



Title of Report:	Final Draft Report on Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) – Notice of Motion re Flying of the Union Flag
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	27th September 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Establish key relationships with strategic partners to deliver our vision for this Council area
Lead Officer	Head of Policy and Community Planning

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A Notice of Motion proposing a revised policy and procedure to fly the Union Flag on various Council buildings 365 days a year was adopted by Council on 5th October 2021.
- 1.2 The Notice of Motion had originally been ratified by Council on 1st June 2021 but a Call In was submitted which resulted in reconsideration of the Motion by Council. The motion was adopted on 5th October 2021 with a vote of 20 for and 11 against.
- 1.3 The Notice of Motion proposed that the following Council buildings would fly the Union Flag every day (365 days) with the list of buildings to be reviewed on an on-going basis:

Coleraine Town Hall
Cloonavin (Council Headquarters)
Limavady Office (Connell Street)
Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre
Ballymoney Town Hall
Riada House
Portrush Town Hall
Portstewart Town Hall*

(*Portstewart Town Hall is no longer part of the Council estate and has been removed from the proposed list.)

- 1.4 Outlined below is the current position with regard to the flying of the Union Flag and the proposed policy change:

Building	Current Position	Proposed Policy
Coleraine Town Hall	365 days per year	365 days per year
Cloonavin Council Headquarters	365 days per year	365 days per year
Limavady Office (Connell Street)	No flag flown	365 days per year
Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre	No flag flown	365 days per year
Ballymoney Town Hall	Designated Days	365 days per year
Riada House	Designated Days	365 days per year
Portrush Town Hall	July & August	365 days per year

- 1.5 The decision of Council was screened in accordance with the S75 Equality and Good Relations guidance and the outcome of this screening exercise was

a recommendation that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) be undertaken.

- 1.6 Gilmartin Consulting was appointed to undertake the EQIA and work commenced on the process at the beginning of January 2022.

2.0 The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Process

- 2.1 An EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy to determine the extent of differential impacts on the groups within the nine S75 categories and to consider whether there are any adverse impacts. If adverse impacts are identified, then the Council is required to consider measures which may mitigate these adverse impacts and consider alternative ways of delivering the aims of the policy which would have a less adverse impact.
- 2.2 The methodology for undertaking an EQIA has been established by the Equality Commission and is subject to statutory guidance. It follows a seven-step process as outlined below:

Step 1	Defining the aims of the policy
Step 2	Consideration of available data and research
Step 3	Assessment of Impacts
Step 4	Consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. measures which might mitigate any adverse impactii. alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
Step 5	Consultation
Step 6	Decision by Council and publication of results of the EQIA
Step 7	Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring

- 2.3 Following completion of steps 1 to 4 of this process a 12-week consultation period took place between 21st February 2022 and 13 May 2022. An extension to this consultation period took place between 16th June 2022 and 1st July 2022 to facilitate the Easter holiday period and the election period.
- 2.4 The consultation invited comments on the proposed policy and this was widely publicised using press advertisements in local and regional papers, the use of social media and the Council website. Council staff were also consulted.
- 2.5 An on-line survey was also available for completion via the Council website. Comments could also be submitted in writing.

3.0 Draft Final Report

- 3.1 At the end of the consultation period the initial draft EQIA report was revised to reflect the comments made by consultees. This final draft report is now placed before the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee for consideration – copy attached – and will be brought before Council for final decision in October.
- 3.2 The Council's decision will be incorporated into a final summary document and the results of the EQIA will be published via the Council's website and in the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission.



Equality Impact Assessment

Final decision report on
proposed policy on the
flying of the Union flag

August 2022

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1. Introduction

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to consultation, which is timely, open, and inclusive and conducted in accordance with the Equality Commission’s Guiding Principles and the Council’s own Equality Scheme, which states that:

“The Council is committed to consulting with a wide range of groups, from the public in general and specific voluntary and community groups to elected representatives and other public sector bodies.”

Between 21 February 2022 to 13 May 2022 the Council carried out a 12-week consultation on its proposed policy on flying the Union flag and associated draft equality impact assessment (EQIA). Due to the Easter holidays and election period, a further 2-week consultation was carried out between 16 June 2022 and 1 July 2022.

The proposed policy aims to align Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council with “the new guidance published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to have the Union flag flown on Council and Civic buildings every day (365 days)” with the outcome of embodying “the emblems of the constituent nations united under one Sovereign – the Kingdoms of England and Wales, of Scotland and of Northern Ireland”.¹

At the same time, the Council is mindful of all other guidance and statutes operating in Northern Ireland at this time, along with views of those affected by the proposed policy, including members of the public and Council staff.

A public advertisement was placed in Coleraine Chronicle, Derry Journal, Belfast Telegraph and Irish News. The advertisement invited comments on the proposed policy.

The draft EQIA Consultation Report and accompanying questionnaire, setting out alternative policies and mitigations to alleviate any adverse impact, was available on the Council’s website.

The Council facilitated two public consultation events on Tuesday 1 March and Tuesday 8 March 2022.

¹ Days designated under the Flags Regulations and days designated by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings are included at appendix 1 and appendix 2 respectively.

All Equality Scheme consultees were notified of the availability of the draft EQIA and invited to comment. A list of these Equality Scheme organisations is attached at appendix 3.

All Elected Members and staff were notified of the availability of the draft EQIA report and consultation questionnaires on the council's website, invited to submit written responses and attend online consultation events.

Separate online events were made available to:

- Elected Members
- Staff and
- Public

This EQIA final decision report sets out:

- the initial findings from the draft EQIA report
- the results of the consultation process
- conclusions
- recommendations for monitoring any adverse impacts

It has been prepared in order to provide the Council with all available information on which to base a decision.

2. The policy

Current position

On 1 April 2015, local government reform created the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council out of four “legacy” councils. Each of these councils had their own flags policy and practice as detailed in the table below.

Legacy council	Current arrangement	Detail
Ballymoney Borough Council	The Union flag is flown on designated days and days designated by Her Majesty the Queen. The Mayor and Chief Executive have discretion to fly on additional days, for example, death of prominent politicians.	The policy applies to three Council buildings: Riada House, Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre and the Town Hall.
Coleraine Borough Council	The Union flag is flown 365 days a year at Coleraine Town Hall and the Council Offices at Cloonavin and during July and August at Portrush Town Hall. The Council also flies the Blue Seaside Award Flag.	
Limavady Borough Council	The only flag that is flown by Limavady Borough Council is the Blue Seaside Award Flag.	
Moyle District Council	The only flag that is flown by Moyle District Council is the Blue Seaside Award Flag.	

As an interim approach, it was proposed at the Shadow Council’s Governance Committee on 12 February 2015 that these existing legacy Council flag-flying arrangements would roll over to the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. A new policy for the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council was then to be developed at a later date.

2015 Notice of Motion

A Notice of Motion was submitted to a meeting of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council on 28 April 2015.

The following Notice of Motion was proposed:

“That this Council supports the following policy with regard to the flying of the Union flag in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Area. Civic Centres and former Centres of local Government (Coleraine Town Hall, Ballymoney Town Hall, Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre – formerly Limavady Town Hall, Portrush Town Hall and Portstewart Town Hall) – 365 Days. Council Admin HQ (Cloonavin) – Working Days and Designated Days plus, including other days at the discretion of the Chief Executive. Council Admin Centres (Riada House, Limavady Council Offices and Sheskburn House) – Working Days and Designated Days plus, including any other days at the discretion of the Chief Executive. This proposal is supported by All members of the DUP, UUP, TUV, PUP and Independent Unionist.”

In accordance with Council policy, the Notice of Motion was referred to the appropriate Council Committee for consideration, and it was therefore placed on the agenda for discussion by the Council’s Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

The decision of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 16 June 2015 was to recommend to the Council that the motion be adopted as Council policy subject to the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The minutes of the meeting of 16 June 2015 were subsequently ratified by Council on 28 July 2015. At both the 16 June and 28 July meetings, an amendment proposing a policy of the flying of no flags on any Council buildings in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area was proposed and lost.

A screening exercise of the proposed policy was carried out, which resulted in a recommendation that an EQIA be undertaken with regard to the proposed flags policy. However, it did not progress until the present motion was proposed on 4 May 2021 and adopted by Council on 5 October 2021.

2021 Notice of Motion and proposed flags policy

A Notice of Motion proposing a revised policy and procedure to fly the Union flag on Council buildings 365 days a year subject to consultation was presented at the Council's meeting on 4 May 2021 and referred to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 25 May.

The Council then ratified the following Notice of Motion at its meeting on 1 June 2021:

"That this Council falls in line with the new guidance published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to have the Union flag flown on Council and Civic buildings every day (365 days). Therefore the following buildings would fly the flag in accordance with this policy; Coleraine Town Hall, Cloonavin Council Headquarters, Limavady Office (Connell St), Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre, Ballymoney Town Hall, Riada House, Portrush Town Hall and Portstewart Town Hall.² This list of buildings will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. The Union Flag is the National Flag of the United Kingdom, and it is so called because it embodies the emblems of the constituent nations united under one Sovereign – the Kingdoms of England and Wales, of Scotland and of Northern Ireland"

The motion was followed by a Call-in Notice which expressed an objection under Section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Local Government Act, that is that the "decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district". The Call-in Notice stated that:

"This decision disproportionately impacts a section of the inhabitants of the council area, namely those who reside within the council area who do not feel represented by the Union flag [...] Some inhabitants of our Council area, those who use, visit and work in the council buildings are adversely impacted by this motion and may be made to feel uncomfortable, unrepresented and deterred from using public buildings as a result of this motion."

² Portstewart Town Hall is no longer part of the Council estate and has been removed from the list.

The Motion was reconsidered by the Council in accordance with the Local Government Act and adopted on 5 October 2021 with a vote of 20 for and 11 against.

In relation to the issue concerning ‘This list of buildings will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.’ The Council has confirmed that, ‘There is a possibility that the Council estate may change and may trigger a review of flying the Union flag on its estate. This will necessitate an equality screening at that time’

Additional flags

Alongside arrangements for the flying of the Union flag, in February 2016 the Council agreed to fly the Armed Forces Flag at Coleraine Town Hall for one week following Armed Forces Day.

In August 2021 the Council also agreed to fly the official flag of the “Emergency Services Day” at Cloonavin (Council headquarters) along with the Union flag on 9 September annually.

5. Consideration of available data and research

This section provides an overview of the data and research that was considered in the draft EQIA consultation report.

Statistical data

Data on Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council residents by Section 75 category is set out in appendix 4. This information is taken from the 20011 Census and 2019 local council elections.

Appendix 5 provides a breakdown of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council residents by Section 75 category based on Article 55 returns to the Equality Commission NI.

Appendix 6 contains data from the 2020 NI Life and Times Survey on public opinion on the flying of the Union flag.

Research

The draft EQIA consultation report included a range of background information on policies and guidance that might have an influence on the Council's policy. These are set out in the appendices to this report and include:

- Appendix 7: Relevant legislation
- Appendix 8: Relevant Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council policies
- Appendix 9: Other relevant policies and research

6. Assessment of impacts

In accordance with the EQIA process, having gathered information on the policy and those affected by it, the Council must then assess whether there is a differential impact on one or more of the equality groups, determine the extent of differential impact and whether that impact is adverse.

Differential impact suggests that a particular group has been affected differently by the policy (either favourably or unfavourably), while adverse impact is an indication that the effect is less favourable (i.e., negative) and is potentially unlawful.³

In order to determine whether the policy has any adverse differential impact, it is necessary to consider the people affected by the policy, their needs and experiences and the equality categories to which they belong.

The following section summarises the assessment of impacts as set out in the draft EQIA report based on the evidence available at that time.

Groups affected by the proposed policy

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council understands from the research currently available that the display or non-display of flags is an issue that may primarily impact upon people in relation to their religious belief and/or political opinion.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is fully cognisant of the political realities in Northern Ireland and of the differing aspirations of the two main communities, including within the Borough itself. The Council therefore accepts that the issue of the display or non-display of flags at particular locations is one that impacts primarily upon people due to their political opinion. At the same time the Council accepts that political opinion in Northern Ireland is often closely associated with religious identity and that therefore the policy may impact on religious belief.

It is considered therefore that the policy may have significant impact with regard to the following categories under Section 75:

- Political opinion
- Religious belief

³ Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI, 2004 (pp.22-23)

It is assumed for the purposes of this EQIA that the majority of Catholics in the borough are likely to be Nationalist and that the majority of Protestants are likely to be Unionist (this assumption being supported to a large degree by the parallel in religious belief and voting figures in local government elections). It is also recognised that the breakdown of the population by religious belief will vary across the borough.

The Council is not aware of any evidence which would support the existence of a significant differential impact on the following groups, and it is therefore considered that the policy has no discernible impact on the following categories under Section 75:

- Ethnic group/racial background
- Age
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Persons with/without a disability
- Persons with/without dependants

Nature of this impact

Adverse impact or the degree of adverse impact on people in relation to the display or non-display of flags is difficult to quantify. The impact appears to be one of perception as to whether a flag represents a cultural, political or historical aspect of life in Northern Ireland.

Consideration would have to be given to the possibility that the Council's proposed position with regard to the display of flags may have a differential and potentially adverse impact on people in relation to whether they feel free to fully access the public services available to them in the Council buildings at particular localities as defined in the proposed policy.

More generally people may experience a "chill factor" in their dealings with Council or visits to the Council buildings concerned. This "chill factor" may not prevent people from physically entering a building or accessing a service but may detract from their ability to participate and benefit fully.

Consideration also needs to be given to the role of the Council as an employer. Causeway Coast and Glens Council in its Equal Opportunities Policy, in line with the Fair Employment Code of Practice, is committed to:

“Promoting a good and harmonious working environment where all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment will be tolerated.”

Within its Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Harassment, the Council commits itself to providing equal opportunities and defines harassment, *inter alia*, as:

“visual displays of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting or emblems or any other offensive material”

The Council recognises that some employees may experience a “chill factor” when working in a building/grounds displaying flags which would lead them to associate the building with a different political identity.

Impact of the proposed flags policy

It is recognised that a flags policy which includes the removal of flags connected with Unionism and/or Protestantism would minimise the adverse impact of the previous practice on Nationalists and/or Catholics. It does, however, on the same evidence possibly create an adverse impact on Unionists and/or Protestants who may regard the removal of longstanding flags as reflecting on a diminution of their culture and history. Similarly, the reverse position would apply.

The Equality Commission has commented on the issue of displays in the past. In 2002 Fermanagh District Council reviewed its policy on the flying of flags and asked the Equality Commission for their views. In a letter to the Chief Executive dated 12 March 2002, the Equality Commission stated:

“The Commission seeks to promote a spirit of inclusivity and mutual respect and urges the avoidance of contentious displays which act as a badge for community or political allegiance and promote division in the workplace. [...] Where an employer is seeking to provide or maintain fair participation, or to ensure that all of its services are widely utilised by all sections of the community, the Commission recommends particular sensitivity concerning displays

which are wholly or mainly associated with one section of the community.”

Given the breakdown by community background of the population within each of the four legacy councils that make up Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, it is likely that the local response to the flying of the Union flag on Council premises may vary considerably. Accordingly, this matter will be afforded due consideration in the EQIA final decision report, and respondents to the consultation questionnaire have an opportunity to consider the flying of the Union flag at each location separately.

7. Consideration of alternative policies and mitigating actions

The EQIA process requires that if it is decided that the policy has an adverse impact on one or more of the nine equality categories, then a series of alternatives should be put forward for consideration and an assessment of the possible impact of these alternatives undertaken. The Council must consider measures which might mitigate the adverse impact and alternative ways of delivering policy aims which have a less adverse impact on the relevant equality category or which better promote equality of opportunity and good relations.⁴

Along with the draft EQIA Consultation Report, questionnaires were prepared for staff and the public. These included various alternatives to the proposed policy on the flying of the Union flag (including not flying the flag), and which potentially could act to mitigate adverse impacts if adopted. In summary, the following alternatives were made available in each questionnaire:

	365 days	Working days (260) and designated days *	Designated days (circa 15)	No flag
Coleraine Town Hall				
Portrush Town Hall				
Ballymoney Town Hall				
Roe Valley Arts Centre (formally Limavady Town Hall)				
Council Admin HQ (Cloonavin, Coleraine)				
Council Admin Centre – Riada House,				
Council Admin Centre – Limavady Council Offices,				

⁴ Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI, 2004 (pp.30-31)

At the time of preparing the draft EQIA, and prior to feedback obtained from the public consultation, other than seeking views on these alternative proposals (see above), it was not felt that any further mitigating measures needed to be introduced to the proposed policy.

However, the Council remains mindful of the need to continue to accommodate sensitivities around this issue and to ensure that all steps are taken to minimise adverse impacts in the future, whether currently known or unknown.

With this in mind, it is proposed that, in keeping with the commitment included in the Council's Equality Scheme (see p.17, para. 4.30), the revised policy should be subject to review after two years, and that this review should consider and remedy any identified adverse impacts.

The council has commented that, "There is a possibility that the Council estate may change and may trigger a review of flying the Union Flag on its estate. This will necessitate an equality screening at that time."

This EQIA review will run independently from any ongoing review of the Council's estate that may impact on the outworking of the proposed policy.

8. Summary of consultation responses

The Equality Commission's Guide to the Statutory Duties makes it clear that a formal consultation exercise should be included as a critical stage in an EQIA, immediately before decision making. Consultation should focus on the actual impact of the existing policy and the likely impact of proposed and alternative policies. Consultation should be inclusive, afford a fair opportunity to communicate pertinent information and enable consultees to give advice and opinion on the policy so that the public authority may reach a more informed decision. However, the Equality Commission has also made it clear that an EQIA should not be considered as a referendum whereby the views of consultees from a majority are counted as votes to decide the outcome.⁵

The consultation process on this EQIA covered a 14-week period from 21 February 2022 to 13 May 2022 and 16 June 2022 and 1 July 2022. During the consultation period the draft EQIA report was available on the Council's website together with questionnaires for staff and the public designed to facilitate the type of responses referred to above. A public advertisement was placed in the local press, and there were two public meetings. The Council's Equality Scheme consultees were notified of the availability of the report and invited to comment. Elected Members were made aware of the draft EQIA report and consultation questionnaires on the Council's website, invited to submit written responses and attend an online consultation event.

Responses to the online consultation events

The following section summarises online consultation events that were carried out during the 14-week public consultation.

Public meetings

Two online consultation events were arranged and widely advertised. No attendance was recorded.

Staff meetings

Two online consultation events were arranged. No attendance was recorded.

⁵ Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, Equality Commission for NI, 2004 (p.36)

Equality Forum

Six Equality Forum members attended. One respondent questioned if everyone would feel welcome and “included”. One attendee had no objection to the Union flag flying 365 days a year, but she was concerned that it may be viewed as “overkill”. A note of the meeting is attached in Appendix 12.

Youth Forum

The Youth Forum members were invited to attend an online consultation event. They opted for a closed session with a recorded version of the presentation.

Elected Members

Eighteen elected Members attended. Respondents raised questions regarding the administrative arrangements of the EQIA report. The queries concerned the submission date of the final EQIA report to council and if community groups had been contacted.

One elected Member suggested an extension to the consultation deadline of two weeks as the report had been circulated over the Easter holidays and election period.

A note of the meeting is attached in Appendix 13.

The request for an extension to the consultation period was considered by Senior Leadership Team and party group leaders on 6 June 2022. The extension to the consultation period was granted.

Responses from the general public

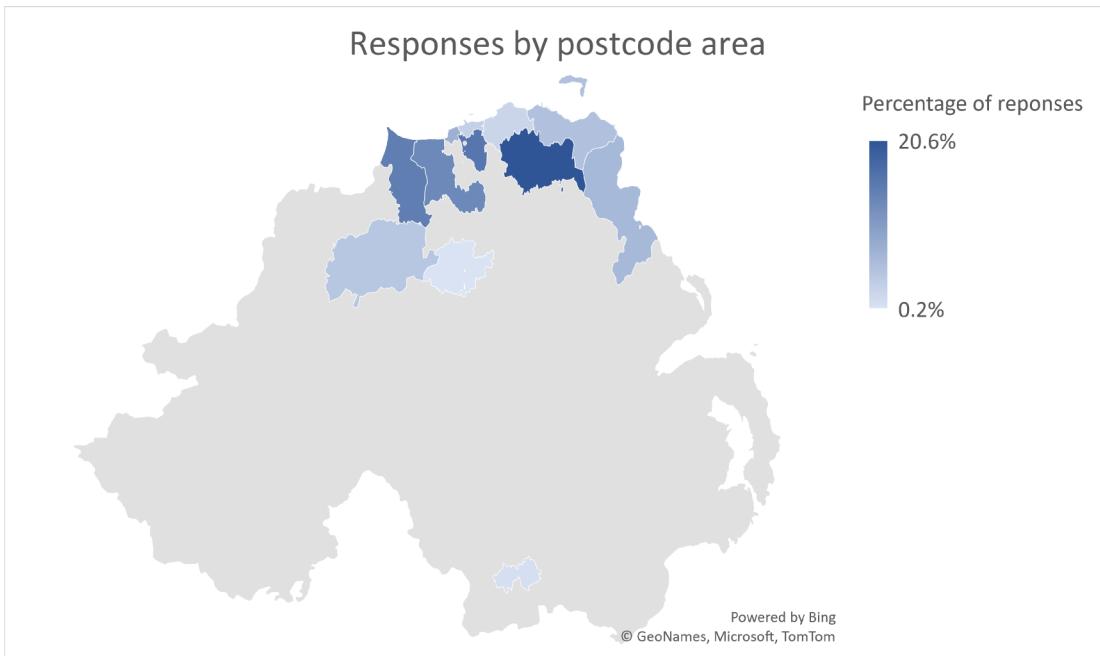
There were 562 responses received to an online survey targeted at the general public.⁶ Five hundred and fifty-one responses were received from individuals and two were received from organisations (nine returns did not include responses to this question).

⁶ Unless otherwise stated, n=562

Demographic breakdown of responses

Geographic spread

Respondents were asked to provide the first four digits of their postcode. The map and table below show the geographic spread of respondents.

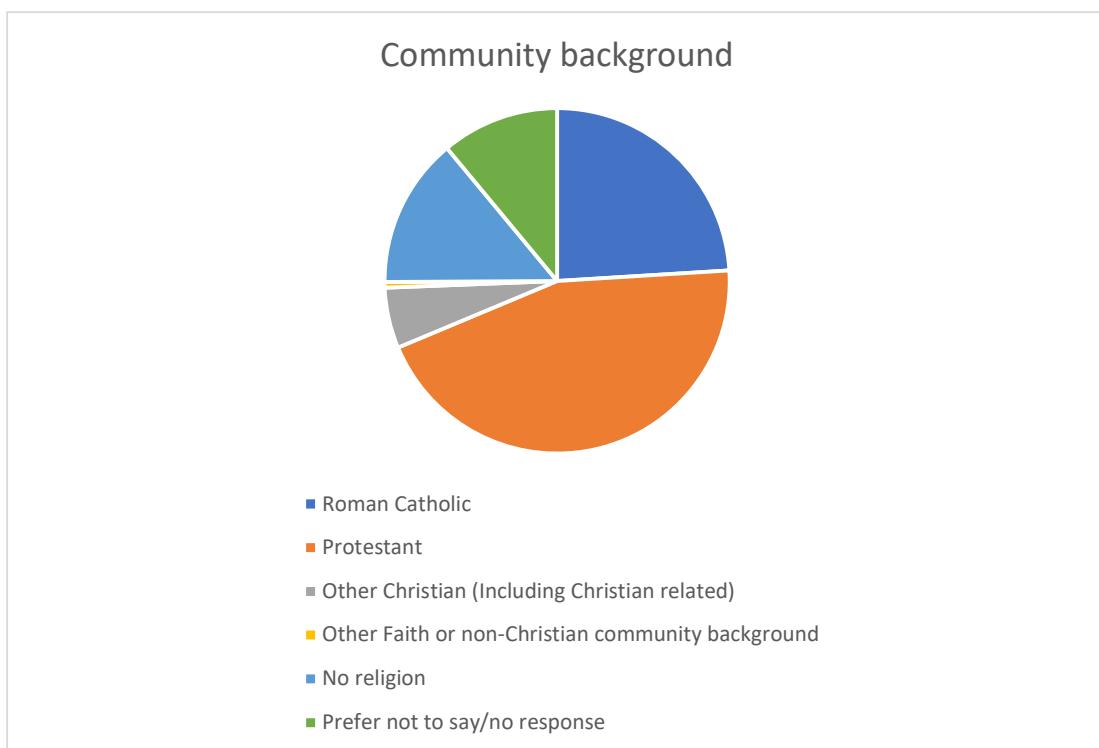


Postcode	Percentage	Number
BT35	0.7%	4
BT44	6.2%	35
BT46	0.2%	1
BT47	4.3%	24
BT49	14.8%	83
BT51	13.2%	74
BT52	15.8%	89
BT53	20.6%	116
BT54	5.2%	29
BT55	7.5%	42
BT56	2.8%	16

BT57	2.1%	12
No response	6.6%	37

Community background

44.7 per cent of respondents identified as from a Protestant community background. 24.0 per cent identified as from a Roman Catholic community background.

