



February 27th, 2025

Chairperson: Councillor J Craig

Vice-Chairperson: Alderman H Legge

Aldermen: A Grehan, A McIntyre, P Porter and S Skillen

Councillors: D Bassett, T Beckett, J Gallen, B Higginson, C Kemp, S Lowry, G McCleave, T Mitchell and G Thompson

Ex Officio:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor: Councillor K Dickson

Deputy Mayor: Councillor R Carlin

Notice Of Meeting

A meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Committee will be held on Tuesday, 4th March 2025 at 6:00 pm for the transaction of the undernoted Agenda.

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

A hot meal shall be available in the **Members' Suite** from 5.15 pm.

David Burns

Chief Executive

Agenda

1.0 APOLOGIES

2.0 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

📎 *Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf*

Not included

3.0 REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEISURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING

3.1 CIF Launch 2025/26

For Decision

📎 *Item 1 DIR CIF 2025-26 (3).pdf*

Page 1

3.2 Storm Eowyn Support for the Community Voluntary Sector

For Decision

📎 *Item 2 DIR Storm Eowyn (5).pdf*

Page 4

📎 *LG 03-25 - NON-FLOODING SEFA - DISTRICT COUNCILS - STORM EOWYN COVER LETTER (1).pdf*

Page 7

4.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

4.1 VE Day Grant Funding

For Decision

📎 *Item 1 [Com] VE Day 80 Grant Funding (4).pdf*

Page 9

📎 *Appendix 1 Table of Outcomes VE (2).pdf*

Page 11

4.2 Active Travel

For Decision

📎 *Item 2 [Com] DfI Active Travel Delivery Plan consultation response.pdf*

Page 14

📎 *Appendix 2 [Com] Consultation Response to the ATDP (1).pdf*


Page 19

5.0 REPORT OF ACTING HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH,

RISK & EMERGENCY PLANNING




5.1 Fuel Poverty Strategy Consultation

For Decision

 <i>Item 3 - Report - Fuel Poverty Strategy Consultation Response.pdf</i>	<i>Page 37</i>
 <i>Item 3 - Appendix 5 - DfC Consultation - Fuel Poverty Strategy.pdf</i>	<i>Page 39</i>
 <i>Item 3 - Appendix 6 - Fuel Poverty Strategy Draft Consultation Response.pdf</i>	<i>Page 104</i>

5.2 PHA Corporate Plan 2025/2030 Consultation Response









For Decision

 <i>Item 3 EH - Report - PHA Corporate Plan Consultation.pdf</i>	<i>Page 130</i>
 <i>DRAFT PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030 for consultation 28 November 2024 Watermarked.pdf</i>	<i>Page 132</i>
 <i>Final PHA Corporate Plan Draft Consultation Response (1).pdf</i>	<i>Page 157</i>

6.0 REPORT OF HEAD OF PARKS & AMENITIES

6.1 Requests to use Council Parks and Open Spaces

For Decision

 <i>Item 1 BP&A Request to use Councils Parks and Open Spaces (1).pdf</i>	<i>Page 192</i>
 <i>App 1 Event Booking Form Lisburn Baptist Church_Redacted.pdf</i>	<i>Page 194</i>
 <i>App 2 Event Booking Form - Railway Street PC_Redacted 2.pdf</i>	<i>Page 197</i>
 <i>Appix 3 Booking form Moira MDC_Redacted.pdf</i>	<i>Page 200</i>
 <i>Appendix 4 Event booking form - Moira PC_Redacted.pdf</i>	<i>Page 203</i>
 <i>App 5 Event booking form - Lisburn Scouts_Redacted.pdf</i>	<i>Page 214</i>
 <i>App 6 Feile Wallace Pk Event Booking Form 2025_Redacted.pdf</i>	<i>Page 226</i>
 <i>LCCC parks open spaces screening Jan 2025.pdf</i>	<i>Page 238</i>

7.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING

7.1 Portmore & Aghalee Business Case

For Decision

Confidential for reason of information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS



Committee:	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date:	March 2025
Report from:	Director Leisure and Community Wellbeing

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Community Investment Fund Launch 2025/26

1.0

Background

1.1

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

1.2

The priority scheme proposed in the Investment Plan, namely the Community Investment Fund, was incepted through the delivery of 2 pilot phases in April 2021 and March 2022. In total 3 organisations were successful in securing funding up to a level of £250k.

1.3

Following a review of the Community Investment Fund pilot phases, Council agreed to close the pilot and further launch the Fund with an upper limit of £350k per organisation which saw an additional 4 successful recipients. The increase was applied due to the inflationary construction pressures across the sector.

1.4

To date the Fund is supporting a total of 7 organisations. **Table 1** provides details regarding the 7 projects.

1.5

Table 1

Organisation	Committed Award	Project
1. Ballymacash Sports Academy	£250k	New sports and community facility
2. Crewe United	£195k	Accessible toilet, changing facilities and carparking
3. Lisburn Rugby Club	£225k	Indoor studio space, fitness suite and female changing
4. Canal Boxing Club	£285,455k	Sports Hub at QEII playing fields.
5. Hillhall Regeneration Group	£350k	To develop a community hall/resource centre
6. Carryduff GAC	£290k	To develop floodlit 4g facility, accessible toilets and works to neighbouring pitch
7. Ballinderry War Memorial	£350k	Restoration and regeneration of the Hall
Total committed	£1,945,455	

1.6	In addition to the CIF funding, both Ballymacash Sports Academy and Lisburn Rugby Club received additional funding under UKSPF (£55k & £45k).
1.7	There has been significant interest from a range of groups with regards to the release of a future round of CIF.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	<p>Following evaluation in 2024, Members agreed to maintaining the following criteria and principles for future launches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The fund will be a capital funding stream, which will only fund capital projects which are not owned and managed by the Council. b. any funded projects must be located within LCCC and must fall within the legal powers of the Council. c. the Council will not fund revenue costs associated with developing the project or sustaining the planned outcomes. d. the Guiding Principles of the Investment Plan, Connect-Invest-Transform to remain. e. maintain the transparent application process of both assessment and monitoring. f. access training/support for groups regarding legal and financial considerations such as VAT and State Aid g. continue with a programme management approach, through portfolio, with records being maintained such as meetings, assessment of applications and Council reports and h. whilst balanced investment is encouraged it must be based on evidenced need and therefore not all DEA's may secure investment from this fund, however they will be appropriately signposted and supported.
2.2	In addition to the above criteria and principles an organisation can currently only apply once to the fund, a copy of the current programme and associated elements can be found at Connect – Invest – Transform: Community Investment Fund 2024 (Phase 3) - lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk
3.0	<u>Community Investment Fund 2025/26</u>
3.1	At the Corporate Services Committee on 12 th February Members an additional £600k for the Community Investment Fund, bringing the remaining uncommitted total to £1,504,545. This was subsequently agreed at Council.
3.2	As the uncommitted balance is now £1,504,545 it is recommended that a further round of the programme is released and that if any additional officer support is required, to support the programme, it is found from within any in year underspend.
3.3	For groups who have previously applied and would like to secure additional external capital investment finance, it is recommended that officers work with the organisation to

	develop a funding programme and explore opportunities for additional capital and/or revenue funding.	
4.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the committee agrees to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the release of a further round of the Community Investment Fund in line with the previously agreed principles and criteria of the scheme. 	
5.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> Anticipated uncommitted budget is likely to be £1,504,545	
6.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
6.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
6.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out The project will have no impact on those within the S.75 group. Therefore, no requirements for further mitigations (each project has been equality screened individually).	
6.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
6.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. There is no negative impact on rural needs and will have a positive impact for communities (each project must have its own RNIA).	

Appendices:	
--------------------	--



Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing Committee
Date:	4 th March 2025
Report from:	Director of Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Storm Éowyn Support for Community Voluntary Sector

1.0	<u>Background</u>
1.1	Storm Éowyn hit Northern Ireland on the 24 th January 2025. It was the most powerful windstorm for over a decade, bringing red weather warnings with severe impacts to homes, businesses and transport. According to the Met Office analysis of the storm, it was the most significant windstorm for Northern Ireland since the Boxing Day storm of 1998.
1.2	Council, along with Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector organisations, provided invaluable assistance to those most vulnerable, who were left without power and access to hot meals for several days. Many homes across the Council area and beyond were unable to access power, heating, hot food, showers and in some cases water.
1.3	Council Community Assistance Centres were promptly stood up in LoughMoss Leisure Centre, Laganvalley Leisureplex, Hillsborough Village Centre and Dundonald International Ice Bowl. Alongside these centres, Moneyreagh Community Centre and Lagan Valley Island offered Work from Home spaces.
1.4	Many community and faith groups also worked alongside Council to provide warm spaces and meals for those most affected. They also delivered resources to those known to be vulnerable in their area.
2.0	<u>Key Issues</u>
2.1	Correspondence, dated 29 th January 2025, was received from the Department for Communities, (DfC), regarding financial assistance towards the efforts made by Councils and communities to minimise the impact of the storm. The financial assistance known as 'non-flooding to District Councils-Storm Éowyn' has been realised under Article 26 of the Local Government Order 1992, which sees provision of funds for Councils to support in emergency interventions.
2.2	Eligible costs include direct and associated costs to Councils for the Assistance Centres and work from home spaces. The correspondence also notes that Voluntary and Community organisations who have been working with Councils to mitigate the effects of the emergency should be reimbursed.
3.0	<u>Next Steps</u>
3.1	Officers and Members are aware of a number of groups who assisted in mitigating the effects of Storm Éowyn, who worked tirelessly to support those in need. Many groups

	and individuals have incurred financial expenses such as the opening of buildings, provision of food/materials and transport.	
3.2	Given the above and with the support of the financial assistance from DfC, it is recommended that Members consider a reimbursement scheme for relevant groups. Groups eligible should have the relevant governance in place, such as a constitution along with satisfactory evidence of spend incurred, against the impact of Storm Éowyn.	
3.3	If Members are minded to agree to the reimbursement scheme, the upper limit for the claim will be £300 unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each case would be assessed by an interdepartmental officers' group.	
3.4	A communication would go via the Communities Ezine, Council Website and Facebook with details of the scheme along with the relevant documentation such as the criteria and claim form. Once assessed by Council officers a claim would be presented to DfC for all costs incurred.	
3.5	To ensure a timely response it is further recommended that Delegated Authority is granted to the Head of Communities and Acting Head of Environmental Services to agree the claims and that details of applicants are placed on a future noting schedule.	
4.0	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>It is recommended that Members agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to a reimbursement scheme for community/voluntary/faith based organisations who assisted in the emergency response to Storm Éowyn; 2. to an upper limit of £300 and that 3. delegated authority to approve the claims is granted to the Head of Communities and Acting Head of Environmental Services 	
5.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>As per the LG 03/25 Non flooding scheme of emergency financial assistance to Councils – Storm Éowyn. Approximately £9k to be claimed from DfC.</p>	
6.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
6.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out? Screened by DfC	No
6.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
6.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed? Screened by DfC	No
6.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

--	--	--

Appendices:	Appendix 1 Correspondence from DfC Storm Éowyn
--------------------	---



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Pobal

Department for
Commonities

7

**Local Government & Housing
Regulation Division
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

Telephone: 07789758184
e-mail: jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref:
Date: 27 January 2025

Joan McCaffrey
Regional Officer
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Via email: joan.mccaffrey@emergencypreparednessni.gov.uk

Dear Joan,

LG 03/25 - NON-FLOODING SCHEME OF EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DISTRICT COUNCILS – STORM ÉOWYN

The Department has activated a Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to provide support to Northern Ireland District Councils due to the major incident declared because of Storm Éowyn. The scheme will run from 24 January 2025 until the situation is resolved.

I would advise that the Minister for Communities, with the approval of the Department of Finance, has agreed to widen the scope of the scheme to reimburse costs incurred by the council in funding community and voluntary sector partners in line with Local Government Circular 03/2025. This approval relates to the following criteria:

- Costs incurred due to the operation of Community Assistance Centres (CACs) i.e. staffing costs, opening of buildings;
- The cost of providing emergency supplies of food and other provision during the period of the emergency, including but not limited to;
 - Blankets;
 - Provision of hot meals at CACs and by delivery to the most vulnerable;
 - Transport to/from CACs and other Health & Social Care facilities
 - Assessments
 - Washing facilities
- Reasonable mutual-aid staff costs in assisting with the clean-up operation.

This will include reimbursement to Voluntary & Community Organisations who have been working with councils to mitigate the effects of the emergency. Councils are encouraged to reach out to Community Development Networks who may be able to provide assistance.



Department for

Communities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn

Pobal

Depairtment fur

Commonities

8

If additional items are required outside of those listed above, prior approval must be obtained from the Department before costs are incurred.

Please remember that all costs must be supported by the appropriate back-up documentation (invoices/receipts) as detailed in paragraph 15. This includes services provided by voluntary and community organisations (for staff costs this will include timesheets, pay slips and travel claims as proof of work on the emergency).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued co-operation in administering the Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance. It would be most helpful if you could forward any applications electronically to Deborah McKay (Deborah.McKay@communities-ni.gov.uk) and cc LGFinanceBranch@communities-ni.gov.uk

Should you have any queries, or if you need clarification, please contact Jeff Glass on 07789 758184 (jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk) or Deborah McKay on 07971 560639 (e-mail as above).

Yours sincerely,

JEFF GLASS

HEAD OF FINANCE

Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	4 March 2025
Report from:	Head of Communities

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	VE Day 80 Grant Fund

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	Council agreed to develop and implement, as part of its overall VE Day 80 Programme, a small grant fund to allow local groups to apply for financial assistance to undertake community initiatives.
1.2	This grant has an upper threshold amount of £700 with an overall budget of £45,000 agreed by Council against this element of the programme.
1.3	The grant opened for applications on Thursday 9 January 2025 and closed on Thursday 6 February 2025.
1.4	<u>Outcome</u>
1.5	There were a total of 86 applications received and assessed against the eligibility criteria on a pass or fail basis.
1.6	All applications were deemed successful with a total amount of £59,525 applied for.
1.7	At the VE Day 80 working group meeting which took place on Monday 17 February, it was agreed to recommend that the full amount applied for by the groups is approved to enable the events to go forward as planned by the organisations.
1.8	The overspend of £14,525 can be earmarked from in-year underspend in Leisure & Community Wellbeing departmental budget.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the committee agrees to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the outcome of the VE Day 80 grant programme; 2. further agrees the recommendation of the VE Day 80 Working Group for an uplift to the overall budget of £14,525 to cover the grant expenditure, requested and ringfenced from current in year Leisure & Community Wellbeing departmental underspend.
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> £45,000 agreed in the VE Day 80 Programme.

	£14,525 additional amount requested and ringfenced from current in-year departmental underspend.	
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	
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.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 Table of Outcomes VE Day 80 Grant Applications
--------------------	--

Number	Applicant Group	DEA of Applicant Group	Detail of programme / project costs showing exactly how group intend to spend the grant	Event Details			Outcome of application	Full Amount Requested
				Date of event	Time of Event	Location of Event		
1	Fourscore LOL 340	Kiluragh	Vintage rally	05/04/2025	11am	Fourscore Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
2	Ballyfinaghy Arts and Cultural Association	Lisburn North	BBQ, quiz and photographic display	02/05/2025	7pm	Lisburn Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
3	Devonmore Community Group	Downshire West	BBQ, music, artefacts workshop	03/05/2025	2pm	Devonmore Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
4	Lisburn Sea Cadets	Lisburn North	Street party	03/05/2025	12noon - 4pm	Bridge CC	Pass	£700.00
5	Lisburn Recreation and Community Hub	Lisburn South	Community fun day	03/05/2025	3pm - 7.30pm	Stanley Park, Lisburn	Pass	£700.00
6	Ballybeen Education and Cultural Heritage Hub (BEACHH)	Castlereagh East	Community event with refreshments & entertainment	04/05/2025	7pm - 10pm	Ballyoran Community Centre	Pass	£700.00
7	Royal Hillsborough Protestant Boys Flute Band	Downshire West	Family fun day	04/05/2025	2pm - 5pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
8	Drumbeg Community Association	Downshire East	BBQ and music	05/05/2025	2pm	St Patrick's Church, Drumbeg	Pass	£700.00
9	Poundbridge and District Community Association	Downshire East	Celebration event with live music, entertainment and refreshments	05/05/2025	2pm - 5pm	Drumbo Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
10	Ballylesson Old Boys Flute Band	Downshire East	Celebration event with live music, entertainment and refreshments	05/05/2025	2pm - 5pm	Drumbo Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
11	Irwin's True Blues	Downshire East	Afternoon tea and vintage car rally	05/05/2025	2pm - 5pm	Drumbo Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
12	Mallow Residents Association	Downshire West	Tea dance	05/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	Lower Maze Hall	Pass	£700.00
13	The Rasurgam CD Trust	Lisburn South	Tea dance	05/05/2025	11am - 2pm	3D Youth Centre	Pass	£700.00
14	The Welcome Project	Lisburn North	Tea dance	05/05/2025	6.30pm - 8.30pm	Hidden Centre, Church of Ireland Hall	Pass	£700.00
15	Anahilt and Magheraconk Community Association	Downshire East	Celebration community tea	06/05/2025	6pm	Anahilt Primary School	Pass	£700.00
16	Granshaw Presbyterian Church	Castlereagh East	Exhibition with street party and entertainment	06/05/2025	5.30pm - 10pm	Granshaw Presbyterian Church, 54 Gransha Road	Pass	£700.00
17	Dundonald Purple Vine Orange Lodge 1056	Castlereagh East	Community party with music and refreshments	06/05/2025	6pm - 9pm	Dundonald Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
18	Lower Broomhedge Community Association	Downshire West	Tea party, films and music	07/05/2025	7pm	Lower Broomhedge Hall	Pass	£700.00
19	Atlas Womens Centre	Lisburn North	Quiz and tea party	07/05/2025	6pm - 8pm	Atlas Centre	Pass	£700.00
20	Drumbough True Blues	Downshire West	Street party	07/05/2025	7am	Drumbough Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
21	Ballybeen Men's Motivational Group	Castlereagh East	Community celebration	08/05/2025	10am - 4pm	Ballyoran Community Centre	Pass	£700.00
22	Ballybeen Women's Centre	Castlereagh East	Community celebration	08/05/2025	10am - 2pm	Ballybeen Women's Centre	Pass	£700.00
23	Anahilt Parish Church	Downshire East	Evening celebration with music and refreshments	08/05/2025	7.30pm	22 and 23 Glebe Road, Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
24	Christ Church Lisburn	Lisburn South	Warmine tea dance	08/05/2025	2pm - 4pm	Christ Church, Lisburn	Pass	£700.00
25	St Mary's Parish Church	Castlereagh East	Community celebration with tea dance	08/05/2025	10am - 2pm	St Mary's Parish Church	Pass	£635.00
26	Ballymacash Neighbourhood Craft Group	Lisburn South	Tea dance	08/05/2025	10.30am - 12.30pm	Ballymacash Sports Academy	Pass	£700.00
27	Ballybeen Improvement Group	Castlereagh East	Community picnic in the park and music	08/05/2025	6pm - 7.30pm	Brooklands Primary School	Pass	£700.00
28	Davarr Community Initiative	Castlereagh East	Community picnic in the park and music	08/05/2025	6pm - 7.30pm	Brooklands Primary School	Pass	£700.00

29	Lisburn Downtown Centre	Lisburn North	Celebration and Reflection tea party, music and activities	08/05/2025	12.30pm - 3pm	Lisburn Downtown Centre	Pass	£700.00
30	Anahilt PS PTA	Downshire East	Afternoon tea party	08/05/2025	12noon	Anahilt Primary School	Pass	£700.00
31	Ulster New Zealand Trust	Kilbuckagh	Afternoon tea and entertainment	09/05/2025	2pm	The Ballance House, Glenavy	Pass	£700.00
32	Langymore Temperance Junior	Downshire East	Celebration evening	09/05/2025	5.30pm - 8pm	Robert Watson Memorial Hall	Pass	£700.00
33	Hillhall Regeneration Group	Downshire East	Community event; BBQ, music, food, quiz	09/05/2025	5.30pm - 7.30pm	Robert Watson Memorial Hall	Pass	£700.00
34	Ballymacash Rangers FC	Lisburn South	1940's themed dance	09/05/2025	7pm	Ballymacash Sports Academy	Pass	£700.00
35	Hidden Community Association	Lisburn North	Tea dance	09/05/2025	6.30pm - 8.30pm	Hidden Centre, Church of Ireland Hall	Pass	£700.00
36	Baillies Mills Accordion Band	Downshire East	BBQ, music and entertainment	09/05/2025	7pm	Anahilt Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
37	Ballykeel LOL 851	Downshire East	Commemorative BBQ	09/05/2025	7pm	Ballykeel Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
38	Ballyoran Community and Arts Group	Castlereagh East	Tea dance with films being shown	10/05/2025	7pm - 9pm	Ballyoran Community Centre	Pass	£700.00
39	Lagan District Girls' Brigade	Lisburn South	Celebration event	10/05/2025	2pm - 4pm	Trinity Methodist Church, Lisburn	Pass	£700.00
40	RBL Womens Section Hillsborough Branch	Downshire West	Street party	10/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
41	Dunbeg, Ashvale and Kilwarlin Community Group	Downshire West	Street party	10/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
42	Ballymacash LOL 317	Lisburn South	Community event; food, music	10/05/2025	10am - 3pm	Ballymacash Orange Hall	Pass	£590.00
43	Hillsborough Fort Guard	Downshire West	Street party	10/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
44	Hillsborough Working Together	Downshire West	Street party	10/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
45	Lisburn 1st Blues Supporters Club	Lisburn North	Street party	10/05/2025	12noon	6 Sackville Street, Lisburn	Pass	£700.00
46	Regimental Association of Royal Irish Regiment - Lisburn Branch	Lisburn North	Community BBQ, childrens entertainment	10/05/2025	3.30pm - 6pm	Lagan Valley Pigeon Club, Tonagh Drive, Lisburn	Pass	£700.00
47	Downshire Community Sports Centre	Downshire West	Community indoor street party	10/05/2025	7pm	Downshire Community Sports Centre	Pass	£700.00
48	Royal Hillsborough RBL	Downshire West	Street party	10/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
49	Hillsborough Old Guard	Downshire West	Street party	10/05/2025	1pm - 4pm	St Malachy's Church Green, Royal Hillsborough	Pass	£700.00
50	Brookmount Cultural and Education Society	Kilbuckagh	Community indoor street party	10/05/2025	7pm	Lowquarter Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
51	Old Warren Community Association	Lisburn South	Tea dance	10/05/2025	6pm - 9pm	Laganview Enterprise Centre	Pass	£700.00
52	Magheragall Parish Church	Kilbuckagh	Community lunch	11/05/2025	12.30pm	Magheragall Parish Church Hall	Pass	£700.00
53	Lisburn PSP	Lisburn North	Tea dance	11/05/2025	7pm - 10pm	Highway Inn Kitchen Garden	Pass	£700.00
54	Trustees of St Andrews Parish Church, Kilaney	Downshire East	Community picnic	11/05/2025	12noon	St Andrew's Parish Church, 40 Carryduff Road, Lisburn	Pass	£550.00
55	Dundonald Womens Institute	Castlereagh East	Evening Celebration	12/05/2025	7.30pm	Enter Centre	Pass	£700.00
57	Resurgam Youth Initiative	Lisburn South	BBQ, arts & crafts	12/05/2025	6pm - 9pm	3D Youth Centre	Pass	£700.00
59	Castlerobin Guiding Star LOL 146	Kilbuckagh	Family fun day	17/05/2025	2pm - 8pm	Castlerobin Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
60	Drumbough Community Association	Downshire West	Afternoon tea	17/05/2025	12noon	Drumbough Orange Hall	Pass	£300.00
61	Denlaghy Village Community Association	Lisburn North	Community fun day	17/05/2025	2pm	Denlaghy Community Garden	Pass	£700.00
62	Lisburn Congregational Church	Lisburn North	Celebration party	24/05/2025	2pm - 5pm	Congregational Church, 2 Sandfield Road	Pass	£700.00

63	Ballinderry District LOL No 3	Kilultagh	Exhibition of WW2 vehicles and uniforms and lunchtime tea	25/05/2025	11am - 2pm	Maghaberry Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
64	Dromara Local History Group	Downshire East	Hog roast	30/05/2025	7.30pm	Lagan Park, Dromara	Pass	£700.00
65	Hillhall Presbyterian Church	Downshire East	Community Jamboree	31/05/2025	11am - 3pm	Hillhall Presbyterian Church	Pass	£700.00
66	Larneay Rural Development and Cultural Society	Kilultagh	Tea party and film night	06/06/2025	7.30pm	Glenavy Protestant Hall	Pass	£700.00
67	Dundonald Angling Club	Castlereagh East	Evening BBQ	07/06/2025	6.30pm	Creedy Lough	Pass	£700.00
68	Mazetown Rural Action Collective	Downshire West	Community BBQ & Entertainment	14/06/2025	4pm	Kesh Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
69	Royal Hillsborough Apprentice Boys of Derry	Lisburn South	Community party	20/06/2025	7pm	Lisburn Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
70	Moorecroft Rural Community Association	Downshire East	Celebration day: BBQ and music	21/06/2025	7.45pm	Ballycoan Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
71	Ballybeen Jubilee Allotments	Castlereagh East	Street party/BBQ	04/05/2025 or 11/05/2025	2.30pm	Ballybeen Jubilee Allotments, Drumadown Park	Pass	£700.00
72	Lower Iveagh District LOL No 1	Downshire East	Exhibition of military vehicles and war memorabilia	13/06/2025 & 14/06/2025	9am - 5pm 9am - 2pm	Dromara Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
73	Ballinderry War Memorial Hall	Kilultagh	Indoor street party, reflection memorial service	03/05/2025 & 08/05/2025	11am - 1pm 7pm - 8pm	Ballinderry War Memorial Hall	Pass	£700.00
74	Derriaghy District LOL No 11	Lisburn North	Coffee morning and film screening, act of remembrance	03/05/2025 & 08/05/2026	10am 7.30pm	Derriaghy Orange Hall	Pass	£550.00
75	Downshire West Residents Association	Downshire West	Community BBQ and entertainment	06/05/2025	7pm 11am 5pm	Ballymacash Sports Academy	Pass	£700.00
76	Ballymacash Sports Academy	Lisburn South	Afternoon tea, music and commemorative packs	06/05/2025 08/05/2025 10/05/2025	7pm 11am 5pm	Ballymacash Sports Academy	Pass	£700.00
77	History Hub Ulster	Lisburn South	Cemetery tours	08/05/2025 11/05/2025	2pm 6pm	Lisburn Cemetery and Lisburn Holy Trinity Cemetery	Pass	£500.00
78	Beechland Community Group	Lisburn South	Tea dance & afternoon tea	08/05/2025 11/05/2025	1.30pm - 4pm 1pm - 3pm	Sarah Crothers Hall	Pass	£700.00
79	RISE	Castlereagh East	Tea dance & movie night	09/05/2025	6.30pm - 9pm	Enter Centre	Pass	£700.00
80	Larchfield Community Development Association	Downshire East	Family BBQ	10/05/2025	7.30pm	Legacurty Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
81	Anahit LOL 752	Downshire East	Installation of VE Day remembrance garden	May	N/A	Anahit Orange Hall	Pass	£700.00
82	All Saints Parish Church Eglantine	Downshire West	Family party	TBC	TBC	All Saints Parish Church Eglantine	Pass	£700.00
83	Dromara Community Group	Downshire East	Tea party	TBC	1pm - 4pm	Lagan Park Centre	Pass	£700.00
84	Ballymacash Regeneration Network	Lisburn South	Tea party	TBC	6pm - 9pm	Ballymacash Community Centre	Pass	£700.00
85	Seymourhall and Conway Residents Association	Lisburn North	BBQ, music and entertainment	TBC	12pm - 4pm	Tolerton Sports Zone	Pass	£700.00
86	Mora Community Association	Downshire West	Tea dance	TBC	3pm	Laganvale Care Home	Pass	£600.00
								£59,525.00

Lisburn North	13
Lisburn South	14
Downshire East	19
Downshire West	15
Castlereagh South	7
Castlereagh East	13
Kilultagh	8
TOTAL	86



Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	4 March 2025
Report from:	Head of Communities

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation Response – Department for Infrastructure: Active Travel Delivery Plan

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has launched a public consultation on its Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP), a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing active travel infrastructure across Northern Ireland over the next ten years. The ATDP sits in alignment with DfI Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP).
1.2	Opening on 13 November 2024 and closing on 28 February 2025 (extension provided to LCCC until end March 2025), DfI ran a stakeholder event for the LCCC area in LVI in Jan 2025 and this was attended by LCCC staff and residents. The department seeks public and Council input on prioritised routes, proposed guiding principles and measures such as traffic management, street space rebalancing and road safety enhancements. Feedback from the consultation will inform the final version of the ATDP, which aims to serve as a cornerstone for sustainable transport policies across Northern Ireland.
1.3	<u>Key Objectives of the ATDP Plan</u> The ATDP is structured around clear, actionable objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Prioritised Investment: Delivering over 200km of high-quality infrastructure within 10 years and an additional 1,000km in subsequent phases;b. Urban and Rural Focus: Tailoring interventions for both urban settlements (population >5,000) and rural areas to enhance connections to schools, public transport, and town centres;c. Inclusive Design Standards: Ensuring infrastructure meets consistent safety, accessibility, and connectivity benchmarks, drawing on stakeholder input and international best practices; andd. Currently, over one-third of journeys in Northern Ireland are less than two miles, and two-thirds are under five miles. These short distances represent significant opportunities to reduce reliance on private vehicles, encourage healthier lifestyles and foster more sustainable communities. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland 2022) mandates a minimum allocation of 10% of the overall transport budget to active travel, underscoring the importance of this delivery plan in addressing environmental goals while promoting inclusive and vibrant local communities.
1.4	The ATDP framework integrates an assessment methodology to prioritise certain routes that connect key community assets such as schools, employment hubs and leisure

facilities. The department has also highlighted the need to foster active travel behaviours by addressing safety and accessibility concerns.

1.5

Key Areas of ATDP Response and Summary LCCC response:

General Feedback

Does the ATDP plan meet local needs? Are there any gaps or concerns?

- a) LCCC supports the prioritisation of schools, town centres, and public transport but recommends including employment areas (e.g. industrial zones) as a key priority.
- b) Calls for inclusion of future zoned housing and employment land in planning, rather than just existing places of interest.
- c) Highlights the need for alignment with LCCC Local Development Plan (LDP) policies to ensure active travel is embedded in future developments.

1.6

Active Travel Route Prioritisation

Are the proposed ATDP priority routes correct? Should other routes be included? Are connections to schools, public transport, and town centres appropriately prioritised?

- a) Lisburn City: Concerns over geographic imbalance in route prioritisation, with a lack of eastern connections and secondary school linkages.
- b) Carryduff: New housing developments and employment areas not well served by proposed routes, particularly on Mealough Road and Comber Road.
- c) Metropolitan Castlereagh: Key retail and transport hubs (Dundonald, Cairnshill P&R) not connected; strategic and non-strategic road schemes should be repurposed for active travel.
- d) Metropolitan Lisburn: Supports proposed routes but calling for improved connections to the public transport network and the Lagan Towpath.

1.7

Network Delivery Plans

Feedback on priority (0-10 years) and future (10+ years) routes. Should existing routes be enhanced?

- a) LCCC supports many priority routes but raises concerns about existing infrastructure being reclassified as 'new' investment.
- b) Calls for extensions to several routes to ensure better connectivity to key destinations, including major employment zones and secondary schools.
- c) Highlights the lack of connectivity to transport hubs, limiting the effectiveness of active travel routes.

1.8	<p>Design & Infrastructure</p> <p><i>Support for people-centred, high-quality infrastructure. Views on road space reallocation & traffic management (e.g. reducing car dominance, improving safety).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. LCCC supports high-quality, safe and accessible infrastructure as essential for promoting active travel. b. LCCC supports road space reallocation and traffic management interventions to reduce car dependency in balance with wider community or local enterprise needs.
1.9	<p>Environmental & Equality Impact</p> <p><i>Are environmental impacts properly addressed? Does the plan impact certain groups unfairly? How can adverse effects be mitigated?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) LCCC agrees with the environmental benefits but stresses the need for strategic alignment with local and regional transport policies. b) LCCC suggests that active travel routes in rural areas (e.g. Moira, Maghaberry, Glenavy) require greater attention to ensure fair access.
1.10	<p>Council Specific Feedback</p> <p><i>Specific responses on priority routes within each Council area (e.g. Lisburn & Castlereagh). Suggestions for alternative routes. Preferences on whether feedback should be published or kept confidential.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Moira Train Station: LCCC calls for active travel integration, including better connections to Moira village and a footbridge over the A26 to Maghaberry. b) Canal Towpath Network: LCCC supports priority routes work alongside development of all towpaths, for example, Broadwater, to connect Aghalee and Moira. c) LCCC provides detailed feedback on each specific route and ATDP principles and expresses its desire for it to be incorporated into the final ATDP.
1.11	<p>Further Strategic Alignment with LCCC Frameworks: The council is currently drafting an Active Travel Strategy 2025-2040 and aims to integrate local needs with DfI's ATDP. It highlights the need for connected, accessible and safe networks to foster sustainable transportation. This 15-year LCCC draft plan aims to set out a bold vision to transform the areas infrastructure and behaviours around walking, wheeling and cycling, aligning with broader regional and national objectives.</p>
1.12	<p>Councils Draft Active Travel Strategy will seek to to ensure equity for Active Travel but recognises that it is a multi-agency approach along with businesses and communities.</p>

The draft strategy and associated consultations will be presented to this Committee at a future date.

2.0	<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) note the content of this report; andb) consider and agree, subject to any amends, the draft response to the Active Travel Delivery Plan for submission by the required deadline of end March 2025.	
3.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>	
4.0	<p><u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u></p>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out? Dfl has conducted an Equality Screening of the draft framework	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 n/a	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed? Dfl has conducted an Equality Screening of the draft framework	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. n/a	
-----	--	--

Appendices:	Draft Consultation response to the ATDP
--------------------	--

LCCC ATDP Consultation Response

We are now seeking your views on whether we have prioritised the right things or are there factors which you think should have more influence on where we focus investment in active travel infrastructure.

LCCC agrees with the connection priorities listed, local schools, town centres and public transport. However, these should be supplemented with inclusion of established employment areas outside town centres, i.e. industrial zoned lands. Active travel to those areas for workers is a benefit if they don't have access to public transport, a private car or if they live within an acceptable travel distance to their place of work.

Page 5 of the ATDP consultation document refers to development of a framework to consider prioritisation of connection to existing places of interest, including employment locations. This matter is further addressed in the next section.

As this is a long term plan the ATDP should not just propose linkage to existing places of interest. The priority list should identify areas where zoned land (employment and housing) is located. It is appreciated that the ATDP notes at page 5 that ***'the framework considers the extent to which a route will connect people to existing places of interest.'*** However, to accord with the statement that ***'we empower young people to adopt sustainable habits that can last a lifetime'*** (under the priority to connect local schools on page 5), new routes from new zoned land should be a priority in the first 10 years of the ATDP.

This council's Local Development Plan (LDP) affirms this need through its strategic and operational planning policies;

Policy SP20 Transport Infrastructure – The Plan will support development proposals that:

d) facilitate Park & Ride, active travel (public transport, cycling and walking) and strategic greenways to move towards more sustainable modes of travel both within the Council area and linking to wider regional networks.

Policy HOU4 Design in New Residential Development – Proposals for residential development will be expected to conform to all the following design criteria, including:

g) a proposed site layout must indicate safe and convenient access through provision of walking and cycling infrastructure, both within the development and linking to existing or planned networks

TRA8 Active Travel Networks and Infrastructure Provision – Planning permission will only be granted for proposals where public transport, walking and cycling provision forms part of the development proposal.

Aligning with these policy requirements can only be achieved by developers if the ATDP incorporates housing and employment zoned land as a priority to be included with those existing places of interest already listed in the consultation document.

Additionally, the listed connection priorities shown on the appended maps do not provide sufficient and balanced connections to schools, town centres and public transport. This matter is further addressed in the next section.

We are seeking your views on the ATDP priority routes shown on these maps or if there are other routes that you feel may bring more benefit to the local community and should be prioritised above those listed.

The council notes and generally welcomes the priority routes identified in Appendix 7 that accompanies this ATDP consultation document. However, the council would make the following comments in relation to general matters and each of the proposed routes as follows;

Lisburn City

General Points – All of the priority routes, except for No. 6, are located to the west side of the city and whilst this is the major area of growth promoted by the LDP and other council non statutory strategies and frameworks, no regard has been given to prioritising either the city centre or the eastern half of Lisburn.

None of the major secondary education facilities in the city have priority connection proposed in the first 10 years of this ATDP. If, as this ATDP envisages, **'we empower young people to adopt sustainable habits that can last a lifetime'**, it is necessary to encourage secondary level students by provision of priority routes to their schools. Of the 23/24 schools identified on the map, only 7 are in very close proximity to priority routes. Of those 7 schools only 1 provides secondary level education and the remainder, no matter how safe they are to use, would not be considered more desirable, or given greater priority over the encouragement of older students to use active travel.

None of the priority routes connect to existing (or proposed) transport hubs, which is another of the 3 key connection types.

- Route 1 – On footpath shared walking/cycling lanes already exist, why therefore is this a priority route. Whilst it is useful to connect to Route 5 (which also already exists), it doesn't connect to any point of interest at the Knockmore Road/Moira Road junction. Lands west of this route are major employment lands off the Ballinderry and Moira Roads and so this route should extend to these areas.
- Route 2 – Is welcomed as a route to the city centre and importantly it serves 4 educational facilities along its route. However, stopping at Longstone Street, it fails to provide a complete route into the city centre which is a priority point of interest in the ATDP. A route with no perceived end does not make sense.
- Route 3 – Is welcomed as it provides a useful linkage to Sprucefield (eastern portion). It is noted that the western portion of Sprucefield is already connected by way of the Blaris Greenway. As with Route 2, this Route stops short of the city centre at its northern end.
- Route 4 – Whilst useful to provide connection to the Lagan towpath, it does not serve any of the 3 connection types used to identify priority active travel routes.
- Route 5 – Like Route 1 is to a large extent already in situ. It is welcomed as it will serve relatively new housing at its northern end but, like Route 2 is stops short of the city with no easy access route beyond it to the centre.
- Route 6 – Useful as a connection from the north east side of Lisburn to Milltown and, for commuting the BRT route, one of the key connection types, although there is no provision for cycle parking at BRT and until there is safe parking it is unlikely to be used for this purpose.

Carryduff

General Points – Whilst the 3 priority routes terminate at the town centre, they serve only one of two educational facilities. New housing development and previously zoned employment lands are not served well by Routes 1 to 3.

- Route 1 – Should be extended at its northern end to connect directly to the housing lands under development between Carryduff and Mealough Road. Planning permission for that scheme included an active travel route through the development and joining with the northern point of Route 1 at Queensfort Road.
- Route 2 – No comments to raise.
- Route 3 – Should extend further east across the Saintfield Road to the employment lands and the Baronscourt development currently under construction on the Comber Road.

Metropolitan Castlereagh

General Points – Metropolitan Castlereagh contains the Dundonald Local Centre and Forestside District Centre as designated in the LDP. These are key centres within the council's retailing hierarchy however, no proposed priority routes provide linkage to these from the neighbourhoods around them. Although the terminology used in the ATDP is town centres as an existing place of interest, the lower tier local and district centres are equally the same connection type and priority routes to them should apply for the same reason, even more so as they provide for a local need. Other than a lack of connections to these centres, the other comments made in relation to proposals in Lisburn can apply here. There is no connection to public transport hubs – Cairnshill Park and Ride (P&R) and Dundonald (P&R). There are priority connections to a minimal number of education facilities. There are no connections to employment zonings. Dundonald is a prime example that contains retailing, public transport hubs, secondary schools and employment zonings yet none of these are identified for priority connection.

One strategic and one non-strategic road scheme are located in Metropolitan Castlereagh and have evolved through extant Department Development Plans. Neither has and are unlikely to be developed. The strategic scheme, A24 Saintfield Relieve Road and the non-strategic Quarry Corner to Comber Road should be repurposed for active travel. Whether these are done as priority or future routes is not of relevance but, for example, the Quarry Corner scheme could connect the existing urban surroundings to local centres, transport hubs and leisure facilities at Billy Neill and the Comber Greenway. This would be in preference to the proposed nearby future route through Old Mill Heights which, to a greater extent already has a wide combined pedestrian/cycle path through it.

Route 1 – In principle this is a good example of a route to connect 2/3 educational facilities (a minority in the overall area). Otherwise, this route proposes to connect to existing greenways at either end of the route. Whilst fine in principle, the northern end of the route should connect to the Comber Greenway at Dundonald International Ice Bowl (with onward connection to Dundonald Local Centre). The proposed connection via Abbey Road follows a quiet residential street to an existing access point to the Comber Greenway. There should be a redirection of proposed Route 1 to the east, either along the busier Kings Road or via those quieter suburban routes to its south e.g. from Melfort Drive via Lothian Drive and Vionville Rise.

Metropolitan Lisburn

Routes 1 and 2 – These are welcomed for provision of access to/from Milltown and the BRT route starting point. They also provide useful links to the public transport network at Derriaghy and onward connection via future routes to the Lagan Towpath.

We are seeking your views on the key principles and their implications in terms of road space allocation and traffic management.

Council agrees with the two key principles of design as set out in the ATDP as high quality schemes will be both safe for intended users and aid in making active travel an attractive lifestyle choice of the future.

Council takes cognisance of the Department's set change to promote a modal shift away from the private car and endorses this through Strategic Policy 01 – Sustainable Development and all other strategic and operational policies of its LDP.

The reallocation of road space and traffic management interventions seem appropriate to aid both the Department's and the Council's transport objectives into the future.

It is also noted that one of our LCCC members would like to express direct feedback on the ATDP more broadly linked to wider DfI Travel and infrastructure planning:

- **Moira Train Station and Connectivity**

There is currently no focus on active travel around Moira Train Station, which serves as a vital connector to both Lisburn and Belfast for rural communities within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area. This station is utilised by residents from Moira, Magheraberry, Glenavy, Ballinderry, Aghalee, and surrounding areas. Improved active travel infrastructure in this area should be considered a key priority. Suggestions include enhanced connections from Moira village itself and the construction of a footbridge over the A26 to link the train station with Magheraberry village.

- **Canal Towpath Network**

The canal towpath network in this area should also be prioritised within the Active Travel Strategy. For instance, the towpath at Broadwater provides an important link between Aghalee village and Moira Train Station and is widely used by the local community. Further development and enhancement of the towpath network would be highly beneficial and are strongly supported.

Alignment of LCCC Greenway Priorities with the Active Travel Delivery Plan Consultation

The **Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP) Consultation** and **LCCC's priorities** for greenways share strong alignment in many areas, but there are also gaps where LCCC's feedback could enhance the plan's effectiveness. Below is an analysis of how LCCC's greenway priorities inform and interact with the consultation document's objectives, especially any interlinkage with proposed or future priority routes.

1 General Policy Alignment on Greenways

ATDP Consultation Stance

- Recognises greenways as a key part of active travel infrastructure.
- Seeks to expand traffic-free walking and cycling routes as part of an integrated active travel network.
- Plans to align with the Strategic Plan for Greenways and Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan to improve active travel infrastructure.

LCCC's Key Feedback

- Supports the expansion of greenways as a vital mode of active travel.
- Agrees greenways contribute to health, sustainability, and connectivity.
- Recommends prioritising future growth areas, not just existing greenways.
- Requests stronger connections to employment zones and new housing areas.

How LCCC Feedback Informs ATDP:

- The ATDP should go beyond existing greenway infrastructure and prioritise routes to new developments, industrial areas, and strategic employment sites, ensuring they are part of early-stage planning.
- LCCC's request for employment-focused greenways aligns with the ATDP's goal of reducing car dependency for work commutes.

2. Priority Route Development

ATDP Consultation Stance

- Proposes over 200km of high-quality active travel routes in the first 10 years, with 1,000km planned for longer-term development.
- Prioritises connections to schools, public transport, and town centres.
- Greenways will be considered as part of a rolling programme of major active travel projects.

LCCC's Key Feedback

- Supports the identification of priority routes.
- Agrees that connecting schools and transport hubs is crucial.
- Concerns about geographic imbalance in greenway prioritisation.
- Recommends extending routes to secondary schools and employment areas (e.g. Ballinderry, Moira, Carryduff).
- Requests Moira Train Station connectivity via greenways and the Broadwater Towpath development.

How LCCC Feedback Informs ATDP:

- LCCC highlights the imbalance in route prioritisation, particularly in Lisburn's eastern half and employment areas.
- ATDP should address gaps in secondary school connections and transport hubs, particularly by integrating greenways into Moira Train Station access and the Broadwater Towpath network.

3. Design and Infrastructure Considerations

ATDP Consultation Stance

- Emphasises high-quality, safe, and accessible active travel routes.
- Supports traffic-free routes, including segregated cycling lanes and greenways.
- Road space reallocation may be required to prioritise walking, cycling, and wheeling.

LCCC's Key Feedback

- Supports safe, high-quality greenway infrastructure.
- Recognises the need for traffic-free routes as a core part of active travel.
- Notes that some planned road schemes should be repurposed as greenways (e.g. Saintfield Relief Road, Quarry Corner to Comber Road).
- Raises concerns about cycle parking at transport hubs (e.g. Milltown, Cairnshill Park & Ride, Dundonald).

How LCCC Feedback Informs ATDP:

- ATDP should explicitly consider repurposing road schemes for greenways, ensuring land already allocated for transport projects can be used for active travel.
- The plan should improve active travel facilities at transport hubs, including secure cycle parking and seamless multimodal connections.

4. Rural & Community Greenways

ATDP Consultation Stance

- Recognises the need for rural active travel networks, particularly in smaller towns and villages.
- Seeks to use the same prioritisation framework for rural routes as for urban areas.

- Highlights community greenways as a way to improve rural connectivity.

LCCC's Key Feedback

- Strongly supports rural greenway development.
- Highlights the importance of the canal towpath network for local connectivity.
- Requests priority for key rural greenway projects, including:
 - I. Moira Train Station – Greenway link from Magheraberry.
 - II. Broadwater Towpath – Key route connecting Aghalee to Moira.
 - III. Dundonald Greenway – Connections to retail and transport hubs.

How LCCC Feedback Informs ATDP:

- LCCC's feedback reinforces the need for rural active travel investments and highlights specific underdeveloped rural greenway corridors.
- ATDP should better integrate rural greenways into transport hubs and local centres, ensuring seamless connections for non-urban areas.

5. Implementation and Long-Term Strategy

ATDP Consultation Stance

- Rolling investment in active travel, with phased delivery of routes over the next 10+ years.
- Aims for long-term connectivity and multi-modal integration with public transport.
- Encourages ongoing feedback and future consultation on specific schemes.

LCCC's Key Feedback

- Welcomes the long-term vision for active travel.
- Supports a phased approach to greenway investment.
- Stresses the need for more transparent, localised consultation on specific greenway projects.
- Recommends proactive engagement with councils on greenway alignment with future growth areas.

How LCCC Feedback Informs ATDP:

- LCCC calls for more council-level involvement in greenway planning, ensuring alignment with Local Development Plans (LDPs).
- ATDP should establish more detailed public engagement on specific greenway corridors beyond the current consultation process.

Final Recommendations for ATDP Based on LCCC Feedback

1. Prioritise priority routes allied to greenway extensions to employment areas, particularly in Lisburn, Moira, and Carryduff.
2. Ensure secondary schools have direct greenway connections, not just primary schools.
3. Enhance rural greenways, with particular focus on the Broadwater Towpath and Moira-Magheraberry link.
4. Reallocate unused road corridors (e.g. Saintfield Relief Road) into greenways instead of waiting for road schemes that may never be built.
5. Improve cycle infrastructure at key transport hubs, such as Milltown, Cairnshill P&R, and Dundonald.

6. Engage more closely with local councils to ensure greenways align with local planning policies and future housing/employment zoning.
7. Create a clearer rural greenway strategy, ensuring villages and smaller towns get appropriate investment in active travel corridors.

ACTIVE TRAVEL DELIVERY PLAN CONSULTATION – LCCC Response

Overview and Comments

Over one third of journeys in Northern Ireland are less than two miles long, and two thirds are less than five miles long. These shorter distances offer a tremendous opportunity for active travel to become a practical and attractive option for many people.

