

Equality Screening Template – Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act 1998

Policy title: Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan

Policy screened out **without** mitigation or an alternative policy adopted

Contact: Koichi Samuels

Date of completion: 30 November 2022

For Equality Unit Completion:

Content

Part 1. Policy scoping – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

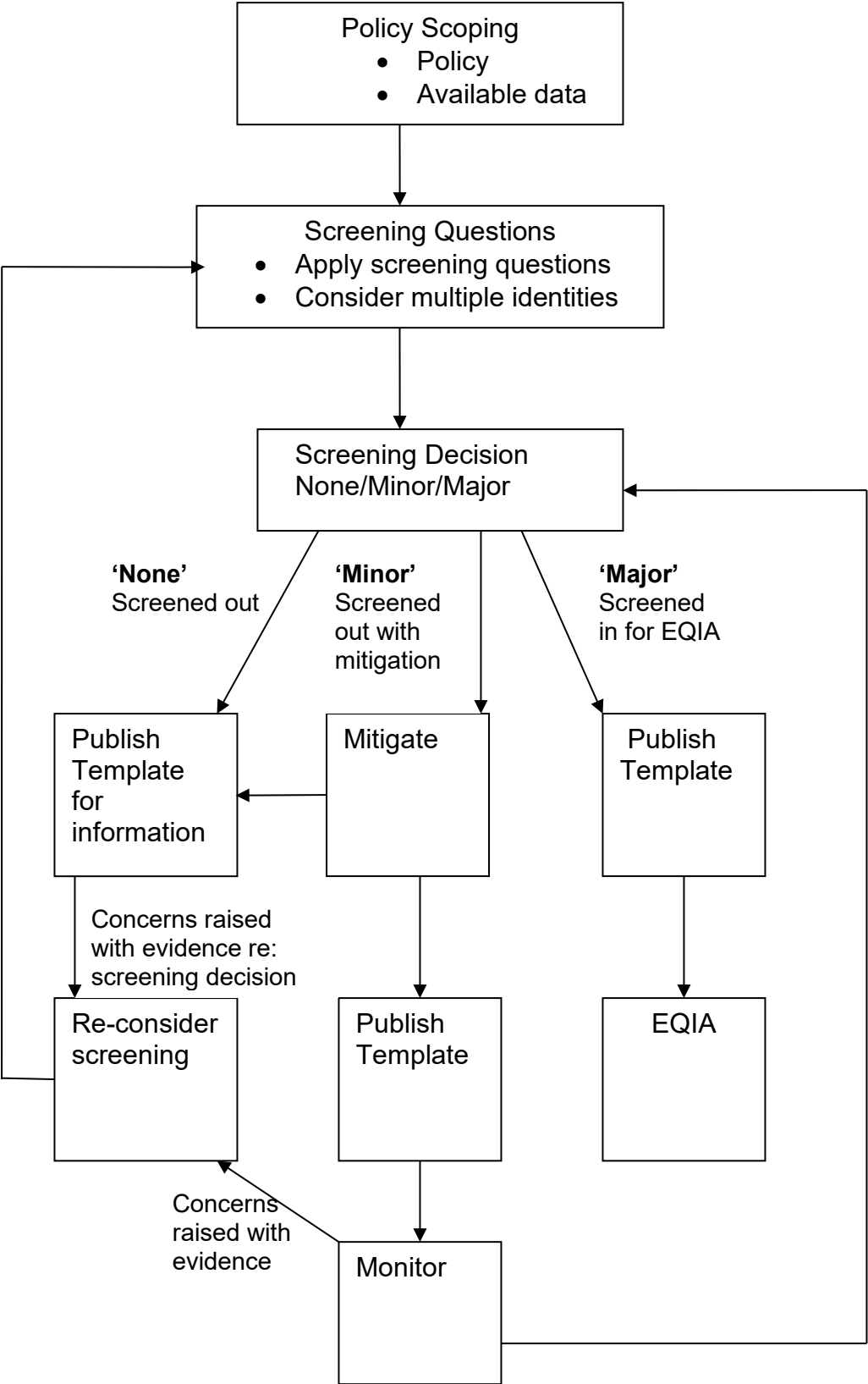
Part 2. Screening questions – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

Part 3. Screening decision – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Part 4. Monitoring – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

Part 5. Approval and authorisation – verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

Flowchart for the equality screening process and decision.



