example, information is available in electronic or paper format (to collect or be posted) and applications accepted in paper format (hand delivered or posted) or electronically via e-mail.

Procedures will be kept under review and further changes made if other issues are identified.

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group Age Marital Status Sexual Orientation Men & Women Generally Disability People with and without Dependants		The programme is already promoted widely to reach all sections of the community. Funding under the policy is available to those who meet the criteria, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial orientation, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. providing there is budget available.

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, however the policy will be kept under review to ensure that requests for information in various formats are monitored and provided across the Council, i.e. to ensure information is accessible to all.

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?

No, activities conducted under this policy are available to all, regardless of Section 75 category.

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 Political Opinion Racial Group	The programme itself will not necessarily impact directly on good relations. However, depending on the nature of the events/activities funded, there may be opportunities for some impact. For example, if an organisation applies for funding to run a community based event or an event that will attract a wide range of participants from different backgrounds, there may be some incidental benefits. In previous years, there have been examples of successful cross-community events. All successful applicants will be encouraged to promote equality.	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 Political Opinion Racial Group		No opportunities identified to directly promote good relations but some successful applications may do so, depending on the nature of the event/activity that is supported.

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.

We have taken into account the needs of different multiple identities in the development of the Tourism Major and Small Events policy. For example, children with disabilities or older people with disabilities will benefit from enhanced accessibility measures.

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]	The main reasons are: 1. No adverse impacts on any group have been identified and any incidental impacts are likely to be positive. 2. Applications are welcome from all, inclusive of the Section 75 groups 3. Procedures are in place to make the process accessible to all eg the Tourism Grant is advertised in the local press across the main newspapers and online. Applications are available online or via post and are accepted via e-mail and/or post for convenience to the applicant.

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]	N/A
Option 3 Screen in for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	N/A

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? N/A

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.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3) N/A

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.

Not applicable

Part 4. Monitoring

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 Tourism team will be responsible for monitoring of this project that will involve logging feedback and concerns from stakeholders, community and the public when required. The Council will proactively seek feedback on the Tourism Major and Small Events policy from all those that enquire about an application for same.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by:	Margaret McAvoy Tourism Development Officer	
Reviewed by: Equality Officer		
Approved by:	Andrew Kennedy. Tourism Development Manager	

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 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.

Tourism Events

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

Developing a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Adopting a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Implementing a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Revising a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Designing a Public Service	☐		
Delivering a Public Service	☒		

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.

Tourism Events

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

The Tourism Events programme is aimed at supporting third party event organisers to stage events in the Council area and in turn generate economic benefits. These events will bring varying numbers of visitor trips, bed nights, and tourism revenue to the area.

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 Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme has been provided to help third party event organisers stage footfall generating events throughout the whole LCCC area.

The rural share of the NI population is growing. Over the years 2001-2011 the number of people living in rural areas of NI increased by 15% in comparison to a rise of only 4% in urban areas. According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth – Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).

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.

Tourism is an expanding sector and is being increasingly recognized for its overall contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

The Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme is an annual initiative aimed at driving even more visitors across the Council area. The programme is open to all event organisers, including urban and rural areas, and as such most of the events supported will be in the rural area of Council.

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	☒
Rural Tourism	☒
Rural Housing	☐
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	☒
Education or Training in Rural Areas	☐
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	☒
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	☐
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	☐
Poverty in Rural Areas	☒
Deprivation in Rural Areas	☒
Rural Crime or Community Safety	☐
Rural Development	☒
Agri-Environment	☐
Other (Please state)	

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	☒	Published Statistics	☐
Consultation with Other Organisations	☒	Research Papers	☐
Surveys or Questionnaires	☐	Other Publications	☐
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			☐

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.

- Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government (2016-2021)
- Northern Ireland Economic Strategy – Vision for 2030
- Tourism NI- Operating Plan
- Tourism NI – Northern Ireland Tourism Priorities for Growth
- Forest Service NI Business Plan 2014-15
- OFMDFM – Together; Building a United Community (TBUC)
- OFMDFM – Lifetime Opportunities – Government's Anti-Poverty & Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2020
- Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act
- Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan. 2015
- Hillsborough Forest Economic Appraisal. 2017
- Public consultation and survey in Hillsborough Forest. 2016

The Socio-economic profile and forecast, Lisburn & Castlereagh (2018-2032) identified the LCCC area as showing marked distinctions between the rural and urban populations. According to the Interim 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.

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
- Rural development
- Agri-Environment

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

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.

The annual programme will have a positive impact on the local rural business community and the Council area as a whole.

According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the LCCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth – Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).

In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area. 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. The slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 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 2018 there were 4,755 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 economic benefits of tourism development will be realised across all the LCCC area. Economic development initiatives such as the Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme will benefit the local rural population and visitors to the area, The programme will contribute towards the Council's overall strategic objective of increasing economic development in the L&CCC area for the benefit of all citizens.

