



Equality Screening Template

Belfast Waterfront Convention and Exhibition Centre:
Operating Model

Belfast City Council - Equality Screening Template

The Council has a statutory duty to screen all policies. Please note a policy can be written or unwritten, formal or informal. 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. Please note a policy can be written or unwritten, formal or informal.

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. To find out about the training contact – gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk or dennisl@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 duties¹ and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission's website.

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

Section A - asks you to provide details about the policy / decision that is being screened.

Section B - has 4 key questions that require you to outline the likely impacts on equality groups, and all supporting evidence.

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 ECNI 'Section 75 of the NI Act 1998: A Guide for Public Authorities' April 2010. www.equalityni.org

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

Title of policy / decision to be screened:-

Belfast Waterfront Convention and Exhibition Centre: Operating Model

Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

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

The Council has been considering the future of the Waterfront Hall since 2008 when it became apparent that, despite experiencing considerable success as a conference destination, the Waterfront was unable to attract a significant number of events from within its target market, i.e. the Association Conference Market. A feasibility study concluded that the provision of a larger conferencing facility in the city could attract additional conferences, resulting in a significant economic benefit being realised.

The Council's Investment Programme, launched in February 2012, therefore included a proposal to invest £20 million to extend the Waterfront Hall to provide dedicated conference and exhibition facilities. This will result in a fundamental change to the business model from an entertainment venue to a conference centre and will restrict public access to the building.

Work is already underway on the extension to the Waterfront Hall and the strategic objectives and aims of the development have already been determined. The Council is now considering the future operating model (with the two shortlisted options being an arm's length company or an enhanced in-house operation). It has already been determined that the Ulster Hall should continue to be managed with the BWCEC as part of a single business entity. In the light of the Council's statutory equality duties (particularly in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995), it is important that

equality considerations are factored into the development and decision making process.

The development will impact on the public (including both users and non-users of the building and residents and non-residents of Belfast) and on the permanent staff involved in the management and operation of the facilities. If the arm's length company option is adopted, the Council will contract with the new company in relation to the targets and objectives to be met and the transfer of staff. The contract will include social objectives in relation to employability schemes and the inclusion of local companies in supply chains. The Council will continue to oversee the operation of the BWCEC and the Ulster Hall through the annual business planning process and will receive regular performance reports.

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

(What is the policy trying to achieve?)

The project is designed to contribute to the following central and local government strategic objectives:

- To promote business tourism in Northern Ireland;
- To promote the development of Belfast as a prime tourism destination;
- To promote the economic growth of Belfast and Northern Ireland;
- To facilitate job creation; and
- To contribute to urban regeneration.

Specifically the aims of the project are to:

- Provide an integrated conference/convention centre in Belfast;
- Position Belfast as a premium destination for national and international conferences;
- Utilise the development of business tourism in Belfast as a catalyst for wider economic growth across the city;
- Create jobs at the new facility and create and sustain jobs across the city of Belfast;

- Exploit the “Bleisure” tourism market through increasing return visits to Belfast of business visitors;
- Improve the sustainability/growth of the local hotel market; and
- Improve the profile, perception and image of Belfast as a City

The SMART objectives of the project are:

- By 2016 to provide an integrated conference/convention centre in Belfast which offers the following:
 - A minimum of 2,000 sq./m exhibition space across one level;
 - Banqueting space for a minimum of 750 people;
 - Breakout provision for a minimum of 5 groups of 200;
- To attract 50,000 conference delegates to the City by 2020;
- To attract 35,000 out of state conference delegates to the City by 2020;
- To host an average 6 national large association conferences per annum from 2020; and
- To host an average 6 international/European association conferences per annum from 2020.

On whom will the policy / decision impact?

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

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations
- voluntary / community groups / trade unions
- others, please specify

Are there linkages to other Agencies / Departments?

The project is being jointly funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and the Council.

Section B

1. Outline consultation process achieved or planned

(a) The Waterfront Hall has an established Disability Access Group which is being consulted as the project progresses.

(b) The Council is keeping staff and Trade Unions informed of developments through existing mechanisms.

