

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Chief Executive's Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**

26th November, 2014

## **MEETING OF SHADOW STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following items will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 10.00 am on **Friday, 28th November, 2014**.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

- 1d. Forum for Alternative Belfast - Request to Address the Committee  
(Pages 1 - 2)
- 5a. Draft Equality Scheme (Pages 3 - 74)

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## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Forum For Alternative Belfast
<b>Date:</b>	Friday 28 November 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive

### 1. Purpose

Members are advised that Mark Hackett and Declan Hill from Forum for Alternative Belfast (FAB) have written to the council requesting the opportunity to make a presentation to the Shadow SP&R Committee with an accompanying one page proposal (see attached).

### 2. Background – About FAB

Forum for Alternative Belfast is a not-for-profit organization (Community Interest Company) that campaigns for a better and a more equitable built environment in Belfast. The Forum was formally launched on 4 June 2009 by a group of architects, planners and others who came together to explore alternative ways to develop the city.

As a campaigning group, the Forum's work is underpinned by three key principles. In its view:

1. the creative potential of planning, urban design and architecture had not been explored for post-conflict Belfast;
2. the approach to design and regeneration has to be more socially expansive than traditional architecture, urban design and spatial planning practices;
3. the Forum itself should be an action-orientated research group; in other words, a 'do-tank' that should go beyond lobbying and 'think-tanking' to demonstrate alternative ways of developing the city.

### 3. Recommendations

Members are asked to receive the FAB to present to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in January 2015.

### 4. Documents Attached

Letter dated 21 October 2014 from FAB

Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

21st Oct 2014

Dear Councillor Stalford, Chair of Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

In late August we asked the Chief Executive to raise at committee level the engagement of the Forum with council. We request an opportunity to make a very short presentation to the committee with an accompanying one page submitted proposal.

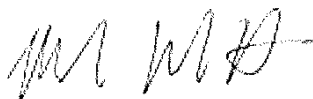
We list below some examples of our work positively incorporated into local authority thinking over the past four years. We also list five areas where we see the need for ongoing work by Forum to be continued until in-house skills are strengthened in the council under RPA.

In 2010 Esmée Fairbairn/ Henry Smith Charity approached and supported the forum and its work, this is reaching completion, to allow this work to continue we will submit a detailed project plan. We will highlight the time and cost saving value of our work, suggesting how it might be financed without additional burden on council budgets at this time.

We also ask if, over the next months we can explore and clarify with officers and committee, how the Forum, as a Community Interest Company, can play a role in the development of the community plan process leading to the preparation of the Local Development Plans by 2017.

The need for continued work by the Forum is clearly demonstrated in the recent meeting of BCC and DSD on the York Street Interchange, 2nd July 2014. BCC and DSD requested the Forum carry out a short report to submit to DRD.

yours faithfully



Mark Hackett, Declan Hill  
directors

**FORUM WORK ADOPTED BY COUNCIL / OTHERS**

1.0 **'The Six Links'** 2010: Adopted in Council Investment Programme 2012-2015,

2.0 **York Street Interchange** Dec. 2012; forum work acknowledged as influential in the preferred option. Input to the OGC procurement Gateway review and DRD have changed alignments in line with forum suggestions to enable more regeneration.

3.0 **'Streets not Roads'** 2012: The longstanding road threat through south Belfast was first negotiated as series of good streets, the approach was incorporated into the 'Draft City Masterplan'.

4.0 **'Coordinate and Connect'** 2012: established urgency for a local plan around the new University, actioned by BCC in May 2014

5.0 **Belfast City Council: Draft Masterplan 2013:** Forum work, 'Six Links' 2010 and 'Streets not Roads' 2012 was incorporated as the two spatial priorities. We proactively organised community engagement supported by 20 groups and partnerships.

6.0 **Belfast City Centre: Initial Directions: Urban Strategies Inc:** We provided the consultant with fully developed city schemes and detailed report. We walked Urban Strategies / Arups around the city illustrating disconnection issues. Four of the 'eight strategies' reflect Forum work, as are two of the four 'Places in the centre':

**SUGGESTED AREAS OF SHORT TERM WORK NEEDED**

1.0 **York Street Interchange:** Continued detailed discussions are needed with DRD over the next critical 6 months

2.0 **The Inner-city neighbourhoods:** Over the past eight months we have convened a group of city neighbourhoods who are sharing their common urban issues in the city. Continuation is needed to involve and built capacity of neighbourhoods in the Local Development plan process.

3.0 **Summerschool:** We want to continue this annual event and for 2015 suggest the theme. 'What is a good Local Development Plan?'

4.0 **Transport Hub:** we have had a series of meetings with Translink who want us to do an 'issues studio' with communities along with a report based on summer school process.

5.0 **Belfast City Centre plan:** We would like to work with Urban Strategies Inc to ensure a stronger neighbourhood engagement and review process.



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to</b>	Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Draft Shadow Council Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan</b>
<b>Date:</b>	28 November 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager (Ext 6020)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stella Gilmartin, Equality & Diversity Officer (Ext 6026)

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Following the public consultation period on the Council's revised draft Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan, SSP&R is asked to approve the revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan, and the proposed Council response to the consultation comments (attached Appendix 1).
1.2	Committee Members will recall that they considered reports outlining revised guidance from the Equality Commission on S75 duties and the implications for Local Government Reform and the establishment of the Shadow Council.
1.3	The revised guidance required Councils to prepare a revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan, drawn up in accordance with a model template issued by the Equality Commission, and consult with the public. In addition all public authorities are requested to undertake an Audit of Inequalities and develop an Equality Action Plan and Disability Action yearly plans. The Commission acknowledge that the situation for Belfast is different than other Councils.
1.4	The Commission has acknowledged that Equality Action Plans may be more usefully developed post scheme. In accordance with this, the draft Equality Scheme included a commitment to develop an Equality Action Plan within six months of 1 April 2015 i.e. from the date of the new Council taking on its full functions.

1.5	The Council's Disability Action Plan items are still current until 2015. The Equality Commission and Disability Action have been informed we will be resubmitting a new Disability Action Plan in 2015-2016.
1.6	Committee Members will recall that on 29 August 2014, the draft revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plans were approved for consultation. The main change was to reflect the Shadow Council.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<b>Consultation process</b>
	The Council's Equality Consultation List (known as the AA list) was updated in September 2012. All consultees received an electronic copy of the revised Equality Scheme, and the Disability Action Plan, a consultation response form and an opportunity to update their details on the Council's consultation list.
2.2	In addition, the documents were presented to consultees at a NI regional equality consultation event at Lagan Valley Island Civic Centre on 24 September 2014 held in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission.
2.3	The Council received 6 formal written responses, from the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), the Equality Coalition, Disability Action and NIACRO and the Equality Commission, in addition to comments from the Regional Event. All consultees' responses are recorded, considered and draft responses are included for your consideration. These are outlined at Appendix 1.
2.4	<b>Comments received</b>
	<u>Equality Commission</u>
	The Equality Commission requested a few minor changes to the Draft revised Equality Scheme and noted that the Council will be developing new items for inclusion in the Disability Action Plan over the next six months in collaboration with Disability Action.
	The Equality Commissions comments have been taken into account and all amendments included in the Final draft Equality Scheme; the proposed Council response to each comment is attached in Appendix 1.
	<u>Disability Action and NIACRO</u>
	The response from Disability Action was on the Disability Action Plan which will be addressed later and Disability Action have agreed to further discussions on this. The NIACRO response was generically sent to all Councils it relates to HR issues and does not require changes to the

scheme.