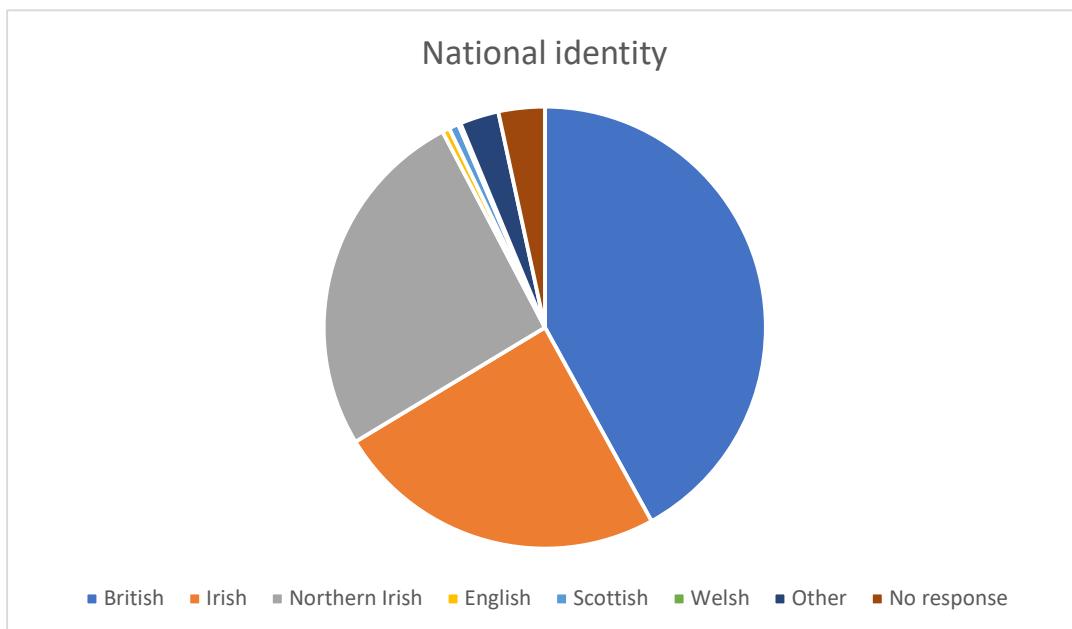


Community background	Number	Percentage
Roman Catholic	135	24.0%
Protestant	251	44.7%
Other Christian (Including Christian related)	32	5.7%
Other Faith or non-Christian community background	3	0.5%

No religion	79	14.1%
Prefer not to say/no response	62	11.0%

National identity

42 per cent of respondents identified as British. 26 per cent identified as Northern Irish. 24.4 per cent identified as Irish.



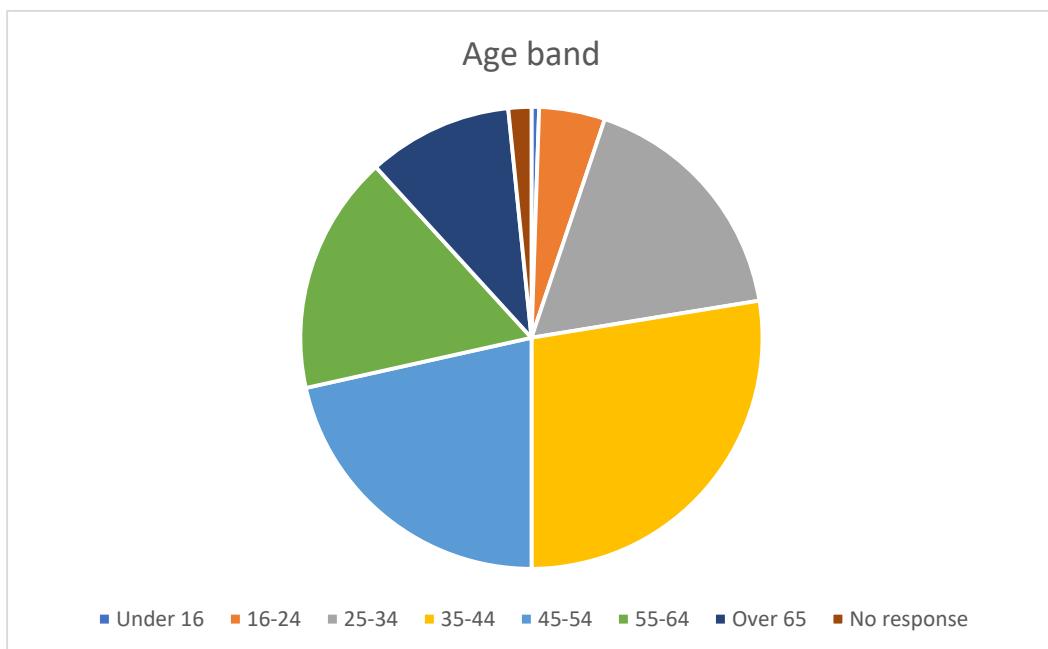
National identity	Number	Percentage
British	236	42.0%
Irish	137	24.4%
Northern Irish	146	26.0%
English	3	0.5%
Scottish	4	0.7%
Welsh	1	0.2%
Other	16	2.8%
No response	19	3.4%

Ethnic group

96.3 per cent of respondents (519) identified as white. 1.7 per cent (9) identified as from another ethnic group.⁷

Age

The following graph and table provide a breakdown of responses by age band.



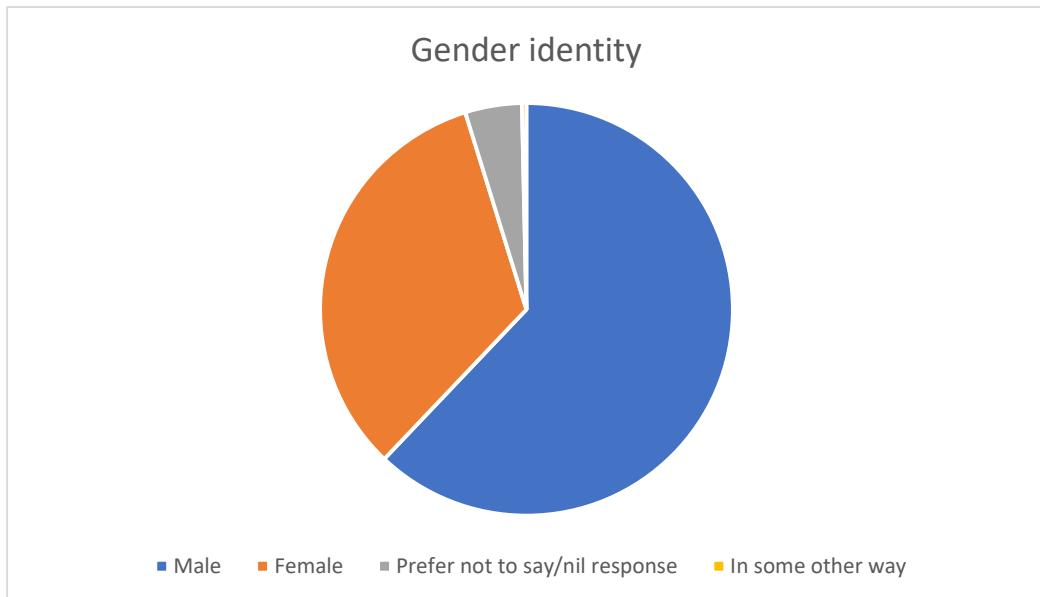
Age band	Number	Percentage
Under 16	3	0.5%
16-24	26	4.6%
25-34	97	17.3%
35-44	155	27.6%
45-54	121	21.5%
55-64	44	8.1%
65-74	11	2.1%
75-84	3	0.5%
Over 85	1	0.2%
No response	1	0.2%

⁷ n=539

55-64	94	16.7%
Over 65	57	10.1%
No response	9	1.6%

Gender identity

The majority of respondents (62.1 per cent) identified as male.



Gender identity	Number	Percentage
Male	349	62.1%
Female	186	33.1%
Prefer not to say/nil response	25	4.4%
In some other way	2	0.4%

Responses in relation to the policy

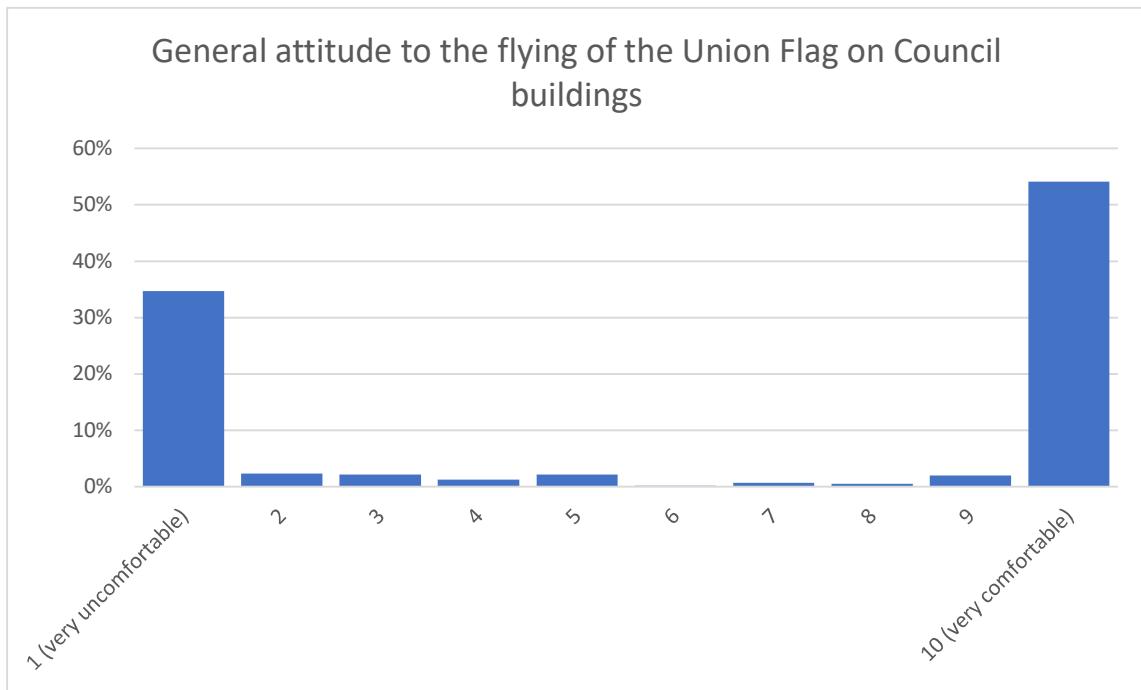
The following section considers responses to the current and proposed policy on flying the Union flag.

It should be noted that the responses indicate some confusion as to the nature of the current and proposed policy. For example, some respondents were broadly favourable of the flying of the Union flag but went on to object to the proposed policy on the grounds that it makes provision for designated days only (the proposed policy makes provision for flying the Union flag 365-days a year on listed Council buildings).

General attitude to flying the Union flag

Respondents were asked to indicate how they feel in general about the flying of the Union flag on Council buildings using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 meant “very uncomfortable” and 10 meant “very comfortable”.

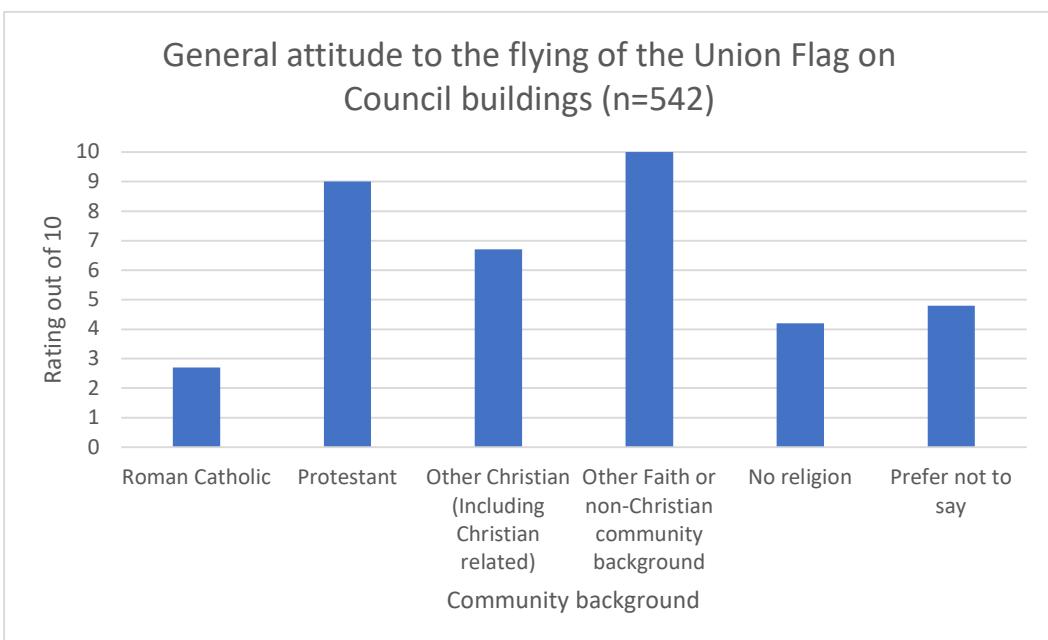
The average rating was 6.2 out of 10.



Attitude	Number	Percentage
1 (very uncomfortable)	195	34.7%

2	13	2.3%
3	12	2.1%
4	7	1.2%
5	12	2.1%
6	1	0.2%
7	4	0.7%
8	3	0.5%
9	11	2.0%
10 (very comfortable)	304	54.1%

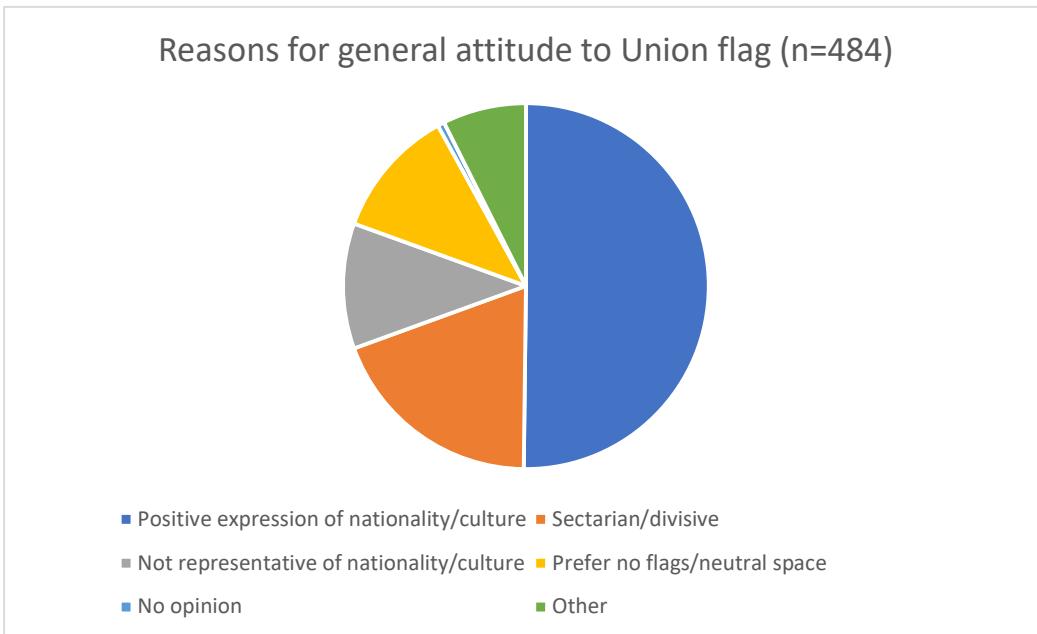
Taking the average response by religious category, people from Protestant and other faith or non-Christian backgrounds feel most comfortable with the flying of the Union Flag. People from a Roman Catholic community background or no religion feel least comfortable on average.



Community background	Number of responses	Average rating
Roman Catholic	135	2.7

Protestant	251	9.0
Other Christian (Including Christian related)	32	6.7
Other Faith or non-Christian community background	3	10
No religion	79	4.2
Prefer not to say	46	4.8

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to explain why they felt that way. Four hundred and eight-four responses were received. The sentiment of each comment was analysed and coded as follows.



Sentiment	Number	Percentage
Positive expression of nationality/culture	258	65.0%
Sectarian/divisive	99	12.0%

Not representative of nationality/culture	57	8.1%
Prefer no flags/neutral space	59	10.9%
No opinion	3	0.8%
Other	38	3.1%

Comments in favour of flying the Union flag included:

- “Council buildings are government buildings and therefore should fly the Union Flag 365 days a year.”
- “Across europe its common for national flag to be flown on goverment buildings.”
- “Because I have grown up with the union flag flying, it doesn't cause me any offence in the slightest, it is the flag of our country. The same way when I holiday in the Republic of Ireland the flag of their country doesn't cause me any offence or scare me”
- “Because it is the national flag of the UK, of which NI are central”
- “We are part of the UK it is our National Flag. We should be proud to fly it.”
- “It is the flag of our country”
- “Because it is the flag of our nation, which local people fought and died for and still do, it's a bit of respect”
- “Remember those who fought for our country”

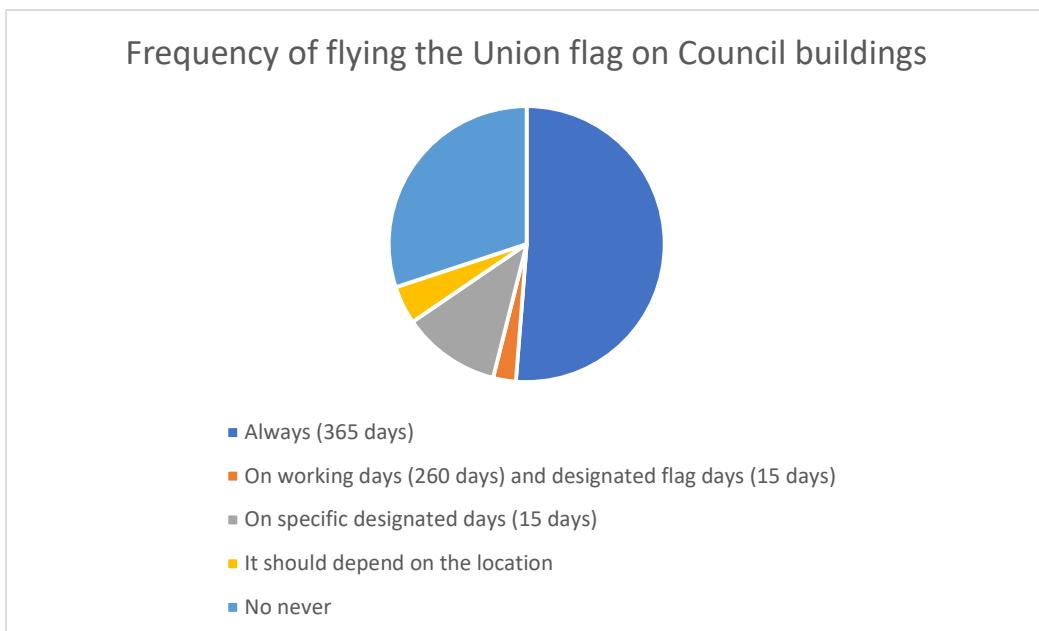
Comments not in favour of flying the Union flag included:

- “It recognises one identity only and effectively marks territory. In that sense it is intimidatory and exclusionary. I would feel unwelcome and less likely to access council services.”
- “The Union Flag has been politicised by loyalists and is used to mark territory abd goad nationalists and then it is left to deteriorate to rags.”
- “British and Irish flags are divisive”

- “Flags in NI are political statements. Council and civic buildings should be seen as politically neutral.”
- “Cause it doesn’t represent the mixed cultures of NI”
- “Doesn’t show equality to all residents”
- “I would feel intimidated and unwelcome to shop in the local area”
- “An entertainment venue should be inclusive and welcoming”

Frequency of flying the Union flag on Council buildings

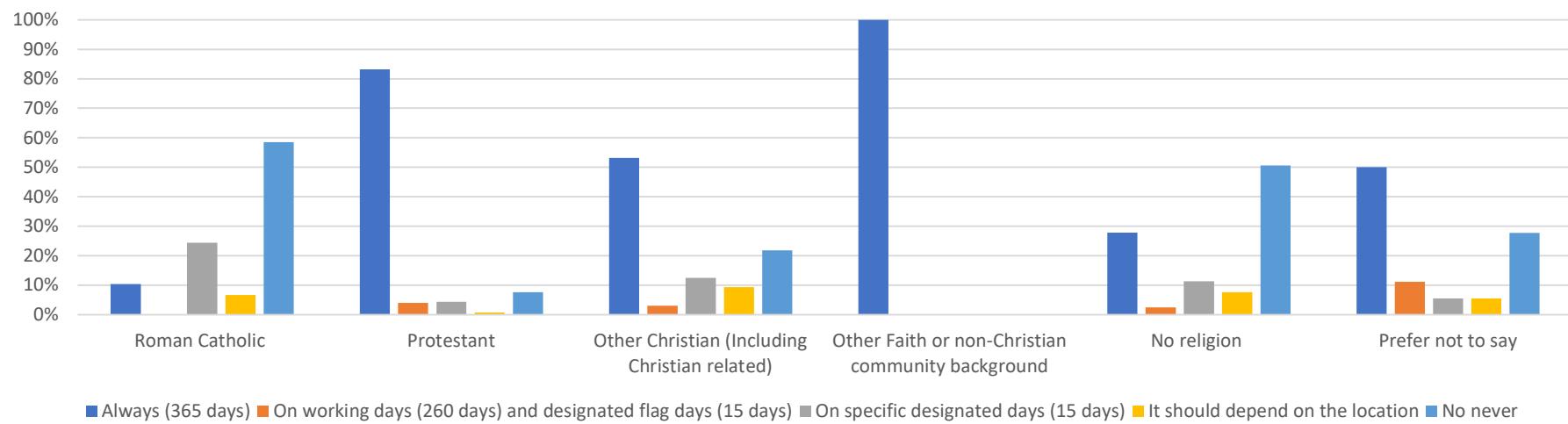
Half of respondents (51.2 per cent) felt the flag should fly 365-days a year. Nearly a third (30.1 per cent) felt it should never fly.



Frequency	Number	Percentage
Always (365 days)	288	51.2%
On working days (260 days) and designated flag days (15 days)	15	2.7%
On specific designated days (15 days)	65	11.6%
It should depend on the location	25	4.4%
No never	169	30.1%

People from Protestant and other non-Christian faiths were most likely to agree that the Union Flag should be flown 365-days a year. People from a Roman Catholic community background and no religion were most likely to agree that it should never be flown.

