

Screening Form

- 1. Is this a** Plan
- 2. Name of Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service** Tourism Events Programme 2026
- 3. Reference** 419
- 4. Category of Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service** Existing

5. Please provide a description of the Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service

The Tourism Events Programme is made up of a series of visitor-oriented events delivered across the borough, including seasonal festivals and events, cultural experiences, food and drink events and outdoor activities. Its purpose is to attract visitors, support the local tourism economy, and promote the borough as a destination.

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

To develop, plan and deliver a Tourism Event Programme which can deliver safe, sustainable events meeting the Council Corporate Plan, Integrated Tourism Development and Regeneration Strategy (ITDRS) objectives and implementing actions and recommendations from the Borough Events Strategic Direction to deliver tourism outcomes.

7. Who initiated or wrote the Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service? Wendy Smith, Event Manager ANDBC

8. Who is responsible for the implementation of the Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service? Wendy Smith, Event Manager ANDBC

9. Is this policy affected by timetables established by other relevant Public Authorities? No

Equality

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

Yes

1a. If Yes, which Section 75 categories are expected to benefit?

All

1b. How are they expected to benefit?

The vision set out in the Heart AND Soul Strategic Direction is to host a balanced and sustainable portfolio of events, showcasing Ards and North Down's assets and delivering a range of cultural, social and economic outcomes for its people and visitors.

All section 75 categories are expected to benefit -the events programme is free to attend and open to all

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

Yes

2a. If yes, are they:

Financial - is it dependent on financial support of Council or another named Body or Organisation?

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

Staff, Service Users, Other Public Sector organisations, Voluntary/Community/Trade Unions, Potential Visitors,

Businesses and employees within the Borough, local event organisers, service providers and potential providers and attendees at events. Tourism NI, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as a potential funder, Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association, community groups across the Borough, NMNI, National Trust (Mount Stewart) and WWT (Castle Espie)

4. Is this policy associated with any other Council Policy (or Policies)?

Yes

4a. If yes, please state the related Policy (or Policies)

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Borough Events Strategic Direction 2020-2025 Tourism Events Grant

Scheme 21/22 2021/22 Arts and Tourism Events Transition Plan 2022/23 Tourism Events Programme

Heart and Soul Events Strategy (BESD)

Safeguarding Children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable

Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy 2018 - 2030

Disability Action Plan 2020 - 2025

Licensing Policy

Equality Action Plan 2020 - 2025

Procurement Policy

Purchasing and Payments Policy

Lands and Property Policy

Data Protection Policy

Complaints Handling Procedure

Health & Safety Policy Statement

Management Risk from Manual Handling Operations Policy

Food & Drink Destination Development Plan

Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan 2025 – 2028

Risk Management Strategy

5. Does this policy affect Internal or External users?

Both

Evidence to help inform the Section 75 screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

6. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy?

All

Religious belief evidence

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Political opinion evidence

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Racial group evidence

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Age evidence

Add data from Market research here but again it is open to all to attend

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Marital status evidence

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Sexual orientation evidence

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Men and women generally evidence

No additional evidence is gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

Disability evidence

A Disability Audit was carried out in advance of the 2024-25 programme to ensure all reasonable adjustments were made to make each event accessible to all - we continue to review and apply the recommendations from this audit in all event plans

Dependants evidence

Additional dependants evidence is not gathered as the Tourism Events Programme includes a series of events that are free to attend and open to all.

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

7. Please provide details of different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the categories

A festival or event as defined in the Borough Events Strategic Direction:

'Festivals and events are not 'business as usual' and provide opportunities for shared public celebrations, distinctive from everyday cultural activity. They are inherently diverse and will engage with all multiple identities as represented within Section 75 legislation.

The range of needs of attendees will be considered in preparing for each event and will be determined by the event aim and purpose, topography of the site(s), previous identified needs and local knowledge.

In relation to the considerations made by the events team when planning the Tourism Events Programme, considerations will be made for each of the categories:

Religious Belief and Political Opinion:

Events should be non-partisan and respectful of all beliefs. Scheduling should consider religious holidays and political events to avoid exclusion.

Racial Group: Programmes should celebrate multiculturalism and be accessible to all racial groups.

Cultural sensitivities should be respected.

Age: Events should cater to different age groups with appropriate programming. Family-friendly timings and activities for children, as well as accessibility for older attendees.

Marital Status: Accommodate different family structures with ticketing options and seating arrangements that reflect the diversity of family units.

Sexual Orientation: Ensure the events are inclusive and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community, with a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination.

Gender: Strive for gender balance in event representation, and consider the safety and privacy needs of all genders in event planning.

Disability: Ensure all event sites are accessible, provide necessary accommodations, and consider the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities.

Dependants: Offer facilities to support those with care-giving responsibilities - baby changing, pram parking etc

8. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Religious belief?

None

9. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Political opinion?

None

10. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Racial group?

None

11. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Age?

None

12. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Marital status?

None

13. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Sexual orientation?

None

14. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Men and women generally?

