

Screening Form

1. Is this a Public Service

2. Name of **UK First Entry Property Inspections** Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service

3. Reference 361

New 4. Category of

Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Service

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

This process is to enable the Council to charge a fee for carrying out property inspections, requested by those wishing to satisfy Home Office requirements for first entry into the United Kingdom. The inspections are carried out by the Environmental Health Protection and Development Service. The Council has no statutory obligation to provide these inspections but has traditionally provided the service. Fees are charged for all other property inspections carried out by the Service, so requesting a fee for First Entry applications would bring this in line with other services provided. This would also bring about consistency with the approach in Great Britain, as local authorities in other UK nations have been charging for this service for several years.

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

The aim of this policy is as stated above, but to further clarify this would be an exercise to cover Council costs, with the fee representative of the estimated expenditure to the Council in providing this service.

This will enable the Council to continue to provide the service at no cost to the ratepayer.

7. Who initiated or wrote the Head of Environmental Health Protection and Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public Development Service?

Head of Environmental Health Protection and 8. Who is responsible for the implementation of the Development Policy/Strategy/Plan/Public

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

Service?

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?

Racial Group

1b. How are they expected to benefit?

The UKVI report is a requirement by the Home Office in applications for Spouse Visa, civil partners visa, fiancé / fiancée and proposed civil partner or any other visa/ immigration where proof is required that new arrivals will not need to be further re-housed once they arrive in the UK. It is an absolute requirement in applications from outside the EEA.

The report will enable those who apply to have a property inspection to certify that The accommodation is-

- Of the minimum housing standard (free from hazards).
- Is in a reasonable state of repair.
- Has sufficient space to accommodate both the existing occupiers and any additional people who propose to live there.
- Will not become statutorily overcrowded. (specified in the Home Office guidelines as using the definition in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.)

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

No

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

Staff. Service Users

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

No

5. Does this policy affect Internal or External users?

External

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?

Racial group

Racial group evidence

At present, the majority of requests made to the Council have been received for individuals originating from Bangladesh. However, the same First Entry rules apply to a large number of other states.

It is likely that the First Entry rules will also be applied to EU states in the near future, which may significantly increase the number of requests made to the Council from these nations.

Sexual Orientation - Internal

Sexual Orientation	Total Employees	Percentage
Bisexual	3	0.34%
Heterosexual	624	70.75%
Homosexual	3	0.34%
I do not want to answer	21	2.38
None	6	0.68%
Blank	225	25.51%
Total	882	100%

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

In our experience there have been no particular challenges, as advice and support has been provided to the sponsors of the people seeking First Entry. This only affects those people that are from outside of the UK and currently EU looking to relocate family members. This means that the person requiring the inspection will most like be of a different racial group. It is important to note that this service is not singling out any group in particular, as the requirement to provide a report is not statutory but rather it allows applicants for a visa to meet the necessary criterion to satisfy the Home Office. The Home Office guidelines, whilst itemising matters with which they must be satisfied, does not specify any particular format for such proof.

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?

Minor

10a. Impact on equality of opportunity - Racial group

A fee to cover Council costs must be paid by the sponsor of the person requesting First Entry so there will be a small financial impact. Importantly the requirement to provide a report is not statutory but rather it allows applicants for a visa to meet the necessary criterion to satisfy the Home Office. The Home Office guidelines, whilst itemising matters with which they must be satisfied, does not specify any particular format for such proof.

In the U.K., where these reports are much more frequently required than in Northern Ireland an industry has established itself to provide same with specialist property companies offering to survey a property and provide the necessary documentation to satisfy the Home Office in as little as 24 hours. These services are obviously provided for a fee which for the faster services can run to up to £1000.00. However, the average seems to be between £80 and £200. In addition, English Councils also provide this service and again a fee is charged. For example, Manchester City Council at present charges £174.00 for such a service.

As the Council will be providing this service, which it is not legally required to, for a fee of £120.

This ensures the fee does not exceed the cost of provision. This reduces expenditure of rate payers' money whilst keeping the cost lower than other UK Councils.