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 synopsis of the programme has been identified in Section 2B, fully considering the needs of the rural population. There have been no detrimental impacts identified.

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:	Margaret McAvoy
Position/Grade:	Tourism Development Officer
Division/Branch	Economic Development
Signature:	MARGARET MCAVOY
Date:	09/01/2026
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Andrew Kennedy
Position/Grade:	Tourism Development Manager
Division/Branch:	Economic Development/ Tourism
Signature:	
Date:	09/01/2026

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth Committee
Date:	12 February 2026
Report from:	Head of Economic Development

Item for:	Noting
Subject:	Rural Business Development Grant Scheme funded by DAERA under the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI)

1.0	<u>Background</u> 1. The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme, which is funded by DAERA as part of the TRPSI Programme, aims to help tackle poverty and social isolation within rural communities across Northern Ireland by supporting business growth. The scheme is designed to be delivered by local Councils. 2. The scheme provides rural micro businesses with a small capital grant capped at £7,500 at a match funding rate of 50% from DAERA and 50% from participating businesses. The location of the business must be designated as rural under the scheme rules. Capital improvements to property are ineligible for support. This includes building works, refurbishments of any property (commercial or residential) or any project that requires Building Control or planning permission. 3. The scheme has been successfully delivered for five years by the Programmes Team enabling 136 local businesses to date to drawdown a total of £400,000 in financial assistance to the LCCC area. <u>Key Issues</u> 1. Members are reminded that the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme opened for applications on 25 September 2025. The call closed for applications on 30 October 2025. A total number of 49 applications were received. A number of assessment panels were held during December 2025, with 37 applications scoring above the 65% scoring threshold. This resulted in a grant allocation of over £170,000. A summary of all the successful applications is attached (see Appendix). 2. As part of the Council's standard process Members should be assured that due diligence is undertaken to ensure the assets claimed for are bona fide and that there is a declaration that is required saying that the grant is not funded from any other sources of public money. <u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the committee notes the above update and summary.
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> DAERA have indicated that an administration income of over £16,000 will be made available to the Council for processing all applications received under this call.

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 <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out It has been concluded that a detailed equality impact assessment is not necessary as all the potential impacts identified are minor and positive. (see Appendix 3b)	
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 LMP has been developed in order improve employability conditions for those who are economically inactive or unemployed regardless of their urban / rural location.	

Appendices:	Appendix 2a – Summary Appendix 2b - Equality Screening Appendix 2c – Rural Needs Impact Assessment
--------------------	---

ASSESSMENT PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS – RURAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT SCHEME & RURAL BASIC SERVICES SCHEME

Members should note that during December 2025, a number of assessment panels were convened to assess applications received under the application call to the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme, Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation.

The Assessment Panel agreed the following recommendations and on Monday 15th December 2025 a Letter of Offer was issued to each of the following applicants, who scored above the threshold score of 65%:

Project Ref: LCCC 20254031- McDog's Play Centre Lisburn - Lidy McClean
Project Location: 47 Waterloo Road, Lisburn, Down, BT27 5NW
Project Title: Purchase of ride on lawn mower
Amount of Funding Offered: £1,697.50

Project Ref: LCCC 20256284- Cecil Davidson Sand & Gravel Ltd- Greg Campbell
Project Location: 56 Wellington Park RD, Maghaberry, Antrim, BT67 0XR
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to support business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £5,474.58

Project Ref: LCCC 20253756, Popculture Printing UK, Mark James Curran
Project Location: 33 Helens Drive, Aghalee, Craigavon, BT67 0HE
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to support workshop expansion
Amount of Funding Offered: £822.45

Project Ref: LCCC 20256440, G&H Bell (Life & Pensions), Michael McStay
Project Location: 6D Lisburn Street, Royal Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6AB
Project Title: Purchase of computer equipment to support remote working
Amount of Funding Offered: £599.50

Project Ref: LCCC 20256343, ATTX Ltd, Alastair Luke
Project Location: 14 The Beeches Manor, Lisburn, BT28 3PL
Project Title: Attention X: Purchase of additional equipment to allow new studio facilities
Amount of Funding Offered: £4,276.06

Project Ref: LCCC 20256317, Fulmax Solutions LTD, Chris McIlroy
Project Location: Unit 3E Redbrae Business Park, LISBURN, Down, BT28 3JU
Title: Purchase of equipment to support business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £7500

Project Ref: LCCC 20256200, Rare Grazing NI, Rachel Vance
Project Location: 2b Lough Road, Lisburn, Antrim, BT28 2PJ
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to support business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £1,386

Project Ref: LCCC 20254984- The Auld House- Stephen Grey
Project Location: 27 Church RD, Moneyreagh, Down, BT23 6BB
Project Title: Purchase of new kitchen equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 6,597.46

