

Section 75 Screening Form

Part 1: Policy Scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy or policy area. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

You should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

Information about the policy

Name of the policy:

Shaping Sustainable Places

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

Existing	Revised	New
		X

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims and outcomes)

The Shaping Sustainable Places (SSP) Programme was developed by Urban Regeneration officials in collaboration with Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Active Travel and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Rural Affairs Division. It articulates a vision for maximising the limited Executive budgets available for regeneration through focused, strategically aligned projects.

The Programme's objective is to deliver place-based regeneration and infrastructure interventions which would be developed by Local Councils in line with overarching Programme outcomes. These would need to demonstrate value for money and be prioritised.

There are 41 urban towns and cities across Northern Ireland. In addition, there are 24 intermediate settlements and 69 villages. These 134 villages, towns and cities are important for a range of reasons: *"they are a crucial part of our communities and local economies that create jobs, nurture small businesses and inject billions of pounds into our economy"*. Similarly, they represent the heart of communities, are rich in heritage assets and generate a sense of place and local pride. They play an important role in bringing people together and can foster a sense of community and place.

Over the last thirty years village, town, city centres and high streets have faced a range of issues (which have been exacerbated by Covid-19, the 2007 economic crisis and rising share of internet shopping). As one commentator has noted longer term trends of decentralisation (development away from town centres) and disaggregation (separation of uses) has removed many village, town and city centre activities and assets and reduced reasons to visit and dwell. This has led, in many places, to sustained falls in village, town and city centre residents and commercial and other activities with consequent self-reinforcing "hollowing out" effects.

Renewal will depend on remaking "work-live-spend-do connections" in and around village, town and city centres to increase the number of households, and the diversity of social groups, for whom high streets: *"should be safe and attractive gathering points for whole communities, where people can live, work, shop, learn, do business, use public services and enjoy their leisure time."* Renewing these connections, however, also needs to recognise that in the future the way people shop, and communities use their town centres will be different. This changes the nature of what will make a place successful.

From a policy perspective (given the above) there is a need to support interventions which develop village, town and city centres as multifunctional social centres. The impact of Covid-19, and the resultant negative effects on village, town and city centres, has reinforced the importance of adopting a coordinated strategic inter-governmental response - to both the immediate and longer-term recovery priorities for village, town and city centres - in order to address the specific needs of each place and community. One of the key roles of SSP will be, therefore, to build upon existing structures of governance and institutions to redirect them towards collectively defined objectives that meet these needs.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

YES	NO	N/A
X		

If YES, explain how.

The interventions will lead to an improved environment in cities, towns and small settlements where projects are delivered. This will result in increased appetite to live, work, visit and invest in these areas.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

The programme was initiated by the Urban Regeneration directorates within DfC, with contributions from DAERA, DfI Active Travel, Local Councils and stakeholder groups.

Who owns and who implements each element of the policy?

The programme is owned and initiated by DfC

Implementation factors

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

If yes, are they

- ☒ financial
- ☐ legislative
- ☒ other, please specify: timely delivery of interventions, supported by Council led stakeholder groups

Main stakeholders affected

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

- ☐ staff
- ☒ service users
- ☒ other public sector organisations
- ☒ voluntary/community/trade unions
- ☒ other, please specify - the general public who use the city centres for work recreation etc.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

What are they and who owns them?

There are a number of national/local policies relevant to this policy/ study:

- Programme for Government (2024-2027) (The Executive Office)
- DfC: Vital and Viable: a Good Practice Guide for Breathing New Life into Cities and Towns (2007)
- Town and city centre masterplans (DfC and councils)
- Living Places - An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland (DfI)
- Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 (RDS) (DFI)
- DfC: Building Inclusive Communities 2020 – 2025
- Section 75 – The Northern Ireland Act 1998
- DRD: Regional Development Strategy for NI 2035
- DRD: Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (2012)
- DfI: Living with Water (2014)
- SIB: Infrastructure 2050, The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland Draft Consultation document (2022)
- Tackling Rural Policy and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework (2016)
- Emerging Future Rural Policy
- The Climate Change Act 2022
- The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaption Programme (NICCAP)
- Green Growth strategy
- Just Transition
- End Violence Against Women & Girls Strategic Framework

Available evidence

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for **each** Section 75 categories.

For the purpose of obtaining data for this screening exercise, DfC Urban Regeneration Directors are of the view that the Northern Ireland Census 2021 statistics would have the most relevance in providing an illustration of the likely patrons of the area covered by this programme.