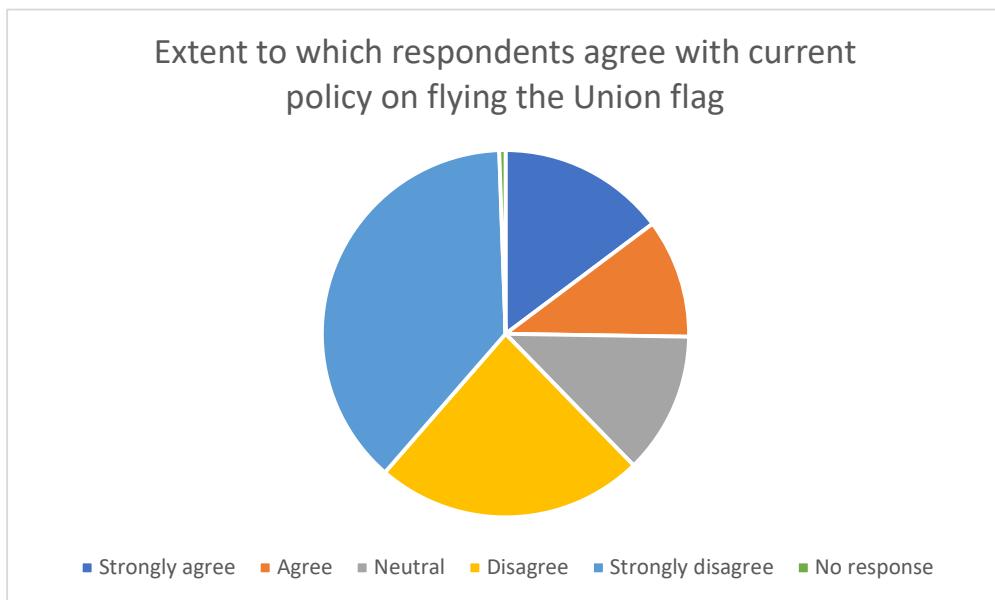
Frequency of flying the Union flag on Council buildings
by community background (n=518)



Frequency	Roman Catholic		Protestant		Other Christian (Including Christian related)		Other Faith or non-Christian community background		No religion		Prefer not to say/	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%
Always (365 days)	14	10.4 %	20	83.3 %	17	53.1 %	3	100.0 %	22	27.8 %	9	50.0%
On working days (260 days) and designated flag days (15 days)	0	0.0%	10	4.0%	1	3.1%	0	0.0%	2	2.5%	2	11.1%
On specific designated days (15 days)	33	24.4 %	11	4.4%	4	12.5 %	0	0.0%	9	11.4 %	1	5.6%
It should depend on the location	9	6.7%	2	0.8%	3	9.4%	0	0.0%	6	7.6%	1	5.6%
No never	79	58.5 %	19	7.6%	7	21.9 %	0	0.0%	40	50.6 %	5	27.8%

Current policy on flying the Union flag

Respondents were asked to consider how much they agreed with the current policy on flying the Union flag.



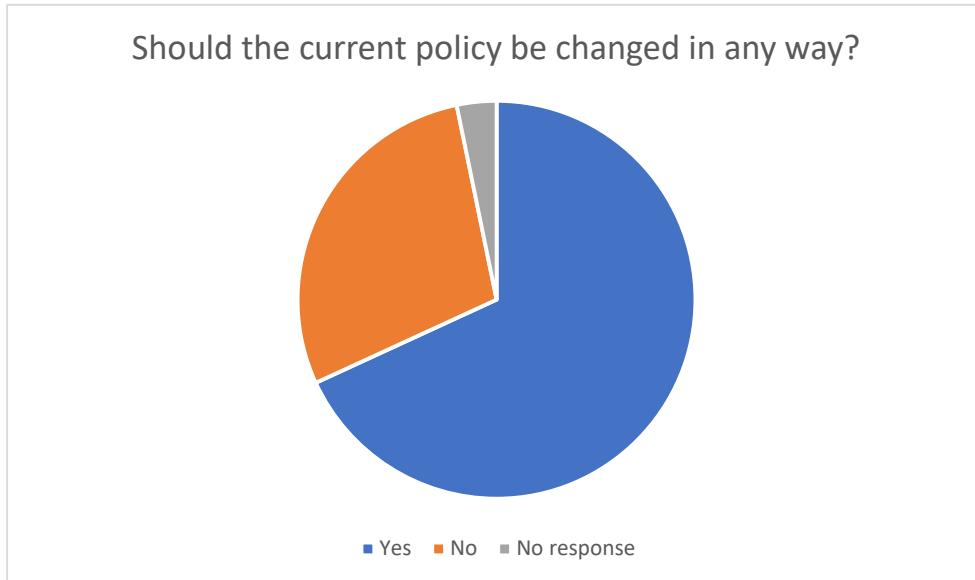
Agree with current policy	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	83	14.8%
Agree	59	10.5%
Neutral	70	12.5%
Disagree	133	23.7%
Strongly disagree	214	38.1%
No response	3	0.5%

25.3 per cent agree or strongly agree with the current policy, and 61.7 per cent disagree or strongly disagree with it.

Those who disagreed included respondents who felt that there should be a consistent approach to flying the flag 365 days a year across all Council

buildings and those who felt there should be a consistent no-flags policy across all Council buildings.⁸

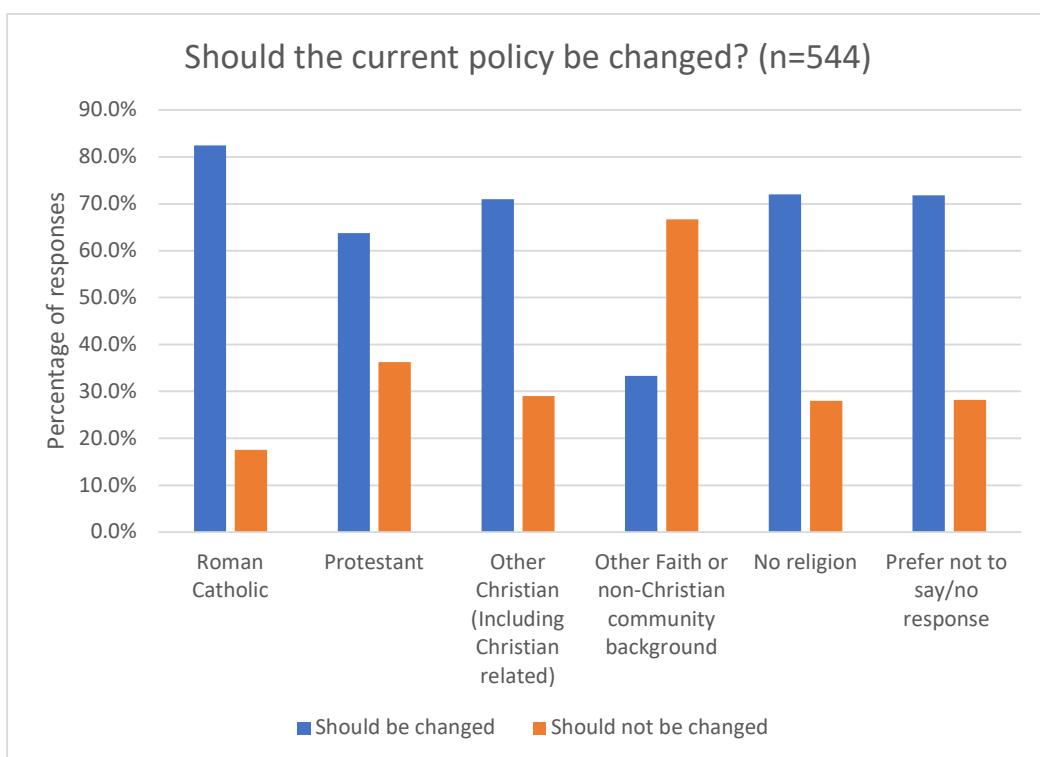
68.1 per cent also agreed that the current policy should be changed, while 28.6 disagreed.



Should the current policy be changed?	Number	Percentage
Yes	383	68.1%
No	161	28.6%
No response	18	3.2%

82.4 per cent of people from a Roman Catholic background agree that the current policy should be changed compared with 63.8 per cent of people from a Protestant community background.

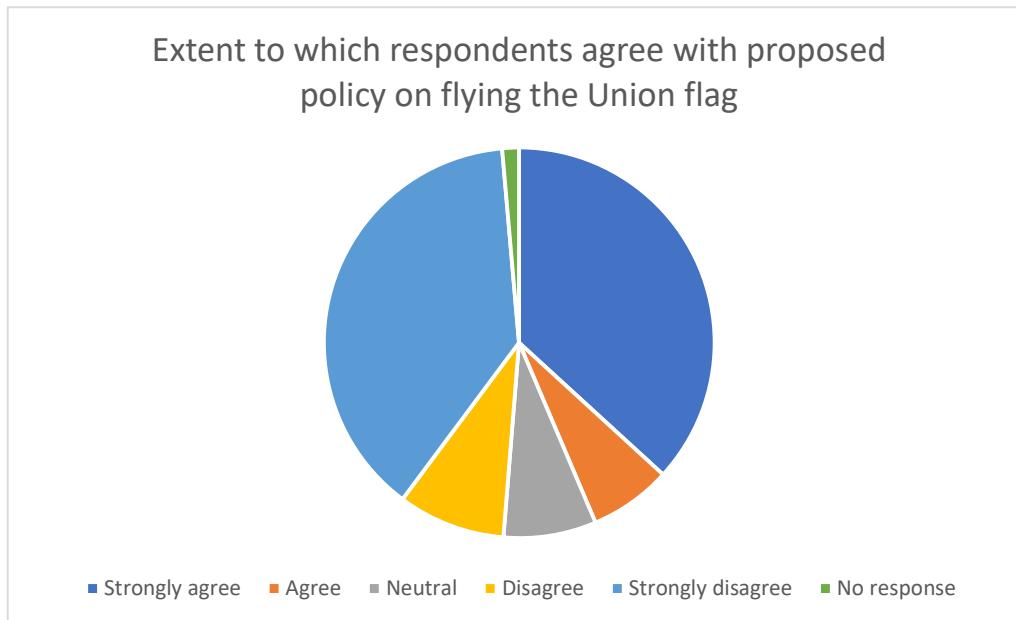
⁸ n=396



Community background	Current policy should be changed		Current policy should not be changed	
	Number	%	Number	%
Roman Catholic	108	82.4%	23	17.6%
Protestant	155	63.8%	88	36.2%
Other Christian (Including Christian related)	22	71.0%	9	29.0%
Other Faith or non-Christian community background	1	33.3%	2	66.7%
No religion	54	72.0%	21	28.0%
Prefer not to say/no response	43	71.8%	18	28.2%

Proposed policy on flying the Union flag

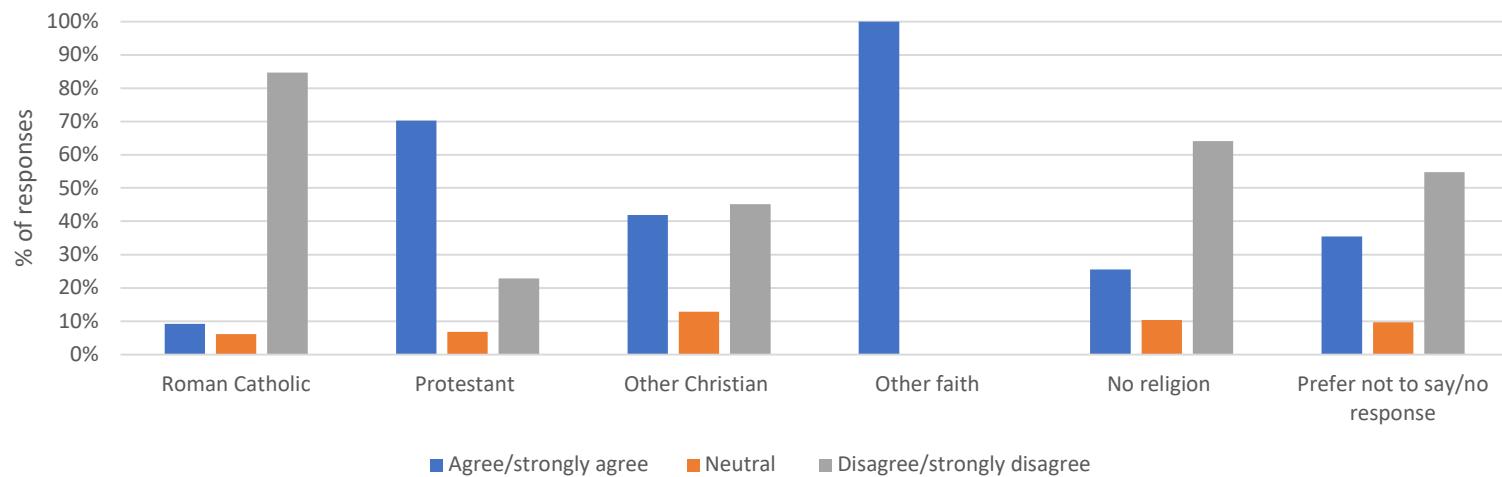
Respondents were asked to consider how much they agree with the proposed policy on flying the Union flag. 43.6 per cent agreed or strongly agreed and 47.3 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.



	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	207	36.8%
Agree	38	6.8%
Neutral	43	7.7%
Disagree	50	8.9%
Strongly disagree	216	38.4%
No response	8	1.4%

People from Protestant and other faith community backgrounds were most likely to agree with the proposed policy, and people from a Roman Catholic background and no religion were most likely to disagree.

Extent to which respondents agree with proposed policy on flying the Union flag by community background (n=554)



	Roman Catholic		Protestant		Other Christian		Other faith		No religion		Prefer not to say/no response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree/strongly agree	12	9.2%	175	70.3%	13	41.9%	3	100%	20	25.6%	22	35.5%
Neutral	8	6.1%	17	6.8%	4	12.9%	0	0.0%	8	10.3%	6	9.7%
Disagree/strongly disagree	111	84.7%	57	22.9%	14	45.2%	0	0.0%	50	64.1%	34	54.8%

Respondents were also asked to comment on the proposed policy on the flying of the Union flag. While the majority of respondents⁹ used the opportunity to reinforce previously stated support or opposition to the flying of the Union flag, a number of respondents proposed alternative measures including:

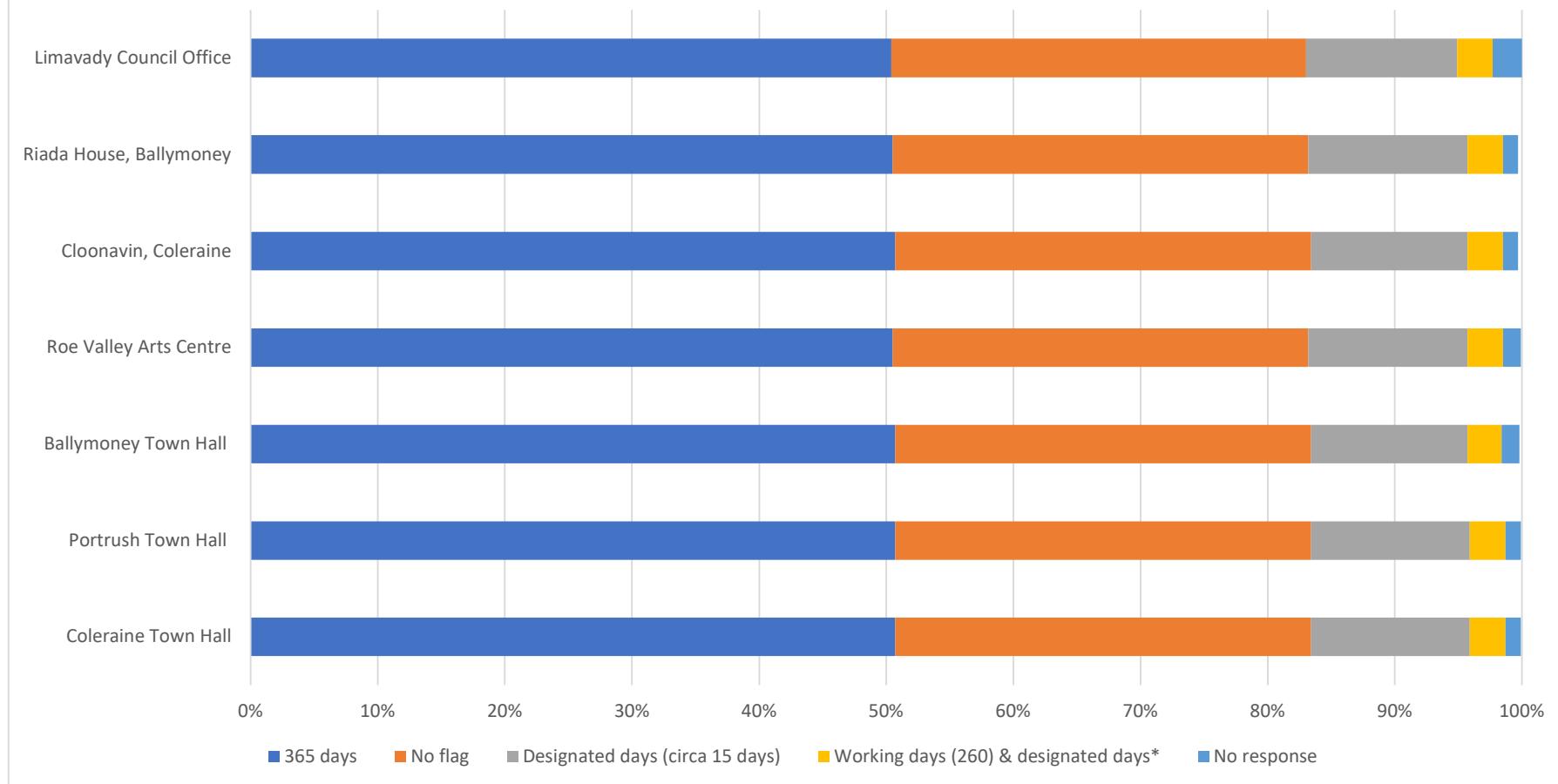
- “Only needs to be flown for Head of State’s official birthday”
- “if Union flag is flown, then Irish flag should be flown alongside”
- “We need our own flag and only our flag to fly. We don’t require an English flag. Scotland and Wales don’t fly the English flag. We are just being lazy.”
- “To include ‘all’ Council properties”
- “To fly in all depots yards and building.”
- “This policy if adopted needs to be revisited to include Ballycastle to comply with published guidance.”
- “All 4 civic buildings should be included. Town Halls could fly it on special days to mark them as special”

Preferred arrangement by location

Respondents were then asked to consider each of the Council buildings named in the proposed policy and indicate how many days they would prefer the Union flag to fly, if any.

⁹ n=354

Preferred arrangement for flying the Union flag by location

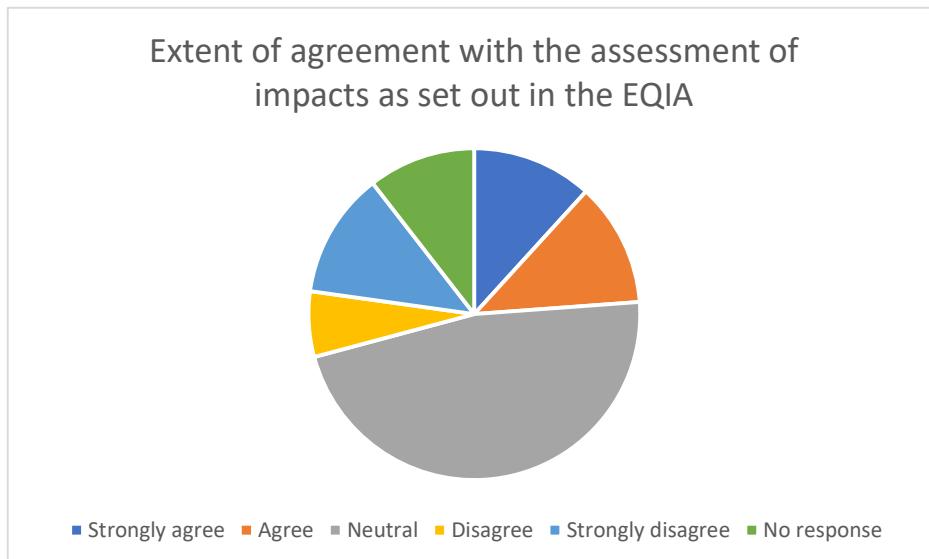


Preferred option	Coleraine Town Hall		Portrush Town Hall		Ballymoney Town Hall		Roe Valley Arts Centre		Cloonavin, Coleraine		Riada House, Ballymoney		Limavady Council Office	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
365 days	285	50.7%	285	50.7%	285	50.7%	284	50.5%	285	50.7%	284	50.5%	283	50.4%
No flag	184	32.7%	184	32.7%	184	32.7%	184	32.7%	184	32.7%	184	32.7%	183	32.6%
Designated days (circa 15 days)	70	12.5%	70	12.5%	69	12.3%	70	12.5%	69	12.3%	70	12.5%	67	11.9%
Working days (260) & designated days*	16	2.8%	16	2.8%	15	2.7%	16	2.8%	16	2.8%	16	2.8%	16	2.8%
No response	7	1.2%	7	1.2%	8	1.4%	8	1.4%	7	1.2%	7	1.2%	13	2.3%

On average across all buildings, 50.6 per cent preferred flying the flag 365-days a year. 32.7 per cent preferred no flag days. Variances between locations are not statistically significant.

Responses in relation to the draft EQIA

23.8 per cent of respondents agreed with the assessment of impacts in the EQIA, and 18.7 per cent disagreed



Agreement with EQIA	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	66	11.7%
Agree	68	12.1%
Neutral	264	47.0%
Disagree	36	6.4%
Strongly disagree	69	12.3%
No response	59	10.5%

Among comments received asking respondents to explain why they disagree with the assessment of impacts;¹⁰ identify any other issues that should be included in the EQIA;¹¹ and any further relevant data or research;¹² the majority of respondents took the opportunity to restate their previous policy position. Other comments included:

¹⁰ n=86

¹¹ n=116

¹² n=67

- “To say that the flying of the Union Flag on Council buildings could create a ‘chill factor’ is outrageous! [...] May all Councils be reminded to not cause hurt towards the majority of people in Northern Ireland. Remember the removal of the flag from Belfast City Hall in 2012? It caused deep hurt for the majority of people in Northern Ireland.”
- “Disproportionate weight and consideration has been given to the ‘Chill Factor’ element, especially when compared to statistical data. And there is little/none weight given or indeed statistical data provided for the discomfort felt when the Union Flag is NOT flown.”
- “They're more concerned about offending those who don't want the Union Flag flown, they have ignored the discomfort felt by those of us who want the Union Flag flown.”
- “The union flag currently flies at the council offices in Coleraine and it has not prevented either elected representatives or the public from entering the building. Likewise no council employee has indicated that they were not willing to come to work because it was flying. I therefore do not believe it will be a bar to people entering and doing business within council premises.”
- “the impact assessment sets out the worst state scenario and assumes that all people who are of a certain religion will be impacted by the flying of the countries flag on council buildings will be adversely affected. Many within Northern Ireland now see themselves as Northern Irish and British and are in favour of maintaining the Union for various reasons. Pride in where they were born, economic ties , benefits of belonging to a strong economic partner, the NHS etc. I do not believe that the flying of the countries flag will deter anyone from entering the above mentioned buildings as it has not done so in the past where the flag has been flown, in Coleraine or Ballymoney.”
- “Why has the policy discriminated against Council Admin Centre - (Ballycastle Council Offices). So the policy is discriminatory and fail Section 75. “
- “Unrealistic and biased towards pro union members of the community“
- “The adverse impact on staff and sections of inhabitants of the council area may be understated. 41% of staff stated that they feel offended by the flying of this flag at their place of work. The Council must robustly affirm as a corporate entity its commitment to creating

a neutral work environment for staff and for members of the public who, as stated, may as a result not fully participate or benefit from council services as a direct result of flying this flag.”

- “Other options apart from just one flag or no flag should have been given, both flags should have been an option as well as an alternative for example a council flag.”
- “A civic flag would have been a good option”
- “Give the Irish community some sort of recognition, it's not much to ask”
- “Irish Language research which states it is not political but the language of Ireland. Is there some linkage as the flag represents Northern Ireland too.”
- “The non-flying of any other flags within the council administered area. Paramilitary emblems and flags should be disallowed in public spaces.”
- “Flags flying in towns, for example Irish flags flying in ballycastle should be removed, along with any other flags”
- “We must try and maintain as neutral an environment as is possible. Consider these locations as proposed for the flying of the tricolour and this will facilitate an understanding of how this flag is perceived by those who have no allegiance to it.”
- “You should consider the ethnic minorities represented in the borough and consider flying the flags they represent, and also consider the impact on flying the British flag for them, e.g for Caribbean's the British flag is a mark of the commonwealth and often offensive as it represents slavery and how Britain took many Africans from their homeland and made them slaves in the Caribbean.”
- “Reasons people oppose the flying of the flag, for clarity”
- “Overall, Scoffield QC found that ‘The striking of such a balance’ as is set down for central government buildings in the Flags Regulations ‘seems to me to be a laudable aim’. Furthermore, it ‘is likely to be legally “safer” than the present policy and very unlikely to give rise to a successful discrimination and less at risk of a successful legal challenge’.”

- “I am extremely uncomfortable with the religious / sectarian nature of the report. I think religions such as Protestant and Catholic should be removed and replaced by political / cultural identity i.e. National, Unionist, Republican, Loyalist, Neutral. So few people these days are actually religious. But plenty of people have strong beliefs on cultural identity and the use of tribal flags.”