Project Ref: LCCC20253707, Glenavy Plant Centre and Rosewood Nursery, Dominic Armstrong
Project Location: 7 Feumore Road, Lisburn, BT28 2LH
Project Title: Purchase of new computer equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,444.05

Project Ref: LCCC 20255050, Aghalee Building Supplies, Patrick Lavery
Project Location: 2 Ballinderry RD, Aghalee, Antrim, BT67 0DY
Project Title: Purchase of wood processor
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,175

Project Ref: LCCC 20254932, Linton Fencing & Sportsgrounds Ltd, Adam Montgomery
Project Location: 4 Hallstown RD, Lisburn, Antrim, BT28 2NE
Project Title: Purchase of a new digger for business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 7,500

Project Ref: LCCC 20254831, Cloverstone Ltd, David McAllister
Project Location: 5 Clover RD, Lisburn. Antrim, BT28 2RZ
Project Title: Purchase of a new trailer for business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 4,475

Project Ref: LCCC 20254819, Russell Managh Hydraulics LTD, Briege Lyons
Project Location: 30A Backwood RD, MOIRA. Armagh, BT67 0LJ
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to support business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 6,009.25

Project Ref: LCCC 20254730, Found Home Films, Terri-Jayne Smith
Project Location: 3 Stewarts RD, Dromara, Down, BT25 2AN
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to support business growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 4,160

Project Ref: LCCC 20254625, Fisher joinery and construction, Philip Fisher
Project Location: 13 Maghaberry Road Moira, Antrim, BT670JE
Project Title: Purchase of a low load trailer and log splitter
Amount of Funding Offered: £6,624

Project Ref: LCCC 20254369, Attitude Fitness, Kyle Reain
Project Location: 71 Magheraconluce RD, Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6PR
Project Title: Purchase of digital equipment to support online services
Amount of Funding Offered: £2,046.25

Project Ref: LCCC 20254279, Paul Collin
Project Location: 8 Moneybroom RD, Lisburn, Antrim, BT28 2QP
Project Title: Purchase of computer equipment and software
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 2,651.15

Project Ref: LCCC 20254248, James Kerr Plumbing and Heating, James Kerr
Project Location: 12 Gulf RD, Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6ER
Project Title: Purchase of a low loader trailer
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,225

Project Ref: LCCC 20256160, Hendy Tiling, Darryl Hendy
Project Location: 5 Edenview Crescent Maghaberry, Antrim, BT67 0RZ
Project Title: Purchase of trailer and IT equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £4,545.92

Project Ref: LCCC 20256011, The Brown Bean Ltd, Josh Paul
Project Location: 303 Ballynahinch RD, Lisburn, Down, BT27 5LX
Project Title: Purchase of IT equipment to support growth
Amount of Funding Offered: £782.50

Project Ref: LCCC 20255959, Alpine Signs, Andrew McAlpin
Project Location: 1 Gransha RD, Comber, Down, BT23 5QA
Project Title: Purchase of a vinyl plotter
Amount of Funding Offered: £4,892.50

Project Ref: LCCC 20255919, Viral Muse Creative, Claire Ford
Project Location: 1 Governors Gate PK, Royal Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6FN
Project Title: Purchase of IT equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £1,213

Project Ref: LCCC 20255728, Dream Designs Group Ltd, Nial Bell
Project Location: Unit 3, 3 Drumalig RD, Carricknaveagh, Down, BT27 6UD
Project Title: Purchase of a new CNC router
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,500

Project Ref: LCCC 20255662, SL Contracts, Steven Lewis
Project Location: 26 Lany RD, Ballyknock, Down, BT67 0NZ
Project Title: Purchase of a digger and IT equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 3,971.25

Project Ref: LCCC 20255575, Evans Plant LTD, Mark Evans
Project Location: 7 Sheepwalk RD, Lisburn, Antrim, BT28 3RD
Project Title: Purchase of a crane rail
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 6,301.44

Project Ref: LCCC 20254852, The Pheasant, Frederick William Patterson
Project Location: 410 Upper Ballynahinch RD, Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6NR
Project Title: Purchase of new kitchen equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 1,317.25

Project Ref: LCCC 20255299, Montana Real Estate, Robert Montgomery
Project Location: 59 Steps RD, Donacloney, Down, BT66 7NZ
Project Title: Purchase of IT equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 7,215.62

Project Ref: LCCC 20255203, Michael Boville Joinery & Building, Michael Boville
Project Location: 81 Burren RD, Ballynahinch, Down, BT24 8LF
Project Title: Purchase of 12ft Tipping Trailer with Ramps
Amount of Funding Offered: £ 3,750

Project Ref: LCCC 20254223, MasterCraft Ireland, Jonathan Crawford
Project Location: 34 Creevy RD, LISBURN, Down, BT27 6UX
Project Title: Next Purchase of equipment to support growth in existing watersports business
Amount of Funding Offered: £3,000.83