Part 1. Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Name of the Policy

Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

New - Developing an action plan to deliver 1 Gigawatt of offshore wind for Northern Ireland was one of the policies included in the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022 agreed by the Minister and published in January 2022.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

An ambition of the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2022 (Action 14)^[3] is to “***Develop an action plan to deliver 1GW of offshore wind from 2030***”. Since that ambition was set the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022^[4], which came into effect on 6 June 2022, has raised the commitment for renewable electricity consumption from 70% to 80% by 2030.

The research underpinning the Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland, backed up by the analysis of responses to the Energy Strategy policy options consultation, established that one of the criteria for raising the renewable electricity consumption target was the deployment of offshore wind in NI waters by 2030. The draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan (OREAP) and public consultation is being issued with proposed action points for consideration of to what extent the offshore wind ambitions of the Energy Strategy can feasibly be accelerated, both in terms of capacity and timeframe.

The OREAP aligns with the UK Government’s ambition of 100% clean electricity by 2035; the target established through the Climate Change (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 of 80% of electricity consumption to come from a range of renewable sources by 2030; and the Energy Strategy’s target of net zero carbon and affordable energy by 2050. The OREAP will support a whole system approach to the facilitation of a smart and flexible electricity system. This means ensuring that offshore wind farms are sited in the most sustainable and cost-effective locations, and that they are connected in the most efficient ways that are feasible to deliver self-sufficiency in affordable renewable energy for Northern Ireland.

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

^[3] <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/energy-strategy-path-to-net-zero-action-plan.pdf>

^[4] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2022/31/contents/enacted>

It is expected that the Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan will benefit all of the population in Northern Ireland including all Section 75 categories.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has published a report on the impact of global warming at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. They made it clear that by limiting warming to 1.5° we may be able to mitigate some of the effects on health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth.

Through a move to cleaner sources of electricity, carbon emissions will be reduced along with energy costs, helping to tackle fuel poverty as well as reducing associated health problems.

The Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan will accelerate Northern Ireland's journey towards net zero bringing on board large scale renewable generation to decarbonise local electricity production.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

To oversee the delivery of the OREAP, DfE established and led an OREAP Steering Group to identify the actions that will need to be undertaken to ensure that the ambition for offshore wind is successfully delivered, and if feasibly possible, accelerated. The Steering Group brings together our key delivery partners: The Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DAERA), The Department for Infrastructure (DfI), Utility Regulator of Northern Ireland (UR), The Crown Estate (TCE), Systems Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI), Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIEN), and RenewableNI, to identify the barriers to accelerating offshore wind deployment in Northern Ireland and seek solutions to overcoming them, through a joined-up and coordinated approach.

Four expert stakeholder working groups were established and have identified key actions which are required to deliver offshore wind deployment in Northern Ireland waters. The draft OREAP has been developed based on the input of these working groups and the research and evidence they have provided, setting the direction to achieve the 1GW of offshore wind from 2030 target.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

DfE is responsible for the development of the Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan. Implementation is shared across key delivery partners DAERA, DfI, UR, TCE, SONI, NIEN, and RenewableNI.

Implementation factors

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

Legislative – It is likely that legislation will be necessary to enable key elements of the OREAP such as establishing a decommissioning regime for Northern Ireland, establishing safety zones and extinguishing navigational rights around wind farms and bringing forward potential powers for the electricity networks offshore. A support mechanism for renewables investment is also a

key element to delivering the OREAP which will likely require legislation to be brought forward to deliver.

Main stakeholders affected

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

- Offshore renewable energy developers
- Electricity networks (SONI/NIEN)
- Energy supply chain sector
- Utility Regulator
- DAERA (marine regulator)
- The Crown Estate
- DfI
- Environmental NGOs
- All those that live close to, work in or otherwise use the marine environment

The Offshore Renewable Energy Forum (OREF) has also been established, which includes bodies that are representative of those that live close to, work in, or use the marine environment including: the fishing industry, local government, maritime safety, environmental protection, maritime and marine economic development, ports and harbours, and marine heritage. The OREF functions to ensure that the views of marine users in the widest sense are considered in offshore renewable energy development in NI.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

The UK Government recently published the Net Zero Strategy¹ and Energy White Paper.² Whilst energy policy is largely devolved in NI, some relevant areas remain reserved matters. There are also additional UK strategies and policies in specific areas, such as transport or offshore wind, which impact on Northern Ireland.

The Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan will need to be observant also in respect of products, services and schemes that will enable with a broad range of non-energy strategies, frameworks and policies. that will support and reflect the ambitions of the new Energy Strategy including:

- Programme for Government, TEO
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, SIB
- Energy Management Strategy, DfE/SIB

1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1026655/net-zero-strategy.pdf

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945899/2012_16_BEIS_EWP_Command_Paper_Accessible.pdf

- Vision for a 10X Economy, DfE
- Skills Strategy, DfE
- Circular Economy Strategic Framework, DfE
- Green Growth Strategy, DAERA
- Environment Strategy, DAERA
- Fuel Poverty Strategy, DfC

Available evidence

Throughout the development of the Path to Net Zero Energy Strategy and the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan – public consultation, DfE has worked closely with a broad cross-section of business, consumers, environmental NGOs, government and the energy industry.

The first stage of the strategy development was a Call for Evidence published in December 2019, which closed on 3rd April 2020. This process also involved thematic workshops, stakeholder engagement and collaboration across government. A report on the Call for Evidence along with all the individual responses was published on 30 June 2020.³ Throughout the policy process the Department worked collaboratively with over 70 organisations represented on five working groups, established specific industry consultation groups, issued a monthly e-bulletin to over 600 stakeholders and established a cross governmental stakeholder group to align cross cutting policies.

The second stage was the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation Paper⁴, launched on 31 March and closed on 02 July 2021. The Department carried out virtual, public stakeholder events as well as consumer focus groups and an online business survey.⁵ This commitment to collaboration is reflected in the high level of responses (283) to the policy options consultation resulting in stakeholders’ feedback and views on policy proposals being reflected in Northern Ireland’s new Energy Strategy.⁶

During 2022, DfE has undertaken extensive stakeholder engagement via the OREAP Steering Group, OREAP Working Groups and the Offshore Renewable Energy Forum, to garner the input of 56 expert stakeholders from 22 organisations towards the development of the draft OREAP.

Religious belief evidence / information:

The 2021 Census found that 43.5% of the population in Northern Ireland came from a Protestant background and 45.7% from a Catholic background. The Equality Commission’s Fair Employment Monitoring Report No. 31⁷ indicates that 50.2% of the (monitored) workforce are from a Protestant background and 49.8% from a Roman Catholic background.

³ [Energy Strategy - Call for Evidence | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Consultation on policy options for the new Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Energy Strategy business and consumer virtual insight and awareness consultation | Consumer Council](#)

⁶ [Energy Strategy for NI](#)

⁷ [Fair Employment Monitoring Report No.31 \(equalityni.org\)](#)

Political Opinion evidence / information:

In 2020, 35% of respondents to a NI Life & Times Survey⁸ considered themselves to be unionist, 19% nationalist and 42% neither.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the policy development for the Path to Net Zero Energy Strategy and offshore renewable energy was a key element of that. Although information on individuals was not collected based on political opinion, no responses identified political opinion as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

Racial Group evidence / information:

The 2021 Census reported that 96.55% of the total NI population was white.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy and, although information on individuals was not collected based on racial group, no responses identified racial grouping as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

Age evidence / information:

The Northern Ireland population continues to age. The 2021 Census⁹ shows:

- 0-14 years 19.20%
- 15-39 31.2%
- 40-64 32.40%
- 65+ 17.2%

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Path to Net Zero energy strategy and OREAP development, including representatives of older people.

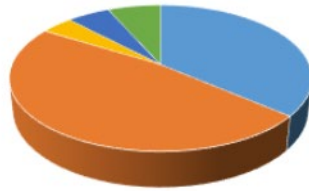
Marital Status evidence / information:

The 2011 Census contains information in relation to the marital and civil partnership status of the population within Northern Ireland:

⁸ [NI Life and Times Survey - 2020 : UNINATID \(ark.ac.uk\)](https://www.ark.ac.uk/ni-life-and-times-survey-2020/)

⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/census-2021-main-statistics-demography-tables-age-and-sex>

NI Marital and Civil Partnership Status 2011



- Single
- Married
- Registered same-sex civil partnership
- Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a same-sex civil partnership)
- Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved
- Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy but information on individuals was not collected based on marital status and no responses identified marital as a factor in differing impacts of the strategy or specific policies such as the OREAP policy.

Sexual Orientation evidence / information:

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy but information on individuals was not collected based on sexual orientation and no responses identified sexual orientation as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy or specific policies such as the OREAP policy.

Men & Women generally evidence / information:

NISRA population statistics for 2020 show that 50.7% are female with 49.3% male¹⁰. By 2031, projections are that the male/female balance will be 50/50 with that balance persisting to 2051.