#### CAJ/ Equality Coalition

The CAJ response and the Equality Coalition are identical and generically submitted to all City, Borough and District Councils and to the Local Government Staff Commission. The response from CAJ/ Equality Coalition requested amendments to the definition of Good Relations and also decoupling 'good relations' from EQIAs and screening (i.e. that the current good relations impact questions are removed and hence decoupled from screening and equality impact assessment exercises).

They also recommend that any consideration of good relations in the context of policy appraisal is limited to following an EQIA, provision to explore whether there is an opportunity for complimentary 'good relations' measures to tackle prejudice and promote understanding

In addition to the above matters on 'good relations' CAJ also recommended that the new equality schemes also contain commitments to: publish Council screening templates online and take reasonable steps to inform consultees of same; and that audits of inequalities will be consulted on and also published.

#### Comments from Regional Event

Disability Action, RNIB, the British Deaf Association and the Equality Coalition raised issues concerning improved communication issues.

The Council has consulted the Equality Commission on these comments as it is a model scheme and currently includes a definition of Good Relations which the Council uses. The ECNI is suggesting that a new definition of Good Relations will be brought forward as the TBUC strategy is developed. They are recommending that we do not change the good relations definition until this process is complete.

ECNI also consider there to be an inter-dependence between the two Section 75 duties. As a consequence the committee is recommended to respond to the CAJ and the Equality Coalition to inform them of the forthcoming move via the Equality Commission and that the Council will await the outcome of this before changing its scheme.

### **2.7 Next Steps**

The closing date for the consultation was 21 November 2014. We are aware the Council Committee Cycle will not enable us to present a final Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan to the Commission by the due date of the 26 November 2014. The Equality and Diversity Officer has discussed this with the Equality Commission and they have agreed that we present the draft Equality Scheme with a holding letter indicating the date the final version will be submitted.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Minimal – to be met by the Good Relations Unit’s revenue budget
<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	There is no requirement to conduct an equality screening exercise in this instance.
<b>5</b>	<b>Call In</b>
5.1	This decision is subject to Call In.
<b>6</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
6.1	<p>SSP&amp;R is requested to note this report and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree responses to consultation comments outlined in Consultation Report (Appendix 1)</li> <li>• Approve revised Equality Scheme with amendments (Appendix 2)</li> <li>• Approve revised Disability Action Plan (Appendix 3)</li> <li>• approve submission of report to Shadow Council</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Stella Gilmartin, Equality and Diversity Officer, Good Relations Unit	
<b>8</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
8.1	<p>CAJ - Committee on the Administration of Justice</p> <p>NIACRO - Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation Report (Appendix 1)</li> <li>• Revised Equality Scheme (Appendix 2)</li> <li>• Revised Disability Action Plan (Appendix 3)</li> </ul>



**Belfast City Council**  
**Consultation Report on**  
**Draft Revised Equality Scheme and Draft Disability Action**  
**Plan**

DRAFT - 14.11.14

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Belfast City Council prepared a Draft Equality Scheme which set out how the Council will promote equality of opportunity and good relations in its day to day work. The Draft Disability Action Plan sets out how Belfast City Council intends to improve the quality of life for all people with disabilities, who live in, work in or visit our city.
- 1.2 Belfast City Council ran a consultation process to seek views on the content of the Draft Disability Action Plan and Draft Equality Scheme. The consultation period ran for a 12 week period, from August 2014 to 21st November 2014 and 5 responses were received.
- 1.3 The summary in Section 3 provides an overview of the issues raised during the consultation process together with detail on the Council's response to the recommendations including the proposals which are outside the scope of the Consultation process.

## 2. Consultation Process and Responses

- 2.1 To facilitate an inclusive consultation process, the following actions were taken:
  - i. All consultees received notification of the consultation process regarding the Equality Scheme and the Disability Action Plan.
  - ii. Documents were advertised and placed on the Council website.
  - iii. Officers attended a Regional Consultation event on 24 September 2014 at Lagan Valley to consult with regional umbrella groups

## 3. Record of Comments Received and Council Response

No.	Written responses received from	Page
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## Consultation on the Draft Equality Scheme and Draft Disability Action Plan

### A. CAJ The Committee on the Administration of Justice

#### 1) Define 'good relations' in the Equality Scheme (taking definition from S149 (5) Equality Act 2010)

Although the Legislation only provides that many key elements of an Equality Scheme relate to the S75 (1) 'equality of opportunity' limb of the duty only some elements also apply to the S75(2) 'good relations' duty. This includes the Equality Scheme showing how the public authority proposes to fulfil the duties in general. The CAJ research and other commentary have drawn attention to a lack of legal certainty and scope for vague and subjective implementation of the good relations duty given the absence of a clear definition of the concept. Considerable concern has also been highlighted about misuse of 'good relations' to thwart equality initiatives in this context. From 2007 the Equality Commission has recommended public authorities adopt a definition, and has not been prescriptive about what that should be. CAJ advocates that the Council includes in its Equality Scheme a definition of 'good relations' adapted from that already provided for in law in Great Britain and consistent with the formulation of Section 75(2), namely that: 'good relations' means, in particular having regard to the desirability of a) tackling prejudice and b) promoting understanding. We feel this definition would not only help prevent misinterpretation of the duty but would also assist in supporting a framework for existing Council good relations work. In being 'in particular' (i.e. not exclusively but primarily) about tackling prejudice and promoting understanding provides a focus for combating sectarianism and other forms of racism (tackling prejudice) as well as a framework for work on reconciliation and dialogue (promoting understanding). Should 'good relations' be clearly defined as above we would also suggest consideration of going beyond S75 (2) in relation to the categories it covers and also including matters such as a commitment to tackling homophobia as general element of the Equality Scheme.

2) Separate 'good relations' from EQIAs and screening (consistent with the existing legislation) It is important to note that neither the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement nor the legislation envisage or require 'good relations' considerations being part of equality impact assessments. Duties under schedule 9 to assess the impact of policies, monitor 'adverse impacts', consider mitigating measures against adverse impacts or alternative policies, apply to the S75 (1) equality of opportunity limb of the duty only. Although the Equality Commission since 2007, and in its current model scheme, suggests public authorities could also include good relations questions in screening and equality impact assessment methodology in a similar manner as equality considerations, our research has found that this approach has been fraught with difficulties. This is not least as applying defined equality concepts such as 'adverse impact' to a more subjective concept of 'good relations' has had perverse outcomes. We have identified instances whereby measures actually taken to further rights and equality have been classified as 'adverse impacts' on good relations grounds, due to objections to them. The situation has also led, in practice, to a blurring of the primacy the equality duty is to take over good relations considerations. We would therefore recommend that the current good relations impact questions are removed and hence decoupled from screening and equality impact assessment exercises. We would recommend that any consideration of good

relations in the context of policy appraisal is limited to following an EQIA, provision to explore whether there is an opportunity for complimentary 'good relations' measures to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. This, being limited to questions of screening and EQIAs, would not impact on the broader 'good relations' work of a Council, but would address the issues which have arisen in relation to impact assessment.

3) In addition to the above matters on 'good relations' CAJ would also recommend that the new equality schemes also contain commitments to: publish Council screening templates online and take reasonable steps to inform consultees of same; and that audits of inequalities will be consulted on and also published.

#### **Draft Recommended Response:**

The response from CAJ has been given to all the new Councils. A request for clarification on the issues contained was made to the Equality Commission. A copy of their response is included at the top of Page 6.

The ECNI model scheme includes a definition of good relations based on 2007 Good Relations guide:

'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

We have been advised by the ECNI that they are recommending a definition in legislation in the context of the NI Good Relations Strategy, "Together: Building a United Community (TBUC). The Council does not propose to change the definition at present and will await the legislative definition, if brought forward in TBUC.