A number of respondents stated that they had not seen or been able to find the EQIA. One respondent felt that the survey was poorly advertised and the survey questions and form were confusing.

Responses from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Staff

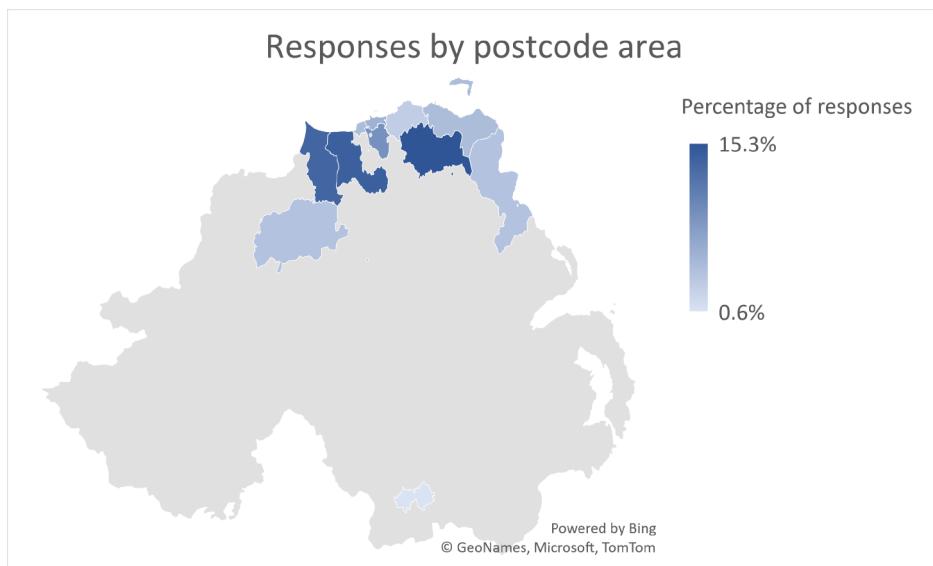
There were 177 responses from staff during the public consultation on the draft EQIA.¹³ Of these, 169 were submitted on behalf of individuals and 3 on behalf of organisations (the remainder did not provide a response to the question).

Demographic breakdown of responses

Geographic spread

Respondents were asked to provide the first four digits of their postcode. The map and table below show the geographic spread of respondents.

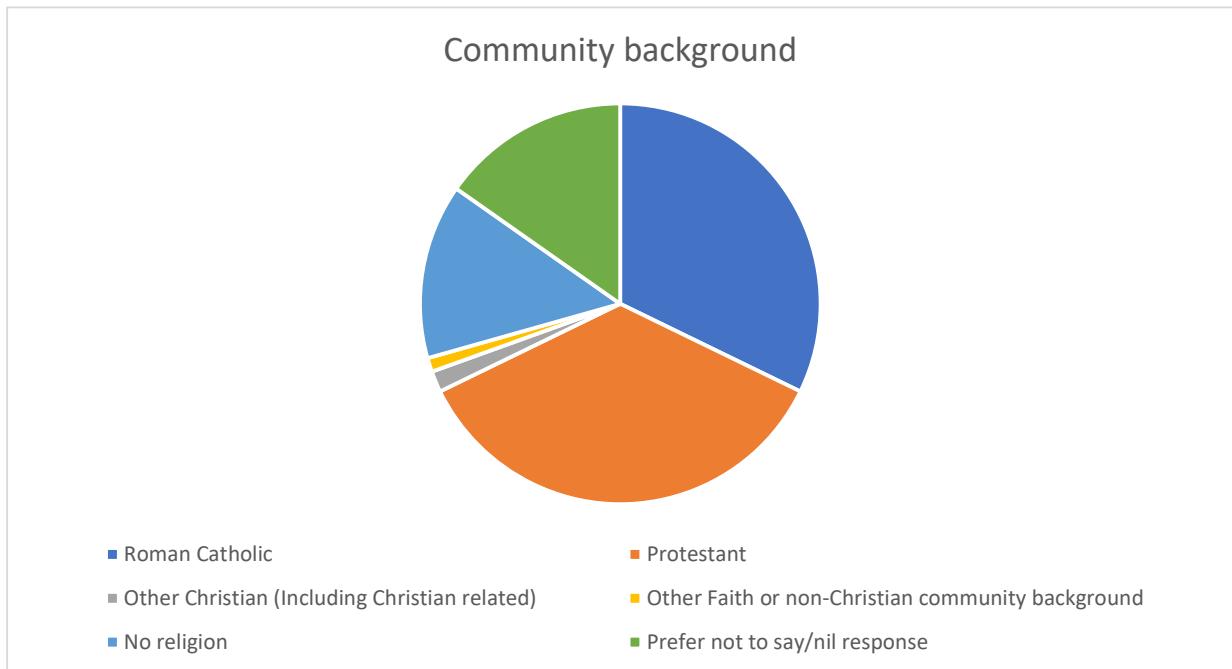
¹³ Unless otherwise stated, n=177



Postcode	Number	Percentage
BT35	1	0.6%
BT44	7	4.0%
BT47	7	4.0%
BT49	24	13.6%
BT51	25	14.1%
BT52	16	9.0%
BT53	27	15.3%
BT54	8	4.5%
BT55	8	4.5%
BT56	10	5.6%
BT57	5	2.8%
No response	39	22.0%

Community background

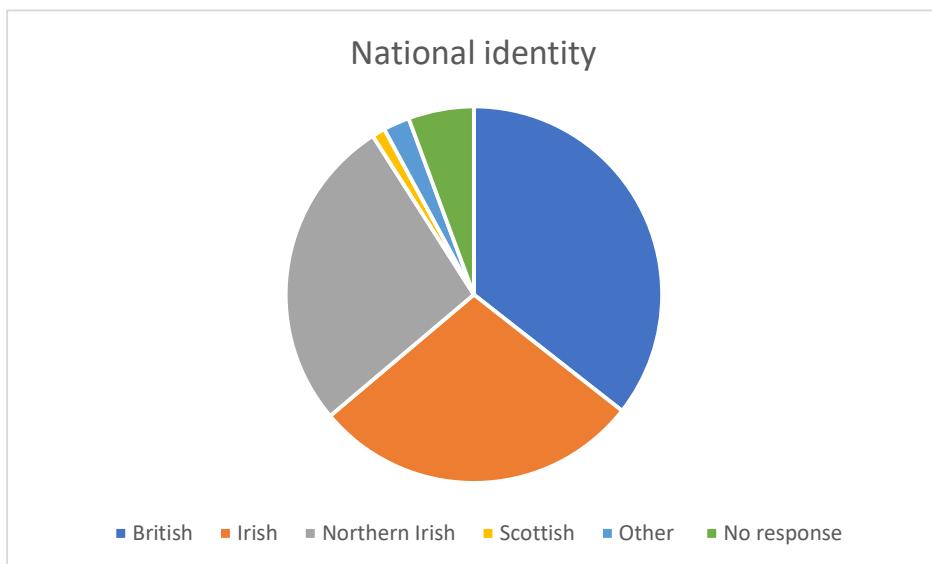
The following chart and table provide a breakdown by community background.



Religion	Number	Percentage
Roman Catholic	57	32.2%
Protestant	63	35.6%
Other Christian (Including Christian related)	3	1.7%
Other Faith or non-Christian community background	2	1.1%
No religion	25	14.1%
Prefer not to say/nil response	27	15.3%

National identity

35.6 per cent of respondents identified as British; 28.2 per cent as Irish; and 27.1 per cent as Northern Irish.



National identity	Number	Percentage
British	63	35.6%
Irish	50	28.2%
Northern Irish	48	27.1%
Scottish	2	1.1%
Other	4	2.3%
No response	10	5.6%

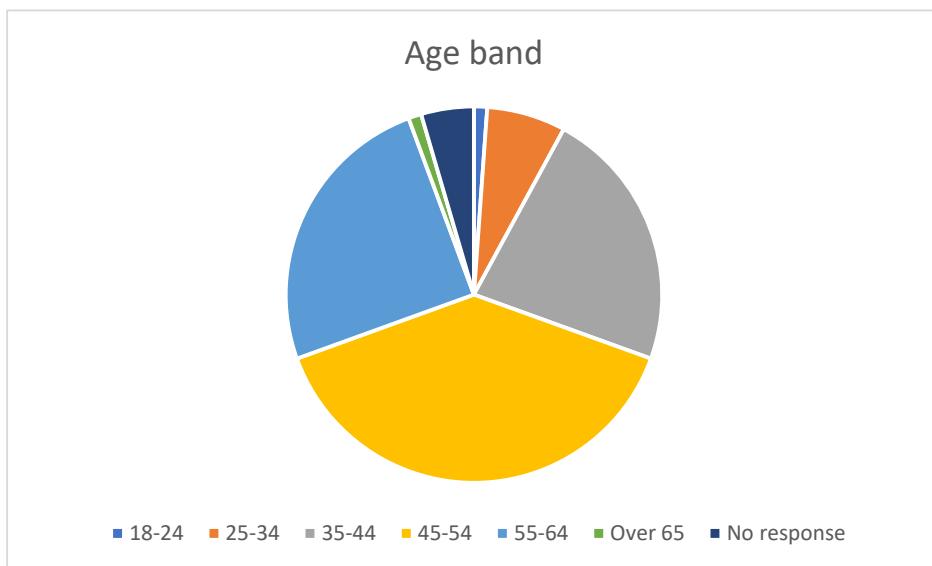
Ethnic group

97.6 per cent of respondents (162) identified as white.¹⁴

¹⁴ n=166

Age

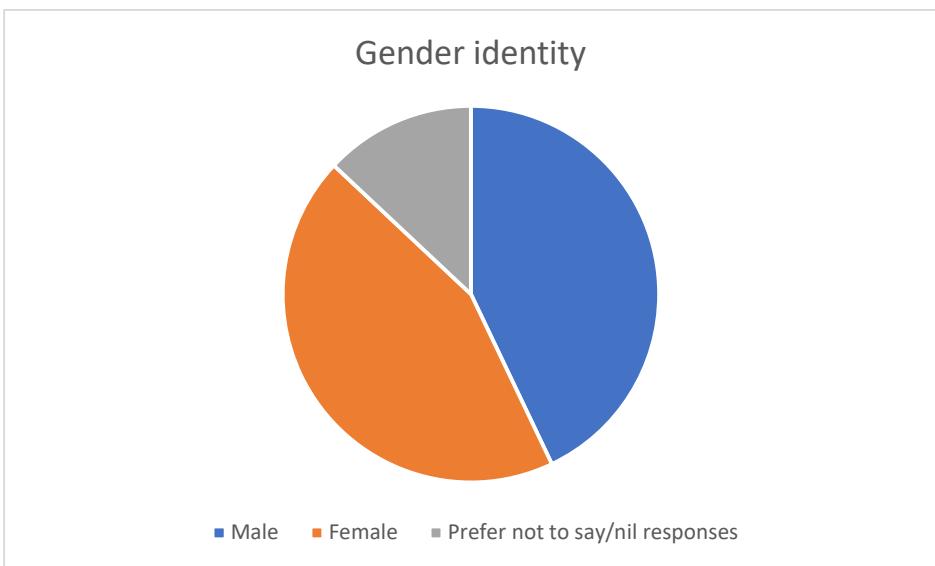
The following graph and table provide a breakdown of responses by age band.



Age band	Number	Percentage
18-24	2	1.1%
25-34	12	6.8%
35-44	40	22.6%
45-54	69	39.0%
55-64	44	24.9%
Over 65	2	1.1%
No response	8	4.5%

Gender identity

A similar number of responses were received from people who identified as male as people who identified as female.



Gender identity	Number	Percentage
Male	76	42.9%
Female	78	44.1%
Prefer not to say/nil responses	23	13.0%

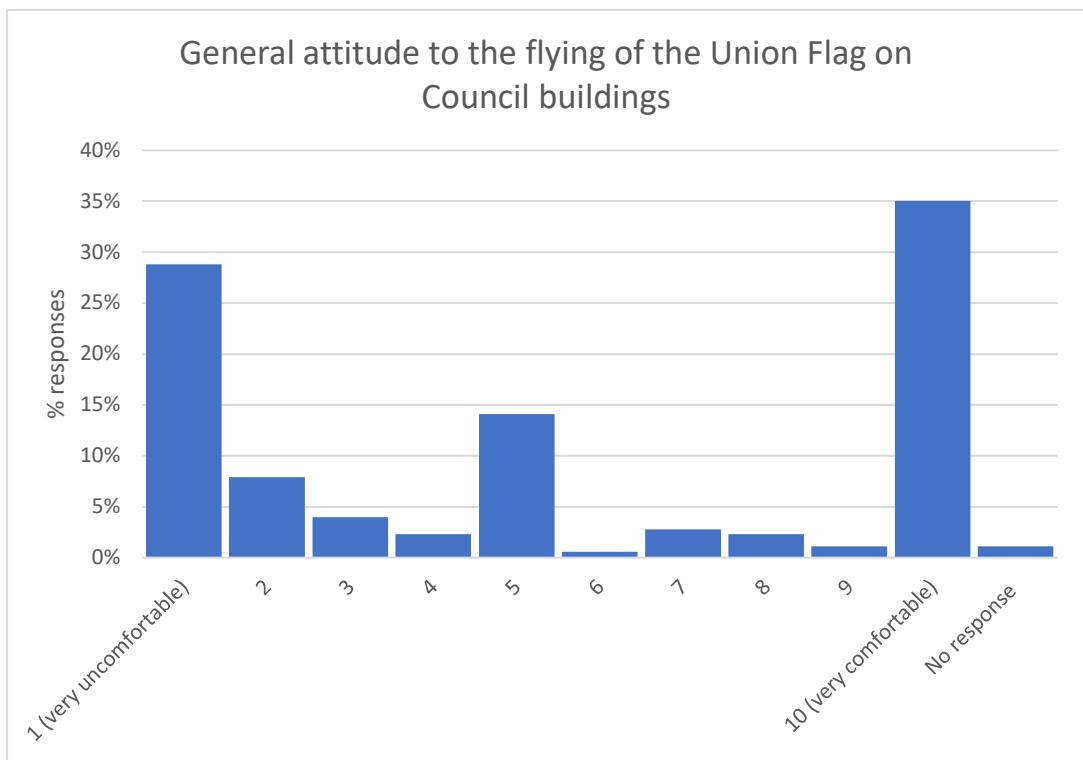
Responses in relation to the draft policy

The following section considers responses to the current and proposed policy on flying the Union flag.

General attitude to flying the Union flag

Respondents were asked to indicate how they feel in general about the flying of the Union flag on Council buildings using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 meant “very uncomfortable” and 10 meant “very comfortable”.

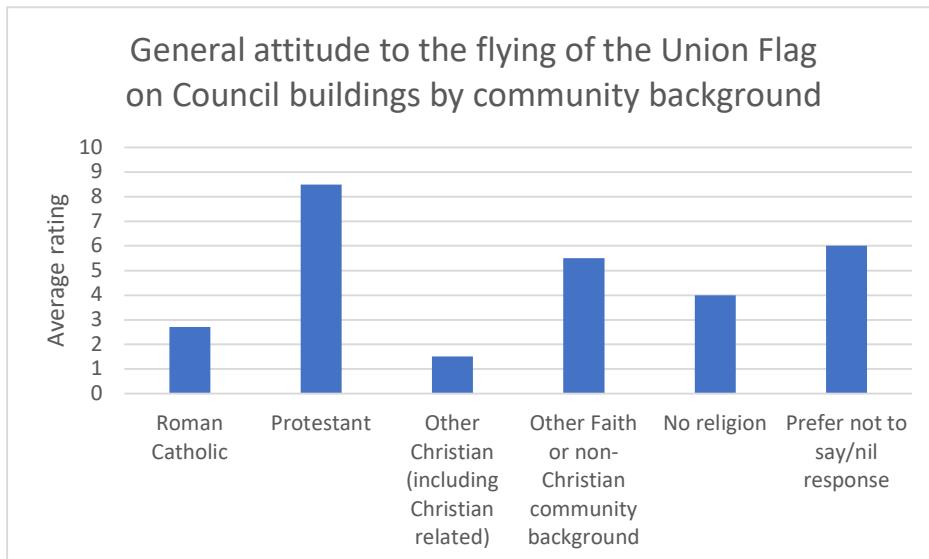
The average rating was 5.4 out of 10.



Attitude	Percentage	Number
1 (very uncomfortable)	28.8%	51
2	7.9%	14
3	4.0%	7
4	2.3%	4
5	14.1%	25
6	0.6%	1
7	2.8%	5
8	2.3%	4
9	1.1%	2
10 (very comfortable)	35.0%	62

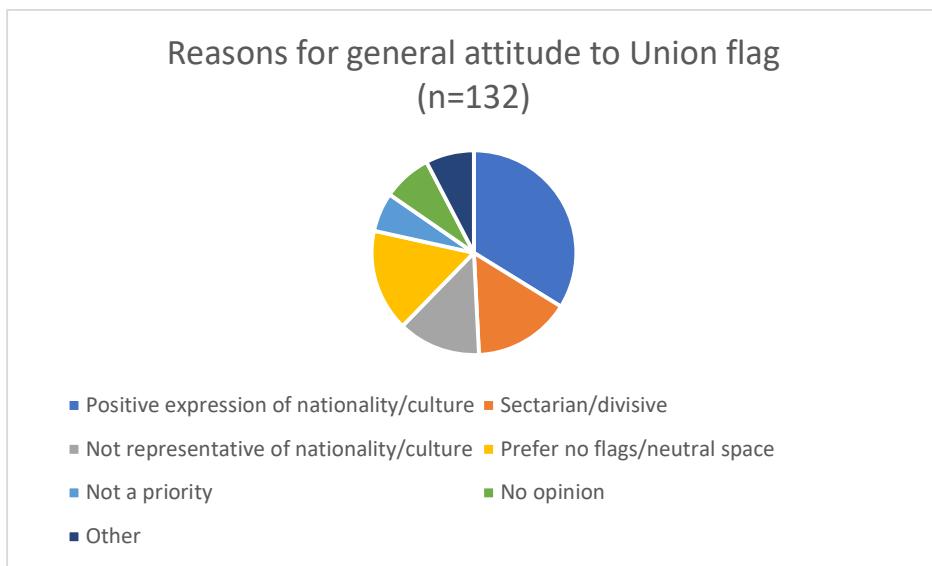
No response	1.1%	2
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Respondents from a Protestant community background felt most comfortable with the flying of the Union Flag on average. Respondents from other Christian and Roman Catholic community backgrounds felt least comfortable on average.



Religion	Number of responses	Average rating
Roman Catholic	57	2.7
Protestant	62	8.5
Other Christian (including Christian related)	3	1.5
Other Faith or non-Christian community background	2	5.5
No religion	24	4.0
Prefer not to say/nil response	29	6.0

Respondents were also offered the opportunity to explain why they felt that way. One hundred and thirty-two responses were received. The sentiment of each comment was analysed and coded as follows.



Reason	Number	Percentage
Positive expression of nationality/culture	44	33.3%
Sectarian/divisive	20	15.2%
Not representative of nationality/culture	17	12.9%
Prefer no flags/neutral space	21	15.9%
Not a priority	8	6.1%
No opinion	10	7.6%
Other	10	7.6%

Comments in favour of flying the Union flag included:

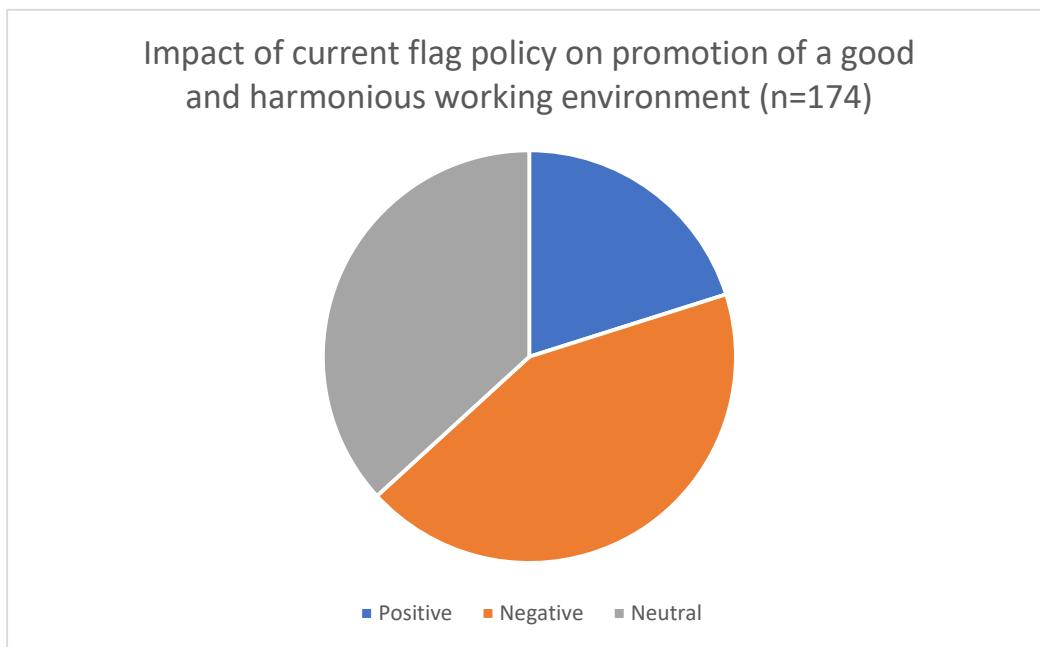
- “We are part of the United Kingdom, and the Union Flag is the flag our nation.”
- “This is a government building and are flew across all government buildings in the UK.”
- “I have always been used to the Union Flag flying, part of my growing up.”

Comments not in favour of flying the Union flag included:

- “Very intimidating”
- “This flag is not representative of the entire community nor is it representative of the entire workforce.”
- “There is no need for visual reminders on Council buildings – we all know where we live, and the flag is used as a symbol of oppression.”

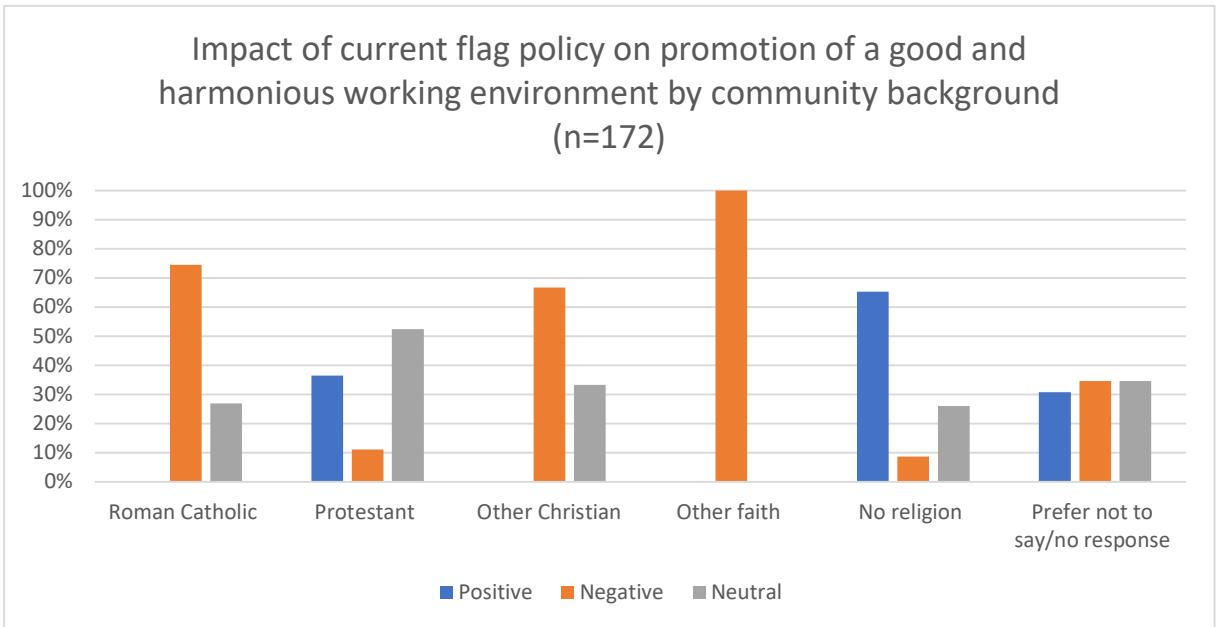
Impact of current policy on promoting a good and harmonious working environment

20.1 per cent of respondents felt that the current flag policy has a positive impact on promoting a good and harmonious working environment; 43.1 felt that it has a negative impact; and 36.8 felt the impact to be neutral.