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 opportunites 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

Political opinion

no

Racial group

no

Age

no

Marital Status

no

Sexual orientation

no

Men and women generally

no

Disability

no

Dependants

no

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

This only affects those people that are from outside of the UK and currently EU looking to relocate family members. This means that the person requiring the inspection will most like be of a different racial group. It is important to note that this service is not singling out any group in particular, as the requirement to provide a report is not statutory but rather it allows applicants for a visa to meet the necessary criterion to satisfy the Home Office. The Home Office guidelines, whilst itemising matters with which they must be satisfied, does not specify any particular format for such proof.

Disability Discrimination Order (NI) 2006

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

Nο

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

No

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

We will monitor the national identities and disability status of applications for First Entry that are received to insure due regard to S75 categories.

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

Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)

25a. Mitigating Actions

To date the Council has only received a request for 6 inspections in 5 years, this has to date cost Officers time, travel and administration costs to the Council. The inspection is not a statutory requirement of the Council and therefore the fee charged for this service is to cover costs to the ratepayer and is proportionally charged.

This public service will be monitored and reviewed annually. Should there be any comments or complaints regarding the fee, Council will need to re-examine the service and possibly cease the

service. The Council will consider if subsidies or exemptions can be provided to groups or individuals facing financial difficulties and Council will engage in meaningful public consultations to gather the views and perspectives of the community, particularly those who may be affected by the charge.

26. Monitoring Recommendations

This public service will be monitored and reviewed annually. Should there be any comments or complaints regarding the fee, Council will need to re-examine the service and possibly cease the service. The Council will consider if subsidies or exemptions can be provided to groups or individuals facing financial difficulties and Council will engage in meaningful public consultations to gather the views and perspectives of the community, particularly those who may be affected by the charge.

Rural

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

Introduction a fee for UK first entry inspections

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

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable

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?

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

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.

N/A

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?

No

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.

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'

<u>Sustainability</u>

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

Screened Out - No negative impacts

Data Protection

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

Data Protection Officer Comments

Conclusion

Conclusion

I believe that on balance there will be no detrimental impact on any group. Although there is a small financial impact on sponsors, the alternative option for the Council is to withdraw the service as there we are not obliged to provide it. It is likely that withdrawl could have a more negative impact that introducing a fee to cover costs.

Email

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Screening Panel Comments

Appendix - Religious Belief

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 that 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 Electrol 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 ANDBC	Local Government Seats Held Northern Ireland	seats held North Down	NI Assembly Elections seats held 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)

Racial Group	Total	Percentage
White	756	85.71%
Black	2	0.23%
Chinese	2	0.23%
Other	5	0.57%
Did not want to answer	4	0.45%
Left Blank	113	12.81%

Religious belief (External)

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	All usual Residents	Catholic	Protestant and other Christian Religions	Other Reglions	None
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Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland	

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Appendix - Age

Age (Internal)

Age Profile	Female	Female %	Male	Male %
Under 20	0	0%	1	0.18%
20-25	4	1.18%	15	2.76%
26 - 30	11	3.24%	31	5.71%
31-35	26	7.67%	51	9.40%
36-40	40	11.8%	55	10.13%
41-45	62	18.29%	60	11.05%
46-50	70	20.65%	56	10.31%

51-55	57	16.81%	79	14.55%
56-60	38	11.21%	110	20.26
61-65	24	7.08%	74	13.63
66 - 70	6	0.77%	8	1.47%
70+	1	0.30%	3	0.55%

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)

Marital Status	Total	Percentage
Single	186	21.09%
Married	437	49.55%
Divorced	39	4.42%
Co Habiting	45	5.10%
Separated	22	2.50%
Civil Partnership	6	0.68
Left Blank	134	15.19%
Never Married	12	1.36%
Widowed	1	0.11%

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 - External

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 Woman Generally

Men and women generally (Internal)

Male	Female	Total
543	339	882
61.56%	38.44%	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

Screening Form

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:	Dependent children in household: Three
Northern Ireland 71%		11%	11%	6%

Ards and North Down	74%	11%	11%	4%

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 Irelands 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	

24. Does this policy require an Equality Impact Assessment?

No

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.

Religious belief (Internal)

	Catholic	Protestant & other Christian	Non Determined	Left Blank	Total
Males	52	449	41	1	543
wates	9.57%	82.68%	7.55%	0.184%	100%
Females	79	236	24	0	339
	23.3%	69.6%	7.07%	0%	100%
Total	131	685	65	1	882
	14%	77.6%	7.36%	0.11%	100%