Project Ref: LCCC 20254067, Noreen's Nettles, Noreen Van der Velde
Project Location: 2C Lime Kiln Lane, Aghalee, Armagh, BT67 0EZ
Project Title: Purchase of a trailer pod
Amount of Funding Offered: £4,644

Project Ref: LCCC 20253828, HoneyComb Cabin, Fiona Doherty
Project Location: 2F Gortaney RD, Lisburn, Antrim, BT28 2JG
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to develop new products
Amount of Funding Offered: £2,142

Project Ref: LCCC 20256185, David Moore T/A TGS Landscapes, David Moore
Project Location: 2 The Old Orchard, Aghalee, Antrim, BT67 0EZ
Project Title: Purchase of horticulture equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £2,060.35

Project Ref: LCCC 20255483, RH Home Solutions, Robert Hosseini
Project Location: 236 Hillhall RD, Lisburn, Down, BT27 5JQ
Project Title: Purchase of tipping Trailer and Doff III
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,500

Project Ref: LCCC 20255373, John Campbell & Sons Ltd., Stephen Campbell
Project Location: 7A Lough RD, LISBURN, Antrim, BT28 2PQ
Project Title: Purchase of equipment to support existing business operations
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,500

Project Ref: LCCC 20254206, Eagle Eye Vet, Steven Baird
Project Location: 128 Dromara Road, Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6QA
Project Title: Purchase of a mobile cataract surgery machine
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,500

Project Ref: LCCC 20254205, Larkfied Structures Ltd, Michael Anthony Gordon
Project Location: 61 Ballinderry RD, Lisburn, Antrim, BT28 2NW
Project Title: Purchase of forklift and other equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £7,500

Project Ref: LCCC 20254371, Lakeside View Caravan Park, Harold and Isobel Reain
Project Location: 71 Magheraconluce Road, Hillsborough, Down, BT26 6PR
Project Title: Provision of Security Barrier and IT equipment
Amount of Funding Offered: £1,555.70

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the recommendations of the Assessment Panel as outlined above.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

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

Name of the activity/policy/project

The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2025-26

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

The scheme has been successfully delivered for four consecutive years by the Economic Development Unit at Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. The first five programmes enabled 136 local businesses to drawdown approximately £400,000 in financial assistance to the LCCC area.

DAERA are currently in the process of developing a sixth call for applications under the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme across rural Lisburn and Castlereagh and rural Belfast. It is proposed that the scheme will open for applications in September 2025.

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

The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme is funded through the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme, and will be delivered in partnership with local Councils.

The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework's focus is on 'Supporting Rural Communities'. The overall objective when developing this Framework is to ensure that mechanisms remain in place to continue to help improve the quality of life for vulnerable rural dwellers.

The Scheme can provide funding of up to 50% of costs for capital items up to a maximum of £4,999. The minimum grant awarded will be £500. The total cost of the capital project must be a minimum of £1,000 and must not exceed £20,000. Applicants must provide the remaining match funding towards the project.

The Scheme's overarching aims are to support rural business development (sustainability and growth), contributing towards the TRPSI's objectives of:

- 1) Alleviate financial poverty by enhancing entrepreneurship and growth
- 2) Alleviate financial poverty by supporting micro businesses in rural areas

The Scheme objectives are:

- 1) To support the sustainability, survival and development of micro rural businesses across Northern Ireland by providing a small capital grant for the business.
- 2) To support participating businesses to grow and develop their business
- 3) To support participating businesses to either maintain or increase pre application staffing levels
- 4) Contribute to the submission of an overall Scheme Evaluation

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 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme welcomes applications from applicants across a wide range of backgrounds.

Grants are available to support the recovery, sustainability and development of existing micro businesses based in rural areas.

In order to apply for a Rural Development grant, the following eligibility criteria was set by the DAERA:

- The business is based in a rural area of Lisburn, Castlereagh or Belfast. A rural area is defined as an area with a population of less than 5,000 residents. Applicants are advised to contact LCCC if they are unsure if their business operates in an eligible rural area.
- The business is an existing, registered private Business or Social Economy Enterprise that is actively trading commercially; evidenced by providing self-assessment number or Limited Company details and sales turnover details.
- The business currently employs less than 10 full-time equivalent employees (based on full time 30 hours per week and part time at least 16 hours per week).
- Applicants must be aged 18 or above at the application deadline.
- Only one application can be accepted per business/ legal entity.
- Sports Clubs and Community Groups can only be considered if they are commercially trading and generate sales revenue from selling goods and services to customers who are not exclusively Club or Community Group members. The grant can only be used to support the sustainability, survival and/or development of this commercial element, and not for the club or community group on its own. Projects that can be supported from other funding sources, such as Sport NI, are not eligible to be considered under this scheme.

Who Cannot Apply?