Impact	Number	%
Positive	35	20.1%
Negative	75	43.1%
Neutral	64	36.8%

Respondents from Roman Catholic and other (non-Christian) faith backgrounds were most likely to feel the impact of the current policy is negative. People of no religion were most likely to feel the impact is positive.

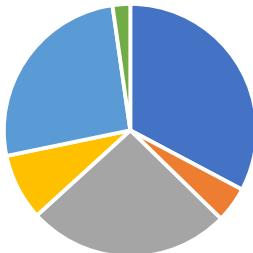


Impact	Roman Catholic		Protestant		Other Christian		Other faith		No religion		Prefer not to say/no response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Positive	0	0.0%	23	36.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15	65.2%	8	30.8%
Negative	41	74.5%	7	11.1%	2	66.7%	2	100%	2	8.7%	9	34.6%
Neutral	14	26.9%	33	52.4%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	6	26.1%	9	34.6%

Frequency of flying the Union flag on Council buildings

Nearly a third of respondents (32.8 per cent) felt the flag should fly 365-days a year. Just over 1 in 4 (26.0 per cent) felt it should never fly.

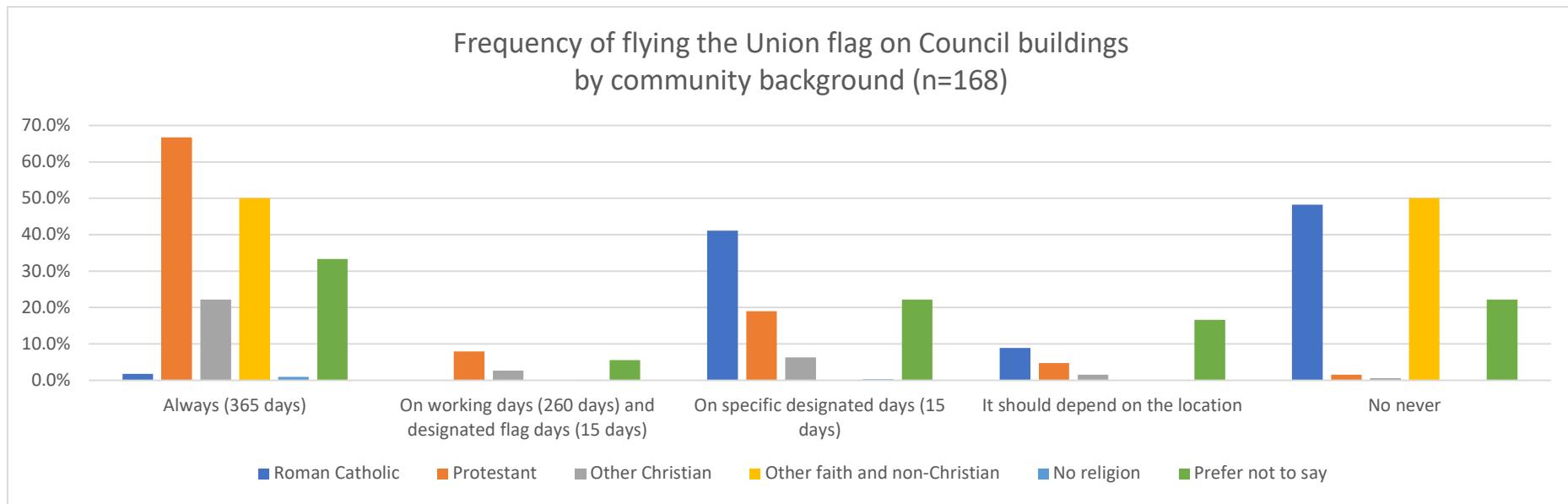
Frequency of flying the Union flag on Council buildings



- Always (365 days)
- On working days (260 days) and designated flag days (15 days)
- On specific designated days (15 days)
- It should depend on the location
- No never
- No response

Frequency	Count	Percentage
Always (365 days)	58	32.8%
On working days (260 days) and designated flag days (15 days)	8	4.5%
On specific designated days (15 days)	46	26.0%
It should depend on the location	15	8.5%
No never	46	26.0%
No response	4	2.3%

People from a Protestant community background were on average most likely to agree that the Union Flag should be flown 365 days. People of Roman Catholic, other Christian, other faith and no religion backgrounds were on average most likely to agree that the flag should never be flown.

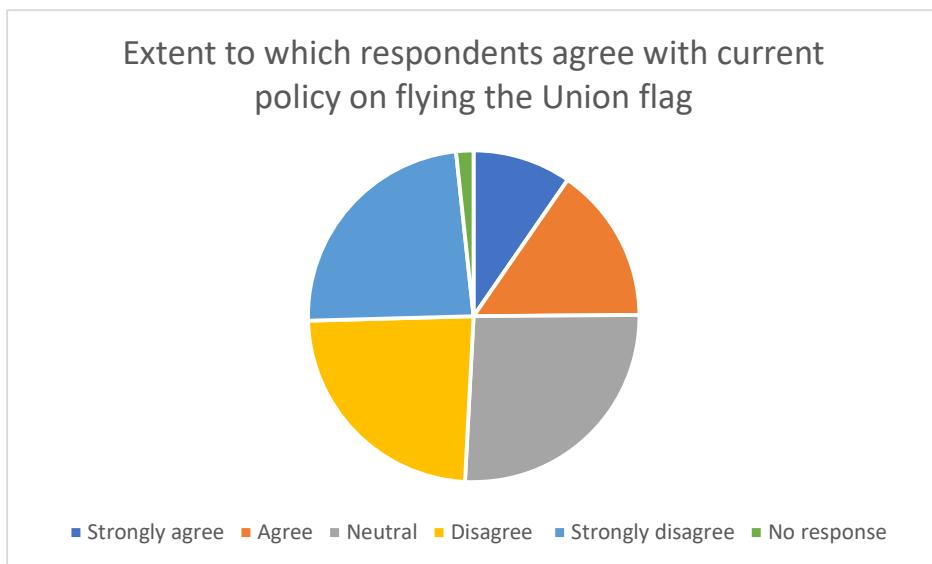


Frequency	Roman Catholic		Protestant		Other Christian (Including Christian related)		Other Faith or non-Christian community background		No religion		Prefer not to say	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Always (365 days)	1	1.8%	42	66.7%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	2	8.0%	6	33.3%
On working days (260 days) and designated flag days (15 days)	0	0.0%	5	7.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	8.0%	1	5.6%
On specific designated days (15 days)	23	41.1%	12	19.0%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	6	24.0%	4	22.2%
It should depend on the location	5	8.9%	3	4.8%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	3	12.0%	3	16.7%

Current policy on flying the Union flag

Respondents were asked to consider how much they agreed with the current policy on flying the Union flag.

24.9 per cent agree or strongly agreed with the current policy, and 47.5 per cent disagree or strongly disagree.

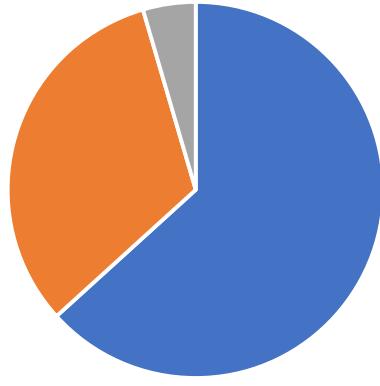


Current policy	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	17	9.6%
Agree	27	15.3%
Neutral	46	26.0%
Disagree	42	23.7%
Strongly disagree	42	23.7%
No response	3	1.7%

Among the 81 respondents who provided a comment in response to this question, those not in favour of the current policy considered that the Union flag is divisive, not representative or not a priority at this time and would prefer no flags or a neutral working environment. Others appear to disagree with the current policy on the grounds that it could go further, for example, by flying the flag consistently across all Council buildings.

63.3 per cent agreed that the current policy should be changed, while 32.2 per cent disagreed.

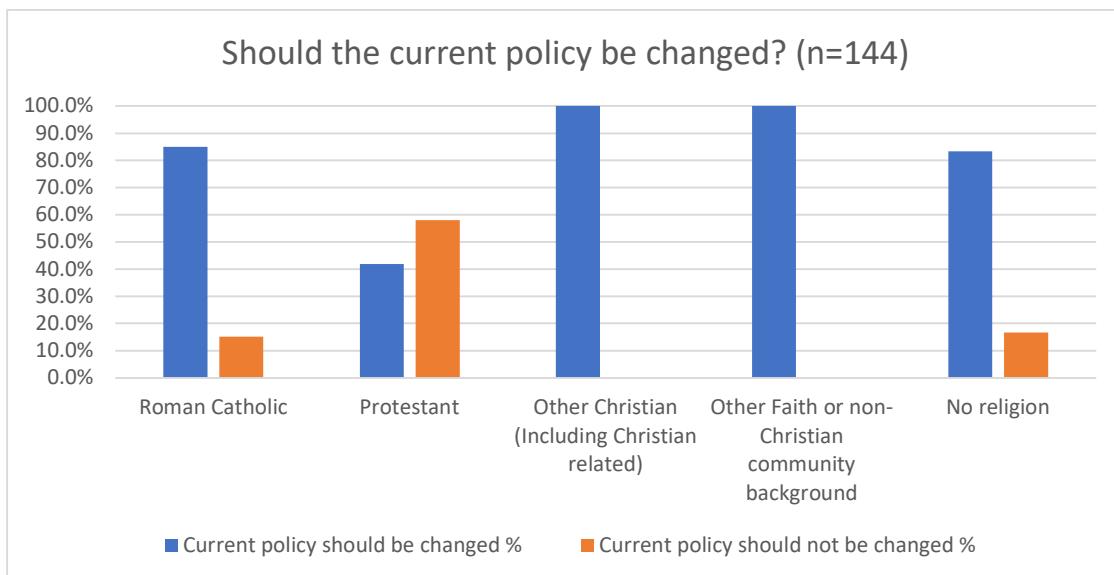
Should the current policy be changed in any way?



■ Yes ■ No ■ No response

Opinion	Number	Percentage
Yes	112	63.3%
No	57	32.2%
No response	8	4.5%

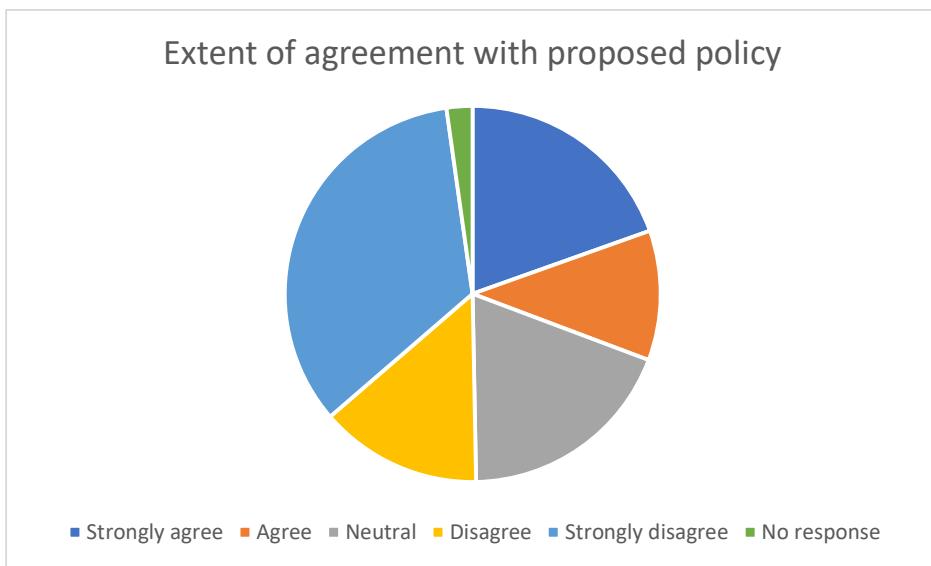
84.9 per cent of respondents from a Catholic community background felt the current policy should be changed compared to 41.9 per cent of respondents from a Protestant background.



Community background	Current policy should be changed		Current policy should not be changed	
	Number	%	Number	%
Roman Catholic	45	84.9%	8	15.1%
Protestant	26	41.9%	36	58.1%
Other Christian (Including Christian related)	3	100.0%	0	0.0%
Other Faith or non-Christian community background	2	100.0%	0	0.0%
No religion	20	83.3%	4	16.7%

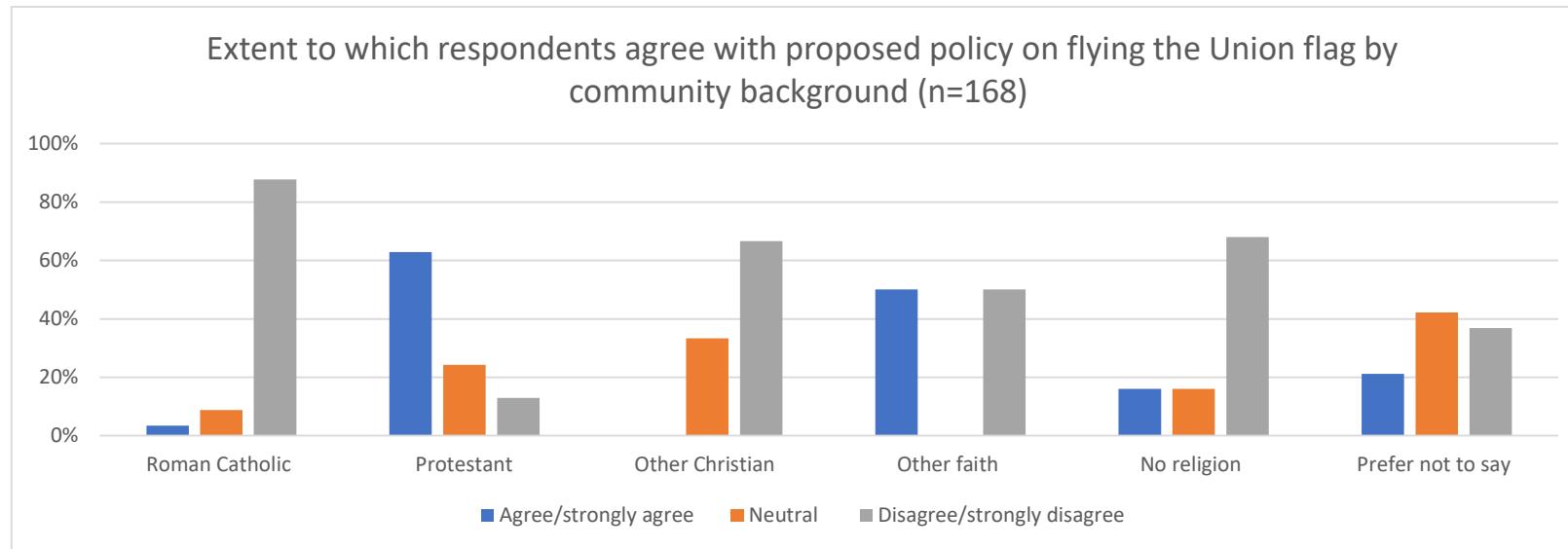
Proposed policy on flying the Union flag

Respondents were asked to consider how much they agree with the proposed policy on flying the Union flag. 31.1 per cent agreed or strongly agreed and 48.6 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.



Opinion	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	19.8%
Agree	20	11.3%
Neutral	34	19.2%
Disagree	25	14.1%
Strongly disagree	61	34.5%
No response	4	2.3%

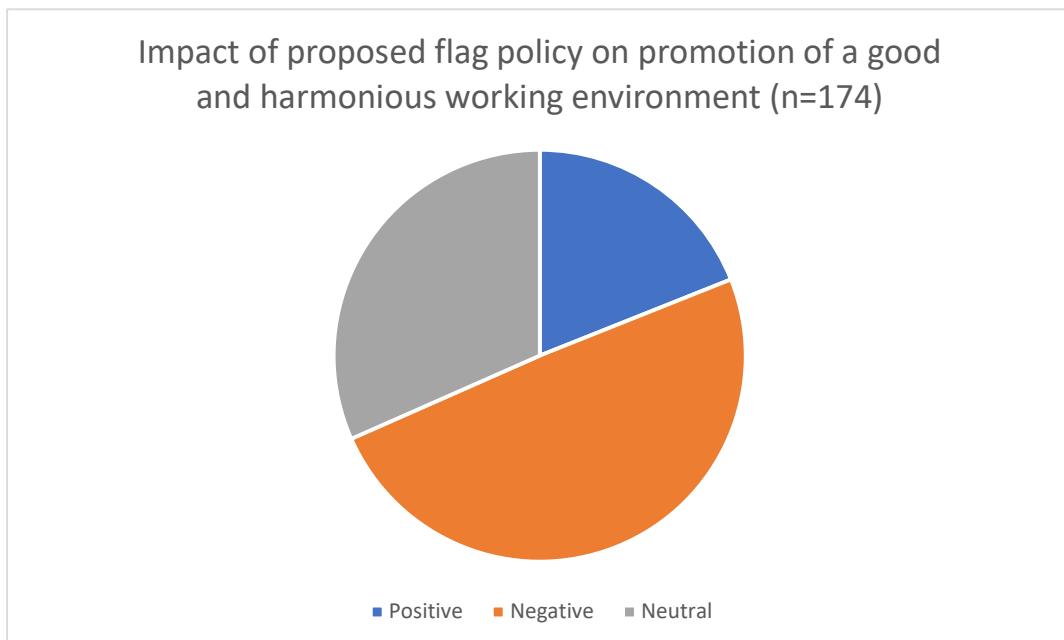
Respondents from a Protestant community background were mostly likely to agree with the proposed policy, while respondents from a Catholic community background were least likely to agree.



	Roman Catholic		Protestant		Other Christian		Other faith		No religion		Prefer not to say	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree/strongly agree	2	3.5%	39	62.9%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	4	16.0%	4	21.1%
Neutral	5	8.8%	15	24.2%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	4	16.0%	8	42.1%
Disagree/strongly disagree	50	87.7%	8	12.9%	2	66.7%	1	50.0%	17	68.0%	7	36.8%

Impact of proposed policy on promoting a good and harmonious working environment

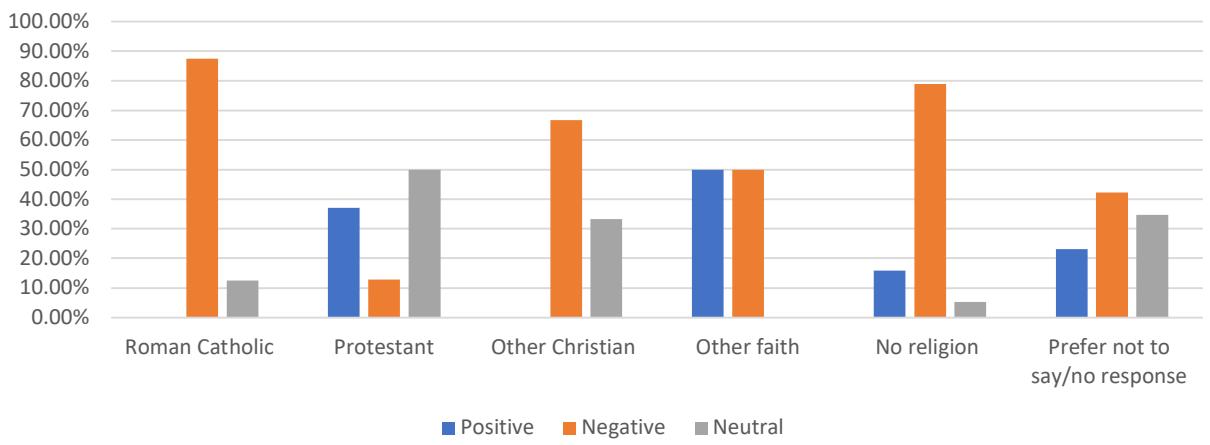
19.0 per cent of respondents felt that the proposed flag policy would have a positive impact on promoting a good and harmonious working environment; 49.4 felt that it would have a negative impact; and 31.6 felt that the impact would be neutral.



Impact	Number	%
Positive	33	19.0%
Negative	86	49.4%
Neutral	55	31.6%

Respondents from Roman Catholic and other (non-Christian) faith backgrounds were most likely to feel the impact of the current policy is negative. People of no religion were most likely to feel the impact is positive.

**Impact of proposed flag policy on promotion of a good and harmonious working environment by community background
(n=186)**



Impact	Roman Catholic		Protestant		Other Christian		Other faith		No religion		Prefer not to say	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Positive	0	0.0%	23	37.1%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	3	15.8%	6	23.1%
Negative	49	87.5%	8	12.9%	2	66.7%	1	50.0%	15	78.9%	11	42.3%
Neutral	7	12.5%	31	50.0%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	1	5.3%	9	34.6%

Respondents were also asked to comment on the proposed policy on the flying of the Union flag.¹⁵ Comments in favour of the proposed policy included:

- “to show that we are part of something bigger and are happy to be part of UK”
- “It will promote equality across the Council and ensure everywhere is following the same guidance.”
- “Government buildings should fly Union Flag.”

Comments not in favour of the proposed policy included:

- “Unnecessary and a show of unwillingness to create a shared space.”
- “it alienates the Catholic staff and disrespects their right to an equal and neutral workplace.”
- “lets be more welcoming and tolerant to visitors and locals in our area.”

A number of respondents also proposed alternative measures including:

- “Tolerance of others in a divided society. Fly the flag only at Cloonavin, preferably designated days only.”
- “Doesnt need to flown 365 days or for minor royals, and Sheskburn left out and discriminated against.”
- “I disagree with the removal of restrictions within the policy however I think the focus is purely on one flag and should be widened to include all flags”

Preferred arrangement by location

Respondents were then asked to consider each of the Council buildings named in the proposed policy and indicate how many days they would prefer the Union flag to fly, if any.

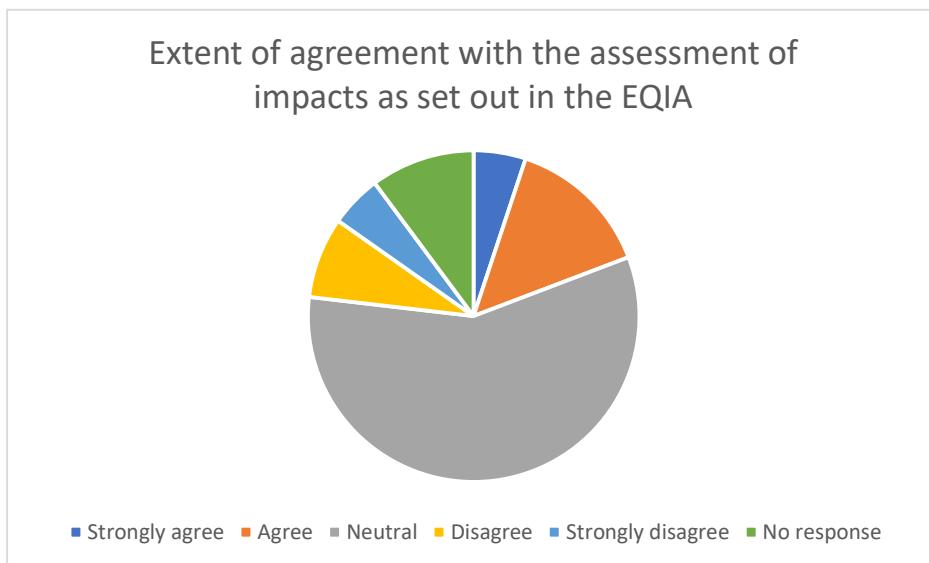
On average across all buildings, 31.1 per cent preferred flying the flag 365-days a year; 35.5 per cent preferred no flag days; and 24.9 per cent preferred designated days. Variances between locations are not be statistically significant.

¹⁵ n=78

	Coleraine Town Hall		Portrush Town Hall		Ballymoney Town Hall		Roe Valley Arts Centre		Cloonavin, Colerain		Riada House		Limavady Council Office	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
365 days	56	31.6%	56	31.6%	56	31.6%	54	30.5%	55	31.1%	54	30.5 %	54	30.5 %
No flag	63	35.6%	63	35.6%	63	35.6%	62	35.0%	63	35.6%	63	35.6 %	63	35.6 %
Designated days (circa 15 days)	44	24.9%	44	24.9%	44	24.9%	44	24.9%	44	24.9%	44	24.9 %	44	24.9 %
Working days (260) and designated days*	10	5.6%	10	5.6%	10	5.6%	10	5.6%	10	5.6%	10	5.6%	10	5.6%
No response	4	2.3%	4	2.3%	4	2.3%	7	4.0%	5	2.8%	6	3.4%	6	3.4%

Responses in relation to the draft EQIA

19.2 per cent of respondents agreed with the assessment of impacts in the EQIA, and 13.0 per cent disagreed.