2. 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. Please note: It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as:

- *Monitoring information*
- *Complaints*
- *Research /surveys*
- *Consultation exercise and other public authorities*

This screening assessment has been conducted on the basis of information obtained through:

- EQIAs carried out by the Council and other public bodies on matters affecting the future operation of the BWCEC (e.g. transfer of staff to an arm's length company);
- Data on current staff (in terms of community background and gender);
- Discussion with officers involved in promoting community arts and culture in Belfast;
- Desk research into best practice on disability access to conference venues

Section 75 category	Details of evidence / information and engagement
Religious belief	<p>With respect to staff, at 1st January 2015, 46.3% identified themselves as coming from a Catholic community background and 53.7% from a Protestant community background. These proportions are broadly reflected in the staff permanently employed at the Waterfront Hall (approximately 50 FTE). The data for the staff currently employed at the Waterfront Hall has not been presented here as the small number means that individuals could potentially be identified from the data.</p>
Men & women generally	<p>With respect to staff, at 1st January 2015, the proportion of males to females was 60.9% to 39.1%. These proportions are broadly reflected in the staff permanently employed at the Waterfront Hall (approximately 50 FTE). The data for the staff currently employed at the Waterfront Hall has not been presented here as the small number means that individuals could potentially be identified from the data.</p>
Disability	<p>When the Waterfront Hall was built in the 1990s it incorporated a state of the art approach to physical access, especially for disabled people, including those with mobility difficulties and visual and hearing impairments. The Hall enjoys a good reputation in terms of its approach to the inclusion of disabled people but best practice in terms of access and support requirements has been refined over the years as a result of research.</p> <p>Current best practice for disabled access is defined in British Standard 8300:2009 entitled <i>Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – code of practice</i>. This builds on earlier versions of the standard with particular reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stair pitch;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual contrast; • slip resistance; • doors and doorways; • provision of 'Changing Places²; • facilities for working dogs. <p>In addition, best practice on support provided to disabled people to enable them to participate fully in conferences has been developed in recent years, to include the provision of interpreters, guides, readers, note takers and food servers and facilities for personal assistants.</p>
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3. 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 / political opinion	<p>46.3% of all Council staff identify themselves as coming from a Catholic community background and 53.7% from a Protestant community background. These proportions are broadly reflected in the staff permanently employed at the Waterfront Hall (approximately 50 FTE).</p> <p>If the Council ultimately decides to pursue the arm's length company operating model, permanent staff will be transferred to the employ of the new company. With regard to terms and conditions, including pension arrangements, there are strict</p>	None

² 'Changing Places' are toilet and sanitary/changing facilities for use by disabled persons and their carers where conventional accessible toilets are inadequate. They offer adequate space for the disabled person and up to two carers and incorporate a centrally placed toilet, height adjustable adult-sized changing bench, hoist, screen or curtain and often have wash-down facilities.

	<p>statutory guidelines in place³ to protect transferring staff and ensure that there is no diminution in the terms and conditions they currently enjoy. This means that no negative impacts in terms of equality of opportunity will result from the transfer of staff.</p>	
Racial group	<p>With regard to differences in human resource policies and work culture, previous EQIAs have suggested that that some policies can have a differential effect on people in certain Section 75 groups. The culture of a workplace may affect a number of Section 75 groups if they feel that the working environment is not as supportive as that provided in the public sector. This may negatively affect black and minority ethnic people.</p> <p>It is unlikely that an enhanced in-house operating model would have any significant impact in terms of work culture. Even if the arm's length company option were adopted, the Council would be in a position to transfer existing HR policies to the new company and ensure that any potential negative impacts would not occur without mitigating measures being put in place.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ongoing discussions with staff and Trade Unions in order to develop a transformation plan and these issues can be resolved through discussion and negotiation.</p>	<p>Potential minor negative impacts that can be mitigated through discussion and negotiation</p>
Age	<p>With regard to differences in human resource policies and work culture, previous EQIAs have suggested that that some policies can have a differential effect on people in certain Section 75</p>	<p>Potential minor negative impacts that can be mitigated through</p>

³ Including the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and the Service Provision Change (Protection of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

	<p>groups. The culture of a workplace may affect a number of Section 75 groups if they feel that the working environment is not as supportive as that provided in the public sector. This may negatively affect older people.</p> <p>With regard to training, development and promotion opportunities, any changes that restrict the amount of / or access to such opportunities may have a differential impact on younger employees who are looking to develop a career and on older employees who have less flexibility in terms of finding employment elsewhere.</p> <p>The in-house operating model would have no impact on these issues; if the arm's length company option is adopted the Council will transfer existing training and development policies to the new company.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ongoing discussions with staff and Trade Unions in order to develop a transformation plan and these issues can be resolved through discussion and negotiation.</p>	discussion and negotiation
Marital status		None
Sexual orientation	<p>With regard to differences in human resource policies and work culture, previous EQIAs have suggested that some policies can have a differential effect on people in certain Section 75 groups. The culture of a workplace may affect a number of Section 75 groups if they feel that the working environment is not as supportive as that provided in the public sector. This may negatively affect lesbian, gay and bisexual people.</p>	Potential minor negative impacts that can be mitigated through discussion and negotiation