This Active Travel Delivery Plan sets out how the Department for Infrastructure will prioritise and deliver high-quality active travel infrastructure, for shorter everyday journeys within urban and rural settlements, over the next 10 years. The plan will be instrumental in ensuring that the infrastructure is consistently designed to be safe, accessible, and interconnected, encouraging more people to walk, wheel, or cycle as part of their daily routine.

Why your views matter

By commenting on our proposals, you can help shape the developing active travel network in your area and the Department's overall approach to active travel investment.

Responses to the consultation can be submitted via the link at the bottom of this page.

It is planned to hold a number of engagement events during the consultation period if you would like more information before responding.

Dates, times and locations will be posted on the Department's website, social media feeds and the Events section below as it becomes available.

If you require a paper copy of the questionnaire, please contact us at: activetravel@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

We would like to receive your comments by **28th February 2025**.

Why is an Active Travel Delivery Plan Needed?

By providing attractive travel options, we empower people to make more sustainable choices. With safe, reliable, and accessible active travel infrastructure, individuals are more likely to embrace healthier alternatives to driving. This shift can lead to more vibrant places where traffic congestion and air quality are less of an issue and our streets feel safer and more pleasant for everyone.

While we have the Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan and the Strategic Plan for Greenways, up until now there was no plan for the North for the delivery of active travel infrastructure. Historically, delivery has sometimes leaned towards less technically complex schemes, resulting in a lack of consistency and connectivity. Without a unified plan, many areas remain underserved by active travel options, limiting the overall impact of the investment.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 underscores the crucial role of active travel in addressing climate goals. It mandates the development of sectoral plans for transport which set a minimum spend on active travel from the overall transport budgets of 10%. Meeting this commitment will require a significant increase in investment.

A comprehensive plan is essential to maximise the benefits of this increased investment. Our long-term vision is to create a seamless, integrated network that allows more people, regardless of age or ability, to choose active travel. Our vision also focused on consistency in design, ensuring that new infrastructure meets the highest levels of safety and accessibility.

We invite you to comment on our proposals, to help shape the developing active travel network in your area and the Department's overall approach to active travel investment.

What is your name?

Name (Required)

What is your email address?

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response.

Email

Are you responding on behalf of:

(Required) Individual Organisation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of your organisation and outline which groups of people it represents:

Are you responding on behalf of:

For individuals please select your most common mode of transport for short journeys?

Prioritisation of Potential Active Travel Routes

To ensure we prioritise investment effectively, we have developed an assessment framework that will allow us to assess and score potential active travel routes.

The framework considers the extent to which a route will connect people to existing places of interest, as well as any potential barriers to delivery such as land ownership and ecological matters. The places of interest considered include such things as schools, leisure facilities, areas of employment and many other local amenities. It also considers the connections that could be prioritised to maximise benefits for individuals, the environment and society.

We identified three key connection types which we believe offer the greatest potential to realise these benefits. We have placed a particular emphasis on these in our assessment framework.

Connections to local schools

Many people are concerned about safety and congestion in the vicinity of schools. Improving the active travel infrastructure around schools to encourage parents and children to travel actively for the school run,

can improve safety and bring health benefits for pupils and parents alike. By investing in such infrastructure, we empower young people to adopt sustainable habits that can last a lifetime.

Connections to public transport

Combining active travel and public transport is a great way for people to reduce their dependence on the car and reduce their carbon footprint. Reducing the impact of traffic congestion by reducing the number of people who are dependent on the private car for their commute, can help to make our cities more attractive, sustainable and successful.

Connections to town centres

Creating better connections to local centres will make it easier for people to access the amenities they use every day. This can lead to increased footfall, making these local centres more vibrant and commercially attractive.

The assessment framework can be applied to anywhere people have a desire to get from A to B. This will form the basis for how we will prioritise investment in active travel infrastructure.

Do you agree that we have emphasised the right things?

(Required)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Connections to local schools	x				
Connections to public transport	x				
Connections to town centres	x				

Are there other types of journey or connections that you think should have more influence on where we focus investment in active travel infrastructure?

Active Travel Network Delivery Plans

We have used our assessment framework to identify a network of priority routes, for delivery over the next 10 years, and future routes. We have also identified routes where the existing active travel infrastructure could be enhanced.

We are proposing to phase delivery as set out below. We believe this is a reasonable estimate of what we can deliver based on ramping up active travel investment to meet our Climate Change Act obligations by 2030.

- **Priority routes (0-10 Years):** This phase will see the delivery of over 200km of high-quality active travel infrastructure. These are the routes that we have assessed as having the potential to deliver the greatest benefits on completion.
- **Future routes (10+ Years):** This phase will see the delivery of over 1000km of high-quality active travel infrastructure which will deliver a high-quality, connected network that is accessible and attractive to as wide a range of people as possible.

Active Travel Network Delivery Plans have been developed for 42 settlements within the following Council Areas:

(Click on Council Area to expand list of settlements)

[Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council](#)

[Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

[Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council](#)

[Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council](#)

[Derry City and Strabane District Council](#)

[Fermanagh and Omagh District Council](#)

[Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council](#)

[Mid and East Antrim Borough Council](#)

[Mid Ulster District Council](#)

[Newry, Mourne and Down District Council](#)

This is an interactive map.

Active Travel Delivery Plan for all Councils

Key

- Priority Routes
- Future Routes
- Existing Routes
- Existing Routes With Potential For Future Enhancements
- Translink Bus Rail Stations
- NI School Locations 2023
- Town City Centres

Map showing Active Travel Network across all 42 settlements

Do you wish to comment on specific Priority Routes?

(Required) Yes

Priority Routes

Which Council Area do you wish to comment on?

(you can comment on as many Council Areas as you wish and when you have finished commenting on Priority Routes tick the last box on the below list to proceed)

(Required) Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Mid

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council ATDP

The following settlements are situated within Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

- Lisburn City
- Carryduff
- Metropolitan Castlereagh
- Metropolitan Lisburn

Our assesement framework has identified the following Priority Routes in these settlements.

(Please comment on as many settlements as you wish before continuing to the next question)

Do you agree with the Priority Routes for Lisburn City?

	Yes	No
Route 1: Knockmore Road (A520) (Moira Road and Prince William Road)	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 2: Moira Road/Knockmore Road junction to Longstone Street (A3).	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 3: Sprucefield Park to Laganbank Road (A1) via Hillsborough Road	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 4: Lambeg Road (B103)/Queensway Junction to Lagan Towpath	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 5: Prince William Road (A519) to Lady Wallace Avenue	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 6: McKinsty Road/Queensway junction to McKinsty	See additional LCCC response statement	

	Yes	No	30
Road/The Cutts Junction via McKinstry Road			

This is an interactive map.

Lisburn City ATDP

Key

- Priority Routes
- Future Routes
- Existing Routes
- Existing Routes With Potential For Future Enhancements
- Translink Bus Rail Stations
- NI School Locations 2023
- Town City Centres

+

–

i

This interactive map shows: Priority Routes, Future Routes, Existing Routes and Existing Routes with potential for Future Enhancements

The following trip attractor information is available within the map and can be turned on (by clicking on the eye symbol within the key): School Locations, Translink Bus & Rail Stations and Town/City Centres.

If you wish to expand on your answer above or if you have any alternative routes that you feel may bring more benefit to the local community and should be prioritised above those identified, please do so in the box below.

Do you have any alternative routes?
Do you agree with the Priority Routes for Carryduff?

	Yes	No
Route 1: Ballynahinch Road (A24) to Carryduff Roundabout	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 2: Hillsborough Road (B178) to Ballynahinch Road	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 3: Church Road (B178)	See additional LCCC response statement	

	Yes	No	31
(Ballynahinch Road to Saintfield Road)			

This is an interactive map.

Carryduff ATDP

- Key
- Priority Routes
 - Future Routes
 - Existing Routes
 - Existing Routes With Potential For Future Enhancements
 - Translink Bus Rail Stations
 - NI School Locations 2023
 - Town City Centres

+

This interactive map shows: Priority Routes, Future Routes, Existing Routes and Existing Routes with potential for Future Enhancements

The following trip attractor information is available within the map and can be turned on (by clicking on the eye symbol within the key): School Locations, Translink Bus & Rail Stations and Town/City Centres.

If you wish to expand on your answer above or if you have any alternative routes that you feel may bring more benefit to the local community and should be prioritised above those identified, please do so in the box below.

Do you have any alternative routes?
Do you agree with the Priority Routes for Metropolitan Castlereagh?

	Yes	No
Route 1: Knock Road/Glen Road junction to Abbey Road (connection to Comber Greenway) via Lower Braniel Road, Gilnahirk Road, Geary Road, Melfort Drive and Kings Road	See additional LCCC response statement	

This is an interactive map.

Met Castlereagh ATDP

Key

- Priority Routes
- Future Routes
- Existing Routes
- Existing Routes With Potential For Future Enhancements
- Translink Bus Rail Stations
- NI School Locations 2023
- Town City Centres

+

—

i

This interactive map shows: Priority Routes, Future Routes, Existing Routes and Existing Routes with potential for Future Enhancements

The following trip attractor information is available within the map and can be turned on (by clicking on the eye symbol within the key): School Locations, Translink Bus & Rail Stations and Town/City Centres.

If you wish to expand on your answer above or if you have any alternative routes that you feel may bring more benefit to the local community and should be prioritised above those identified, please do so in the box below.

Do you have any alternative routes?

Do you agree with the Priority Routes for Metropolitan Lisburn?

	Yes	No
Route 1: Stewartstown Road to The Cutts/Derriaghy Road Junction	See additional LCCC response statement	
Route 2: The Cutts/Queensway Junction to Derriaghy Road (C5)	See additional LCCC response statement	

This is an interactive map.

Met Lisburn ATDP

Key

- Priority Routes
- Future Routes
- Existing Routes
- Existing Routes With Potential For Future Enhancements

- Translink Bus Rail Stations
- NI School Locations 2023
- Town City Centres

+

i

This interactive map shows: Priority Routes, Future Routes, Existing Routes and Existing Routes with potential for Future Enhancements

The following trip attractor information is available within the map and can be turned on (by clicking on the eye symbol within the key): School Locations, Translink Bus & Rail Stations and Town/City Centres.

If you wish to expand on your answer above or if you have any alternative routes that you feel may bring more benefit to the local community and should be prioritised above those identified, please do so in the box below.

Do you have any alternative routes?
Do you have any additional comments about the proposals for Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council?
Do you have any additional comments about the proposals?

Designing the Network

Design Principles

To enhance the streetscape for active travel, we will consider a variety of interventions tailored to meet the unique needs of each area. Two key principles will guide the design of each scheme:

Do you agree with these principles?

(Required)	Yes	No
Design will be people-centred, with the aim of creating places that are welcoming and accessible to all.	<p><i>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) fully agrees with the design statement that "design will be people-centred, with the aim of creating places that are welcoming and accessible to all." This aligns closely with the council's commitment to promoting inclusivity and accessibility in its active travel infrastructure and wider development plans.</i></p> <p><i>LCCC emphasises the importance of designing infrastructure that serves all residents, including those from rural and urban areas, and ensures connectivity to key locations such as schools, town centres, public transport hubs, employment zones, and recreational spaces. Prioritising enhancements such as improved active travel links to rail or bus stations/stops, safe pedestrian crossings and the expansion of canal towpaths, reflects the council's aim to create welcoming, accessible, and sustainable environments for all.</i></p> <p><i>This people-centred approach also complements the council's Local Development Plan/Active Travel policies, which advocate for sustainable development, active travel, and strategic greenways, and ensures that future</i></p>	

(Required)	Yes	34
	<p><i>developments foster community cohesion and equitable access to key services and opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>By embedding these principles into design and planning, LCCC aims to empower residents to adopt sustainable habits while creating vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming places that cater to the needs of all.</i></p>	
<p>Design will focus on the provision of high-quality infrastructure, appropriate to the situation, with safety at its heart</p>	<p><i>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) fully supports the design statement that "design will focus on the provision of high-quality infrastructure, appropriate to the situation, with safety at its heart."</i></p> <p><i>The council recognises that high-quality, context-appropriate infrastructure is essential to encouraging active travel and ensuring its widespread adoption. Safety is a fundamental component, as it builds trust and confidence among users of all ages and abilities. This commitment is reflected in the council's Local Development Plan/Active Travel Plan policies, including those prioritising active travel infrastructure within residential developments, connections to public transport, and strategic greenways.</i></p> <p><i>LCCC's feedback on the Active Travel Design Plan (ATDP) highlights several examples of where safety and quality infrastructure are critical. Additionally, prioritising infrastructure for schools, town centres, and employment zones is crucial to creating safe, high-quality networks that serve the needs of residents.</i></p> <p><i>By embedding safety and quality into design principles, LCCC aims to deliver infrastructure that not only meets practical needs but also fosters a culture of sustainable and active travel in welcoming and secure environments.</i></p>	

Do you have any comments on these overarching design principles?

Road Space Allocation and Traffic Management

Rebalancing the Street

To accommodate safe, high-quality active travel infrastructure, we may need to re-balance the space within our streets. This could involve narrowing carriageway widths in areas where the focus has shifted from maximizing motor traffic to ensuring safe and efficient movement for everyone. We may also explore options to reduce or relocate parking and review existing bus stop placements to ensure equal and convenient access to local amenities and services for all.

Rethinking Traffic Management

There may be places where we can introduce traffic management measures that can help to make walking, wheeling, and cycling more attractive. This could include lowering speed limits or implementing one-way systems to reduce risks associated with motor traffic, especially in areas with high pedestrian and cyclist interaction. We may also restrict motor vehicle access in places where there is desire to create places that are predominantly people focussed.

To what extent do you agree with these principles?

(Required)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Rebalancing the Street	x				
Rethinking Traffic Management	x				

Do you have any additional comments on the principles for Designing the Network?

"Rebalancing the Street" and "Rethinking Traffic Management" are essential components of a forward-thinking Active Travel Design Plan (ATDP). Rebalancing the street is a critical step toward prioritising active travel modes such as walking, cycling, and public transport over private car usage. This approach aligns with LCCC's commitment to promoting modal shift through its Local Development Plan policies, such as facilitating sustainable transport and ensuring active travel infrastructure is integrated into new developments. Rethinking traffic management is equally important to achieve these goals. By reorganising road space and introducing measures that prioritise safety, accessibility, and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists in balance with the needs of vehicle users, streets can be transformed into vibrant, people-focused spaces that encourage active travel. LCCC welcomes these concepts as part of a cohesive strategy to make streets more equitable, sustainable, and aligned with the needs of the local community yet in keeping with its own specific feedback on the ADTP itself. These measures will not only enhance safety and accessibility but also support broader council objectives to foster healthier, more connected, and environmentally friendly spaces.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment report has been produced for this plan. The report identifies the likely environmental effects of implementing the Plan, with a particular emphasis on those effects which are considered 'significant' and provides detail of mitigation that can be applied to maximise beneficial effects, while minimising those effects considered to be adverse to the environment.

The report can be accessed via the following link:

[Strategic Environmental Assessment Report](#)

[Information on Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#)

Do you have any comments on the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report ?

Do you have any comments on the SEA?

Equality Impact Assessment Screening

An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been carried out on this plan.

The document can be accessed via the following link:

[Equality Impact Assessment Screening](#)

Thinking about the Section 75 categories in the previous section, do you believe this plan will have any positive or negative impact on people in these groups? Please give details below
Please add response below
What action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts?
What action you think could be taken to reduce or eliminate any adverse impacts?
Do you have any comments on the Equality Impact Assessment Screening document?
Do you have any comments on the Equality Impact Assessment Screening document?

Next Steps

After the consultation ends, we will review all the feedback. Following this, a report will be published showing how your comments have influenced the final Active Travel Delivery Plan.

Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will still take account of your views in our analysis, but we will not publish your response, quote anything that you have said or list your name. We will regard your response as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#) (please right click on the link to open in a new window). By submitting your response you agree to our privacy policy.

Information for organisations only:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' refers only to your name, not your organisation's name. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

The Department for Infrastructure would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference
(Required) Publish response with name Publish response only without name Do not publish response

We may wish to contact you regarding your response, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Department for Infrastructure to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise
(Required) Yes No

Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	4 March 2025
Report from:	Head of Service (Acting) - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland – Consultation Response

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	A Consultation from the Department for Communities on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland (attached as Appendix 5 EH for Members' information).
1.2	The draft Fuel Poverty Strategy proposes a framework for addressing fuel poverty and its impacts.
1.3	Fuel poverty is the inability of a household to heat and power their home adequately. It is affected by the cost of energy, the energy efficiency of the home and energy needs of those living in it, and household income. When people cannot heat their homes adequately, it can lead to poor mental and physical health.
1.4	Fuel poverty is a complex subject and there are a number of areas that require consideration, not only remaining net income and impact on health and household budgets.
1.5	The Strategy proposes a vision of a Warm, Healthy Home for Everyone, supported by 4 principles.
1.6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long-term sustainable solutions to ensure people are lifted out of fuel poverty by focusing on long term solutions rather than short term fixes, aligning our duties under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, including those relating to the Just Transition principle and its connected objectives to ensure that actions taken eliminate poverty, inequality and social deprivation. 2. A Needs-based response to the changing needs of people in or at risk of fuel poverty by providing more flexible, holistic support that prioritises those most in need. 3. A Collaborative approach building partnerships, referral networks and collaboration across all sectors of society will be at the heart of everything we do. 4. A participative approach empowering people and communities to seek long-term solutions, recognising and removing barriers, and enhancing the capacity and confidence of fuel poor people to seek support.
1.7	<p>It contains a number of proposed actions that will help us achieve the following objectives to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make homes more energy efficient. 2. Collaborate and build capacity. 3. Protect consumers. <p>The draft Strategy also proposes a new approach to measuring and reporting on fuel poverty and proposals for the Department's new Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Scheme.</p>

	The proposed response to the Consultation is attached as Appendix 6 for Members' consideration. It outlines the complexities of the subject matter, coupled with the importance of engaging with key stakeholders to set real targets with the ability to review and amend if little benefits are being realised. It also articulates the need for a systemic approach, whereby addressing fuel poverty should alleviate pressure on other sectors and this outcome requires consideration.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members approve the <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation response in relation to the Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland and that 2. it be submitted to the Department for Communities on behalf of the Council. 	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> None.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out Not required – Consultation response only.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Not required – Consultation response only.	

Appendices:	Appendix 5 EH - Consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for NI Appendix 6 EH - Draft Consultation Response
--------------------	---



Department for
Communities

An Roinn

Pobal

Depairtment fur

Commonities

www.communities-ni.gov.uk

39



Consultation on a draft Fuel Poverty Strategy

December 2024

Contents

1. Ministerial Foreword	4
2. Executive Summary	5
3. Strategic Framework	7
4. Introduction	9
5. Strategic Context	11
Reflecting and building on existing government priorities	11
Stakeholder engagement	12
6. Vision and Principles	14
Vision	14
Principles	14
Timeframe	15
7. Make homes more energy efficient	16
Outcome 1: Improved energy efficiency for vulnerable households	16
Objective 1: Raise and appropriately enforce housing standards	17
Objective 2: Increase investment in energy efficiency schemes for vulnerable households	20
8. Collaborate and Build Capacity	28
Outcome 2: Increased access to trusted energy efficiency advice, measures and support for low-income, vulnerable households through partnership working	28
Objective 3: Utilise and build on experience and knowledge of others to increase energy wellbeing	29
Objective 4: Ensure consistent, accessible financial support for vulnerable people in emergencies	34

Contents

9. Protect Consumers	38
Outcome 3: Informed, protected consumers have access to essential, sustainable and affordable energy	38
Objective 5: Implement a new support framework for energy affordability	38
Objective 6: Ensure robust protection and redress for heating and energy efficiency	42
10. Governance and Accountability	46
Understanding fuel poverty	46
Transparency and Accountability	55
11. Next Steps	57
How to respond	57
Annex A - Summary of questions in consultation	58
Annex B - Consumer Protection/Redress	62

1. Ministerial Foreword

This consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy sets out a pathway to a Northern Ireland where everyone lives in a warm, healthy home. Too many people live in houses that they struggle to heat, and our most recent modelling suggests that in 2022 more than a quarter of households here were living in fuel poverty. Living in cold and damp homes impacts health and well-being, particularly for the most vulnerable in our society. The continued high prices of fossil fuels, low standards of energy efficiency in our homes and the ongoing cost of living all contribute to unacceptably high levels of fuel poverty.

My Department has made significant investment in improving energy efficiency in low-income households. In addition, I have recently secured a £17million allocation to provide a one-off £100 payment to pensioners no longer eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment and an uptake in additional benefits of £62million in 2023/24 through my Department's Make the Call service, £21.3million of which went to pensioners. These have all supported people struggling with high energy bills, especially older people, and have made a meaningful contribution to addressing fuel poverty.

In developing this consultation we have worked collaboratively with those who understand and can address fuel poverty. Our stakeholders provided valuable insights into the lived experience of people living in fuel poverty and have shaped the proposals contained within this consultation. Using the

input gathered during our engagement we now set out a series of actions, guided by clear and fair principles, to help us achieve three key goals: to make homes more energy efficient, to collaborate and build capacity, and to protect consumers.

Tackling fuel poverty will require significant collaboration across government and our partners to continue to provide both emergency and long-term support. It will help achieve wider societal benefits by supporting those struggling with the cost of living, improving health outcomes and decarbonising our homes.

The recent announcement to restrict the winter fuel payment creates an additional financial burden for less well-off older people and this Fuel Poverty Strategy aims to better understand the longer-term impact of the removal of the payment on pensioners who are above the threshold for winter fuel payments and provide support, if necessary, to help those who have moved into fuel poverty.

I encourage you to play your part in this consultation to help guide and shape this important strategy. This is a continuation of the engagement which my officials have carried out with the most vulnerable in our society. A warm home is a healthy home and your contribution will ensure that this strategy reflects and responds to the needs of those who cannot afford to stay warm in their own homes in the coming winters.

2. Executive Summary

There are many factors that contribute to making energy unaffordable. These include the energy efficiency of homes and the energy needs of the household, the cost of energy, household income and people's ability to access energy solutions that are right for them. Tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland will help protect people, particularly the most vulnerable, from the effects of cold and damp living conditions. Doing so sustainably will also make a positive contribution to our carbon reduction targets.

Our vision is a warm healthy home for everyone, and we propose that our approach to addressing fuel poverty should be needs-based, participative, collaborative and focused on long-term, sustainable solutions. Achieving our vision and being guided by these principles will make a significant positive contribution to a Just Transition to a low-carbon economy.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is the first of our objectives and is a key priority. The energy efficiency of Northern Ireland's housing stock is among the worst in Europe and to address this we need to establish and raise housing standards and significantly increase investment in energy efficiency. Improving housing standards will help make homes easier to heat and

set clear expectations from government for homeowners across a range of housing tenures. This consultation also explores proposals for the successor to the Affordable Warmth Scheme and proposes alignment of our Fuel Poverty Strategy principles in all new home energy schemes.

Through our stakeholder engagement process we heard repeatedly about the importance of coordinating services to improve outcomes for citizens. Our second key objective is therefore to collaborate and build capacity, and particularly to build partnerships that can identify and provide advice and long-term sustainable support to those most in need. We will work closely with the voluntary and community sector and statutory bodies to build capacity and confidence and improve people's ability to seek the right energy solutions for them. However, we know that many people face stress just trying to pay for the essentials of life. Part of our response will need to address the immediate difficulty of keeping people's homes warm in emergency situations and ensuring such support is accessible and consistent. We will improve the pathway to ensure that they can also access the long-term, sustainable solutions that will help prevent or reduce future emergencies.

Making our homes more sustainable will help create warmer, healthier houses, reduce air pollution and create new job opportunities. However, the transition will mean changes to people's homes, energy sources and behaviours. Our third objective therefore focuses on protecting consumers. This means improving our understanding of the impacts of changes on their energy bills and exploring bill support for those groups for whom energy efficiency measures may not be a viable option. It also means making sure that when we fund energy efficiency and low-carbon heating measures that people can expect a common standard of installation and protection. This will also help industry plan their investment in training and accreditation.

We were asked by stakeholders to ensure that the language we use when designing and delivering schemes is clear, dignified and appropriate. This consultation therefore asks whether we should consider moving away from the language of fuel poverty and towards energy wellbeing to emphasise

the importance of essential and affordable energy to enable a decent standard of living and health.

During our engagement, there were calls for better and more frequent data on fuel poverty and its impacts. We propose improving our understanding of how fuel poverty affects people and utilising data to design better policy and ensure that interventions reach those who need help the most. We will improve monitoring and accountability by introducing indicators on issues that stakeholders have told us are important to them.

Our renewed focus on transparency also includes proposals for more regular, visible reporting and, reflecting our commitment to inclusiveness, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by fuel poverty continue to inform the implementation of this strategy.

3. Strategic Framework

Context	Just Transition, Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, Carbon Budgets, Programme for Government (“Our Plan”)		
Vision	A warm, healthy home for everyone		
Principles	Long-term, sustainable solutions	Needs-Based	Collaborative
Objectives	Make homes more energy efficient	Collaborate and build capacity	Protect Consumers
Outcomes	Improved energy efficiency for vulnerable households	Increased access to trusted energy efficiency advice, measures and support for low income, vulnerable households through partnership working	Informed, protected consumers have access to essential, sustainable and affordable energy
Governance & Accountability	Introduce a comprehensive, more frequent framework for understanding fuel poverty indicators and outcomes	Ministerial statement annually before the Assembly	Form a Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel

Fuel Poverty Strategy Policies & Actions

Objectives / Policies

Make homes more energy efficient

1. Raise and appropriately enforce housing standards
2. Increase investment in energy efficiency schemes for vulnerable households

Collaborate and build capacity

3. Utilise and build on experience and knowledge of others to increase energy wellbeing
4. Ensure consistent, accessible financial support for vulnerable people in emergencies

Protect Consumers

5. Implement a new support framework for energy affordability
6. Ensure robust protection and redress for heating and energy efficiency

Proposed Actions

1. Introduce a revised Decent Homes Standard for social housing by 2026
2. Introduce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for the Private Rented Sector (PRS) by 2027
3. Implement improved Fitness Standards for all tenures by 2030
4. Alignment of Fuel Poverty Strategy principles in all new home energy schemes
5. Introduce a more ambitious fuel poverty energy efficiency scheme
6. Consider alternative funding models to increase investment in energy efficiency schemes

1. Utilise and enhance referral partnerships across government and our partners to raise awareness of energy wellbeing, identify people in fuel poverty and provide support
2. Introduce a One Stop Shop
3. Explore role of community energy in addressing fuel poverty
4. Implement key aspects of NICE Guidelines on the health risks associated with living in a cold home
5. Work with other organisations to ensure consistent emergency support and referrals to efficiency measures and advice
6. In a future energy crisis, target financial assistance at those most in need
7. Gain a better understanding of the impact of changes to the Winter Fuel Payment and introduce additional support where appropriate

1. Improve our understanding of energy decarbonisation policies on the affordability of domestic energy bills
2. Raise awareness of existing price protection tools
3. Investigate targeted affordability support for certain vulnerable households
4. Assess need for non-price protection of less-protected energy and take appropriate steps
5. Agree minimum quality standards for all energy efficiency schemes
6. Ensure appropriate aftercare and redress mechanism for government energy schemes

4. Introduction

Fuel poverty is the inability to heat or power a home to an adequate degree at a reasonable cost. It is affected by household income, the cost of energy and how much energy is needed in the home. Fuel poverty levels in Northern Ireland have fluctuated from 27% in 2001, to 44% in 2009 and 22% in 2016¹ as reported in the NI House Condition Survey.² The most recent modelled fuel poverty estimate using the 2016 baseline data estimated a fuel poverty figure of 27% in 2022.³ Protecting human health from the detrimental effects of living in cold and damp homes is the primary driver for tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland.

Our extant Fuel Poverty Strategy was published in 2011 and since then we have invested significantly in improving heating and energy efficiency in low-income households. However, much more needs to be done to improve the energy efficiency of homes. This will also help protect households

from volatile fossil fuel prices and economic shocks caused by geopolitical unrest.

In 2022, climate legislation was introduced in Northern Ireland with targets to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and an intention to do so in a way that contributes to reducing poverty and inequality through a Just Transition. This is core to our approach.

The proposals contained in this consultation have been developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, organisations and parts of Government that have responsibility for, or are impacted by, fuel poverty.

Purpose of document

This document sets out draft proposals for a Fuel Poverty Strategy that will contain a range of actions to make homes more efficient, raise awareness and build confidence and

1 Lead author Dr Salvador Acha, from the Department of Chemical Engineering at Imperial College London, said: "Studies show the UK's 28.6 million homes are among the least energy efficient in Europe and lose heat up to three times faster than on the continent, making people poorer and colder.
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/grantham/publications/energy-and-low-carbon-futures/decarbonising-buildings-insights-from-across-europe.php>

2 The Housing Executive - House Condition Survey (nihe.gov.uk)

3 The Housing Executive - House Condition Survey (nihe.gov.uk)

capacity, enhance collaboration and protect consumers. We are carrying out a full public consultation on a draft Fuel Poverty Strategy. We expect to publish a final strategy in Summer 2025.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Consultation Responses

For this consultation, we may publish all responses except for those where the respondent indicates that they are an individual acting in a private capacity (e.g. a member of the public). All responses from organisations and individuals responding in a professional capacity will be published. We will remove email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses, but apart from this, we will publish them in full. For more information about what we do with personal data please see our consultation privacy notice. Your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may also be disclosed on request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). However all disclosures will be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (UK) 2016/679. If you wish your response to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential, such that this may be considered if the Department should receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

Impact assessments

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality between all Section 75 groups. Without prejudice to these obligations, the Department is also required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. Equality screening of this consultation document has identified no adverse impacts. On this basis, the decision is that the proposed fuel poverty strategy should not be subject to a full equality impact assessment.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment: The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 introduced a new duty on NI departments, district councils and other public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. The Department, under a commitment to rural proof, is also required to identify the potential impact on rural areas and if appropriate, adjust to take account of rural circumstances. As part of the development of this consultation, issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas have been identified and taken into consideration.

5. Strategic Context

Fuel poverty is affected by and impacts policies and actions across government. Our approach in developing this draft strategy has been to reflect and build on existing government priorities relating to fuel poverty while setting new ambitions. We have collaborated closely with other parts of government and ensured stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

Reflecting and building on existing government priorities

The draft Programme for Government includes the publication of a new Fuel Poverty Strategy, as well as a commitment to provide more social, affordable and sustainable housing and making a contribution to the people, place and prosperity missions.⁴ The draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland⁵ recognises the importance of improving domestic energy efficiency in addressing fuel poverty, decarbonising our homes and reducing emissions and supporting green jobs for economic growth.

Since 2021, Northern Ireland has set a new ambition to decarbonise our economy. This includes a new Climate Change Act which sets a legal requirement to reduce emissions (from base year emission levels) by 48% by 2030.⁶ The Act includes a Just Transition principle to ensure that the benefits of moving to a green economy are shared widely and support is provided for sectors and people who are likely to be most affected by the transition. We believe that this strategy, which aims to reduce fuel poverty, makes a particular contribution to a Just Transition by its focus on actions to help eliminate poverty, inequality and social deprivation.

Other government policies impact our approach to fuel poverty including those relating to poverty, health, housing, energy and climate. Among these are the draft Green Growth Strategy⁷, the Carbon Budgets⁸ and the Climate Action Plan that will deliver on these. The Energy Strategy - The Path to Net

4 Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most. Draft Programme for Government 2024 – 2027. <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/draft-programme-for-government-our-plan-doing-what-matters-most.pdf>

5 Draft ISNI 2050. <https://isni.gov.uk/strategy/draft-isni-2050/>

6 Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk))

7 Consultation on the draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

8 Summary of Responses: Consultation on Northern Ireland's 2030 & 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets & First Three Carbon Budgets & Seeking views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)

Zero Energy has a key indicator of reducing households in fuel poverty⁹. Our Housing Supply Strategy¹⁰ sets out a 15-year journey to transform housing supply. Work has also been carried out on developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy¹¹ as well as a review of the People and Place Strategy.¹² Consideration is currently being given to a refresh of Making Life Better, our public health strategy¹³ which relates to the health impacts of fuel poverty.

We have reflected the ambitions of these in developing this draft strategy. Addressing fuel poverty in the right way can lead to a reduction in emissions, improve housing conditions and, through better, warmer homes, improve health outcomes and ensure people have to spend less on their fuel costs.

Stakeholder engagement

Our approach has focused on engaging with stakeholders through the formation of a Reference Panel, holding workshops and focus groups to understand and learn from existing experience and knowledge of fuel poverty and building close links across those parts of government that have responsibility for or respond to those who are impacted by fuel poverty.

A Reference Panel was formed with external expertise to provide advice, evidence-based communication and a reference-and-challenge function throughout the development of this strategy. A Project Board comprised of senior officials from across government was established to provide high-level oversight and strategic direction. Both groups met regularly from September 2023.

In addition to these groups and ongoing bilateral engagement, we organised workshops to engage and listen to stakeholders. A total of 268 registrants from a wide range of backgrounds came together to inform the process, raise issues and concerns, bring forward new ideas, and highlight what has worked and what can be strengthened. Focus groups were also held with vulnerable groups impacted by fuel poverty. We held a webinar on fuel poverty definitions with experts from New Zealand and the Netherlands to inform our understanding of measuring fuel poverty.

A Stakeholder Engagement Report outlining our approach and findings from the engagement process has been published alongside this strategy.

⁹ Energy Strategy - Path to Net Zero Energy | Department for the Economy ([economy-ni.gov.uk](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk))

¹⁰ Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039 ([communities-ni.gov.uk](https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk))

¹¹ Anti-poverty | Department for Communities ([communities-ni.gov.uk](https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk))

¹² People and Place Review | Department for Communities ([communities-ni.gov.uk](https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk))

¹³ Making Life Better - Strategic Framework for Public Health | Department of Health ([health-ni.gov.uk](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk))

To provide a voice to those impacted by fuel poverty we have included quotes from our focus groups throughout this consultation document.

6. Vision and Principles

“In relation to damp and mould. Everyone knows that this affects your health. People know that they need to keep the heat on, but they simply can’t afford it”

Vision

A warm, healthy
home for everyone

Tackling fuel poverty will contribute to Executive commitments to improve health and wellbeing, tackle poverty, contribute to climate change targets and deliver positive outcomes for society. To support this strategy, we have set out a vision that describes our goal, setting out our desired outcome for the future and what success will look like. This vision will be shared across government departments and our partners.

During our stakeholder engagement phase this vision was tested and discussed. Most stakeholders welcomed the proposed vision. This vision is aspirational and should guide our work and the work of our partners when making decisions that may impact on people experiencing fuel poverty. It sets out our overall outcome and should be easily understood, not just by our partners, but also the people we are trying to help.

Principles

These principles support our vision and guide all the work we do, describing the way we will deliver solutions to tackle fuel poverty. All proposals and actions must meet each guiding principle and contribute to our vision for the future.

PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION
Long-term sustainable solutions	Ensure people are lifted out of fuel poverty by focusing on long term solutions rather than short term fixes, aligning our duties under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, including those relating to the Just Transition principle and its connected objectives to ensure that actions taken eliminate poverty, inequality and social deprivation.
Needs-based	Respond to the changing needs of people in or at risk of fuel poverty by providing more flexible, holistic support that prioritises those most in need.
Collaborative	Building partnerships, referral networks and collaboration across all sectors of society will be at the heart of everything we do.
Participative	Empowering people and communities to seek long-term solutions, recognising and removing barriers, and enhancing the capacity and confidence of fuel poor people to seek support.

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposed vision and guiding principles? If not, please suggest alternatives and why?

Timeframe

We believe that a new Fuel Poverty Strategy needs to give sufficient long-term direction for stakeholders while also recognising that we are in a period of significant change in decarbonisation policy. We propose that the strategy focus on a ten-year period to 2035

with a review in 2030. This will provide a clear pathway for homeowners, our partners and industry to plan, prepare, invest and engage in the journey to more efficient homes and greater energy security.

Question 2: Do you agree with the timeframe and review period? If not, why not?

7. Make homes more energy efficient

OUTCOME 1: Improved energy efficiency for vulnerable households

Energy efficient homes are easier to heat and stay warm for longer. Improving energy efficiency is therefore a priority to reduce fuel poverty. A vulnerable household is one that is most at risk of fuel poverty and most likely to be negatively impacted by it, for example, households with low incomes, a long-term health condition or illness exacerbated by the cold. Good quality, warm, secure housing is vital to both mental and physical health, with the very young and very old most vulnerable to the impacts of fuel poverty.

More efficient homes contribute to the Energy Strategy principle of “Do more with less”¹⁴ and the Housing Supply Strategy objective of reducing whole-life carbon emissions from new and existing homes.¹⁵

To deliver on this outcome, we will:

- Raise and appropriately enforce housing standards

- Increase investment in energy efficiency schemes for vulnerable households

Current schemes to improve energy efficiency include the Affordable Warmth Scheme, Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) and projects developed and delivered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Government energy efficiency schemes raised mean SAP figures (an estimate of how much energy a property uses) from 59.63 to 65.83 between 2011-2016 and contributed to fuel poverty reduction during this period. However, investment in energy efficiency must increase significantly. Government must also collaborate across departments to ensure that there is a common approach to how we design and target future home energy schemes.

Minimum housing standards in Northern Ireland are significantly lower than those in the rest of the UK. Inefficient housing stock contributes to fuel poverty and stakeholders

¹⁴ The Path to Net Zero Energy. Safe. Affordable. Clean. (economy-ni.gov.uk)

¹⁵ Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039 (communities-ni.gov.uk)

particularly raised concerns about inadequate housing in the private rented sector (PRS). In addition to improving thermal comfort, raising housing standards will make homes easier to heat, reduce damp and condensation through appropriate ventilation, make rental properties more attractive, and increase the value of the house.

Objective 1: Raise and appropriately enforce housing standards

Housing standards include a mix of statutory and administrative standards applying to different tenures and covering a range of safety, environmental and amenity aspects. Elements of each impact the efficiency and thermal comfort of housing and will impact fuel poverty, though none were designed specifically for this purpose. Some of our housing standards have not been updated significantly for decades and therefore significant improvement is now required.

Our aim is for all homes to be of good quality meaning that everyone can expect the same high standards no matter their tenure. This means updating existing policies and developing new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality homes across all tenures.

Through our pre-consultation engagement, there was an emphasis on the challenges facing tenants in the PRS. Tenants feel they have very little control over energy efficiency

and heating provision and landlords often blame them for damp, mould, or disrepair. They feel vulnerable if they raise concerns about their living conditions, fear eviction if they make complaints about poor conditions and fear retaliatory rent rises after energy efficiency improvements.

Proposed action: Introduce a revised Decent Homes Standard for social housing by 2026

The Decent Homes Standard applies to the social housing sector. A home is considered decent if it meets four criteria:

- a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (Fitness Standard)
- b) It is in a reasonable state of repair
- c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

DfC is developing a new Decent Homes Standard and social housing will be required to comply with this standard as part of the regulatory programme for social housing. Introducing this standard may impact fuel poverty as 'criterion d' (a reasonable degree of thermal comfort) requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating. A 'reasonable degree of thermal comfort' is not yet defined but is likely to require higher standards of energy efficiency

and the consultation on the new Decent Homes Standard will explore this more fully.

Question 3: What would a readily understandable and measurable definition of “thermal comfort” look like?

Proposed action: Introduce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for the Private Rented Sector (PRS) by 2027

The 2016 NIHCS¹⁶ estimated that only 43% of private rented dwellings had an EPC rating A-C and 26% of those living in the PRS were living in fuel poverty - the highest percentage of any sector. Tenants in the PRS make up a very high proportion of the number of calls to Housing Rights advice services and some of the most common issues raised are damp, mould and cold.¹⁷

DfC has enabling legislation to establish standards for the PRS.¹⁸ Given the highest levels of fuel poverty are in this sector we propose to set MEES for PRS by 2027. Landlords will be required to comply with these new MEES standards within this strategy period and the exact date will be subject to consultation. DfC is currently progressing the transfer of the Landlord Registration Scheme to Councils, with Lisburn

and Castlereagh Council acting as the lead for this work. The overarching aim of the transfer is to make registration a more meaningful tool for improving the PRS. A second phase of this work will include exploring the potential to link standards more explicitly to the registration process.

MEES for other sectors may also be needed to achieve our aim that everyone can expect the same high standards. The Scottish Government is proposing that owner-occupied homes will be required to meet the same MEES as the PRS five years later (2033 and 2028 respectively).

Question 4: For MEEs in PRS to effectively alleviate fuel poverty, what information or data do you think would be useful and what barriers would we need to overcome?

Question 5: Should MEES also be applied to other tenures? Please give reasons for your answer.

¹⁶ The Housing Executive - House Condition Survey (nihe.gov.uk)

¹⁷ A 'just transition' to net zero in Northern Ireland | Housing Rights

¹⁸ Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)

Proposed action: Implement improved Fitness Standards for all tenures by 2030

The Fitness Standard is a basic standard for human habitation. It has not been substantially updated since its introduction in 1981 and has not kept pace with building standards, environmental or health and safety issues. 2% of dwellings (16,370) were considered unfit in 2016 and the most common reason for a property being classified as unfit was dampness.¹⁹ The House Condition Survey also assessed our housing stock based on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which is a risk-based system that replaced the Fitness Standard in England and Wales. Applying these standards, 9% of dwellings (69,900) had Category 1 hazards²⁰ and one of the common risks in HHSRS was excess cold.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

The HHSRS is a statutory, risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. Environmental Health Officers inspect a property and consider the likelihood of harm to the occupier, how

serious it would be and whether it would pose any additional risk for children or older people.

The HHSRS assesses 29 hazards and the effect that each may have on the health and safety of current or future occupants of the property. If a hazard is a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety, this is known as a Category 1 hazard. If a hazard is less serious or less urgent, this is known as a Category 2 hazard. Local Authorities have a duty take appropriate action in relation to Category 1 hazards and may choose to act in relation to other hazards.

The Housing Supply Strategy²¹ recognises that our Housing Fitness Standard lags behind other jurisdictions. It notes issues with the quality, security and safety of the PRS and commits to undertaking a comprehensive review of fitness standards. To address this, we commit to updating Fitness Standards by 2030. One area in which this standard is particularly deficient is defining "thermal comfort"; it requires "adequate provision for heating," but no minimum standard is specified. "Thermal comfort" will consider the outcomes of the Decent Homes Standard

¹⁹ House Condition Survey Main Report 2016 (nihe.gov.uk)

²⁰ House Condition Survey Main Report 2016 (nihe.gov.uk)

²¹ Housing Supply Strategy 2024-2039 (communities-ni.gov.uk)

review and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards.

Question 6: Do you agree that introducing updated fitness standards will contribute to making homes more energy efficient? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Objective 2: Increase investment in energy efficiency schemes for vulnerable households

A very significant increase in funding for energy efficiency schemes is required. This will deliver substantial savings for consumers²² and generate savings for public health²³. Investing in energy efficiency will tackle fuel poverty, help our communities, reduce emissions in the residential sector, support green jobs for economic growth, and improve health outcomes for tenants and homeowners, contributing to a reduction in health inequalities. Government must collaborate to ensure that access to different kinds of support is straightforward and home energy schemes complement and align with each other.

A key policy to support this objective is the successor to the Affordable Warmth Scheme. This new scheme will be vital to improving the energy efficiency of low-income households and in this consultation, we

explore some key aspects of the new scheme. We also need to ensure that we consider all potential funding pathways for investment to enable us to achieve our energy efficiency ambitions.

Proposed action: Alignment of Fuel Poverty Strategy principles in all new home energy schemes

All government domestic energy efficiency, heating and other energy schemes should be coordinated to ensure help is available to those who need it most. The majority of government funding for domestic energy efficiency schemes should be allocated to those on low incomes and particularly when facing additional vulnerabilities. Stakeholders called for home energy schemes to be complementary and proposed a common approach to eligibility, ensuring there are no gaps or cliff-edges in support.

While not all domestic energy schemes will focus on the fuel poor, we believe that they should take account of the principles proposed in this strategy so that the fuel poor are not left behind:

- Long-term sustainable solutions
- Needs-based
- Collaborative
- Participative

²² <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>

²³ Capturing the Multiple Benefits of Energy Efficiency (windows.net)

For example, there is already a commitment that the roll-out of smart meters will be done with consumers at the core, in terms of both consumer protection, empowerment and cost effectiveness. Smart meters can improve consumer understanding of electricity use in the home, and, if new tariffs are introduced, they can help people manage or adjust their electricity use to take advantage of times when costs are lower²⁴.

Question 7: Do you agree that all government domestic energy schemes should take account of the Fuel Poverty Strategy principles?

Stakeholders also told us that as government develops new schemes we should ensure:

- **Consistency** – the need for long-term schemes and avoiding a ‘stop and start’ approach. Support to be available across Northern Ireland, moving away from what was sometimes referred to as a ‘postcode lottery’
- **Flexibility** – government should be responsive to changing needs and stakeholders requested that schemes build in flexibility in both eligibility and approach
- **Transparency** – making it clear what schemes are offering and who is eligible, as well as communicating with applicants

throughout the application process. It also means government sharing appropriate data to help plan and target schemes to areas or groups of people who need support most.

Proposed action: Introduce a more ambitious fuel poverty energy efficiency scheme

All questions posed in this section refer to the Department for Communities new fuel poverty energy efficiency support scheme.

Improving the energy efficiency of vulnerable households has been a central element of the Government’s Fuel Poverty Strategy for many years. In Northern Ireland, the Affordable Warmth Scheme was introduced in 2014.

This Scheme provided a wide range of energy improvement measures including installation of new heating systems, cavity wall and loft insulation, replacement windows and external insulation in solid wall properties. The current Affordable Warmth Scheme stops in March 2026.

The Department for Communities is now planning an expanded, more ambitious energy efficiency support scheme that will take account of current economic issues, construction inflation and include the potential for replacing energy sources with lower carbon options.

²⁴ Data-For-Good-Final.pdf (esc-production-2021.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

Eligibility Criteria

The current eligibility criteria used to assess applications within the Affordable Warmth Scheme are that:

- (i) applicants must own their own home and occupy it as their sole or main residence, or rent from a Private Sector landlord, and
- (ii) have a total gross annual household income of less than £23,000.

The income threshold and eligibility criteria are currently set in legislation within the Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 and the use of gross income including certain passport benefits to define eligibility for grants provides a simple means of administering applications. However, the income threshold for the Affordable Warmth Scheme currently excludes groups such as the working poor and some pensioners as the calculation of the threshold was made using data that is now outdated.

During the stakeholder engagement workshops, participants raised the need to consider the makeup of income and stated that disposable income was the most important factor when looking at those low-income households most in need.

Additionally, the issue was raised that by only using income threshold as an eligibility criterion, it could mean a lack of flexibility.

Further discussion raised the point that as well as looking at household income, the makeup of a household was equally important, i.e. whether it was a couple with or without dependents or a single person, as it can also determine the amount of disposable income available.

Question 8: Do you agree that DfC should take a more flexible approach that considers current data when setting and reviewing:

- a) income thresholds and
- b) eligibility criteria?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 9: Do you agree that an income threshold should increase in line with minimum wage levels/inflation or another index such as Retail Price Index (RPI) to mitigate increases in the cost of living? Please give reasons for your answer.

Participants also felt that using the energy rating and age of a house as eligibility criterion was important, as investing in energy efficiency can make homes more sustainable and resilient which will not only help the current occupier of the house but also assist future generations that will live in the property.

Question 10: Should the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of a house be considered as part of eligibility criteria (i.e. the least energy efficient homes are considered first)? Please give reasons for your answer.

Energy Efficiency Measures

Given that in a typical household, heating accounts for over half of the fuel bills ²⁵, most people think of their heating as a key factor when considering the energy efficiency of their home. But there is limited benefit in upgrading to an efficient boiler if other elements of the home such as windows that are single-glazed, doors that have gaps around the edges, and uninsulated floors, roofs, and walls are not addressed at the same time.

How well a home retains heat also plays a very important role in how much energy is used when heating your home. If your home is poorly insulated, your heating system will need to work harder and use more energy to maintain the temperature of your home. A typical house with no insulation will lose 33% of heat through walls and 25% through the roof ²⁶.

The main element of retrofitting existing properties is to install measures to improve the fabric of the building such as insulation,

replacement glazing, controlled ventilation and improved airtightness. This alongside renewable energy sources such as solar panels and battery storage, plus low carbon heating options will make homes warmer, easier to heat and healthier for both the occupants and the planet. This is commonly known as the Whole House approach or providing a Whole House solution.