Our arrangements for screening and EQIA are as per the ECNI model screening and EQIA guidance. Any alternative arrangements would be subject to review by the ECNI to determine if they meet the requirements of the statutory duties.

The ECNI have advised that in their view it may be cumbersome to decouple and introduce alternative Good Relations arrangements due to the interdependence of the two Section 75 duties.

The Council does not propose to change its arrangements for screening and EQIA at present.

The Council draft equality scheme gives a commitment to make screening templates available on the website (**para 4.13**) All consultees will be advised of the availability of these via email unless they have indicated they wish to receive notification by post.

Wording is as the ECNI model scheme which does not include consultation on the Audit of Inequalities. However, we will consult on our Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan.

## **ECNI Response:-**

A number of Councils raised with the Commission the response to the consultation that they had received from CAJ/Equality Coalition and asked the Commission position regarding this.

Commission Officers advised that the Commission's position remains the same i.e. in summary that:

1. Definition of GR – there is one in ECNI model scheme based on 2007 Good Relations's guide. The Commission (in context of TBUC) is recommending a definition in legislation. It is up to the Council to decide if it wishes to change definition in current context or await legislative definition, if brought forward in TBUC
2. Decoupling GR from screening questions – Commission's position remains the same as per model screening and EQIA guidance. Should an authority decide to present alternative arrangements the Commission will review this and determine if this is sufficiently equivalent to meet the duties. The interdependence of the duties should be remembered and may be cumbersome to decouple and introduce alternative Good Relations arrangements. However, this is completely up to the authority to determine.

## **B. Equality Coalition**

### **1: Define 'good relations' in the Equality Scheme (taking definition from s149(5) Equality Act 2010)**

Although the legislation only provides that many of the key elements of an Equality Scheme relate to the S75(1) 'equality of opportunity' limb of the duty only some elements also apply to the S75(2) 'good relations' duty. This includes the Equality Scheme showing how the public authority proposes to fulfil the duties in general. Through research carried out by CAJ and other commentary it is clear that there is a lack of legal certainty and scope for vague and subjective implementation of the good relations duty given the absence of a clear definition of the concept. Considerable concern has also been highlighted about misuse of 'good relations' to thwart equality initiatives in this context within the CAJ research. From 2007 the Equality Commission has recommended public authorities adopt a definition, and has not been proscriptive about what that should be.

The Equality Coalition advocates that the Council includes in its Equality Scheme a definition of 'good relations' adapted from that already provided for in law in Great Britain and consistent with the formulation of section 75(2), namely that:

'good relations' means, in particular, having regard to the desirability of a) tackling prejudice and b) promoting understanding

We feel this definition would not only help prevent misinterpretation of the duty but would also assist in supporting a framework for existing Council good relations work. In being 'in particular' (i.e. not exclusively but primarily) about tackling prejudice and promoting understanding provides a focus for combating sectarianism and other forms of racism (tackling prejudice) as well as a framework for work on reconciliation

and dialogue (promoting understanding). Should 'good relations' be clearly defined as above we, as a membership organisation representing all 9 categories, would also suggest consideration of going beyond S75(2) in relation to the categories it covers and including matters such as a commitment to tackling homophobia as a general element of the Equality Scheme.

## **2: Separate 'good relations' from EQIAs and screening (consistent with the existing legislation)**

It is important to note that neither the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement nor the legislation envisage or require 'good relations' considerations being part of equality impact assessments. Duties under schedule 9 to assess the impact of policies, monitor 'adverse impacts', consider mitigating measures against adverse impacts or alternative policies, apply to the S75(1) equality of opportunity limb of the duty only.

Although the Equality Commission since 2007, and in its current model scheme, suggests public authorities could also include good relations questions in screening and equality impact assessment methodology in a similar manner as equality considerations, our research has found that this approach has been fraught with difficulties. This is not least as applying defined equality concepts such as 'adverse impact' to a more subjective concept of 'good relations' has had perverse outcomes. We have identified instances whereby measures actually taken to further rights and equality have been classified as 'adverse impacts' on good relations grounds, due to objections to them. The situation has also led, in practice, to a blurring of the primacy the equality duty is to take over good relations considerations.

We would therefore recommend that the current good relations impact questions are removed and hence decoupled from screening and equality impact assessment exercises. We would also recommend questions are included on complimentary opportunities to promote good relations by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding and also the similar questions provided under the DDA (promoting positive attitudes to persons with disabilities and participation in public life) are included. These amendments can be seen in the attached model equality scheme.

We would recommend that any consideration of good relations in the context of policy appraisal is limited to, following an EQIA, provision to explore whether there is an opportunity for complimentary 'good relations' measures to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

This, being limited to questions of screening and EQIAs, would not impact on the broader 'good relations' work of a Council, but would address the issues which have arisen in relation to impact assessment.

In addition to the above matters on 'good relations' the Equality Coalition would also recommend that the new equality schemes also contain commitments to: publish Council screening templates online and take reasonable steps to inform consultees of same; and that audits of inequalities will be consulted on and also published.

**Response:**

The ECNI model scheme includes a definition of good relations based on 2007 Good Relations guide:

‘the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms’.

We have been advised by the ECNI that they are recommending a definition in legislation in the context of the NI Good Relations Strategy, “Together: Building a United Community (TBUC).

The Council does not propose to change the definition at present and will await the legislative definition, if brought forward in TBUC.

Our arrangements for screening and EQIA are as per the ECNI model screening and EQIA guidance. Any alternative arrangements would be subject to review by the ECNI to determine if they meet the requirements of the statutory duties. The ECNI have advised that in their view it may be cumbersome to decouple and introduce alternative Good Relations arrangements due to the interdependence of the two Section 75 duties.

The Council does not propose to change its arrangements for screening and EQIA at present.

The Council Draft Equality Scheme gives a commitment to make screening templates available on the website (**para 4.13**). All consultees will be advised of the availability of these via email unless they have indicated they wish to receive notification by post.

Wording is as the ECNI model scheme which does not include consultation on the Audit of Inequalities. However, we will consult on our Audit of Inequalities and Action Plan.

**ECNI Response:**

– a number of Councils raised with the Commission the response to the consultation that they had received from CAJ/Equality Coalition and asked the Commission position regarding this.

Commission Officers advised that the Commission’s position remains the same: i.e. in summary that:

1. Definition of GR – there is one in ECNI model scheme based on 2007 Good Relation’s guide. The Commission (in context of TBUC) is recommending a definition in legislation. It is up to the Council to decide if it wishes to change definition in current context or await legislative definition, if brought forward in TBUC.



2. Decoupling GR from screening questions – Commission’s position remains the same as per model screening and EQIA guidance. Should an authority decide to present alternative arrangements the Commission will review it and determine if it sufficient equivalent to meet the duties. The interdependence of the duties should be remembered and may be cumbersome to decouple and introduce alternative Good Relations arrangements. However, this is completely up to the authority to determine.

## C. Regional Event

Discussions were held with representatives from Disability Action, RNIB, the British Deaf Association and the Equality Coalition, all of whom were keen to work with the Council to improve both communication and consultation channels.

**Draft Recommended Responses:** The Council thanks the various organisations which took the time to attend the consultation event. The Equality and Diversity Office will be in contact with all these organisations to discuss opportunities to improve our services.