None

15. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Disability?

None

16. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, in relation to Dependants?

None

17. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? If Yes, provide details. If No, provide reasons.

Religious belief

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Political opinion

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Racial group

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Age

No as the programme will consider the range of needs of all previous attendees and potential attendees and ensure these are addressed.

The portfolio will also have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

The events, in planning, will consider and make adjustments for younger children, young adults, older people, those with dependants and those with a disability as well as a range of other dimensions that may be identified in particular for the event and will ensure they are inclusive of a breadth of identified needs and interests.

Marital Status

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Sexual orientation

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Men and women generally

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Disability

Yes - the programme will consider the range of needs of all previous attendees and potential attendees and ensure these are addressed.

The programme will also have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity

across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

A disability audit has been conducted and the recommendations from this audit have been implemented including accessible site access and layouts, accessible toilets in sufficient numbers, accessible viewing areas, rest areas with seating throughout the event sites, quiet/sensory spaces, clear, high contrast signage, BSL interpreters when appropriate and suitable pre-event information that includes accessibility details, terrain descriptions and facilities available. Accessoloo will be available at all events on the programme - they will promote their attendance on their social media channels and website, directly targeting potential attendees who require this service.

For the 2026 season we will introduce a quiet hour to Sea Bangor, Comber Earlies Food Festival and Tide and Turf Festival.

Dependants

No as the programme will consider the range of needs of all previous attendees and potential attendees and ensure these are addressed.

The portfolio will also have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy and Arts and Heritage Strategy.

The events, in planning, will consider and make adjustments for younger children, young adults, older people, those with dependants and those with a disability as well as a range of other dimensions that may be identified in particular for the event and will ensure they are inclusive of a breadth of identified needs and interests.

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

None

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

No

19a. Please provide your reasons below

No as the programme will have regard to the Council's commitment to promote equality of opportunity across all its services and be delivered within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy.

Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006

20. Is there evidence to suggest that this policy would promote positive attitudes towards people with a disability?

Yes

20a. Provide details of opportunities identified

The events programme will ensure the needs of those with a disability and their carers are addressed. This will be through ensuring the outcomes from the disability audit previously carried out are incorporated and reasonable adjustments made.

Learning from previous events will be used in all forward planning.

Individuals will be informed via digital promotional channels that where a specific need exists this will be considered in advance and reasonable adjustments made.

The 2026 programme will see the introduction of an "accessibility host" - a clearly identifiable trained person on site whose sole focus is accessibility support

21. Is there evidence to suggest that this policy would encourage the participation of people with a disability in public life?

Yes

21a. Provide details of opportunities identified

Quiet areas and accessible toilet facilities will be available at all events.

Signage and all information will be in accessible format where possible.

Information on events is made available in a range of formats on request and advertised through some disability representative groups.

Accessoloo will be present at all events and all training will include disability awareness in preparation and delivery and include JAM Card, Dementia Awareness etc Introduction of quiet hour and accessibility host

Additional Considerations

22. Are there any potential impacts of the policy / decision (positive or negative) on people with multiple identities?

No

Monitoring Arrangements

23. Outline what data you could collect in the future to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties

Market Research

Future disability audits

Records of complaints and compliments

Records from Event Control Log

25. On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy/decision is

Screened Out - No negative impacts

Email

heather.shields@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Screening Panel Comments

Appendix - Religious Belief

Religious belief (Internal)

* Small numbers removed as individuals could be identifiable

	Catholic	Protestant & other Christian	Other religions	Total
Males F/T	33	388	34	425
	8%	84%	8%	100%
Males P/T	*	*	*	8
	25%	63%	13%	100%
Females F/T	58	223	6	287
	20%	78%	2%	100%
Females P/T	12	20	5	35
	32%	54%	14%	100%
Total	105	606	46	757
	14%	80%	6%	100%

Religious belief (External)

The Northern Ireland Census 2021 (NISRA) statistics for the Borough area show the religious group the person belongs to or for people with no current religion their religious group of upbringing. People with no current religion and no religion of upbringing are labelled 'None'.

On Census Day 2021 in Northern Ireland just under one person in five (19.0%) either had 'no religion' (17.4%) or 'religion not stated' (1.6%). Nearly one person in three in Ards and North Down (32.1%) had 'no

religion' or 'religion not stated' On census day 2021 bringing together information on current religion and religion of upbringing, 45.7% of the population were either Catholic or brought up as a Catholic, while 43.5% were recorded as 'Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related)'. Again, bringing together information on current religion and religion of upbringing, 1.5% of the population are classified as 'other religions' and 9.3% of the population identified that they neither belonged to nor were brought up in a religion. This points to the increasingly secular nature of the population ('None').