One of the lessons learned from the current Affordable Warmth Scheme is that although there was a priority of measures recommended, applicants could choose not to install all measures offered, opting instead to tackle one energy efficiency issue at a time, such as only replacing an old or broken boiler. By tackling individual measures, they weren't boosting the overall energy efficiency of their homes or maximising the support available.

Question 11: Do you agree that the new scheme should take a Whole House retrofit approach? Please give reasons for your answer

Question 12: If the Whole House approach is used, do you agree that all recommended measures must be installed unless there are exceptional reasons not to? Please give reasons for your answer

²⁵ Help and advice for heating your home - Energy Saving Trust

²⁶ Energy Saving Trust – Home Insulation

In order to meet climate change obligations, it will be necessary to phase out fossil fuel heating and move towards low carbon heating and renewable technologies such as solar panels with battery storage. Heat pumps are by far the most efficient technology, with their co-efficient of performance²⁷ approximately three to five times higher than the efficiency of condensing gas and oil boilers. However, to address and reduce the impact of fuel poverty it is imperative that the property is well insulated and ventilated so that the cost savings are passed to the householder.

The Affordable Warmth Scheme currently replaces or upgrades fossil fuel boilers if there is no functioning heating system in place or where an existing boiler is at least 15 years old. With the heavy reliance in Northern Ireland on fossil fuels such as oil, there will be a requirement for a stepped approach in the move to low carbon heating. Additionally, the Affordable Warmth Scheme failed to address the long-standing problem of 'hard to treat' homes, which typically are located in rural areas, off the gas network and often have a solid wall construction. This was a consequence of the current Affordable Warmth Scheme grant limits being too low to fully support these properties.

Question 13: Do you agree that the new scheme should prioritise low carbon heating solutions where possible?

Question 14: Do you agree that the new scheme should offer renewable technologies such as solar panels and battery storage to offset the running costs of low carbon heating solutions in low-income households? Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 15: Do you agree that rural properties should be prioritised for energy efficiency support? Please give reasons for your answer.

Proposed action: Consider alternative funding models to increase investment in energy efficiency schemes

The Energy Strategy included an Executive commitment to substantially increase funding and support for retrofitting buildings. The scale of the ambition to make homes more efficient is also set out in the Housing Supply Strategy. The draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland also recognises the need to facilitate retrofitting of the

²⁷ A heat pumps co-efficient of performance (COP) is a measure of its efficiency or how well it converts electricity into heating. A higher COP indicates a more efficient heat pump. For example, a COP of 4, means that for every kW of electricity used, 4 kW of heat was provided to the property.

existing housing stock to improve energy efficiency through increased investment and sustainable funding and partnership models. Investment in energy efficiency must increase significantly.

To achieve our ambitions, we must consider all financing options for home energy investment. Funding currently comes via core funding from the block grant (Affordable Warmth), electricity consumer bills (NISEP), rental income (for investment in social housing, supplemented by borrowing by Housing Associations), as well as individuals or institutions who invest for themselves, either for research purposes or to make a return.

‘The higher the percentage of people who are in fuel poverty should equate to more funding being made available to help with the problem.’

Government funding: We must increase energy efficiency funding for low-income households, particularly those who are more vulnerable. A multi-year budget is necessary to ensure that schemes are both long-term and sustainable. This would enable experience to be built up by delivery agents and referral partners and give confidence to industry to invest in requisite skills and training. It would also help prevent bottlenecks in applications and ensure that schemes are not closed early to new applicants. A key action to deliver this funding is DfC’s new fuel poverty scheme.

Private investment: To achieve higher standards of energy efficiency and thermal comfort we must unlock additional private investment. Stakeholders support a “sliding scale” or tiered approach, whereby those with greatest need receive the most support while those more able to pay contribute in line with their circumstances. This aligns with the public health concept of “proportionate universalism” whereby actions must be universal but with a scale and intensity proportionate to the level of disadvantage.

Landlords will need access to finance to support them to invest in their assets to reach new standards. However, landlord uptake of energy efficiency grants has been historically low: between 5-8% of home upgrades were installed in the private rented sector when Affordable Warmth offered 50% grants to landlords. In Scotland, schemes enabled landlords to access loans,

including the PRS Landlord Loan Scheme. As new standards are introduced, financing options for landlords will be consulted upon individually.

Housing Associations and NIHE carry out maintenance or improvements through their asset management programmes, funded by rental income. We are exploring Financial Transactions Capital funding being made available to Housing Associations to enable investment.

Question 16: Do you agree with a sliding scale approach to funding for home energy schemes?

Question 17: Do you agree that loans are the fairest financing option for landlords who are required to improve their assets? If not, what would you suggest as alternative funding options?

Consumers: The wholesale cost of energy makes up the largest and most volatile aspect of energy bills. Levies are also applied to bills to generate investment to save energy and reduce emissions, which also contribute to reducing costs in the longer-term. In

Northern Ireland, levies applied to electricity bills support the NI Renewables Obligation and the NISEP energy efficiency scheme for lower-income households. In GB, levies on electricity bills support new renewable generation as well as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) domestic energy efficiency grants scheme and the Warm Home Discount (WHD). ECO and WHD levies are also applied to gas bills.

In Northern Ireland levies usually comprise around 10% of electricity bills ²⁸. In GB levies comprise approximately 16% of electricity bills and 6% of gas bills (April-June 2024).²⁹

Additional funding for energy efficiency schemes for low-income and vulnerable households could be enabled by increasing the current levy on electricity bills. NISEP costs a subsidised £3.12³⁰ per domestic customer and the estimated average Lifetime Gross Customer Benefit is between £2,310 and £5,500: a significant benefit for households who access the scheme ³¹. Importantly, business and industrial users contribute to NISEP but the vast majority of funding is ringfenced for households.

²⁸ Power NI Tariff Briefing Paper - April 2024.pdf (uregni.gov.uk)

²⁹ Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit | Are 'green levies' going up in... (eciu.net)

³⁰ Annual Retail Energy Market Monitoring Report 2022 | Utility Regulator (uregni.gov.uk)

³¹ Annual Report

Introducing levies on gas bills may also be a route to increasing investment for energy efficiency schemes. This could also help ameliorate potential disincentives to moving to low carbon, electrified heating in the future: only applying levies to electricity helps make it more expensive relative to gas.

For oil and other heating fuels there would be a number of challenges in considering energy efficiency levies, for example, the fact that these are unregulated, the high number of smaller suppliers, and potential taxation implications.

We would also want to understand the impact of increased energy efficiency levies on different consumers so that we may consider appropriate mitigation if required. This is addressed under Outcome 3.

Question 18: Do you agree that we should consider increasing levies from electricity bills to fund energy efficiency schemes for low-income households? Please give reasons for your answer.

Question 19: Should we explore introducing levies on gas to increase funding for such energy efficiency measures? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Question 20: What are your thoughts on exploring any revenue-raising opportunities for energy efficiency schemes from unregulated heating sources such as home heating oil?

8. Collaborate and Build Capacity

OUTCOME 2: Increased access to trusted energy efficiency advice, measures and support for low-income, vulnerable households through partnership working

While improving the energy efficiency of homes is an important element of alleviating fuel poverty, maximising incomes also plays an important role. The Department for Communities has a key role in this through the payment of social security benefits and helping people into employment, as does the Department for Economy through their economic policy, employment and skills programmes and support for further and higher education.

To alleviate fuel poverty, we want to ensure that people are accessing all the support they are entitled to, taking a holistic approach and collaborating with partners to ensure energy efficiency advice is included in the help provided to meet the needs of the person. The importance of collaboration and coordination of services to minimise duplication, maximise resources and improve outcomes for people was a key theme during our stakeholder engagement. We heard of the difficult circumstances people are in, and the stress and anxiety many face just trying to pay for the essentials in life. This experience meant that

people relied on trusted partners, friends and family to seek help, support and advice.

“People only really seek help when they are at rock bottom and are desperate. To really help you need to get people before they hit rock bottom especially to help with mental health. There is a stigma attached to seeking help and it puts people off.”

This section focuses on collaborating and building partnerships to identify and provide advice and long-term sustainable support to those most in need. A key part of this will be to build the capacity and confidence of people to seek solutions. However, in many cases, that means dealing with the immediate challenge of keeping their home warm before they can focus on the future.

To deliver on this outcome, we will:

- Utilise and build on experience and knowledge of others to increase energy wellbeing

- Ensure consistent, accessible financial support for vulnerable people in emergencies

“When people are already tired and down the last thing they have the energy for is to fight for what they are entitled to.”

Objective 3: Utilise and build on experience and knowledge of others to increase energy wellbeing

During our engagement all stakeholders praised the invaluable help and support provided by advice organisations, community groups, charities and church / faith groups. These organisations are trusted by their communities and have local knowledge that we could never replicate. We also heard of the importance of professionals who are in people's homes on a regular basis, such as health workers and midwives, in identifying people most in need and providing vital advice and information.

We want to utilise these networks and build on established relationships to ensure those in fuel poverty can access long-term sustainable support to enable them to obtain and afford adequate energy to support their wellbeing in their home (energy wellbeing). To ensure people who

need our help seek it, it is important that we raise the importance and benefits of energy wellbeing and remove the stigma of seeking help and support. We also need to highlight and educate about the visible signs when someone may be struggling.

We know that people are more likely to seek support from people they trust. For some populations this trust may be lacking more than others, for example those from certain migrant communities and travellers. Trusted sources may be family, friends or organisations that have provided support in the past and built a relationship with the person needing help. There is an important role for trusted partners in the health sector, the independent advice network and across the voluntary and community sectors to raise awareness of energy wellbeing, remove any stigma to seeking help and direct people to the appropriate support.

During our engagement, the support provided by the Independent Advice and Debt Services Sector was widely praised and used as an example of how to build referral partnerships and support vulnerable people. This Sector is part of the wider Voluntary and Community Sector and comprises local community-based advice services in each council area, supported by regional advice organisations Advice NI and Law Centre NI. DfC currently

invests approximately £6.6 million annually into the provision of Independent Advice and Debt Services.

Local councils are co-funders and commissioners of community-based advice provision and this is central to the ambitions of Community Plans which have a focus on individual and community well-being.

The Family Support Hub model was also praised. This is a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organisations that provide early intervention services, or work with families who need support.

Referral partnerships within DfC include DfC's Make the Call benefits advice line following up on Personal Independence Payments (PIP) applications following notification of a terminal illness diagnosis. This leads to an offer of advice and guidance on the wide range of support the applicant may be entitled to, from benefits and transport to energy advice, providing referrals or application assistance as needed.

Subject to Executive approval, during 2025 DfC will consult on the People and Place Strategic Framework Review to improve how we address the objective

need of using a place-based approach to tackling deprivation. This will build on existing structures to develop practical community-based led delivery models to rebalance the relationship between government and communities, giving communities an increased ownership of decision making and improved outcomes.

Proposed action: Utilise and enhance referral partnerships across government and our partners to raise awareness of energy wellbeing, identify people in fuel poverty and provide support

To raise awareness, identify people who need support and provide this support, we will utilise and build upon collaborative partnerships and referral pathways between Government, local Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector. We do not want to duplicate support but rather build a partnership approach to better blend support services to the community and people in need including energy advice and the installation of energy efficiency measures, where appropriate. We will take best practice used by these organisations and provide specialist support when needed, using warm handovers to ensure vulnerable people access the support they need. This will include raising awareness with voluntary and community and health professionals on the signs and impact of fuel poverty, energy advice and referral pathways.

Building on and utilising existing partnerships and referral networks should improve outcomes for people struggling with fuel poverty as they will have access to more holistic support from the right people, delivering the right service at the right time. The Utility Regulator Code of Practice for Consumers in Vulnerable Circumstances requires companies to ensure processes are in place to enable a warm handover of consumers in vulnerable circumstances who need additional support.³² Energy companies could use these referral partnerships to support their customers who are experiencing hardship, either by building a relationship with partners or by referring their customer to additional advice and support.

“I was financially stable, was working and had money coming into the house. I was able to get a mortgage and buy the house and then everything changed when my partner died.”

Referral pathways and holistic support are crucial at crisis or transition points in peoples’ lives, such as following a bereavement or serious health diagnosis. We will seek to enhance the support

provided by Make the Call at these critical transition points to include energy advice and support, working with a wide range of partners including health, Voluntary and Community partners, statutory organisations and energy companies.

Question 21: Do you agree that we should utilise and build referral pathways between Government, local Government, health professionals and the Voluntary and Community Sector? If yes, how can we best achieve this?

Proposed action: Introduce a One Stop Shop

Throughout our stakeholder engagement we heard the call for a local, tailored support service so people can access the energy, financial, technical and behavioural advice they need to become more energy efficient and reduce their energy costs. The Energy Strategy made a commitment to establish a One Stop Shop to act as a focal point for consumers as we transition to Net Zero, deliver trusted advice and support to consumers, raise awareness and provide coordination across Government, the public sector and Voluntary and Community Sector. This was expanded on in the 2022 consultation on the One Stop Shop Implementation Plan.

³² Appendix 2 (NIW) - Code of Practice for Consumers in Vulnerable Circumstances.pdf ([uregni.gov.uk](https://www.uregni.gov.uk))

The establishment of a One Stop Shop was widely endorsed by all stakeholders. It underpins many key energy priorities for government. A One Stop Shop offers the opportunity to empower consumers through the provision of free impartial advice, building trust in new technologies, ensuring alignment and delivery of support, services and grants, and supporting behavioural change.

We support the provision of all energy efficiency advice and measures through the One Stop Shop model. One single point of contact for all energy efficiency support will allow us to assess the needs of the consumer and offer the appropriate support. This may mean financial support, either grants or loans, or by offering support with the actual application process, right through to aftercare support, based on the individual circumstances and needs of the consumer.

Many stakeholders conveyed their frustration of frequently changing information, contacts, support and eligibility criteria. The One Stop Shop will offer a single point of contact for specialist advice and grants, and additional support depending on the needs of the consumer. Having a single point of contact will reduce confusion and increase transparency of schemes, while still leaving space for the schemes to be flexible if required.

The Department for the Economy has committed to establish a One Stop Shop. Collaboration across Government and our partners will be necessary to ensure those likely to experience fuel poverty are supported to access specialist energy advice and grants.

Proposed action: Explore role of community energy in addressing fuel poverty

Communities can work together to discover and implement solutions to their energy needs, an approach taken in the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere. This was also recognised in the Energy Strategy which contains a specific commitment to adopt policies that facilitate active consumers and energy communities.

Stakeholders noted local examples of community energy, such as the Northern Ireland Community Energy (NICE) solar energy scheme, which fed profits into a community fuel poverty fund, the GAA green energy fund, the Drumlin Wind Farm Cooperative and recently launched Sustainable Energy Communities project. More broadly we heard calls for the development of community masterplans or community workshops on energy efficiency with more consistent support from Councils.

Community buy-in to energy infrastructure was raised as a significant issue in rural areas where most renewable energy generation is located. Rural communities particularly felt that community energy and renewable technologies were crucial in fostering energy wellbeing.

The Welsh Government Energy Service provides financial and technical support to help public sector and community groups develop their own renewable energy projects. When a community comes forward with an idea, support can be provided with feasibility studies, technical support, non-repayable grants and access to further Welsh Government loan funding. Scotland also has structures in place to support community energy projects such as private sector-funded grant schemes and the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) which supports communities to engage with, participate in, and benefit from the transition to net zero emissions.

Through GB Energy, the Labour Government has committed to scale up municipal and community energy by partnering with energy companies, local authorities and cooperatives to develop small- and medium-scale community energy projects. Profits will flow directly back into local communities to reduce bills with more local generation and ownership

During our stakeholder engagement we heard that those who may be struggling to pay their energy bills may find it harder to engage in seeking or developing community energy solutions. Additional bespoke support will be required to support people and communities to develop community energy projects in response to fuel poverty.

To ensure that vulnerable people and communities can participate in this potential solution to fuel poverty and provide energy stability and resilience for their communities, government will establish a taskforce comprising industry, councils, community energy schemes, experts and community representatives to develop enabling frameworks for community energy.

Question 22: Do you agree with a taskforce/working groups to develop enabling frameworks for energy communities?

Proposed action: Implement key aspects of the NICE 6 Guidelines on the health risks associated with living in a cold home

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produces guidelines containing evidence-based recommendations for the health and social care sector. NG6 focuses on reducing the health risks (including preventable deaths)

associated with living in a cold home.³³ The recommendations relate to:

- developing a strategy for people living in cold homes
- identifying people at risk from cold homes
- training practitioners to help people with cold homes
- raising awareness of how to keep warm at home
- ensuring buildings meet required standards

Implementing these guidelines in Northern Ireland would increase awareness within the health, social care and voluntary sectors of how health problems caused or exacerbated by cold homes can be addressed through appropriate referrals, training, and identifying heating needs as well as ensuring people are discharged to a warm home. There are also recommendations for housing and energy suppliers on how to deal with certain vulnerable groups whose homes may be too cold for their health and wellbeing. Their implementation would also help to address health inequities in a society where those who live in deprived areas have lower life expectancy, greater health struggles and worse outcomes.

Question 23: Do you agree that government should assess the most relevant recommendations of the NICE6 guidelines and consider their implementation?

Objective 4: Ensure consistent, accessible financial support for vulnerable people in emergencies

During our stakeholder engagement, we heard of the difficulties people struggling with fuel poverty have in looking towards the future and seeking long-term help. We also heard of the challenges that vulnerable people, such as elderly people or those with health conditions, have in accessing appropriate help and support. While we are committed to collaboration and building partnerships to ensure long term help, we recognise that people will still experience crises when access to emergency financial support is required. However, in line with the overarching principles of this strategy, the provision of emergency support must always be accompanied by energy advice and / or a referral to a long-term sustainable solution to support long-term energy wellbeing.

“To get the bare necessity of heat, I have to go to a foodbank.”

³³ Overview | Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes | Guidance | NICE

Proposed action: Work with other organisations to ensure consistent emergency support and referrals to energy efficiency measures and advice

People may experience occasions in their lives, when, potentially due to an unforeseen bill or an unexpected life event, they will require emergency financial support to keep the lights on or heat their homes. There are many organisations such as food banks, councils' hardship funds and charities such as Bryson House, the Salvation Army or St Vincent De Paul that provide crisis fuel support. However, awareness of support available, knowledge about how to access it, scheme eligibility and availability vary widely across council districts. Many vulnerable people do not know where or how to access support and through our engagement, it seemed that for some, securing emergency support was by chance, maybe hearing from a friend or family member or through contacting a charity.

In response, we will work with organisations, such as local Government, to increase awareness and accessibility of emergency financial support for vulnerable fuel poor people across Northern Ireland. This support should be geographically consistent and must include a referral to energy advice and / or a long-term sustainable solution, most likely an energy efficiency / fuel poverty scheme.

“There is nothing out there. If I had no gas or oil, I don't know where to go.”

Question 24: Do you agree that we should work with organisations that provide emergency support, to seek a consistent approach across Northern Ireland and the inclusion of a referral to a long-term solution? If so, what would be the best way to achieve this?

Proposed action: In a future energy crisis, target financial assistance at those most in need.

The Discretionary Support scheme is unique to Northern Ireland and was introduced in November 2016 to provide a fast and responsive means of providing short-term financial support. Eligibility criteria includes an income threshold, residency in Northern Ireland and being in an extreme or exceptional situation or a crisis. Applicants

who receive financial assistance from Discretionary Support are referred to Make the Call who complete a benefit needs assessment to identify potential entitlement to benefits and services. Discretionary Support is a well-recognised provider of emergency financial support, and it is available across Northern Ireland.

During the COVID pandemic, Discretionary Support was able to respond quickly, amending legislation to deliver financial support to people who were required to self-isolate. During the subsequent cost of living crisis, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also made large-scale payments (on behalf of DfC) using the benefit system as a quick and easy way to identify those who needed support. During the winter of 2022/23, large scale energy payments were made to all energy customers. While this support was much welcomed, it was not targeted at those most in need.

If there was a future energy or cost-of-living crisis, due to the relative flexibility of Discretionary Support to provide emergency assistance, we propose, until we can secure improved data of who is most in need, that financial support through Discretionary Support should be prioritised rather than developing local large-scale payments based on benefit entitlement. This should ensure that assistance is based on need,

which is a more targeted approach and a much better use of resources. Optimising referral pathways highlighted previously should ensure people who need support are referred to Discretionary Support and could offer support to vulnerable people who may find the application process a barrier.

If Discretionary Support is to undertake this role in the future, it must be appropriately resourced, both financially and physically, potentially having the ability to stand up teams to manage claims in critical times of need.

In addition, we will explore options to share data between relevant organisations, such as the Department for Communities, the Utility Regulator and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to ensure, if a future energy price emergency was to occur and large-scale payments were to be made, financial assistance could be targeted at those most at need.

Question 25: Do you agree with the proposal to prioritise Discretionary Support to provide emergency financial support if there is a future energy or cost of living crisis, until we have better data to target large scale payments? If not, can you provide a reason?

Proposed action: Gain a better understanding of the impact of changes to the Winter Fuel Payment and introduce additional support where appropriate

The Winter Fuel Payment was introduced in 1997 as a non-means-tested annual payment ranging from £100 - £300 paid to everyone who reached the qualifying age for State Pension, which is currently 66, and due to rise to 67 in 2026. On 29 July 2024, the Chancellor announced that from Winter 2024/25 onwards, only those receiving Pension Credit or other means-tested benefits would receive the annual Winter Fuel Payment in England and Wales, targeting these payments at those who are most in need. The NI Executive had to maintain parity with GB and implemented the revised eligibility criteria for Winter Fuel Payments locally.

An estimated 28% of households entitled to Pension Credit are not receiving it, with approximately £1.1 million in unclaimed Pension credit expenditure. To maximise claims from those who are eligible, DfC has begun a campaign to promote its uptake.

To minimise the impact of this change on pensioners here, we will analyse the impact of the removal of Winter Fuel Payments on pensioners who are above the threshold for Pension Credit to gain a better understanding of who may be at risk of fuel poverty as a result of this change. Following this analysis, we will provide support, if necessary, to help those who have moved into fuel poverty. This may include working with referral partners and / or energy companies to provide energy advice and long-term support through fuel poverty interventions. If necessary, and subject to the allocation of the necessary budget by the NI Executive, emergency financial support to pensioners who have moved into fuel poverty or are at risk of falling into fuel poverty will also be considered.

Question 26: Do you agree with the proposal to gain a better understanding of the impact of changes to Winter Fuel Payments and introduce additional support where appropriate? If not, why and do you have alternative suggestions?

9. Protect Consumers

OUTCOME 3: Informed, protected consumers have access to essential, sustainable and affordable energy

The cost of energy is a concern for many households. Improving energy efficiency and generating and using more local renewable energy are crucial to reducing our reliance on expensive imported fossil fuels. However, we need to improve our understanding of how new energy policies impact bills and any potential impacts on fuel poverty, as initial investment in energy efficiency and low-carbon heating sources is required to ensure longer-term savings. It may be necessary to implement energy cost mitigation measures if decarbonisation policies have imbalanced or unfairly distributed impacts on energy bills for different groups of people.

Other forms of energy consumer protection are also important, such as measures relating to debt, standards of service, Codes of Practice and energy literacy.³⁴ Currently price protections only apply to some regulated energy suppliers for electricity and gas; we want to assess whether there are specific vulnerabilities that affect those using oil or pre-payment meters.

We also need to consider protection of consumer's homes when new insulation measures or changes to heating systems are required. People should be able to easily access reliable advice, have confidence in the quality and standard of work carried out, and trust that, if things go wrong, they will be put right with help and support. Protecting consumers in these ways will help to ensure that we achieve a Just Transition.

To deliver on this outcome, we will:

- Implement a new support framework for energy affordability
- Ensure robust protection and redress for heating and energy efficiency

Objective 5: Implement a new support framework for energy affordability

Affordability is a key aspect of consumer protection. Carbon reduction investment brings long-term benefits but there will be necessary short-term costs.³⁵ This strategy's priority is to help manage energy costs through improved energy efficiency in homes. However, a Just Transition means that all policies that will impact energy costs

³⁴ Consumer Protection Programme 2024 – 2029 (CPP24) – Final decision paper | Utility Regulator (uregni.gov.uk)

³⁵ [The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf](#) (theccc.org.uk)

must be developed and implemented in such a way that they alleviate fuel poverty, particularly for those most impacted by it. Where this is not possible, appropriate mitigation measures should be considered to ensure that households still have access to essential and affordable energy to enable a decent standard of living and health. Therefore, we need to improve our understanding of the impacts of new policies and schemes on different types of consumers.

Network costs represent about 25% of domestic gas bills and domestic electricity bills. Supply costs make up around 8% and environmental policy costs – NISEP and NIRO renewable energy support – around 10% of electricity bills.³⁶ In Northern Ireland fixed costs are more heavily skewed towards industrial and commercial consumers than domestic consumers.

Proposed action: Improve our understanding of energy decarbonisation policies on the affordability of domestic energy bills

While low-carbon investment will generate savings in the long-term, the distribution of costs and savings over time could create

both winners and losers. Achieving a Just Transition in Northern Ireland requires us to ensure that the impacts of decarbonisation policies will be just and fair. This aligns closely with the Path to Net Zero Energy commitment to assessing the impacts of upfront investment and long-term energy bills on identified consumer populations.

Taking this commitment forward may mean that we need to introduce or improve mechanisms for identifying the impacts and trade-offs of new policies or regulatory decisions on different groups of people. Assessing costs and benefits can be a complex issue. For example, funding for the NISEP energy efficiency scheme comes from levies on all domestic and non-domestic electricity bills. The levies, although small, make up a larger proportion of the household income of lower-income groups. However, the scheme improves energy efficiency in lower-income households which leads to significant lifetime savings in their energy bills. There are potential challenges for regulators to make such trade-offs without government guidance; conversely, government may require information on the context and potential impacts of different choices from the regulator before providing such guidance.³⁷

³⁶ Power NI Tariff Briefing Paper – April 2024.pdf (uregni.gov.uk)

³⁷ Strategic Investment and Public Confidence (nic.org.uk)

Ofgem has introduced an impact assessment tool to better understand the impacts of changes in the energy system on consumers. This assesses how the costs or benefits are distributed across consumers with different characteristics such as income levels, disabilities and fuel types.³⁸ The assessments are part of the decision-making process and provide a structured framework for understanding the impacts of certain decisions (see box).³⁹ They can provide an insight into how policy costs can be spread across either unit rates or standing charges.

After calls for the abolition of standing charges in GB Ofgem analysed potential impacts using their distributional impact assessment tool and concluded:

- 5 million lower-income households would benefit
- 1 million lower income households would lose out and these would include some vulnerable customers with high energy needs, including those reliant on medical equipment and those with poorly insulated homes

The overall effect would be progressive (lower-income consumers would benefit more) but lower-income households that would lose out would see an increase in bills by twice as much as bills would fall

elsewhere. Using this analysis, Ofgem was able to develop options to reduce standing charges by moving some charges to the unit rate and increasing the range of such charges that suppliers offer. The analysis highlights an overall benefit from the changes proposed but also that some consumers' bills would increase. Ofgem was then able to work with government on how the impact on households in the domestic retail market could be reduced.

A better understanding of how new policies could impact the energy bills of different population groups could support evidence-based decision-making and help identify whether potential mitigations may be required. The Consumer Council highlights this as an important aspect of future-proofing consumer affordability and it also reflects Utility Regulator's commitment to embed Just Transition principles within their analysis and decision-making.

³⁸ Assessing the distributional impacts of economic regulation ([ofgem.gov.uk](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk))

³⁹ Standing charges: domestic retail options | Ofgem

Question 27: Do you agree that we should improve our understanding of the impacts of energy decisions on the energy bills of different consumer groups? If so, what would be the best way of understanding these impacts?

Proposed action: Raise awareness of existing price protection tools

Consumers can manage their energy bills by understanding and reducing their energy use and looking for the cheapest supplier. For electricity and gas, the best way a consumer can affect their bill is through switching suppliers to get a cheaper tariff. However, switching is challenging for some people: even if they get help to switch, they may not be able to check and change when the initial offer stops and prices rise. People can also engage with suppliers on payment methods that may be more suitable for them.

Oil prices are more volatile than gas or electricity and competition between suppliers is the primary method of keeping costs down.⁴⁰ Oil-buying clubs can help people buy in bulk with average savings of £10-£30 on 200 litres of oil, however stakeholders, particularly in rural communities, reported inconsistency in the availability of such clubs. The Consumer Council also publishes weekly data on oil prices to help people find the cheapest supplier.

Not enough people are aware of, or use, the tools that help access lower-cost energy. It is therefore important to increase awareness and engagement in tariff and supplier switching and oil-buying clubs while recognising that there can be barriers to accessing the cheapest energy source for those who have certain vulnerabilities.

Question 28: Do you have suggestions for how we could improve understanding and awareness of existing tools to enable consumers to manage their energy costs?

Question 29: How can we support vulnerable people to ensure they are on the most affordable tariff?

Proposed action: Investigate targeted affordability support for certain vulnerable households

While investment in energy efficiency is our priority to help people keep their homes warm, this solution is not always appropriate. For example, people living with a terminal illness or significant disability can have higher bills due to medical or life-saving equipment. Energy efficiency measures could support these groups but the timeframe and potential disruption for such works may not be the right solution.

⁴⁰ Home Energy Index | Consumer Council

Stakeholders suggested bill support to help certain low-income households. This would support targeted households through either an ongoing discount on the unit rate, a commitment to certain customers always being on the lowest tariff, a regular rebate on bills, or some combination of these.⁴¹ Such support would usually be subsidised by a levy on all consumer bills.

We believe that any support, if implemented, should be targeted at particularly vulnerable households for whom other forms of support, such as energy efficiency schemes, may not be appropriate. These vulnerable households could be groups such as low-income households with a terminal illness or a long-term disability that necessitates the usage of specialised medical equipment. We will build an evidence base that includes an analysis of the wider financial impacts of such support. We will also explore the barriers and opportunities of extending the GB Warm Homes Discount to Northern Ireland. We are aware that there are likely to be a number of legislative and operational challenges to doing so.

Question 30: Do you agree that we should explore potential affordability support for populations where energy efficiency measures may not be the right solution?

If so, which population groups? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Objective 6: Ensure robust protection and redress for heating and energy efficiency.

The Energy Strategy notes the need to review existing consumer protection frameworks. Such protections may mean different things depending on the service or product being offered, for example the type of energy supplied, or a new technology being installed in a home.

Certain protections are already in place for consumers in Northern Ireland, but we want to look at those areas where greater protection may be needed. For example, in GB Ofgem identified some consumer protection issues in off-grid markets such as heating oil and LPG.⁴² In our focus groups we heard from people, particularly low-income, those in rural areas and those with disabilities, who experience challenges with their oil supply. Furthermore, people who use pre-payment meters can “self-disconnect” by not topping up and data on this is limited. Similar “self-disconnection” occurs for off-grid fuels, whereby consumers are unable to afford the cost of fuel and either ration significantly or simply go cold.

⁴¹ The UK Energy Bill Support Scheme and Energy Price Guarantee, introduced in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, were not social tariffs as they were not targeted to low-income or vulnerable households.

⁴² insights paper on households with electric and other non-gas heating | Ofgem

When choosing or installing energy efficiency and renewable energy options, people need to have confidence in the quality and standards of work carried out. They should be able to easily access advice and they need to trust that if things go wrong, they can be put right, with help and support.⁴³ We propose that the following core components should be in place across all Government energy efficiency schemes:

- Trusted advice is available and provided in an easily understandable form
- Confidence in the suitability of recommended energy efficiency and renewable energy measures made through a consistent and complete assessment of the property
- Quality installations are carried out to robust standards by skilled installers, who are members of a standards body, helping consumers identify reliable, trustworthy businesses
- Reassurance that if things go wrong, there is a simple, fair and consumer-focused redress process to make it right

Proposed action: Assess need for non-price protection of less-protected energy and take appropriate steps

In our focus groups we heard that home heating oil accessibility and supply issues are experienced by some low-income, disabled or rural populations and that those from traveller communities have had similar experiences with other alternative heating sources. As we transition our energy use away from fossil fuels these issues may present a greater challenge for those unable to make the change to other energy sources, such as electricity, where a more robust standard of service exists because of market regulation.

Within the regulated sector, people who use pre-payment meters can also experience physical accessibility issues. Recent research also highlights that while people who use gas or electricity prepayment meters are protected by a Code of Practice, most people do not contact their supplier for support when facing challenges⁴⁴. Those who may be struggling should contact their suppliers to see whether help is available but it may be that communication could be improved to encourage this type of engagement.

⁴³ [Decarbonisation_Energy_Transport_and_Water_Summary.pdf \(consumercouncil.org.uk\)](#)

⁴⁴ [Energy Hardship - Consumer Lived Experiences - full report.pdf \(uregni.gov.uk\)](#)

There are therefore different challenges and protection levels for different energy users. More research may be required to identify particular issues for different energy users before we determine whether there is a need to strengthen or provide more consistent non-price protection.

Question 31: Is further research required to identify gaps in non-price protection for different energy users in Northern Ireland? If yes, what should we focus on?

Proposed action: Agree minimum quality standards for all energy efficiency schemes

Reducing energy bills or improving warmth and comfort in homes include traditional methods like adding insulation, changing windows and installing energy-efficient boilers. Renewable energy technologies, such as heat pumps and solar power are becoming more cost-competitive and cheaper to run providing that the property is well insulated and ventilated and along with solar battery storage, play an increasing part in helping many householders produce and store energy in their homes.

‘Have trusted partners who are trusted to know what is needed in a home, that they will not rip people off and will have high standards’

Consumer confidence is required to support people to buy, install, or accept support to embrace these products. Therefore, it is critical that people can trust businesses to treat them fairly and are protected from harmful practices. During the stakeholder engagement workshops, participants raised fears that installers in Northern Ireland may not be fully competent in installing these technology products. However, whilst relatively new to Northern Ireland, they have been commonplace in USA and Europe for many decades. Participants also asked as to the need for specified installer certification, qualifications and / or trusted supplier lists. We believe that a key step on the customer journey is to ensure that quality installations are carried out to robust standards by skilled installers, who are members of a standards body helping consumers identify reliable, trustworthy businesses.

Question 32: What are your views on whether government should adopt a common quality assurance standard or framework across all energy efficiency and low carbon heat grant schemes?

Proposed action: Ensure appropriate aftercare and redress mechanism for government energy schemes

Participants also called for a clear system in place for escalating a complaint with an independent arbiter if complaints reached an impasse. Consumer protection law already places obligations on businesses to provide people with the key information they need to make informed decisions, to use fair sales practices and contract terms, to have an effective way of dealing with complaints and to carry out work with reasonable care and skill. Bodies that enforce consumer protection law ensuring businesses act appropriately and treat consumers fairly include national and local Trading Standards and the Competition and Markets Authority.

Standards bodies often require member businesses to provide consumers with financial protection in case the business stops trading and is unable to honour the terms of their workmanship guarantee. This can provide consumers with additional peace of mind and, in addition to the installer's workmanship guarantee, the product manufacturer will typically provide a guarantee to repair or replace a faulty item for a certain period of years. To help ensure that consumers have the necessary confidence and trust that they are protected, it is vital that there are robust and consistently high standards of quality, customer care and business competency, and that these are effectively monitored and enforced across all supported schemes.

Consumer protection along customer journey



Question 33: Do you agree that government should take a common approach to consumer protection across all supported energy efficiency schemes?

10. Governance and Accountability

Understanding fuel poverty

There are three main factors in determining whether a household is fuel poor: household income; energy efficiency; and fuel prices. However, it is measured differently across the UK and in other parts of the world. Understanding fuel poverty also means recognising its impacts: cold homes can cause and worsen physical and mental health conditions⁴⁵. People in fuel poverty may also be more susceptible to damp, mould and poor air quality, while draughty, inefficient homes require more energy to heat.

Through our engagement there were widespread calls for better and more frequent data on fuel poverty. There was interest in improving our understanding of the impacts of fuel poverty and using data to design better policy and ensure that interventions reach those who need help the most. We propose improving monitoring and increasing accountability by introducing indicators on issues that stakeholders have told us are important to them. This could also help us to identify groups that are

not being supported by existing policies, enable us to be responsive to these needs and improve links between policies and fuel poverty outcomes. We will keep this new approach for understanding and reporting on fuel poverty under review.

Most of the data we currently use to measure fuel poverty comes from the NI House Condition Survey, which is carried out every 5 years. We propose using additional annual statistics for many of the new indicators. In addition, we can improve our use of the data and research published by other organisations to monitor energy affordability in situations where rapid changes may occur, as happened during the fossil fuel price rises in 2021-22.

Stakeholders suggested we improve our understanding of the impact of new home energy schemes. We currently collect data such as energy cost savings, SAP improvements and carbon emission reductions⁴⁶ and, to ensure linkages between our strategic indicators and new interventions, we will work across

⁴⁵ Poor housing conditions harm family wellbeing | ESRI

⁴⁶ <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/getattachment/b83a9174-6361-4bff-aac0-90c570c0e8c8/Affordable-Warmth-Boiler-Replacement-Scheme-Evaluation-2020-2022.pdf>

government to ensure that all new schemes collect pre- and post-intervention data that can contribute to the indicators above.

Reframing the issue

Fuel poverty is not a term that people usually apply to themselves. Recent Utility Regulator research⁴⁷ indicates that even those who are struggling most to stay warm do not describe themselves as 'fuel poor'. Use of the term 'poverty' was felt by stakeholders to be unhelpful and could prevent people from accessing support designed for them. Government should use language that is person-centred and treats people with dignity.

'The phrase fuel poverty puts people off'

Our vision could be better supported by focusing on how people's wellbeing improves when they live in a warm, healthy home. This could be done by reframing fuel poverty towards a positive focus on "energy wellbeing", and this may also reflect the proposed basket of indicators approach, which is set out below. However, changing language can cause confusion and have unintended consequences in designing and delivering policies.

We could consider introducing energy wellbeing or a similar phrase to emphasise the importance of households having access to essential and affordable energy to enable a decent standard of living and health. This positive viewpoint is based on language introduced in the Energy Strategy. Whether or not we introduce a new way of describing fuel poverty, we recognise that the language used when designing and delivering schemes must be clear, dignified and appropriate to those whom we support.

Question 34: Do you have suggestions about how government could change our use of language to improve buy-in and engagement on fuel poverty?

Building a picture of energy wellbeing

Indicators help us to understand the persistence of a problem, identify trends, make comparisons with other countries, identify the people affected by the problem and design and deliver policy. However, no single indicator can fulfil all these roles and such statistics do not necessarily tell us about the outcomes of being fuel poor. This becomes more important if we want to prioritise better health by focusing on those most likely to be adversely impacted by living in a cold, damp home.

⁴⁷ Utility Regulator launches new lived experience research on energy hardship | Utility Regulator ([uregni.gov.uk](https://www.uregni.gov.uk))

We propose introducing a basket of indicators to improve the understanding of fuel poverty and help us measure progress towards our outcomes. This will make better use of data already collected from a range of sources, provide a more person-centric understanding of fuel poverty and its impacts, and give us better information about how to design policy to help people move out of fuel poverty. We will also continue to make better use of relevant data and research carried out elsewhere.

Using a basket of indicators will enable us to monitor progress in a timelier manner. As this is a new approach, indicators may be staggered depending on how frequently different data sources are published.

Fuel Poverty 10% indicator

We currently use the 10% indicator for fuel poverty as set out in 2001:⁴⁸

“a fuel poor household is one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use and to heat its home to an adequate standard of warmth. This is generally defined

as 21° C in the living room and 18° C in the other occupied rooms – the temperatures recommended by the World Health Organisation”

Consistent use of this indicator using robust data collection through the House Condition Survey (HCS)⁴⁹ helps us to identify trends and understand the persistence of fuel poverty over time. It identifies some characteristics of people affected such as age, income and employment status, as well as the types of home that they are likely to live in. As it is based on what a household would need to spend, ‘under consuming’ - turning off the heating - is not counted as not being in fuel poverty. We therefore propose retaining this as one of our indicators as this will support our understanding of the overall persistence of the problem in Northern Ireland.

10% indicator using an after-housing costs calculation

Stakeholders raised concerns that using ‘before housing costs’ income could hide vulnerabilities of those with high rent or mortgage payments, and that this particularly affected working families with

⁴⁸ Fuel poverty strategy 2001.pdf (bristol.ac.uk)

⁴⁹ House Condition Survey Main Report 2016 (nihe.gov.uk)

children and those living in the PRS. Our current methodology uses a ‘before housing costs’ calculation which means older people are much more likely to be classed as being in fuel poverty because they typically own their homes outright and are less likely to rent. We propose introducing an ‘after housing costs’ indicator which will use the same methodology as the current 10% indicator. This may provide an additional perspective on those who may be struggling to pay all their household bills. In future, it may also help us to link changes in housing policy with our energy support mechanisms.

PROPOSAL	SOURCE
We will begin to capture information on fuel poverty levels using the 10% indicator for both before and after housing costs.	NI House Condition Survey

Ability to pay utility bills without going without

We believe that we should build a better picture of people’s ability to pay their energy bills and to what extent this impacts their ability to pay for other necessities. Some parts of Europe use arrears on utility bills as an indicator for energy poverty but there are limitations with this approach in NI.

Neither oil nor pre-payment meter users have bills; rather, people delay getting a fill of oil or topping up their meter, or don’t turn on their heating.⁵⁰ Some people also prefer to borrow elsewhere to pay their energy bills rather than go into arrears with energy companies. We therefore propose using the Family Resource Survey (FRS) to understand the choices that people make in their own homes. This will also address some stakeholder concerns that the current definition of fuel poverty does not use disposable income in its methodology.

INDICATOR	SOURCE
Are you able to pay regular bills, including gas, electricity or oil, without cutting back on essentials?	FRS

Household Expenditure on Energy

In 2024 Northern Ireland had the highest weekly expenditure on energy of any UK region. This is likely to be due to a combination of factors including energy mix; geographic and weather conditions; energy pricing; and lower household income levels. A major contributor is our dependence on fossil fuels.⁵¹ This indicator includes energy used for transport and was introduced

50 Utility Regulator launches new lived experience research on energy hardship | Utility Regulator (uregni.gov.uk)

51 Energy in Northern Ireland 2022 (economy-ni.gov.uk)

by the Energy Strategy to create a more holistic understanding of our energy needs as they become increasingly connected: for example, as electricity starts to power heating (heat pumps) and transport (electric vehicles). We believe that linking this Energy Strategy indicator with our fuel poverty strategy will help start to capture the impacts of policies on overall household energy spending.

INDICATOR	SOURCE
Household energy expenditure relative to all expenditure	ONS Living Cost and Food Survey ⁵²

Damp and mould

Cold homes exacerbate health inequalities⁵³ and can cause and worsen respiratory conditions, cardiovascular diseases, poor mental health, dementia and problems with childhood development. In Northern Ireland, respiratory illness is a leading cause of excess winter deaths.⁵⁴ People are aware of the negative impacts of mould

but are unable to keep their homes warm and healthy. When homes are made more energy efficient, they are less cold and damp and become cheaper to heat, which leads to ongoing savings to the Health and Social Care System⁵⁵. We propose using damp and mould as a secondary indicator for energy wellbeing, an approach taken in New Zealand⁵⁶. While the HCS captures this information through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System⁵⁷ we propose using data from the annual FRS, which for the first time in 2024 requests data from all households on the presence of damp.

INDICATOR	SOURCE
Is your home damp-free?	FRS

Being able to keep homes adequately warm

Our 10% indicator defines a specific adequate standard of warmth, but stakeholders noted that people’s backgrounds and health can affect their

52 Household energy expenditure relative to all expenditure

53 Fuel Poverty and Human Health : A Review of Recent Evidence — Ulster University; The cost of poor housing in Northern Ireland 2016 (nihe.gov.uk)

54 Winter Mortality in Northern Ireland, 2022-23 (nisra.gov.uk)

55 The cost of poor housing in Northern Ireland 2016 (nihe.gov.uk)

56 Report on energy hardship measures | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (mbie.govt.nz)

57 House Condition Survey Summary Report 2016 (nihe.gov.uk)

needs (e.g. people with disabilities requiring medical equipment, families with young children, older people, or people from other climates feeling the need to keep their home warmer). Some people supported the Scottish approach⁵⁸ of specified temperatures for targeted vulnerable groups. However, others felt that needs are best determined by the household themselves. We propose a new indicator based on people's own assessment of their energy needs and their inability to meet those needs. The FRS asks a question about people's ability to heat their homes; using this annual indicator would provide a subjective understanding of people's own needs.

PROPOSAL	SOURCE
In cold weather, is your home kept adequately warm?	FRS

Winter mortality

There is a clear relationship between Winter Mortality and low indoor temperatures.⁵⁹ In Northern Ireland, winter mortality in the last decade ranged from 560 - 1,620 and together circulatory disease and respiratory disease accounted for just over half of additional winter mortality in 2022/23.⁶⁰ Chronic respiratory disease is one of the six groups of conditions that are the greatest contributors to ill-health and early mortality.⁶¹ Living conditions are a risk factor in all groups and cold homes are the greatest risk factor for those suffering from chronic respiratory conditions, though other factors such as air pollution also impact these. Deaths from cardiovascular diseases are directly linked to excessively low indoor temperatures for long periods of time.⁶² However, there have been UK discussions around an overhaul of the definition and methodology for the Winter Mortality indicator to improve it and address some of the issues around reliability. We propose using winter mortality as an indicator but given the potential changes, we will include regular reassessments as to whether it is the most suitable indicator to use.

58 The Fuel Poverty (Enhanced Heating) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk))

59 <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty/the-health-impacts-of-cold-homes-and-fuel-poverty.pdf>

60 Winter Mortality in Northern Ireland, 2022-23 ([nisra.gov.uk](https://www.nisra.gov.uk))

61 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/major-conditions-strategy-case-for-change-and-our-strategic-framework/major-conditions-strategy-case-for-change-and-our-strategic-framework--2#fn>

62 <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/research/effect-cold-weather-heart#Heading2>

PROPOSAL	SOURCE
Compare the number of deaths that occur in December - March with the average number of non-winter deaths occurring in the preceding August- November and the following April - July	FRS

Severe and extreme fuel poverty

Stakeholders told us that we need a renewed focus on identifying those who are in deepest fuel poverty. Since 2011 we have used a severity index, whereby households which need to spend more than 15% of income on fuel use are in “severe fuel poverty”; and households which spend more than 20% of income are in “extreme fuel poverty”⁶³. In 2016, 2% of homes were in extreme fuel poverty, and 4% in severe fuel poverty. We propose modelling severe and extreme fuel poverty annually, which could enable a tiered approach of support for such households. However, breaking these figures down by tenure, age or income presents statistical challenges as the numbers are low. This may require further refinement in future.

PROPOSAL	SOURCE
Annual modelling of figures for both extreme and severe fuel poverty	HCS

The drivers of fuel poverty

Our 10% indicator is calculated using income, energy price and energy use and this can make it difficult to isolate the reason for changes in overall fuel poverty levels. The last House Condition Survey identified that the sharp drop in fuel poverty levels between 2011-2016 was due to:

- Gas price reductions of 26%-28%, electricity price decreases of between 4%-16% and reduction of heating oil prices by 0.01p/kWh
- A 16% increase in household income
- Government investment in domestic energy efficiency schemes leading to improvements to mean SAP figures from 59.63 to 65.84

Improved fuel poverty levels were therefore both a direct result of government policy - domestic energy efficiency schemes - as well as factors where government has little impact - fossil fuel prices - to which our

⁶³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dsd/warmer-healthier-homes.pdf>

definition is very sensitive.⁶⁴ Understanding changes in the underlying drivers will help assess where our policies are having an impact and this is recognised by NIHE who now model the impact of each driver on fuel poverty levels.⁶⁵ We intend to continue to provide this breakdown going forward.

PROPOSAL	SOURCE
In our annual modelling we will continue to assess the impact of each driver on overall fuel poverty levels.	HCS and annual BRE modelling

Low-income households in energy inefficient homes - NEW

We believe that, as the area of fuel poverty over which we have most influence, we should introduce an indicator focused on energy efficiency. This would enable us to track progress and provide a clear link between our strategy and new policies and schemes across government. The main tool used to measure energy efficiency is the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).⁶⁶ There are challenges in using EPCs, for example, they do not consider dwelling size and some low-carbon interventions could potentially cause a drop in EPC ratings. The

House Condition Survey collects SAP ratings and this is the base for energy efficiency rating band data for all types of dwellings in NI. This can be cross-tabulated with fuel poor households and can be used as a new indicator. However, in future we want to improve the availability and frequency of energy efficiency data for homes and will explore how to do this.

