Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS) Self-Check Tool

Policy: Future of Magherafelt Courthouse

Use this tool during the policy development process to ensure the Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS) has been properly considered. Complete this checklist at key milestones and retain it as part of your audit trail.

Date Completed	Question	Notes/Evidence
26/10/2026	Have you identified whether your policy could have an environmental impact?	The policy being developed relates to the future of Magherafelt Courthouse, based on a policy proposal to permanently close the courthouse building; resulting in a permanent reallocation to an alternative courthouse in the NICTS estate with better facilities for service users. The direct impact of the proposed policy is that NICTS would no longer be producing emissions from this venue. Despite being temporarily closed, Magherafelt was responsible for 0.53% of overall NICTS emissions in 2025-26, i.e. 10,622 kilograms of CO2. As no court business is being heard at Magherafelt Courthouse, the ongoing generation of carbon emissions relates solely to the maintenance of a vacant building. While this is a small proportion of overall emissions, it is not justified through associated business value. The indirect impact of the proposed policy is that there would be an increased travel requirement for court users due to the permanent closure of Magherafelt Courthouse. Case listing is a judicial matter, so the courthouse that Magherafelt court users would have to travel to (if a decision is taken to close it) is not decided by this policy. However, consequence of this proposed policy is that Magherafelt Courthouse would no longer be available for case listing, so court users would have to travel to an alternative courthouse in the NICTS estate (as directed by judicial case listing decisions). Since the temporary closure of Magherafelt Courthouse in 2020, the current operational arrangement is for the separate listing of business previously heard at Magherafelt Courthouse at Londonderry Courthouse. It is not possible to quantify the exact increase in travel and carbon emissions due to the variations in the location the journey starts from, the start time, the method of travel and an absence of information about the number of people attending court for each deposition. However, an estimation of increased travel to and from Londonderry Courthouse could be made based on 49 court sittings, each by 63 court users (judge, 5 legal representatives, 47 defendants/plaintiffs, 10

		witnesses/professional attendees) and each affected by the average travel increase of 53.44 km (33.21 miles) each way; resulting in additional carbon emissions of 326,010 kilograms. If business was to be listed to and from the next nearest courthouse from each Magherafelt ward, an estimation of increased travel to the respective courthouse could be made based on 49 court sittings, each by 63 court users (judge, 5 legal representatives, 47 defendants/plaintiffs, 10 witnesses/professional attendees) and each affected by the average travel increase of 30.53 km (18.97 miles) each way; resulting in additional carbon emissions of 299,162 kilograms. The travel impact is mitigated by a number of factors: • NICTS has developed a Sustainability Delivery Plan (SDP) to help the Northern Ireland Civil Service meet its obligations under the Climate Change Act and Climate Action Plan. • Not all participants in proceedings will physically attend court. Travel is reducing due to increasing uptake of remote attendance. • This is a generous estimation as not all journeys will generate this level of carbon emissions. Court users may undertake active travel, public transport or use more energy efficient cars. • Some Speeding Up Justice initiatives would decrease physical attendance in the court estate, for example by increasing the incidence of out of court disposals , such as the recent proposed expansion of out of court penalty notices. • 10,622 kilograms of carbon emissions will be offset by the closure of Magherafelt Courthouse. • Revenue released through this proposal could be invested in higher impact activities to improve sustainability and reduce carbon emissions across the wider estate. While acknowledging the indirect impact in terms of increased carbon emissions due to the additional travel, NICTS considers that the policy proposal is reasonable and justified by the legitimate aim of providing court users with higher quality court facilities. Through the NICTS Sustainability Delivery Plan NICTS will continue to contribute to Departmental sustainability actions to meet our obligations under the Climate Change Act and Climate Action Plan. Given the scale and significance of the environmental effects, the mitigations outlined above, the fact that case listing

		decisions are out of scope of this policy, and the fact that the environmental impact of transport related emissions is outside of the scope of this policy, NICTS considers that it is proportionate to screen this policy out of further EPPS considerations.
26/10/2026	Have you screened the policy against all five environmental principles?	Yes
26/10/2026	Which principles are most relevant and why?	Integration – Environmental impact of transport related emissions is not governed by this policy. Requirement for court attendance is not governed by this policy. Prevention – NICTS has determined that Magherafelt Courthouse is no longer suitable for the operational delivery of NICTS services. Increased travel to an alternative courthouse cannot be prevented, though there are a number of mitigations outlined above. Disposal will reduce NICTS emissions related to maintenance of a vacant building. Precautionary – There is reasonable certainty on emissions data and estimation calculations. Rectification at source – Environmental impact of transport related emissions is not governed by this policy. Requirement for court attendance is not governed by this policy. Polluter Pays – Environmental impact of transport related emissions is not governed by this policy.
26/10/2026	Have you recorded how each principle has been applied or not applied?	Yes, as above
26/10/2026	Have you balanced environmental impacts with other considerations?	Yes, as outlined in the Future of Magherafelt Courthouse Consultation Papers
26/10/2026	Have you used the EPPS Implementation	Yes, this assessment is at initial policy development stage

	Flowchart to guide timing?	
26/10/2026	Is there a clear audit trail of environmental considerations in your documentation?	Yes, as outlined in Future of Magherafelt Courthouse Consultation papers and this self-check tool
26/10/2026	Have you consulted with DAERA or your departmental EPPS lead if unsure?	N/A, Departmental EPPS leads not published in the intranet guidance
26/10/2026	Have you attached this checklist to your policy submission or RIA?	Yes, as outlined in Future of Magherafelt Courthouse Consultation papers