	All usual Residents	Catholic	Protestant and other Christian Religions	Other Reglions	None
Ards and North Down	163,659	22,912	111,288	1,636	27,822
Northern Ireland	1,903,178	875,461	818,366	19,031	171,286

	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
All Usual residents	163,659	1,903,178
Catholic	18,003	799,334
Presbyterian	47,461	323,540
Church of Ireland	22, 912	228,381
Methodist	6,546	38,063
Other Chrtistian Religions	16,365	133,222
Other Religions	1,636	19,031
No Religion/Not stated	52,370	361,603

Appendix - Political Opinion

Political opinion (External)

Electoral Office data from recent Local Government elections (2023) and Northern Ireland Assembly Elections (2022) detail the political representation on Ards and North Down. Data also shows the turnout to vote. This tends to be lower than the rest of Northern Ireland, suggesting less strong political opinions, however the results show a preference in Ards and North Down for Unionist Parties.

Constituency	Registered Voters	Turnout
North Down	70,176	60%
Strangford	70,755	68%
Northern Ireland	1,373,731	63%

District Electoral Area	Eligible Electorate	Votes Polled
Overall Turnout (2023)		
Ards and North Down Borough Council Area	123,736	57,677
Overall Turnout (2023)		
Northern Ireland	1,380,372	745,400

Party	Local Government Seats Held	Local Government Seats Held	NI Assembly Elections seats held	NI Assembly Elections seats held
	ANDBC	Northern Ireland	North Down and Strangford	Northern Ireland
Alliance	12	67	4	17
Aontù	0	0	0	0
DUP	14	122	3	25
Green	2	5	0	0
Independants	3	19	1	2
People before Profit	0	1	0	1

SDLP	1	39	0	8
Sinn Fèin	0	144	0	27
TUV	0	9	0	1
UUP	8	54	2	9
Other	0	1	0	0

Appendix - Racial Group

Racial group (Internal)

* Small numbers removed as individuals could be identifiable

Racial Group	Total	Percentage
White	682	78.66%
Black	*	*
Chinese	*	*
Other	*	*
Did not want to answer	*	*
Left Black	176	20.30%

Racial group (External)

On Census Day 2021, 3.4% of the population, or 65,600 people, belonged to minority ethnic groups. This is around double the 2011 figure (1.8% – 32,400 people) and four times the 2001 figure (0.8% – 14,300 people); Taken together the bulletin reports and tables released today show an increasing diversity from 2011 to 2021 in Northern Ireland's population across statistics on ethnic group, main language, country of birth and passports held. This increasing diversity is evident to a greater or lesser degree across all 11 Local Government Districts.

All Usual Residents	163,660
White	159,892
Irish Traveller	24
Roma	19
Indian	388
Chinese	500
Filipino	308
Pakistani	87
Arab	28
Other Asian	468
Black African	309

Black Other	135
Mixed	1,236
Other ethnicities	266

Main Language	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
English	160,385	1,808,019
Other	3,279	95,158

Passports Held	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
All Usual Residents	163,659	1,903,178
UK only	109,651	894,493
Ireland Only	13,092	513,858
Uk and Ireland	13,098	95,158
Other Passport(s)	4,909	95,158
No Passport	21,275	304,508

Appendix - Age

Age (Internal)

Age Profile	Female	Female %	Male	Male %
16 to 29	20	6%	26	65%
30 to 39	75	23%	83	19%
40 to 49	105	33%	121	27%
50 to 59	80	25%	176	39%
65+	42	13%	41	9%
Total	322	100%	447	100%

Age (External)

On Census Day 2021 Ards and North down had the largest increase in the number of people aged 65 and over. This rose from 27,692 (17.7%) in 2011 to 36,226 (22.1%) in 2021, demonstrating the scale of population change due to ageing.

Age Profile	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
0 to 14	361,602	27,822
15 to 39	589,983	44,187
40 to 64	609,015	55,644
65+	323,539	36,226
Total	1,903,173	163,659

Appendix - Marital Status

Marital Status (Internal)

* Small numbers removed as individuals could be identifiable

Marital Status	Total	Percentage
Single	180	20.76%
Married	405	46.71%
Divorced	35	4.04%
Co Habiting	14	1.61%
Separated	25	2.88%
Civil Partnership	*	*
Left Blank	207	23.88%

Marital Status (External)

Statistics classifies people aged 16 and over according to their legal marital or civil partnership status on Census Day 21 March 2021. The law in relation to marriage and civil partnership changed in the ten years to 2021. A summary of the changes in Northern Ireland is given below:

- civil partnership for opposite-sex couples became legal in late 2019;
- marriage for same-sex couples became legal in 2020; and
- in late 2020 a couple in a civil partnership could convert their status from civil partnership to marriage.

The rise in the 'single' population and the fall in the 'married' population here is in line with results from recent censuses in England and Wales. These figures mirror changes in society and specifically in personal relationships that has been witnessed over the last 50 years. Ards & North Down LGD, which has the oldest demographic profile of all 11 LGDs, has the highest percentage of adults who were widowed, at 8%.