PROPOSAL	SOURCE
NEW - Link SAP data with income deprivation	HCS

Energy confidence and awareness - NEW

‘How do you know where to go for help with energy? I didn’t have a clue where to go.’

A frequent theme from stakeholders was a lack of energy confidence, agency and awareness. There was a reasonable understanding of where to access emergency financial help, but for grants or

64 Hills, John (2012) the measure of fuel poverty: Final Report of the Fuel Poverty Review.

65 Estimates of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland in 2020 and 2021 (nihe.gov.uk)

66 Energy rating of housing in Northern Ireland - up to March 2023 (nisra.gov.uk)

trusted advice on energy efficiency, there is low awareness of where to go, who to ask and what support is available. If people lack confidence in how to engage in long-term solutions, they will be more likely to focus on short-term options such as vouchers or incurring debt. We believe that agency and awareness must be core to our approach and that policies need to be designed and delivered to enable people to engage in the solutions to fuel poverty. This reflects the Energy Strategy commitment to ‘Place you at the centre of our energy future’. We propose introducing a new indicator to help provide a better understanding of how confident and aware people are of information and support for energy solutions in their home. The NIHCS social survey asks about ‘seeking energy advice in the last 12 months’, however this data is only collected every five years.

INDICATOR	SOURCE
NEW - People’s awareness and confidence in being able to address their own energy issues	TBC

Question 35: Do you agree that government should take a basket of indicators approach to measuring and understanding fuel poverty?

Question 36: Are the indicators suggested the correct ones? Please provide reasons for your answer

Question 37: If you agree with the introduction of an indicator based on energy confidence, agency or awareness, do you have suggestions about what kind of indicator might be most valuable?

Carbon emissions

Achieving the targets in our Climate Change Act requires action to significantly reduce carbon emissions. Residential sector emissions form part of our overall reporting on carbon reduction. This means that new home energy schemes and new housing standards will be required to assess and report on their contribution to carbon emission reductions. We therefore do not propose using carbon emissions as an indicator for fuel poverty. However, we will ensure that carbon savings from all home energy schemes is reported in a consistent manner across government in future.

Question 38: Do you agree with our proposal that carbon emissions are not used as a fuel poverty indicator? Please provide reasons for your answer

Transparency and Accountability

The societal and health impacts of cold homes require a renewed focus. We recognise that alleviating fuel poverty and improving people's energy wellbeing will be an iterative process. The data we propose to capture and analyse will help us monitor our progress towards achieving our outcomes and allow us to target our policies and interventions more effectively. As part of our commitment to alleviating fuel poverty, we must increase visibility of the issue, thereby improving accountability and demonstrating government's best endeavours. This work will be guided by a cross-Departmental working group.

Lived Experience

In developing this consultation document, engagement with people living in fuel poverty was invaluable in helping develop proposed policies and actions, providing evidence and urgency to act. It is our desire to keep the lived experience of fuel poverty at the centre of this strategy and we are committed to ongoing engagement with people experiencing fuel poverty while building their confidence and capacity to engage / participate.

Question 39: What is the best way to continue to engage with people experiencing fuel poverty?

Annual Reporting

We believe that data on fuel poverty needs to be more frequent, more timely and more accessible. To achieve this, we propose to produce an annual report outlining our progress in achieving the actions contained within this strategy, modelling of the data from the proposed indicators and data from new home energy schemes, sharing the lived experience and future actions that will continue to address fuel poverty and contribute to the achievement of our outcomes.

Given the cross-cutting nature of fuel poverty and importance of collaboration this report should be laid before the Assembly by the Minister for Communities and will form the basis of an annual Ministerial statement on fuel poverty.

Fuel Poverty Advisory Group

As recognised in the introduction, alleviating fuel poverty requires a whole of government approach. It also requires a multi-agency approach. This complex issue cannot be resolved by just one organisation and the support we received from across Government, the Voluntary and Community Sector and the public in developing this strategy is proof of that. It also demonstrates the commitment of our partners to strive for change and we want to maintain and build on the partnerships and commitment we have gained.

To ensure all the key stakeholders are fully engaged and aligned towards achieving the vision, guided by our principles, ongoing communication and engagement built on trusting, working relationships will be key. Time and effort will be required to build and develop these relationships to ensure a truly collaborative approach is taken to alleviating and tackling the root causes of fuel poverty.

To assist with this, we propose the establishment of a Fuel Poverty Advisory group with partners from statutory agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector. This group will play an advisory role to guide, advise and challenge actions and progress over the lifetime of the Fuel Poverty Strategy. While membership of the group will be appointed by the Minister, with secretariat provided by the Department

for Communities, the Advisory Group will be independent and offer a critical friend function in the implementation of the strategy. This will include reviewing the annual report and providing an assessment of our progress, helping develop future policies and actions as required.

Question 40 – Do you agree with the proposal for a Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, if not, can you suggest an alternative proposal?

Question 41 – If you have any further comments or suggestions not already captured, please provide these.

11. Next Steps

How to respond

This consultation will be hosted online at the following website: **<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/fuel-poverty-consultation>** The Citizen Space website has been specially designed to be as user-friendly and welcoming as possible for those who wish to complete the consultation. It also allows DfC to rapidly collate results. For this reason, we would encourage anyone who is interested in responding to this consultation to utilise Citizen Space as the method of their response.

If this is not possible, you can however respond to this consultation via email to **FuelPovertyStrategy@communities-ni.gov.uk** or you can respond in writing to the following address:

Fuel Poverty Strategy
Department for Communities
4th Floor, Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

When responding via email or in writing, please state whether you are responding as an individual, or representing the views of an organisation (please state the name of the organisation). Please also quote the following reference in your response: "Fuel Poverty Strategy Consultation".

Responses must be received by 23.59 on Thursday 6 March 2025.

Annex A - Summary of Questions in Consultation

1. Do you agree with the proposed vision and guiding principles? If not, please suggest alternatives and why.
2. Do you agree with the timeframe and review period? If not, why not?

Make homes more energy efficient:

3. What would a readily understandable and measurable definition of “thermal comfort” look like?
4. For MEES in PRS to effectively alleviate fuel poverty, what information or data do you think would be useful and what barriers would we need to overcome?
5. Should MEES also be applied to other tenures? Please give reasons for your answer.
6. Do you agree that introducing updated fitness standards will contribute to making homes more energy efficient? Please provide reasons for your answer.
7. Do you agree that all government domestic energy schemes should take account of the Fuel Poverty Strategy principles?
8. Do you agree that DfC should take a more flexible approach that considers current data when setting and reviewing income thresholds and eligibility criteria? Please give reasons for your answer.
9. Do you agree that an income threshold should increase in line with minimum wage levels/inflation or another index such as RPI to mitigate increases in the cost of living? Please give reasons for your answer.
10. Should the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of a house be considered as part of eligibility criteria (i.e. the least energy efficient homes are considered first)? Please give reasons for your answer.
11. Do you agree that the new scheme should continue with the Whole House retrofit approach? Please give reasons for your answer.

12. If the Whole House approach is used, do you agree that all recommended measures must be installed unless there are exceptional reasons not to? Please give reasons for your answer.
13. Do you agree that the new scheme should prioritise low carbon heating solutions where possible?
14. Do you agree that the new scheme should offer renewable technologies such as solar panels and battery storage to offset the running costs of low carbon heating solutions in low-income households? Please provide reasons for your answer.
15. Do you agree that rural properties should be prioritised for energy efficiency support? Please give reasons for your answer.
16. Do you agree with a sliding scale approach to funding for home energy schemes? Please provide reasons for your answer.
17. Do you agree that loans are the fairest financing option for landlords who are required to improve their assets? If not, what would you suggest as alternative funding options?
18. Do you agree that we should consider increasing levies from electricity bills to fund energy efficiency schemes for low-income households? Please give reasons for your answer.
19. Should we explore introducing levies on gas to increase funding for such energy efficiency measures? Please provide reasons for your answer.
20. What are your thoughts on exploring any revenue-raising opportunities for energy efficiency schemes from unregulated heating sources such as home heating oil?

Collaborate and build capacity

21. Do you agree that we should and build referral pathways between Government, local Government, health professionals and the Voluntary and Community Sector? If yes, how can we best achieve this?
22. Do you agree with a taskforce/working group to develop enabling frameworks for Energy Communities?
23. Do you agree that government should assess the most relevant recommendations of the NICE6 guidelines and consider their implementation? Please provide reasons for your answer.

24. Do you agree that we should work with organisations that provide emergency support, to seek a consistent approach across Northern Ireland and the inclusion of a referral to a long-term solution? If so, what would be the best way to achieve this?
25. Do you agree with the proposal to prioritise Discretionary Support to provide emergency financial support if there is a future energy or cost of living crisis, until we have better data to target large scale payments? If not, can you provide a reason?
26. Do you agree with the proposal to gain a better understanding of the impact of changes to Winter Fuel Payments and introduce additional support where appropriate? If not, why and do you have alternative suggestions?

Protect consumers

27. Do you agree that we should improve our understanding of the impacts of energy decisions on different consumer groups? If so, what would be the best way of understanding these impacts?
28. Do you have suggestions for how we could improve understanding and awareness of existing tools to enable consumers to manage their energy costs?
29. How can we support vulnerable people to ensure they are on the most affordable tariff?
30. Do you agree that we should explore potential affordability support for populations where energy efficiency measures may not be the right solution? If so, which population groups? Please provide reasons for your answer.
31. Is further research required to identify gaps in non-price protection for different energy users in Northern Ireland? If yes, what should we focus on?
32. What are your views on whether government should adopt a common quality assurance standard or framework across all energy efficiency and low carbon heat grant schemes?
33. Do you agree that government should take a common approach to consumer protection across all supported energy efficiency schemes? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Governance and Accountability

34. Do you have suggestions about how government could change our use of language to improve buy-in and engagement on fuel poverty?
35. Do you agree that government should take a basket of indicators approach to measuring and understanding fuel poverty?
36. Are the indicators suggested the correct ones? Please provide reasons for your answer.
37. If you agree with the introduction of an indicator based on energy confidence, agency or awareness, do you have suggestions about what kind of indicator might be most valuable?
38. Do you agree with our proposal that carbon emissions are not used as a fuel poverty indicator? Please provide reasons for your answer.
39. What is the best way to continue to engage with people experiencing fuel poverty?
40. Do you agree with the proposal for a Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, if not, can you suggest an alternative proposal?
41. If you have any further comments or suggestions not already captured, please provide these in the box below.

Annex B - Consumer Protection/Redress

Low carbon home heating and insulation products are increasingly important in the context of the rising cost-of-living and meeting statutory climate change obligations. These products will help people heat their homes in environmentally sustainable and more energy efficient ways.

However, without consumer confidence, there is a risk people are put off from either buying or installing these products and progress toward Net Zero is slowed. Consumer engagement is also needed to drive effective competition between businesses, to spur greater innovation and better consumer outcomes.

Across the UK and Ireland, government has introduced policies to encourage uptake, including support with the cost of energy efficiency measures via grant and funding schemes. Therefore, it is critical that people can trust businesses to treat them fairly and are protected from harmful practices. Businesses also need to comply with their legal obligations, which will help drive consumer trust and confidence.

Consumer experience

Making people's experience of buying/ installing energy efficiency products as simple and straightforward as possible, is crucial for developing consumer confidence, supporting uptake of measures and further development of the sector. People must be able to make informed decisions about which products are right for their circumstances, their property and have easy access to clear, impartial, appropriate, and usable information and advice at key stages.

Therefore, the onus is on government to provide greater centralised information and advice services for consumers, to ensure they can fully engage in the energy transition.

Consumer protection

Consumer protection law places obligations on businesses to provide people with the key information they need to make informed decisions, to use fair sales practices and contract terms, to have an effective way of dealing with complaints and to carry out work with reasonable care and skill.

Overall, there are a number of bodies that enforce consumer protection law to ensure businesses act appropriately and treat consumers fairly. This includes national and local Trading Standards, energy sector regulators (i.e. the Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland) and the Competition and Markets Authority.

Across government the need to ensure consumer protection is recognised within this growing sector. For example, the Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland also includes the need to review existing consumer protection frameworks within its key policies. The Utility Regulator has set a key objective to 'provide the highest level of consumer service and protection' within its corporate strategy 2024-2029.

During our stakeholder engagement fears that installers may not be fully competent in installing new technology products and the need for installer certification and/or trusted supplier lists were raised. Participants also explained they would like a clear system for escalating a complaint with an independent arbiter in place if complaints reached an impasse.

Standards landscape

Standards bodies play an important role in the low carbon heat and insulation sector, by helping consumers identify reliable,

trustworthy businesses. Using a business that is a member of a standards body should mean that consumers can be confident the business is qualified to do the work to a high standard, will treat them fairly and provide protection if anything goes wrong.

However, the current standards landscape is complex and confusing, with low consumer awareness of the benefits.

The landscape can be divided into three categories:

- Quality Standards – Such as the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) for low carbon heating products and the British Standards Institution (BSI) for the installation of insulation products.
- Certification bodies that assess businesses' conformity with quality standards and are accredited by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) to carry out this function.
- Consumer Protection standards such as the Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC) and the Home Insulation and Energy Systems Quality Assured Contractors Scheme (HIES) which set rules for member businesses selling low carbon heating products about how to engage with consumers and aim to strengthen consumer protection.

Quality Mark

The use of a government backed quality mark that represents a guarantee of adherence to standards provides consumers with a unified, equal, and consistent approach across different products and services at all stages of the consumer journey.

TrustMark is the quality mark established by the UK government and endorsed within the PAS 2035 retrofit framework. It is designed to ensure that professionals in the industry adhere to high standards of workmanship, technical ability, and customer protection. TrustMark also licences other standards bodies in the sector (including certification bodies and consumer codes) to deliver its scheme and to certify that businesses meet its requirements.

Additionally, the BSI publishes PAS 2035/2030 standards for retrofitting dwellings for improved energy efficiency through the use of insulation and other energy efficiency measures. Installers must be certified to the appropriate PAS 2030 standard to take part in UK government-funded energy efficiency schemes in England.

In the insulation sector the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA) provides independent 25 year guarantees for Cavity Wall Insulation fitted by registered installers in the UK and Channel Islands.

Redress

A key component of consumer protection relates to complaints resolution and redress for when things go wrong. This is particularly relevant where new technologies may require high quality installation and specifications which will demand suitably robust regulation.

Standards bodies often require member businesses to provide consumers with financial protection in case the business stops trading and is unable to honour the terms of their workmanship guarantee. This can provide consumers with additional peace of mind and in addition to the installer's workmanship guarantee, the product manufacturer will typically provide a guarantee to repair or replace a faulty item for a certain period of years.

To help ensure that consumers have the necessary confidence and trust that they are protected, it is vital that there are robust and consistently high standards of quality, customer care and business competency, and that these are effectively monitored and enforced across all supported schemes. This will be particularly important given that most installers in the sector are small businesses.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

Available in alternative formats.

© Crown Copyright 2024

Draft Response to Fuel Poverty Strategy NI Jan 2025

Question 1: Do you agree with the proposed vision and guiding principles? If not, please suggest alternatives and why.

The Department for Communities' (DfC) vision of warm, healthy homes for everyone, underpinned by the principles of long-term sustainable solutions, collaboration, participation and a needs-based approach, is sound. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council supports the concept of a needs-based approach to addressing fuel poverty, which involves identifying households most in need and providing targeted support accordingly. Such an approach is necessary to ensure that those who require assistance get it.

A collaborative approach, where stakeholders such as government agencies, statutory, voluntary and community sectors work together in a meaningful way to produce and implement a NI strategy is key. Collaboration can bring diverse expertise, resources, and perspectives, ultimately leading to more effective solutions and better outcomes.

Participative approaches that effectively engage with households and communities are also important. Building effective partnerships, referral networks and collaboration across all sectors, with meaningful involvement in the planning and decision-making process is necessary to ensure that solutions address actual need and thus are more likely to be successful and sustainable in the long term.

However, it is also important to acknowledge the complexity of fuel poverty and the various factors contributing to it. A multifaceted analysis of these factors and their interactions is required, rather than focusing solely on a needs-based approach.

Ultimately, whether the government vision is effective in addressing fuel poverty will depend on how well it is implemented and the level of commitment and resources allocated to it.

Section 5 of the Strategy, Strategic Context, bears little correlation to Section 3 Strategic Framework. The Strategy is all about financial hardship, increased warmth, equity and consistency across sectors while strategic framework tries to shoehorn all of the plan into just transition and carbon reduction. The PfG makes addressing fuel poverty an absolute priority and in delivering it, supports other government priorities.

To provide long-term sustainable solutions as an underpinning principle, the strategy should also consider the following:

- Economic factors - The strategy and implementation plan must be sufficiently flexible and responsive to take into account changes in energy prices, the economy, and other factors that can impact household income and energy expenditure.
- Social factors - Addressing fuel poverty often requires addressing underlying social issues such as inequality, and social exclusion.
- Environmental/educative factors - Encouraging energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, and reducing energy consumption can help mitigate the effects of fuel poverty and contribute to a more sustainable future.
- Monitoring and evaluation – regular and timely monitoring and evaluation of the strategy's effectiveness will help identify areas for improvement and ensure that adjustments are made as needed to ensure that the strategy remains flexible and fit for purpose.
- Political factors – the political will to work collaboratively to agree a budget and work cross departmentally and with partners such as local government to deliver positive outcomes.

In summary, the DfC's vision and underpinning principles for tackling fuel poverty are sound in theory, but the effectiveness of the strategy will depend on its implementation, the level of commitment, and the incorporation of a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that adequately addresses the various factors contributing to fuel poverty.

Question 2: Do you agree with the timeframe and review period? If not, why not?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agrees that the 10-year strategy focus period from 2025-2035 with a 5-year review in 2030 seems a reasonable period to allow for planning and delivery.

Question 3: What would a readily understandable and measurable definition of 'thermal comfort' look like?

Thermal comfort describes the human satisfactory perception of the thermal environment. It refers to a number of conditions in which the majority of people feel comfortable.

Thermal comfort describes the warmth, ventilation and humidity of a room in which at least 80% of occupants would describe as comfortable.

In terms of measurability, with regards to the Fitness Standard in privately rented properties, the current method is by using temperature/humidity datalogging equipment to interpret whether the dwelling meets the minimum required by Private Tenancies Northern Ireland Order 2006 Officer's Guidance Document which states;

"In deciding whether a house is or is not unfit, the authority should consider whether the house currently has for heating a main "living" room, provision for fixed heating, capable of efficiently maintaining the room generally at a temperature of 18 deg C or more than the outside temperature is -1 deg C, and for the other main habitable rooms, provision for heating capable of maintaining an equivalent temperature of 16 deg C or more."

Thermal comfort depends on wider factors than just looking at temperature in isolation; an approach considering a suite of factors should include:

- Temperature: as defined by WHO standards
- Relative Humidity: for example, between 30% and 60% to prevent condensation and discomfort caused by high humidity.
- Ventilation: There is a gentle air movement of for example 1.5m/s to prevent drafts and discomfort caused by stagnant air.
- Thermal satisfaction: The overall thermal comfort experience is rated as satisfactory by at least 80% of occupants.
- The conservation and retention of thermal energy within properties as identified by the standards of Part F1 (Conservation of fuel and Power) of the Building Regulations (NI).
- The provision and maintenance of adequate ventilation of domestic dwellings as identified by the standards of Part K (Ventilation) of the Building Regulations (NI).

A readily understandable and measurable definition of thermal comfort in the home can be based on a combination of the above factors. To make these definitions more accessible to homeowners, however, consider the following:

- Encourage homeowner use of a simple thermometer to measure indoor temperature.
- Encourage homeowner use of hygrometer to measure relative humidity.
- Encourage homeowner use of a portable fan or blower to improve air movement.

- A smart thermostat or a thermostat with a built-in sensor to monitor and adjust temperature and humidity levels.

By promoting use of such measures, homeowners are better equipped to create a comfortable indoor environment that meets their thermal comfort needs.

Question 4: For Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the private rented sector to effectively alleviate fuel poverty, what information or data do you think would be useful and what barriers would we need to overcome?

On the basis that the data being used in this Strategy is from 2016, the inflationary increase in energy costs means significantly more than 26% of the PRS will be in fuel poverty. Setting a MEES without that up to date data on fuel poverty makes it difficult to consider what level of investment would be needed to support the sector. 2027 is an ambitious target unless funding support is available through grants at 80%.

To effectively alleviate fuel poverty through minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector, DfC will need specific information and data, as well as an understanding of the barriers that might hinder data collection and analysis. The following information would be useful to provide a sound evidence base for the strategy:

- **Current Energy Efficiency Ratings:** Data on the energy performance of rental properties, typically derived from Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs), indicating their current efficiency levels and potential for improvement.
- **Demographic Data:** Information about the tenants, including income levels, family size, and specific vulnerabilities (e.g., elderly, disabled, children) to identify those at greater risk of fuel poverty.
- **Fuel Poverty Statistics:** Data on the proportion of households that experience fuel poverty, including metrics such as household income, energy costs, and heating needs.
- **Property Characteristics:** Detailed information on housing type, age, heating systems, insulation levels, and any previous upgrades to understand factors affecting energy efficiency.
- **Energy Consumption Patterns:** Data on energy usage trends to understand how energy consumption relates to the energy efficiency of properties.
- **Landlord Compliance and Awareness:** Information on landlord awareness of energy efficiency standards as well as their data relating to existing EPC ratings.

Barriers to obtaining this data are likely to include:

- **Data Privacy and Accessibility:** Concerns over data privacy may limit access to personal information regarding tenants, particularly regarding income and demographic characteristics.
- **Incomplete or Inaccurate Data:** Many properties lack up-to-date EPCs or relevant efficiency data, leading to incomplete datasets. Additionally, inaccuracies in self-reported data from landlords can complicate assessments.
- **Reluctance of Landlords:** Landlords may be hesitant to share information about their properties due to concerns over potential regulations or financial obligations associated with data disclosure.
- **Funding Constraints:** Limited financial resources may restrict DfC's ability to conduct comprehensive research and data collection initiatives.
- **Legislative and Regulatory Challenges:** Complicated legislation surrounding housing, energy efficiency, and tenants' rights may slow the process of gathering and analysing necessary data. Building Regulation considerations and Planning restrictions

associated with listed buildings and conservation areas should also be considered where appropriate.

- **Stakeholder Coordination:** Effective data collection often requires coordination among various stakeholders (e.g., councils, housing associations, NIHE, energy providers), which can be challenging to achieve.

To establish effective minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector aimed at alleviating fuel poverty, DfC must prioritise gathering comprehensive and accurate data on housing and energy use. Addressing the barriers to obtaining this information will be crucial for formulating policies and initiatives that truly benefit vulnerable populations while driving meaningful improvements in energy efficiency across NI housing stock.

Question 5: Should Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards also be applied to other tenures? Please give reasons for your answer.

The introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) for tenures beyond the private rented sector, such as owner-occupied homes or social housing, can have benefits, for example:

- **Environmental Impact:** Expanding energy efficiency standards can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change mitigation efforts.
- **Energy Cost Savings:** Improved energy efficiency can lead to lower energy bills for residents, making housing more affordable over the long term.
- **Public Health:** Increased energy efficiency can improve indoor air quality and thermal comfort, leading to better health outcomes for occupants, especially in vulnerable populations.
- **Economic Stimulus:** Implementing energy efficiency upgrades can stimulate economic activity through job creation in the construction, energy, and related sectors.
- **long-term Resilience:** Enhancing energy efficiency can make housing more resilient to energy price fluctuations, benefiting both occupants and the economy.

However, there are further considerations which must be taken into account when formulating policy in relation to extension of MEES beyond the private rented sector. For example,

- **Cost and Financial Implications:** Homeowners may face significant upfront costs associated with upgrades, which could be a barrier, particularly in lower-income households.
- **Equity and Access:** Ensuring that all households, especially low-income or vulnerable ones, have access to resources and support for achieving energy efficiency improvements is crucial.
- **Market Readiness:** The construction and renovation sectors need to be equipped to handle increased demands for energy-efficient upgrades, which may require training and resources.
- **Regulatory Framework:** Implementing these standards would require careful consideration of the regulatory framework, including enforcement mechanisms and potential penalties for non-compliance.
- **Behavioural Change:** In addition to regulatory measures, promoting education and awareness around energy efficiency can encourage voluntary adoption beyond just meeting minimum standards.

While there may be compelling reasons to extend energy efficiency standards beyond the private rented sector, careful planning and consideration of the economic, social, and administrative implications are essential for successful implementation. Engaging stakeholders, including homeowners, local governments, and energy providers, can foster

collaborative solutions that address the challenges and opportunities associated with improved energy efficiency across various housing tenures. It is suggested that owner occupied, social and private rented sector housing should be of the same thermal standards where possible.

Question 6: Do you agree that introducing updated fitness standards will contribute to making homes more energy efficient? Please provide reasons for your answer

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are of the view that the introduction of new government housing fitness standards could potentially contribute to making houses more energy efficient, depending on the specifics of those standards. It does depend on what is included in the fitness standard remembering that fitness is not solely about energy efficiency. The document itself states fitness is about security, safety and quality.

The current fitness standard for human habitation has not been significantly updated since 1981. If the revised standards focus on aspects such as insulation, heating systems, thermal comfort, energy-efficient appliances, and the use of renewable energy sources, they can lead to homes that consume less energy.

Examples of new housing standards, that could improve energy efficiency include:

- Insulation and building materials: Requirements for enhanced insulation and the use of energy-efficient building materials can significantly reduce heating demands.
- Energy-Efficient appliances and systems: Standards that mandate the use of energy-efficient appliances, heating systems, and water heaters can reduce energy consumption in households.
- Renewable Energy Integration: If the standards encourage or require the installation of solar panels or other renewable energy systems, this can lead to self-sufficient homes that rely less on traditional energy sources.
- Smart Home Technology: Incorporating requirements for smart home technology can help residents monitor and reduce their energy usage, including taking advantage of tariff bands at times when energy costs are lower, leading to overall efficiency gains.
- Sustainability Practices: Standards that promote sustainable building practices, such as the use of recycled materials or water conservation measures, can also contribute to energy efficiency indirectly.
- Ventilation Rates for rapid, background and mechanical extract ventilation or energy efficient passive ventilation systems should be considered in accordance with Part K (Ventilation) of the Building Regulations (NI)2012
- Occupier education will always help but we cannot be seen to be solely "blaming" the occupier for conditions relating to condensation and mould growth. All other variables must be considered and landlords given the tools they need to help tenants – this can be educational but financial help will be required for landlords if it is to be successful.
- An updated Fitness standard will help but it will need to take into consideration the range of types of properties, especially those built before 1945 or from non-traditional construction methods.
- Any improvements need to be reasonable, practical and applicable. Clarity will be required on implementation and enforcement responsibilities across Environmental Health and Building Control departments. Clear instruction and guidance for officers must be provided by Depts for Communities/Finance. Resources both practical and financial must be provided to local authorities.

Overall, if new standards are well-designed and enforced, they are likely to encourage the construction of homes that are more energy-efficient, ultimately leading in the long term to lower energy consumption and a positive impact on fuel poverty.

Question 7: Do you agree that all government domestic energy schemes should take account of the Fuel Poverty Strategy principles?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree that all government domestic energy schemes should take account of the Fuel Poverty Strategy principles.

Question 8: Do you agree that DfC should take a more flexible approach that considers current data when setting and reviewing:

- a) Income thresholds and
- b) Eligibility criteria?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree that a more flexible approach that considers current data when setting income thresholds and eligibility criteria for energy grant schemes, would be beneficial, for the following reasons:

- **Dynamic Economic Conditions:** Economic situations can change rapidly due to various factors, including inflation, job market fluctuations, and other socioeconomic challenges. A flexible approach to income assessment and eligibility criteria allows for assessment and adjustment based on the most recent data, ensuring that schemes remain relevant and supportive of those in need.
- **Targeted Support:** By using up-to-date data, DfC can more accurately target support to those who need it most. For instance, individuals or families who may not have qualified under outdated thresholds could be struggling and in need of assistance.
- **Encouraging Participation:** More inclusive and adaptive eligibility criteria could encourage a wider range of participants to engage in energy efficiency programmes, leading to greater overall impact. When people see that a scheme considers current realities, they may be more likely to apply.
- **Efficient resource allocation:** Continuously reviewing eligibility criteria can help ensure that financial and policy resources are allocated efficiently and effectively, avoiding waste and ensuring that assistance reaches the intended recipients.
- **Promoting equity:** A flexible approach can assist in addressing inequalities faced by different communities. By being responsive to data reflecting disparities, DfC can design a scheme that promote equal opportunities for energy efficiency upgrades.
- **Moving to a regional rather than local approach to promote "worst first"** where evidence suggests this is necessary to aid those most in need.

Overall, a flexible, data-informed and evidence led approach to income thresholds and eligibility criteria in energy grant schemes can lead to more effective and equitable outcomes.

However, all the focus cannot be on eligibility criteria and applicability. There needs to be cognisance that people move homes and the home is the element that needs improved, rather than necessarily the ability of a household to pay for improvements.

The strategy needs to provide more focus on how it will deliver recognising that housing estates and housing of a certain age and energy efficiency are an issue. For example, Will the Government work with NIHE to address multi – tenure estates for the benefit of everyone living there? The Environment Agency in Scotland provides examples.

Question 9: Do you agree that an income threshold should increase in line with minimum wage levels/inflation or another index such as Retail Price Index (RPI) to mitigate increases in the cost of living? Please give reasons for your answer.

What is not detailed in the Strategy is how the current eligibility criteria of £23,000 was arrived at and how appropriate that is as a criterion going forward.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council favour increasing income thresholds for energy efficiency grant schemes in line with the retail price index (RPI) as a beneficial policy response to mitigate the impact of rising living costs rather than minimum wage/inflation, for the following reasons:

- **Expanded Accessibility:** Raising income thresholds in line with RPI would allow more individuals and families who are struggling with energy costs to access grants, thus alleviating financial pressure.
- **Alignment with Cost of Living:** As living costs rise, adjusting thresholds in line with RPI helps ensure that support measures remain relevant and effective in helping those in need.
- **Supporting Vulnerable Populations:** By updating income thresholds in line with the RPI, DfC can ensure that low-income households, who are often disproportionately affected by energy costs, receive the assistance they need.

It is however recognised that there are identifiable constraints with this approach.

- **Budget Constraints:** Expanding eligibility in line with the RPI may increase the financial burden on public funds, necessitating careful consideration of budget allocations and the sources of funding for these schemes.
- **Potential for over-qualification:** If thresholds are raised too high, it may allow individuals who are not in genuine need of assistance to access grants, potentially diluting the impact of the scheme.
- **Measurement of effectiveness:** It's important to have mechanisms in place to regularly evaluate the impact of policy decisions on energy efficiency uptake and overall cost savings.

Increasing income thresholds for energy efficiency grant schemes in line with RPI could be an effective measure to support households facing rising living costs and promote energy efficiency. However, it requires careful evaluation of funding mechanisms and ongoing assessment of the programme's effectiveness. Balancing support for vulnerable populations while ensuring efficient use of public resources is key to a successful implementation. Any modifications to schemes should be considered on a reasonable frequency and an agile approach, with clear guidance on how these changes can positively impact those who are already on any eligibility waiting list.

Question 10: Should the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of a house be considered as part of eligibility criteria (i.e. the least energy efficient homes are considered first?) Please give reasons for your answer

Perhaps, however there is an argument for considering the volume of homes and the expenditure required to achieve compliance. It may be that improving 100 x G rate homes across NI could cost £40K each to achieve an EPC of C when alternatively, 400 homes with a D rating in a mixed tenure development could be improved by spending 10K on each. NI is starting from such a poor position compared to other jurisdictions that consideration needs to be given to the volume of homes that can be improved.

- **Maximising Impact:** by considering the volume of homes targeted grant schemes can achieve better outcomes in terms of energy savings. Improving the efficiency of low-rated homes can lead to drastic improvements in energy efficiency but providing a larger number of homes with the capacity to make smaller improvements will also achieve results.
- **Addressing fuel poverty:** Homes with poor EPC ratings are often associated with lower-income households that struggle with high energy bills. It cannot be ignored that by prioritising these properties, grant schemes can alleviate financial strain on vulnerable populations, contributing to social equity in energy access.
- **Compliance with policy goals:** UK have set ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions and improving overall energy efficiency. Using EPC ratings to guide grant distribution aligns with these policy objectives by ensuring that efforts to enhance building efficiency are strategically focused
- **Encouraging upgrades:** Providing grants to improve the EPC ratings may encourage homeowners and landlords to invest in necessary upgrades. This could stimulate the green economy, creating jobs in energy retrofitting and construction.
- **Regulatory alignment:** Many countries are already incorporating energy performance into building regulations and financial incentives. Including EPC ratings in grant scheme eligibility criteria aligns with existing frameworks, making the strategy more coherent and easier to implement.
- **Improving Property Value:** Energy efficiency improvements can enhance the value of properties. Grant schemes can help increase property values in areas that may have been economically stagnant, leading to broader community revitalisation.

Question 11: Do you agree that the new Affordable Warmth Scheme should take a Whole House retrofit approach? Please give reasons for your answer.

Yes Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are of the opinion, with careful implementation, taking a whole house retrofit approach to energy efficiency measures can be highly effective for several reasons:

- **Comprehensive solutions:** A whole house approach considers the interconnectedness of various building systems (heating, cooling, insulation, ventilation, etc.) rather than addressing individual components in isolation. This can lead to more effective and holistic energy savings
- **Increased energy savings:** By optimising the entire home's energy performance, homeowners can achieve greater energy savings than through piecemeal upgrades. This can significantly reduce energy bills and increase thermal comfort.
- **Enhanced Thermal Comfort:** Improvements made through a whole house approach can enhance indoor air quality, reduce drafts, and maintain more consistent temperatures, resulting in a more comfortable living environment.
- **Long-Term value:** Investing in comprehensive retrofits can improve the overall value of the property by enhancing its energy efficiency and sustainability, making it more attractive to potential buyers.
- **Environmental benefits:** By reducing energy consumption, retrofitting homes can contribute to climate change mitigation efforts.
- **Economic Growth:** A push for whole house retrofits can spur job creation in the construction and home improvement sectors, promoting local economies.
- **Accessibility and Equity:** Implementing a whole house approach through government initiatives can help low- and moderate-income households access energy efficiency upgrades that they might not be able to afford otherwise.

In summary, a whole house retrofit strategy can lead to significant environmental, economic, and social benefits, making it a compelling approach for DfC policy on tackling fuel poverty. However, a one size does not fit all, and there will be circumstances where this approach will not work (see Question 12 below).

Question 12: If the whole house approach is used, do you agree that all recommended measures must be installed unless there are exceptional reasons not to? Please give reasons for your answer.

The idea of a "whole house approach" in government energy efficiency grant schemes emphasises a comprehensive strategy to improve the energy performance of a home. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are of the opinion that under this approach, *all* recommended measures should ideally be installed to maximise benefits. While a "whole house approach" can dramatically enhance the effectiveness of energy efficiency initiatives, making all recommended measures mandatory without exceptions may not be practical or feasible for every homeowner.

Reasons for Allowing Exceptions:

- **Financial Constraints:** Homeowners may face limitations, particularly if the upfront costs of all recommended measures are prohibitive. Providing flexibility allows participants to prioritise based on financial capability.
- **Property-specific conditions:** Each home is unique, and some measures may not be suitable due to structural limitations or existing conditions such as solid wall construction, design and physical footprint or construction type that can make a whole house approach financially prohibitive.
- **Homeowner preferences:** Homeowners may have specific preferences or priorities based on their lifestyle or needs that could lead them to opt out of certain measures. For example, the need for internal drylining may require the redecoration of each and every room affected, or elderly householders are often unable to clear out their roof space used as a storage area, to allow for the fitting of roof insulation. This can result in homeowners who are in need, rejecting the progress of the improvement works. Such scenarios should be considered on a case-by-case basis to avoid the vulnerable elderly population in particular, from being excluded or excluding themselves, from a scheme due to practical constraints.
- **Appropriate prioritisation:** Not all measures may yield equal benefits in all homes. A focused approach could consider the most critical improvements that provide the best return on investment in terms of energy savings. Consideration of a prioritisation of measures as identified in previous schemes should be introduced in a specific order that align to most effective thermal benefits for the home. This could also be used to help determine exceptions to a whole house approach.
- **Potential problems during installation:** In some instances, recommended measures may reveal or lead to other issues (like mould or structural damage) that could complicate a full installation. In such cases, exceptions or staged installations may be necessary.

Rather than insist on a whole approach only, it would be beneficial to encourage comprehensive upgrades while allowing some level of flexibility to address individual circumstances. This balanced approach could promote participation in grant schemes while still achieving significant energy efficiency improvements.

Question 13 Do you agree that the new scheme should prioritise low carbon heating solutions where possible?

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree the new Affordable Warmth Scheme should prioritise low-carbon heating solutions where possible, but this should be desirable rather than mandatory. It could be that some solutions are significantly more expensive in comparison to other measures which would still generate a warm home.

However, it is accepted that :

- **Climate Change Mitigation:** Low-carbon heating solutions, such as solar, heat pumps, and biomass, play a crucial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change. By transitioning to low-carbon heating, governments can help meet their climate change mitigation targets and reduce their carbon footprint. It is essential that low-carbon solutions are only used where suitable, as they may be ineffective in certain property types and so the need to be desirable rather than mandatory. For example, heat pumps will only be effective and efficient as a home heating method in a well-insulated property, and their use may therefore be very limited in households impacted by fuel poverty.
- **Air Quality Improvement:** Northern Ireland still relies heavily on fossil fuels as a home heating source which can lead to air pollution, negatively impacting public health. Low-carbon heating solutions, on the other hand, produce little to no greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants, resulting in improved air quality.
- **Renewable energy integration:** Prioritising low-carbon heating helps integrate renewable energy sources into the energy mix. This can contribute to a more diversified energy supply, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and promoting energy security.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Low-carbon heating solutions often require less energy to operate than traditional heating systems. This can lead to cost savings for households and reduce strain on the grid during peak demand periods.
- **Economic benefits:** Investing in low-carbon heating solutions can create new economic opportunities, such as jobs in the renewable energy sector, and stimulate local economies. Additionally, the long-term savings from reduced energy consumption can have a positive impact on a region's economic growth.
- **Public Health benefits:** Exposure to air pollution from fossil fuel-based heating can have significant health impacts. By promoting low-carbon heating solutions, this can contribute to a reduction in respiratory diseases and other health problems associated with air pollution.

To prioritise low-carbon heating solutions effectively, the fuel poverty strategy for NI should consider:

- Incentivising low-carbon heating options through grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans for households (and businesses).
- Developing and implementing policies that support the deployment of low-carbon heating technologies, such as building control standards that promote energy efficiency.
- Investing in energy grid modernisation to ensure that it can accommodate increased adoption of low-carbon heating solutions.
- Providing education, training and awareness raising programmes to ensure that individuals have the knowledge and skills to select, install and maintain low-carbon heating systems.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships to accelerate the development and deployment of low-carbon heating technologies.

Question 14: Do you agree that the new scheme should offer renewable technologies such as solar panels and battery storage to offset the running costs of low carbon heating solutions in low-income households? Please give reasons for your answer

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council support this approach:

- **Economic Relief and Energy Independence:** Low-income households often struggle with energy costs. By offering renewable technologies, the government can help reduce their reliance on conventional energy sources, thereby potentially lowering their monthly energy bills. Solar panels and battery storage empower households to generate and store their own energy. This independence can shield low-income families from fluctuating energy prices and provide a more stable financial situation.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Transitioning to low carbon heating solutions and renewable technologies is crucial for the UK's climate goals. By promoting these solutions, the government can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to combating climate change and improving air quality.
- **Job Creation:** Investment in renewable technologies can spur job creation in the green energy sector. This includes opportunities in manufacturing, installation, and maintenance, which can benefit both low-income communities and the broader economy.
- **Public Health:** Low carbon heating solutions and renewable energy can help reduce pollution, leading to better air quality and improved public health outcomes. This is particularly important in low-income areas that may experience higher levels of air pollution and related health issues.
- **Social Equity:** By prioritising access to renewable technologies for low-income households, the strategy can address fuel poverty and promotes social equity. Ensuring that all households, regardless of income, can benefit from clean energy solutions is fundamental to a fair transition.
- **Long-term Savings:** While the initial investment in renewable technologies may be a barrier, government support through grant schemes can facilitate access. Over time, these technologies can lead to substantial savings on energy costs, making them a financially viable option for low-income households.
- **Incentives for Adoption:** By providing incentives for renewable technologies in low-income households, the government can drive greater adoption of low carbon solutions, accelerating the transition to a sustainable energy future.
- **Community Resilience:** Renewable technologies and low carbon heating solutions can enhance resilience in communities, especially during energy supply disruptions or price spikes. Increased self-sufficiency is vital for vulnerable populations.

In summary, offering renewable technologies to low-income households aligns with economic, environmental, and social justice goals. It provides an important pathway for these communities to engage with and benefit from the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Question 15: Do you agree that rural properties should be prioritised for energy efficiency support? Please give reasons for your answer.

In general, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are of the opinion that priority should be based on need and the "worst first" principle rather than geographical location. Whether a 10-year strategy should prioritise rural properties for energy efficiency support involves several considerations, and there are compelling arguments for and against such prioritisation. Here are some reasons to support prioritising rural properties:

- **Ageing Infrastructure:** Many rural homes are older and may lack modern energy-efficient features. 'Hard to Treat' homes with solid wall construction are typically located in rural areas. Targeting these properties for support can lead to significant

reductions in energy consumption, lowering utility bills and improving overall energy efficiency in the region.

- **Access to Resources:** Rural areas may have limited access to resources such as the gas network distribution system that support energy efficiency improvements. By prioritising these areas, governments can directly address systemic inequities and ensure that rural residents have the same opportunities to benefit from energy efficiency programs as those in urban areas.
- **Environmental Impact:** Improving energy efficiency in rural properties can contribute to broader environmental goals, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. Rural areas often have significant agricultural activities, and enhancing energy efficiency can lead to lower carbon footprints and promote sustainable practices.
- **Reducing Strain on Energy Grids:** Energy-efficient rural properties can reduce overall demand for energy, which can help alleviate strain on national energy grids. This is particularly important during peak energy usage times when rural areas may face higher costs or energy shortages.
- **Local Economic Growth:** Supporting energy efficiency retrofits can create local jobs in construction, skilled trades, and energy audits. Prioritising rural areas can stimulate local economies and promote sustainable economic development.
- **Resilience and Self-Sufficiency:** By enhancing energy efficiency, rural properties can become more resilient against energy price volatility and disruptions.

However, it is also important to consider counterarguments, such as the possibility of neglecting urban areas that might need similar support or the logistics and costs associated with implementing programs in sparsely populated areas. Ultimately, an effective approach will involve a balanced strategy that assesses and addresses the specific needs of both rural and urban properties based on sound evidenced-based analysis.

Question 16: Do you agree with a sliding scale approach to funding for home energy schemes?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agrees with this approach. A sliding scale approach to funding home energy schemes can be beneficial for several reasons:

- **Affordability:** It allows for a more equitable distribution of funds, ensuring that those who can least afford to invest in energy efficiency get more support. It also aligns with the public health approach of 'proportionate universalism' where actions are universal but the scale and intensity of is proportionate to the level of disadvantage.
- **Incentivising Participation:** A sliding scale can encourage broader participation by providing greater incentives for those who might be hesitant to invest in energy improvements due to cost concerns.
- **Targeted Assistance:** It enables the allocation of resources based on specific needs and circumstances, addressing barriers faced by different sectors of the population.
- **Improved Energy equity:** It can contribute to reducing fuel poverty, ensuring that energy-efficient homes are accessible to all socio-economic groups
- **Flexibility and responsiveness:** A sliding scale approach can be adjusted over time based on changing economic conditions or energy markets, making it a more dynamic and responsive funding strategy.

However, there are also challenges to consider:

- **Cost and complexity:** Implementing a sliding scale may require more administrative oversight and could complicate the funding process.
- **Potential for misuse:** There may be concerns about ensuring that the funds are used appropriately and that those who truly need assistance are receiving it.

- **Balancing Interests:** It's important to balance the needs of different stakeholders, including taxpayers, homeowners, and energy providers.

Overall, if carefully designed and implemented, a sliding scale approach can enhance the effectiveness of home energy schemes and promote sustainability while addressing social equity concerns. The success of such an approach would depend on transparent criteria, robust oversight, and effective communication and support for the target population.

Question 17: Do you agree that loans are the fairest financing option for landlords who are required to improve their assets? If not, what would you suggest as alternative funding options?

While loans can be a viable financing option for landlords seeking to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, they may not always be the fairest or most suitable solution for every situation. Here are some considerations and alternative funding options:

Considerations for Loans:

- **Repayment Burden:** Loans require repayment with interest, which may be burdensome for landlords, especially if cash flow is tight.
- **Creditworthiness:** Access to loans can depend on a landlord's creditworthiness, potentially excluding those with less favourable financial backgrounds.
- **Market Variability:** Interest rates can fluctuate, affecting the overall cost of borrowing.

Alternative Funding Options:

- **Match funding grants:** These funds do not require repayment, making them a more accessible option for many landlords. However, 50% grant funding has been available to landlords for some years through the current Affordable Warmth Scheme, but unfortunately to date uptake has been stubbornly low (5-8%). DfC must first conduct research to uncover the reasons behind poor uptake before considering a similar roll out.
- **Incentives and rebates:** Offering incentives such as rates rebates could encourage landlords to undertake energy efficiency improvements.
- **Repayment Programmes:** Implemented on-bill financing programmes that allow landlords to finance energy improvements through their rates or utility bills can linking repayment directly to energy savings.
- **Public-Private partnerships:** Collaborations between government departments and private firms can provide funding, expertise, and shared risk for large-scale energy efficiency projects.
- **Energy Performance contracts:** These agreements allow landlords to partner with energy providers to implement energy-efficient upgrades with financing based on the savings realised from reduced energy bills.
- **Community partnerships:** Collective funding programmes can enable individuals or communities to finance energy-efficient improvements through contributions from a large number of people.
- **Introduction of claw back options** where grant-aided households are sold after securing the improvements or where the eligible tenant renting the improved dwelling moves on within a defined period of time.

While loans can be an effective means to finance energy efficiency improvements, they aren't necessarily the fairest or most accessible for all landlords. A multifaceted approach that includes grants, incentives, and innovative financing models may provide a more equitable and supportive framework for property owners addressing energy efficiency upgrades.

Question 18 Do you agree that we should consider increasing levies from electricity bills to fund energy efficiency schemes for low income households? Please give reasons for your answer.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council do not agree that consideration should be given to increasing levies from electricity bills to fund energy efficiency schemes for low-income households.

It is thought that implementing such a policy would:

- **Increase costs for consumers:** Higher levies on electricity bills may lead to increased costs for consumers, which could exacerbate fuel poverty, particularly for those already struggling to pay their energy bills.
- **Have a regressive impact:** Energy bills are often seen as a regressive tax; thus, increasing levies could exacerbate inequality if not carefully designed to protect the most vulnerable.
- **Create equity concerns:** Some critics argue that a levy-based approach may place an unfair burden on certain consumers, such as those who are not eligible for energy efficiency schemes or those with limited access to energy-efficient technologies.
- **Have administrative complexities:** Implementing and managing a levy-based system can be complex and may involve significant administrative costs, which could eat into the budget allocated for energy efficiency schemes.

Question 19: Should we explore introducing levies on gas to increase funding for such energy efficiency measures? Please provide reasons for your answer

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council do not agree that consideration should be given to exploring the introduction of levies on gas bills to increase funding for such energy efficiency measures.

It is thought that implementing such a policy would:

- Increase costs for consumers: An introduction of levies on gas bills may lead to increased costs for consumers, which could exacerbate fuel poverty, particularly for those already struggling to pay their energy bills.
- Have a regressive impact: Energy bills are often seen as a regressive tax; thus, introducing additional levies could exacerbate inequality if not carefully designed to protect the most vulnerable.
- Create equity concerns: Some critics argue that a levy-based approach may place an unfair burden on certain consumers, such as those who are not eligible for energy efficiency schemes or those with limited access to energy-efficient technologies.
- Increase administrative complexities: Implementing and managing a levy-based system can be complex and may involve significant administrative costs, which could eat into the budget allocated for energy efficiency schemes.