	<p>It is unlikely that an enhanced in-house operating model would have any significant impact in terms of work culture. Even if the arm's length company option were adopted, the Council would be in a position to transfer existing HR policies to the new company and ensure that any potential negative impacts would not occur without mitigating measures being put in place.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ongoing discussions with staff and Trade Unions in order to develop a transformation plan and these issues can be resolved through discussion and negotiation.</p>	
<p>Men and women generally</p>	<p>60.9% of all Council staff are male and 39.1% are female. These proportions are broadly reflected in the staff permanently employed at the Waterfront Hall (approximately 50 FTE).</p> <p>With regard to differences in human resource policies and work culture, previous EQIAs have suggested that that some policies can have a differential effect on people in certain Section 75 groups. Any restrictive changes in terms of flexibility in patterns of working can have a significant impact on people with dependants who have a responsibility to be in a certain place at a certain time, for example, to collect children or elderly or disabled relatives from day care facilities. Across all employment fields, a large percentage of part-time staff choose to work these hours because of caring responsibilities and a high proportion are female.</p> <p>It is unlikely that an enhanced in-house operating model would have any significant impact in terms of work culture. Even if the arm's length company</p>	<p>Potential minor negative impacts that can be mitigated through discussion and negotiation</p>

	<p>option were adopted, the Council would be in a position to transfer existing HR policies to the new company and ensure that any potential negative impacts would not occur without mitigating measures being put in place.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ongoing discussions with staff and Trade Unions in order to develop a transformation plan and these issues can be resolved through discussion and negotiation.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>When the Waterfront Hall was built in the 1990s it incorporated a state of the art approach to physical access, especially for disabled people, including those with mobility difficulties and visual and hearing impairments. The Hall enjoys a good reputation in terms of its approach to the inclusion of disabled people but best practice in terms of access and support requirements has been refined over the years as a result of research.</p> <p>Current best practice for disabled access is defined in British Standard 8300:2009 entitled <i>Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – code of practice</i>.</p> <p>In addition, best practice on support provided to disabled people to enable them to participate fully in conferences has been developed in recent years, to include the provision of interpreters, guides, readers, note takers and food servers and facilities for personal assistants.</p> <p>Although not specific to the decision on the operating model, if the BWCEC is to establish a reputation as a world class facility and enhance its marketing potential, it is essential that mechanisms are established to ensure that facilities and support</p>	<p>Potential minor positive impact</p>

	<p>can be updated as research progresses and new aspects of best practice in terms of support for disabled conference delegates are identified.</p> <p>The Waterfront Hall has a Disabled Access Guide which will be updated for the BWCEC and an established Disability Access Group which is regularly consulted on issues relating to access and inclusion. Whatever decision is reached on the operating model, it will be important to continue (or re-establish) the Disability Access Group to identify and address future needs.</p>	
<p>Dependents</p>	<p>With regard to differences in human resource policies and work culture, previous EQIAs have suggested that that some policies can have a differential effect on people in certain Section 75 groups. Any restrictive changes in terms of flexibility in patterns of working can have a significant impact on people with dependants who have a responsibility to be in a certain place at a certain time, for example, to collect children or elderly or disabled relatives from day care facilities. Across all employment fields, a large percentage of part-time staff choose to work these hours because of caring responsibilities and a high proportion are female. The culture of a workplace may also affect a number of Section 75 groups if they feel that the working environment is not as supportive as that provided in the public sector. This may also negatively affect people with dependants.</p> <p>It is unlikely that an enhanced in-house operating model would have any significant impact in terms of work culture. Even if the arm's length company option were adopted, the Council would be in a position to transfer existing HR policies to the new</p>	<p>Potential minor negative impacts that can be mitigated through discussion and negotiation</p>

	<p>company and ensure that any potential negative impacts would not occur without mitigating measures being put in place.</p> <p>The Council is committed to ongoing discussions with staff and Trade Unions in order to develop a transformation plan and these issues can be resolved through discussion and negotiation.</p>	
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4. 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
All categories	<p>The project presents an opportunity to deliver a significant economic benefit to the city of Belfast as whole. The objectives and targets for the new operating model will include social objectives including employability schemes, local involvement in supply chains and initiatives to ensure that all neighbourhoods benefit from the increase in visitors. These will provide opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within all Section 75 equalities categories.</p> <p>In particular there is an opportunity to establish mechanisms to ensure that facilities and support can be updated as research progresses and new aspects of best practice in terms of support for disabled conference delegates are identified.</p>	