Marital Status	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
Single	575,966	41,540
Married or in Civil Partnership	682,065	68,340
Separated, Divorced or Formally in a Civil Partnership	151,570	13,400
Widowed or Surviving partner from a Civil Partnership	97,004	10,720

Appendix - Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation

Statistics show that 2.1% (31,600) of NI population aged 16 and over identified as ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+)’ and 90.0% (1,363,900) identified as ‘straight or heterosexual’. More urban LGDs have a higher percentage of people who identified as LGB+. Almost 8% of our population aged 16 and over (119,300) either ticked ‘prefer not to say’ or chose not to answer the question. Taken together, these are labelled ‘No sexual orientation stated’ in these statistics.

8.8% percent of people who identified as LGB+ in Northern Ireland live in the Ards and North Down Borough, Statistics also show that 800 Households in the Borough are living in a same sex couple relationship.

Living in households by relationship	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
Living in a Same Sex Couple	9,600	800
Not Living as a Couple	694,600	53,500
	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
All usual Residents (over 16)	1,515,700	134,000
Straight or Hetrosexual	1,364,130	121,940
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or other Sexual orientation	30,314	2,680
No sexual orientation stated	121,256	9,380

Appendix - Men and Women Generally

Men and women generally (Internal)

Male	Female	Total
511	356	867
58.94%	41.06%	100%

Men and women generally (External)

The Northern Ireland usually resident population increased by 5.1% (92,300) from 2011 to 2021. The Census 2021 population is recorded at 1,903,175 people up from 1,810,863 people in 2011. Ards & North Down had an increase of population from 2011 of 7,000, which is 4.5%.

The census day population comprised of 967,000 females and 936,100 males. Statistics show that for every 100 females in Ards and North Down Borough there were 94.9 males.

Statistics show that 54% of the Borough are employed 2% are Unemployed and 43% are Economically inactive. Of those employed, 37% were in the Public administration, education and health Industry and 2% were in the Agriculture, energy and water industry.

62% of employed people travelled to work in a car or van and 34% travelled 5km-20km to their place of work.

There were 70,445 households recorded in Ards and North Down 4,400, 5.9% were unoccupied at the time of the survey.

The average household size in sits at 2.30 (2.44 in NI). 31% are single occupancy and 6% had more than 6 people living in the property.

72% of the Borough owns their own property, this has decreased by 2% from 2011 where 13% are Social rented and increase of 2% increase in 2011.

LGD	Male	Female

Northern Ireland	932,554	970,618
Ards and North Down	80,192	83,466

Appendix - Disability

Disability (External)

A self-assessment of whether a person has a long-term health problem or disability that limits daily activities and which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. It includes problems that are due to old age. The 2021 Census (NIRSA) demonstrates an increase of 15% or more in the percentage of people who reported a long-term health problem or disability which limited day-to-day activities. 41,300 or 25.3% of people in Ards and North Down had a limiting long-term health problem or disability. Ards & North Down experienced an increase of 31.4% from 2011. These changes are in part a reflection of the Boroughs ageing population.

The following statistics show a breakdown in residents in Northern Ireland and Ards and North Down borough with a Disability that is expected to last 12 months or more.

The figures show that 7.2 per cent of the Borough have deafness or partial hearing loss, 68% being over the age of 65. 2% have blindness or partial sight loss, 11% of those people are aged 0-39 years. 1.6 % have mobility or dexterity difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair, in comparison to Northern Ireland statics this means that 9.3% of all those who have mobility or dexterity difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair reside in the Borough.

0.8% have an intellectual or learning disability including dyslexia and Downs Syndrome. 1.6% have Autism or Asperger syndrome, 49% are between 0-14 years whilst 40% are aged 15- 39 year. 8.1 % have an emotional, psychological or mental health condition, includes depression and schizophrenia, this is highest in the age ranges of 40 – 64 years (47%). 2% have frequent periods of confusion or memory loss, including Dementia, this is most prevalent with ages 65+. 10% of residents have another condition, for example Cancer, Heart Disease or Diabetes, again this is most prevalent in age 65+. Taken together these results show that policy making must consider Ards and north Down aging population and health and disability issues as well as recognition for those that provide unpaid care throughout the Borough.

LGD	All usual residents	Activites Not Limited	Limited a little	Limited a lot
Northern Ireland	1,903,178	1,446,415	247,413	209,349
Ards and North Down	163,659	122,744	22,912	18,002

Long term Health Conditions	None	1	2	3 or More
Northern Ireland	1,237,065	342,572	152,254	171,286
Ards and North Down	101,468	32,731	14,729	14,729
Disability Breakdown Age range (0 - 65+)	Ards and North Down		Northern Ireland	
Deafness or Partial Hearing loss	11,802		109,457	
Blindness or Partial Sightloss	3,214		33,961	

Mobility or dexterity difficulty that required the use of a wheelchair	2,641		28,138	
Intellectual or learning disability include dyslexia and Downs Syndrome	1,469		16,923	
Autism or Asperger Syndrome	2,628		35,367	
Emotional, psychological or mental health condition inc depression and schizophrenia	13,275		165,127	
Frequent periods of confusion or memory loss inc Dementia	3,432		37,789	
Other conditions E.g Cancer, Heart Disease or Diabetes	167,752		16,636	

Appendix - Dependants

Dependants (External)

For the Purposes of S75 a dependant can be classed as Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

In Census 2021 one person in eight of NI population aged 5 or more (or 222,200 people) noted that they provided unpaid care. One important point to note in Policy making is that 2,600 children aged 5 to 14 in Northern Ireland provide unpaid care.