Question 20: What are your thoughts on exploring any revenue-raising opportunities for energy efficiency schemes from unregulated heating sources such as home heating oil?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council not believe that consideration should be given to exploring revenue raising opportunities for energy efficiency schemes from unregulated heating sources such as home heating oil.

NI is currently still more reliant on home heating oil than other parts of the UK. It is thought that implementing such a policy would have a higher impact on those who are most at risk of being in fuel poverty. Such a policy would :

- Increase costs for consumers: An introduction of levies on oil bills may lead to increased costs for consumers, which could exacerbate fuel poverty, particularly for those already struggling to pay their energy bills.
- Regressive impact: Energy bills are often seen as a regressive tax; thus, introducing additional levies could exacerbate inequality if not carefully designed to protect the most vulnerable.
- Equity concerns: Some critics argue that a levy-based approach may place an unfair burden on certain consumers, such as those who are not eligible for energy efficiency schemes or those with limited access to energy-efficient technologies.
- Administrative complexities: Implementing and managing a levy-based system can be complex and may involve significant administrative costs, which could eat into the budget allocated for energy efficiency schemes.

Question 21: Do you agree that we should utilise and build referral pathways between Government, Local Government, health professionals and the Voluntary and Community Sector? If yes, how can we best achieve this?

Yes Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council are of the opinion that building referral pathways for people needing advice and support is absolutely essential for creating a comprehensive support system to enhance overall community well-being, particularly for vulnerable

populations who may struggle with energy-related issues. There does however need to be clear leadership with one organisation responsible for delivering the scheme.

Effective collaboration is critical to ensuring that those struggling with fuel poverty are provided with accessible and timely assistance. The skills and competencies of partnership working can help through the local knowledge, emotional intelligence and trust building capabilities of staff who can be the conduit between the scheme and eligible customer connectivity.

To achieve this effectively, the NI fuel poverty strategy must ensure

- **Effective stakeholder engagement at all stages of planning and implementation:** Involve all relevant stakeholders from the outset, including government agencies, health professionals, and VCS representatives, to ensure their insights and needs are considered. Regular meetings and workshops can facilitate collaboration and build trust among partners.
- **Shared Goals and objectives:** Develop a clear framework outlining shared goals, objectives, and outcomes for the referral pathways. This can help ensure that all parties are aligned and working towards common aims, such as reducing fuel poverty and improving health outcomes.
- **Training and awareness:** Conduct training sessions for health professionals and VCS workers on the energy advice available, common energy-related issues faced by clients, and how to refer individuals effectively. This will empower them to recognise when someone needs support and know where and how to direct them.
- **Integrated information systems:** Establish a centralised information system or platform where stakeholders can easily access resources, share information, and track referrals. This can help ensure consistency in service delivery and facilitate communication between different sectors.
- **Clear referral processes:** Develop clear, user-friendly referral procedures that outline how individuals can be referred between sectors. This should include a simple process to follow and the types of information required for referrals.
- **Community engagement:** Implement community engagement programmes to raise awareness about available resources and support channels. This could include workshops, informational sessions, or partnerships with local organisations or community groups that engage with residents.
- **Feedback and evaluation:** Create mechanisms for regular feedback and robust evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the referral pathways. Analyse data on referrals made, support outcomes, and areas for improvement to refine the process continuously.
- **Focus on accessibility:** Ensure that the referral pathways are accessible and inclusive, addressing potential barriers such as language, mobility, and technological access. Tailor services to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- **Data Sharing agreements:** Establish data sharing agreements among partners to facilitate information exchange while ensuring data privacy and security. This can help improve the understanding of community needs and enhance service provision.

Question 22: Do you agree with a taskforce/working groups to develop enabling frameworks for energy communities

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council strongly support the appointment of a taskforce with clear timescales for action, and representation from industry, councils, communities etc to develop enabling frameworks for community energy. A taskforce or working group can be an effective way to bring together diverse stakeholders, including community representatives, experts, and decision-makers, to co-create and implement such

frameworks. Enabling frameworks can help communities overcome specific challenges and barriers by providing a structured approach to addressing them. This can include:

1. Facilitating dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders
2. Identifying and mapping community strengths and resources.
3. Developing tailored interventions and strategies
4. Enhancing community engagement and participation.
5. Building capacity and resilience within communities.
6. Developing and refining the frameworks based on community needs and priorities
7. Ensuring that frameworks are inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the evolving needs of communities.

Question 23: Do you agree that government should assess the most relevant recommendations of the NICE6 guidelines and consider their implementation

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree, implementation of the NICE6 guidelines will increase awareness within the health, care and voluntary sectors of how health problems caused or exacerbated by cold homes can be addressed through appropriate referrals, training and identifying needs as well as ensuring people are discharged from hospital to a warm home.

Question 24: Do you agree that we should work with organisations that provide emergency support, to seek a consistent approach across NI and the inclusion of a referral to a long-term solution. If so, what would be the best way to achieve this?

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, agree that the government should collaborate with organisations providing emergency energy support, such as local councils and the Public Health Agency, to establish a consistent approach and facilitate referrals to long-term solutions. This collaboration can help ensure that people in need receive not only immediate assistance but also sustainable support.

Question 25: Do you agree with the proposal to prioritise discretionary support to provide emergency financial support if there is a future energy or cost of living crisis, until we have better data to target large scale payments? If not, can you provide a reason?

There are compelling arguments to continue to provide emergency financial support in the short term, at least until a time when there is data gathered about who is most in need and allow prioritisation. These include

- Flexibility and responsiveness: Discretionary support can be more adaptable to changing circumstances and can be tailored to meet immediate needs of individuals or families facing financial distress.
- Targeted assistance: It allows agencies to quickly direct funds to those who are most in need without waiting for extensive data collection, which can be time-consuming.
- Prompt Relief: In times of crisis, immediate financial support can prevent people from falling into deeper financial hardship, homelessness, or inability to afford basic necessities.

However, the disadvantages of this approach are clear:

- **Risk of inequity:** Without robust data, there's a potential risk that support may not reach the most vulnerable populations, as decisions could be influenced by subjective criteria or less visible needs.
- **Sustainability concerns:** Discretionary funding may be limited in scope or duration, potentially leading to gaps in support once the initial funds are depleted. Clear criteria would be essential if there are to be any discretionary funds allocated.
- **Lack of comprehensive strategy:** Prioritising discretionary support might detract from the development of a more systematic approach that looks at the root causes of financial crises and provides longer-term solutions.

Question 26: Do you agree with the proposal to gain a better understanding of the impact of changes to Winter Fuel Payments and introduce additional support where appropriate? If not, why, and do you have alternative suggestions?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree, the proposal to analyse the impact of withdrawing Winter Fuel Payments from pensioners above the pension credit threshold is essential as it acknowledges the diverse financial situations pensioners face. Many pensioners, even those above the threshold, may struggle with heating costs, particularly during harsh winters. A thorough assessment could provide insights into how this policy affects vulnerable groups and inform future decisions. Additionally, introducing additional support where appropriate would ensure that those who are still in need receive assistance, promoting fairness and social equity.

If there are concerns, alternatives could include:

- **Income assessments:** Instead of a blanket withdrawal based on the pension credit threshold, a more nuanced approach could consider individual circumstances, such as other sources of income or cost of living considerations.
- **Targeted support programmes:** Establish specific programmes that target lower-income pensioners who may be less able to afford heating costs, ensuring that support goes to those most in need.
- **Emergency Funds:** Creating an emergency fund that pensioners can access during particularly cold periods could alleviate financial strain without entirely withdrawing support.
- **Broadening eligibility:** Instead of withdrawing payments, consider gradually tapering them based on income levels, allowing for a smoother transition and minimising the impact on those who may just exceed the threshold.

Overall, it is essential to balance fiscal responsibility with the need to support vulnerable populations, ensuring that all pensioners can maintain a comfortable and safe living environment during the winter months.

Question 27: Do you agree that we should improve our understanding of the impacts of energy decisions on the energy bills of different consumer groups? If so, what would be the best way of understanding these impacts?

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree that improving our understanding of the impacts of energy decisions on the energy bills of different consumer groups is crucial. Understanding these effects can help policymakers design more equitable energy policies and ensure that no particular group bears an undue financial burden.

The best ways to understand these impacts include:

- **Sound evidence base:** Collect and analyse data on energy consumption patterns across different demographic groups, including income levels, geographic locations, and household sizes. This could involve utilising smart meter data, historical energy use data, and bill payment histories to assess how different policies or energy prices would affect various groups.
- **Consumer segmentation:** Identify and segment consumer groups based on factors such as income, energy usage, and access to renewable energy sources. This segmentation can help in predicting how changes in energy pricing will affect sector-specific demographics.
- **Surveys and focus groups:** Conduct surveys and focus groups to gather qualitative insights from consumers about their energy usage, the impacts of energy bills, and the willingness to adopt energy-saving technologies or practices. Understanding consumer preferences can shed light on how policies could impact their bills.
- **Modelling and simulation:** Use econometric models to simulate the impacts of different energy policies on consumer bills. This could include modelling scenarios like carbon pricing, changes in subsidies for renewable energy, or alterations in energy market structures.
- **Pilot programmes:** Implement pilot programmes aimed at specific consumer groups to measure the impacts of particular energy policies or decisions before rolling them out on a wider scale.
- **Collaboration with utilities:** Work closely with utilities, consumer advocacy groups etc to get a holistic view of the consumer impacts. These organisations often have valuable insights and data on consumer behaviour and challenges.
- **Transparency and reporting:** Ensuring that energy decision-makers provide transparent reports on how decisions affect various consumer groups, with accessible breakdowns of potential financial impacts, can foster a better understanding within the community.
- **Feedback and evaluation mechanisms:** Create channels for ongoing feedback from consumers regarding their experiences with energy pricing and policies, which can inform future policy adjustments.

By combining quantitative data with qualitative insights and consumer feedback and evaluation, policymakers can develop a comprehensive understanding of how energy decisions impact different groups and work towards more equitable energy solutions.

Question 29: How can we support vulnerable people to ensure they are on the most affordable tariff?

Government can implement a variety of strategies to assist vulnerable individuals in accessing the most affordable energy tariffs. Here are several approaches:

- **Information and education campaigns:** Launch campaigns to educate vulnerable populations about available energy tariffs and programs, helping them understand how to select the most cost-effective options. Provide resources in multiple languages and formats to ensure accessibility.
- **Tariff Comparison Tools:** Develop or support online platforms where individuals can easily compare energy tariffs from different suppliers. This can include filters for special rates for low-income households.
- **Subsidies and financial assistance:** Provide direct financial assistance or subsidies to low-income households to help cover energy costs, ensuring they can afford the best tariffs. Implement programmes that automatically enrol eligible households in low-income energy assistance programmes.

- **Partnerships with Energy Companies:** Collaborate with energy providers to create special tariffs or discounts for vulnerable people, such as elderly citizens, low-income families, or those on disability support. Encourage energy companies to offer simplified processes for vulnerable groups to determine their eligibility for lower tariffs.
- **Consideration needs to be given to the role of the Utility Regulator to monitor the energy companies in ensuring lowest tariffs are given to vulnerable groups.**
- **Engagement programmes:** Deploy community engagement initiatives to connect with at-risk populations and help them navigate energy services. This can include partnerships with local councils who already work locally to assist vulnerable families in applying for energy programmes and understanding their options.
- **The revision of the arms' length service that was introduced by the DfE 'One stop shop' as it is not thought to be as accessible or user friendly for certain sectors such as the elderly who don't have the confidence or family support to navigate the system. These are often the sectors that need the most assistance.**
- **Legislative measures:** Introduce legislation or policies that prioritise affordable energy access for vulnerable populations, including limits on energy shut-offs during extreme weather. Ensure that consumer protection laws are in place to prevent exploitative practices targeting low-income households.
- **Data Sharing and referrals:** Utilise data sharing agreements (with privacy protections) to identify individuals who may qualify for assistance, enhancing outreach efforts. Create referral programmes between social services and energy providers to seamlessly connect vulnerable individuals to financial assistance and resources.
- **Crisis support services:** Establish or bolster emergency assistance programmes for energy disconnection to support individuals facing immediate crisis situations. Set up hotlines or helplines for individuals to receive immediate advice and support regarding energy billing and concerns.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programmes aimed at helping vulnerable populations with energy tariffs to ensure they meet their goals and adjust as necessary.

By implementing these measures, government can significantly improve access to affordable energy for vulnerable citizens, reducing their financial burdens and enhancing their overall well-being.

Question 30: Do you agree that we should explore potential affordability support for populations where energy efficiency measures may not be the right solution? If so, which population groups? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree that this is an area that requires exploration.

There are potential population groups who may require additional and targeted specific support. These could include low-income households living with a terminal illness, or long-term disability or dementia which requires the usage of specialised medical equipment and considerations from ethnic minority groups or those who do not have English as their first language.

Question 31: Is further research required to identify gaps in non-price protection for different energy users in Northern Ireland? If yes, what should we focus on?

Yes, further research is required to identify gaps in non-price protection for different energy users in Northern Ireland. Some key focus areas for this research could include:

- **Vulnerable Consumer identification:** Conduct studies to identify specific groups of vulnerable consumers, such as low-income households, elderly residents, and those with disabilities, to understand their unique energy needs and challenges.

- **Awareness and accessibility:** Assess the current awareness of existing non-price protections among different user groups and evaluate how accessible these protections are. This may include evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies used by energy providers and regulatory bodies.
- **Impact of energy transition:** Analyse how the transition to renewable energy and changes in the energy market impact non-price protections for various user sectors and identify potential gaps in support.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Look at non-price protections in other jurisdictions to identify best practices and lessons learned that could be applied in Northern Ireland.
- **Regulatory Framework:** Review the existing regulatory framework to pinpoint any shortcomings or inconsistencies in protections for different types of energy users.
- **Method of Billing and Payment Options:** Explore the different billing methods and payment options available, assessing their fairness and accessibility for all user groups, especially those who may struggle with traditional payment systems.
- **Consumer Rights and Dispute Resolution:** Investigate the effectiveness of consumer rights protections and dispute resolution mechanisms in place, focusing on their adequacy for protecting non-price aspects of energy services.
- **Environmental and Social Impact Considerations:** Assess the intersection of environmental policies with non-price protections, ensuring that energy strategies are equitable and do not disproportionately impact vulnerable communities.
- **Engagement with Stakeholders:** Gather input from a wide range of stakeholders, including consumer advocacy groups, energy providers, and governmental agencies, to understand their perspectives on current protections and needed improvements.

By focusing on these areas, research can help to ensure that non-price protections are comprehensive, effective, and adaptable to the evolving energy landscape in Northern Ireland.

Question 32: What is your view on whether government should adopt a common quality assurance standard or framework across all energy efficiency and low carbon heat grant schemes?

The adoption of a common quality assurance standard or framework across all energy efficiency and low carbon heat grant schemes by the government could offer several significant benefits:

- **Consistency and Transparency:** A unified framework would ensure that all schemes adhere to the same standards, promoting consistency in the fuel poverty strategy implementation. This would provide clarity for both consumers and service providers, fostering trust in the strategy.
- **Improved Quality of Services:** A common standard could help ensure that all contractors and service providers meet minimum quality requirements, reducing the risk of poorly executed installations and ensuring that the benefits of energy efficiency measures are fully realised.
- **Streamlined Processes:** Having a standard framework may simplify administrative processes, reducing confusion and making it easier for applicants to navigate the various programmes. This could also ease the burden on government agencies managing these schemes.
- **Enhanced Reporting and Accountability:** A common framework would facilitate better tracking and reporting of outcomes across different programmes, allowing for more effective evaluation of their success and identification of areas for improvement.
- **Encouragement of Best Practices:** A standardised approach could promote the sharing of best practices across different areas and schemes, leading to continuous improvement in energy efficiency measures and low carbon technologies.

- **Increased Participation:** With clear standards in place, more homeowners may be encouraged to participate in energy efficiency programmes, knowing that they will receive support that meets a recognized quality standard.

However, there are also considerations to keep in mind:

- **Implementation Costs:** Establishing and enforcing a common standard may require significant initial investment in terms of resources and training. This needs to be weighed against the long-term benefits.
- **Potential for Bureaucracy:** A standardised approach could lead to increased bureaucracy, which might slow down the rollout of grants and limit accessibility for potential beneficiaries.
- **The potential for fraud and/or misinformation provided by applicant**

Overall, while the development of a common quality assurance standard or framework presents certain challenges, the potential benefits in terms of consistency, quality, and effectiveness make it a worthwhile consideration for improving energy efficiency and low carbon heat grant schemes. Careful planning and stakeholder engagement would be crucial to ensure that the implementation is practical and beneficial across different contexts.

Question 33: Do you agree that government should take a common approach to consumer protection across all supported energy efficiency schemes?

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree that government should take a common approach to consumer protection across all supported energy efficiency schemes. Consumer protection measures and consumer confidence in those On are essential components of well-functioning energy efficiency schemes.

Question 34: Do you have suggestions about how government could change our use of language to improve buy-in and engagement on fuel poverty?

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council would encourage the Government consider 'Poverty Strategy' by whatever terminology is appropriate but taking the focus away from Fuel.

Question 34: Do you agree that government should take a basket of indicators approach to measuring and understanding fuel poverty?

Yes, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agree, a basket of indicators approach can be very effective for measuring and understanding fuel poverty. Fuel poverty is a multifaceted issue that encompasses not only income levels but also housing quality, energy prices, and household energy usage patterns. Utilising a range of indicators, such as winter deaths, household energy expenditure relative to total expenditure, and other socio-economic factors, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding fuel poverty. For example:

- **Winter Deaths:** Tracking winter mortality rates can highlight the health impacts of inadequate heating and poor living conditions, illustrating the human cost associated with fuel poverty.
- **Energy Expenditure:** Comparing energy costs to overall household expenditure can help identify how much of a household's budget is being consumed by energy needs, revealing financial strain and potential risk of fuel poverty.
- **Housing Quality:** Including indicators related to insulation, heating systems, and overall energy efficiency can shed light on the structural factors that contribute to fuel poverty.

- **Income Levels:** Understanding income levels, including disparities based on demographics or geographic locations, can help identify which populations are most at risk.
- **Energy Prices:** Monitoring fluctuations in energy prices can provide insights into how external economic factors impact households' ability to afford energy.

By using a diverse set of indicators, with particular focus on the poverty index, government can better tailor policies and interventions to address the root causes of fuel poverty and implement more effective solutions.

Question 36: Are the indicators suggested the correct ones?

The issue with these indicators is that as a government strategy this cannot control external price increases by private energy providers. So perhaps the measurements need to change to the number of houses that meet certain energy rating, rather than the financial circumstances of the individuals living in them.

Question 37: If you agree with the introduction of an indicator based on energy confidence or awareness, do you have suggestions about what kind of indicator might be most valuable?

To gauge consumer energy awareness and confidence, several indicators can be valuable such as

- **Surveys and Polls:** Conducting surveys that assess consumer knowledge about energy sources, conservation methods, and renewable energy can provide direct insights into awareness levels. Questions about their understanding of energy costs, efficiency, and environmental impacts can be particularly revealing.
- **Energy Consumption Patterns**:** Analysing trends in energy usage can indicate consumer confidence. A significant shift towards energy-efficient appliances, smart home technology, or renewable energy adoption may suggest increased awareness and confidence in sustainable energy choices.
- **Participation in Energy Schemes:** Tracking participation in energy efficiency programmes, renewable energy adoption (like solar panel installation), and demand response initiatives can indicate both awareness and confidence levels among consumers.
- **Feedback Mechanisms from Utility Companies:** Utility customer feedback about rates, service quality, and energy saving programs can serve as an indicator of consumer confidence. High satisfaction rates may correlate with awareness and confidence in energy management initiatives.

Combining these qualitative and quantitative measures will provide a fuller picture of consumer energy awareness and confidence, helping to inform policies and programs designed to enhance energy literacy and promote sustainable practices.

Question 38: Do you agree with our proposal that carbon emissions are not used as a fuel poverty indicator? Please provide reasons for your answer.

The question of whether carbon emissions should be used as a fuel poverty indicator is complex and involves various considerations.

There are compelling arguments for not using Carbon Emissions as a Fuel Poverty Indicator such as:

- **Primary Focus on Affordability:** Fuel poverty is primarily about the inability of households to afford adequate heating and energy. Using carbon emissions as a metric may shift the focus away from the immediate financial stress experienced by low-income households.
- **Diverse Energy Sources:** Different communities rely on a variety of energy sources with different carbon profiles. Some low-income households may use cheaper, less environmentally friendly energy sources (e.g., coal or older gas systems) to stay warm, which may not reflect their overall carbon footprint.
- **Impact on Policy:** Relying on carbon emissions as a fuel poverty indicator could lead to policies that focus more on emissions reductions than on helping people access affordable energy. The needs of vulnerable populations could be neglected.
- **Complexity of Measurement:** Accurately measuring carbon emissions requires comprehensive data on energy usage, which can be difficult to obtain. This adds complexity to an already critical issue.

However, ignoring carbon emissions in the context of fuel poverty could counteract long-term sustainability goals. Fuel poverty initiatives should ideally align with climate goals to ensure energy systems are both affordable and environmentally responsible. Households in fuel poverty often live in energy-inefficient homes, which can result in high carbon emissions. Improving energy efficiency could reduce both fuel poverty and carbon output, making it relevant to consider both issues together.

In addition, using carbon emissions as a factor could raise awareness about the environmental impacts of energy consumption, potentially encouraging more sustainable practices among low-income households in the long run.

Ultimately, while there are valid reasons for DfC's proposal not to use carbon emissions as a fuel poverty indicator, it is also essential to recognise the interconnectedness of these issues. A balanced approach that considers both immediate needs for affordable energy and long-term sustainability goals may be the most effective strategy for addressing the dual challenges of fuel poverty and climate change.

Question 39: What is the best way to continue to engage with people experiencing fuel poverty?

Engaging with people experiencing fuel poverty requires an empathetic approach that considers their specific needs and challenges. This may be facilitated through Community Planning structures.

Establish connections through regular communication, showing genuine care and understanding. Use trusted local representatives such as local council officers or trusted community members to facilitate relationships.

Share clear, concise information about available assistance programmes, energy-saving tips, and financial support options. Use multiple formats (e.g., hard copy leaflets, social media, workshops) to reach different audiences.

Organise local community gatherings, workshops, or forums to raise awareness about fuel poverty and discuss solutions. This can also help build a supportive community network.

Encourage feedback through surveys, focus groups, or informal check-ins to understand their experiences, needs, and preferences better.

Collaborate with Local organisations: Work with local councils, charities, social services, and energy companies to develop comprehensive support programmes tailored to the community's specific needs.

Offer Practical Support, providing resources such as energy efficiency assessments, assistance with applying for grants or subsidies, and connecting them with home improvement schemes.

By combining these strategies, stakeholders can effectively engage with individuals experiencing fuel poverty, providing the support they need while also empowering them to take charge of their energy needs.

Question 40: Do you agree with the proposal for a Fuel Advisory Group. If not, can you suggest an alternative?

Yes. The formation of a fully representative fuel advisory group is critical to ensure that all stakeholders are fully engaged and aligned towards achieving the vision of warm, healthy homes for everyone.

Question 41: If you have any further comments or suggestions not already captured, please provide these.

It is recognised that often the most vulnerable in Northern Ireland are those in the rental sector and therefore to assist them, the private landlords must be encouraged and incentivised to improve those houses. From previous grant schemes, it is known that the take up of these schemes are too low to make an effective difference, therefore new approaches need to be considered including:

- providing a list of accredited contractors that will offer fair rate to deliver efficiency improvements within an agreed timeline, thus providing landlords with confidence of when they will be in a position to re-let properties and reducing cost burden on landlords
- should these deadlines not be achieved, landlords have the opportunity to be receive payment for the weeks that the house cannot be rented outside of this agreed period
- providing apprenticeship courses to assist these accredited contractors to develop the skill force required to improve the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES).

Further to this, many tenants wish to apply or nominate their rented house for improvements in heating and energy efficiencies but worry about where they would be able to move to in a time when the housing supply is so low in NI.

Consideration must be given to the wide range of reforms required for the rental sector, to include removing reforms that do not serve a practical purpose or make it difficult for landlords to stay in the rental market, before introducing new regulations on MEES. This will allow for consistency and a clear communications plan to be developed to encourage landlords to stay in the rental market at a time when the supply is so sparse.

Understanding the need to protect individuals' information, there needs to be improved and enhanced data sharing across organisations in order to assist landlords within the rental market to ensure that this information can be used for the best possible decision making and to prevent fraud or misuse by rogue individuals where possible.

Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	4 March 2025
Report from:	Head of Service (Acting) - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Public Health Agency Corporate Plan 2025-2030 – Consultation Response

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Public Health Agency (PHA) Corporate Plan 2025-2030 sets out the strategic direction of the Agency for the next 5 years, including where they will target their resources, based on evidence and informed by engagement with partners, the public and key stakeholders and aligned to the Programme for Government and Department of Health (DoH) strategies and priorities.
1.2	It sets out PHA's vision and ambitions for health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland and reiterates their call for continued focus on improving health and reducing inequalities across HSC and wider society.
1.3	PHA's priorities are set out in the Corporate Plan (attached as Appendix 3 EH for Members' information), focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the population from serious health threats • Laying the foundations for a healthy life from early years; • Ensuring people have the opportunity to live and work in a healthy way; • Supporting people to age healthily throughout their lives.
1.4	The Plan is supported by an implementation plan setting out the next steps and looking forward.
1.5	PHA recognise that this work cannot be done in isolation and requires a whole system, cross government approach with robust engagement with the public. Cognisant of this, they have now published the Draft Corporate Plan for public consultation from Thursday 28 November 2024 until Friday 28 February 2025.
1.6	To satisfy the public consultation deadline, a draft response, attached as Appendix 4 , has been forwarded to PHA and they have been advised that this is a draft response that is subject to Council approval and there may well be amends.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members retrospectively approve the 1. Consultation response in relation to the Public Health Agency Draft Corporate Plan
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> None
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>

4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out Not required – Consultation response only.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Not required – Consultation response only.	

Appendices:	Appendix 3 EH - Public Health Agency Corporate Plan Appendix 4 EH - Draft Consultation Response
--------------------	--

Public Health Agency Corporate Plan 2025–2030

Preventing, protecting, improving:
Better health for **everyone**



Public Health
Agency

Contents



Collage of artwork from PHA all staff event 2023.

Foreword	4
Purpose, vision and values	6
Our context and the health profile of Northern Ireland	8
What is public health?	16
Our focus.....	20
Protecting health.....	22
Starting well	24
Living well	26
Ageing well	30
Our organisation	32
Summary table	39
Glossary of useful terms	42
References	45

Foreword

Foreword

134

This Public Health Agency (PHA) Corporate Plan 2025-2030 sets out our strategic direction for the next five years: where we will target our work, based on evidence and informed by engagement with our partners, the public, key stakeholders and aligned to Programme for Government and Department of Health (DoH) strategies and priorities.

This plan is being developed during a period of reform both for our organisation and for Health and Social Care (HSC) and in a time of significant financial constraint. However, we have embraced the opportunity provided by this time of change and constraint to set out our vision and ambitions for health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland and reiterate our call for a continued focus on improving health and reducing health inequalities across HSC and wider society.

Over the period of our previous corporate plan (2017-2021), the PHA has continued to take forward work to improve and protect health and wellbeing, reduce health inequalities, improve the quality and safety of care services, and support research and development.¹ Much has been achieved, but much is yet to be done to deliver better health for everyone in Northern Ireland.

Our society has faced many difficult challenges in recent years, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact. This has shaped many of our priorities and work areas over recent years and the lessons learned continue to influence our work: pandemic preparedness and a re-energised focus on stubborn and systemic inequalities in health that we continue to experience. These unfair and avoidable differences in health impact our ability to lead healthy lives and too many people in Northern Ireland still die prematurely or live with preventable conditions. We must do all that we can to prevent this from being the case. Our commitment to work to reduce health inequalities is at the core of this plan and our work over the next five years.

The priorities set out in the following pages (and summarised on pages 40-41) relate to everyone in Northern Ireland irrespective of your age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, disability; whether you are a service user, a carer, independent or needing care. Our outcomes are ambitious, and will require energy, courage, commitment and creativity to deliver them – all against the backdrop of increasing demands

and financial constraints, as well as structural reform. We must take a 'whole system' approach and make partnership, involvement and engagement central to our work, to make the best use of our combined resources. We must work collaboratively with service users and carers, the community and voluntary sector and across government to have a positive, lasting impact on health and wellbeing.

It is also critical as we grow as an organisation that we focus on our people. We have a highly skilled and committed multidisciplinary workforce across a range of professions and we must strive to ensure they feel valued, equipped and enabled in their work. In particular, we must ensure that all staff are supported and given opportunities to develop both professionally and personally.

We must continue to develop as a learning organisation and build on significant developments in digital capacity in recent years. Embracing innovative, digital solutions and maximising the use of data will enable us to work more effectively to meet the current and future needs of the population.

This plan, supported by a more detailed implementation plan, sets out our next steps as we look forward. This will be a period of change and adaptation but also of great opportunity where we endeavour, as the lead organisation for public health, to be an organisation where people want to work, where we nurture collective and compassionate leadership.

Above all, this plan represents our unwavering commitment to improving health and wellbeing for everyone in Northern Ireland.



Aidan Dawson
Chief Executive



Colin Coffey
Chair

Purpose, vision and values

Purpose, vision and values

135

Purpose:

Protect and improve the health and social wellbeing of our population and reduce health inequalities through leadership, partnership and evidence-based practice.

Vision:

A healthier Northern Ireland.

Values:

The PHA endeavours to translate the Health and Social Care values into its culture by putting individuals and communities at the heart of everything we do, acting with **openness and honesty** and treating people with dignity, respect and **compassion**; **working together** in partnership to improve the quality of life of those we serve, listening to and involving individuals and communities; valuing, developing and empowering our staff and striving for **excellence** and innovation; being evidence led and outcomes focused.



Our context and the health profile of Northern Ireland

Our context and the health profile of Northern Ireland

Since its establishment in 2009, the PHA has worked to improve and protect health and wellbeing, reduce health inequalities, promote healthy behaviours and reduce barriers to good health, improve the quality and safety of care services, and support related research and innovation.

There have been many developments and advances in recent years in respect of interventions and programmes to improve and protect health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. The graphics on pages 10-15 show a snapshot of health in 2022-23. In general, the health of our population has been improving over time, as seen in increases in life expectancy (the number of years a person can expect to live) and healthy life expectancy (the number of years lived in good health). However, in recent years, improvements in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy have slowed and health inequality remains a major issue (see page 10).

Determinants of health

Health is determined by many factors: social, political, environmental and economic. Changes in these can have significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of the population and in recent years, society has experienced many significant events of this nature: the COVID-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis, climate change, the outworking of EU exit and other political change.²⁻⁴ The pandemic also highlighted both the stubborn and systemic inequalities in health that Northern Ireland continues to experience. Health inequalities remain and continue to divide our society. While this situation is not unique to Northern Ireland, it remains a major issue with significant differences in health outcomes between the most and least disadvantaged.

A time of change

The challenges facing our health and social care system, and indeed health systems worldwide, are also well documented, and Northern Ireland's health and social care system remains under immense and growing pressure.⁵ Further change is also underway both in the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICSNI). The current economic climate and constrained financial environment for HSC continues to impact on population health and requires creative, innovative and collaborative ways of working,



and making best use of available resources to deliver better health outcomes and help people to stay well.

It is well documented that long-lasting and significant improvements in health and wellbeing can only be achieved through a 'whole system' approach.^{2,5-7} Our current context, compounded with the additional challenges to health and wellbeing further strengthen the need for a population health approach, a focus on prevention and early intervention and strong cross-sectoral, multi-agency collaboration.

Regional strategic frameworks

These key foundations for our work are reflected across the draft Programme for Government framework 2024-2027 and the wide range of departmental policies and strategies that influence and determine the work of PHA, including Making Life Better public health framework, and Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together.^{2,3} The PHA also has lead responsibility for implementing a number of strategies across key areas of work, including maternity and early years; mental health, emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention; obesity; tobacco use; alcohol and drugs; and long-term conditions, including cancer.⁸⁻¹⁴

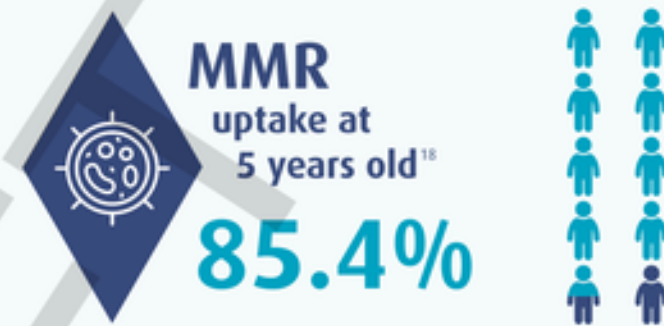
There are many DoH and indeed other departmental strategies and policies that are relevant to the setting of priorities for the PHA. The outcomes and priorities for the PHA for the next five years reflect and align with these key strategic documents, and our contribution to progressing this agenda and our commitment to working collaboratively with others, will help ensure that these outcomes are realised.

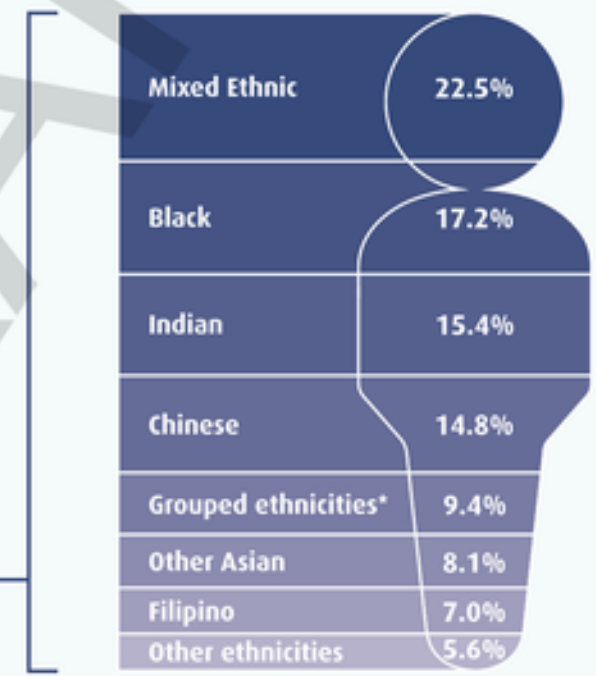
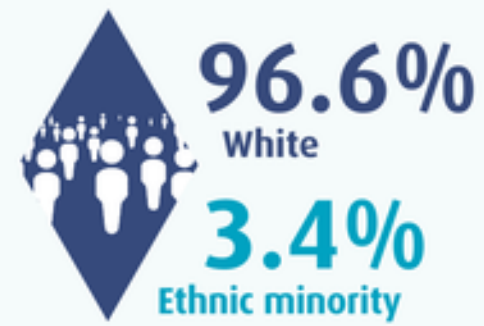
Snapshot of health in Northern Ireland, 2022-2023.



Life expectancy and Healthy life expectancy¹⁶







*Includes Irish Traveller, Arab, Pakistani and Roma



65,600
Ethnic minority population



What is public health?

What is public health?

140

Public health works to protect communities and has a strong focus on equity.

There are three key domains of public health practice:²²

1. Health protection

This involves protecting the population from threats to their health from infectious diseases and other hazards. It involves both proactive preventative actions (such as vaccination) as well as reactive response to incidents such as disease outbreaks.

2. Health improvement

This involves wide ranging actions working with a variety of stakeholders to improve health and wellbeing. It includes influencing other sectors to address the wider determinants of health, as well as working with the general public and specific vulnerable or marginalised groups, to improve health literacy and promote healthy lifestyle choices. There is a heavy focus on addressing health inequalities.

3. Healthcare public health

This involves actions in the planning, commissioning and development of healthcare services working with partners across the HSC and related services to ensure provision of high quality, safe and effective services, while working to reduce inequalities.

As set out in the diagram, these three aspects of public health practice are not stand-alone and overlap with each other, requiring a skilled workforce that can work across these various domains to address complex issues.

HSC services make a significant contribution to the health of individuals and the population. The PHA has a statutory responsibility to work with the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) and provide professional input to commissioning healthcare services. We work with SPPG and colleagues across HSC to ensure that people in Northern Ireland have access to high-quality and effective health services no matter where they live.

Three key domains of public health practice



The work of the PHA in each of these three domains is underpinned by a strong basis in science, with evidence informing all of our work. We cannot deliver improvements to public health in isolation, so partnership working and building relationships with our partners is a key element of our work.

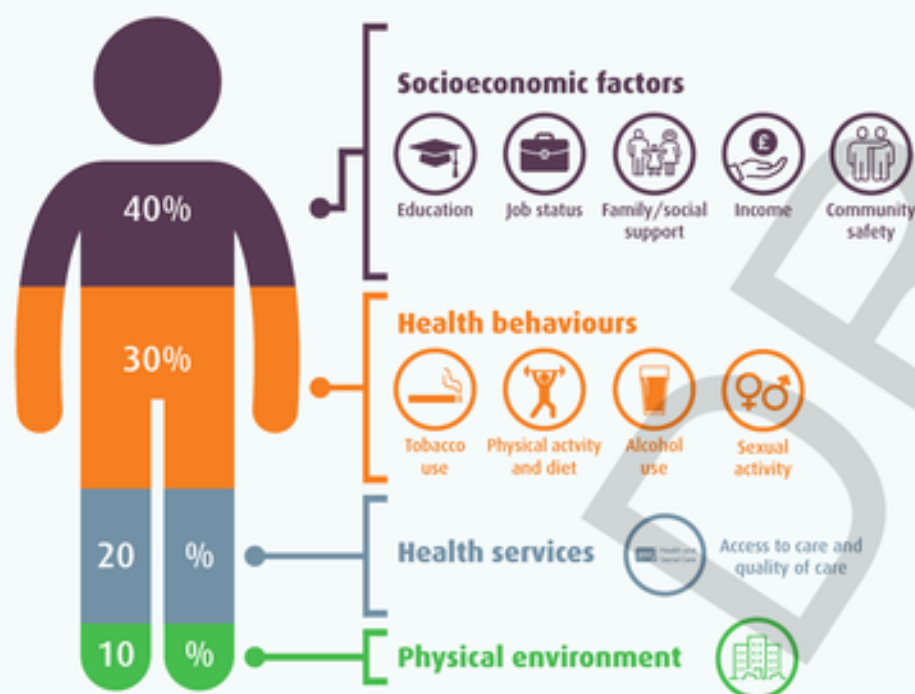
“Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and wellbeing, through the organised efforts of society.”²³

What factors impact on our health and wellbeing?

Many factors, known as the 'wider determinants of health' affect our health and wellbeing. These include social, economic and environmental conditions such as income, education, access to green space, healthy food, work and living conditions.^{2, 24} It is widely recognised that, taken together, these factors are the principal drivers of how healthy people are.^{2, 25}

The PHA works with various sectors to influence these wider determinants of health, aiming to make it easier for our population to have healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices.

As well as working with partners to address the wider determinants of health, the PHA has a key role in encouraging healthy behaviours and ensuring equitable access to high quality, safe and effective preventative and treatment services.



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement. Going beyond clinical walls: solving complex problems (October 2014)

What are health inequalities?

Health inequalities are "avoidable differences in health status between different population groups" and are influenced by variation in the determinants of health referred to above.⁵⁻⁸ Health inequalities are evident in terms of differences in the prevalence of certain health conditions among certain groups in society or differences in outcomes (like life expectancy or cancer survival, for example) for certain population groups.²⁴

Some groups are disproportionately impacted by the determinants of health, which can lead to health inequalities.

Factors impacting on health inequality:

- socioeconomic factors, for example living in socioeconomically deprived areas;
- geography, for example, region or whether urban or rural;
- specific characteristics including those protected in law, such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability;
- socially excluded groups, for example, people experiencing homelessness.

The determinants of health interact with each other and can often have a cumulative effect with people often experiencing challenges across multiple determinants contributing to inequalities in health and health outcomes.²⁴



Our focus

Our focus

These strategic themes encompass core areas of focus for our organisation as we work towards our vision of a healthier Northern Ireland.

Protecting health

Protecting the population from serious health threats, such as infectious disease outbreaks or major incidents

Starting well

Laying the foundations for a healthy life from pre-birth, infancy, early years, childhood to adolescent years

Living well

Ensuring that people have the opportunity to live and work in a healthy way

Ageing well

Supporting people to age healthily throughout their lives

The first is focused on protecting health and the others adopt a life course approach. Whilst we have taken a life course approach, we recognise there are a number of cross-cutting areas, including for example mental health, learning disability and inclusion health.

Each theme sets out our ambition and a number of priorities for the years ahead. These are aligned with the strategic direction outlined in key departmental strategies. Population level indicators are also provided for each ambition to support regular evaluation.

In working to achieve the priorities set out in this plan, we commit to:

- tackling and reducing health inequalities being at the heart of our work
- championing a 'whole system', cross-government approach to tackle the challenges and barriers to improving health and reducing health inequalities
- providing professional public health advice to the planning and commissioning of safe, effective, equitable, high-quality healthcare

- listening to, involving, and working together with individuals, families, local communities, HSC and other key partners in all our work
- ensuring planning, guidance and decisions are based on best available evidence and driven by data, research and experience
- improving equity of access to prevention and early intervention information and services for those who need them.

Reporting against this corporate plan will take place through our annual business plans and corporate monitoring. In addition, a more detailed delivery and action plan will be developed setting out the actions to be taken forward and appropriate measures within each of the themes.

We commit to reviewing this plan in line with any future programme for government framework and departmental strategies to be developed during the period of this plan.

Protecting health

Protecting the population from serious health threats, such as infectious disease outbreaks or major incidents



Protecting health

Our ambition

That our population is protected from threats to health arising from infectious diseases and environmental hazards and that we reduce death and ill health through effective screening.

Protecting our population's health is one of our core functions. We do this through surveillance, identification and timely response to threats to public health; providing advice and support; monitoring of threats to health; and education, training and research. This includes the prevention of infectious diseases through vaccination and early detection of disease through population screening programmes. Our focus is also on preparing and planning for potential future pandemics and other potential threats to the population's health and wellbeing. We will

work effectively across the organisation to ensure a robust coordination of the overall public health response. We will ensure that we learn from and implement recommendations from inquiries and incidents.

Our people will have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to deliver an effective and efficient service, using evidence-informed approaches to mitigate the impact of inequalities on prevention and control of infectious diseases and other defined hazards.

The PHA has responsibility for commissioning, coordinating and quality assuring a number of population screening programmes: infectious diseases in pregnancy, newborn blood spot and hearing; diabetic retinopathy; bowel, breast and cervical cancer; and abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA).

Priorities 2025-2030

- develop emergency response plans to support readiness to respond to incidents that may have an impact on public health for Northern Ireland;
- work collaboratively to minimise the impact of infectious disease, with a focus on antimicrobial resistance and our elimination targets for blood-borne viruses;
- deliver a high-quality and responsive health protection surveillance and epidemiology programme;
- strengthen the multidisciplinary coordinated approach to infection prevention and control across the wider HSC system through the established infection, prevention and control forums;
- ensure the delivery of high-quality screening programmes;
- lead the development and commissioning of vaccine programmes to ensure they are accessible to all, addressing the associated barriers and inequalities and ensure there is a key focus on seldom heard groups;
- scope existing evidence for public health approaches to protect people and communities from the public health impacts of the environment, including climate change, and develop a PHA climate action plan;
- build public confidence and trust in public health advice, information and messaging through improving health literacy via education and engagement with the public.

Indicators

We will measure success through the following:

- surveillance data
- notifications of infectious disease
- screening uptake
- vaccine uptake.

Starting well

Laying the foundations for a healthy life from pre-birth, infancy, early years, childhood to adolescent years



Starting well

Our ambition

That all children and families in Northern Ireland have the healthiest start in life.

What happens during pre-conception, pregnancy, the early years, the school years and adolescence is key to what happens in later life. This includes having an adequate standard of living, a secure family environment, good physical and mental health and wellbeing and being protected from harm.

We will support and empower families to create and provide a safe and nurturing home environment and to make good decisions about their physical and mental health and wellbeing. We recognise that adolescence is a unique stage of development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health.

Health inequalities can have a profound impact on a child's start in life. All children and young people, including those who have additional needs, should have the opportunity for better health and wellbeing.

Adverse childhood experiences can have long-term impacts on health and wellbeing. We will embed a trauma-informed approach and work with partners to prevent these from happening.

The challenges faced by families are complex and multifaceted and we cannot improve their health in isolation. We must work together in strong partnerships with families and across society in a whole system, holistic approach to make a meaningful difference.

Priorities 2025-2030

- support families to take care of their physical and mental health, with a particular focus on the first 1,000 days;
- reduce the impact of social complexity in pregnancy;
- promote the health benefits of breastfeeding and encourage support for breastfeeding mothers;
- protect the health of children and young people through antenatal and newborn screening programmes and childhood vaccination programmes;
- deliver universal and targeted support programmes, including Healthy Child Healthy Future, Family Nurse Partnership, and Northern Ireland New Entrants service (NINES);
- work together to reduce child deaths through improved use and application of data and evidence;
- support children and young people with special education needs, their families and carers in addressing the unique health challenges and disparities they face, by enhancing access to services, resources and support systems that contribute to their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing;
- support adolescents to establish patterns of behaviour that can protect their mental and physical health;
- work with others to promote the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

Indicators

We will measure success through the following:

- screening and vaccination in pregnancy uptake
- percentage of babies born at low birth weight
- avoidable child death rates
- percentage of mothers breastfeeding on discharge
- developmental progress in pre-school
- childhood vaccination uptake
- number of children starting school at a healthy weight
- smoking and alcohol use in children and young people
- incidence of hospital attendance with self-harm/deaths by suicide among children and young people.

Living well

Ensuring that people have the opportunity to live and work in a healthy way



Living well

Our ambition

That all people in Northern Ireland can live longer, healthier and independent lives.

Adults now generally enjoy better health and wellbeing and can expect to live longer than previous generations. However, in recent years life expectancy rates have been stalling and there are still many challenges and significant health needs within our population that impact the ability of people to experience good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

There are many factors that impact our health and wellbeing during our adult lives. These include where we live, our environment, access to education and employment, health services and the effects of poor diet, smoking, drug and alcohol misuse, low levels of physical activity, homelessness and food, fuel and financial poverty.

Many of the challenges that impact our physical health, also impact our mental health and emotional wellbeing. Too many people in our communities are struggling with ill mental health, which is impacting their ability to make healthy choices. It is important that we support and promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing across society.

Health inequalities continue to compound challenges to health and prevent many from experiencing good health and wellbeing. We must ensure that we provide targeted approaches where needed for those more vulnerable in our society.

As well as equipping people to live longer, healthier lives, we must also help protect them from becoming ill or needing health interventions. This includes access to adult immunisation programmes, screening and detection programmes and tackling issues that lead to poor health. Promoting healthy choices and healthier environments and communities, including within workplaces, will also be a key focus.

Supporting everyone to adopt healthier behaviours, avail of preventative services and access high-quality care throughout our lives can make a significant contribution to improving the health of the population. This is not about placing the responsibility on the individual but working together to support people and create supportive environments and opportunities for good health for all.



Alcohol

Adults drinking over recommended guidelines

 **9 in 10 men**
 **2.5 in 10 women**

Priorities 2025-2030

- create the conditions for people to adopt healthier behaviours and reduce the risks to health caused by low physical activity, smoking and vaping, poor diet and sexual behaviours;
- support those living with long-term conditions to live well with disease;
- deliver high-quality programmes and initiatives, including prevention and early intervention approaches, to protect and improve mental health and emotional and social wellbeing;
- continue to work in partnership across government and with communities, services, and families across society to reduce suicides and the incidence of self-harm;
- reduce harm caused by substance use by improving access to high-quality prevention and early intervention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services to ensure people can access the right service at the right time delivered in the right place to best meet their needs;
- support prevention and early detection of illness through vaccination and screening programmes;
- provide targeted information and support to help everyone, including those who experience multiple barriers to health, to adopt healthy behaviours, avail of preventative services and access high-quality care.