## D. Disability Action

### SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

1. In relation to the Disability Action Plan Disability Action would make the following comments:-
  - Actions should be numbered for ease of reference
  - Many of the actions are process functions rather than outcome based measures.
  - Approved list of alternative format providers should have been long established as DDA 1995 and Section 75 legislation were introduced in 1995 and 1998 respectively.
2. Belfast City Council is asked to outline measures to promote public life opportunities which are not confined simply to the public appointment process. The Council should highlight measures for which it has responsibility within its action plan, or at the very least, identify those public life opportunities that it may influence to increase the number of people with disabilities in public life.
3. Additionally, the definition of public life within the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland DDO Guide is much broader than public appointments therefore it is not appropriate to exonerate the responsibility in this area.
4. Disability Action has noted that 13 of the 22 actions are ongoing. Disability Action would advise that ongoing timescales are vague and make it difficult to determine what has been achieved to date and to identify new or next step actions. Have these actions been carried over from the last DAP? Disability Action would

recommend that ongoing timescales be replaced by specific actions, dates, clear performance indicators.

5. Disability Action has found it difficult to identify what is actually new or carried over from the last DAP? If so, have these actions been monitored and evaluated and what has been the success to date?

6. Disability Action finds no evidence of a specific action detailing how the Council intends to involve people with disabilities in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Action Plan as referred to at paragraph 7.1.

7. Regarding performance indicators/targets Disability Action believes it would be more beneficial if Action Plans establish outcome driven measures which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. (SMART) This will enable Action Plans to be attainable and measured rather than creating unachievable, aspirational goals which although commendable rarely achieve real change.

8. Whilst recognising the efforts to prepare this plan, Disability Action believes that it requires significant redrafting and to support this Disability Action encloses its generic response for public authorities regarding the two new duties.

9. Disability Action has welcomed the opportunity to respond to this important draft Plan and looks forward to seeing the comments above incorporated into the revised Plan.

**Draft Recommended Response:** The Equality and Diversity Officer met Disability Action and discussed the issues raised in the consultation response. Belfast City Council is in the unusual position of not merging with another council and therefore the already existing Disability Action Plan remains current. We did not submit new action measures for consultation but indicated that we would use the Audit of Inequalities as a method of gathering new items to include in our new action plan to be developed in 2015- 2016.

We are delighted to have had confirmation from Disability Action that they are organising a meeting on December 3rd to discuss and develop meaningful actions for future Disability Action Plans.

## E. NIACRO

### Equality Scheme.

#### 2.1 People with a Police Record and Section 75 Groupings

NIACRO welcomes the opportunity to comment on the new Council's draft Equality Scheme. Whilst NIACRO accepts the importance of ensuring appropriate representation of Section 75 groupings, it is also important to note that people do not fit neatly into any one of these groups.

People with a police record often face additional barriers (structural, attitudinal and legislative) when trying to access education, training and employment opportunities or accessing financial services. We believe there is clear potential for adverse impacts in the appointment of staff to Councils. Referring back to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, previous convictions may give rise to differential impacts in the following ways.

- People may experience discrimination on the grounds of previous involvement with a particular paramilitary group: **grounds of political opinion.**
- Most people who have been convicted of an offence are male; in 2012, of the people convicted in court in Northern Ireland, 84 % were male<sup>1</sup>: **grounds of gender.**
- 30% of those convictions related to people aged 25 and under<sup>2</sup>: **grounds of age.**
- Families, spouses and dependants of people with a criminal conviction are likely to experience adverse impact in relation to equality of opportunity: **grounds of people with dependants.**

**We recommend that the Council considers the additional barriers faced by people with a police record before submitting its final Equality Scheme.**

**Response:** The Council recognises that people do not fit neatly into one S75 grouping and consider impacts on Multiple Identity Groups as part of the Screening process.

#### 1.2 People with Conflict Related Convictions

It is estimated that approximately 40,000 people are convicted through the courts in Northern Ireland each year. This represents a significant proportion of the population who should not be denied access to the labour market and other opportunities to engage in employment and public life. It is further estimated that some 30,000 people have received lengthy sentences as a result of conflict related convictions, and the Employers' Guidance issued by OFMDFM on Recruiting People With Conflict Related Convictions clearly states that "a conviction arising from the conflict should not bar an applicant from obtaining employment, facilities, and goods or services unless that conviction is manifestly incompatible with the job, facility or service in question", and furthermore that "a conflict related criminal record should

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not play a part (in a recruitment process) until the individual has successfully gone through a selection process”.

NIACRO would therefore recommend that Councils give due consideration to this guidance when making decisions about suitability of those with conflict related convictions.

**Response:** Belfast City Council has developed recruitment procedures based on legislative requirements and taking advice and guidance from NIACRO. We will build upon the existing good practice in this regard.

### 2.3 Disclosure and Checks

NIACRO recommends that, for the purposes of confidentiality, applicants should be able to disclose conviction related information confidentially; similar to the process used for equal opportunities monitoring.

The Council should explain in any guidance it issues if the post will be subject to disclosure under either:

- the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978, which requires only unspent conviction to be disclosed; or
- the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order NI 1979, as amended which provides for the disclosure of spent and unspent convictions, and non-conviction information - not subject to filtering.

Once this determination has been made, it is recommended that the ‘conviction’ question is worded clearly to ensure applicants are aware of their disclosure responsibilities. There should also be clear guidance given to applicants that a criminal record check, or an AccessNI disclosure check, is a requirement before appointment. It is therefore important that the Council states clearly what type of check the applicant will be subject to and amount of conviction information an applicant would be required to disclose for that level of check.

A fact sheet on the relevant Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation, and criminal record or disclosure check, should be issued to applicants at this stage, along with the details of associated policies and procedures, including appeals mechanism, which exists in the event of a refusal on the grounds of previous convictions. We have attached further information on filtering and would be happy to discuss this further.

**Response: Belfast City Council** has developed recruitment procedures based on legislative requirements and taking advice and guidance from NIACRO. We will build upon the existing good practice in this regard.

### 2.4 NIACRO Disclosure Support

In its commitment to enhancing education, training and employment opportunities for people with a police or criminal record, NIACRO offers support to organisations to address structural, legislative and attitudinal barriers faced by this group.

NIACRO's equity work focuses on targeting recruitment and selection processes and has sought to change the systems so as to take account of the needs of organisations and prospective applicants with a criminal record. We operate a free, confidential, advice service to organisations and applicants on the area of disclosure and legislative requirements.

A half day training workshop is delivered each month, which is a guide to good practice relating to the fair recruitment of people with police or criminal record. The objective of the training is to give employers and organisations an opportunity to consider the benefits of having fair recruitment practices in relation to people who have police or criminal record. It covers:

- background information;
- the rehabilitation of offenders and other associated legislation;
- Access NI - procedures and requirements;
- facilitating disclosure of conviction;
- risk assessment; and
- handling and retaining conviction information.

Training is supported by NIACRO's publication "Working with Conviction - A Guide for Employers", which is a guide for employers on best practice. We would the opportunity to provide advice and training to the new Council and its members of staff.

## 2. Conclusion

We welcome the opportunity to share our comments on the Council's draft Equality Scheme, and would welcome further opportunity to discuss these matters in more detail. We look forward to the outcome of this consultation process.

**Response:** Belfast City Council will build upon the existing good practice and commits to ongoing dialogue with NIACRO.

## F. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

### Chapter 1

References to 'shadow' will need to be removed and the 'who we are and what we do' paragraphs updated once the new Council is fully operational and its full range of powers, functions and responsibilities confirmed.

#### Paragraph 4.31

The Commission recommends that the Council includes specific timescales for when 'other' information on monitoring is reviewed.

#### Paragraph 6.6

The Commission recommends that the Council includes a specific timescale for monitoring across all functions rather than just 'on an ongoing basis'. This should be at least annually.