Ards & North Down LGD had the highest percentage of people who provide unpaid care throughout Northern Ireland , 13.7% estimated at 30,414 residents. 'Unpaid care' covers looking after, giving help or support to anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age

A dependent child is a person aged 0 to 15 in a household (whether or not in a family) or aged 16 to 18 in full-time education and living in a family with his or her parent(s) or grandparent(s). 'No dependent children' includes households with no children and households where all children are non-dependent.

In Ards and North Down there were 27,822 Children (defined as those aged 0 to 14). Children make up 19.2% of the Northern Ireland population. This percentage varies across the Local Government Districts and is lowest in Ards and North Down where the proportion is 17.0%.

According to Birth statistics on NISRA Ards and North Down recorded 2,854 births between 2020 and 2022 , giving an indication of the numbers using buggies or prams in use.

	Dependent children in household: None	Dependent children in household: one	Dependent children in household: Two	Dependent children in household: Three
Northern Ireland	71%	11%	11%	6%

Ards and North Down	74%	11%	11%	4%
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24. Does this policy require an Equality Impact Assessment?

No

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

The 2026 Tourism Events Programme -

Each year Council manages and delivers a series of Tourism Events. The Events and the programming of each has remained reasonably consistent since Council approved the Borough Events Strategic Direction (BESD)2021-2026.

In 2021 Council approved a new transition programme based on BESD actions.

In 2021-2022 season the programme was delivered in line with Government Covid guidelines however, since then, Council has been delivering a full events programme.

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

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

Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

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

Yes

3a. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The Tourism Events Programme will impact people in rural areas in several ways, reflecting the different infrastructure, transport options and service provision compared with urban centres.

How Rural Areas Are Likely to Be Impacted:

- Access and Transport

Rural residents may experience greater challenges accessing events due to limited public transport and reliance on private vehicles. Events held in rural locations may also increase traffic on smaller roads and place pressure on local parking facilities.

- Local Services and Infrastructure

Rural towns and villages often have fewer shops, hospitality venues and public facilities. High visitor numbers during events may temporarily reduce access for local residents or increase demand on local services.

- Community and Social Impact

Rural communities, which may have fewer cultural or social activities throughout the year, can experience significant positive impacts from events. These include increased social interaction, reduced isolation, and enhanced community cohesion.

- Economic Opportunities

Events held in rural areas can provide valuable economic benefits for local businesses, producers and hospitality providers, particularly where footfall is normally lower than in urban centres.

The choice of event location takes into account the expected attendance, the nature of the event and logistical requirements. These decisions will influence the scale and type of impact experienced by rural residents, businesses and visitors.

3b. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

People in rural areas may experience different impacts from the Tourism Events Programme compared with those in urban areas due to differences in infrastructure, transport availability, and the scale of local services.

Potential Adverse Impacts

- **Transport and accessibility:** Rural areas often have more limited public transport options, meaning residents and visitors may rely heavily on private cars. This can lead to increased traffic congestion on smaller rural roads and greater pressure on local parking facilities during events.
- **Pressure on local services:** Rural towns may have fewer shops, restaurants, and amenities. High visitor numbers during events could temporarily reduce access for local residents or create longer travel and waiting times.
- **Infrastructure strain:** Hosting events in rural locations may require additional temporary infrastructure (e.g., signage, traffic management, waste facilities), which can cause short-term disruption during set-up and clear-down periods.

Potential Positive Impacts

- **Reduced social isolation:** Rural communities often have fewer cultural or social activities. Events can therefore have a stronger positive effect by providing opportunities for social interaction, community cohesion, and participation.
- **Economic benefits:** Increased footfall can support small rural businesses, local producers, and hospitality venues that may not normally experience high visitor numbers.
- **Enhanced community identity:** Events can help strengthen local pride, cultural expression, and community confidence, particularly in areas where opportunities for cultural engagement are limited.

Overall, while rural areas may face more logistical challenges due to limited transport and infrastructure, they may also experience greater social and cultural benefits from events compared with urban centres where such activities are more frequent.

3c. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on

Rural Business

Rural Tourism

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas

Rural Crime or Community Safety

Agri-Environment

Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service? Deprivation levels can be found at Home Page | NI Area Statistics | NISRA

Yes

4a. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders

Consultation with Other Organisations

Surveys or Questionnaires

4b. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

The Plan has been developed taking cognisance of available budget/resources, allowance of adequate timeline to plan and deliver events and the support of the Strategic Events Direction, particularly in terms of a balanced, outcomes-driven programme.

Using the recommended assessment model the Event Impact Radar, all previous annual Tourism Events have been reviewed. This model assesses each event and outcomes related to place, community and economic outcomes.