Indicators

We will measure success through the following:

- percentage of people with a high GHQ-12 score, indicating a mental health problem
- tobacco use, including smoking and vaping prevalence
- suicide rates
- obesity and physical activity measures
- alcohol and substance use
- screening and vaccination uptake rates
- percentage self-reporting a physical or mental health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more
- percentage of those living with long-term conditions reporting a reduced ability to carry out daily activities.



Ageing well

Supporting people to age healthily throughout their lives



Ageing well

147

Our ambition

That older people live healthier, independent lives.

As a population, we are living longer and many older adults enjoy good health and make significant contributions to their communities.

For others, however, older age brings a risk of poor physical and mental health, social isolation and complex health problems. Poor health and frailty should not be inevitable outcomes as we age. As well as living longer, we also want to live healthier for longer so that we can continue to participate in activities we enjoy and live fulfilled, independent lives.

There are many factors that impact our health and wellbeing throughout our lives and this is no different as we age. These include the environment we live in, access to health services and the impact on our health and wellbeing of poor diet, smoking, drug and alcohol

misuse, low levels of physical activity and food, fuel and financial poverty.

As our older population continues to grow, we want to support and promote healthy, positive ageing both for individuals and as a society. We must enable people to live longer, healthier more fulfilling lives but also create environments and communities that enable healthy behaviours and also support, value, respect and protect our older population.

Working with partners, we will support and advocate for delivery of healthcare that is wrapped around the person, be that in their own home, hospital or care home.

We must take a lifelong approach to positive health and active ageing and work to reduce the impact of health inequalities through education and support for people to improve their health.

Priorities 2025-2030

- implement the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-friendly movement across Northern Ireland;
- reduce and prevent falls and home accidents, including the development and implementation of a regional model for safer mobility;
- reduce the impact of frailty by raising awareness and increase early detection;
- support prevention and early detection of illness through vaccination and screening programmes for older adults;
- increase levels of physical activity and promote opportunities to stay active;
- work with key partners to identify and reduce levels of loneliness and social isolation and to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing;
- champion the voice of older people and the issues that impact on their health and wellbeing;
- lead and implement initiatives to ensure people who live with long-term conditions and those who live in care homes have good health and wellbeing and improved quality of life;
- work with partners to support individuals and families at the end of their life through advance care planning;
- build and develop a strong research and evidence base to support ageing well programmes in Northern Ireland.

Indicators

We will measure success through the following:

- percentage of people aged 65+ with a high GHQ-12 score, indicating a mental health problem
- percentage of people who report feeling lonely 'often/always' or 'some of the time'
- adults aged 65+ stating health is good or very good
- obesity and physical activity measures
- falls and frailty measures
- screening and vaccination uptake.

Our organisation

How we work: our processes, governance, culture, people and resources

Our organisation

The PHA is a multidisciplinary, multi-professional body with a strong regional and local presence and was set up with the explicit agenda to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland.

Since its establishment in 2009, we have worked to improve and protect health and wellbeing, reduce health inequalities, promote healthy behaviours, reduce barriers to good health, improve the quality and safety of health and social care services and support related research and innovation.

As part of the health and social care family, we work closely with the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health (DoH), local Health Trusts (HSC Trusts), the Business Services Organisation (BSO) and the Patient Client Council (PCC).

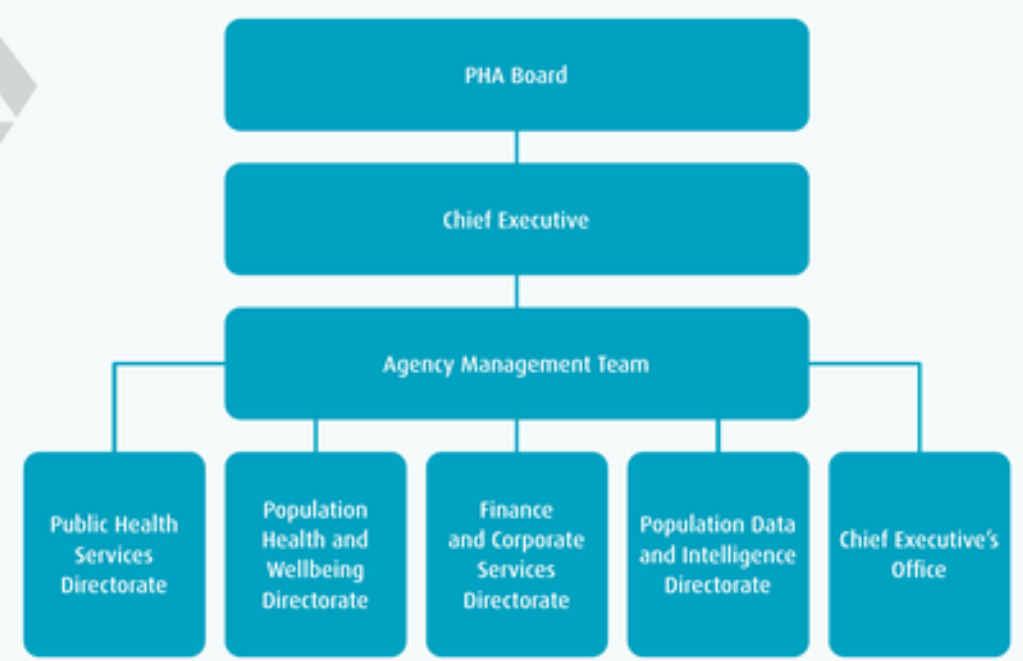
Central to our main responsibilities is working in close partnership with individuals, groups and organisations from all sectors – community, voluntary and statutory.

Through our organisational 'Reshape and Refresh' programme to design and implement a new operating model for the organisation, we continue to evolve as an organisation to ensure we can continue to meet the public health needs of the people of Northern Ireland.

As part of this programme, our organisational structure has changed and is outlined below.

Our legislation determines that we should hold two distinct professional roles: Director of Public Health and Director of Nursing and AHP. These will be encompassed within the Public Health Services and Population Health and Wellbeing directorates.

PHA organisation chart



Staff at 31 March 2024



Budget



Our ambition

That we are an exceptional organisation, working effectively to improve health and wellbeing for everyone.

Our progress towards this ambition over the next five years depends on our people. We must therefore ensure that our staff feel supported, equipped and empowered in their work. We will continue to develop our staff and make use of their expertise, building on their experience, to make sure we achieve the greatest impact and can effectively respond to new challenges.

In fulfilling this ambition, we are committed to:

People



Partnership



Process



Digital



Research and evidence



People



Our people are our greatest asset and we must strive to ensure staff feel valued, are equipped and enabled in the work they do and given opportunities to develop both professionally and personally. We want to be an organisation where people want to work and are proud to be part of. All staff working in PHA should have a common understanding of public health and have a shared sense of purpose, feel valued and supported and have opportunities to upskill, develop and progress in their career.

We must ensure a multidisciplinary workforce which is highly skilled in the area of public health to ensure effective and appropriate preparation for future threats and that we are agile, designed to deliver and able to manage emerging risks to health. The PHA currently is the lead organisation in the delivery of the Public Health Specialty Training Programme for people wishing to become Consultants in Public Health. It is important that the quality and standards of this training programme are maintained in order to safeguard the future workforce.

As we work to implement the 'Reshape and Refresh' programme, we must remain focused on valuing and

supporting our people, recognising that periods of change and uncertainty are difficult for everyone and ensuring that staff are equipped and enabled to adapt to any new structures and to continue to take forward the important work set out in this plan.

Culture is key to the success of any organisation. We must continue to develop into an organisation where:

- our culture and values are clear in everyone's experience of the PHA;
- we are agile and adaptive to changes and challenges;
- we attract and retain high calibre staff;
- we are leaders in our field and strive to learn from research and evidence;
- we embrace collective and compassionate leadership, nurturing collaboration, continuous improvement and empathetic care and support.

Priorities 2025-2030

- implement the Reshape and Refresh recommendations and restructure;
- deliver Our People Plan and develop subsequent plans encompassing culture, staff experience and workforce development. This will include a wide range of targets with the overall aim of supporting the underlying goals that our staff:
 - are inspired with a shared sense of purpose to improve and protect the health of our population
 - feel valued, supported and engaged in all they do
 - are knowledgeable, skilled and competent;
- develop a professional governance framework;
- provide an improved working environment maximising flexible, modern ways of working to enhance staff engagement and wellbeing.

Partnership



Improving the health and wellbeing of the population is the work of not just one single organisation but requires collaborative cross-society efforts. This includes ensuring that our communities, service users and carers are not only the focus of our work but that their voices are heard and listened to.

We are committed to working collaboratively with others, to help ensure the best outcomes for the population of Northern Ireland. This will include working with and across government departments, local government, other statutory bodies (such as housing and education), community and voluntary organisations and commercial and private providers and organisations as we create and distribute knowledge and information, interventions and services to improve health and wellbeing.

We will continue to engage and collaborate with partners with public health expertise locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, to maximise our combined resources to improve health and wellbeing. In line with the PHA's regional leadership role across the HSC in lived experience and involvement and in keeping with statutory and policy responsibilities in this area, we are committed to actively listening to and meaningfully involving service users, carers and the public who we serve.

Priorities 2025-2030

- carry out a comprehensive stakeholder mapping and relationship profiling and collaborate with leaders in key sectors to implement improvements, enhance partnership working and target messaging;
- develop our communications and engagement strategy and resources to support the implementation of the corporate plan priorities;
- engage with key structures and foster partnerships focused on improving health and wellbeing including through SPPG Planning and Performance Teams, ICS Area Integrated Partnership Boards and Local Government Community Planning Partnerships;
- develop a partnership working strategy that embeds lived experience and involvement into the culture and practice of the PHA;
- use expertise and data from other sources to develop a comprehensive joined up approach to planning public health investment and programmes across government.

Process



We know the importance of demonstrating good organisational and professional governance in how we conduct our work, ensure good stewardship of all our resources and accountability for the use of public monies. In the volatile and continuing changing environment in which we are working, with organisational, sectoral and strategic change, increasing demand on health services and ongoing financial and economic constraints, it is essential that we have strong accountability and dynamic processes to enable effective delivery and achieve the greatest impact possible within organisational resources. We must also ensure our processes allow us to be agile, designed and able to manage any emerging risks.

The PHA will continue to look at creative, innovative and collaborative ways of working to make best use of available resources to achieve maximum impact. Strong planning and multidisciplinary ways of working as well as strong governance processes will be crucial to our success as an organisation.

Priorities 2025-2030

- establish and embed robust financial governance in line with new financial management arrangements as part of the ongoing transformative restructure;
- review, refresh and embed key corporate and information governance policies and procedures, ensuring that staff across the PHA understand their responsibilities and implement these ensuring good governance in how we do our business;
- develop the planning and procurement arrangements in the PHA, ensuring the necessary skills, expertise and capacity to work alongside programme leads and together progress these, to meet the health and wellbeing needs of the population ensuring best use of public monies;
- continue to implement the multidisciplinary public health planning structure.

Digital



In recent years, we have made rapid and significant development around digital capacity, embracing innovative ways of working and harnessing the potential of new technology.

Technology is continually changing the way we live, interact, learn play and work, offering new opportunities to connect and engage with people and communities in different ways. Digital tools offer new ways to gather and analyse data, collaborate within the PHA and with external partners to improve public health, support our core functions and build capabilities. Embracing new technology requires new thinking about public health provision models, data, governance, partnership and engagement. The PHA will take a 'digital first' approach to its work and develop an open data approach that supports openness and transparency.

Priorities 2025-2030

- strengthen public health leadership in digital innovation through development and implementation of innovative public health models, positioning PHA as a leader in digital health provision;
- enhance digital awareness and understanding across PHA; building digital literacy and fostering a shared understanding of digital opportunities and challenges;
- embed a digital first approach in planning by integrating digitalisation into the design of external and internal products, services and business processes;
- build and continuously improve the accessibility and functionality of underpinning digital platforms for the PHA;
- increase digital skills across the PHA, embed learning and development for digital ways of working and design new digital roles.

Research and evidence



The availability, analysis and interpretation of good data and evidence is essential for effective planning and delivery of services. As an organisation, we will bring together evidence and learning from both national and international sources and continually seek to develop and improve our data sources and analytic capability. We have a wealth of experience and knowledge in health intelligence, data management and surveillance, and it is essential that we invest in and further develop this over the next five years. This will inform not only PHA policy and actions but crucially also the policy, actions and plans of our partners, to improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

HSC Research and Development (R&D) division works to support research that provides high quality evidence to improve care for patients, clients and the general population, and adds to our understanding of health, disease, treatment and care. A new HSC R&D strategy is in development for launch in 2025, building on the existing strategy with an enhanced focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), sustainability and the safe and appropriate use of data in HSC research.

Developing as an organisation and enabling innovative, data-driven approaches to the planning and delivery of our services will enable the organisation to deliver a public health service that meets the current and future needs of the population and respond to emerging challenges or threats.

We will become a more research active organisation, both in identifying research questions and encouraging staff to engage in active research and collaborate with the Northern Ireland Public Health Research Network.

Priorities 2025-2030

- establish a new directorate focused on health intelligence, research and digital approaches;
- implement the new HSC R&D strategy;
- develop research literacy and capacity in research within the PHA workforce, through training and development opportunities such as critical appraisal and evidence synthesis training and R&D fellowships;
- build strategic partnerships with clear data-sharing agreements to ensure access to a comprehensive range of data sources, enabling robust modelling, planning and public health response capabilities;
- strengthen our reputation as a leader in evidence-based decision-making, using data to drive public health policy, inform practices and guide resource allocation;
- expand analytical capabilities by further developing skills in areas such as behaviour change analysis, data science, health economics and modelling and equipping the organisation for in-depth programme evaluation;
- use high-calibre modelling and evaluation techniques to assess equality impacts and effectiveness of interventions and programmes;
- be recognised as a leader in health intelligence, predictive modelling and scenario planning, driving insights for proactive public health strategy.

Summary table

Summary table

152

Summary of PHA priorities for 2025-2030 and indicators for each strategic theme

Protecting health	
Priorities	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop emergency response plans to support readiness to respond to incidents that may have an impact on public health for Northern Ireland; work collaboratively to minimise the impact of infectious disease, with a focus on antimicrobial resistance and our elimination targets for blood-borne viruses; deliver a high-quality and responsive health protection surveillance and epidemiology programme; strengthen the multidisciplinary coordinated approach to infection prevention and control across the wider HSC system through the established infection, prevention and control forums; ensure the delivery of high-quality screening programmes; lead the development and commissioning of vaccine programmes to ensure they are accessible to all, addressing the associated barriers and inequalities and ensure there is a key focus on seldom heard groups; scope existing evidence for public health approaches to protect people and communities from the public health impacts of the environment, including climate change, and develop a PHA climate action plan; build public confidence and trust in public health advice, information and messaging through improving health literacy via education and engagement with the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> surveillance data notifications of disease screening uptake vaccine uptake
Starting well	
Priorities	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support families to take care of their physical and mental health, with a particular focus on the first 1,000 days; reduce the impact of social complexity in pregnancy; promote the health benefits of breastfeeding and encourage support for breastfeeding mothers; protect the health of children and young people through antenatal and newborn screening programmes and childhood vaccination programmes; deliver universal and targeted support programmes, including Healthy Child Healthy Family, Family Nurse Partnership, and Northern Ireland New Entrants service (NINES); work together to reduce child deaths through improved use and application of data and evidence; support children and young people with special education needs, their families and carers in addressing the unique health challenges and disparities they face, by enhancing access to services, resources and support systems that contribute to their physical, mental, and social wellbeing; support adolescents to establish patterns of behaviour that can protect their mental and physical health; work with others to promote the safeguarding and protection of children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> screening and vaccination in pregnancy uptake percentage of babies born at low birth weight avoidable child death rates percentage of mothers breastfeeding on discharge developmental progress in preschool childhood vaccination uptake number of children starting school at a healthy weight smoking and alcohol use in children and young people incidence of hospital attendance with self-harm/deaths by suicide among children and young people

Living well	
Priorities	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create the conditions for people to adopt healthier behaviours and reduce the risks to health caused by low physical activity, smoking and vaping, poor diet and sexual behaviours support those living with long-term conditions to live well with disease deliver high-quality programmes and initiatives, including prevention and early intervention approaches, to protect and improve mental health and emotional and social wellbeing continue to work in partnership across government and with communities, services, and families across society to reduce suicides and the incidence of self-harm reduce harm caused by substance use by improving access to high-quality prevention and early intervention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services to ensure people can access the right service at the right time delivered in the right place to best meet their needs support prevention and early detection of illness through vaccination and screening programmes provide targeted information and support to help everyone, including those who experience multiple barriers to health, to adopt healthy behaviours, avail of preventative services and access high-quality care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of people with a high GHQ-12 score, indicating a mental health problem tobacco use, including smoking and vaping prevalence suicide rates obesity and physical activity measures alcohol and substance use screening and vaccination uptake rates percentage of people self-reporting a physical or mental health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more percentage of those living with a long-term condition reporting a reduced ability to carry out daily activities
Ageing well	
Priorities	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-friendly movement across Northern Ireland reduce and prevent falls and home accidents, including the development and implementation of a regional model for safer mobility reduce the impact of frailty by raising awareness and increase early detection support prevention and early detection of illness through vaccination and screening programmes for older adults increase levels of physical activity and promote opportunities to stay active work with key partners to identify and reduce levels of loneliness and social isolation and to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing champion the voice of older people and the issues that impact on their health and wellbeing lead and implement initiatives to ensure people who live with long-term conditions and those who live in care homes have good health and wellbeing and improved quality of life work with partners to support individuals and families at the end of their life through advance care planning build and develop a strong research and evidence base to support ageing well programmes in Northern Ireland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of people aged 65+ with a high GHQ-12 score, indicating a mental health problem percentage of people who report feeling lonely 'often/always' or 'some of the time' adults 65+ yrs stating health is good or very good obesity and physical activity measures falls and frailty measures screening and vaccination uptake

Glossary of useful terms

Glossary of useful terms

153

Term	Definition
AAA	Abdominal aortic aneurysm. A swelling in the abdominal aorta, the main artery that supplies blood to your body, which can be fatal.
Age-friendly	An WHO initiative to create liveable communities that are inviting and accessible for people of all ages – especially older adults.
Area Integrated Partnership Board (AIPB)	A local planning body with the overarching aim of improving health and social care outcomes and reducing health inequalities for its local population.
Collaboration	The action of working with someone to produce something.
Coronavirus disease/ COVID-19	An infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
Delivering Together 2026	Approach launched by the then Minister of Health, Michelle O'Neill, on 25 October 2016 and driven by the Northern Ireland Executive's draft Programme for Government, setting out an ambition to support people to lead long, healthy and active lives.
Department of Health (DoH)	A devolved government department in the Northern Ireland Executive.
Diabetic retinopathy	Diabetic retinopathy occurs when diabetes damages the small blood vessels in the part of the eye called the retina, affecting vision.
EDI	Equality, diversity and inclusion.
GHQ-12	General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) consisting of 12 items, each one assessing the severity of a mental problem.
Health and wellbeing	The combination of factors contributing to a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health.
Health inequalities	Unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population and between different groups within society.
Health intervention	A treatment, procedure or other action taken to prevent or treat disease, or improve health in other ways.
Health literacy	The ability to access, understand, appraise and use information and services in ways that promote and maintain good health and wellbeing.
Healthy life expectancy	The average number of years of full health that a newborn could expect to live.
Health and Social Care (HSC)	Publicly funded healthcare system in Northern Ireland. Although created separately to the National Health Service, it is nonetheless considered a part of the overall national health service in the United Kingdom.

Term	Definition
Integrated Care System Northern Ireland (ICS NI)	The new (2024) commissioning framework for Northern Ireland. It is a single planning system that will help us to improve the health and wellbeing of our population.
Life course approach	An inclusive approach that considers people's health needs and opportunities across all age groups.
Live Better initiative	A series of planned initiatives set out by the Health Minister in October 2024 to help tackle health inequalities in Northern Ireland and bring targeted health support to communities that need it most.
Making Life Better, the NI Public Health Framework	A strategic framework for public health designed to provide direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland and to reduce health inequalities.
MMR Vaccine	Vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella.
Mortality	In medicine, a term also used for death rate, or the number of deaths in a certain group of people in a certain period of time.
Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)	Active and meaningful involvement of service users, carers, their advocates and the public in the planning, commissioning, delivery and evaluation of Health and Social Care (HSC) services, in ways that are relevant to them.
Programme for Government (PFG)	The Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most outlines the Executive's priorities for making a real difference to the lives of people here.
Public Health	The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society.
Public Health Agency (PHA)	Established in April 2009 as part of the reforms to Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland, responsible for providing health protection and health and social wellbeing improvement to every member of every community in Northern Ireland.
Smoking cessation	The process of discontinuing tobacco smoking.
SPPG	Strategic Planning and Performance Group.
Whole system approach	A strategic integrated approach to planning and delivering services.
World Health Organization	(WHO) The World Health Organization sets standards for disease control, healthcare and medicines; conducts education and research programs; and publishes scientific papers and reports.

References

References

155

1. Public Health Agency. Corporate plan 2017-2021. Belfast: PHA, 2017. Available at: www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/pha-beyond-2016-%E2%80%93-93-public-health-agency-corporate-plan-2017-2021 Accessed 19 November 2024.
2. Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety. Making life better - A whole system strategic framework for public health 2013-2023. Belfast: DHSSPS, 2014. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/making-life-better-strategic-framework-2013-2023_0.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
3. Department of Health. Health and wellbeing 2026: delivering together. Belfast: DoH, 2016. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/health-and-wellbeing-2026-delivering-together.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
4. Northern Ireland Executive. Our plan: doing what matters most. Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027. Belfast: Northern Ireland Executive, 2024. Available at: www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/newnigov/draft-programme-for-government-our-plan-doing-what-matters-most.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
5. World Health Organization. Closing the gap in a generation. Health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final report of the commission on social determinants of health final. Geneva: WHO, 2008. Available at: www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-IR-CSDH-08.1 Accessed 19 November 2024.
6. Marmot M. Fair society, healthy lives. The Marmot Review: strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010. London, 2010. Available at: www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
7. Marmot M, Allen J, Boyce T, Goldblatt P, Morrison J. Health equity in England: the Marmot Review 10 years on. London: Institute of Health Equity, 2020. Available at: www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on/the-marmot-review-10-years-on-full-report.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
8. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Breastfeeding - A great start: a strategy for Northern Ireland 2013-2023. Belfast: DHSSPS, 2013. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/breastfeeding-strategy-2014.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
9. Department of Health. Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031. Belfast: DoH, 2021. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-mhs-strategy-2021-2031.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
10. Department of Health. Protect Life 2: A strategy for preventing suicide and self harm in Northern Ireland. Belfast: DoH, 2019. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/pli-strategy.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
11. Department of Health. A fitter future for all. Outcome framework revised for 2019-2022. Belfast: DoH, 2019. Available at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/fitter-future-sto.pdf> Accessed 19 November 2024.
12. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Ten-year tobacco control strategy for Northern Ireland. Belfast: DHSSPS, 2012. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/tobacco-control-10-year-strategy.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
13. Department of Health. Preventing harm, empowering recovery: a strategic framework to tackle the harm from substance use (2021-31). Belfast: DoH, 2021. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-substance-use-strategy-2021-31.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
14. Department of Health. A cancer strategy for Northern Ireland (2022-2032). Belfast: DoH, 2022. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-cancer-strategy-march-2022.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
15. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. NISRA Statistical Bulletin 2023 Mid-year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland. Available at: www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/MYE23-bulletin_1.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
16. Department of Health. Health Inequalities - a product of the NI Health and Social Care inequalities monitoring system. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hscims-report-2024.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
17. Department of Health. Health Survey (NI) First Results 2022/23. Available at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hscni-first-results-22-23.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
18. Vaccination coverage statistics for children in Northern Ireland. Available at: www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2024-10/5%20years%20of%20age%20jun%202024.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
19. Department of Health. Health Survey (NI) First Results 2019/20 www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hscni-first-results-19-20.pdf Accessed 22 November 2024.
20. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. NISRA Statistical Bulletin 2024. Alcohol-specific deaths in Northern Ireland, 2012-2022. Available at: www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Alcohol-Specific%20Deaths%20in%20NI%202022_updated.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
21. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Suicide statistics in Northern Ireland, 2002-2022. Belfast: NISRA, 2023. Available at: www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/Suicide%20Statistics%202022%20Report.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
22. Faculty of Public Health. Functions and standards of a public health system. London: Faculty of Public Health, 2020. Available at: www.fph.org.uk/media/3031/fph_systems_and_function-final-v2.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
23. Faculty of Public Health. What is public health? London: Faculty of Public Health, 2024. Available at: www.fph.org.uk/what-is-public-health/ Accessed 19 November 2024.
24. The King's Fund. Creating healthy places: Perspectives from NHS England's Healthy New Towns programme. London: The King's Fund, 2019. Available at: www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/reports/creating-healthy-places Accessed 19 November 2024.
25. Buck D, Baylis A, Dougall D, Robertson R. A vision for population health: Towards a healthier future. London: The King's Fund, 2018. Available at: https://assets.kingsfund.org.uk/1/256914/x/251a862dd5/vision_for_population_health_2018.pdf Accessed 19 November 2024.
26. Williams E, Buck D, Babalola G, Maguire D. What are health inequalities? London: The King's Fund, 2022. Available at: www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/what-are-health-inequalities Accessed 19 November 2024.



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:



Public Health Agency Draft Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Public Consultation Questionnaire

Welcome to the draft Public Health Agency (PHA) Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Preventing, protecting, improving; Better health for **everyone**. Our new draft plan is open for public consultation.

Overview

The Public Health Agency (PHA) has developed a draft Corporate Plan for the period 2025-2030, setting out the strategic direction for the PHA for the next five years. This draft plan takes account of engagement and discussion with a range of stakeholders, the vision set out by the Minister of Health in Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together, Department of Health (DoH) priorities, especially the Making Life Better Public Health Framework and the Draft Programme for Government Framework 2024-2027 within the context of financial constraints and Health and Social Care (HSC) reform and restructuring.

Priorities and Approach

The PHA's objectives apply to everyone in the population, aiming to address health outcomes across all demographics, including diverse backgrounds and needs. Achieving these outcomes will require determination, innovative thinking, and collaborative efforts across HSC, government and the community and voluntary sectors. We must make partnership, involvement and engagement central to our work, explore new and different ways of doing things and make the best use of our combined resources.

We recognise our work cannot be done in isolation and requires a whole system, cross government approach with robust engagement with the public. Cognisant of this, we have now published our draft corporate plan for public consultation from Thursday 28th November 2024 until Friday 28th February 2025.

Respondent Information Form

Please use this questionnaire to share your views on the draft PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030. You can email your response to phacorporateplan@hscni.net or return to us by post to PHA Corporate Plan Consultation, Public Health Agency, 4th Floor South, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS.

Here to Help

Please get in touch via contact details above if you require assistance, an alternative format or have any questions with regards to completing your consultation response. We would be happy to receive any other comments you feel do not fit into the questions set out in this survey.

Details of in-person consultation events taking place in the new year will be announced in due course on the [PHA website](#).

The draft PHA corporate plan 2025-2030 aims to have wide reaching effects. We would welcome views on how delivering this plan may affect any particular groups in society. The draft Corporate Plan 2025-2030, an initial draft equality screening and rural needs impact assessment are available via the [PHA Website - Current Consultations section](#)

Have your say now by completing our consultation survey. Please make sure to share your thoughts before the consultation deadline **4pm, Friday 28 February 2025**.

Thank you for your contribution to this consultation and joining us in building a healthier Northern Ireland for all.

Consultation Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to help you respond to the Draft PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030 'Preventing, protecting, improving: Better health for everyone. Written responses are welcome either using this questionnaire template, via [online survey](#) or in an alternative format which best suits your response.

Please answer the following questions and note your comments and views in the text boxes provided.

About You

(Please tick the relevant box)

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?
(required)

- ☐ Individual – Please complete Section 1, 2 and 4
- ☒ On behalf of an organisation – skip to Section 3
'Responding as an Organisation' – please complete
section 3 and 4

Section 1 - Responding as an individual

1.1 Please provide your contact details below:

Your name and email address are required for validation purposes.

Name: **(required)**

Email address: **(required)**

1.2 Can we contact you to discuss your response to this consultation? This may be to follow up any specific points we need to clarify.

(required)

☐ Yes

☐ No

1.3 Can we contact you in future about the draft PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030? For example, to provide you with a link to the results of this consultation, to inform you of further consultations or provide update information on the plan. **(required)**

☐ Yes

☐ No

1.4 To support transparency in our decision-making process, we will publish a summary of the consultation feedback on the PHA website. This will sometimes include the responses themselves and may mention names of the responding organisation (if applicable). However, names of individuals responding on a personal capacity will only be published where consent has been given. Please note we will not publish contact details.

(required)

☐ **Yes**, I consent to my name being published with my response

☐ **No**, please remove my name before publishing my response

[PHA Privacy Notice](#)

Feedback provided may be subject to publication or disclosure under access to information laws like the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. If you believe your input should be treated as confidential, please contact us by email, so that this may be considered should we receive a disclosure request.

Email: phacorporateplan@hscni.net

Section 2 – (Monitoring Information for individual responses only)

The Public Health Agency (PHA) is committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone. This makes sure everyone has the chance to participate in our survey groups regardless of gender, marital status, disability, age, religion, political views, ethnic origin, caring responsibilities or sexual orientation.

By answering the following questions, you will help us understand who we are reaching and how we can better serve everyone in our community. Your response to these questions is **optional** and answers will be **anonymised**.

2.1 What is your sex? By sex we are referring to your current sex.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Identify in a different way
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you identify in a different way, please specify below:

2.2 What is your age?

- ☐ Under 16
- ☐ 16 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 to 74
- ☐ 75 to 84
- ☐ 85+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2.3 What is your marital status?

- ☐ Single, that is, never married and never registered in a civil partnership
- ☐ Married
- ☐ In a registered civil partnership
- ☐ Separated but still legally married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Separated but still legally in a civil partnership
- ☐ Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
- ☐ Surviving partner from a civil partnership
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2.4 Which council area do you live in?

- ☐ Antrim and Newtownabbey
- ☐ Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
- ☐ Belfast
- ☐ Causeway Coast and Glens
- ☐ Derry City and Strabane
- ☐ Fermanagh and Omagh
- ☐ Lisburn and Castlereagh
- ☐ Mid and East Antrim
- ☐ Mid Ulster
- ☐ Newry, Mourne and Down
- ☐ Ards and North Down
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2.5 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expecting to last for 12 months or more?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you answered 'Yes', does your condition(s) or illness(es) reduce your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

- ☐ Yes, a lot
- ☐ Yes, a little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2.6 What is your religion?

- ☐ No Religion
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Presbyterian
- ☐ Church of Ireland
- ☐ Methodist
- ☐ Baptist
- ☐ Free Presbyterian
- ☐ Brethren
- ☐ Protestant - not specified
- ☐ Christian - not specified
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you have selected Other, please specify below:

2.7 Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- ☐ Heterosexual or Straight
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you have selected Other, please specify below:

2.8 Do you have responsibility for caring of any of the following groups?

- Care of a child
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
- Care of a person with a disability
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
- Care of a dependant elderly person
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Prefer not to say

2.9 What is your ethnic group?

- ☐ White
- ☐ Irish Traveller
- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other Asian background
- ☐ African
- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ Other Black/African/Caribbean background
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you have selected Other, please specify below:

2.10 Do you think of yourself as a unionist, a nationalist or neither?

- ☐ Unionist
- ☐ Nationalist
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you have selected Other, please specify

Section 3 – Responding as an organisation

3.1 Please provide your organisation contact details below

Organisation name and email address are required for validation purposes. **(required)**

Organisation name: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Organisation email address:

sally.courtney@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

3.2 Which of the following best describes the sector you work in?

(Please tick the relevant box)

This will assist us in monitoring the range of respondents the consultation has reached.

- ☐ Statutory or Regulatory Body
- ☐ Arm's Length Body (ALB)
- ☐ Organised interest Group: e.g. Education, Health, Business, Creative Industries, Environment, Community, Voluntary & Third sectors
- ☐ Business operator
- ☒ Local Government
- ☐ Government Department
- ☐ Trade Union
- ☐ Church or faith group
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Academia
- ☐ Charity
- ☐ Political Party
- ☐ Other (please specify):

3.3 Can we contact you to discuss your response to this consultation? This may be to follow up any specific points we need to clarify. **(required)**

☒ Yes

☐ No

3.4 Can we contact you in future about the draft PHA Corporate Plan 2025-2030? For example, to provide you with a link to the results of this consultation, to inform you of further consultations or provide updated information on the plan. **(required)**

☒ Yes

☐ No

3.5 To support transparency in our decision-making process, we will publish a summary of the consultation feedback on the [PHA website](#). This will sometimes include the responses themselves and may mention names of the responding organisation (if applicable). However, names of individuals responding on a personal capacity will only be published where consent has been given. Please note we will not publish contact details. **(required)**

☒ **Yes**, I consent to my organisation name being published with my response

☐ **No**, please remove my organisation name before publishing my response

Section 4 - Have your say

The following questions focus on the core elements of the draft PHA corporate plan 2025-2030.

Our purpose, vision, values and strategic outcomes are set out below and in the document.

Purpose: Protect and improve the health and social wellbeing of our population and reduce health inequalities through leadership, partnership and evidence-based practice.

Vision: A healthier Northern Ireland.

Values: The PHA endeavours to translate the Health and Social Care values into its culture by putting individuals and communities at the heart of everything we do, acting with **openness and honesty** and treating people with dignity, respect and **compassion; working together** in partnership to improve the quality of life of those we serve, listening to and involving individuals and communities; valuing, developing and empowering our staff and striving for **excellence** and innovation; being evidence led and outcomes focused.

Over the next five years, as we work to fulfil our purpose and advance towards our vision of a healthier Northern Ireland, we will focus on delivering a number of key public health priorities under the following strategic outcomes:

- **Protecting Health** - protecting the population from serious health threats, such as infectious disease outbreaks or major incidents
- **Starting Well** - laying the foundations for a healthy life from pre-birth, infancy, early years, childhood to adolescent years
- **Living Well** - ensuring that people have the opportunity to live and work in a healthy way

- **Ageing Well** - supporting people to age healthily throughout their lives

Each outcome sets out our ambition and a number of priorities for the years ahead. These are aligned with the draft Programme for Government Framework 2024-2027 and the strategic direction outlined in key departmental strategies.

Using the scale, please indicate using a cross (x) or a tick (√) to what extent you agree or disagree with the content in each of the sections

4.1 Do you agree with our purpose? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below:

The defined purpose of the organisation includes the key elements of protecting and improving public health alongside reducing health inequalities. Recognition that this will be achieved through strong leadership, meaningful partnerships and evidence-based practice is critical to success.

When considering partnership working, recognition should be given to existing partnerships such as Community Planning, Children Services Plan, Civil Contingencies, Regional Age Friendly, HAPSIG etc and how these can be utilised with PHA support and where appropriate, leadership to achieve the aims and objectives of a healthier Northern Ireland.

Greater emphasis needs to be placed on collaborative working to make partnerships meaningful and successful in delivering outcomes.

The emphasis on protecting and improving health and social wellbeing and reducing health inequalities through leadership, partnership, and evidence-based practice aligns well with our strategic objectives within the LCCC Community Action Plan and the LCCC Local Development Plan 2032.

Key Areas of Alignment:

- The LCCC Community Action Plan places a strong focus on health and wellbeing, community resilience, and reducing inequalities, particularly in relation to access to health services, social determinants of health, and community-led interventions.
- The LCCC Local Development Plan 2032 also highlights the importance of sustainable communities, healthy living environments, and infrastructure that enables active lifestyles, mental wellbeing, and social inclusion.

Suggested Enhancements to the Purpose Statement:

While the purpose as written is strong, we suggest further explicit recognition of:

1. Community Empowerment – Ensuring that local communities are actively involved in shaping their own health and wellbeing outcomes.
2. The Wider Determinants of Health – Acknowledging the critical role that housing, transport, economic development, and green space play in shaping long-term health outcomes.
3. Place-Based and Localised Approaches – Recognising the importance of tailoring public health interventions to specific regional and local needs, in line with the community planning process.

4.2 Do you agree with our vision and values? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below.

The vision is clear, concise and easy to understand.

The values are as would be expected of an organisation.

The commitment to placing individuals and communities at the heart of public health, acting with transparency, working in partnership, and striving for excellence aligns with our own strategic priorities within the LCCC Community Action Plan and Local Development Plan 2032.

Key Areas of Alignment with LCCC Priorities:

1. Community-Centred Approach – The LCCC Community Action Plan prioritises empowering local people to influence health and well-being initiatives through co-production and co-design.
2. Health and Well-being as a Core Priority – Our Local Development Plan (LDP 2032) commits to sustainable place-making, active travel, and enhancing green spaces, all of which contribute to long-term public health.
3. Partnership Working – The LCCC Strategic Community Planning Partnership brings together statutory, community, and voluntary organisations to improve outcomes for local people, mirroring the PHA's focus on collaboration.



Suggested Enhancements to the Vision & Values:

While we support the vision and values, we believe the following enhancements would strengthen their impact:

1. Vision Statement

- The current vision ("A healthier Northern Ireland") is broad but could be more action-oriented.
- We propose a small refinement to emphasise equity, prevention, and empowerment:

Suggested Alternative Vision:

"A healthier, more equitable Northern Ireland where every individual and community has the opportunity to thrive through prevention, empowerment, and partnership."

2. Values – Additional Emphasis

- Explicit focus on tackling health inequalities – Addressing geographical, economic, and social disparities in health outcomes should be more explicitly stated.
- Commitment to innovation in prevention – While "striving for excellence and innovation" is mentioned, there should be greater emphasis on proactive, preventive measures, not just reactive health interventions.

Suggested Additional Value:

"We are committed to reducing health inequalities by addressing the wider determinants of health and ensuring that those in greatest need are prioritised in our approach."

4.3 Referring to the draft plan, do you agree with Outcome 1: Protecting Health and the priorities listed? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below.

The importance of a collaborate approach to infection control cannot be underestimated. Clear roles and responsibilities are necessary for all delivery partners in this area. The recent Department of Health consultation on an updated Public Health Act was lacking in this area. It should be considered that should roles of individual partners change further specific consultation is necessary.

Consideration could be given in this area to link into existing structures such as Climate change and Emergency Planning forums.

LCCC fully recognises the critical importance of a collaborative approach to infection control and public health protection. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with ongoing threats from emerging infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and environmental health risks, has demonstrated the necessity for clear roles and responsibilities across all partners.

Key Considerations:

1. Defined Roles & Responsibilities Across Delivery Partners

- The recent Department of Health consultation on an updated Public Health Act did not provide sufficient clarity on the specific roles of local government and other key partners in infection control.
- As the landscape of public health governance evolves, it is essential that any proposed changes to partner roles undergo additional consultation to ensure alignment with local government responsibilities and community planning objectives.

2. Integration with Existing Multi-Agency Structures

- The PHA should explore synergies with established structures, including:
 - Climate Change Forums – Addressing the intersection between environmental change and infectious disease risks (e.g., air quality, vector-borne diseases, and extreme weather-related health risks).
 - Emergency Planning & Civil Contingencies Forums – Ensuring infection control measures are embedded into crisis response planning, strengthening preparedness at a local level.

By linking with these structures, infection prevention and control could be more effectively mainstreamed across public health, environmental health, and resilience planning frameworks.

Protecting health should also consider scanning for potential harmful environmental hazards through monitoring of data and local/regional intelligence whilst linking with international organisations. Public health practice and implementation aims to improve through research, advice and the relevant guidance. Again, this approach will require input from a number of key partners. The data and evidence produced should be trusted and shared with the

3. A Place-Based, Community-Led Approach

- Infection control is not just a health service issue—it requires local, place-based solutions that integrate housing, transport, environmental health, and social care considerations.
- Community resilience strategies—such as those outlined in the LCCC Community Action Plan—should be leveraged to strengthen infection control efforts, particularly for vulnerable populations (for example, linked to our Age Friendly Plan).

Recommendations for Strengthening This Area:

- Enhanced statutory clarity on infection control responsibilities at local government level.
- Greater alignment between infection control strategies and existing emergency planning frameworks.
- Formal engagement between the PHA and local Climate Change & Emergency Planning forums to ensure a joined-up approach to future health threats.
- Consideration is also required for the 9 protected groups in S75 NI Act 1998, along with financial impacts.
- Multi agency approaches to develop trusted research and data both at an environmental level and blood/airborne. Collaboration at a local, regional and international level is key to preparedness. Resources need considered for this approach.

4.4 Referring to the draft plan, do you agree with Outcome 2: Starting Well and the priorities listed? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below.

In addition to the priorities listed, specific mention of families where English is not a first language should be included along with a recognition of the impact of poverty on early years.

As well as stating preventing deaths, mention should be made of injuries. It should also note home accidents in particular due to the high impact this has on the under 5 age group.

Consideration should be given to the impact of violence (particularly against Women and Girls) and perhaps the priority should be updated to state: support families to take care of their physical and mental health, *including protection from domestic violence*, with a particular focus on the first 1,000 days.

Public health will mean something different to each person/family, linking with local people is vital. Clear evidence is needed to promote public health. Quality and equity should be a central theme when designing programmes/interventions.

S75 groups need careful consideration amongst all themes. Objectives and outcomes need communicated in a manner that engages local people. Evidential data needs to be transparent and accessible.

LCCC supports the PHA's commitment to prioritising early years health and well-being. However, we believe that additional considerations should be explicitly included to strengthen the impact of this priority area.

Key Areas for Enhancement:

1. Recognition of Families Where English Is Not a First Language

- Language barriers can significantly limit access to healthcare, early years services, and support networks.
- The PHA should explicitly acknowledge the needs of multilingual families and ensure that early years support is accessible, culturally sensitive, and effectively communicated.
- This aligns with LCCC's Community Action Plan objective of creating inclusive and empowered communities.

2. Explicit Recognition of the Impact of Poverty on Early Years Development

- Socio-economic deprivation is a key determinant of early childhood health outcomes, educational attainment, and long-term well-being.
- Food insecurity, housing instability, and financial stress directly affect parental mental health and child development.
- Strengthening partnership working between PHA, local government, and community organisations can help mitigate the negative impacts of poverty in early years.

3. Inclusion of Injury Prevention, Specifically Home Accidents

- The prevention of injuries, not just deaths, should be explicitly mentioned, as non-fatal injuries can have long-term physical, cognitive, and social consequences for children.
- Home accidents are a leading cause of hospital admissions for under-5s, and enhanced public health messaging around household safety measures is needed.
- This is particularly relevant in social housing and low-income households, where overcrowding and unsafe environments increase risk.

Addressing the Impact of Violence, Especially Against Women and Girls

- Domestic violence has a profound impact on maternal mental health, infant development, and child safety.
- Early years health priorities should explicitly include supporting families in safeguarding their physical and mental health, including protection from domestic violence.
- Given the wider recognition of gender-based violence as a public health crisis (and the centrality of the EVAWG Strategy to the new PfG, this should be reflected in the PHA's strategic priorities.

4.5 Referring to the plan, do you agree with Outcome 3: Living Well and the priorities listed? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below.

There is no mention of workplace health, working with businesses and the value of places of employment as "settings" to improve public health.

Previous work done on a "healthy settings" base e.g. hospitals, prisons, universities, schools and workplaces may be lost in this change of approach rather than built on if not included.

Again, the impact of violence (particularly against Women and Girls) is relevant to this section.

Where there are dual or multiple work areas involved e.g. a dual diagnosis of mental health & addiction problems, there is often little coordination and engagement between teams. A priority to engage collectively with other workstreams to tackle issues would be beneficial.

There is no mention of the particular concerns around health and homelessness which is an ever-growing problem in today's society. A priority should be to work with homeless agencies and support services to address the health implications as part of the overall care.



LCCC supports the intent behind Outcome 3: Living Well, as ensuring that people can live and work in a healthy way is central to improving long-term public health outcomes. However, we believe that the priorities could be expanded and refined to fully address key public health concerns that impact local communities.

Key Areas for Enhancement:

1. Recognition of Workplace Health as a Public Health Priority

- The absence of workplace health and well-being in this outcome is a significant omission.
- Places of employment should be recognised as key settings for improving public health, given that most adults spend a significant portion of their lives in the workplace.
- There is an existing body of evidence on workplace-based interventions (e.g., mental health support, physical activity, smoking cessation, and healthy eating programmes) that should be leveraged.
- Previous "Healthy Settings" initiatives (hospitals, prisons, universities, schools, and workplaces) provided proven frameworks that should be built upon rather than replaced.

Suggested Addition to Priorities:

"Strengthen workplace health initiatives by working with businesses and employers to create supportive, health-promoting environments."

2. Impact of Violence, Especially Against Women and Girls

- Violence, particularly gender-based violence, has long-term public health consequences, affecting mental health, physical well-being, and economic participation.
- Domestic violence and coercive control can create chronic stress and trauma, with significant links to substance misuse, homelessness, and poor mental health.
- This priority should explicitly recognise the importance of addressing violence as a barrier to "Living Well."

Suggested Addition to Priorities:

"Embed prevention and support strategies for those affected by violence, particularly domestic abuse and gender-based violence, into public health initiatives."

3. Coordinated Support for Individuals with Complex Needs (Dual Diagnosis & Multi-Service Users)

- There is often poor coordination between services when individuals experience overlapping challenges (e.g., mental health conditions and addiction issues).
- Cross-sector collaboration is essential to ensure more integrated support pathways, particularly where Health, Social Care, and Community Services must work together.
- The PHA should prioritise collective engagement with dual diagnosis teams, addiction services, and mental health professionals.

Suggested Addition to Priorities:

"Improve coordination between public health, mental health, and addiction services to better support individuals with complex needs, including dual diagnosis cases."

4. Addressing the Growing Public Health Concerns Around Homelessness

- Homelessness is an escalating issue across Northern Ireland, and it has severe health implications, including chronic illness, addiction, mental health disorders, and exposure-related conditions.
- Homeless individuals face barriers to accessing healthcare, including difficulty in maintaining GP registration, lack of preventative care, and increased emergency admissions.
- The PHA must actively engage with homeless charities, housing agencies, and health services to develop a targeted public health response.

Suggested Addition to Priorities:

"Work in partnership with homelessness agencies and support services to ensure access to essential healthcare for homeless individuals and those in precarious housing situations."

4.6 Referring to the plan, do you agree with Outcome 4: Ageing Well and the priorities listed? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below.

The inclusion of Home Accident Prevention, Active Ageing and Age Friendly is welcomed however the omission of a priority specifically related to dementia in ageing is disappointing. The inclusion of a priority to support those living with dementia to age well would be of benefit to the strategy.

Indicators – falls and frailty measures:

Data collected by Councils during home safety checks to households with people over 65 and or vulnerable adults (18-64) could be used as an indicator. For example, Percentage of households that had a home accident in the 12 months before their home safety check. Percentage of accidents that were falls etc.

LCCC welcomes the inclusion of Home Accident Prevention, Active Ageing, and Age-Friendly approaches within Outcome 4: Ageing Well. These priorities align with our commitment to supporting older residents in leading active and engaged lives, as outlined in our [Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2026](#).

Key Areas for Enhancement:

1. Dementia Care as a Core Priority in Ageing Well

- The absence of a specific priority related to dementia is a significant gap in the strategy.
- Dementia prevalence is increasing, and it is essential that people living with dementia and their carers receive targeted support to age well in their communities.
- The PHA should explicitly commit to improving dementia care, early diagnosis, and post-diagnostic support.
- This aligns with Lisburn & Castlereagh's Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2026, which prioritises dementia-inclusive communities and services.

Suggested Addition to Priorities: "Support individuals living with dementia and their carers to age well, focusing on early diagnosis, dementia-friendly communities, and access to appropriate care and support."

2. Strengthening Indicators on Falls, Frailty, and Home Accidents

- Falls are a major cause of hospitalisation and loss of independence among older people, making falls prevention a critical public health concern.
- Councils already collect valuable data through home safety checks for older people and vulnerable adults.
- This data could enhance monitoring efforts and provide a more localised understanding of falls and frailty risk factors.

Suggested Indicators:

- Percentage of households (aged 65+) that experienced a home accident in the 12 months before a home safety check.
- Percentage of accidents that were falls-related.
- Proportion of older people reporting access to falls prevention interventions (e.g., strength and balance classes, occupational therapy, home adaptations).

4.7 Referring to the plan, do you agree with our organisation ambition and priorities listed? If not, what alternative do you suggest?

1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree;
4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5
			x	

Please include any comments in the box below.