Opinion	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	5.1%
Agree	25	14.1%
Neutral	102	57.6%
Disagree	14	7.9%
Strongly disagree	9	5.1%
No response	18	10.2%

Among the 20 comments received asking respondents to explain why they disagree with the assessment of impacts, six stated that they had not seen or been able to find the EQIA.

Respondents were also asked about any other issues that should be included in the EQIA¹⁶ and about any further relevant data or research that should be taken in to account.¹⁷ The majority of respondents took the

¹⁶ n=28

¹⁷ n=25

opportunity to restate their previous position in relation to the policy. Other comments included:

- “Flying of a flag outside a building does not necessarily cause a chill factor and individuals are aware that a flag outside a building does not represent the views – either politically or religiously of every individual within a building.”
- “The Town Halls or previous town halls are generally centers of art, culture, venues for weddings etc, essentially they are Shared Spaces, but the policy wants to remind citizens and staff, that they are not really shared at all. There is absolutely no need for the Town Halls or Arts Centre to fly flags.”
- “What about Ballycastle – its inconsistent”
- “There should be no other flags flown representing any other country or minority groups, such as the Pride flag.”
- “The Good Relations strategy of the CCGC should be considered to ensure that the flag flying does not become contentious.”
- “I am not opposed to the Union flag being flown, however, I do think having this flag alone in non inclusive. Either both Union flag and Irish Tri colour should fly beside eachother at the same height and have the same rules/guidance surrounding them or no flag at all should fly.”
- “Equality Impact assessment should be taking into account the other parties and religions within council”
- “A study into flags, emblems and victims was published before Christmas without any recommendations, as none of the politicians could agree on how to deal with the past or flags [...] I believe that it would be prudent to delay such a policy would could potentially have ramifications both with regards to staff and on the ground in community relations terms.”

Other responses

Causeway Coast and Glens received two substantive written responses to the public consultation.¹⁸

Response from an elected Member

Independent councillor James McCorkell provided a written submission which agreed “that the Union Flag should be flown on all Council buildings in a fair and equal manner across the Borough.”

He stated that the revised policy would bring consistency across the borough and across the UK.

“As things stand, there is not fairness and equality to the Rate paying residents who I represent in Limavady DEA as no flag is flown at any time, however the Union Flag is flown in an official capacity, to varying degrees in other towns across the Borough [...] and I see no reason why the rules applicable to GB, should not be applied to Northern Ireland. We are after all, part of the United Kingdom [...] if viewed with a fair eye, the Union Flag does not discriminate, nor intimidate.”

Councillor McCorkell’s full submission is included at appendix 10.

Response from the Equality Commission

A written response was submitted by the Equality Commission NI. It considered that "the information contained in the screening succinctly summarises" advice previously provided by the Commission on this matter.

However, it further advised that in relation to the policy, the arrangements for reviewing the locations where the Union Flag would be flown should be clarified.

In relation to the EQIA, it commented:

¹⁸ A further two written responses stated that they had no opinion on this matter.

“Where a policy shows a possible adverse impact on any group, the EQIA should include consideration of measures which might mitigate these impact(s) and of alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity. Such considerations should be central to an EQIA and be included in the EQIA so that consultees may evaluate the information and the potential impact of mitigations/alternative policies on equality of opportunity and good relations.

“Despite identifying a potential major impact, the EQIA has not set out or considered any mitigations or alternative policies. While the consultation questionnaire issued to consultees presents alternatives to the policy these are not included in the main EQIA report. This places the onus on consultees to consider impacts. Responsibility to identify alternative policies or mitigations and their impacts lies with the council as opposed to consultees and these should have been included in the EQIA report to enable consultees to make an informed decision.”

The Commission also advised that the final EQIA should include plans to monitor the impact of the policy in line with the Council’s equality scheme.

A copy of the response is included at appendix 11.

9. Conclusions

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires that, in making any decision with respect to a policy, a public authority shall consider any EQIA and consultation carried out in relation to the policy (para. 9.2).

There is no strict definition of what “taking into account” entails. However, the Equality Commission guidance on how decisions should be recorded makes it clear that a public authority must be able to record the decision-making process (as well as the decision) and that the decision must be justified.¹⁹

The guidance also advises that all available information should be combined in making the decision. This includes the information gathered during the research phase, the results of the consultation and the analysis of alternative policy options.²⁰

This information has been brought together in this report and the accompanying appendices in order to ensure that the Council is in a position to take account of all issues and relevant data when making a decision.

In any consultation, the number of people that have expressed a preference for a particular option cannot be ignored, but this information must also be considered in the context of all other relevant concerns, including the strength and depth of feeling expressed by those who have responded.

Equally, it is to be expected that those who took the time and trouble to respond to the consultation would be those with strong opinions on the subject, and they have made their views very clear. At the same time, the impact of the proposed policy on all those who engage with the Council or live within or visit the Borough should not be disregarded.

In relation to Section 75 consultations, the Equality Commission has made explicit in the past that an “EQIA should not be considered as a referendum whereby the views of consultees from a majority are counted as votes to decide the outcome.” Instead, all available quantitative and qualitative data should be interrogated in order to help reach a decision that aspires to be fair, reasonable and proportionate.

¹⁹ Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, ECNI 2004, p.45

²⁰ Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, ECNI 2004, p.45

The following analysis of the key points arising from the EQIA and the consultation responses is provided to assist the Council in its decision making, but it is not exhaustive and is not offered as a substitute for the detailed information as presented in the report.

The surveys of both staff (n=177; 28.1 per cent of staff total) and the public (n=562; 0.4 per cent of the population of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough) yielded healthy returns, and broadly representative samples, although in the public survey, there was a slightly higher response rate from people of no or other religion (20.3 per cent of survey responses compared to 6.2 per cent of the population) than would be predicted from the latest population survey of the Borough. There was also a lower response rate from people from a Roman Catholic background 24 per cent as opposed to 37 per cent in the population for CCG. In addition, the majority of respondents to this public survey were men (62.1 per cent).

EQIA process

With regard to the EQIA itself, the overwhelming majority of respondents to both surveys either agreed with or were neutral to the assessment of impact as outlined in the Draft EQIA Consultation Report.

Of the additional comments received regarding the EQIA (including the need for any additional data), very few related to the content of the EQIA process itself but instead reiterated stated positions regarding the proposed policy, or made reference to the inappropriate use of terminology (e.g. “chill factor”).

In relation to the EQIA process one respondent felt the consultation was poorly advertised and survey questions confusing. Others said they could not find or weren’t aware of the EQIA.

Only two substantive written responses were received (see above). The written response from the Equality Commission did highlight three issues relating to the EQIA process, and these have been noted and taken on board in the EQIA Final Decision Report.

First, the aim of the policy now clearly identifies the need to align the proposed policy not only with GB-wide Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport guidance but also local considerations, including relevant statutes and guidance, along with the views of all those affected (see p.3).

Second, the alternative policies and measures to mitigate (as originally only set out in the questionnaires accompanying the Draft EQIA Consultation

Report but not in the report itself) are now also referenced in the relevant section in the body of the report (see p.14).

Third, monitoring arrangements for the proposed policy are set out clearly in section 10. below and are referenced earlier at page 15 above where it is made clear that the policy will be reviewed independently from any changes attaching to the Council estate.

Quantitative data

In summary, both surveys indicate a strong division of opinion with regard to the proposed policy.

Just over half of respondents to the public survey (51.2 per cent) felt that the Union flag should fly all year round on Council buildings, and half of (50.6 per cent) also supported the proposed policy with regard to seven locations.

Not surprisingly, and in common with previous surveys, community background emerged as a highly significant predictor of attitudes towards this issue, and the division of opinion by community background was stark.

While 83.3 per cent of Protestants who responded maintained that the Union flag should fly permanently (365 days) on Council buildings, only 10.4 per cent of those declaring themselves Roman Catholic felt likewise. Equally, only 7.6 per cent of those self-declaring as Protestant stated that the Union flag should never fly on Council buildings, in contrast with 58.5 per cent of Roman Catholics.

Specifically with regard to the proposed policy, 7 out of 10 (70.3 per cent) of respondents from a Protestant background either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed policy in contrast with around only 1 in 10 respondents from a Roman Catholic background (9.2 per cent).

Among staff, levels of support for the flying of the Union flag on Council buildings were less strong than among the general public. Only around one third (32.8 per cent) of staff felt the flag should fly 365-days a year on Council buildings generally, and around a quarter of those who responded (26.0 per cent) felt it should never fly.

With regard to the specifics of the proposed policy, less than one third (31.1 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal while nearly half (48.6 per cent) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

It was also evident that there is a degree of disquiet among staff as to how both the current and proposed policy may impact on the promotion of a good and harmonious working environment within the Council. 43.1 per cent of staff surveyed suggested that the current policy had had a negative impact, with nearly three-quarters of respondents from a Roman Catholic background (74.5 per cent) suggesting this was the case.

49.4 per cent of staff surveyed suggested that the proposed policy would have a negative impact, with nearly 87.5 per cent of Roman Catholic respondents suggesting this was the case.

Across the seven proposed locations, in both surveys it was noteworthy that there was little variation in response or discrimination between each venue, with the same view typically expressed for all seven.

Qualitative data

Throughout both surveys, respondents were afforded the opportunity to provide additional comments or reasons for their choice.

Many of these comments were simply affirmations of personal opinions in relation to the flying of the Union flag, seeing it either as a legitimate expression of identity, or as an unwanted, and even intimidating, display of national allegiance with little personal resonance.

A number of respondents made reference to concern with how the proposed policy may impact on community relations within the Borough, along with suggesting opportunities to reach a compromise that may satisfy both communities.

These comments tended to be more common among staff who regarded the proposed policy as potentially divisive within the Council, where “shared” or “neutral” spaces were valued. There did appear to be a genuine concern that any change to the existing policy may harm what were seen as good relations within the Council, and this was seen as unfortunate but potentially avoidable if a compromise position could be reached.

The need for consistency across the Borough was also alluded to, while also recognising the need to create a welcoming environment for visitors and residents alike, and whose identities may be extremely diverse.

Decision making

In reaching a decision in relation to the proposed policy, the consultation does not provide the Council with a clear mandate to move in a particular

direction. While there is some support among both staff and the public for the proposal to fly the Union flag permanently at seven Council sites, equally there is opposition, and sentiment for and against runs high in both camps.

On the one hand there are those among both the public at large and staff who regard the flying of the Union flag permanently at seven locations as a proportionate and appropriate display of allegiance to the United Kingdom by the Council, and in line with guidance issued to GB authorities by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

On the other hand, there are those who regard any extension to the Council's existing policy as perhaps "a step too far" and one that may raise concerns and tensions locally, while also moving the Council well beyond the guidance offered by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to local authorities on the flying of the Union flag in 2013.

This guidance makes explicit that while the flying of the Union flag at a Council's civic headquarters may be appropriate, "the rationale for its display at every Council location, facility and leisure centre would be questionable."

Although the Council is not advocating flying the Union flag permanently at every Council location, it has moved further beyond the parameters of this guidance in its current proposal, and the rationale offered, of simply following GB guidance, may not provide adequate cover given Northern Ireland's unique legislative status.

The Commission goes on to state that any decision should reflect the Council's legitimate policy aims and "not cause unlawful discrimination or harassment, unintentionally or indirectly through its likely effects or impacts."²¹ A significant minority of staff surveyed (48.6 per cent) have indicated opposition to the proposed policy and this finding should be given due regard in the Council's further deliberations.

In finally reaching a decision, Section 75 considerations must be afforded due regard by the Council, alongside all other matters that are seen to be germane to the policy in question. The EQIA has made clear that there are a number of concerns and in particular relating to the promotion of good

²¹ Advice on Flying the Union flag in Councils,
www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/AdviceflyingtheUnionflagincouncils2013.pdf?ext=.pdf

relations within the Council, but ultimately executive authority will rest within the Council Chamber.

10. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future

Over and above any review of the proposed policy attached to a realignment of the Council's estate, Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires that a system be established to monitor the impact of the final policy in order to gauge its effect on the relevant groups and subgroups attached to the nine Section 75 categories.

The results of ongoing monitoring must be reviewed and published on an annual basis (para. 4 (2) (b)). If the monitoring and analysis of results over a two-year period show that the policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the public authority must ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for the relevant equality groups (Annex 1, para. 7.2).

The Council therefore needs to agree how the impact of the final policy will be monitored. This may involve some or all of the following:

- collation and analysis of all comments, queries, complaints received;
- surveys of visitors to the various locations;
- staff surveys;
- inclusion of appropriate questions in omnibus surveys.

Appendix 1: Days in 2022 designated under the Flags Regulations

9 January	Birthday of The Duchess of Cambridge
20 January	Birthday of The Countess of Wessex
6 February	Her Majesty's Accession
19 February	Birthday of The Duke of York
*TBC	Commonwealth Day
10 March	Birthday of The Earl of Wessex
17 March	St Patrick's Day
21 April	Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen
2 June	Coronation Day
21 June	Birthday of The Duke of Cambridge
*TBC	Official Celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday
17 July	Birthday of the Duchess of Cornwall
15 August	Birthday of The Princess Royal
*TBC	Remembrance Day
14 November	Birthday of The Prince of Wales

* Dates to be confirmed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Appendix 2: Days designated by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings 2021

- **January:** Birthday of the Duchess of Cambridge
- **20 January:** Birthday of the Countess of Wessex
- **6 February:** Her Majesty's Accession
- **19 February:** Birthday of the Duke of York
- **1 March:** St David's Day (in Wales)
- **March:** Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)
- **March:** Birthday of the Earl of Wessex
- **17 March:** St. Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland)
- **21 April:** Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen
- **23 April:** St George's Day (in England)
- **2 June:** Coronation Day
- **June:** Birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh
- **June:** Official celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday
- **21 June:** Birthday of the Duke of Cambridge
- **17 July:** Birthday of the Duchess of Cornwall
- **15 August:** Birthday of the Princess Royal
- **November:** Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November)
- **November:** Birthday of the Prince of Wales
- **20 November:** Her Majesty's Wedding Day
- **30 November:** St Andrew's Day (in Scotland)

Appendix 3: Equality Scheme consultees

Please find below our list of consultees. Please note that this list is indicative and is not exhaustive. The list is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant to our functions and policies:

55+ Activity Club
1st Antrim CSI
3rd Ballymoney Boys Brigade
4th Ballymoney BB
1st Garvagh Boys Brigade
7th Coleraine Guides

Action Cancer
Action Mental Health
Action Mental Health New
Horizons Antrim
Action on Elder Abuse Northern
Ireland
Action on Hearing Loss
Action MS
Adapt NI
Age NI
Age concern Causeway
Ageing Well Roe Valley
Aghanloo Community Association
Agherton Grange Tenants
Association
Aims Project
Alliance Party
All Saints' Church of Ireland
Loughguile
Alliance Youth Works
Alzheimer's Society
An Droichead
Antrim to Gaza
Ardinariff Historical & Cultural
Society
Ar moy Auld Boys Musical
Association
Ar moy Community Association
Ar moy Community Development
Association
Ar moy Cross Community
Playgroup
Ar moy Over 55's Club
Ar moy Primary School
Ar moy School Parent Teacher
Association
Ar moy Woman's Institute
Ar moy Youth Group
Art & Disability Forum

Articlave Community
Development Group
Articlave District Community
Association
Arthritis Care NI
Articlave Cultural and Historical
Society
Asian Over 50 Club
Assistance Dogs NI
Association for Spina Bifida &
Hydrocephalus
Asthma UK
Autism NI
Autism NI – North Coast Branch
Aware Defeat Depression

Baha'i Coleraine
Bahai Council for NI
Ballerin GAC
Ballybogey Community
Association
Ballybogey Over 50s Club
Ballybogey Youth Association
Ballycastle Church Action
Ballycastle Community
Development Group
Ballycastle Concern Group
Ballycastle Connect
Ballycastle & District Over 55's
club
Ballycastle & District Probus Club
Ballycastle Girls Brigade Youth
Ballycastle High School Youth
Club
Ballycastle Presbyterian Church
Ballycastle TRAINS Development
Association
Ballykelly Area Development
Association
Ballykelly Men's Shed
Ballylough Living History Trust
Ballymoney Arthritis Care Branch
Ballymoney Baptist Church
Ballymoney Church of God
Ballymoney Churches Forum

Ballymoney Community Resource Centre
Ballymoney & District Community Playgroup
Ballymoney Drama Festival
Ballymoney Elim Parent & Toddler Group
Ballymoney First Presbyterian Church
Ballymoney Methodist Church
Ballymoney Reformed Presbyterian Church
Ballymoney U3A
Ballymoney Women's Institute
Ballymoney Writers
Ballysally Community Association
Ballyvoy & Carey Development Group
Ballywatt Presbyterian Church
Ballyweaney Presbyterian Church
Ballywillan Community & Cultural Group
Ballywillan Drama Group
Banagher Parish Church
Balnamore & District Community Association
Barnardo's NI
Be Safe Be Well
Beautiful Minds
Bee Heard
Benbradagh Community Support Group
Benbradagh Resource Centre
Bendooragh & District Community Association
Benedy Community Association Ltd
Benedy Women's Group
Benvarden Apprentice Boys of Derry
Benvarden Community Association
Benvarden LOL 1001

Big Telly Theatre Company
Blaugh Sons of Ulster
Blind Centre
Boveedy Community Association
Boveedy Springwell Club
Brake PYDP
BraveheartsNI
Breen Centre
British Deaf Association
Brook, Coleraine
Building Ballysally Together
Building Communities Resource Centre
Bushmills Community Centre
Burnfoot Community Development Association
Burnside Presbyterian Church
Burnfoot Parent & Toddler Group
Bushmills & District Community Association
Bushmills and District Motorcycle Club
Bushmills Primary School & Nursery Unit
Bushmills Residents & Environmental Forum
Bushmills Residents Group
Bushmills Trust
Bushmills Ulster Scots Heritage
Bushvale Presbyterian Church
Business in the Community
Butterfly Survivors

Cairns Residents Group
CAN (Compass Advocacy Network)
Cancer Focus NI
Carey Faughs GAC
Cara Friend
Carers NI
Carhill Integrated Primary School P.T.A
Carnany Community Association

Carnanmore Community Group
Carnany Parent & Toddler Group
Carnduff Community Association
Carnduff Residents Association
Castle Community Association
Castle Community Centre
Castlerock Community Association
Castlerock Senior Citizens' Wednesday Club
Castlereoe Area Community Development Association
CAUSE
Causeway ADHD Support Group
Causeway Care in Crisis
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
Causeway Coast Peace Group
Causeway Coast Vineyard Church
Causeway Hospital Radio
Causeway Multi-Cultural Forum
Causeway Older Active Strategic Team (COAST)
Causeway Rural and Urban Network
Causeway U3A
Causeway Volunteer Action Trust
Causeway Volunteer Centre
Causeway Women's Aid
Cedar Foundation
Ceres Europees (NI) Ltd.
Cheers Youth Group
Child Action Protection Trust
Children's Law Centre
Children in Northern Ireland
Child Poverty Action Group
Chinese Welfare Association
Choice Housing
Citizens Advice Causeway
Cloughmills Community Association
Cloughmills Community Action Team
Cloughmills Community Guides
Cloughmills Free Presbyterian Church
Cloughmills Golden Oldies
Cloughmills Playgroup
Cloughmills Reformed Presbyterian Church
Co Londonderry Agricultural Show Society Ltd.
C.O.A.S.T
Coleraine Baptist Church
Coleraine Borough 50+ Forum
Coleraine Branch – The Royal British Legion
Coleraine Borough Churches Forum
Coleraine Carers Support Group
Coleraine Disability Forum
Coleraine & District Riding for the Disabled
Coleraine Eotas Project
Coleraine Festival Committee
Coleraine Gardening Club
Coleraine Gateway Club
Coleraine Guide Hall
Coleraine Islamic Centre
Coleraine Probus Club
Coleraine Rotary Club
Coleraine Round Table
Coleraine Rural and Urban Network
Coleraine Street Pastors
Coleraine Talking News
Coleraine Young Farmers Club
Coleraine Youth Forum
Coleraine Ulster Scots
Regeneration Club
Coleraine Versus Arthritis
Comhaltas Ceolto?r? ?ireann
Rasharkin

Comhaltas Ceoltóiri Éireann, Dun Lathair/Dunloy Comhaltas Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) Community Advice Causeway Community Development and Health Network NI Community Family Support Programme Community Foundation for NI Community Relations Council Compass Advocacy Group Contact a Family Connect Christian Fellowship Conradh na Gaeilge Cooleenan Community Association Cornerstone Youth & Community Centre Corrymeela COSO Council for the Homeless NI Crafts with Love Cramsie Court Residents Association Crossroads Caring for Carers Cruse Bereavement Care NI Croaghmore Presbyterian Church Crockney Residents' Association Portrush Cross Glebe Community Association Crow's Nest Community Playgroup Cruse Northern Area Curator Shackleton and Aviation Museum Cushendall Development Group Cushendall's Men's Shed Cushendall Women's Association Cushendall Women's Institute Cushendun and District Development Association

Cushendun Building Preservation Trust
Cushendun GAC
CVSNI

Dalriada Rural Sure Start
Dalriada Training Services
Dalriada Rural Surestart
Deaf Association
Derrykeighan Church of Ireland (St Colman's)
Derrykeighan & District Community Association
Derry Well Woman
Derry Travellers Support Group
Drumrane Orange Community Association
Dunseverick Community Association
Dunseverick Primary School
Dervock & District Community Association
Dervock Presbyterian Church
Dervock Playgroup
Dervock Youth Association
Destined Feeny
Diabetes UK Limavady Branch
Disability Action
Disability Sports NI
Down's Syndrome Association NI
Dromboughill Community Association
Dunloy Presbyterian Church
Drum Men's shed
Drumboughill Community Association
Drumrane Orange Community Association
Drumreagh Presbyterian Church
Drumsurn Community Association
Dry Arch Children's Centre
Dunaghy Flute Band

Dungiven Faith and Crown Defenders LOL2036	Foreglen Community Association Foreglen Day Care Centre
Dungiven Presbyterian Church	Foyle Downs Syndrome Trust
Dungiven Regeneration Group	Foyle Friend
Dunloy Development Association	Foyle Women's Aid (Limavady)
DUP	Friends of Glenariffe
Eagle Glen community Partnership Ltd	Gaeil Ruairí Óg agus Gaeil na nGlinntí
Early Years (North West)	Gaelcholaiste Dhoire
Early Years	Garryduff Presbyterian Church
Eden Project Communities	Garvagh & Agadowey Great War Society
Education Authority NI	Garvagh & District Development Association
EGSA Educational Guidance Service for Adults	Garvagh & District Diamond Club
Employers Forum on Disability	Garvagh Community Forum
Eoghan Rua GAC	Garvagh Cultural Awareness Association
Equality and Emergency Planning Team	Garvagh Development Trust
Equality Coalition	Garvagh Young Farmers Club
Equality Commission for NI	Garvagh Youth Centre
Errigal Hall Development Association	Gelvin Area Community Association Ltd
Ethnic Minority Worker	Gingerbread NI (Western Area)
Evergreen Club	Girls Brigade NI
Extern	Glebeside Community Association
Faughanvale Community Project	Glack Community Association
Faughanvale GAC	GLAD
Feeny Community Association	Glenariff Improvement Group
Feis Na Gleann	Glenariffe Oisin CLG
Fibromyalgia Awareness Northern Ireland (FMANI)	Glenariffe Resource Centre
Fibromyalgia North West Support Group	Glenariff Youth Group
Finvoy Church of Ireland	Glenmona House Trust
Finvoy Presbyterian Church	Glenmona Resource Centre
Finvoy Young Farmers Club	Glens Community Association
First Garvagh Presbyterian Church	Glenshane Care Association
Flowerfield Writers Group	Glenshane Community Development Ltd
Focus on Family	Glenshesk Court Tenants Association
Foras na Gaeilge	Glens & Dalriada U3A Group Glens of Antrim Comhaltas