5. 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 / political opinion	<p>One of the original objectives of the development of the Waterfront Hall was to create a shared space at a boundary between two communities in the Markets area of Belfast and the Waterfront development has resulted in an area which is now considered a business hub within Belfast with shared working and entertainment spaces.</p> <p>The Waterfront Hall has never been a venue designed primarily for community use, but there have been examples of cross community events over the years, particularly in relation to art exhibitions. The new operating model will result in a shift from an entertainment venue to a conference centre and will restrict public access to the building, resulting in a loss of entertainment and exhibition space. However, the Ulster Hall has always been the more popular venue for smaller community events over the years and has been effectively promoted, through outreach work, as a popular location for entertainment and education events including workshops, film screenings, amateur theatre, master classes, tea dances etc. This policy will be retained and the BWCEC and Ulster Hall will continue to be managed as a single entity.</p> <p>In terms of exhibition space, since the Waterfront Hall was developed, a wide range of initiatives has been put in place by the Council and its partners to promote community arts and culture, with an emphasis on cross community events and shared spaces in order to further promote good relations. There are now significantly more arts and culture</p>	Potential minor negative impact

	<p>venues in the city than were in place when the Waterfront Hall opened and so the loss of exhibition space at the BWCEC will have only a minor impact. The Council has an established Cultural Framework for Belfast with a specific strand entitled <i>Inspiring Communities</i>, which emphasises the importance of developing shared cultural spaces and significantly contributes to the promotion of good relations. For example, the current action plan (2015-16) includes an initiative to transform a number of vacant spaces in both city centre (retail) and community locations into pop-up galleries and hubs for exhibitions, community arts displays and public artworks.</p> <p>These initiatives will continue to promote good relations across the city and will mitigate any negative impacts of the loss of the Waterfront Hall as an entertainment and exhibition venue.</p>	
Racial group	None	None

6. 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 / political opinion	The community arts and culture initiatives outlined above will continue to promote good relations across the city	
Racial group		The project will have no specific impact on the promotion of good

		relations between people of different racial groups
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7. Multiple Identities

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

No specific issues have been identified.

Section C

Belfast City Council also has legislative obligations to meet under the [Disability Discrimination Order](#) and Questions 8-9 relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

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

By establishing a venue which provides the highest standards of access and inclusion of disabled people, the Council will create opportunities to better promote positive attitudes to disabled people by ensuring that they are able to participate fully in conferences and events.

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

Insofar as conferences and events may have an impact on public life, the project will create opportunities to increase the participation by disabled people in public life by ensuring that they are able to participate fully in those events.

10. 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
<p>Regular performance reports to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff satisfaction feedback; • monitoring information on conference delegates across all Section 75 equality categories, as far as is practicable, with particular reference to disabled delegates; • information on meetings of the Disabled Access Group (or its successor) and changes made as a result of their recommendations. 	<p>The impact of community arts and culture on good relations is currently monitored through mechanisms within the Cultural Framework for Belfast.</p>	<p>Secondary data on attitudes to disabled people (e.g. Equality Commission research).</p>

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened:

Belfast Waterfront Convention & Exhibition Centre: Operating Model

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	* Screened In – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
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<input type="checkbox"/>	* Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:
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X	* Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached: This screening assessment is being conducted to provide decision makers with relevant information before a decision is taken on the appropriate operating model for the new BWCEC. This decision is unlikely to have more than minor impacts on any of the Section 75 equalities categories. It is therefore not considered necessary to conduct an EQIA. • Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:
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	<p>In order to ensure that there are no major impacts on equality of opportunity/good relations and that opportunities to improve the promotion of equality of opportunity / good relations are realised, the following mitigating actions have been (or will be) addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council is committed to ongoing discussions with staff and Trade Unions in order to develop a transformation plan. 2. Mechanisms will be established to ensure that facilities and support can be updated as research progresses and new aspects of best practice in terms of support for disabled conference delegates are identified. 3. The Waterfront Hall has a Disabled Access Guide which will be updated for the BWCEC. 4. There is an established Disability Access Group which is regularly consulted on issues relating to access and inclusion. Whatever decision is reached on the operating model, the Disability Access Group will continue (or be re-established) to identify and address future needs. 5. Community arts and culture initiatives (set out in the Cultural Framework for Belfast) will continue to promote good relations across the city and the Ulster Hall will continue to be promoted as a popular location for community events and entertainment/education activities.
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Formal Record of Screening Decision (cont.)

Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -

Name:

Claire Patterson

Date: 21.8.15

Department/ Job Title: Business Research and Development Manager

Screening decision approved by -

Name:

Donal Durkan

Date: 21.8.15

Department / Job Title: Director

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk or dennisl@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*)

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