In considering the value of staff, this must not be a lip service approach, there is an expectation that this will be delivered with clear targets, measurables and continuous improvements. Employee health and wellbeing should be one of the highest priorities for PHA and they should be an exemplar organisation in this regard. If "health is your wealth" then PHA should be setting this example from within.

LCCC would welcome clear roles and responsibilities' outlined, so access to services is made easier. The approach to public health requires a systemic approach, with key partners round the table to agree to targets and helping achieve them.

Areas of work should not be duplicated such as Community Planning, but rather used as a problem solving and collaborative platform to promote public health.

Funding remains a priority to achieve the values and themes laid out in the Corporate plan. Linkages need to be made with individuals who remain isolated and this is best done at a community setting.

With pressures on public services, collaboration is key and distribution of funds from source needs careful planning to create systemic delivery of evidence based programmes which are inclusive.



LCCC acknowledges the importance of organisational ambition and strategic priorities in delivering high-quality public health outcomes. However, we emphasise that valuing staff should not be a tokenistic commitment, but rather a genuine organisational priority with clear targets, measurable outcomes, and a culture of continuous improvement.

Key Areas for Enhancement:

1. Employee Health and Wellbeing as a Core Organisational Priority

- The PHA should set the standard as an exemplar organisation in employee health and wellbeing.
- Staff in public health and healthcare-related roles often face high-pressure environments, burnout, and mental health challenges—this must be proactively addressed.
- A clear commitment to continuous improvement in staff health and wellbeing should be reflected through transparent reporting on progress and organisational initiatives.

Suggested Addition to Priorities:

"Ensure PHA is a leader in workplace health and wellbeing by embedding robust staff support mechanisms and fostering a culture of care and continuous improvement."

2. The Need for Clear Targets and Measurables

- The PHA's commitment to valuing staff should be backed by concrete actions and measurable outcomes.
- Regular staff feedback mechanisms, wellbeing audits, and transparent progress reporting should inform continuous improvements.

Suggested Addition to Priorities:

"Develop and implement clear performance measures for staff wellbeing and organisational culture, with transparent reporting on progress."

4.8 Is there an outcome you feel is missing or is not sufficiently reflected?

Yes [☒]

No [☐]

Please include any comments in the box below:

Reduction in inequalities needs to be more prominent in stipulated priorities.

The statistical evidence illustrated should be more closely to priorities to show the evidence base from where these priorities have arisen.

4.9 Have you any other comments or suggestions to improve the document as a whole? If so, please outline these in the box below.

Whilst the statistics are well presented, they should be more clearly linked to the priorities.

Consultation process and [PHA privacy notice](#)

The PHA will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process on the PHA corporate website. The responses will be used to amend and further develop the draft Corporate Plan 2025-2030. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request, in line with Freedom of Information legislation.

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire. We very much value your input.

Committee:	Communities & Wellbeing
Date:	4 March 2025
Report from:	Head of Parks & Amenities

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Request to use Councils Parks and Open Spaces

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	Six requests have been received, from organisations to use Councils parks and open spaces in 2025.
1.2	Three of the events request to hold a dawn service on Easter Sunday 20 th April 2025 within Wallace Park & Moira Demesne, all of which are noted below; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lisburn Baptist Church to hold a service in Wallace Park from 08:30 – 09:30 hrs Appendix 1 2. Railway Street and Sloan Street Presbyterian Churches to hold a joint service in Wallace Park at the band stand from 06:30am – 07:30am. Appendix 2 3. Moira Community Multi Denominational Church request to hold a service in Moira Demesne at the wild-life garden between 07:00 – 07:30am. Appendix 3
1.3	A fourth request has been received from Moira Presbyterian Church Appendix 4 to host an interactive Easter story from 18 th April – 20 April 2025 in Moira Demesne. The story trail will consist of boards with images describing the Easter story. The boards will line the path around the Demesne, allowing families and groups to engage with the Easter story in an active way.
1.4	A fifth request from Lisburn District Scouts Appendix 5 to host their scouts funday in Wallace Park on Sunday 27 th April 2025 from 2pm – 5pm. The scouts will require 1 pitch for their funday with approximately 300 scouts predicted to attend.
1.5	The sixth request comes from Lisburn Feile to hold an event on Friday 25 th July 12-5pm. Appendix 6 For the last two years Lisburn Feile has utilised Wallace Park to host their annual family fun day event, attracting approximately 1000 visitors. There will be a requirement for the organisers to have some set up and take down time.
1.6	The above events if approved will require Council temporarily setting aside the relevant Byelaws which prohibit activities such as preaching, erection of a tent/stall and driving a vehicle onsite. The bye-laws state that the prior consent of the Council must be sought for such events so that the bye-law be set aside for the requested purpose.
1.7	If Members are minded to support these requests, then the bye-laws can be set aside for the duration of each event. The organisers will be required to engage with the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and comply with all usual booking requirements such as providing adequate insurance and necessary risk assessments.
1.8	In line with the infrastructure policy, some infrastructure and staff support may be required for the above events.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that Members agree to

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of Wallace Park and Moira Demesne for the six events noted above; 2. approve the setting aside of the Byelaws to enable these requests to progress and to 3. provide infrastructure support if required. 	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> To be managed within existing workstreams and infrastructure policy	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
	Summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. No impact and support community celebrations with appropriate mitigations in place.	
	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
	Summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

Appendix	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application request – Lisburn Baptist Church 2. Application request - Railway Street and Sloan Street Presbyterian Churches 3. Application request - Moira Community Multi Denominational Church 4. Application request – Moira Presbyterian Church 5. Application request – Lisburn District Scouts 6. Application request – Lisburn Feile 7. Screening document
-----------------	--



LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

Wallace Park (Band Stand)

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event)

Sunday 20th April (Easter Sunday) from 8:30-9:00AM

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; anticipated numbers attending etc)

We are looking to have our annual Easter Morning Service for our church family and visitors who are interested. The event will be held at the Band Stand at Wallace Park and we will have singing and a short message from the Bible.

4. **Purpose of proposed Event** (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

Church gathering

5. **Facilities Required** (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

We would require use of the Band Stand and area surrounding it for people to gather at. We expect there to be no more than 30-40 people.

6. **Your Details**

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	Lisburn Baptist Church
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	No
Community Group	Church

Applicant's Contact Details

Name	██████████
Address	██████████
Email Address	██████████████████
Mobile Number	██████████

7. **Safety Advisory Group.** If your event booking is approved then it is a requirement of the Council that you notify S.A.G (Safety Advisory Group) of your event.

Please email SafetyAdvisoryGroup@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk for further information.

8. **Insurances and Risk Assessments.** If your event booking is approved then you may be required to provide Public and if relevant Employers Liability insurance to the Council Insurance Officer. You will also be asked to provide a Risk Assessment for the event.

9. **Contact.** Please email this form to event.request@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk once completed. Your request will be considered and you shall be contacted shortly to advise on availability and costs. No booking has been made until such times as this has been clarified and confirmed by the Council in email.

You are advised NOT to make any commitments re your event until such time as your request has been approved and confirmed.

10. **Privacy Notice.**

Your Personal Data:

What we need

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is the 'Controller' of the personal data that you provide to us. We only collect basic personal data, this does not include any special types of information, it does however include name, address, email etc.

Why we need it

We need to know your basic personal data in order to proceed with your event booking. We will not collect any personal data from you we do not need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

What we do with it

All personal data that we process is processed by our staff in the UK however for the purposes of IT hosting and maintenance this information is located on servers within the European Union. No 3rd parties have access to your personal data unless the law allows them to do so. We have a Data Protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

How long we keep it

We are required under UK law to keep your basic personal data (name, address, contact details) in line with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Retention and Disposal Policy after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

If at any point you believe the information we process on you is incorrect you may request to see this information and even have it corrected or deleted. If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data not in accordance with the law you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Council Data Protection Officer can contact at data.protection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Full details of can be found on the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council website:

www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

Band stand, Wallace Park, Lisburn BT27 4AN

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event)

20th April 2024 – 6.30am to 7.30am

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; anticipated numbers attending etc)

We are requesting permission to hold a short service of Christian worship around dawn on Easter Sunday morning. The service is being organised by Railway Street Presbyterian Church and Sloan Street Presbyterian Church and every member of the community is welcome to attend. We anticipate an attendance of between 80 and 100 people of all ages.

The service will comprise prayers, readings from the Bible, a short sermon and several hymns. It is anticipated that the service will last approximately 30 minutes with those attending taking around 15 minutes to gather and then 15 minutes to disperse. We anticipate that those coming by car will park either in the Wallace Park car park or on North Circular Road.

We plan to serve breakfast in the Railway Street Presbyterian Church halls after the service has concluded.

4. **Purpose of proposed Event** (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

Service of Christian worship – all members of our community are welcome to attend.

5. **Facilities Required** (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

We request to use the band stand and immediately surrounding area in Wallace Park, Lisburn.

6. **Your Details**

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	Railway Street Presbyterian Church
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	Yes - NI Charity Commission Registration Number [REDACTED]
Community Group	No

Applicant's Contact Details

Name	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]
Email Address	[REDACTED]
Mobile Number	[REDACTED]

7. **Safety Advisory Group.** If your event booking is approved then it is a requirement of the Council that you notify S.A.G (Safety Advisory Group) of your event.

Please email SafetyAdvisoryGroup@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk for further information.

8. **Insurances and Risk Assessments.** If your event booking is approved then you may be required to provide Public and if relevant Employers Liability insurance to the Council Insurance Officer. You will also be asked to provide a Risk Assessment for the event.

9. **Contact.** Please email this form to event.request@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk once completed. Your request will be considered and you shall be contacted shortly to advise on

availability and costs. No booking has been made until such times as this has been clarified and confirmed by the Council in email.

You are advised NOT to make any commitments re your event until such time as your request has been approved and confirmed.

10. Privacy Notice.

Your Personal Data:

What we need

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is the 'Controller' of the personal data that you provide to us. We only collect basic personal data, this does not include any special types of information, it does however include name, address, email etc.

Why we need it

We need to know your basic personal data in order to proceed with your event booking. We will not collect any personal data from you we do not need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

What we do with it

All personal data that we process is processed by our staff in the UK however for the purposes of IT hosting and maintenance this information is located on servers within the European Union. No 3rd parties have access to your personal data unless the law allows them to do so. We have a Data Protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

How long we keep it

We are required under UK law to keep your basic personal data (name, address, contact details) in line with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Retention and Disposal Policy after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

If at any point you believe the information we process on you is incorrect you may request to see this information and even have it corrected or deleted. If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data not in accordance with the law you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Council Data Protection Officer can contact at data.protection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Full details of can be found on the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council website:

www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

MOIRA DEMENSE

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event)

SUNDAY 20th April 2025 0700-0730

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; anticipated numbers attending etc)

MOIRA COMMUNITY MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL EASTER SUNDAY DAWN SERVICE.

THE SERVICE WILL CONSIST OF SINGING 3 SONGS, A BIBLE READING AND A SHORT REFLECTION FOCUSING ON THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

THERE ARE PLANS TO USE A PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM THIS YEAR BUT TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE PROXIMITY OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY THE NEAREST BEING AT LEAST 300M AWAY.

IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 100 WILL ATTEND BASED ON NUMBERS IN 2024.

4. **Purpose of proposed Event** (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

RELIGIOUS MEETING TO CELEBRATE EASTER.

5. **Facilities Required** (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

THE SERVICE WILL TAKE PLACE IN VICINITY OF THE SENSORY WILDLIFE GARDEN WHICH IS THE FURTHERMOST AREA FROM RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AT LEAST 300M AWAY.

REQUEST MAIN GATES OPEN FROM 0630 TO FACILTATE CAR PARKING AND ACCESS TO TOILET FACILITIES.

6. **Your Details**

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	Yes / No (if Yes please provide NI Charity Commission Registration Number
Community Group	Yes / No

Applicant's Contact Details

Name	
Address	
Email Address	
Mobile Number	

7. **Safety Advisory Group.** If your event booking is approved then it is a requirement of the Council that you notify S.A.G (Safety Advisory Group) of your event. Please email SafetyAdvisoryGroup@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk for further information.

8. **Insurances and Risk Assessments.** If your event booking is approved then you may be required to provide Public and if relevant Employers Liability insurance to the Council Insurance Officer. You will also be asked to provide a Risk Assessment for the event.

9. **Contact.** Please email this form to event.request@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk once completed. Your request will be considered and you shall be contacted shortly to advise on availability and costs. No booking has been made until such times as this has been clarified and confirmed by the Council in email.

You are advised NOT to make any commitments re your event until such time as your request has been approved and confirmed.

10. Privacy Notice.

Your Personal Data:

What we need

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is the 'Controller' of the personal data that you provide to us. We only collect basic personal data, this does not include any special types of information, it does however include name, address, email etc.

Why we need it

We need to know your basic personal data in order to proceed with your event booking. We will not collect any personal data from you we do not need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

What we do with it

All personal data that we process is processed by our staff in the UK however for the purposes of IT hosting and maintenance this information is located on servers within the European Union. No 3rd parties have access to your personal data unless the law allows them to do so. We have a Data Protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

How long we keep it

We are required under UK law to keep your basic personal data (name, address, contact details) in line with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Retention and Disposal Policy after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

If at any point you believe the information we process on you is incorrect you may request to see this information and even have it corrected or deleted. If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data not in accordance with the law you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Council Data Protection Officer can contact at data.protection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Full details of can be found on the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council website:

www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

Moira Demesne – Main Street Moira.

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event to include set/take down time)

18-20th April (or one of these days would be great)

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; space required, content including vendors to be used, anticipated numbers attending etc)

A story trail consisting of boards with images following elements pointing to the Easter story. The boards would line the path on the grass for part of the Demesne. As families/ childrens groups walk along the trail they can engage with the story in an active way.

4. Please tick the appropriate boxes to show the activities and facilities you intend to utilise.

Fireworks/Pyrotechnics	<input type="checkbox"/> Live Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carnival/Procession	<input type="checkbox"/> Live Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairground Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Lost Children Point	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marquees	<input type="checkbox"/> Barrier/Fencing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balloon launch	<input type="checkbox"/> Portable Generator (Diesel Only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Power Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horses/Donkeys/Other Animals	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/> Food/Drink Concessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural Activities (e.g. ploughing)	<input type="checkbox"/> Barbecue	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inflatables (e.g. Bouncy Castle)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bonfire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portable Staging	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>
PA System	<input type="checkbox"/> Market Stalls	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stewarding/Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Re-enactment Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	

5. Purpose of proposed Event (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

Educational and interactive. Attraction for children and families to enjoy as part of Easter celebrations. Encourage outdoor activity for families to enjoy.

6. **Facilities Required** (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

Grass along the path for posts to support story boards.

7. **Your Details**

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	Moira Prebyterian Church
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	Yes / No (if Yes please provide NI Charity Commission Registration Number
Community Group	No

Applicant's Contact Details

Name	
Address	
Email Address	
Mobile Number	

8. **Safety Advisory Group.** If your event booking is approved then it is a requirement of the Council that you notify S.A.G (Safety Advisory Group) of your event. The link below provides you access to the necessary forms:

9. **Insurances and Risk Assessments.** If your event booking is approved then you may be required to provide Public and if relevant Employers Liability insurance to the Council Insurance Officer. You will also be asked to provide a Risk Assessment for the event.

10. **Contact.** Please email this form to event.request@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk once completed. Your request will be considered and you shall be contacted shortly to advise on availability and costs. No booking has been made until such times as this has been clarified and confirmed by the Council in email.

You are advised NOT to make any commitments re your event until such time as your request has been approved and confirmed.

11. **Privacy Notice.**

Your Personal Data:

What we need

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is the 'Controller' of the personal data that you provide to us. We only collect basic personal data, this does not include any special types of information, it does however include name, address, email etc.

Why we need it

We need to know your basic personal data in order to proceed with your event booking. We will not collect any personal data from you we do not need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

What we do with it

All personal data that we process is processed by our staff in the UK however for the purposes of IT hosting and maintenance this information is located on servers within the European Union. No 3rd parties have access to your personal data unless the law allows them to do so. We have a Data Protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

How long we keep it

We are required under UK law to keep your basic personal data (name, address, contact details) in line with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Retention and Disposal Policy after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

If at any point you believe the information we process on you is incorrect you may request to see this information and even have it corrected or deleted. If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data not in accordance with the law you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Council Data Protection Officer can contact at data.protection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Full details of can be found on the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council website:

www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL
LEISURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING DEPARTMENT
CONDITIONS OF HIRE

1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 In the Conditions set out below the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned:

- (a) **"Council"** means Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, of the Island Civic Centre, Lagan Valley Island, The Island, Lisburn and includes any officer or employee of Council or any person with the Council's authority acting on its behalf.
- (b) **"Facility"** shall include all the buildings, grounds, car parks, or other facilities of the Facility at and shall be construed to mean any rooms or individual facilities within or without those buildings (or any part thereof).
- (c) **"User"** means any person using any of the facilities of the Facility, whether as a participant or spectator and whether or not a charge has been paid either for entry to the Facility or for the use of the Facility's facilities.
- (d) **"Hirer"** means the person, club, group or other entity hiring the Facility or its facilities (or any part thereof).
- (e) **"Hiring Period"** means the day(s) and period(s) of time reserved by the Hirer for the hire of the Facilities and includes event site set up/take down.
- (f) **"Club"** includes any group or organisation approved by the Facility's manager for booking Facilities at the Facility.
- (g) **"Facilities"** means the facilities at the Facility hired by the Hirer.
- (h) **"Substantial/Special Events"** Events such as large scale public events.

1.2 Words importing the singular shall be construed as importing the plural and vice versa.

1.3 References to persons include bodies corporate.

1.4 Any undertaking by the Hirer not to do an act or thing shall be deemed to include an obligation not to permit or suffer such an act or thing to be done by another person.

1.5 Headings do not form part of these Conditions and shall not be taken into account in their construction or interpretation.

2. GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

2.1 On making a booking application, the Hirer must agree to abide by these Conditions.

2.2 The Application for Booking must be returned, completed and agreed prior to the commencement of the Hiring period.

2.3 Failure to comply with these Conditions will result in future use of the Facility by the Hirer being withdrawn. In addition, the Hirer will be held responsible for any financial costs incurred as a result of a breach of these Conditions.

2.4 Please note: Officers of the Council have the right to inspect all hiring activities to ensure that they are being organised in accordance with these Conditions and to check that the information on the booking form is correct. In addition, dependant upon the nature and type of function, the PSNI may be notified of the name and address of the Hirer.

2.5 The applicant named on the Application for Booking shall be the Council's sole point of contact with the Hirer and shall be responsible for (and shall have authority to ensure)

compliance on the part of the Hirer with all of the Conditions.

3. APPLICATION FOR HIRE AND CHARGES

3.1 The Facilities cannot be used for a period in excess of the agreed Hiring Period. In the event of this Condition being contravened, then, without prejudice to any rights the Council may have: (a) the Hirer will be charged for the excess period at such rate as the Council considers appropriate (but in any event no less than the normal hiring rate for the Facilities used); and (b) the Council will be entitled to require the Hirer (and any Users) to vacate the Facility and the Facilities hired.

3.2 The Hiring Period will be inclusive of the time required to set up and take down equipment and also any cleaning which might be necessary before there is any further use of the Facilities.

3.3 At the expiration of the Hiring Period the Hirer must leave the Facility in a clean and orderly state free of litter, and the Hirer shall remove all equipment or other belongings previously brought to the Facility by or on behalf of the Hirer.

3.4 There shall be no subletting of the Facilities without the Council's prior permission in writing.

3.5 A club shall not levy any charge on Users in connection with any Hiring Period without obtaining the prior consent of the Council to do so.

3.6 No part of the Facility is to be used for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful way.

3.7 No animal (with the exception of Assistance dogs) is to be brought into the Facility or allowed to enter the Facility without the Council's consent.

4. DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT

4.1 Unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the Council, the Hirer shall pay to the Council the appropriate fee set out in the Council's approved scale of charges for hire of the Facility in force at the date on which the Facilities are used by the Hirer ("**Fee**").

4.2 Payment of the Fee is due in full prior to the Hiring Period commencing, unless invoicing arrangements have been arranged in advance with the Council and subject to the Council's invoicing policy. [Non-payment of the Fee prior to commencement of the Hiring Period shall entitle the Council to cancel the Hirer's booking (in whole or part).

4.3 In the case of substantial/special events being held at the Facility, the Council may require a non-refundable deposit of 25% before the event can be confirmed.

4.4 For Substantial/Special Events, an additional refundable deposit of £500 may be required to be paid in advance and no later than two (2) weeks before the date of the event and will be returned once the site has been vacated and any ground maintenance reinstatement costs deducted. Should

damage be caused to Council property arising from the activities of the event, then the Council reserves the right to retain part/or all of the deposit to meet the reinstatement costs. If payment is by cheque, this is to be made payable to "Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council".

5 CANCELLATION BY THE HIRER

5.1 If the Hirer wishes to cancel the hiring in whole or in part and: (a) the hiring is for a substantial/special event, the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 30 days' prior written notice; (b) the hiring is one of a series of hiring's, the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 7 days' prior written notice for each such cancellation; or (c) the hiring is for a purpose other than that that described under Condition 5.1(a) or 5.1(b), the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 14 days' prior written notice.

5.2 If the Hirer fails to provide the Council with the appropriate notice required under Condition 5.1 and/or fails to take up the hiring during any Hiring Period, the Hirer will still be liable for payment of the Fee in full, PROVIDED THAT (with the exception of regular hiring's) in the event the Council can re-hire the Facilities to a third party during the Hiring Period reserved by the Hirer, the Council may, at its discretion, refund up to 75% of the Fee paid. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event of cancellation by the Hirer, the Council shall be under no obligation to source a third party to hire the Facilities for the Hiring Period booked by the Hirer.

6 CANCELLATION BY THE COUNCIL

6.1 The Council may cancel the hiring: (a) if the Facilities are rendered unusable to any event beyond its reasonable control (within the meaning of Condition 22.5); (b) if the Hirer fails to perform any of its obligations under these Conditions; or (c) at its discretion, at any time, without cause, upon giving notice to the Hirer.

6.2 The Fee paid in respect of a hiring cancelled in accordance with Condition 6.1(a) or 6.1(b) will be refunded provided that these Conditions and the general rules and conditions of use of the Facility have been complied with by the Hirer, but the Council shall not be liable for any expenditure incurred or loss sustained (whether directly or indirectly) by the Hirer arising from such cancellation.

6.3 The Council reserves the right to refuse to accept an 'Application for Booking' for any reason whatsoever without being obliged to disclose that reason to the Hirer.

7. SAFEGUARDING

7.1 Where applicable hirers who book the Facility for 6 or more sessions per year have substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults, the Hirer is required:

- to have its own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- to have attended relevant safeguarding training;

- to have undertaken the necessary Police and Access checks on staff/volunteers that have substantial access to children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure all members of the group/organisation are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults; and
- to adhere to the Council's Safeguarding Policy (available on request), including the provision of adequate staff supervision.

7.2 All Hirers must ensure that children/young people/vulnerable adults are supervised at all times.

7.3 **The Council wishes to remind all Hirers/volunteers that the responsibility for the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Facility rests with them at all times.**

8. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MEDIA EQUIPMENT

8.1 Use of photographic media equipment by or on behalf of the Hirer is only permitted with the prior written consent of all participants. Where the participants are children under 18 years or vulnerable adults, prior written consent must be obtained from all their parents/guardians. All responsibility for obtaining consent rests solely with the Hirer.

8.2 **Please check with the Facility in advance that photography equipment is permitted.**

8.3 The Hirer is not to grant broadcasting or filming rights without the prior consent of the Council.

9. SPORTS COACHING, TEACHING OR COMPETITION

9.1 If the activity to be held at the Facilities involves sports coaching, teaching or competition, the Hirer must, in accordance with Council practice, guarantee that the person in charge is qualified (including holding necessary valid coaching qualifications and possess valid personal liability insurance) and that the appropriate teacher/coach to participant ratio is observed.

9.2 Copies of all qualifications and coaching certificates must be submitted to the Facility manager prior to the hiring being confirmed.

10. FIRE AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

10.1 Whilst a function is taking place at the Facility, proper care and attention must be taken to ensure that all Emergency Exits are kept clear, and that entrances/exits, doors and corridors are kept clear from obstruction.

10.2 The Hirer must ensure that the events at the Facilities are conducted in a safe manner. If a problem arises during the course of an event which may put guests at risk, it is the Hirer's responsibility to cancel the event immediately, vacate the premises and report to Facility staff.

10.3 The Council/Facility staff in attendance (if approved) will have the final authority in terms of the cancellation of any event due to a breach in these Conditions, or for any reasons of Health & Safety.

10.4 In the event of any alarm i.e. fire or other emergency situation, the Facility must be evacuated immediately and any instructions given by Council/Facility staff must be followed. In the event that Council/Facility staff are not present at your event you must contact the Council immediately on 02892 447345.

10.5 The Hirer must ensure that it, its volunteers and all persons attending the event comply strictly with all health and safety legislation.

10.6 The Hirer will make all health and safety announcements required by the Council at the beginning of the event.

11. CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 If the Hirer requires catering a request must be made to the Council in advance no later than 14 days prior to the event, as the level of service available varies at the Facility.
- 11.2 No private catering or drinks should be brought on to the premises at any time by the Hirer, their volunteers, members or invited guests. A special request may be made by the Hirer but this will be dependent on permission being granted in advance by the Council and requires written notice.
- 11.3 Should approval be given for outside caterers to be used, The Council require them to be registered with their local council and to fully comply with the Food Hygiene Register NI 2006.
- 11.2 The Council cannot be held responsible for the safety of any food brought onto the premises or prepared by the hirer.

12. ALCOHOL

No alcohol should be brought on to the premises at any time by the Hirer, their volunteers, members or invited guests. A special request may be made by the Hirer but this will be dependent on permission being granted in advance by the Council and requires 6 weeks written notice.

13. SERIES OF HIRINGS

A series of hirings will be exempt from VAT if the Facilities are hired for a series of sessions and all of the below conditions apply:

- the series consists of 10 or more sessions;
- each session is for the same sport or activity;
- each session is in the same place;
- the interval between each session is at least a day and not more than 14 days;
- the series is to be **paid as a whole** and there is **written evidence to that effect** ie: dates of lets etc detailed on the invoice;
- the Facilities are let out to a school, club, association; and
- the person to whom the Facilities are let has exclusive use of them during all the sessions.

14. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HIRER FOR GOOD ORDER AND SAFETY

- 14.1 The Hirer must ensure that during each Hiring Period all statutory provisions or bye-laws concerning the management and control of recreation/leisure Facilities/parks and playing fields are strictly observed and that those participating in or spectating at each event or activity do not act in a manner which will contravene these Conditions, any licensing or insurance provision and the general rules and conditions of use of the Facility. The Hirer shall be liable for any breach thereof as if such breach had been committed by the Hirer.
- 14.2 The Hirer shall employ sufficient stewards to maintain good order during the Hiring Period and shall remove any person acting in a disorderly manner or disobeying any instruction of the Council or any member of its staff.
- 14.3 The Hirer will bear sole responsibility for the administration, organisation and running of each event or activity included in the Application for Booking and no responsibility whatsoever

will devolve on the Council in respect of any assistance given by special arrangement.

- 14.4 The Hirer must comply with all instructions issued by the Council or authorised deputy with regard to the movement and control of vehicles in the access roads or car parks of the Facility and persons whether participants or spectators in all parts of the Facility including any external facilities.
- 14.5 Seating must not be re-arranged or added to, and all doors, entrances, corridors and exits must be kept clear and ready for use in an emergency. The Hirer will indemnify the Council against any and all claims made against it, or losses sustained by the Council where such claims or loss is directly or indirectly due to its failure to comply with this Condition 14.5.
- 14.6 The Hirer will pay the Council on demand the cost of repairing any damage caused to any part of the Facility or any fixtures or fittings therein during the Hiring Period. Failure to tender payment for such repairs within 14 days of the date of the invoice may (without prejudice to any other legal remedy to which the Council may be entitled) result in future bookings being refused.
- 14.7 At the conclusion of each Hiring Period the Hirer will ensure that the Facility is vacated in an orderly fashion and that all changing rooms, toilets, showers and any other rooms included in the hiring are left in a clean and tidy state. Any damage caused to any fixtures and fittings in any part of the Facility during the Hiring Period must be reported immediately to the Facility's Duty Manager or staff in attendance.
- 14.8 The hire arrangement is not transferable unless approved in advance in writing by the Council and any transfer may be made subject to such special conditions, as the Council impose at its discretion.
- 14.9 The management of the Facility reserve the right to refuse entry to the Facility or any part thereof, to any person suspected of having partaken of any excess of alcohol or substance abuse. The judgement of the Facility's Duty Manager in this regard will be final.
- 14.10 During the Hiring Period, the Hirer is responsible for: (a) effective control of children; (b) orderly and safe admission and departure of persons to and from the Facilities; (c) orderly and safe vacation of the Facilities in case of emergency; (d) preservation of good order and decency at the Facilities; and (e) liaising directly with any third party relevant to the hiring and confirming details with the Council prior to the Hiring Period.
- 14.11 The Hirer shall: (a) supply to the Council as much information as possible regarding the hiring; (b) notify the Council in advance of any special requirements for persons attending the Facility; (c) fully and fairly represent the purpose of hiring. Any misrepresentation may result in cancellation of the hiring by the Council at any time; and (d) agree prior to the Hiring Period any changes in the Hiring Period required by the Hirer.

- 14.12 Hirers must comply with the Council's Entertainment Licence, ensuring that the maximum numbers for guests and members is not exceeded under any circumstances. Details of maximum numbers can be obtained from Facility Management and the entertainments licence is displayed on the Facility notice board. In the event of the event taking place outdoors maximum numbers must be calculated according to the space and agreed by LCCC H&S. Please note you may have to apply for a specific entertainment licence.

15. EQUIPMENT TO BE BROUGHT ONTO THE FACILITY

- 15.1 Any equipment which is brought onto the Facility by the Hirer, members or guests, must be in a safe condition.
- 15.2 No electrical equipment owned/supplied by the Hirer is to be used in the facilities during the hire period unless it has been PAT tested by a Registered Electrical Contractor and the relevant certificate has been completed, signed by the Hirer and provided to the Facility Duty Manager.
- 15.2 The Hirer agrees to indemnify the Council against any claims, action, demands, costs or proceedings which may arise out of the use of any equipment not belonging to the Council.
- 15.3 The Council may require Safety Certificates for specific items of equipment.

16. MUSICAL EVENTS

- 16.1 The Hirer is requested to keep the noise level to an acceptable level. Any complaints received and/or instructions given by Council staff or evening security personnel should be immediately and fully adhered to.
- 16.2 The Hirer's attention is also drawn to their legal requirement under the Performing Rights Society for live musical performances. Further information is available upon request.
- 16.3 In the use of the Facilities, the Hirer is not to infringe any copyright or allow any copyright to be infringed.
- 16.4 If the use of the Facilities will involve the performance of any musical or dramatic works it will be the responsibility of the Hirer to obtain prior to the Hiring Period the consent of the owner of the relevant copyright and pay all other fees which may be payable in respect of the function.

17. CARE OF THE FLOOR AREA (INDOOR)

- 17.1 Where special footwear is required in any part of the Facility the Hirer must ensure that this is strictly observed.
- 17.2 Floor chalk or any other substance should not be put on any floor within the Facility. The Hirer should seek further advice and instructions from the Facility's administration staff regarding functions involving dancing or the provision of staging or event infrastructure.

18. PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

- 18.1 The Hirer shall conduct its own risk assessment and implement necessary actions arising from it. The risk assessment and required actions list is to be submitted to the Council a minimum of 14 days prior to the Hiring Period.
- 18.2 The Hirer will indemnify the Council against all claims for death, injury or loss due to its negligence or default or of any participants in the event, (either competitors or spectators), and for this purpose will effect a policy of public liability insurance with a reputable insurance company, such cover to include a minimum £5 million liability, and £10 million. Employers Liability cover. Confirmation/proof of the appropriate insurance being held shall be submitted to the Council at least 14 days in advance of the Hiring Period.

19. NO SMOKING POLICY

From Monday 30 April 2007 it is against the law to smoke in 'enclosed and substantially enclosed workplaces and public places, and in vehicles'. Smoke Detector Alarms have been fitted in the toilets and other key areas to prevent any abuse of the NO SMOKING POLICY at the Facility.

20. ALTERATIONS OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Council reserves the right without prior notice at any time to alter or amend the whole or any of these Conditions.

21. BREACH OF CONDITIONS

- 21.1 If the Hirer fails to observe and perform its obligations under these Conditions, the Council may: (a) charge to and recover from the Hirer any expenses incurred by the Council in remedying any such failure, including the cost of employing attendants, workmen, cleaners or other persons as may be appropriate; (b) cancel the instant or any other hiring of the Facilities by the Hirer without incurring any liability to the Hirer for return of the Fee or otherwise; and/or (c) require the Hirer to leave the Facility.
- 21.2 The Hirer shall indemnify the Council in full upon demand against any costs, claims, demands, liabilities or expenses arising out of or in connection with a breach by it of its obligations under these Conditions.
- 21.3 The Council's decision as to whether any act or omission constitutes a breach of these Conditions is final.

22. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

- 22.1 The Council's total liability arising out of or in connection with these Conditions shall be limited to the Fee paid.

- 22.2 The Council will not be liable for any consequential losses, claims, demands, actions, proceedings, damages, costs or expenses or other indirect or consequential liability incurred by the Hirer in the exercise of the rights granted by these Conditions.
- 22.3 The Council will not under any circumstances accept responsibility or liability in respect of any damage to or loss of any goods, articles or property of any kind brought into or left at the Facility either by the Hirer for its own purpose or by any other person or left or deposited with any officer or employee of the Council.
- 22.4 Nothing in this Condition 22 shall operate so as to limit or exclude the Council's liability for death or personal injury caused by its negligence.
- 22.5 The Council will not be liable for any loss due to any breakdown of machinery, failure of supply of electricity, leakage of water, Civil disturbances, Government restriction or act of God which may cause the Facilities to be temporarily closed or the hiring to be interrupted or cancelled.
- 22.6 The Council gives no warranty that the Facility is legally or physically fit for any specific purpose.

23 RIGHT OF ENTRY

- 23.1 The Council reserves the right for duly authorised members or officers or employees of the Council to enter the Facilities at any time for any authorised purpose.
- 23.2 The Council reserves the right to exclude or eject, as it thinks reasonable, any persons from the Facilities, function or any other premises of the Council as it shall consider objectionable (including any engaged by the Hirer to provide duties or entertainment) and the Hirer will be liable for any liability arising thereby save where the Hirer establishes negligence or bad faith on the part of the Council.

24 COMPLAINTS

Any complaint arising out of the Hiring must be made to the Facilities Manager at the time of the use of the Facilities.

25 GOVERNING LAW

These Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Northern Irish law and the parties irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of the Northern Irish courts.



LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

WALLACE PARK
LISBURN
BT27 4AN

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event to include set/take down time)

SUNDAY 27TH APRIL 2-5PM

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; space required, content including vendors to be used, anticipated numbers attending etc)

LISBURN DISTRICT SCOUTS
ST GEORGES DAY FUNDAY

LISBURN DISTRICT SCOUTS WOULD LIKE TO MEET IN THE CIVIC CENTRE CARPARK & THEN WALK ON PUBLIC ROAD TO WALLACE PARK WHERE WE WILL HAVE ORGANISED A FUNDAY WITH ACTIVITIES FOR ALL SCOUTS.

IF POSSIBLE WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SPACE OF APPROX 2NO FOOTBALL PITCHES.

WE WOULD PROPOSE TO USE OUR OWN BBQs & WOULD LIKE PERMISSION TO BRING IN ICE CREAM VANS. ALL ACTIVITIES WILL BE MANAGED BY SCOUT LEADERS.

WE HOPE TO HAVE APPROX 300 SCOUTS ATTENDING
IF POSSIBLE COULD THE COUNCIL PROVIDE FENCING AROUND THE EVENT
SPACE??

4. Please tick the appropriate boxes to show the activities and facilities you intend to utilise.

Fireworks/Pyrotechnics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Live Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carnival/Procession	<input type="checkbox"/>	Live Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairground Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lost Children Point	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marquees	<input type="checkbox"/>	Barrier/Fencing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Balloon launch	<input type="checkbox"/>	Portable Generator (Diesel Only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	Power Supply	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horses/Donkeys/Other Animals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicles	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food/Drink Concessions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural Activities (e.g. ploughing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Barbecue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inflatables (e.g. Bouncy Castle) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bonfire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portable Staging	<input type="checkbox"/>	On-Site Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>

PA System	<input type="checkbox"/>	Market Stalls	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stewarding/Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-enactment Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

5. Purpose of proposed Event (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

LISBURN DISTRICT SCOUTS CELBRATING ST GEORGE PATRON SAINT OF SCOUTING FUNDAY

6. Facilities Required (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

GRASSED AREA

7. Your Details

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	LISBURN DISTRICT SCOUTS
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	Yes NIC [REDACTED]
Community Group	Yes

Applicant's Contact Details

Name	[REDACTED]
Address	[REDACTED]
Email Address	[REDACTED]

Mobile Number	██████████

8. **Safety Advisory Group.** If your event booking is approved then it is a requirement of the Council that you notify S.A.G (Safety Advisory Group) of your event. The link below provides you access to the necessary forms:

9. **Insurances and Risk Assessments.** If your event booking is approved then you may be required to provide Public and if relevant Employers Liability insurance to the Council Insurance Officer. You will also be asked to provide a Risk Assessment for the event.

10. **Contact.** Please email this form to event.request@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk once completed. Your request will be considered and you shall be contacted shortly to advise on availability and costs. No booking has been made until such times as this has been clarified and confirmed by the Council in email.
You are advised NOT to make any commitments re your event until such time as your request has been approved and confirmed.

11. **Privacy Notice.**

Your Personal Data:

What we need

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is the 'Controller' of the personal data that you provide to us. We only collect basic personal data, this does not include any special types of information, it does however include name, address, email etc.

Why we need it

We need to know your basic personal data in order to proceed with your event booking. We will not collect any personal data from you we do not need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

What we do with it

All personal data that we process is processed by our staff in the UK however for the purposes of IT hosting and maintenance this information is located on servers within the European Union. No 3rd parties have access to your personal data unless the law allows them to do so. We have a Data Protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

How long we keep it

We are required under UK law to keep your basic personal data (name, address, contact details) in line with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Retention and Disposal Policy after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

If at any point you believe the information we process on you is incorrect you may request to see this information and even have it corrected or deleted. If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data not in accordance with the law you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Council Data Protection Officer can contact at **data.protection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk**

Full details of can be found on the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council website:

www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL
LEISURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING DEPARTMENT
CONDITIONS OF HIRE

1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 In the Conditions set out below the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned:

- (a) **"Council"** means Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, of the Island Civic Centre, Lagan Valley Island, The Island, Lisburn and includes any officer or employee of Council or any person with the Council's authority acting on its behalf.
- (b) **"Facility"** shall include all the buildings, grounds, car parks, or other facilities of the Facility at and shall be construed to mean any rooms or individual facilities within or without those buildings (or any part thereof).
- (c) **"User"** means any person using any of the facilities of the Facility, whether as a participant or spectator and whether or not a charge has been paid either for entry to the Facility or for the use of the Facility's facilities.
- (d) **"Hirer"** means the person, club, group or other entity hiring the Facility or its facilities (or any part thereof).
- (e) **"Hiring Period"** means the day(s) and period(s) of time reserved by the Hirer for the hire of the Facilities and includes event site set up/take down.
- (f) **"Club"** includes any group or organisation approved by the Facility's manager for booking Facilities at the Facility.
- (g) **"Facilities"** means the facilities at the Facility hired by the Hirer.
- (h) **"Substantial/Special Events"** Events such as large scale public events.

1.2 Words importing the singular shall be construed as importing the plural and vice versa.

1.3 References to persons include bodies corporate.

1.4 Any undertaking by the Hirer not to do an act or thing shall be deemed to include an obligation not to permit or suffer such an act or thing to be done by another person.

1.5 Headings do not form part of these Conditions and shall not be taken into account in their construction or interpretation.

2. GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

2.1 On making a booking application, the Hirer must agree to abide by these Conditions.

2.2 The Application for Booking must be returned, completed and agreed prior to the commencement of the Hiring period.

2.3 Failure to comply with these Conditions will result in future use of the Facility by the Hirer being withdrawn. In addition, the Hirer will be held responsible for any financial costs incurred as a result of a breach of these Conditions.

2.4 Please note: Officers of the Council have the right to inspect all hiring activities to ensure that they are being organised in accordance with these Conditions and to check that the information on the booking form is correct. In addition, dependant upon the nature and type of function, the PSNI may be notified of the name and address of the Hirer.

2.5 The applicant named on the Application for Booking shall be the Council's sole point of contact with the Hirer and shall be responsible for (and shall have authority to ensure)

compliance on the part of the Hirer with all of the Conditions.

3. APPLICATION FOR HIRE AND CHARGES

3.1 The Facilities cannot be used for a period in excess of the agreed Hiring Period. In the event of this Condition being contravened, then, without prejudice to any rights the Council may have: (a) the Hirer will be charged for the excess period at such rate as the Council considers appropriate (but in any event no less than the normal hiring rate for the Facilities used); and (b) the Council will be entitled to require the Hirer (and any Users) to vacate the Facility and the Facilities hired.

3.2 The Hiring Period will be inclusive of the time required to set up and take down equipment and also any cleaning which might be necessary before there is any further use of the Facilities.

3.3 At the expiration of the Hiring Period the Hirer must leave the Facility in a clean and orderly state free of litter, and the Hirer shall remove all equipment or other belongings previously brought to the Facility by or on behalf of the Hirer.

3.4 There shall be no subletting of the Facilities without the Council's prior permission in writing.

3.5 A club shall not levy any charge on Users in connection with any Hiring Period without obtaining the prior consent of the Council to do so.

3.6 No part of the Facility is to be used for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful way.

3.7 No animal (with the exception of Assistance dogs) is to be brought into the Facility or allowed to enter the Facility without the Council's consent.

4. DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT

4.1 Unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the Council, the Hirer shall pay to the Council the appropriate fee set out in the Council's approved scale of charges for hire of the Facility in force at the date on which the Facilities are used by the Hirer ("Fee").

4.2 Payment of the Fee is due in full prior to the Hiring Period commencing, unless invoicing arrangements have been arranged in advance with the Council and subject to the Council's invoicing policy. [Non-payment of the Fee prior to commencement of the Hiring Period shall entitle the Council to cancel the Hirer's booking (in whole or part).

4.3 In the case of substantial/special events being held at the Facility, the Council may require a non-refundable deposit of 25% before the event can be confirmed.

4.4 For Substantial/Special Events, an additional refundable deposit of £500 may be required to be paid in advance and no later than two (2) weeks before the date of the event and will be returned once the site has been vacated and any ground maintenance reinstatement costs deducted. Should

damage be caused to Council property arising from the activities of the event, then the Council reserves the right to retain part/or all of the deposit to meet the reinstatement costs. If payment is by cheque, this is to be made payable to "Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council".

5 CANCELLATION BY THE HIRER

5.1 If the Hirer wishes to cancel the hiring in whole or in part and: (a) the hiring is for a substantial/special event, the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 30 days' prior written notice; (b) the hiring is one of a series of hiring's, the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 7 days' prior written notice for each such cancellation; or (c) the hiring is for a purpose other than that that described under Condition 5.1(a) or 5.1(b), the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 14 days' prior written notice.

5.2 If the Hirer fails to provide the Council with the appropriate notice required under Condition 5.1 and/or fails to take up the hiring during any Hiring Period, the Hirer will still be liable for payment of the Fee in full, PROVIDED THAT (with the exception of regular hiring's) in the event the Council can re-hire the Facilities to a third party during the Hiring Period reserved by the Hirer, the Council may, at its discretion, refund up to 75% of the Fee paid. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event of cancellation by the Hirer, the Council shall be under no obligation to source a third party to hire the Facilities for the Hiring Period booked by the Hirer.

6 CANCELLATION BY THE COUNCIL

6.1 The Council may cancel the hiring: (a) if the Facilities are rendered unusable to any event beyond its reasonable control (within the meaning of Condition 22.5); (b) if the Hirer fails to perform any of its obligations under these Conditions; or (c) at its discretion, at any time, without cause, upon giving notice to the Hirer.

6.2 The Fee paid in respect of a hiring cancelled in accordance with Condition 6.1(a) or 6.1(b) will be refunded provided that these Conditions and the general rules and conditions of use of the Facility have been complied with by the Hirer, but the Council shall not be liable for any expenditure incurred or loss sustained (whether directly or indirectly) by the Hirer arising from such cancellation.

6.3 The Council reserves the right to refuse to accept an 'Application for Booking' for any reason whatsoever without being obliged to disclose that reason to the Hirer.

7. SAFEGUARDING

7.1 Where applicable hirers who book the Facility for 6 or more sessions per year have substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults, the Hirer is required:

- to have its own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- to have attended relevant safeguarding training;

- to have undertaken the necessary Police and Access checks on staff/volunteers that have substantial access to children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure all members of the group/organisation are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults; and
- to adhere to the Council's Safeguarding Policy (available on request), including the provision of adequate staff supervision.

7.2 All Hirers must ensure that children/young people/vulnerable adults are supervised at all times.

7.3 **The Council wishes to remind all Hirers/volunteers that the responsibility for the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Facility rests with them at all times.**

8. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MEDIA EQUIPMENT

8.1 Use of photographic media equipment by or on behalf of the Hirer is only permitted with the prior written consent of all participants. Where the participants are children under 18 years or vulnerable adults, prior written consent must be obtained from all their parents/guardians. All responsibility for obtaining consent rests solely with the Hirer.

8.2 **Please check with the Facility in advance that photography equipment is permitted.**

8.3 The Hirer is not to grant broadcasting or filming rights without the prior consent of the Council.

9. SPORTS COACHING, TEACHING OR COMPETITION

9.1 If the activity to be held at the Facilities involves sports coaching, teaching or competition, the Hirer must, in accordance with Council practice, guarantee that the person in charge is qualified (including holding necessary valid coaching qualifications and possess valid personal liability insurance) and that the appropriate teacher/coach to participant ratio is observed.

9.2 Copies of all qualifications and coaching certificates must be submitted to the Facility manager prior to the hiring being confirmed.

10. FIRE AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

10.1 Whilst a function is taking place at the Facility, proper care and attention must be taken to ensure that all Emergency Exits are kept clear, and that entrances/exits, doors and corridors are kept clear from obstruction.

10.2 The Hirer must ensure that the events at the Facilities are conducted in a safe manner. If a problem arises during the course of an event which may put guests at risk, it is the Hirer's responsibility to cancel the event immediately, vacate the premises and report to Facility staff.

10.3 The Council/Facility staff in attendance (if approved) will have the final authority in terms of the cancellation of any event due to a breach in these Conditions, or for any reasons of Health & Safety.

10.4 In the event of any alarm i.e. fire or other emergency situation, the Facility must be evacuated immediately and any instructions given by Council/Facility staff must be followed. In the event that Council/Facility staff are not present at your event you must contact the Council immediately on 02892 447345.

10.5 The Hirer must ensure that it, its volunteers and all persons attending the event comply strictly with all health and safety legislation.

10.6 The Hirer will make all health and safety announcements required by the Council at the beginning of the event.

11. CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 If the Hirer requires catering a request must be made to the Council in advance no later than 14 days prior to the event, as the level of service available varies at the Facility.
- 11.2 No private catering or drinks should be brought on to the premises at any time by the Hirer, their volunteers, members or invited guests. A special request may be made by the Hirer but this will be dependent on permission being granted in advance by the Council and requires written notice.
- 11.3 Should approval be given for outside caterers to be used, The Council require them to be registered with their local council and to fully comply with the Food Hygiene Register NI 2006.
- 11.2 The Council cannot be held responsible for the safety of any food brought onto the premises or prepared by the hirer.

12. ALCOHOL

No alcohol should be brought on to the premises at any time by the Hirer, their volunteers, members or invited guests. A special request may be made by the Hirer but this will be dependent on permission being granted in advance by the Council and requires 6 weeks written notice.

13. SERIES OF HIRINGS

A series of hirings will be exempt from VAT if the Facilities are hired for a series of sessions and all of the below conditions apply:

- the series consists of 10 or more sessions;
- each session is for the same sport or activity;
- each session is in the same place;
- the interval between each session is at least a day and not more than 14 days;
- the series is to be **paid as a whole** and there is **written evidence to that effect** ie: dates of lets etc detailed on the invoice;
- the Facilities are let out to a school, club, association; and
- the person to whom the Facilities are let has exclusive use of them during all the sessions.

14. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HIRER FOR GOOD ORDER AND SAFETY

- 14.1 The Hirer must ensure that during each Hiring Period all statutory provisions or bye-laws concerning the management and control of recreation/leisure Facilities/parks and playing fields are strictly observed and that those participating in or spectating at each event or activity do not act in a manner which will contravene these Conditions, any licensing or insurance provision and the general rules and conditions of use of the Facility. The Hirer shall be liable for any breach thereof as if such breach had been committed by the Hirer.
- 14.2 The Hirer shall employ sufficient stewards to maintain good order during the Hiring Period and shall remove any person acting in a disorderly manner or disobeying any instruction of the Council or any member of its staff.
- 14.3 The Hirer will bear sole responsibility for the administration, organisation and running of each event or activity included in the Application for Booking and no responsibility whatsoever

will devolve on the Council in respect of any assistance given by special arrangement.

- 14.4 The Hirer must comply with all instructions issued by the Council or authorised deputy with regard to the movement and control of vehicles in the access roads or car parks of the Facility and persons whether participants or spectators in all parts of the Facility including any external facilities.
- 14.5 Seating must not be re-arranged or added to, and all doors, entrances, corridors and exits must be kept clear and ready for use in an emergency. The Hirer will indemnify the Council against any and all claims made against it, or losses sustained by the Council where such claims or loss is directly or indirectly due to its failure to comply with this Condition 14.5.
- 14.6 The Hirer will pay the Council on demand the cost of repairing any damage caused to any part of the Facility or any fixtures or fittings therein during the Hiring Period. Failure to tender payment for such repairs within 14 days of the date of the invoice may (without prejudice to any other legal remedy to which the Council may be entitled) result in future bookings being refused.
- 14.7 At the conclusion of each Hiring Period the Hirer will ensure that the Facility is vacated in an orderly fashion and that all changing rooms, toilets, showers and any other rooms included in the hiring are left in a clean and tidy state. Any damage caused to any fixtures and fittings in any part of the Facility during the Hiring Period must be reported immediately to the Facility's Duty Manager or staff in attendance.
- 14.8 The hire arrangement is not transferable unless approved in advance in writing by the Council and any transfer may be made subject to such special conditions, as the Council impose at its discretion.
- 14.9 The management of the Facility reserve the right to refuse entry to the Facility or any part thereof, to any person suspected of having partaken of any excess of alcohol or substance abuse. The judgement of the Facility's Duty Manager in this regard will be final.
- 14.10 During the Hiring Period, the Hirer is responsible for: (a) effective control of children; (b) orderly and safe admission and departure of persons to and from the Facilities; (c) orderly and safe vacation of the Facilities in case of emergency; (d) preservation of good order and decency at the Facilities; and (e) liaising directly with any third party relevant to the hiring and confirming details with the Council prior to the Hiring Period.
- 14.11 The Hirer shall: (a) supply to the Council as much information as possible regarding the hiring; (b) notify the Council in advance of any special requirements for persons attending the Facility; (c) fully and fairly represent the purpose of hiring. Any misrepresentation may result in cancellation of the hiring by the Council at any time; and (d) agree prior to the Hiring Period any changes in the Hiring Period required by the Hirer.

- 14.12 Hirers must comply with the Council's Entertainment Licence, ensuring that the maximum numbers for guests and members is not exceeded under any circumstances. Details of maximum numbers can be obtained from Facility Management and the entertainments licence is displayed on the Facility notice board. In the event of the event taking place outdoors maximum numbers must be calculated according to the space and agreed by LCCC H&S. Please note you may have to apply for a specific entertainment licence.

15. EQUIPMENT TO BE BROUGHT ONTO THE FACILITY

- 15.1 Any equipment which is brought onto the Facility by the Hirer, members or guests, must be in a safe condition.
- 15.2 No electrical equipment owned/supplied by the Hirer is to be used in the facilities during the hire period unless it has been PAT tested by a Registered Electrical Contractor and the relevant certificate has been completed, signed by the Hirer and provided to the Facility Duty Manager.
- 15.2 The Hirer agrees to indemnify the Council against any claims, action, demands, costs or proceedings which may arise out of the use of any equipment not belonging to the Council.
- 15.3 The Council may require Safety Certificates for specific items of equipment.

16. MUSICAL EVENTS

- 16.1 The Hirer is requested to keep the noise level to an acceptable level. Any complaints received and/or instructions given by Council staff or evening security personnel should be immediately and fully adhered to.
- 16.2 The Hirer's attention is also drawn to their legal requirement under the Performing Rights Society for live musical performances. Further information is available upon request.
- 16.3 In the use of the Facilities, the Hirer is not to infringe any copyright or allow any copyright to be infringed.
- 16.4 If the use of the Facilities will involve the performance of any musical or dramatic works it will be the responsibility of the Hirer to obtain prior to the Hiring Period the consent of the owner of the relevant copyright and pay all other fees which may be payable in respect of the function.

17. CARE OF THE FLOOR AREA (INDOOR)

- 17.1 Where special footwear is required in any part of the Facility the Hirer must ensure that this is strictly observed.
- 17.2 Floor chalk or any other substance should not be put on any floor within the Facility. The Hirer should seek further advice and instructions from the Facility's administration staff regarding functions involving dancing or the provision of staging or event infrastructure.

18. PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

- 18.1 The Hirer shall conduct its own risk assessment and implement necessary actions arising from it. The risk assessment and required actions list is to be submitted to the Council a minimum of 14 days prior to the Hiring Period.
- 18.2 The Hirer will indemnify the Council against all claims for death, injury or loss due to its negligence or default or of any participants in the event, (either competitors or spectators), and for this purpose will effect a policy of public liability insurance with a reputable insurance company, such cover to include a minimum £5 million liability, and £10 million. Employers Liability cover. Confirmation/proof of the appropriate insurance being held shall be submitted to the Council at least 14 days in advance of the Hiring Period.

19. NO SMOKING POLICY

From Monday 30 April 2007 it is against the law to smoke in 'enclosed and substantially enclosed workplaces and public places, and in vehicles'. Smoke Detector Alarms have been fitted in the toilets and other key areas to prevent any abuse of the NO SMOKING POLICY at the Facility.

20. ALTERATIONS OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Council reserves the right without prior notice at any time to alter or amend the whole or any of these Conditions.

21. BREACH OF CONDITIONS

- 21.1 If the Hirer fails to observe and perform its obligations under these Conditions, the Council may: (a) charge to and recover from the Hirer any expenses incurred by the Council in remedying any such failure, including the cost of employing attendants, workmen, cleaners or other persons as may be appropriate; (b) cancel the instant or any other hiring of the Facilities by the Hirer without incurring any liability to the Hirer for return of the Fee or otherwise; and/or (c) require the Hirer to leave the Facility.
- 21.2 The Hirer shall indemnify the Council in full upon demand against any costs, claims, demands, liabilities or expenses arising out of or in connection with a breach by it of its obligations under these Conditions.
- 21.3 The Council's decision as to whether any act or omission constitutes a breach of these Conditions is final.

22. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

- 22.1 The Council's total liability arising out of or in connection with these Conditions shall be limited to the Fee paid.

- 22.2 The Council will not be liable for any consequential losses, claims, demands, actions, proceedings, damages, costs or expenses or other indirect or consequential liability incurred by the Hirer in the exercise of the rights granted by these Conditions.
- 22.3 The Council will not under any circumstances accept responsibility or liability in respect of any damage to or loss of any goods, articles or property of any kind brought into or left at the Facility either by the Hirer for its own purpose or by any other person or left or deposited with any officer or employee of the Council.
- 22.4 Nothing in this Condition 22 shall operate so as to limit or exclude the Council's liability for death or personal injury caused by its negligence.
- 22.5 The Council will not be liable for any loss due to any breakdown of machinery, failure of supply of electricity, leakage of water, Civil disturbances, Government restriction or act of God which may cause the Facilities to be temporarily closed or the hiring to be interrupted or cancelled.
- 22.6 The Council gives no warranty that the Facility is legally or physically fit for any specific purpose.

23 RIGHT OF ENTRY

- 23.1 The Council reserves the right for duly authorised members or officers or employees of the Council to enter the Facilities at any time for any authorised purpose.
- 23.2 The Council reserves the right to exclude or eject, as it thinks reasonable, any persons from the Facilities, function or any other premises of the Council as it shall consider objectionable (including any engaged by the Hirer to provide duties or entertainment) and the Hirer will be liable for any liability arising thereby save where the Hirer establishes negligence or bad faith on the part of the Council.

24 COMPLAINTS

Any complaint arising out of the Hiring must be made to the Facilities Manager at the time of the use of the Facilities.

25 GOVERNING LAW

These Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Northern Irish law and the parties irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of the Northern Irish courts.



LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Leisure & Community Wellbeing

Parks & Amenities

Outdoor Events Booking Request Form

Booking details (Please complete in Block Capitals)

1. **Venue and Address** (please specify the location of the proposed event)

Wallace Park, Fort Hill, Lisburn BT27 4AN

2. **Date and Time** (please specify the proposed date and time of the event to include set/take down time)

Friday 25th July 2025 from 12-5pm

3. **Describe the proposed Event in as much detail as possible** (please describe the event; space required, content including vendors to be used, anticipated numbers attending etc)

We propose to bring back our Lisburn Feile event to Wallace Park this year, building on the fantastic success of last year. We plan to host it in the same spot—the main playing field area near the car park entrance—so it'll be easy to find for everyone, we shall explore further parking facilities and plan a series of meetings with local PSNI and community groups.

This year's event will feature a stage with live music, powered by a diesel generator, along with a wide variety of vendors offering hot food, sweets, confectionery, and fun kids' toys. We will bring back the same trusted vendors from last year, who are fully certified and ready to provide a great experience for the public.

There will be loads to do for all ages, including inflatables, an animal petting farm, birds of prey displays, and a dedicated sensory area. You'll also find marquees housing cultural workshops, information stands, and plenty of fun activities like a climbing wall, face painting, and visits from beloved Disney characters.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable day, we'll have onsite first aiders and a well-organised setup. We're anticipating around 1,500 attendees.

4. Please tick the appropriate boxes to show the activities and facilities you intend to utilise.

Fireworks/Pyrotechnics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Live Music	x	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carnival/Procession	<input type="checkbox"/>	Live Entertainment	x	
Fairground Equipment	x	<input type="checkbox"/> Lost Children Point	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marquees	x	<input type="checkbox"/> Barrier/Fencing	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balloon launch		<input type="checkbox"/> Portable Generator (Diesel Only)	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water		<input type="checkbox"/> Power Supply		<input type="checkbox"/>
Horses/Donkeys/Other Animals	x	Alcohol		<input type="checkbox"/>
Motor Vehicles	x	<input type="checkbox"/> Food/Drink Concessions	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural Activities (e.g. ploughing)		<input type="checkbox"/> Barbecue		<input type="checkbox"/>
Inflatables (e.g. Bouncy Castle)	x	Bonfire		<input type="checkbox"/>
	x			
Portable Staging	x	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Communications	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
PA System		<input type="checkbox"/> Market Stalls	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stewarding/Security	x	<input type="checkbox"/> Re-enactment Groups		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/>		

5. Purpose of proposed Event (Social, Recreational, Private Party, Fund Raising, Commercial etc)

The proposed event is a social and recreational family intergenerational fun day, designed to bring together community members of all ages for a day of entertainment, connection, and enjoyment. It aims to foster community spirit, provide engaging activities for all generations, and create lasting memories in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

6. Facilities Required (please specify what exactly you require eg is it a grassed area on which to hold an event; approx. how much space; or is it a function room for an internal event)

The grassed outdoor area, keen to arrange a site visit with council staff to specify exact area and space.

7. Your Details

Organisation (Organisation/Club/Team etc. If it a private booking go directly to 'Applicant's Contact Details')

Organisation Name	Lisburn Feile
Commercial / Profit Making	No
Charity	No (if Yes please provide NI Charity Commission Registration Number. Remain on waiting list for charity status
Community Group	Yes

Applicant's Contact Details

Name	
Address	
Email Address	
Mobile Number	

8. Safety Advisory Group. If your event booking is approved then it is a requirement of the Council that you notify S.A.G (Safety Advisory Group) of your event. The link below provides you access to the necessary forms:

9. **Insurances and Risk Assessments.** If your event booking is approved then you may be required to provide Public and if relevant Employers Liability insurance to the Council Insurance Officer. You will also be asked to provide a Risk Assessment for the event.

10. **Contact.** Please email this form to event.request@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk once completed. Your request will be considered and you shall be contacted shortly to advise on availability and costs. No booking has been made until such times as this has been clarified and confirmed by the Council in email.

You are advised NOT to make any commitments re your event until such time as your request has been approved and confirmed.

11. **Privacy Notice.**

Your Personal Data:

What we need

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is the 'Controller' of the personal data that you provide to us. We only collect basic personal data, this does not include any special types of information, it does however include name, address, email etc.

Why we need it

We need to know your basic personal data in order to proceed with your event booking. We will not collect any personal data from you we do not need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

What we do with it

All personal data that we process is processed by our staff in the UK however for the purposes of IT hosting and maintenance this information is located on servers within the European Union. No 3rd parties have access to your personal data unless the law allows them to do so. We have a Data Protection regime in place to oversee the effective and secure processing of your personal data.

How long we keep it

We are required under UK law to keep your basic personal data (name, address, contact details) in line with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Retention and Disposal Policy after which time it will be destroyed.

What are your rights?

If at any point you believe the information we process on you is incorrect you may request to see this information and even have it corrected or deleted. If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data not in accordance with the law you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The Council Data Protection Officer can contact at data.protection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Full details of can be found on the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council website:
www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL
LEISURE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING DEPARTMENT
CONDITIONS OF HIRE

1. INTERPRETATION

1.1 In the Conditions set out below the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned:

- (a) **"Council"** means Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, of the Island Civic Centre, Lagan Valley Island, The Island, Lisburn and includes any officer or employee of Council or any person with the Council's authority acting on its behalf.
- (b) **"Facility"** shall include all the buildings, grounds, car parks, or other facilities of the Facility at and shall be construed to mean any rooms or individual facilities within or without those buildings (or any part thereof).
- (c) **"User"** means any person using any of the facilities of the Facility, whether as a participant or spectator and whether or not a charge has been paid either for entry to the Facility or for the use of the Facility's facilities.
- (d) **"Hirer"** means the person, club, group or other entity hiring the Facility or its facilities (or any part thereof).
- (e) **"Hiring Period"** means the day(s) and period(s) of time reserved by the Hirer for the hire of the Facilities and includes event site set up/take down.
- (f) **"Club"** includes any group or organisation approved by the Facility's manager for booking Facilities at the Facility.
- (g) **"Facilities"** means the facilities at the Facility hired by the Hirer.
- (h) **"Substantial/Special Events"** Events such as large scale public events.

1.2 Words importing the singular shall be construed as importing the plural and vice versa.

1.3 References to persons include bodies corporate.

1.4 Any undertaking by the Hirer not to do an act or thing shall be deemed to include an obligation not to permit or suffer such an act or thing to be done by another person.

1.5 Headings do not form part of these Conditions and shall not be taken into account in their construction or interpretation.

2. GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

2.1 On making a booking application, the Hirer must agree to abide by these Conditions.

2.2 The Application for Booking must be returned, completed and agreed prior to the commencement of the Hiring period.

2.3 Failure to comply with these Conditions will result in future use of the Facility by the Hirer being withdrawn. In addition, the Hirer will be held responsible for any financial costs incurred as a result of a breach of these Conditions.

2.4 Please note: Officers of the Council have the right to inspect all hiring activities to ensure that they are being organised in accordance with these Conditions and to check that the information on the booking form is correct. In addition, dependant upon the nature and type of function, the PSNI may be notified of the name and address of the Hirer.

2.5 The applicant named on the Application for Booking shall be the Council's sole point of contact with the Hirer and shall be responsible for (and shall have authority to ensure)

compliance on the part of the Hirer with all of the Conditions.

3. APPLICATION FOR HIRE AND CHARGES

3.1 The Facilities cannot be used for a period in excess of the agreed Hiring Period. In the event of this Condition being contravened, then, without prejudice to any rights the Council may have: (a) the Hirer will be charged for the excess period at such rate as the Council considers appropriate (but in any event no less than the normal hiring rate for the Facilities used); and (b) the Council will be entitled to require the Hirer (and any Users) to vacate the Facility and the Facilities hired.

3.2 The Hiring Period will be inclusive of the time required to set up and take down equipment and also any cleaning which might be necessary before there is any further use of the Facilities.

3.3 At the expiration of the Hiring Period the Hirer must leave the Facility in a clean and orderly state free of litter, and the Hirer shall remove all equipment or other belongings previously brought to the Facility by or on behalf of the Hirer.

3.4 There shall be no subletting of the Facilities without the Council's prior permission in writing.

3.5 A club shall not levy any charge on Users in connection with any Hiring Period without obtaining the prior consent of the Council to do so.

3.6 No part of the Facility is to be used for any unlawful purpose or in any unlawful way.

3.7 No animal (with the exception of Assistance dogs) is to be brought into the Facility or allowed to enter the Facility without the Council's consent.

4. DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT

4.1 Unless otherwise agreed in advance in writing by the Council, the Hirer shall pay to the Council the appropriate fee set out in the Council's approved scale of charges for hire of the Facility in force at the date on which the Facilities are used by the Hirer ("Fee").

4.2 Payment of the Fee is due in full prior to the Hiring Period commencing, unless invoicing arrangements have been arranged in advance with the Council and subject to the Council's invoicing policy. [Non-payment of the Fee prior to commencement of the Hiring Period shall entitle the Council to cancel the Hirer's booking (in whole or part).

4.3 In the case of substantial/special events being held at the Facility, the Council may require a non-refundable deposit of 25% before the event can be confirmed.

4.4 For Substantial/Special Events, an additional refundable deposit of £500 may be required to be paid in advance and no later than two (2) weeks before the date of the event and will be returned once the site has been vacated and any ground maintenance reinstatement costs deducted. Should

damage be caused to Council property arising from the activities of the event, then the Council reserves the right to retain part/or all of the deposit to meet the reinstatement costs. If payment is by cheque, this is to be made payable to "Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council".

5 CANCELLATION BY THE HIRER

5.1 If the Hirer wishes to cancel the hiring in whole or in part and: (a) the hiring is for a substantial/special event, the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 30 days' prior written notice; (b) the hiring is one of a series of hiring's, the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 7 days' prior written notice for each such cancellation; or (c) the hiring is for a purpose other than that that described under Condition 5.1(a) or 5.1(b), the Hirer must provide the Council with not less than 14 days' prior written notice.

5.2 If the Hirer fails to provide the Council with the appropriate notice required under Condition 5.1 and/or fails to take up the hiring during any Hiring Period, the Hirer will still be liable for payment of the Fee in full, PROVIDED THAT (with the exception of regular hiring's) in the event the Council can re-hire the Facilities to a third party during the Hiring Period reserved by the Hirer, the Council may, at its discretion, refund up to 75% of the Fee paid. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event of cancellation by the Hirer, the Council shall be under no obligation to source a third party to hire the Facilities for the Hiring Period booked by the Hirer.

6 CANCELLATION BY THE COUNCIL

6.1 The Council may cancel the hiring: (a) if the Facilities are rendered unusable to any event beyond its reasonable control (within the meaning of Condition 22.5); (b) if the Hirer fails to perform any of its obligations under these Conditions; or (c) at its discretion, at any time, without cause, upon giving notice to the Hirer.

6.2 The Fee paid in respect of a hiring cancelled in accordance with Condition 6.1(a) or 6.1(b) will be refunded provided that these Conditions and the general rules and conditions of use of the Facility have been complied with by the Hirer, but the Council shall not be liable for any expenditure incurred or loss sustained (whether directly or indirectly) by the Hirer arising from such cancellation.

6.3 The Council reserves the right to refuse to accept an 'Application for Booking' for any reason whatsoever without being obliged to disclose that reason to the Hirer.

7. SAFEGUARDING

7.1 Where applicable hirers who book the Facility for 6 or more sessions per year have substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults, the Hirer is required:

- to have its own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- to have attended relevant safeguarding training;

- to have undertaken the necessary Police and Access checks on staff/volunteers that have substantial access to children, young people and vulnerable adults to ensure all members of the group/organisation are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults; and
- to adhere to the Council's Safeguarding Policy (available on request), including the provision of adequate staff supervision.

7.2 All Hirers must ensure that children/young people/vulnerable adults are supervised at all times.

7.3 **The Council wishes to remind all Hirers/volunteers that the responsibility for the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults at the Facility rests with them at all times.**

8. USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND MEDIA EQUIPMENT

8.1 Use of photographic media equipment by or on behalf of the Hirer is only permitted with the prior written consent of all participants. Where the participants are children under 18 years or vulnerable adults, prior written consent must be obtained from all their parents/guardians. All responsibility for obtaining consent rests solely with the Hirer.

8.2 **Please check with the Facility in advance that photography equipment is permitted.**

8.3 The Hirer is not to grant broadcasting or filming rights without the prior consent of the Council.

9. SPORTS COACHING, TEACHING OR COMPETITION

9.1 If the activity to be held at the Facilities involves sports coaching, teaching or competition, the Hirer must, in accordance with Council practice, guarantee that the person in charge is qualified (including holding necessary valid coaching qualifications and possess valid personal liability insurance) and that the appropriate teacher/coach to participant ratio is observed.

9.2 Copies of all qualifications and coaching certificates must be submitted to the Facility manager prior to the hiring being confirmed.

10. FIRE AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

10.1 Whilst a function is taking place at the Facility, proper care and attention must be taken to ensure that all Emergency Exits are kept clear, and that entrances/exits, doors and corridors are kept clear from obstruction.

10.2 The Hirer must ensure that the events at the Facilities are conducted in a safe manner. If a problem arises during the course of an event which may put guests at risk, it is the Hirer's responsibility to cancel the event immediately, vacate the premises and report to Facility staff.

10.3 The Council/Facility staff in attendance (if approved) will have the final authority in terms of the cancellation of any event due to a breach in these Conditions, or for any reasons of Health & Safety.

10.4 In the event of any alarm i.e. fire or other emergency situation, the Facility must be evacuated immediately and any instructions given by Council/Facility staff must be followed. In the event that Council/Facility staff are not present at your event you must contact the Council immediately on 02892 447345.

10.5 The Hirer must ensure that it, its volunteers and all persons attending the event comply strictly with all health and safety legislation.

10.6 The Hirer will make all health and safety announcements required by the Council at the beginning of the event.

11. CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

11.1 If the Hirer requires catering a request must be made to the Council in advance no later than 14 days prior to the event, as the level of service available varies at the Facility.

11.2 No private catering or drinks should be brought on to the premises at any time by the Hirer, their volunteers, members or invited guests. A special request may be made by the Hirer but this will be dependent on permission being granted in advance by the Council and requires written notice.

11.3 Should approval be given for outside caterers to be used, The Council require them to be registered with their local council and to fully comply with the Food Hygiene Register NI 2006.

11.2 The Council cannot be held responsible for the safety of any food brought onto the premises or prepared by the hirer.

12. ALCOHOL

No alcohol should be brought on to the premises at any time by the Hirer, their volunteers, members or invited guests. A special request may be made by the Hirer but this will be dependent on permission being granted in advance by the Council and requires 6 weeks written notice.

13. SERIES OF HIRINGS

A series of hirings will be exempt from VAT if the Facilities are hired for a series of sessions and all of the below conditions apply:

- the series consists of 10 or more sessions;
- each session is for the same sport or activity;
- each session is in the same place;
- the interval between each session is at least a day and not more than 14 days;
- the series is to be **paid as a whole** and there is **written evidence to that effect** ie: dates of lets etc detailed on the invoice;
- the Facilities are let out to a school, club, association; and
- the person to whom the Facilities are let has exclusive use of them during all the sessions.

14. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HIRER FOR GOOD ORDER AND SAFETY

14.1 The Hirer must ensure that during each Hiring Period all statutory provisions or bye-laws concerning the management and control of recreation/leisure Facilities/parks and playing fields are strictly observed and that those participating in or spectating at each event or activity do not act in a manner which will contravene these Conditions, any licensing or insurance provision and the general rules and conditions of use of the Facility. The Hirer shall be liable for any breach thereof as if such breach had been committed by the Hirer.

14.2 The Hirer shall employ sufficient stewards to maintain good order during the Hiring Period and shall remove any person acting in a disorderly manner or disobeying any instruction of the Council or any member of its staff.

14.3 The Hirer will bear sole responsibility for the administration, organisation and running of each event or activity included in the Application for Booking and no responsibility whatsoever

will devolve on the Council in respect of any assistance given by special arrangement.

14.4 The Hirer must comply with all instructions issued by the Council or authorised deputy with regard to the movement and control of vehicles in the access roads or car parks of the Facility and persons whether participants or spectators in all parts of the Facility including any external facilities.

14.5 Seating must not be re-arranged or added to, and all doors, entrances, corridors and exits must be kept clear and ready for use in an emergency. The Hirer will indemnify the Council against any and all claims made against it, or losses sustained by the Council where such claims or loss is directly or indirectly due to its failure to comply with this Condition 14.5.

14.6 The Hirer will pay the Council on demand the cost of repairing any damage caused to any part of the Facility or any fixtures or fittings therein during the Hiring Period. Failure to tender payment for such repairs within 14 days of the date of the invoice may (without prejudice to any other legal remedy to which the Council may be entitled) result in future bookings being refused.

14.7 At the conclusion of each Hiring Period the Hirer will ensure that the Facility is vacated in an orderly fashion and that all changing rooms, toilets, showers and any other rooms included in the hiring are left in a clean and tidy state. Any damage caused to any fixtures and fittings in any part of the Facility during the Hiring Period must be reported immediately to the Facility's Duty Manager or staff in attendance.

14.8 The hire arrangement is not transferable unless approved in advance in writing by the Council and any transfer may be made subject to such special conditions, as the Council impose at its discretion.

14.9 The management of the Facility reserve the right to refuse entry to the Facility or any part thereof, to any person suspected of having partaken of any excess of alcohol or substance abuse. The judgement of the Facility's Duty Manager in this regard will be final.

14.10 During the Hiring Period, the Hirer is responsible for: (a) effective control of children; (b) orderly and safe admission and departure of persons to and from the Facilities; (c) orderly and safe vacation of the Facilities in case of emergency; (d) preservation of good order and decency at the Facilities; and (e) liaising directly with any third party relevant to the hiring and confirming details with the Council prior to the Hiring Period.

14.11 The Hirer shall: (a) supply to the Council as much information as possible regarding the hiring; (b) notify the Council in advance of any special requirements for persons attending the Facility; (c) fully and fairly represent the purpose of hiring. Any misrepresentation may result in cancellation of the hiring by the Council at any time; and (d) agree prior to the Hiring Period any changes in the Hiring Period required by the Hirer.

- 14.12 Hirers must comply with the Council's Entertainment Licence, ensuring that the maximum numbers for guests and members is not exceeded under any circumstances. Details of maximum numbers can be obtained from Facility Management and the entertainments licence is displayed on the Facility notice board. In the event of the event taking place outdoors maximum numbers must be calculated according to the space and agreed by LCCC H&S. Please note you may have to apply for a specific entertainment licence.

15. EQUIPMENT TO BE BROUGHT ONTO THE FACILITY

- 15.1 Any equipment which is brought onto the Facility by the Hirer, members or guests, must be in a safe condition.
- 15.2 No electrical equipment owned/supplied by the Hirer is to be used in the facilities during the hire period unless it has been PAT tested by a Registered Electrical Contractor and the relevant certificate has been completed, signed by the Hirer and provided to the Facility Duty Manager.
- 15.2 The Hirer agrees to indemnify the Council against any claims, action, demands, costs or proceedings which may arise out of the use of any equipment not belonging to the Council.
- 15.3 The Council may require Safety Certificates for specific items of equipment.

16. MUSICAL EVENTS

- 16.1 The Hirer is requested to keep the noise level to an acceptable level. Any complaints received and/or instructions given by Council staff or evening security personnel should be immediately and fully adhered to.
- 16.2 The Hirer's attention is also drawn to their legal requirement under the Performing Rights Society for live musical performances. Further information is available upon request.
- 16.3 In the use of the Facilities, the Hirer is not to infringe any copyright or allow any copyright to be infringed.
- 16.4 If the use of the Facilities will involve the performance of any musical or dramatic works it will be the responsibility of the Hirer to obtain prior to the Hiring Period the consent of the owner of the relevant copyright and pay all other fees which may be payable in respect of the function.

17. CARE OF THE FLOOR AREA (INDOOR)

- 17.1 Where special footwear is required in any part of the Facility the Hirer must ensure that this is strictly observed.
- 17.2 Floor chalk or any other substance should not be put on any floor within the Facility. The Hirer should seek further advice and instructions from the Facility's administration staff regarding functions involving dancing or the provision of staging or event infrastructure.

18. PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

- 18.1 The Hirer shall conduct its own risk assessment and implement necessary actions arising from it. The risk assessment and required actions list is to be submitted to the Council a minimum of 14 days prior to the Hiring Period.
- 18.2 The Hirer will indemnify the Council against all claims for death, injury or loss due to its negligence or default or of any participants in the event, (either competitors or spectators), and for this purpose will effect a policy of public liability insurance with a reputable insurance company, such cover to include a minimum £5 million liability, and £10 million. Employers Liability cover. Confirmation/proof of the appropriate insurance being held shall be submitted to the Council at least 14 days in advance of the Hiring Period.

19. NO SMOKING POLICY

From Monday 30 April 2007 it is against the law to smoke in 'enclosed and substantially enclosed workplaces and public places, and in vehicles'. Smoke Detector Alarms have been fitted in the toilets and other key areas to prevent any abuse of the NO SMOKING POLICY at the Facility.

20. ALTERATIONS OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Council reserves the right without prior notice at any time to alter or amend the whole or any of these Conditions.

21. BREACH OF CONDITIONS

- 21.1 If the Hirer fails to observe and perform its obligations under these Conditions, the Council may: (a) charge to and recover from the Hirer any expenses incurred by the Council in remedying any such failure, including the cost of employing attendants, workmen, cleaners or other persons as may be appropriate; (b) cancel the instant or any other hiring of the Facilities by the Hirer without incurring any liability to the Hirer for return of the Fee or otherwise; and/or (c) require the Hirer to leave the Facility.
- 21.2 The Hirer shall indemnify the Council in full upon demand against any costs, claims, demands, liabilities or expenses arising out of or in connection with a breach by it of its obligations under these Conditions.
- 21.3 The Council's decision as to whether any act or omission constitutes a breach of these Conditions is final.

22. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

- 22.1 The Council's total liability arising out of or in connection with these Conditions shall be limited to the Fee paid.

- 22.2 The Council will not be liable for any consequential losses, claims, demands, actions, proceedings, damages, costs or expenses or other indirect or consequential liability incurred by the Hirer in the exercise of the rights granted by these Conditions.
- 22.3 The Council will not under any circumstances accept responsibility or liability in respect of any damage to or loss of any goods, articles or property of any kind brought into or left at the Facility either by the Hirer for its own purpose or by any other person or left or deposited with any officer or employee of the Council.
- 22.4 Nothing in this Condition 22 shall operate so as to limit or exclude the Council's liability for death or personal injury caused by its negligence.
- 22.5 The Council will not be liable for any loss due to any breakdown of machinery, failure of supply of electricity, leakage of water, Civil disturbances, Government restriction or act of God which may cause the Facilities to be temporarily closed or the hiring to be interrupted or cancelled.
- 22.6 The Council gives no warranty that the Facility is legally or physically fit for any specific purpose.

23 RIGHT OF ENTRY

- 23.1 The Council reserves the right for duly authorised members or officers or employees of the Council to enter the Facilities at any time for any authorised purpose.
- 23.2 The Council reserves the right to exclude or eject, as it thinks reasonable, any persons from the Facilities, function or any other premises of the Council as it shall consider objectionable (including any engaged by the Hirer to provide duties or entertainment) and the Hirer will be liable for any liability arising thereby save where the Hirer establishes negligence or bad faith on the part of the Council.

24 COMPLAINTS

Any complaint arising out of the Hiring must be made to the Facilities Manager at the time of the use of the Facilities.

25 GOVERNING LAW

These Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with Northern Irish law and the parties irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of the Northern Irish courts.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

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

All Council owned parks & open spaces within the remit of Parks & Amenities Service Unit are being considered under this process. These spaces are used by members of the public, contractors, 3rd party event organisers and our own Council staff.

The facilities managed by the Parks and Amenities unit include **Parks/open spaces** incorporating Childrens play areas, Outdoor gyms, Multi Use Games Areas, Bike and pump tracks, indoor tennis, Caravan pitches, Dog exercise areas.

Sports turf Senior Football, Junior football pitches, Baseball diamond, Gaelic pitch, Cricket Square, Cross country course, Golf course, Outdoor Bowling greens.

Facility users

Allotments: Allotment holders, Disability groups, Horticultural workshops

Cemeteries: Mourners, cemetery visitors

Council events Mayors' parade and Family fun day. Park life, Music /Jazz Twilight night, Christmas lights, Teddy bear picnic, ceremonial events. Colour runs. Biodiversity projects, Woodland and Bat walks.

Externally organised events Car show meets, Royal black chapter. Orange order, Lisburn Feile, food festivals, IFA Disability football, IFA Grassroots football, Dawn church services, corporate days, Park runs, schools' sports days, Football leagues.

Name of the activity/policy/project

Parks & Amenities parks & open spaces

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

This is a new policy.

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

To ensure that our parks & open spaces have taken consideration of S.75 equality and good relations. Many of our open spaces are utilised by 3rd party event organisers and therefore consideration must be given to this process.

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

Council owned/managed open spaces and amenities are intended for everyone to enjoy. This includes residents and visitors to the district. Our aim is to provide amenities and facilities that will be attractive and accessible to all ages and categories, including the Section 75 categories. Open spaces provide opportunities to all for informal recreation, or to walk, cycle or scoot within parks and open space or exercise along paths, bridleways and riverbanks. Allotments may provide physical exercise and other health benefits. It has been proven that the use of open green spaces can provide physical and mental health benefits to users, no matter which section 75 group they belong to. The Council recognise that facilities must be promoted so that everyone will wish to use them, so that they know about provision and accessibility to open space areas.

Open spaces within the Council area will particularly benefit certain groups whose needs have been taken into account, in terms of accessibility. Many parks, trails and greenways have been designed with particular groups in mind, for example they are suitable for those with mobility issues, including those who look after or care for children using buggies/pushchairs, those who have disabilities and older people who are using rollator walking aids or walking sticks. The council are keen to continue this in the future, taking consideration of certain Section 75 group needs, in the design and construction of new open spaces.

In local equipped areas for play, any new play equipment will be introduced for children with disabilities, so that they have the ability to use the same equipment as those without disabilities e.g. accessible ground level trampolines.

The Council wish to make green open spaces as accessible for as many section 75 groups as possible. At a number of sites, where it is appropriate, tactile maps and braille signs will be installed. This means that many more sites will be accessible for those who are blind and partially sighted.

Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play and Local Equipped Areas for Play will be installed in local communities, so that residents can access these areas in their own community. This will have a positive effect on those with particular political opinions, within racial groups and who have differing religious beliefs.

These sections of the community can access open spaces which are convenient to them, without having to travel into another community where they may not feel comfortable to play or carry out physical activity.

The Council recognises the need for creating accessible places for everyone to experience the great outdoors. Where opportunities arise the Council will explore new ways to access the countryside. If this is through obtaining formal planning permissions or permissive path agreements, with local land owners, the Council will pursue all avenues, to create new trails which are accessible to all.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Community & Wellbeing management team

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

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council owns the activity.
Parks & Amenities Service Unit within Communities & Wellbeing Directorate will implement the activity.

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

Yes

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

Limited budget, unsuccessful funding bids, government policy including planning restrictions. Dependency on partners in some areas, for example Lagan Valley Regional Park.

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

External Customers –

Other public sector organisations –

Voluntary/community/trade unions –

Other

Staff	Yes.
Service Users	Yes. Particularly those with access issues.
Other Public Sector Organisations – please list	Yes. Belfast City Council who are partners in the management of Lagan Valley Regional Park.

	Athletics NI, Belfast hills, Lough Neagh partnership
Voluntary/Community/Trade Unions – please list	Yes. The voluntary and community sector who wish to use open spaces and 3 rd party event organisers.
Other – please list (eg, Elected Members, delivery partners, contractors, etc)	Elected Members, delivery partners and contractors during construction works.

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

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements?
Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Community Planning Partners
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Corporate Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Regional Development Strategy	NI Executive
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council's Connect, Invest, Transform investment Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Local Development Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
LCCC Open space strategy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Health & Safety Policies	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
LCCC local Biodiversity Action Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Pitch strategy	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Available evidence

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

The Council recognises the importance of creating a healthy, active and accessible environment connecting places and people. We also recognise that as part of this, biodiversity, conservation and adapting to climate change are key. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a huge upsurge in people exercising outdoors. This, coupled with a desire from Council for more local DEA projects, has increased the opportunities for the development of open spaces for recreation throughout the Council area.

We have engaged with partners such as RNIB to identify areas for improvement in our Parks and then sought to avail of grant opportunities

through the Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme to install tactile maps and braille signs.

The Council’s Customer Care interface provides a regular source of useful user feedback, which we consider, when making changes to open space areas.

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

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information												
Religious Belief	2021 Census data indicates that 27% of the LCCC population were brought up in the Catholic religion while 73% were brought up in the Protestant & Other Christian religion												
Political Opinion	<div>The Local Government Election in May 2023 demonstrated the following weighting in the Borough’s political opinion. Note: only 52% of those eligible submitted a vote.</div> <table><tr><td>DUP (%)</td><td>Alliance (%)</td><td>UUP (%)</td><td>SF (%)</td><td>SDLP (%)</td><td>Ind (%)</td></tr><tr><td>35</td><td>32.5</td><td>15</td><td>10</td><td>5</td><td>2.5</td></tr></table>	DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)	35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5
DUP (%)	Alliance (%)	UUP (%)	SF (%)	SDLP (%)	Ind (%)								
35	32.5	15	10	5	2.5								
Racial Group	Using the same Census/boundary data indicates that just over 4% of the population were from an ethnic minority group												
Age	The population in 2021 totalled 149,106: 28,331 (0-14 years) 44,731 (15-39 years) 49,205 (40-64 years) 26,839 (65+ years)												
Marital Status	For the 16+ population in relation to marital and civil partnerships: 33% single 52% married or civil partnership 3% separated. 6% Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership. 6% Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership												

Sexual Orientation	The Census 2021 data indicates that 91% identified as Straight or heterosexual, 2% of the household population in identified as Gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation, while 7% Prefer not to say or not stated.
Men & Women Generally	The LCCC population (2021) was 51% female and 49% male. This reflects the overall NI position
Disability	Using the same census data as above indicates that 32% of the population had a long-term health problem or disability. Several studies have shown a positive association between access to natural environments and increased rates of physical activity for all ages. Physical activity can help reduce obesity, improve mental health and overall health and well-being. We need to make sure that our open spaces are inclusive to all.
People with and without Dependents	In 2021, of the 60,143 households in the Lisburn & Castlereagh City council area 14.4% (8,661) had dependent children. 10.98% of the population on average provide unpaid care, with 3.4% providing more than 50 hours per week.

Needs, experiences and priorities.

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

Section 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	Accessibility to open spaces in their own, local community, where they feel safe.
Political Opinion	Accessibility to open spaces in their own, local community, where they feel safe. The Council

	recognises the diverse community celebrations and cultural traditions within Northern Ireland. For all events, Council takes a positive action approach, working with communities, agencies, and individuals to address any potential environmental or social impacts of planned events as appropriate and to ensure community cohesion. All community celebrations/events will be considered and assessed in line with event booking process.
Racial Group	Accessibility to open spaces in their own, local community, where they feel safe. Some ethnic minorities, who are new to the area, may need access to translation of information, and their knowledge of open spaces may be limited.
Age	Older people may be less mobile than others and will need safe level surfaces in order to use open spaces. They may also need rest areas (seating or shelter) and well-lit areas, where they will feel safe. Accessible toilets will also be required for some older people.
Marital Status	No particular needs identified for people of different marital status
Sexual Orientation	No particular needs identified for people of different sexual orientation
Men & Women Generally	Need for safe spaces with areas which are well-lit, especially at night.
Disability	Paths, trails and greenways accessible for wheelchair users and those with other mobility conditions. . Signage and information available in formats that those with visual/hearing impairments can access. Accessible toilet provision. Other disabled people (for example neurodivergent people, those with mental health conditions) may also benefit from the provision of more quality open spaces that are convenient to where they live.
People with and without Dependents	Carers of children/older people/disabled people need accessibility for buggies/wheelchairs/walking aids so that they can enjoy open spaces as a family group. The Council recognises the diverse community celebrations and cultural traditions

	within Northern Ireland. For all events, Council takes a positive action approach, working with communities, agencies, and individuals to address any potential environmental or social impacts of planned events as appropriate and to ensure community cohesion.
--	--

Needs

The main need is for accessibility for all. This includes those with disabilities, those with dependents and those who are older. People in these groups often have different needs from other groups. They may find access to the countryside difficult or limiting. If paths have steps, steep gradients, gates or small entrances, those in wheelchairs, using walking sticks, partially sighted, using pushchairs or those who are unsteady on their feet would find these obstacles difficult to overcome. Traditionally parks have been designed for able-bodied children. It has been recognised that there is also a great need for play equipment for those children who have disability so that they too can access this play space.

There is also a need for some communities to access open spaces in their local area. If those with particular religious beliefs, political opinions or racial groups find it difficult to go into areas where people have different beliefs, opinions or are a different race, then the council has endeavoured to introduce Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play and Local Equipped Areas for Play. These play areas are usually convenient to residential areas. The council will ensure that the strategy provides equitable open space provision across all communities and supports community cohesion towards celebrations in line with normal event booking practices. Open spaces convenient to residential areas, also provides space for children and young people to play, who may not have access to transport.

It became apparent throughout the Covid 19 lockdown period that there is a need for additional suitable walking trails within the Council area. Some of the current paths are not suitable for those with limited mobility. The Council realise that appropriate path provision is necessary, so that people with disabilities, those with dependents and older people, also have access to the countryside and a place to exercise. Due care has been taken by the Council to consider these groups and many new open spaces have been designed with these groups in mind. There has also been a focus on opening local walking paths and trails. This has enabled those living in cities and towns to walk to the

open space that they wish to use for exercise. This also has a positive effect on climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of individual households. Where appropriate, tactile maps and braille signs have been installed in parks to provide improved access for those who are visually impaired.

The Council also recognises a need on occasions to support some event organisers that use our open spaces with certain infrastructure, such as barriers, toilets and Gazebos.

Experiences

The experience of those with disabilities, buggies/pushchairs or rollators is that at many open space areas, they may not have full access to a site due to poorly planned walkways or barriers to using them. The Council wants to avoid this, and so all greenways, paths and parks have been carefully pre-planned to take all end users into account. Tactile maps and braille signs have also been installed at a number of sites to enable access for those who are partially sighted. Children with disabilities have experienced a lack of play equipment that is suitable for their use, in traditional playparks.

Priorities

The priorities of the groups that could be affected by access (as stated in the table above), will be full accessibility to open spaces within the council area, so that they can achieve the same benefits as those who are not in these groups.

Part 2. Screening questions

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

Section 75 Category	Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none	Level of impact - major or minor* - see guidance below
Religious Belief	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor
Political Opinion	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor

Racial Group	Positive – people can access open spaces which are convenient to where they live and safe.	Minor
Age	<p>Positive – more older people, particularly those with mobility issues, will be able to safely access and use open space areas, due to enhanced accessibility measures.</p> <p>Children will have access to open spaces which are convenient to where they live, encouraging participation in physical activity.</p> <p>Teenagers will be able to access open spaces designed with their needs in mind – pump parks, skate parks.</p>	Minor
Marital Status	No differential impact identified	None
Sexual Orientation	No differential impact identified	None
Men & Women Generally	No differential impact identified	None
Disability	<p>Positive - People with certain disabilities, including those who are wheelchair users, use mobility aids, and who are visually impaired will find open spaces more accessible.</p> <p>Those who are visually impaired, can use tactile maps and braille signage.</p>	Minor

	Those who have mental health disabilities can access safe open spaces where they can relax and feel close to nature.	
People with and without Dependants	Positive - People with dependants, including those who use buggies or wheelchairs, will find open spaces easier to use. Open spaces will have improved facilities which whole families can enjoy – with this comes social benefits.	Minor

* See Appendix 1 for details.

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

Section 75 Category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Political Opinion		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Racial Group		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Age		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Marital Status		No opportunities identified in relation to

		this policy for any of these groups.
Sexual Orientation		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Men & Women Generally		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
Disability		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.
People with and without Dependents		No opportunities identified in relation to this policy for any of these groups.

Open spaces have been designed to accommodate all S.75 groups. LCCC owned spaces are shared spaces and not specifically aimed to accommodate one particular S.75 group. No further opportunities have been identified at this time as the needs of different groups have been considered fully in this activity. However, if further issues arise, they will be addressed.

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

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

No

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

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

1. to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

Open spaces will allow improved access so that more people with disabilities will be able to use the Council's parks and greenways. Through this, there will

be more interaction between disabled people and non-disabled people, and so this may work towards promoting more positive attitudes towards disabled people. There is also the potential for use of images of disabled people in promotional material for council facilities and spaces, which will also raise awareness and promote positive attitudes.

2. to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?
LCCC open spaces encourage the participation of disabled people in public life, by providing opportunities for those with disabilities to enjoy outdoor spaces, by giving them access to these spaces. When planning new sites and refurbishing existing sites, the views of those with disabilities will be sought, to ensure improved accessibility.

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

Good Relations Category	Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative? [if no specific impact identified, say none]	Level of impact – minor/major*
Religious Belief	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor
Political Opinion	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor
Racial Group	Should have a positive impact as open spaces will provide a safe and secure environment.	Minor

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

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

Multiple identity

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

The Council recognises that no individual sits in one group and this has been given consideration.

Increased accessibility may particularly benefit older people with disabilities, younger people with disabilities, people who have dependent children or dependants who are disabled.

The development of the Council’s open spaces may be considered to be designed with people with disabilities, dependents and older people in mind, however these areas can be used by anyone in the community. Is it also recognised that those using parks, trails and greenways, for example those with disabilities, will fall into other groups. They may be young or old, male or female or from a specific religious background.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

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

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

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

Screening Decision/Outcome	Reasons/Evidence
----------------------------	------------------

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]	This policy will be screened out with mitigation. We have concluded that the impacts will be minor and should generally be positive for all groups. However, in developing plans for open spaces, due consideration will be given to some issues identified, including accessibility and inclusion.
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?

Mitigation factors – the geography of the council area will be studied closely and open spaces will be designed taking into account path width, path incline, seating provision and rest places at points around open spaces. Entrances to parks and greenways are designed to be accessible for wheelchair users and those pushing buggies. New playparks, and those which are being refurbished, will be designed to provide play equipment for those in wheelchairs. The allotment site provides access for those with disabilities, in terms of accessible raised beds and potting benches and accessible toilets.

The screening has identified some needs and potential positive impacts on the following three groups – those with dependents, those with disabilities and those in the older age category. The impacts on these groups are now taken into consideration during construction works and the redevelopment of open spaces, and those impacts are minor or none. All measures have been taken to mitigate any potentially negative impacts on these groups.

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

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

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

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

Two elements to monitoring:

1. Monitoring the activity generally as part of normal review and evaluation or service improvement

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

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

Where possible 'Access Counters' will be fitted to monitor footfall and use of the open spaces.

Periodic spot surveys will also take place to gather qualitative feedback from users and to gather comments for further improvement. This can take place at Council organised events etc.

The Council's Customer Care policy is advertised on all Park signage to encourage feedback – good or bad. All communication is responded to.

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

Play equipment for those with disabilities will be monitored and kept in working order. Weekly and quarterly inspections by Assets unit followed up full independent annual inspection with report.

Accessibility to facilities will be constantly reviewed and improved when identified.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: William Torrens	P&A Manger	21 Jan 2025
Reviewed by: Annie Wilson	Equality Officer	22 Jan 2025
Approved by: Gareth Lennox	HoS P&A (Acting)	22 Jan 2025

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

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

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

Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact

*Major impact (none)

Minor impact (none)

No impact (none)