The grant scheme cannot support:

- Businesses based in urban areas.
- New start businesses who have yet to commence trading (all business sectors).
- Farmers, or anyone registered to a Category 1 DAERA Business ID, undertaking mainstream agricultural activity.
- Farm diversification projects where the diversified activity has not started trading.

Are there any expected benefits to the Section 75 categories/groups from this policy? If so, please explain.

N/A the programme is designed to support rural micro businesses regardless of the Section 75 categories of the applicant. The scheme is a competitive process whereby applications are scored based on ability to create employment / export opportunities, demonstrate need and demand and overall benefit to the wider economy.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme is owned and funded through the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme. The programme is delivered by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Economic Development Unit, however, the final decision regarding eligibility application progression is held by DAERA.

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

The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme is owned and funded through the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme. The programme is delivered by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Economic Development Unit.

As the delivery agent, each application will undergo an initial eligibility check and be assessed at an Assessment Panel. Applications must score 65% or above to progress to receiving a Letter of Offer. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council will work alongside applicants to ensure that each individual application is progressing in accordance with the operating rules set by DAERA, and verify claims for expenditure.

As the managing authority, DAERA have the final decision regarding the eligibility of an application and are responsible for administering the grant payment to the applicant.

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

Yes.

- Financial:
 - Fixed budget
 - Reliant on match funding
 - Staffing/resources
 - Timeframes and funding regulations

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

Staff: The Programmes Team within the Economic Development Unit are responsible for delivering the programme on behalf of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Belfast City Council.

Service users: Beneficiaries of this programme - any existing business with less than 10 employees, commercially trading and based in a rural area within Lisburn, Castlereagh and Belfast are eligible to apply to the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme.

Other public sector organisations: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) are the managing agent of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme and are responsible for administering the grant aid.

Other: Belfast City Council: It was agreed that the LCCC programmes team will continue to deliver the scheme in rural Belfast as well as rural Lisburn and Castlereagh. Belfast City Council would like their residents in the rural areas of Hannahstown and Edenderry to have the opportunity to apply to the scheme however they typically receive only two or three grant applications from rural micro-businesses. They are in a unique position where from a resource perspective, the benefits of the programme to their ratepayers does not justify the establishment of the programme in their area. Given the history of collaboration between the two councils

through previous rural financial assistance schemes, the LCCC were content to accede to this request.

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Local Development Plan	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/resident/planning/local-development-plan
LCCC Corporate Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council lccc-corporate-plan-2024-2028-web (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)
LCCC Equality Scheme and associated plans	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Equality - Lisburn & Castlereagh (lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk)
DAERA Rural Policy Framework	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/rural-development
TRPSI Framework	The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework is a rural initiative led by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DAERA) https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/tackling-rural-poverty-social-isolation-new-framework
DAERA Equality Screening	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/equality-screening-2021
LCCC Community Plan 2017 – 2032	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Lisburn Castlereagh Community Plan - Lisburn & Castlereagh

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 Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area, yet rural businesses account for less than a quarter (21%) of employees and around a quarter (25%) of total business turnover (DAERA, 2023). 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). Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions. These include the slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 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 2023 there were 5,240 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.

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	We do not have information on the religious belief of eligible business owners. The 2021 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to religious belief in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area; • 58% Protestant (or other Christian) • 27% Catholic • 4% Other • 13% None
Political Opinion	We do not have information on the political opinion of eligible business owners. The 2021 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to political opinion in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area; 41% indicated that they had a British only national identity, 16% had an Irish only national identity and 21% had a Northern Irish national identity.
Racial Group	We do not have information on the racial background or nationality of eligible business owners. The 2021 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to racial groups in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area; 4% were from an ethnic minority population and the remaining 96% were white (including Irish Traveller).
Age	We do not have information on the age demographics of eligible business owners. In 2021 NI Census statistics with regard to age in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area were recorded to inform the Corporate plan; • 19% Children were aged 0-14 years • 30% of people aged 15 -39 years • 33% aged 40 – 64 years • 18% aged 65+ years and older
Marital Status	We do not have information on the marital status of eligible business owners. The 2021 census records the following statics with regard to the marital status of persons over the age of 16 for the LCCC area; • Single – 33%

