

Equality Screening Template



The Council has a statutory duty to screen. This includes our strategies, plans, policies, legislative developments; and new ways of working such as the introduction, change or end of an existing service, grant funding arrangement or facility. This screening template is designed to help departments consider the likely equality impacts of their proposed decisions on different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors.

Before carrying out an equality screening exercise it is important that you have received the necessary training first. To find out about the training needed or any other queries on screening, contact the Equality and Diversity Officers (job-share) Stella Gilmartin or Lorraine Dennis on extension 6026/6027 or by email equality@belfastcity.gov.uk

The accompanying **Screening Guidance** note provides straightforward advice on how to carry out equality screening exercises. Detailed information about the Section 75 equality duties and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission's website¹.

The screening template has 4 sections to complete. These are:

Section A - provides details about the policy / decision that is being screened

Section B – gives information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts on all equality groups.

Section C - has 4 key questions in relation to obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order

Section D - is the formal record of the screening decision.

¹ <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

1. Title of policy / decision to be screened:-

Draft Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS)

We appointed an independent consultant AECOM to support and guide the development of the BOSS.

2. Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

(Explain - Is this a new, revised or existing policy? Are there financial / legislative / procurement implications?)

The draft Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS) is an update of our previous strategy for open spaces completed in 2005 – ‘Your City, Your Space’. The BOSS is a strategic document pitched at a city level, setting out the vision, strategic principles, opportunities and headline actions for open spaces in the City Council area. For the purposes of the strategy, open spaces are defined as ***‘land where the primary function is related to their community, amenity, recreation, play and sport value; whether in public or private ownership’***. ***This includes parks, playing fields, play areas and civic space. These open spaces may also have secondary biodiversity benefits and form part of a wider ‘green infrastructure’ network.*** It represents an over-arching strategy that will guide more detailed typology strategies, area planning approaches and action plans over time. The BOSS is not site specific, but it does set out some opportunities, examples and headline actions across a ranges of open space typologies at a high-level.

It is important to note that the Council’s new Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) requires an updated open spaces strategy as part of its evidence base. Regional planning policies set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) must be taken into account in the preparation of all LDPs. The SPPS outlines the requirement for council’s when developing an open spaces strategy, stating that *‘there will be a policy presumption against the loss of open space to competing land used in LDPs irrespective of its physical condition and appearance’*. In accordance with the SPSS, our policy approach in line with the emerging LDP is to protect all open spaces and to improve access to open spaces.

3. Aims and objectives of the policy / decision to be screened:-

(What is the policy trying to achieve?)

The draft BOSS is a high-level document that includes an audit of open spaces i.e. assessment of open space provision and park and play area accessibility which will be important for planning and investment decision making purposes.

The draft BOSS is a high-level document that sets out the vision, strategic principles, opportunities and head line actions for existing and future open spaces across the city. The BOSS vision is that by 2035.... *'Belfast will have a well-connected network of high quality open spaces recognised for the value and benefits they provide to everyone who live in, work in and visits our city'*.

A suite of seven guiding strategic principles (SP) have been identified, providing the roadmap to achieving the vision. Belfast's open spaces will:

- SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces
- SP2: Improve connectivity
- SP3: Improve health and well-being
- SP4: Support place-making and enhance the built environment
- SP5: Increase resilience to climate change
- SP6: Protect and enhance the natural environment
- SP7: Be celebrated and support learning

A range of opportunities and headline actions have also been identified that are currently underway or planned over the next five years, which are aligned to the strategic principles above. The delivery of the headline action plan will rely on existing budgets or sourcing external and partner funding over the life of the strategy. We will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to help deliver the strategy.

The strategy will provide the basis for protecting, developing and improving open spaces, help inform the LDP, as well as developer contributions, open space investment decisions and area based plans and approaches.

4. On whom will the policy / decision impact?

Consider the internal and external impacts (both actual or potential) and explain:-

Staff	YES
Service users	YES
Other public sector organizations	YES
Voluntary / community groups / trade unions	YES
Others, please specify	

5. Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?

The BOSS was developed and will be delivered with a range of partners and stakeholders. Regional policy linkages include the Regional Development Strategy, the Programme for Government (PfG) and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) and local policy linkages includes the LDP, Belfast Agenda, Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (GBIP), typology based strategies and plans i.e. Growing Communities Strategy and the Playground Improvement Plan and emerging area planning approaches and neighbourhood place-shaping.

Section B

Information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts for equality and good relations

6. Outline consultation process planned or achieved

The following pre-consultation has been achieved:

External

- In 2017, a 'Strategy Advisory Group' was established, made up of representatives from a range of agencies and organisations across Belfast, to help shape the development of the strategy;
- A series of workshops took place (total of four) with the 'Strategy Advisory Group' to help inform strategy development at key milestones throughout the process;
- The out workings of the workshops were reviewed and agreed by all participants.
- The draft BOSS was presented to the consultative forum on the 27 February 2018;
- The draft BOSS was presented to the 'Strategy Advisory Group' for final comment and feedback on 5 December 2018.