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
General	Various Stakeholder engagements have been carried out in the past to inform previous regeneration initiatives such as public realm and revitalisation and their screenings. Those results will also serve to inform this screening.
Religious belief	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to religious belief in Northern Ireland: 45.70% stated their religion as Catholic; 43.48% stated their religion as Protestant; 9.32% none or religious belief not stated; 1.50% stated their religion as other

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information																						
Political opinion	In the 2024 Westminster Elections, 779,840 valid votes were cast. The results were as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="395 611 849 1205"> <thead> <tr> <th>Party</th><th>NI</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SF</td><td>27.0%</td></tr> <tr> <td>DUP</td><td>22.1%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Alliance</td><td>15.0%</td></tr> <tr> <td>UUP</td><td>12.2%</td></tr> <tr> <td>SDLP</td><td>11.1%</td></tr> <tr> <td>TUV</td><td>6.2%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Green</td><td>1.1%</td></tr> <tr> <td>PBP</td><td>1.1%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Aontu</td><td>1.0%</td></tr> <tr> <td>Other</td><td>3.25%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Party	NI	SF	27.0%	DUP	22.1%	Alliance	15.0%	UUP	12.2%	SDLP	11.1%	TUV	6.2%	Green	1.1%	PBP	1.1%	Aontu	1.0%	Other	3.25%
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Racial group	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics Northern-Ireland-wide: 96.55% were of the white ethnic group; 86.5% were born in Northern Ireland; 4.85% were born in GB; 3.54% were born in other EU countries; 2.12% were born in the Republic of Ireland; 2.99% were born elsewhere.																						
Age	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to age breakdown within Northern Ireland: 19% were aged 0-15; 66% were aged 16-64; 15% were aged 65+																						

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
Marital status	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to marital or same-sex civil partnership status of persons over the age of 16 within Northern Ireland: 38.07% were single and had never been married or registered a same-sex civil partnership; 45.77% were currently married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership; 6.02% were divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved; 3.78% were separated, but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership; 6.36% were widowed or the surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership
Sexual orientation	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to Sexual Orientation within Northern Ireland: 90.04% identified as straight or heterosexual 2.09% identified as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or other 7.87% preferred not to say
Men and women generally	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded the following statistics with regard to gender within Northern Ireland: 50.81% male; 49.19% female
Disability	Primary data is not available for the “persons with a disability and persons without” Section 75 category. However, the 2021 Northern

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information
	Ireland Census collected data on “persons with a limiting long-term health problem or disability”. Statistics showed: 11.45% of people stated they had day to day activities limited a lot. 12.88% of people stated they had day to day activities limited a little 75.67% of people stated they were not limited.
Dependants	The 2021 Northern Ireland Census recorded that within Northern Ireland: 30.69% of households have dependents

Note to reader - If you are aware of and would like the Department to take into account any further evidence or information relevant to this policy, please send this to: - ssp@communities-ni.gov.uk

Needs, experiences and priorities

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

Section 75 Category	Details of Needs/Experiences/Priorities
Religious belief	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for people of different religious beliefs. All groups will benefit directly and/or indirectly from the project.
Political opinion	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for people of different political opinion. All groups will benefit directly and/or indirectly from the project.
Racial group	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for people of different racial background. All groups will benefit directly and/or indirectly from the project.
Age	Needs and priorities of young and old people are: • Attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant regional centres; • Smooth even paving surfaces with good slip resistance; • Wide footpaths; • A well-lit environment; • Provision of safe road crossing points at appropriate locations; • Lack of obstacles and street clutter; • Seating, perch points and pause/rest points (for older people especially); • User-friendly transit plans; • Public spaces; • Green spaces; • Child-friendly areas.

Section 75 Category	Details of Needs/Experiences/Priorities
Marital status	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for people of different marital status. All groups will benefit directly and/or indirectly from the project.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for people with different sexual orientation. All groups will benefit directly and/or indirectly from the project.
Men and women generally	There is no evidence of any different needs, experiences or priorities for men and women generally. All groups will benefit directly and/or indirectly from the project.
Disability	Needs and priorities of people with a disability are: • Attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant regional centres; • Removal of barriers/obstacles on footways; • Ease of Access; • Parking opportunities for blue badge holders; • Quality of pedestrian walkways; • Easy to navigate; • Pedestrian crossing points, with tactile paving; • Appropriate kerb heights.
Dependants	Those with dependents require enhanced accessibility and more child-friendly areas within regional centres.