Themes and core principles from that document have also been considered during the development of the programme.

Consultation was key to the development of the Borough Events Strategic Direction and was conducted in three ways:

- An Events Advisory Group including representation from across the events sector in the Borough, and key regional stakeholders including Tourism NI (TNI), Arts Council NI (ACNI) and Sport NI. This group will have met four times over the lifetime of the project.
- Individual conversations with key potential funders and partners to explore strategic alignment
- Sector and member workshops at Londonderry Park (31st May 2019) and Signal Business Centre (20th June) with representations from across the Borough to inform all aspects of the strategy design and development. There was a total of 96 attendances across both workshops. Groups included community representatives, partnership / networks, key stakeholders, private businesses, charities, not for profits and Chambers of Commerce. In addition, an internal Council management group included representation from Tourism, Arts and Heritage, Tourism / Community / Arts Marketing and Administration, Compliance and Civic Events.

Organisation / Key stakeholders in the Events Advisory Group:

National Trust
Ballyholme Yacht Club
Arts Council NI
Open House Festival
Portico
Open House Festival
Hanna's Florist
Sport NI
Bangor Chamber
National Museum Northern Ireland
Tourism NI
Portaferry Cluster Group
Donaghadee Community Association
Comber Regeneration
Newtownards Chamber

4c. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

Social needs – access to events as attendees and participants, community cohesion and volunteer and event organiser support.

Economic needs - events held in rural areas will encourage economic return to the local shops, restaurants and other local businesses (where available).

Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

5. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the Social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Social Needs

- Many rural areas in the borough have fewer cultural, social and recreational opportunities. Where events cannot be hosted locally, they will be widely promoted across the borough to encourage participation from rural residents.
- The programme recognises that rural communities may experience higher levels of social isolation. Events and festivals provide opportunities for social interaction, community cohesion and cultural engagement that may not otherwise be available.
- For large-scale events delivered in rural locations, the potential for additional or extended public transport provision will be explored to support rural residents in attending and to enable visitors to access rural areas more easily.

Economic Needs

- Events and festivals can provide important economic benefits to rural villages and coastal communities, particularly where footfall is normally lower than in urban centres.
- Even where events are not economically focused, they can still contribute to wider outcomes such as community development, cultural participation and place-making.
- The programme will seek to showcase the unique character, heritage and assets of rural areas, helping to animate these locations and raise their profile with both residents and visitors.
- Visitor information and promotional material for the wider borough will continue to be available at Council-organised events, supporting awareness of rural attractions and encouraging wider exploration of the area.

Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

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

Yes

6a. Please explain how the development, adopting, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service been influenced by the rural needs identified.

The development of the Tourism Events Programme has been directly informed by the social and economic needs identified in rural areas of the borough.

The programme themes—Sea and Coast and Maritime, Food and Drink, Creative Industry, Arts and Crafts, Live Music, Heritage and Ecology—are all relevant to rural communities and reflect the cultural and environmental assets found across the borough.

Where rural infrastructure does not fully support the delivery of large-scale events, the programme has been shaped to consider alternative approaches such as smaller-scale activities, wraparound programming or supporting initiatives that still allow rural areas to benefit from participation, visibility and engagement.

Transport needs have also influenced programme planning. For major events located outside rural areas, access requirements for rural residents have been considered, and where public transport is limited, options for additional or extended services will be reviewed to support attendance.

Similarly, when events are hosted in rural locations, transport and access arrangements are factored into planning to ensure that both residents and visitors can participate.

Overall, the programme has been designed to ensure that rural communities can benefit socially, culturally and economically, even where physical infrastructure limits the scale or type of event that can be delivered locally.

Documenting and Recording

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

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

Sustainability is a holistic approach that considers ecological, social and economic dimensions, recognising that all must be considered together to find lasting prosperity.

Sustainable development is all about meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Depending on your answer your answer may be a 'positive' impact or a 'negative' impact. Specific guidance at each question.

There may be 'no impact'.

If you are not sure complete as 'don't know'

1. What impact will the proposal have on the local community including the ability of people to meet their essential needs?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Transport - Is the activity accessible to everyone via public transport or active travel, in a safe and sustainable way?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive
<p>Public Placemaking, Community & Culture - Is the activity impacting on people's sense of place and community by being included and connected to the area?</p> <p>Is the activity impacting on our cultural offering, helping citizens, visitors and young people become acquainted with art and culture?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive

2. What impact will the proposals have on local, sustainable food supply chains?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Food - If this activity involves either the direct or indirect purchase of food or catering services will there be a negative impact on a sustainable food system?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Food systems currently account for 21-37% of total global greenhouse gases and are a primary cause of environmental degradation and significantly contribute to socio-economic and health inequalities. This can be mitigated by specifying sustainable food and catering services, fresh seasonal food of a high nutritional value produced through low environmental impact farming methods and high standards of animal welfare.</p>	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Food	Priority is given to local artisan producers at all events