#### Appendix 4 - Timetable for measures proposed

The Commission recommends that the Council includes a measure relating to the publication of monitoring information in its timetable for measures as per paragraphs 4.33 and 4.34 of your equality scheme.

## **DAP**

We understand the Council has a current disability action plan which runs from 2013-2015 and that it is currently liaising with Disability Action to develop meaningful measures for inclusion in a new plan which it will develop in 2015. The Commission will be engaging in this process and providing feedback on a new draft Disability Action Plan when the consultation takes place next year.

### **Draft Recommended Response:**

1. References to 'shadow' will be removed and the 'who we are and what we do' paragraphs updated once the new Council is fully operational and its full range of powers, functions and responsibilities confirmed.
2. The Council has included specific timescales for when 'other' information on monitoring is reviewed in Para 4.31.
3. Paragraph 6.6 The Council included a specific timescale for monitoring across all functions.
4. Appendix 4: The Council included a measure relating to the publication of monitoring information in its timetable for measures as per paragraphs 4.31 and 4.33, of our equality scheme.

### **Disability Action Plan (DAP)**

The Council looks forward to engaging with the Commission on the new DAP action measures next year.

## **Draft Equality Scheme for Belfast District Council (Shadow)**



Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and  
Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

For further information please contact:

Equality & Diversity Officer  
Belfast District Council (Shadow)  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

Telephone: 028 90270511  
Freephone: 0800 0855 412  
Text phone: 028 90270405

This document is available in a range of formats on request.  
Please contact us with your requirements

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## Foreword

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act<sup>1</sup>.

In our equality scheme we set out how Belfast District Council (Shadow) proposes to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and elected Members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of the Council and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

.....  
Lord Mayor

.....  
Chief Executive

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<sup>1</sup> See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Belfast District Council (Shadow) to comply with two statutory duties:

#### Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

#### Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority<sup>2</sup>. This includes our employment and procurement functions.

### How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Belfast District Council (Shadow)

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Belfast District Council (Shadow) as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

1.3 We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

## **Who we are and what we do**

**\*\*In accordance with ECNI guidance this section will be updated In April 2015.**

1.4 The role of the shadow council is set out in the Local Government Act and the Transitional Regulations (Transitional, Supplementary and Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (NI) 2014. These regulations indicate that a new council shall use the shadow period to make the necessary preparations for the adoption of their full range of powers and responsibilities.

1.5 During the shadow period, the new council will:

- set the rate for 2015 - 2016
- agree the budget for new council
- develop governance structures and supporting organisational structures for the new council post April 2015
- define and agree the Constitution for the new council
- develop a Corporate and Business Plan for the new council
- consider operational issues relating to service convergence and transferring functions
- prepare to be the planning and regeneration authority for Belfast
- prepare for community planning

Agree an interim governance model to deliver the tasks outlined above

1.6 The current organisational structure of the Council, summarising the functions of Departments, is shown on Appendix 1.

## **Chapter 2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))**

2.1 Some of our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties are outlined in other relevant parts of this equality scheme. For example, consultation in Chapter 3, assessing and monitoring of impact of policies arrangements in Chapter 4, staff training in Chapter 5, access to information in Chapter 6, the complaints procedure in Chapter 8, publication of the revised Equality Scheme in Chapter 9 and review of the Equality Scheme in Chapter 10.

In addition we have the following arrangements in place for ensuring compliance with and reporting on the effective implementation of our Section 75 statutory duties.

### **Responsibilities and reporting**

2.2 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.3 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

Directors are responsible for the implementation of the Equality Scheme within their individual Departments, including the screening of policies. The Directors are supported by identified departmental policy officers with responsibility for equality compliance and liaising with the Equality and Diversity Officer through the Policy Officers' Group, which in turn, reports to Council's Corporate Management Team.

2.4 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance our Equality & Diversity Officer at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

Equality & Diversity Officer	
Belfast District Council	Tel: 028 9027 0511
(Shadow)	
City Hall	Freephone: 0800 0855 412
Belfast	Textphone: 028 9027 0405
BT1 5GS	

2.5 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans<sup>3</sup>.

2.6 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

2.7 The Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties. The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission. The Council also commits to reporting on the progress made in delivering on the Section 75 statutory duties and the action plan in its Corporate Plan Review and Update.

2.8 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.asp>

or by contacting the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.4 above.

2.9 The Council liaises closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that progress on the implementation of our equality scheme is maintained.

2.10 The Equality & Diversity Officer has made a series of presentations to Departmental Management teams, the Policy Officers' Group and other relevant staff. We are reviewing our Equal Opportunities and Equality & Good Relations training to reflect the revised Equality Scheme and its commitments.

The Council is committed to the promotion of the revised Equality Scheme and will redesign its website to ensure that equality information is displayed more prominently. The Council's Equality Reference Guide and Equality Toolkit will be revised alongside the revised Equality Scheme.

### **Action plan/action measures**

2.11 An action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations will be developed within 6 months of 1 April 2015 i.e. from the date of the new Council taking on full functions

2.12 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75 categories<sup>4</sup> to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies<sup>5</sup>.

2.13 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.14 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

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<sup>4</sup> See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

<sup>5</sup> See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

2.15 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.16 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.17 The Council will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.18 Additional arrangements for assessing compliance with the section 75 duties:

Council has introduced a set template (see Appendix 6) for all Committee reports. This template has a specific section titled “equality and good relations implications” and ensures that Departments must detail any equality and good relations implications of the matter under discussion. This demonstrates Council’s commitment to mainstreaming equality and good relations across all of its work and is a key element in our compliance and monitoring process.

2.19 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on request from the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.5 above.

The action plan will also be available on the Belfast District Council website:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.asp>

If you require it in an alternative format please contact the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.4 above.

### **Chapter 3 Our arrangements for consulting**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance "Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)".

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.



3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Specific consideration will be given as to how best to communicate with children and young people, people with disabilities (in particular people with learning disabilities) and minority ethnic communities. We take account of existing and developing good practice, including the Equality Commission's guidance *Let's Talk Let's Listen – Guidance for public authorities on consulting and involving children and young people (2008)*.

In addition we will utilise the following existing Belfast District Council (Shadow) fora: Equality Consultative Forum, comprising representation from Section 75 organisations; our Youth Forum; our Seniors' Forum; and our Migrant Forum.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats<sup>6</sup>, in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees. We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and elected Members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme. This will be delivered through the Consultative Forum mechanism.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees<sup>7</sup> on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our Equality Scheme by undertaking the following:

- Email notification to all consultees within one month of our Equality Scheme and Action Plan being approved by the Equality Commission
- Quarterly Equality internal meetings to discuss targets and progress on the Equality Scheme and actions related to Council functions and business
- As appropriate, arranging pre-consultation meetings with key Section 75 groups and representatives to discuss specific policy issues
- Publish on the internet, and as appropriate, circulate equality progress updates, commitments in key action plans and minutes

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view.

However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or Britain and north of Ireland wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

<sup>7</sup> Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments<sup>8</sup>.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required. Officers organising consultation should refer to Council's Equality Reference Guide (available on Council's website).

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.asp>

or by contacting the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.4 above.

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the Equality & Diversity Officer to provide your contact

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<sup>8</sup> Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring

details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

## **Chapter 4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c);  
Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9.(2))

### **Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity (Schedule 9 4. (2) (b))**

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland. In respect of this equality scheme, the term policy is used for any proposed, amended or existing strategy, policy initiative or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten and irrespective of the label given to it, e.g. draft, pilot, high level or sectoral.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Council uses the tools of screening and equality impact assessment to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance.