Part 2: Screening Questions

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, consider the answers to the following 4 screening questions.

When answering the 4 screening questions:

1. If the conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 and/or good relations categories, then you may decide to screen the policy **out**. If a policy is 'screened out', you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.
2. If the conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to an EQIA.
3. If the conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an EQIA, or to measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of a 'major' impact

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

In favour of 'minor' impact

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated

by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;

- c) Any differing equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In favour of none

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

Taking into account the earlier evidence, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the 4 screening questions and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds? Minor/Major/None		
Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people of different religious beliefs.	None
Political opinion	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people with different political opinions.	None
Racial group	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people from different racial/ethnic groups.	None
Age	This programme could deliver improved infrastructure and accessibility	None

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 grounds? Minor/Major/None		
Section 75 Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of Impact? Minor/Major/None
Marital status	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on men and women	None
Sexual orientation	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on people depending on their sexual orientation.	None
Men and women generally	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on men and women generally.	None
Disability	This programme will seek to make many positive impacts for persons with disabilities e.g. greater accessible public space, better pedestrianisation, increased use of public spaces, and may therefore have a positive impact on this group	None
Dependants	We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on dependents. It is intended that the effects of this policy will benefit people regardless of whether or not they have dependents.	None

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories?		
Section 75 Category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Religious belief		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people of different religious beliefs.
Political opinion		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people of different political opinions.
Racial group		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people from different racial groups.
Age		Improved infrastructure and accessibility which may have a positive effect for the youngest and older population
Marital status		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people of different marital status.
Sexual orientation		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people of different sexual orientations.

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within any of the Section 75 categories?		
Section 75 Category	If Yes , provide details	If No , provide reasons
Men and women generally		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people of different genders.
Disability		Improved infrastructure and accessibility which should promote a more inclusive society for all by enabling better access for disabled people
Dependants		This policy does not offer any opportunity to better promote Equality of Opportunity for people with dependents.

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? Minor/Major/None		
Good Relations Category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	This programme is expected to have a positive impact due to the regeneration and cultivation of regional centres as inclusive and shared spaces. The Programme could contribute therefore to better relations between people of different religious beliefs.	Minor
Political opinion	This programme is expected to have a positive impact due to the regeneration and cultivation of regional centres as inclusive and shared spaces. The Programme could contribute therefore to better relations between people of different political beliefs.	Minor
Racial group	This programme is expected to have a positive impact due to the regeneration and cultivation of regional centres as inclusive and shared spaces. The Programme could contribute therefore to better relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds	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 reasons
Religious belief	This programme is expected to have a positive impact due to the regeneration and cultivation of regional centres as inclusive and	

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 reasons
Political opinion	shared spaces. The Programme could contribute therefore to better relations between these Section 75 groups.	
Racial group		

Additional considerations**Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?
(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

This programme represents no differential impact on those from multiple groups in comparison to those from within a single group.

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

Any impact from the programme will benefit all groups within the equality categories, including those with multiple identities, by making regional centres safer places to live, work, visit and invest in.

Part 3: Screening Decision

In light of your answers to the previous questions, do you feel that the policy should: (please underline one)

1. **Not be subject to an EQIA**
2. **~~Not be subject to an EQIA (with mitigating measures /alternative policies)~~**
3. **~~Be subject to an EQIA~~**

If 1 or 2 (i.e. not be subject to an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons why:

This programme aims to bring Local and Central Government together to the benefit of all those who live in, work in & visit village, town and city centres across urban and rural Northern Ireland. It is not considered to have any adverse differential impact on any section 75 Groups – any impact is expected to be positive across the groups. Therefore, there is currently no need for an EQIA assessment.

If 3. (i.e. to conduct an EQIA), please provide details of the reasons:

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations

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

If so give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

The Post-Project Evaluation will consider any amendments or changes that could be applied to future uses of this delivery model to better promote equality.

As Post Project Evaluations are received by Councils following the completion of projects, the department will consider any adjustments required. The (programme/policy) will also have a Mid-year review, at which point any required adjustments may also be made.

Part 4: Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impacts arising from the policy which may lead you to conduct an EQIA, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

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

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, then you should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Please detail proposed monitoring arrangements below:

The policy programme will be monitored after implementation for two years to ensure that the policy delivers as intended and does not create a new inequality or exacerbate an existing one.

Part 5: Approval and Authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Hugh Killough	Deputy Principal	07/04/2025
Approved by:		
Paul McNaught	Grade 5	16/06/25

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on your website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.