The NISRA Labour Force Survey states that in 2020, of those aged 16-64 who were employed, 52% (432,000) were male¹¹ compared to 48% of women (392,000). There are differences between the public and private sector. The public sector has a large majority of females within its composition (65%) whereas just under half (45%) of the private sector workforce is female. NISRA states that the 2020 population of Northern Ireland is made up of 961,400 females and 934,200¹² males, however our future workforce balance is estimated to be slightly male dominated as the current population split for ages 0-15 is 192,844 female with 203,081 male, a difference of 2.6%.

¹⁰ [Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2020 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/annual-report-2020)

¹¹ [Labour Force Survey Annual Summary 2020 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/labour-force-survey-annual-summary-2020)

¹² [NI Population 2020.jpg \(2481x1749\) \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/population-2020)

DAERA leads on the Just Transition within the Green Growth Strategy. QUB has published an independent think piece on “Mapping a Just Transition”¹³ for Northern Ireland. This was grant funded by DfE.

Research carried out by DfE Skills Division into jobs advertised by the energy sector has identified that communications and customer service are the most sought after jobs although we do not know how many women or men are in these jobs.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Energy Strategy policy options consultation. Information on whether participants were women or men was not collected as part of this exercise.

Disability evidence / information:

The latest data from NISRA in 2018 report that 21.7% of the adult NI population are disabled.¹⁴

One of eight consumer focus groups conducted during the Path to Net Zero options consultation phase comprised people with disabilities. There were no discernible differences reported between the views expressed by people with disabilities or long-term illness and other focus group participants.

In addition, a large number of stakeholders participated in the other evidence gathering aspects of the policy options consultation document, covering a wide range of interests from many backgrounds. Information on individuals with or without disabilities was not collected as part of this exercise.

Dependants evidence / information:

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Path to Net Zero energy strategy options consultation phase, which included offshore renewable energy policy. No respondents were under the age of 18 years old therefore no information on whether participants were dependents was collected as part of this exercise.

Needs, experiences and priorities

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

Religious belief

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their religious belief.

¹³ <https://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/SECA/News/MappingaJustEnergyTransitioninNorthernIreland.html>

¹⁴ [August 2018 NI Wellbeing Report.pdf \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

Political Opinion

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their political opinion.

Racial Group

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their racial group.

Age

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their age.

Marital status

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their marital status.

Sexual orientation

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their sexual orientation.

Men and Women Generally

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of whether they are man or woman.

Disability

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of their disability status.

Dependants

No differential impact has been identified in respect of offshore renewable energy policy in the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The

department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience, or priorities. The OREAP and its policy interventions will apply to everyone regardless of whether they have dependents.

Part 2. Screening questions

Screening questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**:

The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**:
The OREAP is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? Yes/No

Religious Belief –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Political Opinion –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Racial Group –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Age –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Marital Status –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Sexual Orientation –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Men and Women generally –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Disability –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

Dependants –

No. The OREAP has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

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

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

The OREAP has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

The OREAP has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

The OREAP has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

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

Religious Belief –

The OREAP has no direct good relations impact.

Political Opinion –

The OREAP has no direct good relations impact.

Racial Group –

The OREAP has no direct good relations impact.

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).

No.

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan is screened out without mitigation or alternative policy adopted. The energy transition to net zero will impact all the population, irrespective of their religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or if they have dependants.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

No adverse impact on equality of opportunity has been identified for any of the Section 75 categories.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

Not applicable

Mitigation

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

Not applicable.

Part 4. Monitoring

Once the Draft OREAP is adopted (expected in 2024 after relevant environmental assessments are complete) DfE will undertake strategic level monitoring of the implementation of the OREAP on an ongoing basis and provide regular reporting to the OREAP Steering Group and a wider stakeholder Offshore Renewable Energy Forum on progress against the actions set out in the action plan. DfE will publish an annual report on progress against these planned actions and identify any new actions coming forward for the following year. Equality monitoring will be a part of this process. Reporting will be considered by the Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan Steering Group and Offshore Renewable Energy Forum and will be published on the DfE website.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by: Koichi Samuels
Position/Job Title: Deputy Principal
Business Area/ Branch: Renewable Electricity Team
Date: 30 November 2022

Approved by: Zoë Crowe
Position/Job Title: Principal
Business Area/Branch: Renewable Electricity Team

Date: 13/12/2022