#### **Screening**

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development /review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)

- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/ Director within the Council.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/Director within the Council.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Head of Service/Director within the Council.

4.13 As soon as possible following the completion of the screening process, the screening template, signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy, will be made available on our website

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.as>

and on request from the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.4 above.

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published quarterly [see below at 4.20 - 4.23].

### **Equality impact assessment**

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).

### **Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1))

4.19 We make available publicly the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

### **What we publish**

#### 4.20 Screening reports

These are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the Council over the three month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact

- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e:
  - whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment.
  - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
  - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
    - where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
    - a link to the completed screening template(s) on our website

#### 4.21 Screening templates

Please refer to 4.13 above for details on the availability of our screening templates.

#### 4.22 Equality impact assessments

EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

#### **How we publish the information**

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

#### **Where we publish the information**

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.asp>

and by contacting the Equality & Diversity Officer at the address at 2.4 above.

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on a quarterly basis.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as the Council's *City Matters* magazine.

**Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will reviewed annually and will be made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

**Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:



4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]. We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will be reviewed annually and made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

4.34 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see below at 6.3 for details.

## **Chapter 5 Staff training**

(Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))

### **Commitment to staff training**

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and an awareness raising programme for all elected Members of Council. We will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

### **Training objectives**

5.3 The Council has drawn up a detailed training plan for its staff and elected members which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff and elected Members fully understand their role in implementing the scheme
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Council's equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

### **Awareness raising and training arrangements**

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and elected Members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.

- Council staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within 4 working weeks of the approval of this scheme. This will be achieved through inclusion in the monthly staff briefing report.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.
- Policy staff will receive a full briefing on the scheme through the Policy Officers' Group.
- Council's own publications, *City Matters* (external) and *Intercomm* (internal), will include articles on the revised equality scheme and its contents.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.
- Equal Opportunities and Good Relations training is mandatory for all staff and refresher training is provided every three years.

## **Chapter 6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide** (Schedule 9 4. (2) (f))

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of minority ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

### **Access to information**

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days.

Information can be made available for children and young people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities through the various Council hosted Fora listed at 3.2.3. The Council also liaises with a variety of representative organisations outside these fora to produce information in alternative formats and languages as required. The Council will continue to take into account existing and developing good practice in relation to making information accessible.

6.4 The Council is committed to making information available online through our website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk). Our own magazine, *City Matters*, published several times a year, is distributed to over 130,000 addresses in Belfast.

### **Access to services**

6.5 The Council is committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

- All Council staff have received Disability Awareness training.

- The Council's website has been designed with accessibility in mind and follows the accessibility guidelines issued by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Our website is maintained at Level AA of the W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines and is speech enabled.
- The Council's own magazine, *City Matters*, published several times a year, is distributed to over 130,000 addresses in Belfast. We have adopted the BS 8300 standard in relation to compliance with DDA 1995 in this regard and *City Matters* is made available in alternative formats on request.
- Council has extended its contract with *DisabledGo*, a web-based accessibility information service which currently provides detailed accessibility information for over 750 venues in Belfast.

### **Assessing public access to information and services**

6.6 We monitor our functions annually, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

These include:

- monitoring of complaints
- the annual up-dating of statistical information, such as the Baseline Profile of Belfast, which is used in the development of Council's corporate planning process
- the conducting of a major public consultation exercise every 2-3 years to find out the views of the residents of Belfast have about living in the city and about Council services
- monitoring the uptake of our services as part of our normal procedure
- a comprehensive monitoring system for employees of the Council across all section 75 categories
- making reasonable adjustments for staff with specific needs
- annual monitoring of the website regarding plain English.

## **Chapter 7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme (Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))**

7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.

7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.19.

## **Chapter 8 Our complaints procedure**

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 The Council is responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact:

Equality & Diversity Officer  
Belfast District Council  
(Shadow)  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

Tel: 028 9027 0511

Freephone: 0800 0855 412

Textphone: 028 9027 0405

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 10 working days.

8.5 The Equality & Diversity Officer will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within 30 working days of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to 2 months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

## **Chapter 9 Publication of our equality scheme** (Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from the Equality & Diversity Officer, who can be contacted at the address at 2.4 or 8.3 above.

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.asp>

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link to our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 10 working days.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats ( CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.
- We will also use the following existing Belfast District Council (Shadow) fora: Equality Consultative Forum, comprising representation from Section 75 organisations; our Youth Forum; our Seniors' Forum; and our Migrant Forum to ensure that we communicate our equality scheme effectively to children and young people, older people, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/equality/documents.asp>

or contact the Equality & Diversity Officer, who can be contacted at the address at 2.4 or 8.3 above.



## **Chapter 10 Review of our equality scheme** (Schedule 9 8. (3))

10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. A report of this review will be made public on the Council's website and sent to the Equality Commission.

Organisational chart



**Groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for NI purposes**

This list is for illustration purposes only and is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	<p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the Fair Employment &amp; Treatment (NI) Order<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any perceived religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “similar philosophical belief”.</p>
Political opinion <sup>10</sup>	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

<sup>9</sup> See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act...*”*political opinion*” and “*religious belief*” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.”

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

## Appendix 3

### List of consultees (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

This consultation list is an indicative one and is not exhaustive; it is updated on an annual basis to ensure that it remains relevant to Council's functions and policies.

Age Concern Help the Aged N.I.	Contact Youth Counselling Services
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland	Co-Operation Ireland
Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union	Council for the Homeless NI
Ardoyne Community Centre Committee	Counteract
Ardoyne Association	Culturlann
AT&GWU	DARD
AWARE	Dee Street Community Centre Committee
Baha'i Faith	Democratic Unionist Party
Ballynafeigh Community Development Assoc	Disability Action Northern Ireland
Baptist Union of Ireland	Divis Community Centre Committee
Barnardo's Northern Ireland	Duncairn Community Centre Committee
Barnardo's Tuar Ceatha Services	East Belfast Partnership
Belfast Education & library Board	East Belfast Filipino Community
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	Employers' Forum on Disability
Belfast Hebrew Congregation	Equality Coalition
Belfast Islamic Centre	Equality Commission Northern Ireland
Belfast Trades Council	Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland
Belfast Travellers Education & Devt Group	Falls Community Council
Belfast Travellers Support Group	Falls Forum
Blind Centre for Northern Ireland	Féile An Phobail
British Deaf Association	Finaghy Community Centre Committee
Cara Friend	Forbairt Feirste
Carers National Association	Free Presbyterian Church
Carer's Newington Day Centre	Gay Ethnic Group
Carew 11 Family & Training Centre	Gaeloiliuinh
Central Services Agency	Gay & Lesbian Youth in NI
Child Care Northern Ireland	Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Children's Law Centre	Glen Community Centre Committee
Chinese Chamber of Commerce	GMB
Chinese Christian Fellowship	Greater East Belfast Partnership
Chinese Welfare Association Northern Ireland	Greater East Belfast Partnership
Church of Ireland	Greater Shankill Community Council
Circles Network	Greater Shankill Partnership Board
Citizens Advice Bureau - City Centre	Greater West Belfast Community Association
Citizens Advice Bureau - East Belfast	Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
Citizens Advice Bureau - North Belfast	Highfield Community Centre Committee
Citizens Advice Bureau - Shankill	Horn Drive Community Centre Committee
Citizens Advice Bureau - Springfield	Housing Rights Service
Citizens Advice Bureau - West Belfast	Indian Community Centre
Clara Park Tenants & Residents Association	Inner East Youth Project
Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo)	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Committee on the Administration of Justice	Irish Republican Socialist Party
Communication Workers Union	Italian Society
Community Relations Council	Knocknagoney Community Centre Committee
Concorde Community Centre Committee	Latinoamerica Unida