Internal

- An internal 'Strategy Oversight Group' was set up in 2017 made up of inter-departmental council representatives to provide oversight and guidance. Two meetings were convened with this group and joint workshops (total of four) took place with the external 'Strategy Advisory Group'.
- An internal operational management group was also established (made up of City Park Managers, Parks Quality Manager and Community Outreach Managers and Officers). This group participated in a workshop and also completed a questionnaire. The workshop and questionnaire was structured in order to gather important qualitative operational information:
 - Review and verify open spaces baseline information;
 - Identify open space issues; and
 - Recommend future open space opportunities and improvements.
- The draft BOSS will be presented to the Strategic Planning and Resources and the People and Communities Committee in March and will be subsequently noted at the Planning Committee soon after.

Consultation planned.

- The draft BOSS will be subject to 12 weeks public consultation, beginning in June 2019. The consultation exercise will be conducted in line with council consultation policy via the council's on-line consultation platform Citizen Space. We will also be running a series of public consultation events at various venues across the city during July and August.

7. Available evidence

What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Set out all evidence below to help inform your screening assessment.

It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as: monitoring information; complaints; research surveys; consultation exercises from other public authorities.

Evidence gathered

A range of evidence and information was used in the screening of the strategy, including:

- Information obtained from the pre-consultation exercises outlined in the previous question.
- Information gleaned from desk top research as part of strategy development.
- Secondary data gleaned from feedback stemming from responses to the extensive public consultation on the first stage of the LDP (the Preferred Options Paper).
- Research papers stemming from the emerging Local Development Plan have been reviewed including a wide range of topics relevant to the BOSS for example natural heritage and open space.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information and engagement
Religious belief	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category
Political opinion	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category
Racial group	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category
Age	Access to greenspace and nature is important for people of all ages. Evidence suggests that children and young people have less than a connection with nature than previous generations, which results in reduced physical and mental well-being such as Nature Deficit Disorder.
Marital status	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category
Sexual orientation	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category
Men and women generally	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category
Disability	<p>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 wellbeing.</p> <p>A workshop with parks and outreach operational managers highlighted that improving access to, within and between our open spaces is paramount and that we need to make sure that our open spaces are inclusive to all.</p>
Dependants	The pre-consultation and research carried out did not produce any evidence relating to this category

8. What is the likely impact (indicate if the policy impact is positive or negative) on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact?

Section 75 category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those with different religious beliefs. Under SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity, and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning, there are opportunities to increase accessibility to parks and open spaces across the city for people within this category.	Minor
Political opinion	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those with different political opinions. Under SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity, and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning, there are opportunities to increase accessibility to parks and open spaces across the city for people within this category.	Minor
Racial group	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those from different racial groups. Under SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity, and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning, there are opportunities to increase accessibility to parks and open spaces across the city for people within this category.	Minor
Age	<p>The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those from different age groups. Any new and improved open spaces provided as result of the strategy will provide better opportunities for people of all ages to access them. We will continue to provide and actively promote a diverse programme of events, activities and festivals for everyone.</p> <p>As part of the actions within the BOSS we will encourage children and families to get outdoors more often to explore nature in our green spaces. We will continue to work with the education sector to encourage use of our parks and open spaces as outdoor classrooms to deliver elements of the educational curriculum i.e. making learning fun for everyone.</p>	Minor

	We will also continue to encourage users to engage in passive recreation by providing appropriate facilities i.e. shelters and seating areas, which are also important for use by older people.	
Marital status	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those with different marital status.	Minor
Sexual orientation	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those of different sexual orientation.	Minor
Men and women generally	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including men and women generally.	Minor
Disability	<p>The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those with a disability.</p> <p>SP1 seeks to provide welcoming shared spaces and identifies two headline actions to identify specific opportunities within neighbourhoods to enhance and improve access to existing open spaces and to use the planning process to ensure open spaces are well-designed while applying suitable and consistent design principles for all.</p> <p>Two of the headline actions identified within SP3 Improve health and wellbeing of the BOSS is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an ongoing programme of activity focused on using open spaces to improve health and wellbeing, prioritizing efforts in areas of health deprivation with the lowest open space accessibility. • Continue to work with the health and activity sector to develop programmes of our open spaces for at-risk groups. 	Minor
Dependants	The draft BOSS is expected to impact positively across the entire population, including those with dependents. However as part of the actions within the BOSS we will encourage children and families to get outdoors more often to explore nature in our green spaces. We will continue to work with the education sector to encourage use of our parks and open spaces as outdoor classrooms to deliver elements of the educational curriculum i.e. making learning fun for everyone.	Minor

9. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	Whilst it is our belief that there is equality opportunity for a person of any religious belief to access open spaces, there is potential to better promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. The strategic principles are: SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning.	
Political opinion	Whilst it is our belief that there is equality opportunity for a person of any political opinion to access open spaces, there is potential to better promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. The strategic principles are: SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning.	
Racial group	Whilst it is our belief that there is equality opportunity for a person of any racial group to access open spaces, there is potential to better promote equality of opportunity for people within this category. The strategic principles are: SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning.	
Age	Yes – see answer to Q8 above.	
Marital status		No - it is our belief that there are no opportunities to better promote the equality of opportunity is the same for a person of any of marital status to access open spaces.
Sexual orientation		No - it is our belief under the new strategy that there are no opportunities to better promote

		equality of opportunity for a person of any sexual orientation to access open spaces.
Men and women generally		No - it is our belief under the new strategy, the equality of opportunity is the same for men and women generally.
Disability	<p>Yes – see section above and also below.</p> <p>The BOSS outlines the importance of the benefits of open spaces, including promoting their value as a resource for improving people’s health and wellbeing, particularly active and passive recreational activities. A key strategic principle of the BOSS is promoting the use of open spaces to improve health and wellbeing in our local communities. Headline actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of an ongoing programme of activity focused on using open spaces to improve health and wellbeing, prioritising effort in areas of health deprivation; • In partnership with the health and activity sector to develop programmes in our open spaces for at-risk groups; • Continue to encourage active recreation in our open spaces via walking groups, guided tours, nature trails, growing food and outdoor gyms; and • Continue to encourage passive recreation by providing appropriate facilities i.e. shelters and seating areas. 	
Dependants	Yes – see answer to Q8 above.	

10. To what extent is the policy likely to impact (positive or negatively) on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? What is the level of impact?

Good relations category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	<p>Positive impact - Three strategic principles outlined within the BOSS offer the potential to have a positive impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion and racial groups. The strategic principles are: SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve connectivity and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning.</p> <p>SP1 is about providing high-quality open spaces that are inviting and safe for everyone to use. Open spaces will be used to encourage community cohesion and social interaction. Some of the opportunities identified include building stronger communities, by providing conciliatory and socially inclusive opportunities for people and groups to interact and meet new people. We will also continue to build relationships across communities to increase confidence using and developing shared open spaces and services. Some headline actions identified include: supporting the development of a sustainable approach to the management and promotion of shared spaces and facilitating stronger community involvement in the management and enhancement of our open spaces.</p> <p>SP2 is about improving access and connections to existing open spaces. Other opportunities identified include working in partnership to support the removal of peace lines, to release land for open space development and improve access to existing parks and play areas, therefore creating more connected neighbourhoods. Some headline actions identified under SP2 include working in partnership to help remove or improve access through peace lines and continue to work in partnership to support the creation of greenways across the open space network.</p> <p>SP7 is about ensuring that our open spaces remain well-used and valued by local communities. As part of this we will continue to provide a diverse programme of events, festivals and activities. We will continue to promote our open spaces as hubs</p>	Minor
Political opinion		
Racial group		

	for citywide and local events to as many people as possible.	
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11. 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	It is our belief that several of the proposed headline actions will provide opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion and racial groups. These include actions under SP1: Provide welcoming shared spaces, SP2: Improve Connectivity and SP7: Be celebrated and support learning. See the detail in the response to Q10.	
Political opinion		
Racial group		

Section C

Belfast City Council also has legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order** and Questions 12-13 relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

12. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for the Council to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

Explain your assessment in full

Within the draft strategy under SP3: Improve health and wellbeing there are opportunities for the Council to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

13. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life?

Explain your assessment in full

Within the draft strategy under SP3: Improve health and wellbeing there are opportunities for the Council to actively increase the participation of disabled people in public life.

14. Multiple Identities

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on multiple identities

We have collected no data to date on the impact of the draft strategy on multiple identities. However data may become available through the public consultation process and we will take account of this in finalising this screening.

15. Monitoring Arrangements

Section 75 places a requirement the Council to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity.

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

Equality	Good Relations	Disability Duties
A Neighbourhood Service Manager will be responsible for the internal implementation of the BOSS and working externally with partners and stakeholders. The BOSS will help inform planning decisions made by the council, which will feed into annual monitoring and reporting carried out by the planning department. There is a commitment within the draft strategy to review it in 2024.		

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened

Draft Belfast Open Spaces Strategy

I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

x	equality of opportunity and good relations
x	disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is – *(place an X in the appropriate box below)*

	* <u>Screened In</u> – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
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	<p>*<u>Screened Out</u> – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)</p> <p>Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:</p>
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X	<p>* <u>Screened Out - Mitigating Actions</u> (minor impacts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached: • Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced: <p>The screening has indicated that the draft strategy has the potential to have a positive minor impact on all section 75 categories and this impact will be beneficial across the entire population. At this point we are not proposing any mitigating actions to the draft strategy but following an analysis of the feedback from the public consultation exercise we may include these or make changes to the draft strategy prior to seeking formal approval from the Council of the final document.</p>
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Formal Record of Screening Decision (cont)

Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -

Name: Claire Sullivan

Date: 14.06.19

Department : City and Neighbourhood Services Department

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Screening decision approved by -

Name:

Date:

Department:

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – equality@belfastcity.gov.uk. The screening form will be placed on the BCC website and a link provided to the Council's Section 75 consultees.

For more information about equality screening contact –

Stella Gilmartin / Lorraine Dennis
Equality & Diversity Officer (*job-share*)
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS
Telephone: 028 9027 0511
equality@belfastcity.gov.uk