3. What impact will the proposals have on diversity and equality of opportunity?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Equal opportunity - Does the activity have a positive or negative impact on inclusivity and discrimination?</p>	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Equal opportunity	The events programme is free to attend and open to all

4. What impact will the proposals have on prosperity, social value and fair trade?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Decent jobs and income - Are local employment opportunities being created removed 'or removed'? Will there be any volunteering opportunities?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive
<p>Will the financial benefits help raise local income levels and tackle poverty and derivations of poverty such as food and fuel poverty?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive
<p>Social Value - Will the activity lead to the creation of works or services? Are there opportunities to support apprenticeships or training opportunities to combat social exclusion? Are there any opportunities to work with organisations with an environmental or social mission (e.g., from the VCSE sector)?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	Positive
<p>Human and labour rights - Will there be provisions to ensure workers up the supply chain have their human and labour rights respected?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Products at high risk of the use of child labour and contravention of human and labour rights include electronic equipment, textiles, agricultural commodities and construction materials.</p>	Positive

Comments

	Comments
Decent jobs and income	The events programming prioritises the use of local businesses and traders.
Financial benefits	The events bring economic benefit to the locations they are hosted in
Social value	Services required at the event are sourced locally
Human and labour rights	

5. What impact will the proposals have on greenhouse gas emissions, including energy and transport?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Greenhouse Gas Emmissions - Will this activity have a positive or negative impact on greenhouse gases (most commonly caused by fossil fuel burning or deforestation)?</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Greenhouse gases include CO2, CH4, N2O, HFCs, PFCs or SF6. The most common sources include consumption of brown (non-renewable) electricity, burning of coal, oil, petrol, diesel, natural gas, emissions from landfill sites, and the destruction of natural carbon sinks such as peat bogs, woodlands, forests, grasslands, freshwater lakes, and wetlands.</p>	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Energy - Will the activity reduce energy demand through energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Will energy come from renewable energy sources e.g., solar, wind etc.? Will buildings be designed and constructed to high energy and environmental standards?</p>	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Transport - Will the activity be accessible to everyone via active travel (Bike/walking) or public transport? Does the proposal help to reduce non-essential travel and individual car use?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p>	<p>Positive</p>
<p>Embodied carbon - Will the activity use materials from 'heavy industries' such as cement, concrete, iron and steel, or require international transportation of materials using aviation or shipping?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p>	<p>No Impact</p>

Comments

	Comments
Greenhouse Gas Emmissions	diesel generators will be in use although we are working towards a more more renewable energy sources such as HVO generators and battery powered equipment
Energy	
Transport	We encourage visitors to make use of free bus services organised by the events team and to make use of the public transport or walk
Embodied carbon	

Mitigation

	Mitigation
Greenhouse Gas Emmissions	we are working towards a more more renewable energy sources such as HVO generators and battery powered equipment
Energy	
Transport	
Embodied carbon	

6. What impact will the proposals have on waste generation or how waste is managed?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Waste generation - Will this activity lead to the production of waste?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Have you considered how to reduce waste through demand management and re-use strategies which support the circular economy?</p>	Negative
<p>Waste Management - Is waste going to be managed in a responsible, sustainable way?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Will waste be monitored? What recycling provisions are there? Will any waste be sent to landfill?</p>	Positive

Mitigation

	Mitigation
Waste generation	
Waste management	Recycling stations in operation with cleansing team on site to sort waste and limit the amount going to landfill. Zero contamination was reported for the same programme in 2025

7. What impact will the proposals have on the direct consumption of natural resources, including materials, minerals and fresh water?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Materials - Will this activity lead to the consumption of raw materials? (Raw materials include steel, oil, corn, grain, gasoline, wood / forest resources, plastic, natural gas, and coal).</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative.</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Can materials be swapped or reduced, to minimize pressure on natural resources and reduce environmental impact?</p>	No Impact
<p>Will lifecycle costing exercises be used in procurement (e.g., if purchasing vehicles, energy-intensive equipment or major capital projects) in order to minimise the consumption of natural resources and achieve value for money</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select positive</p>	Positive
<p>Fresh water - Will this activity increase pressure on freshwater resources through direct water consumption?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	No Impact
<p>Will the activity impact on the public's ability to access a clean and safe water supply?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Unsustainable water consumption includes use of mains water or other freshwater supplied without water efficiency or recycling measures.</p>	No Impact

Comments

	Comments
Materials	
Lifecycle costing exercises	
Fresh water	Refill Ireland will be in attendance at larger events
Accessing clean and safe water	Refill Ireland will be in attendance at larger events

8. What impact will the proposals have on local resilience to the adverse effects of climate change and severe weather events, including drought, landslips, flooding and sites designated as being at risk of flooding or sea level rise?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Adverse Weather and Climate Impacts - Will buildings, infrastructure, or natural assets be at risk to the adverse effects of climate change and extreme weather?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>For Northern Ireland, climate change is causing hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters with more extreme weather and rising sea levels.</p> <p>A precautionary approach is advised for all planning and construction decisions, taking into account the latest UK Climate Change Projections and making sure that development is not permitted on flood plains and / or land at risk of flooding under future climate scenarios.</p> <p>Avoid activities that may be vulnerable to overheating or flood risk.</p> <p>New assets (e.g. landscaping, buildings etc.) should be future proofed, ensuring all investments are resilient to current and future climate conditions.</p>	<p>No Impact</p>

9. What impact will the proposals have on the local environment (e.g., air/water/soil pollution, land conversion, visual impacts, traffic, noise, vibration, odour, dust, particulates, smoke), heritage (including designated heritage, archaeology sites or listed buildings) and wildlife (including protected sites and species)?