Lee Hestia Housing Association  
 Lenadoon Community Forum  
 Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative  
 Lesbian Line  
 Ligoniel Community Centre Committee  
 Local Government Staff Commission  
 Lower North Belfast Community Council  
 Market Community Centre Committee  
 Mencap Northern Ireland  
 Methodist Church in Ireland  
 Morton Community Centre Committee  
 Multi Cultural Resource Centre  
 Multicultural Group-Windsor Women's Centre  
 NASUWT  
 NATFHE  
 National League of The Blind & Disabled  
 National Children's Bureau Northern Ireland  
 Mindwise  
 Newtownards Road Women's Group Ltd  
 NI Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux  
 NIACRO  
 NIPSA  
 NIPSA  
 North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum  
 North Belfast Partnership Board  
 North Queen Community Centre Committee  
 Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre  
 Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health  
 Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities  
 Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action  
 Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association  
 Northern Ireland Filipino Association  
 Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association  
 Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission  
 Northern Ireland Pensioners Convention  
 Northern Ireland Unionist Party  
 Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT)  
 Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation  
 Northern Ireland Women's Coalition  
 Northern Ireland Women's European Platform  
 Oi Kwan Chinese Women Group  
 Oi Yin Chinese Women  
 Olympia Community Centre Committee  
 Orchardville Society  
 PHAB Northern Ireland  
 Playboard  
 Play Resource Centre  
 Pobal  
 PRAXIS  
 Press for Change  
 Probation Board for Northern Ireland  
 Progressive Unionist Party  
 Putting Children First  
 Queerspace  
 RNIB  
 Royal National Institute for Deaf People  
 Samaritans Belfast  
 Sandy Row Community Centre Committee  
 Save the Children Fund  
 Shankill Women's Centre  
 Shopmobility  
 Short Strand Community Forum  
 Sikh Community Association  
 Simon Community Northern Ireland  
 Sinn Fein  
 SIPTU  
 Skill NI  
 Social Democratic and Labour Party  
 South Belfast Partnership Board  
 South West Belfast Community Forum  
 Spirit of Enniskillen Trust  
 St.James Residents Assoc.  
 Suffolk Community Centre Committee  
 Teach Na Failte  
 Ulster-Scots Community Network  
 Ulster Scots Language Society  
 Ulster Unionist Party HQ  
 UNISON  
 United Kingdom Unionist Party  
 Upper Andersonstown Community Forum  
 Upper Springfield Development Trust  
 USEL  
 Vice Chairperson  
 Victim Support N.I.  
 Victim Support Belfast South & East  
 WAVE  
 West Belfast Economic Forum  
 West Belfast Partnership Board  
 Whiterock Community Centre Committee  
 Windsor Women's Centre  
 Women's Aid Federation N.I.  
 Women Into Politics  
 Women's Forum Northern Ireland  
 Women's Group (Belfast Islamic Centre)  
 Women's Information Group  
 Women's Resource & Development Agency  
 Women's Support Network  
 Woodvale Community Centre Committee  
 Workers' Party

Youth Action  
Youth Council Northern Ireland  
Youth Counselling & Information Service  
Youth Exchange Centre  
Youth for Christ Northern Ireland

Youth for Truth  
Youth Initiatives  
Youth Link Northern Ireland  
Youthnet

## Appendix 4

### Timetable for measures proposed (Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))

Measure	Lead responsibility	Timetable
Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]	Equality & Diversity Officer / Chief Executive	31 August (annually)
<b>Action Plan</b>		
Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]	Equality & Diversity Officer	June – August 2015
Finalised action plan published [2.19]	Equality & Diversity Officer / Chief Executive	September 2015
Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]	Equality & Diversity Officer	September 2015
Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]	Equality & Diversity Officer	July (annually)
Screening Reports [4.15]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Quarterly
<b>Monitoring</b>		
Review of monitoring information [4.31] 4.33] 6.6]	Departmental Managers/ Equality & Diversity Officer	Annually
<b>Training</b>		
Development of summary information on scheme [5.4]	Equality & Diversity Officer	2months of Approval of Scheme Within 6mths of new Council Annually
Development of overall training programme [5.5]	Equality & Diversity Officer	
Evaluation of training [5.6]	Equality & Diversity Officer	
	Equality & Diversity Officer	
<b>Communication</b>		
Assessing access to information and services [6.6]	Corporate Communications	Annually

Communication of equality scheme [9.3]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Within one month of Scheme
Notification of consultees [9.3]	Equality & Diversity Officer	Within one month of Scheme
<b>Review</b>		
Review of equality scheme [10.1]	Equality & Diversity Officer	In line with ECNI guidelines – within Five years
Any other measures proposed	Equality & Diversity Officer	Ongoing

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will reviewed annually and will be made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.

#### **Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring**

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]. We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. All other information on monitoring will be made available through our Equality Consultative Forum and published on our website.



### **Action plan**

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

### **Adverse impact**

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

### **Audit of inequalities**

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

### **Consultation**

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

### **Equality impact assessment**

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Equality of opportunity**

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation. The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

### **Equality scheme**

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

### **Good relations**

Although not defined in the legislation, the Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

### **Mainstreaming equality**

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the everyday work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

### **Mitigation of adverse impact**

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems. Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

### **Northern Ireland Act**

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

### **Policy**

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

### **Qualitative data**

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

### **Quantitative data**

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive

statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

### **Screening**

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

### **Schedule 9**

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme.

### **Section 75**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

**Appendix 6  
Copy of Belfast District Council (Shadow) Committee template**

**Belfast District Council (Shadow)**

<b>Report to:</b>	The name of the Committee or Working Group.
<b>Subject:</b>	Explanation of the subject of the Report
<b>Date:</b>	Date of the meeting of the Committee/Working Group
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	The name of the Officer presenting the report to Committee
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	The name of the Officer who has been most closely involved with the issue under consideration and from whom a Member can obtain additional information, if different from that of the Reporting Officer.

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	This should be condensed to a few brief paragraphs and be used to give <u>essential</u> information only to allow the Members to take informed decisions.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	This should be a summary of the <u>key</u> issues that the Committee is required to consider when coming to a decision. It should not be more than a few paragraphs in length and should report in concise yet understandable terms upon the key issues which the Committee needs to take account of when reaching a decision.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	The Members have stressed that one of their key requirements in the new governance arrangements is to take control of the Council resources at a strategic level. In order for this to be done, it is considered that this section of the new report needs to be much more concise and robust.
3.2	<u>Financial</u> The report needs to point out whether a revenue budget is available for the proposed expenditure or if the proposals have been included within the Capital Programme agreed by the relevant Committee and detail, so far as possible, the precise and exact costs involved. No report should be taken to Committee unless there is finance available for the proposed action or unless the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee has agreed to make such finance available.
3.3	<u>Human Resources</u> The report should also highlight staff resource implications both in terms of the direct implications for the Department/Section concerned and for the Council overall.

3.4	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>The report should highlight implications for Council assets and any other major implications which the decision required would have for the overall strategic planning of the Council.</p>
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<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	The Council has a duty, under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. New guidance has been issued in April 2010 which requires the Council to ensure that an “equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policy-making”.
4.2	If the subject matter of the report is in any way involved with the development of a new or the review of an existing policy then it should be screened under the Council’s equality scheme and the outcome of the screening should be noted in this section of the summary report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	A short, concise bullet-point-format listing the decisions which the Committee is being asked to take.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
This should simply be the name and designation of the Officer who will be responsible for making sure that the Committee’s decision is acted upon and the date by which the action will be implemented.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
There is often the tendency for officers to use abbreviations within reports on the assumption that Members will know what they represent and mean. This is not usually the case and, accordingly, Reporting Officers should, so far as is practicable, desist from the use of such abbreviations within reports. Where it is necessary to use such terms, a full explanation should be provided under this heading.	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
This should include a list of the other relevant information which a Member might wish to read in connection with the summary report and which will provide assistance to and clarification for Members in understanding specific proposals or issues. It must not include material which does not add substantially to the Members’ understanding of the proposal.	