	• Married or in civil partnership– 52% • Same-sex civil partnership – 0.1% • Separated– 3% • Divorced or formerly in civil partnership– 6% • Widowed or surviving partner in civil partnership– 6%
Sexual Orientation	We do not have information on the sexual orientation of eligible business owners. ONS figures (2016) suggest at least 2% of the NI population identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bi-sexual. However, LGB support groups suggest this is a significant under-estimate based on lack of willingness/confidence to identify as LGB and the fact sexual orientation categories is now more inclusive of other categories and is referred to as LGBTQIA+ Government Equalities Office research suggests over 4% of the 18-25 year age group identify as LGB, confirming that younger people are more likely to be open about sexual orientation.
Men & Women Generally	In general, women tend to be underrepresented as entrepreneurs/in business. However, during previous calls, there has been a good balance of applications from males and females. This would suggest no need to develop specific promotional material targeting men and women separately. The 2021 NI Census report the population of Lisburn and Castlereagh Local Government District at 149,106, of which 49% were male and 51% were female. There is no official statistic on the number of people in N Ireland who identify as Transgender, non-binary or part of the LGBTQIA+ population but referrals to advice services are increasing year on year which suggests a growing minority. During a Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) human rights, equalities and diversities workshop (April 2021) some of the main findings were: • Women constitute 79% of the part time workforce. • 1/3 of working age women are economically inactive. • In 2019/20 70% of apprenticeships were male, Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA's) are 69%. • Occupational segregation is problematic; men tend to be more involved in engineering, manufacturing and construction. Women more involved in business, administration and law. One possible related solution is women only training programmes in non-traditional sectors, i.e., construction and engineering.
Disability	We do not have information on the disability status of eligible business owners. The rate of disability in Northern Ireland is higher than the other UK regions with the exception of Wales. The rates of disability among older age groups is higher than other regions of the UK.

	The 50-64 year old age group accounts for 33.4% of our disabled population compared to 26.9% of the UK disabled population as a whole. The most striking finding was that 60.2% of disabled people in Northern Ireland are economically inactive while the comparative figure for the UK as a whole stands at 42.5%. At 55.8% Lisburn and Castlereagh has the highest employment rate for Northern Ireland.
Dependants	There is no specific information available but eligible business owners will likely reflect the general population. Dependants can include children, older people and those with disabilities. 12.51% of people in the 2011 Census stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others. On that basis, people with dependants are less likely to be employed or face greater barriers when seeking employment. According to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, lone parents, 91% of whom are women, also experience occupational segregation in employment, with lone parents with dependent children mostly employed in 'Personal Service' and 'Elementary' occupations. Caregiving has been identified as one factor influencing occupational segregation with women and lone parents choosing occupations.

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

As this scheme is open to applications from anyone who has a rural micro business, there is the potential for applicants to come from a wide range of backgrounds.

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to eligible business owners regardless of their religious belief / community background.
Political Opinion	No different needs identified – the scheme is open to eligible business owners regardless of their political opinion.
Racial Group	There may be applications from people who do not have English as a first language or who are new to the LCCC district. People who are from a minority ethnic background may face difficulties understanding the programme operating rules. The

	application notes and forms may need to be translated for someone who does not have English as a first language.
Age	No different needs identified by age. It is open to eligible business owners regardless of their age. Applicants must be aged 18 or above in order to apply.
Marital Status	No different needs identified by marital status. It is open to eligible business owners regardless of their marital status.
Sexual Orientation	No different needs identified in relation to sexual orientation. It is open to eligible business owners regardless of their sexual orientation.
Men & Women Generally	No different needs identified. It is open to eligible business owners regardless of their gender and no issues have been identified in the previous programme.
Disability	Disabled applicants may find aspects of the process more challenging or inaccessible and may require reasonable adjustments. For example, some disabled people may need to have information about the scheme provided in different formats as a reasonable adjustment.
Dependants	No different needs identified. The scheme is open to eligible business owners regardless of their dependants.

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. The services are available to all current existing micro-enterprises in a rural location, they are eligible to apply regardless of their religious belief.	None
Political Opinion	As above – no differential impact	None
Racial Group	Provided the process and availability of funding are well promoted, no differential impact	Minor
Age	No differential impact	None
Marital Status	No differential impact	None
Sexual Orientation	No differential impact	None
Men & Women Generally	No differential impact – previous programme has resulted in balance of applications	None
Disability	No negative impact as adjustments will be made available to anyone who needs one	None

People with and without Dependents	No differential impact	None
------------------------------------	------------------------	------

*See Appendix 1 for details.

LCCC Programmes will be delivered with a view to benefitting all eligible businesses and/or individuals.

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

Equality of opportunity is already built into the Scheme.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council provides an advisory service to potential applicants under the scheme. All potential applicants are advised to contact the Programmes Team who will provide advice and guidance on the application process, eligibility, review procurement documentation and assist with any queries with regards to the application form / online portal. Contact details are published on promotional material (telephone numbers and email address).

The advice provided to applicants aims to ensure there are no hidden or avoidable barriers. Applying for government funding can be a complicated process, especially for a business who has limited experience managing grant applications. On that basis, the Programmes Team will assist each applicant equally. Applicants must attend a funding workshop prior to submitting an application. This provides each applicant with an opportunity to discuss their application on an individual basis with a member from the Programmes Team. They are also provided with contact details should they require additional advice. In order to ensure we are providing equality of opportunity, LCCC hold a combination of virtual and in person workshops over a range of dates to ensure equality of access.