GI?r Dh?n Geimhin	Inner Wheel Club of Ballymoney
Glens Help Group	Institute for Conflict Research
Glens Red Squirrel Group	Iontaobhas ULTACH
Glens Rural Community Group	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Glens Youth Club	Include Youth
Glenullin & Agivey Conservation and Development Trust	
GMB	Jack Horner Community
Good Morning Causeway	Playgroup
Good Morning Roe Valley	Jimmy O'Hara Comhalltas
Gortnaghey Community Association	Ceolt?ir? ?ireann, Roe Valley
Gortrighey AOH and Community Accordian Band	Juniper Hill Caravan Occupiers Association
Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland	
Greenlight Gateway	Kids Inn After Schools Club
Greenshed Recycling Project	Killagan Church of Ireland
Greysteel Community Association	Killowen & Churchlands Community Association
Greysteel Community Enterprises Ltd	Killowen Community Association
Greysteel Playgroup	Killowen Primary School PTA
Greysteel Parent & Toddler Group	Kilraughts Presbyterian Church
Guide Dogs for the Blind Association	Kilraughts Reformed Presbyterian Church
Guide Dogs NI	Kilrea Ageing Well Club
Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd	Kilrea Community Early Years
Hampsey Harp School	Kilrea Development Committee
Happy Days Playgroup	Kilrea Women's Institute
Hands That Talk Community Group	Kilrea Young Farmers Club
Harpur's Hill Primary School	Kilraughts Young Farmers Club
Heart of the Glens Festival	Killyhammer & District Community Association
Hebron Free Presbyterian Church	Kingdom of Dalriada Ulster-Scots Society
Heights Football Club	Knockmoy Fold Residents Association
HereNI	
Hezlett Court Tenant's Association	Ladies Friendship and Craft Group
Homestart, Causeway	Landhead Primary School
IMTAC	Largy Community Development Association
Indian Community Centre	LCDI Advice Centre
	LCDI Disabled Daycare Centre

Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative (LASI)	Moneydig Young Conquerors Flute Band
Lifestart Limavady	Mossside Community
Limavady Baptist Church	Mossside Monday Club
Limavady Community and Leisure Association	Mossside Youth Group
Limavady Family Centre	Mother's Union Group
Limavady Flexicare	Mountsandel Discovery and Heritage Group
Limavady Garden Centre	Moycraig Young Farmers Club
Limavady Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide	Moyle Gateway Youth & Friends
Limavady Lions Club	MR SMITH Community Group
Limavady Orange Heritage Centre	Mullagh House
Limavady Rugby Club	Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Limavady Volunteer Centre	Multiple Sclerosis Society NI
Limavady Youth Council	Mummies Matter
Liscolman Community Development Association	NACN
Lisnagaver Flute Band	National Deaf Children's Society
Little Orchids Ltd	NEELB
Little Rascals Community Playgroup	NI Association for Mental Health
Live Music Now	NI African Cultural Centre
Loughgiel Community Association	Niamh Mental Wellbeing
Loughgiel Playgroup	NICCY
Loughgiel Youth Club	NI Chest, Heart & Stroke
Macosquin Community Association	NICVA
Macosquin Senior Citizens Club	NI Deaf Youth Association
Magilligan Community Association	NI Gay Rights Association
Magilligan Community Playgroup	NI Housing Executive
Main Street Presbyterian Church, Garvagh	NI Human Rights Commission
Marconi Radio Group	NI Islamic Centre
MENCAP (West)	NI Muslim Family Association
MENCAP NI	NIPSA
Men's Health Forum in Ireland	NI Rare Disease Partnership
Men's Action Network	NI Rural Women's Network
Migrant Centre NI	NI Union of Supported Employment
Millburn Community Association	NI Women's Coalition
MindWise Head Office	NI Women's Aid Federation
Moneydig Rural Network	NI Women's European Platform
	NI Youth Forum
	North Antrim Bands Forum
	North Antrim Community Network
	North Antrim Villages Forum

North Coast Community Transport	Portballintrae Community Development Group
North Coast Integrated College	Portballintrae Residents Association
Northern Area Community Network	Portrush Community Forum
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	Portrush Heritage Group
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	Portrush Partnership
Northern Regional College	Portrush Summer Theatre
North West Animal Welfare Group	Portrush Theatre Company
North West Community Network	Portrush Writers
North West Forum of People with Disabilities	Portrush Youth Centre
North West Historical & Cultural Society	Portstewart Baptist Church
North West Lifelong Learning Ltd	Portstewart Community Association
NSPCC	Portstewart Hospice Support Group
NWLLA - North West Lifelong Learning Ltd	Portstewart Presbyterian Church
Oasis Causeway	Portstewart Presbyterian Youth Club
O' Connors Glack GAC	Portstewart Probus Club
Oakleaf Community Network	Positive Futures
Older Peoples Advocate NI	Pride of the Park Flute Band
Our Lady & St John The Evangelist Roman Catholic Church	Promote Action Mental Health
Our Lady & St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church	PSNI
Parenting NI	PUP (Progressive Unionist Party)
Parents Advice Centre	Pure Tashte Productions
Pavestone Centre	Queerspace
Parish of Errigal & Desertoghill	Rainbow Project
Parkinson's UK NI	Ramoan Friendship Group
People Plus NI	Rasharkin Community Association
Phoenix ADHD	Rasharkin Community Playgroup
Phoenix Project	Rasharkin Free Presbyterian Church
Pinewood House	Rasharkin Women's Group
Playhouse Activity Centre	Rasharkin Primary School
POBAL	Rathain Tenants Association
Polish Association NI	Rathlin Development & Community Association
	Restore Community Group
	Ridge Club - Afterschool & Holiday Club

Riding for the Disabled
Association (Coleraine & District Group) Ltd
Ringsend Presbyterian Church
RNIB
RNID NI
Roe Valley Ancestral Researchers Ltd
Roe Valley Community Playgroup
Roe Valley Historical Society
Roe Valley Residents Association
Roe Valley Women's Network
Roseyards Presbyterian Church
Rotary Club of Coleraine
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Ruairi Og CLG
Rural Community Network
Rural Support

Saint Vincent de Paul, Portstewart
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church
Salvation Army
Sandel Centre
Save the Children Fund
SDLP
Second Dunboe Presbyterian Church
See-Saw Playgroup
Sense
Shelter NI
Sikh Cultural Centre
Simon Community Coleraine
Sinn Fein - connollyhouse@sinnfein.ie

Snatch Club (1st Ballymoney Youth Club)
Society Human rights & Equality Committee
Solas Moyle
Somerset Residents Association

Sports NI
St Andrew's Church of Ireland
Rasharkin
St Canice's GAC
St Canice's Ladies GAC
St Colm's Drum GAC
St Columba's Primary School
St Columba's Roman Catholic Church
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church
St MacNissi's Roman Catholic Church
St Mary's Church Macosquin
St Mary's Roman Catholic Church Rasharkin
St Patrick's Church of Ireland Ballymoney
St Patrick's Church Portrush
St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church
St Peters & St Pauls Primary School
Stranocum Community Centre Ltd
Stranocum & District Development Group
Stendhal Festival
Stepping Stones Playgroup
Stroke Association NI
St Vincent de Paul
St Vincent de Paul Cloughmills
St Vincent de Paul, Kilrea
St Vincent De Paul Society - St Malachy's
St Vincent de Paul Society, Limavady
Sunlea Youth Centre
Supporting Communities NI

Tar Isteach
Tha Boord o Ulster Scotch
The Bushmills Trust
The Corrymeela Community

The Den Drop-In
The Dry Arch Children's Centre
The Friends group
The Mae Murray Foundation
The Princes Trust
The Rainbow Project
Topp Rural Regeneration and Cultural Society
Topp Star Line Dancing Class
Traditional Unionist Voice
Training for Women Network
Traveller Movement NI
Trinity Presbyterian Church

UDR Association
Ullans Centre
Ullans Speakers Association
Ulster Deaf Sports Council
Ulster Scots Agency
Ulster Scots Community Network
Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)
Ulster University Chaplaincy, Coleraine
UNISON
United Parish of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin
UNITE The Union
University of Ulster Coleraine
University of Ulster Students Union
Upper Station Road, Neighbourhood Watch

Vineyard Compassion
Visual Access NI Ltd
Voices of Young People in Care
Volunteer Now Enterprises Ltd

Waterfoot Residents Association
Wave Trauma Centre
WELB Youth Service
Wellington Park Business Centre
West Bann Development Ltd.
Windyhall 50+ Club
Windyhall Community Association
Windyhall Community, Cultural and Sports Action Group
Windyhall Youth Club
Women's Aid Federation NI
Women's Centre Derry
Women of the World
Women's Regional Consortium
Women's Resources and Development Agency
Women's Support Network

Youth Council (Causeway)
Youth Action NI
Youth Links

Zachary Geddis Break the Silence Trust
Zomba Action Group

Appendix 4: Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council population by Section 75 dimension

The usually resident population of the Council area at the 2011 Census was 140,877.

Religious belief

On Census Day 2011, 37 per cent of population of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council came from a Catholic community background and 48 per cent from a Protestant background. However, this varies across the Council area. The table below shows the demographic make-up of each area affected by this policy.

Census 2011	CC&G Borough Council	Ballymoney	Coleraine	Limavady	Portrush	Portstewart	Northern Ireland
Roman Catholic	37.0%	17.2%	24.1%	44.4%	24.8%	35.5%	40.8%
Protestant and other Christian (including Christian related)	48.4%	76.2%	68.1%	51.8%	66.9%	57.0%	41.6%
Other religions	0.6%	0.8%	1.2%	0.4%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%
None/Not stated	5.6%	5.8%	6.7%	3.4%	7.5%	6.4%	6.8%

Political opinion

The following table presents the results of the 2019 local government elections for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.²²

²² www.ark.ac.uk/elections/flg19.htm

Party	First preference votes	Vote share	Seats won
DUP	15371	30.4	14
Sinn Féin	11221	22.2	9
UUP	7725	15.3	7
SDLP	4686	9.3	6
Alliance	4058	8	2
TUV	2177	4.3	
Independent	2039	4	
PUP	1576	3.1	
Aont	992	2	
UKIP	350	0.7	
Green	331	0.7	
Conservative	112	0.2	

Ethnicity

One Census Day 2011, nearly 99 per cent of the population of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council was from a white racial background.²³

	CC&G Borough Council	Northern Ireland
White	98.97	98.21
Irish Traveller	0.03	0.07
Chinese	0.24	0.35

²³ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics website, www.nisra.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

Indian	0.16	0.34
Pakistani	0.03	0.06
Bangladeshi	0.01	0.03
Other Asian	0.15	0.28
Black Caribbean	0.01	0.02
Black African	0.05	0.13
Other Black	0.01	0.05
Mixed	0.25	0.33
Other ethnic group	0.09	0.13

Age

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has a slightly older population than the Northern Ireland average based on mid-year estimates for 2019.²⁴

	CC&G Borough Council	Northern Ireland
Under 15	28,600 (19.74%)	395,800 (20.88%)
16-44	89,200 (61.56%)	1,179,700 (62.24%)
45-59	23,900 (16.49%)	280,600 (14.80%)
60 and over	3,200 (2.21%)	39,400 (2.08%)

²⁴ Source : Northern Ireland Statistics website: www.nisra.gov.uk
[2019 Mid Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](http://www.nisra.gov.uk). Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

Marital status

The following table shows the marital status of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council population on Census day 2011.²⁵

	CC&G Borough Council (%)	Northern Ireland (%)
Single	32.55	33.11
Married	50.02	48.45
Re-married	2.66	2.67
Separated	3.23	3.84
Divorced	4.14	4.12
Widowed	7.42	7.81

Sexual orientation

Several UK- and NI-based studies have attempted to quantify the number of people who identify as LGBTQ+. Estimates for the LGBTQ+ population range from 0.3 to 10 per cent using different sources. A commonly used estimate of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, accepted by Stonewall UK, is approximately 5 to 7 per cent of the population.

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2020) provides the following information on the sexual orientation of people in Northern Ireland (this information is not available at local government level):

	%
I am “gay” or “lesbian” (homosexual)	3
I am heterosexual or “straight”	94
I am bi-sexual	2
Other	1

²⁵ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics website, www.nisra.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

Gender

On Census day 2011, 51 per cent of the population of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council was male and 49 per cent female.²⁶

	CC&G Borough Council	Northern Ireland
Male	50.88%	48.74%
Female	49.12%	51.26%

People with a disability

One in five people in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council had a disability on Census day 2011.²⁷

	CC&G Borough Council	Northern Ireland
People with disability	20.17%	20.69%
People without a disability	79.83%	79.31%

²⁶ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics website, www.nisra.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

²⁷ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics website, www.nisra.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

People with or without dependents

On Census day 2011, 28 per cent of households in the borough reported having dependent children and 11 per cent of residents provided long-term care for an adult.²⁸

	CC&G Borough Council	Northern Ireland
Households with dependent children	28.37%	36.19%
Persons providing unpaid care to another because of long-term physical or mental ill-health/disability, or problems related to old age	10.73%	11.82%

²⁸ Source: Northern Ireland Statistics website, www.nisra.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

Appendix 5: Monitoring returns for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council employees

By religious belief/community background

As at 21 October 2021, 39 per cent of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council employees were from a Catholic community background and 55 per cent were from a Protestant community background.

Religious belief/ community background	Gender	Number of staff	Percentage
Roman Catholic	Male	123	19.52%
	Female	122	19.37%
Protestant	Male	218	34.60%
	Female	131	20.79%
Non-determined	Male	17	2.70%
	Female	19	3.02%

By racial group/ethnic origin

As at 21 October 2021, 89 per cent of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council employees were from white/white European racial group; 10 per cent were unknown; and less than 1 per cent were from an other or mixed ethnic background.

Racial group/Ethnic origin	Gender	Number of staff	Percentage
Mixed ethnic group	Male	-	-
	Female	1	0.16%
Other	Male	1	0.16%
	Female	1	0.16%
White/white European	Male	325	51.59%
	Female	237	37.62%
Unknown	Male	32	5.08%
	Female	33	5.23%

Appendix 6: NI Life and Times Survey

The NI Life and Times 2020²⁹ survey found that the majority of people of Protestant or no religion favoured flying the Union flag on designated days only. The majority of people from a Catholic background favoured that it not be flown at all.

Opinions on flying the Union flag by religion	%		
	Catholic	Protestant	No religion
Union flag flown from all public buildings all the time	2	38	13
Union flag flown on designated days only	35	51	53
Union flag not flown at all from any public building	54	4	25
Don't know	9	7	8

The results are also available by age bracket.

Opinions on flying the Union flag by age	%					
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Union flag flown from all public buildings all the time	17	22	18	19	24	21
Union flag flown on designated days only	25	36	42	49	52	62

²⁹ Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2020, [Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey \(ark.ac.uk\)](http://Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (ark.ac.uk))

Union flag not flown at all from any public building	37	29	32	26	16	12
Don't know	22	14	7	6	7	5

Appendix 7: Relevant legislation

The Flags (Northern Ireland) Order 2000

The Flags (Northern Ireland) Order 2000 and the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 set out the specified days for flying the Union flag at government buildings and courthouses in Northern Ireland. In the 2022 calendar year, there are 15 designated days (appendix 1).

However, council offices are not included in Schedule 1 of the Flags Order, which lists the specified government buildings covered by the Order. There is therefore no legal obligation placed on councils to fly the Union flag on specified days, and it is at the discretion of each council as to whether and when (or not) to fly the Union flag.

A judicial review of the Flags Regulations was conducted in 2001. In that judgement, it was ruled that the Regulations did not conflict with the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The judge stated that:

“The Union flag is the flag of the United Kingdom of which Northern Ireland is a part. It is the judgment of the Secretary of State that it should be flown on government buildings only on those days on which it is flown in Great Britain. By thus confining the days on which the flag is to appear, the Secretary of State sought to strike the correct balance between, on the one hand, acknowledging Northern Ireland’s constitutional position, and, on the other, not giving offence to those who oppose it. That approach seems to me to exemplify a proper regard for ‘partnership, equality and mutual respect’ and to fulfil the Government’s undertaking that its jurisdiction in Northern Ireland ‘shall be exercised with rigorous impartiality on behalf of all the people in the diversity of their identities and traditions’. I do not consider, therefore, that the Regulations have been shown to be in conflict with the Belfast Agreement.”

Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998

The Fair Employment and Treatment Order makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against employees on the ground of religious belief or political opinion. It includes the duty to promote a good and harmonious working environment in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated because of his or her religious belief or political opinion.

The Equality Commission's Fair Employment Code of Practice provides general guidance to employers with regard to good practice in the promotion of equality of opportunity. In relation to the working environment the code states that employers should:

“Promote a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated because of his religious belief or political opinion, e.g., prohibit the display of flags, emblems, posters, graffiti, or the circulation of materials, or the deliberate articulation of songs, which are likely to give offence or cause apprehension among particular groups of employees.”

Legal counsel sought by Belfast City Council in 2002 and 2011 in relation to its flags policy considered two relevant Fair Employment tribunals. The Johnston case (Johnston v Belfast City Council, 2000) dealt with emblems within the Belfast City Council's Dunbar Depot and, in particular, the hanging of a portrait of the Queen following refurbishment. The tribunal decided there was no justification for the display of a portrait of the Queen in a council cleansing depot because the Council had failed to explain or justify the presence of the portrait and there was therefore unlawful discrimination.

In the Brennan case (Brennan v Short Bros plc. 1995), the tribunal held that the applicant had suffered less favourable treatment on the grounds of his religious belief and political opinion by reason of his employer's toleration of manifestations of sectarianism in the workplace and of victimisation of the applicant when he complained of these manifestations. Mr Brennan, a Roman Catholic, complained about a number of matters which he alleged constituted sectarian harassment including the display of Union flag stickers on a number of tool boxes, the painting of a tool box red, white and blue and the wearing of Glasgow Rangers football shirts and scarves, in such a way as to display the Union flag. In upholding the complaint, the tribunal commented:

“Flags are prohibited because of the implications which they have in a workplace for the religious beliefs and/or political opinions of the workforce in that they tend, within Northern Ireland, to mark the ascendancy of one community over another.”

In January 2013 the Equality Commission for Northern issued advice to Councils in relation to the flying of the Union Flag. It considered that the Order:

“does not make any express reference to flags but makes discrimination on the grounds of religious belief and political opinion unlawful, both in the workplace and in the provision of goods, facilities and services. Also, in the workplace, it bans “harassment” on these grounds. In addition to the issue of discrimination and harassment, employers also have legal obligations which require them to promote fair participation in employment and associated responsibilities to promote a good and harmonious workplace.

“In the field of employment, the Fair Employment Code of Practice provides general guidance for employers on these matters. The Code has been cited with approval by the Fair Employment Tribunal when upholding complaints against employers in numerous discrimination cases. A small number of these concerned the display of flags and emblems. The relatively new statutory definition of harassment under FETO, first enacted in 2003, has not yet been explicitly considered by the Tribunal in any case dealing specifically with flags and emblems issues. However, the case law that preceded 2003 can, with a reasonable degree of confidence, be used to predict how the Tribunal would approach these questions if raised today. It is noted that the Tribunal has not considered a complaint relating solely to the official display of a Union Flag at a Council’s premises.”

Appendix 8: Relevant Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council policies

A Better Future Together

A better Future Together, a Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017–2030 sets down a long-term vision and plan for the Causeway Coast and Glens area. Its values include “Respect – We will encourage fairness, making decisions based on evidence, need and equality”.

Equality Scheme

The Council’s Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission in 2015 and reviewed and renewed in 2020. It is supported by the Equality Action Plan 2019–23, which aims to:

- Design, commission and deliver services that are accessible, inclusive and responsive to our customer’s needs
- Raise awareness of equalities issues and tackle prejudices, both internally and externally
- Attract, recruit, retain and progress a diverse range of employees in a culture which celebrates diversity and inclusion
- Provide a working environment where employees are treated with fairness, dignity and respect

Issues identified through an audit of inequalities include:

- Need to tackle both persistent and emerging inequalities in a strategic manner
- Need to have better information about our workforce which enables us to take appropriate action to make improvements in areas where we notice that there are issues with attracting, recruiting, retaining and progressing people with particular protected characteristics.
- Need to improve participation levels among under-represented groups in a range of the Council’s activities and Services

Equal Opportunities Policy

In line with the Fair Employment Code of Practice, the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy states that it is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons;
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect;
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice;
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies;
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate;
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Dignity and Respect at Work Policy 2018

In its Dignity and Respect at Work Policy, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council also commits to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations and defines harassment as, among other things, "visual displays of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting or emblems or any other offensive material".

Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Harassment

Within its Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Harassment, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council commits itself to providing equal opportunities and defines harassment, *inter alia*, as:

"Visual displays of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting or emblems or any other offensive material."

Good Relations Strategy

The vision of the Council's 2018–23 Good Relations Strategy is:

“a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation – one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.”

It will do this by:

“Tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance while actively promoting Good Relations both within Council and building positive relations at a local level.”

Intended outcomes include:

1. Increased use of shared space and services (e.g. leisure centres, shopping centres, education, housing);
2. Shared space is accessible to all;
3. A community where spaces and places are safe for all;
4. Reduce the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation;
5. Increase sense of community belonging (widens contribution beyond community background).

The strategy was informed by the results of an audit which consulted with stakeholders through public meetings, an online survey, a street survey, one-to-one interviews, focus groups and telephone interviews.

Under the theme of “Our shared community”, which aims to have all areas of the Borough open and accessible to everyone, the survey found that:

1. 50.3 per cent of respondents felt that the Borough is welcoming to people of different religions; 31.8 per cent felt that it is sometimes welcoming to people of different religions; and 5.6 per cent felt that it is not welcoming.
2. 43.6 per cent of respondents felt that the Borough is welcoming to people of different political opinions; 34.4 per cent felt that it is sometimes welcoming to people of different political opinions; and 9.7 per cent felt that it is not welcoming.

3. 49.2 per cent of respondents felt that the Borough is welcoming to people of different racial backgrounds; 27.1 per cent felt that it is sometimes welcoming to people of different racial backgrounds; and 5.1 per cent felt that it is not welcoming.
4. 12.0 per cent think sectarianism is a major problem and 38.3 per cent think it is a minor problem.
5. 7.2 per cent think racism is a major problem and 30.5 per cent think it is a minor problem.

Appendix 9: Other relevant policies and research

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

The flying of flags is not the subject of statute law in England, Wales or Scotland, but the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has responsibility for issuing guidance on the days designated for flying of the Union flag.

On 21 May 2021 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport changed its guidance advising that the Union flag be flown on UK government buildings from 20 designated days (see appendix 2) to 365 days a year. It further states that “This guidance is aimed at UK government buildings. However, we would encourage local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit where they wish to fly flags.” However, “In Northern Ireland, designated flag flying for Northern Ireland government buildings is governed by legislation rather than this guidance [emphasis as published]”.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that this guidance should extend to Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Review of the Policy on the Flying of the Union flag at Parliament Buildings

In 2014 the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission completed an EQIA on their policy on the flying of the Union flag at Parliament Buildings (Stormont). There are no statutory obligations in relation to the flying of the Union flag at Parliament Buildings; previously it had adhered to the designated days as set down in the Flags Regulations schedule.

During the consultation on the review, the Commission found that “people from the Nationalist community might experience a ‘chill factor’ in their dealings with the Council as a result of the flying of the Union flag”:

“Comments were made regarding the current impact of the flying of the Union flag on designated days; it was suggested that there is a chill factor for those of a Nationalist or Republican community which makes the building less welcoming on such days, and it was reported that visitors had regularly commented likewise. Some consultees said that, on designated days, issues of identity were raised in consciousness and there was greater

sensitivity to such matters [...] A number of interviewees felt that the flying of the Union flag was not in keeping with the spirit of the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement, and was not likely to encourage mutual respect, nor did it help present the building as a shared space for all communities.

The final decision of the Commission on the matter was to adopt the recommendations in the EQIA report that the existing policy on the flying of the Union flag at Parliament Buildings on designated days should continue but that the designated days observed be based on 18 days designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.³⁰

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's 2013 report The Display of Flags, Symbols and Emblems in Northern Ireland³¹ notes that:

"The display of flags, symbols or emblems in a public space may act as a territorial marker or a method of harassment, irrespective of the intention behind its erection. The ECt.HR has noted that expression, which is not, on its face, offensive, can be offensive in certain circumstances. Consequently, when public authorities make decisions pertaining to the erection or removal of a flag, symbol or emblem, a broader discussion of the rights of those who live in the vicinity and those who travel in or through the area for purposes of accessing services is required. The existence of such displays may have an impact on individuals from other communities, acting as a form of intimidation which creates an access barrier to the area. This may have consequences for individuals accessing health care services and for children in accessing public recreational spaces, both of which are protected by international human rights law."