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Air pollution - Will the activity produce air pollutants?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Air pollutants include: Particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5); Ozone (O3) Nitrogen dioxide (NO2); Carbon Monoxide (CO); Sulphur Dioxide (SO2).</p> <p>The most common causes of air pollution are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuel combustion from motor vehicles (e.g. cars and heavy-duty vehicles) • Heat and power generation (e.g. oil and coal power plants and boilers) • Industrial facilities (e.g. manufacturing factories, mines, and oil refineries) • Municipal and agricultural waste sites and waste incineration/burning. 	<p>Negative</p>
<p>Ozone layer depletion - Will this activity produce ozone depleting substances (fluorinated gases)?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Fluorinated greenhouse gases (F gases) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) • perfluorocarbons (PFCs) • sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) <p>For example through the use of refrigeration and air conditioning units.</p>	<p>No Impact</p>

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Water/soil pollution - Will this activity involve any construction work, street works or road deliveries of construction materials or other goods?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional Information:</p> <p>Soil and water pollution is caused from damaging rainwater run-off arising from road surface treatments, tyre abrasion, fuels and lubricants.</p> <p>Procurement and contractual mechanisms can be used to ensure that building and civil engineering contractors adhere take steps to ensure pollution is prevented from occurring or from dispersing to other areas. Contractors can minimise the use of all substances that could cause pollution and failing that, implement and communicate procedures to ensure the correct disposal (or release) of substances that could cause pollution.</p>	<p>No Impact</p>
<p>Chemical pollution - Will there be any use of toxic chemicals including pesticides, paint or cleaning products?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	<p>No Impact</p>
<p>Will there be any excess fertiliser use that could result in nitrogen or phosphorus runoff?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	<p>No Impact</p>
<p>Noise pollution - Is the activity likely to create a noise nuisance?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Noise pollution can have detrimental effects on human health, amenity, productivity and the natural environment.</p> <p>Eliminating or reducing excessive noise is a legal responsibility and helps to limit the disturbance of residents and businesses, caused by activities and operations.</p>	<p>Negative</p>

	What is the impact of the activity?
<p>Land conversion - Will this activity result in the reduction in the area of forested land, directly or indirectly?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Additional information:</p> <p>Deforestation usually arises from the clearing of land for development, agriculture, or logging for paper, wood, or minerals.</p>	No Impact
<p>Built Heritage - Will this activity impact on designated heritage sites such as a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Archaeology Site, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site or Registered Park and Garden?</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p>	No Impact
<p>Natural Heritage and Biodiversity - Will this activity result in any displacement or loss of biodiversity, overfishing or affect protected or designated sites (e.g. ASSIs, SPAs etc).</p> <p>Note: If the answer is yes, select negative</p> <p>Changes in land use exert the most significant effect on biodiversity. These changes include the conversion of natural ecosystems into agriculture or into urban areas; changes in frequency, duration or magnitude of wildfires and similar disturbances; and the introduction of new species into land and freshwater environments.</p>	No Impact

Comments

	Comments
Air pollution	use of diesel generators will create low levels of air pollution
Ozone layer depletion	
Water/soil pollution	
Chemical pollution	
Excess fertiliser use	
Noise pollution	possible noise pollution from events with music programmes
Land conversion	
Built Heritage	

	Comments
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	

Mitigation

	Mitigation
Air pollution	
Ozone layer depletion	
Water/soil pollution	
Chemical pollution	
Excess fertiliser use	
Noise pollution	noise levels are monitored during the event. We engage with local residents if there is a possibility of noise pollution.
Land conversion	
Built Heritage	
Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	

10 What impact will the proposals have on ensuring peace, justice, public participation and partnership working for sustainable development?

	What is the impact of the activity?
Peace - Will this activity have a negative or positive impact on community safety, crime or anti-social behaviour?	Positive
Justice - Are there safeguards in place to prevent against bribery and corruption? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive Decision making should be open and transparent with clear governance and accountability arrangements.	Positive
Political voice - Are citizens involved and do they have a role in deciding what happens and how it gets implemented? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive	Positive
Partnerships - Will this activity involve working with others either locally or at a national level to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? Note: If the answer is yes, select positive	No Impact

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is

Screened Out - No negative impacts

1. Is Data Protection relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

No

Data Protection Officer Comments