Section 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Political Opinion		None identified through this screening but can be kept under review.
Racial Group	Yes, the application documents can be translated if necessary for anyone who does not have English as a first language. Promotion / information/ targeted advice for people who may need it. Make sure no barriers to information.	
Age		None identified

Marital Status		None identified
Sexual Orientation		None identified
Men & Women Generally		None identified
Disability	Yes, we are able to make reasonable adjustments for disability. The application documents can be provided in alternative formats to ensure accessibility for people with certain disabilities.	
People with and without Dependants		None identified

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025?

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, indirectly. This programme is owned by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) who have conducted their own equality screening exercise for each year that this Scheme has opened. As part of research undertaken by the Department, all Section 75 groups were surveyed prior to the implementation of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme. As part of their ongoing processes, the circulation of surveys includes disabled people, who are consulted with in order to ensure that their views and opinions are taken into account when finalising the Scheme.

Should any specific comments from applicants to LCCC arise surrounding exclusion, these will be processed and fed back to DAERA accordingly.

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	This is a financial assistance scheme for eligible businesses. It is not relevant to promotion of good relations and no	None

	impact identified through this screening exercise	
Political Opinion	As above	None
Racial Group	As above	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		No opportunities identified as this is a financial support scheme for businesses which does not lend itself to the promotion of good relations.
Political Opinion		As above
Racial Group		As above

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.

LCCC recognises that all individuals are not exclusive to just one designated group and “Multiple identity” has been given consideration within this screening exercise.

The Programmes Team at Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are contactable by email / telephone to assist any potential applicants with any queries and deal with the needs of individual applicants.

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]	Section 75 considerations have been embedded in the delivery and strategic development of all Business Support programmes to date, as required by DAERA compliance. Equality screening of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme has concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not necessary. No negative impacts have been identified and no other significant impacts have been identified for any equality group. However, we are proposing a number of mitigation measures to address potential issues.

	It is therefore considered that the undertaking of an EQIA is not necessary at this time.
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 focus is on ensuring that access to the scheme is available to all potential businesses and to ensure that no-one is unfairly disadvantaged by the scheme’s administrative processes. As some applicants may experience difficulty understanding or accessing the online portal, additional efforts will be made to help to ensure they are not disadvantaged. This is the same for any applicant who is having difficulty uploading their application or who requires advice and clarification surrounding the procurement of the items requiring grant funding.

Translation and advisory support / assistance will be provided if required. We will make reasonable adjustments for people with certain disabilities as required. For example, the application documents can be provided in accessible formats as requested/required.

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?

N/A

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.

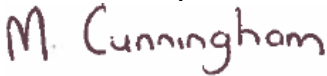
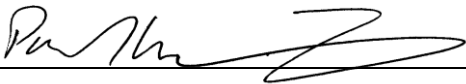
What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency? Please give details:

Any comments and feedback from the public [applicants or others] will be noted. The programme is subject to an evaluation report to measure the successes and limitations of the programmes which are fully considered by DAERA prior to the development of a new Scheme.

The Programmes Team will be responsible for monitoring data by collating feedback from previous applicants. This will include a combination of successful and unsuccessful applicants. This will be reviewed by the Head of Economic Development on an annual basis. LCCC are always ensuring that our admin processes provide fairness and equality of opportunity and we are prepared to make changes to Scheme delivery to ensure equality of opportunity, providing they are in accordance with DAERA’s Contract of Funding.

The collection of Section 75 data is completed by DAERA.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Melissa Cunningham 	Programmes Officer	27/07/2025
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	12/08/2025
Approved by: Paul McCormick 	Head of Economic Development	

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.

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.

Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
2025/26

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

Developing a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☒
Adopting a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Implementing a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Revising a	Policy ☐	Strategy ☐	Plan ☐
Designing a Public Service	☐		
Delivering a Public Service	☐		

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.

Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
2025/26

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

This is a grant scheme funded under the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI). Its key aim is to assist in tackling poverty and social isolation within deprived rural areas.

The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework's focus is on 'Supporting Rural Communities'. The overall objective when developing this Framework is to ensure that mechanisms remain in place to continue to help improve the quality of life for vulnerable rural dwellers

The Scheme's overarching aims are to support rural business development (sustainability and growth), contributing towards the TRPSI's objectives of:

- 1) Alleviate financial poverty by enhancing entrepreneurship and growth
- 2) Alleviate financial poverty by supporting micro businesses in rural areas

The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme's (TRPSI) Rural Business Development Grant Scheme aims to support the sustainability and growth of rural micro-businesses across Northern Ireland by providing a small capital grant for the business. The TRPSI Programme is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, and this grant aid Programme is administered and managed by local Councils.

The Scheme can provide funding of up to 50% of costs for capital items up to a maximum of £4,999. The minimum grant awarded will be £500. The total cost of the capital project must be a minimum of £1,000 and must not exceed £20,000. Applicants must provide the remaining match funding towards the project.