³⁰ [Review of the Policy on the Flying of the Union flag at Parliament Buildings \(niassembly.gov.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/about/policy/reviews/union-flag/)

³¹ <https://nihrc.org/publication/detail/the-display-of-flags-symbols-and-emblems-in-northern-ireland2>

Together: Building a United Community

In 2013 the NI Executive launched the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) strategy. Its vision is:

“a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation – one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.”

It established an all-party group to consider contentious issues including flags and emblems.

Equality Commission

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland was contacted by Causeway Coast and Glens Council in 2015 for their views on the proposed flags policy. The Commission advised that the Council should follow their approved Equality Scheme commitments in regard to undertaking screening of any policy proposals and consideration of an EQIA.

Advice to other councils

The Equality Commission has commented directly to councils on the issue of the display of flags in the past. This includes advice to Limavady Borough Council, a Causeway Coast and Glens legacy council, in 2003.

“We believe that a complainant may find it difficult to convince a Tribunal or court that a practice of flag flying by a Council would be unlawfully discriminatory if it strictly adheres to that which is permitted on designated government buildings by the Flags (NI) Regulations 2000. Conversely however, the Commission believes that a practice of not displaying the Union Flag is also likely to be within a range of acceptable practices”.

In 2002 Fermanagh District Council reviewed its policy on the flying of flags. In a letter to the Chief Executive, the Equality Commission stated:

“The Commission seeks to promote a spirit of inclusivity and mutual respect and urges the avoidance of contentious

displays which act as a badge for community or political allegiance and promote division in the workplace. [...] Where an employer is seeking to provide or maintain fair participation, or to ensure that all of its services are widely utilised by all sections of the community, the Commission recommends particular sensitivity concerning displays which are wholly or mainly associated with one section of the community."

In its final report on its investigation into an alleged failure by Lisburn City Council to comply with its Equality Scheme in June 2006, the Commission found that the council had failed to comply with its Equality Scheme in adopting a position requiring the flying of the Union flag at various council locations on a daily basis. It stated:

"generally, the preferred position of the Equality Commission is that the Council should abide by the Department of Environment recommendation in respect of the 17 designated days for the Union Flag as previously advised to the Council and should not add additional days to the calendar"

In a letter dated 29 September 2011 to Belfast City Council from the Equality Commission in relation to their flag flying policy, the Commission considered:

"The Commission recognises that for local Councils there would be a difference between the customer base at the headquarters and that in more localised areas. Thus, for example, while it is acceptable and appropriate, in the Commission's view for a local council to fly the Union Flag at its Civic Headquarters, this rationale would not extend to every Council location."

It continues:

"To comply with Section 75(2) you need to ensure that, when the Council is formulating its Union flag policy, and considering the various options, account is taken of the desirability of promoting good relations. That goal must be given proper weight; i.e. the weight that is appropriate in the circumstances [...] Furthermore, you should not limit your consideration of the Section 75(2) goal to the immediate circumstances around flying the Union flag

itself. The duty is continuous and wide and requires the Council to consider the broader and longer-term picture and to consider adopting other strategies that may mitigate the immediate effects of a particular policy.”

In 2012 in response to Belfast City Council’s EQIA on proposed changes to its flag policy, the Commission commented:

“While it is acknowledged that this EQIA deals with the flying of the Union Flag on specific Council buildings, consideration should be given to ensuring that the Council’s final policy covers displays of other flags where similar principles and context may apply. To this end, it may serve the Council to further develop the Aims of the policy and ensure that there is a policy framework in which to consider, in a consistent manner, the flying of other flags. Such considerations would include the duration and extent of displays of flags which may be more closely associated with one community background in Northern Ireland, or indeed associated with neither of the two main community backgrounds.”

Advice on flying the Union flag in Councils

In 2013, the Commission published its Advice on Flying the Union flag in Councils.³² It states that “It is for each local Council to determine their own policies on the display of the Union flag, taking account of the full context in which, they operate.”

It further considers that flying of the Union flag must be viewed within the context in which it is flown or displayed and factors affecting this context include “the purpose, manner, location and frequency within which flags are flown”. They are also of the view that, “while it is appropriate for a local Council to fly the Union flag at its Civic Headquarters, the rationale for its display at every Council location, facility and leisure centre would be questionable.”

The Commission also stated that the final council policy should reflect the Council’s legitimate policy aims and “not cause unlawful discrimination or

³²

www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/AdviceflyingtheUnionflagincouncils2013.pdf?ext=.pdf

harassment, unintentionally or indirectly through its likely effects or impacts.”³³

In addition, the Equality Commission has issued guidance on promoting a good and harmonious working environment which states that:

“A good and harmonious working environment is one where all workers are treated with dignity and respect and where no worker is subjected to harassment by conduct that is related to religious belief or political opinion....This of course does not mean that working environments must always be devoid of anything that happens to be more closely associated with one or other of the two main communities in Northern Ireland....In other words an ‘harmonious’ working environment does not necessarily mean a ‘neutral’ one.”³⁴

The guidance includes the following advice on the issue of workplace emblems:

“the Commission recommends that where an employer is seeking to provide or maintain fair participation, or to ensure that all services and facilities are widely utilised by all sections of the community, there is sensitivity concerning displays wholly or mainly associated with one section of the community.”

The guidance also includes the following advice specifically on the flying of the Union flag:

“The flying of the Union flag must be viewed within the context in which it is flown or displayed. Factors affecting the context include the manner, location and frequency with which flags are flown. The Union flag is the national flag of the United Kingdom and, arising therefrom, has a particular status symbolising the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. On the other hand, the Union flag is

³³ Advice on Flying the Union flag in Councils,
www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/AdviceflyingtheUnionflagincouncils2013.pdf?ext=.pdf

³⁴ “Promoting a Good and Harmonious Working Environment, A Guide for Employers and Employees”, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, October 2009

often used to mark sectional community allegiance. There is a world of difference between these two approaches. Thus, for example, while it is acceptable and appropriate, in the Commission's view, for a local Council to fly the Union flag at its Civic Headquarters, the rationale for its display at every Council location, facility and leisure centre would be questionable."

Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition

The Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition published their final report in December 2021. It found "no meeting point" between the:

"two diametrically opposed political and public positions relating to the official flying of flags on public buildings – that either the Union Flag only, should fly on public buildings, or; that the Union Flag and the Irish National Flag should both fly on public buildings together, or there should be no flags flown at all"

In relation to council buildings, it stated:

"The flying of flags by local government is left to the discretion of each local authority. In developing or reviewing a policy on the flying of the Union Flag a Council is required to consider the policy aims, objectives, rationale and must not cause unlawful discrimination or harassment, unintentionally or indirectly through the effects or impacts of the policy. While the policy aims and objectives must be legitimate, ultimately the policy is a matter for each Council to decide for itself. In reaching an outcome on any review of its policy, a Council must comply with its Section 75 duties, namely to 'have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations'."

Policies of other Councils in Northern Ireland

Other councils in Northern Ireland have adopted a range of policies on the flying of the Union flag. These range from the flying of no flags at all (Mid Ulster District Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council); to flying only the council flag (Fermanagh and Omagh District Council); to flying the Union flag on the basis of the principles in the Flags Regulations

(Belfast City Council); to flying the Union flag on a permanent basis at Council buildings (Ards and North Down Council). Other councils, such as Derry City and Strabane District Council, do not have a flags policy or have adopted the policies of their legacy councils.

Ards and North Down Council

In September 2021, a Notice of Motion proposing a new policy on flying the Union flag was deferred subject to an equality screening.

The current policy sees the Union flag flown permanently at seven designated sites including buildings and war memorials. It is also flown on days designated under the Flags Regulations at one site.

The new policy proposes flying the Union flag on all council buildings and war memorials daily. The proposed change aims to bring the policy in line with the revised Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport guidance.

An equality screening was previously carried out on the flags policy in 2020. It notes that:

“This policy will adversely affect some individuals. However, the buildings and flag poles are owned and managed by the council which is a place of local political democracy within the local council area. There is a recognition that the majority of councillors and residents are from the community background that supports the symbolism of the Union flag. At identified places of work the Union flag will only be flown on designated days to recognise the promotion of good and harmonious working relationships and at war memorials to recognise the significance of the period.”

It was screened out (that is, deemed not having substantial equality impact to require an EQIA) as having “a minor impact as it is to maintain the status quo of the two legacy councils and embed the practice followed from 2015”. However, the policy is to be “reviewed annually to be cognisant of the comments and complaints received about this practice and any proposed changes to it”.

Belfast City Council

In 2012 Belfast City Council carried out an EQIA on proposed changes to its flags policy, which was then flown on City Hall 365 days a year and other council buildings (the Ulster Hall, a cultural venue, and the Duncrue

Complex, a depot open to staff only) on designated days, some bank holidays and ad hoc occasions.

Legal opinion

Legal opinion provided at this time by David A. Scoffield QC agreed with earlier legal opinion³⁵ in that:

“It is difficult to see how the flying of the Union flag on the exterior of Council buildings would be likely to have an intimidatory or chilling effect on persons working within the buildings”.

He did not agree, however, with previous counsel that flying the flag on a daily basis (or not at all) would be in breach of good relations duties under Section 75(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 “provided that the decision was taken after full consideration of the possible effects on the promotion of good relations”. This was further challenged by legal advice obtained by Sinn Féin from Eugene McKenna BL, which found “strong authority for the proposition that the flying of the Union flag on days other than in accordance with the Flags Regulations (NI) 2000 would be in contravention of the duties of the council under s.75”.

Overall, Scoffield QC found that “The striking of such a balance” as is set down for central government buildings in the Flags Regulations “seems to me to be a laudable aim”. Furthermore, it “is likely to be legally ‘safer’ than the present policy and very unlikely to give rise to a successful discrimination and less at risk of a successful legal challenge”.

Public opinion

The EQIA further pointed to evidence that some people from a Catholic and/or Nationalist community background regarded the flying of the Union flag as offensive and possibly intimidating, but that ceasing to fly the Union flag would be equally offensive to some people from a Protestant and/or Unionist community background. This included the results of a survey at City Hall which found that

- Protestant visitors were more likely to say they felt pleased/ proud (50 per cent) and comfortable (22 per cent) about the Union Flag

³⁵ Mr Nicolas Hanna QC, 2002

flying. One percent said that they felt uncomfortable, with a further 1 per cent feeling offended by the Union flag flying;

- In contrast, 4 per cent of Catholic visitors said they felt pleased and proud, 8 per cent comfortable with 56 per cent saying they had no particular feelings. Twenty percent said they felt uncomfortable with the Union flag flying, with a further 12 per cent saying they felt offended;
- 72 per cent of protestant visitors believed that the Council should always fly the Union Flag compared with 16 per cent of Catholic visitors.

Consultation responses to the EQIA report confirmed these positions.

Staff survey

- Staff from a Protestant background were more likely to say they felt pleased/proud (78 per cent) and comfortable (14 per cent) about the Union Flag flying. One percent said that they felt uncomfortable, with a further 0.5 per cent feeling offended by the Union flag flying;
- In contrast, 4 per cent of Catholic visitors said they felt pleased and proud, 14 per cent comfortable with 18 per cent saying they had no particular feelings. Thirty two percent said they felt uncomfortable with the Union flag flying, with a further 41 per cent saying they felt offended.

Conclusions

The Belfast City Council EQIA report concluded that:

“... it would appear that the policy options which best promote good relations are – in descending order of effectiveness:

- Designated flag days only
- Designated flag days plus specified additional days
- No flag or a neutral flag
- Two flags”

The final decision of Belfast City Council in December 2012 in relation to their flags policy was to fly the Union flag at its civic headquarters, City Hall, on designated days; and not to fly the flag at all at its other buildings.

This decision was followed by extended civil unrest, which, according to the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission, “gives a strong indication of the likely adverse impact on good relations of any change in policy where one or more communities may feel disadvantaged by that change”.

Banbridge District Council 2009

In 2009 Banbridge council carried out an EQIA on its existing policy of flying the Union flag at its civic headquarters and other buildings all year round. The vast majority of respondents (91 per cent) to the public consultation favoured the current policy.

In deciding to adopt the option of flying the Union Flag at its civic headquarters only throughout the year, the Council took account of the view that this reflected the constitutional status of Northern Ireland; that not to fly the Union Flag would cause offence to a large number of people; that the current presence of the Union flag had not deterred the Council from recruiting and retaining a workforce that was broadly in line with expected rates for the local Protestant and Catholic communities; and, in particular, noted the advice of the Equality Commission that, “this would be an option that would be within the general context of a policy which symbolises the constitutional position of Northern Ireland”.

Craigavon Borough Council 2005

Craigavon Borough Council conducted an EQIA in 2005 of its policy on flying the Union flag on civic occasions. This EQIA raised the question of adding additional days to those designated under the Flags Regulations, such as 1 and 12 July. The Borough Solicitor advised at that time that the Equality Commission would probably not view these additions as sustainable due to political significance and commemoration could be divisive.

Limavady Borough Council 2004

Limavady is a Causeway Coast and Glens legacy council.

In 2004 it conducted an EQIA on the adoption of a no-flags policy. The Council had previously flown the Union flag at its main headquarters building on designated flag days.

The EQIA considered that there was a possibility that the policy on flags may have a differential impact upon people as to whether they feel free to fully access the public services available to them. It suggested that there was a possibility that people may experience a “chill factor” in their dealings

with Council or visits to the Council offices. This “chill factor” may not prevent people from entering a building or accessing a service but may detract from their ability to participate and benefit fully.

The EQIA also recognised that some employees may experience a “chill factor” when working in a building displaying a flag which would lead them to associate the building with a different political identity. Also, that some employees may experience a “chill factor” when working in a building where their political identity was not recognised in the flag flying practice.

Having considered the findings of the EQIA and the consultation responses, the Council adopted the no-flags policy, noting that the stated intent behind the policy, “in the interests of creating a neutral environment”, was reflective of the Council’s own policies in relation to promoting equal opportunities and combating harassment.

Armagh City and District Council

In 2004 Armagh City and District Council conducted an EQIA of a composite policy which included the flying of the Union flag at its civic headquarters on designated days. The Council reported that strong opinions were voiced by the Unionist and/or Protestant community who generally felt that the Union flag was often singled out for causing offence. There was a “genuine sense of hurt” that 1 and 12 July were not included in the designated days and that this indicated a lack of recognition for Unionist and/or Protestant traditions. There was not the same depth of feeling expressed by the Nationalist and/or Catholic community.

As a result of the EQIA the Council decided to continue to fly the Union flag on designated days. It was acknowledged that both main communities might feel that the policy created an adverse impact for them, but the Council considered that the policy best suited its corporate aim of “creating an inclusive place”.

Newtownabbey Borough Council 2003

In 2003 Newtownabbey Borough Council undertook an EQIA of its existing policy that the Union flag should be flown at all times on its administrative buildings and leisure centres.

In carrying out the EQIA the Council acknowledged that there were alternative policies that would reduce the perceived barrier to Nationalists or Republicans and challenge the stereotype that Newtownabbey was a Unionist-controlled Council which did not take account of the views of other traditions. It was recognised that if the Council did not adopt an alternative

policy then those from a Nationalist or Republican tradition would continue to perceive the Council facilities as being unwelcoming. However, the Council determined that the existing policy should be retained on the basis that:

- the policy was lawful;
- although an adverse impact had been identified, the greater number of respondents had indicated that they would not wish to see a change in the policy; and
- altering the policy would have an adverse impact on a greater number of people.

Complaints

There have been no formal complaints regarding the current arrangements for flying the union flag during the lifespan of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Appendix 10: Response from independent councillor

Please see below my submission in regards to the proposed policy of the flying of the Union Flag:

I agree that the Union Flag should be flown on all Council buildings in a fair and equal manner across the Borough. As things stand, there is not fairness and equality to the Rate paying residents who I represent in Limavady DEA as no flag is flown at any time, however the Union Flag is flown in an official capacity, to varying degrees in other towns across the Borough.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has previously stated that, "Flags are a very British way of expressing joy and pride – they are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities, strengthen community cohesion and mark civic pride. The government wants to see more flags flown, particularly the Union Flag, the flag of the United Kingdom. It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The government has recently issued guidance encouraging the flying of the Union Flag on all UK government buildings throughout the year, alongside other national and local flags."

I feel that provided the Union Flag is maintained in a condition that does not impair the overall visual appearance of any of the sites proposed and it is kept in a safe and presentable condition, there is no reason why we should not have the flag of the country displayed at our Civic buildings and I see no reason why the rules applicable to GB, should not be applied to Northern Ireland. We are after all, part of the United Kingdom.

There will, undoubtedly be those who do not support the flying if the Union Flag. We do not live in a perfect world and these set of circumstances of disagreement are not new, nor restricted to Northern Ireland. Violent Republicanism has however exasperated the situation and mindsets of citizens over the past 40 odd years. We need to move away from these mindsets and embrace the Nation we live in. The United Kingdom. The United Kingdom that gives us our National Health Service, world class Benefits system, freedom of Civil and Religious Liberty and, ironically, the right to disagree and protest peacefully.

I frequently visit the Republic of Ireland and have no issue what-so-ever seeing the flag of ROI on display in that country. I frequently visit France and Belgium and the situation is the same there. This is what tolerance

looks like. Any resistance to the flying of the Union Flag is nothing less than intolerance and mindset needs addressed and corrected if our children are to inherit a fair and equal society.

A flag can not discriminate - only people with discriminative mindsets can do that.

A flag can not intimidate - only people using bombs and guns or other heavy handed approaches can do that.

It has been said that a flag won't put food on the table, yet most people who live in Northern Ireland do indeed have food on the table that wouldn't be there but for the United Kingdom. I feel that is as fair and reasonable an argument to fly the Union Flag as any.

In closing, I would state that if viewed with a fair eye, the Union Flag does not discriminate, nor intimidate. It is a flag that represents three Saints... St Patrick of Ireland, St George of England and St Andrew of Scotland. Each symbol representative of the cross.

I look forward to seeing this discussion settled, having the Union Flag on display officially at all our buildings and getting on with the bread and butter issues that affect all the people who live in our Borough.

My regards

Councillor James McCorkell

Independent

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Limavady DEA

Appendix 11: Response from the Equality Commission NI

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland response to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of proposed policy on the flying of the Union Flag

The Commission welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Council's consultation on the proposed policy on the flying of the Union Flag EQIA.

The Commission's remit in this area derives from our duties under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 to promote equality of opportunity, affirmative action, to work for the elimination of religious/political discrimination and our duty to offer advice to public authorities in relation to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Defining the Aims of the Policy

Background context for developing the policy is provided i.e. the Council's current policy on the flying of the Union flag is an amalgamation of custom and practice adopted from the four legacy councils that formed Causeway Coast and Glens in 2015. The EQIA states that the policy is being revised to reflect a Notice of Motion ratified by the Council on 1 June 2021 and that the policy aims are to align Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council with "the new guidance published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to have the Union flag flown on Council and Civic buildings every day (365 days)". The EQIA acknowledges that this guidance does not apply to Northern Ireland, references the call in notice which objected to the motion and the screening determination of adverse impacts on the grounds of political opinion and religious belief.

The policy states a range of locations where it is proposed that the Union Flag would be flown and that these would be reviewed on an ongoing basis. This aspect of the proposed policy should be clarified.

Consideration of available data and research

The EQIA includes a range of data and research, including information on other Council policies on the flying of the Union Flag and Council policies which have relevance to this policy. Quite extensive information is included on specific Commission advice to various Councils, on this subject matter

over a period of time. The information contained in the screening succinctly summarises Commission advice.

Consideration of alternative policies and measures to mitigate adverse impacts:

Where a policy shows a possible adverse impact on any group, the EQIA should include consideration of measures which might mitigate these impact(s) and of alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity. Such considerations should be central to an EQIA and be included in the EQIA so that consultees may evaluate the information and the potential impact of mitigations/alternative policies on equality of opportunity and good relations.

Despite identifying a potential major impact, the EQIA has not set out or considered any mitigations or alternative policies. While the consultation questionnaire issued to consultees presents alternatives to the policy these are not included in the main EQIA report. This places the onus on consultees to consider impacts. Responsibility to identify alternative policies or mitigations and their impacts lies with the council as opposed to consultees and these should have been included in the EQIA report to enable consultees to make an informed decision.

Monitoring

The final EQIA should include the monitoring plans, as required by the Council's equality scheme, in order to monitor the impact of this policy. Monitoring arrangements are not included in the draft EQIA.

This response is made without prejudice to any consideration or determination which the Commission might make in performance of its statutory function to investigate individual complaints under Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 or conduct any other investigation under that Schedule.

The Commission would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of our response further should this be required.

Appendix 12: Minutes of the EQIA Flags Consultation – Equality Forum

10:30 am, 25th March 2020, Microsoft Teams

In attendance:
6 members of the Equality forum, 2 interpreters, 1 consultant and 3 members of staff

The meeting began at 10:30

Presentation by Stella Gilmartin – Gilmartin Consulting

Stella welcomed everyone to the Equality Forum Consultation and gave a short presentation.

At the conclusion of the presentation members of the Equality Forum were invited to express their views.

One person queried what Council were looking at in relation to the Union Flag. This person felt that public perception could be dangerous. The individual had no objection but asked do we want to see it 365 days a year and felt that this might be overkill.

Stella asked the forum how this would affect them personally and how this would affect others.

One member of the forum questioned if everyone would feel welcome and included? They also questioned how this would make people who are visiting the area feel?

Another person asked if this would be the only flag flown or would this include other flags.

Elizabeth stated that the only other flags that council fly are specialist flags e.g blue flags at the beaches. Elizabeth stated Council is open to providing balance.

Another member of the forum queried the painting of the kerbs around the roundabouts and asked what is being done about this.

Elizabeth advised that this is not councils' responsibility but that it could be raised with Road Service.

Stella encouraged the members of the forum to complete online survey.

Appendix 13: Minutes of the EQIA Flags Consultation – Elected Members

7pm, 3rd March 2020, Microsoft Teams

In attendance:

18 Councillors, 2 consultants and 3 members of staff

The meeting began at 19:00

Presentation by John Kremer – Gilmartin Consulting

John welcomed everyone to the Members Consultation and gave a short presentation.

At the conclusion of the presentation members were invited to express their views.

John Kremer offered members the option of expressing their opinion or asking questions on an individual basis by contacting the Policy Officer. Stella Gilmartin added that written submissions by political parties were also important as these range of views provided greater clarity in the report.

John Kremer explained that although responses from members of the public would be anonymised those from representative groups including political parties would be summarised with an explanation as to how it impacted on the final decision.

One Councillor asked when this will come back to council.

This councillor was advised that the 12-week consultation process will be complete by 13th May and the report will go to Council in June.

Another councillor felt that the timeframe should be extended by a further 2 weeks due to Easter holidays and the Election. The councillor also sought clarification if the report for the June or August meeting was the final report or a draft.

The Councillor was advised that the report would be a final draft report to the Council.

John Kremer advised that if the consultation spans across a holiday period it can be extended. Stella Gilmartin explained that people left things to the last minute so if an extension is agreed it should be done in the last couple of weeks, which would reinvigorate the consultation.

One Councillor queried the timing of written submissions and asked if this can be done at any time, also if the councillors can respond as individuals or if it had to be from the party. This councillor had no issues with the timeframe.

John Kremer advised that they could respond from their party but also complete as an individual. John also explained it was important to follow due process.

One Councillor asked if other community groups had been contacted.

It was advised that the Council has an Equality Forum and also invited community equality groups interested in good relations work to a consultation event. We have also sent out information using the community development database to local community and voluntary groups across the borough to get the message out there and reach out.

The Councillor confirmed the message is out there as he has been contacted by groups. The councillor said not to forget about the independent Councillors and the importance of getting views from all.

It was advised there was also an on-line survey on the Council websites consultation page.

A member queried the online survey and asked if this was controlled to not allow multiple returns from individuals.

The councillor was advised that it was not controlled, and that people can make multiple entries. John Kremer advised that this was why the Equality Commission is adamant it is not treated as a head count. Stella Gilmartin advised the information submitted would be analysed in the report.

Policy Officer to send out information to all Councillors.

The meeting ended at 19:38