This is a competitive process and all grants awarded will be determined on the basis of merit.

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.

Funded under the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI) the scheme which has run for 5 consecutive years has enabled 136 local businesses to drawdown approximately £400,000 in financial assistance to the LCCC area. Rural micro businesses can apply for a capital grant capped at £4,999 at a match-funding rate of 50% from DAERA and 50% from participating businesses. Businesses operating within a rural area will have the opportunity to benefit from the fund via a competitive application process.

The rural share of the NI population is growing. Between 2001 and 2020, the population of rural areas rose by 20%, compared to an increase of just 7% for urban areas. As a result, the rural share of the overall NI population grew from 34% to 36%. Areas with fastest growth were those close to urban centres, either in mixed rural/urban areas (36%) or less than an hour's commute from Belfast (22%) (Key Rural Issues, 2023). According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas. More than half (58%) of NI businesses are in rural areas, yet rural businesses account for less than a quarter (21%) of employees and around a quarter (25%) of total business turnover (Key Rural Issues, 2023). The Scheme will continue to focus on the three priority areas of access poverty, financial poverty and

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 Rural Micro Business Development Grant Scheme will only be eligible to established micro businesses operating within the rural areas of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Belfasst City Council. Therefore, rural businesses will be the only beneficiaries of the grant aid.

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	☒
Rural Tourism	☒
Rural Housing	☐
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	☒
Education or Training in Rural Areas	☒
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	☐
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	☐
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	☐
Poverty in Rural Areas	☒
Deprivation in Rural Areas	☒
Rural Crime or Community Safety	☐
Rural Development	☒
Agri-Environment	☐
Other (Please state)	

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	☒	Published Statistics	☒
Consultation with Other Organisations	☒	Research Papers	☒
Surveys or Questionnaires	☐	Other Publications	☐
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			☐

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.

According to the Rural Policy Framework (2022), approximately 36% of the population live in rural areas in Northern Ireland. Lisburn & Castlereagh has 5,185 businesses recorded in 2022 (NISRA), of which approximately 58% are rural based, yet rural businesses account for less than a quarter (21%) of employees and around a quarter (25%) of total business turnover. (DAERA, 2023). Although rural dwellers circumstances are similar to those of urban dwellers, there are also distinct urban/rural differences which tend to be more pronounced in rural areas outside of Belfast. Rural industry and employment differ in nature from that of towns and cities, and difficulties with accessibility and connectivity, social and digital, are almost uniquely rural. The cost of living tends to be higher in rural than urban areas and rural households are more likely to experience fuel poverty.

The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework is a rural initiative led by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DAERA) which aims to tackle poverty and social isolation in rural areas through organisations working in partnership to design and implement measures which target the needs of vulnerable people. This scheme is one of a number of complementary initiatives led by DAERA which are aimed at ensuring that the needs of rural communities are addressed.

The Rural Policy Framework for NI (March 2022) has been developed using a combination of NI Statistics, and extensive consultations with stakeholders including internal departments, other public sector organisations and participants from across the rural sector. The Framework also aligns to Programme for Government Framework, 10x Economy: An Economic Vision (2020-2030) and LCCC's Community Plan (2019 – 2024) with the focus on developing new and innovative ways to help alleviate the effects of poverty and social isolation in rural areas, particularly among vulnerable groups.

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

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 Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the LCCC area live in rural areas. Population growth in rural areas from 2001-20 has outstripped that in urban areas by a factor of almost 3 to 1 (20% to 7%) (DAERA, 2023). Recently the rural community living in small towns, villages, and small settlements in the countryside, has experienced the fastest rate of population growth. This reverses a long term trend of population decline (Rural Development Strategy, 2023).

In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area, yet rural businesses account for less than a quarter (21%) of employees and around a quarter (25%) of total business turnover (DAERA, 2023). 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). Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions. These include the slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 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 2023 there were 5,240 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. Economic development initiatives such as the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme will not only increase rural businesses growth potential but will also create new jobs in the Council area. The project will contribute towards the Council's overall strategic objective of increasing economic development in the L&CCC area for the benefit of all citizens.

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 synopsis of the programme has been identified in Section 2B, fully considering the needs of the rural population. There have been no detrimental impacts identified.

The programmes overarching principle is working towards alleviating areas of access poverty, financial poverty and social isolation across rural areas. DAERA consider these to be the priority areas of rural need. The programme has been specifically developed to ensure rural micro businesses have adequate support.

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

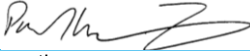
5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

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:	Melissa Cunningham
Position/Grade:	Programmes Officer
Division/Branch	Economic Development
Signature:	
Date:	29 th July 2024
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Paul McCormick
Position/Grade:	Head of Economic Development
Division/Branch:	Economic Development
Signature:	
Date:	29 th July 2024