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Disability Discrimination Order (Northern Ireland)  
2006

# Draft Disability Action Plan

For Belfast District Council (Shadow)

August 2014

## **Foreword**

As the democratically elected body representing the people of Belfast, it's important for us to be conscious of the Disability Discrimination Act 1998 when carrying out our functions and providing civic leadership.

"Promoting good relations" is one of the council's strategic objectives in its corporate plan – this means that all Services/Departments include the promotion of equality (incorporating disability and the Disability duties) and good relations in their annual business plans and set out the actions they are taking to achieve this objective.

We are fully committed to fulfilling our statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006) which places new duties on public authorities to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The council's Disability Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as 'the Plan') sets out how we propose to positively meet these new duties.

The council exists to serve the people of Belfast and to provide civic leadership on issues of concern to the people who live and work in the city.

We will ensure that all councillors and council employees are aware of the DDO disability duties. We will take the lead to ensure that the necessary resources are made available for preparing councillors and employees to deliver the actions set out in this Plan. We wish to ensure that the Disability Action Plan is implemented effectively in the true spirit of our commitment to the DDO duties.

**Lord Mayor**

**Chief Executive**



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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires us, in carrying out our functions, to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, Belfast District Council (Shadow) is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a **disability action plan** showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

1.2 As Lord Mayor and Chief Executive of Belfast District Council (Shadow), we are committed to the fulfilment of these disability duties in all parts of our organisation and have set out how we intend to do this in our Disability Action Plan.

We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan effectively implemented. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and provide all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of this plan as well as carrying out a five yearly review of this plan.

We are committed to consulting with disabled people when implementing and reviewing the council's disability plans.

- 1.3 We will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for all staff and Councillors. This training will coincide with our induction training, refresher training and Councillor training on disability. Training timescales are evidenced in the Plan.

Responsibility for implementing, reviewing and evaluating 'the Plan' and the point of contact within the Belfast District Council (Shadow) will be:-

Name: Stella Gilmartin/Lorraine Dennis  
Title: Equality and Diversity Officers  
Address: City Hall, Belfast BT1 5GS  
Telephone number: (Freefone) 0800 0855412  
Email: gilmartins/dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk  
Textphone: (028) 9027 0405  
Website: [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from us in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, audio cassette, easy read, or on computer disc, plain language, and and/or language, please contact the above person to discuss your requirements. You can also download it from our website. Our website is accessible (we work towards level AA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0).

- 1.4 We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a five year review of this plan, or plans submitted to the Equality Commission over the five year review period.

A copy of 'the Plan', our annual progress to the Equality Commission and our five year review of this plan will be made available on our website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

## **2. Our role and function**

\*\* (To be updated once new Council arrangements are in place)

## 2.1 Outlined below is the range of functions of Belfast City Council

We perform six principal roles within our local area:

- a civic leadership role in providing a vision for Belfast and its people, working in partnership with others and investing for the future to ensure a better quality of life for our citizens,
- the direct provision of a number of services and facilities;
- the promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development, equality and good relations;
- regulating and licensing certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety;
- representation on a number of bodies and boards including education; and
- consulting on issues relating to functions conducted by other government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

## 2.2 In performing the above roles we provide:

- facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, sports grounds and places of entertainment;
- street cleansing services;
- waste collection and disposal services;
- burial grounds;
- grant aid to support the arts, good relations, community development and the promotion of tourism and economic development;
- administration and regulation of matters relating to the environment, public health and public safety such as building control, noise pollution and consumer protection;
- licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations; and
- the making and regulation of bye-laws.

2.3 To enable us to provide the above services and perform our other functions, we must levy an annual rate. We have the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land;
- borrow money;
- employ staff; and
- procure goods and services.

2.4 We have adopted a wide range of policies to support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities.

### **3. Public life positions**

\*\* (To be updated once new Council arrangements are in place)

3.1 The Council does not have direct control over public life positions; however we do have people from various sections of the community sitting on council groups, for example:

- Good Relations Partnership
- Section 75 Consultative Forum;
- Arts & Disability Working Group (Waterfront Hall);
- Friends of Botanic and Falls Parks;
- Friends of Belfast Zoo;
- Friends of Waterworks;
- Travellers Group;
- Youth Forum;
- Belfast Policing & Community Safety Partnership;
- BCC Migrants Forum
- BCC Faith Forum

### **4. Commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan**

4.1 We are committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of the organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be

achieved lies with our Councillors. Day-to-day responsibility for carrying out the policy lies with the Equality and Diversity Officer, who reports through the Good Relations Manager to the Corporate Management Team and the Assistant Chief Executive who are ultimately responsible for the oversight and implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Council complies with our disability duties. The Equality and Diversity Officer reports work to the Disability Access Group chaired by the Director of Parks and Leisure monthly.

- 4.2 Progress on meeting the objectives of 'the Plan', including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation. The Equality and Diversity Officer will ensure 'the Plan' will be monitored and reported on annually. All Disability Action Plan reports will proceed through the council reporting mechanisms and to Corporate Management Team.
- 4.3 We will include a formal progress report on meeting the objectives in our annual report to the Equality Commission which is submitted through the standard Committee reporting procedure.

## 5. Internal arrangements

\*\* (To be updated once new Council arrangements are in place)

5.1 We have 51 Councillors elected for a four year period. They currently meet monthly in full session and more frequently in committees. The principal committees under Belfast City Council are:

- Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- Development Committee;
- Health and Environmental Services Committee;
- Licensing Committee;
- Parks & Leisure; and
- Town Planning Committee.

A range of council departments support these committees.

5.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Corporate Management Team.

5.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for the delivery of the strategic direction set by the Council and through the Corporate Management Team has oversight of the management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.

5.4 Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the Disability Duty lies with the council.

5.4.1 The Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team are responsible for ensuring that the council's decisions are implemented and for overseeing administrative arrangements to make sure 'the Plan' is implemented effectively. Our Equality and Diversity Officer will support this work and act as our main point of contact. Currently, our Equality and Diversity Officer s can be contacted on: [gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:gilmartins@belfastcity.gov.uk) and Lorraine Dennis [dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk).

5.4.2 Chief Executive's Department, Good Relations Unit, City Hall Freepost BEL4010, Belfast District Council (Shadow),

Freephone 08000855412  
Text phone number: 028 9027 0405  
Email: [gilmartins/dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:gilmartins/dennisl@belfastcity.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

5.4.3 The Equality and Diversity Officer will report regularly to the Good Relations Manager and regular progress reports are sent to the Good Relations Partnership, Corporate Management Team and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

5.4.4 We place great importance on disability issues and have established a Disability Working Group chaired by the Director of Parks and Leisure. This group comprises senior representatives from each department including the Equality and Diversity Officer.

## **6. Annual report**

6.1 The annual report will be included in our Annual Report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of an Equality Scheme but will also be available as a stand alone document.

6.2 A copy of the annual report will be made available on our website. You can also download it from our website. Our website is accessible (we work towards level AA of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0).

## **7. Five year review**

7.1 We will carry out a five year review of the Plan in accordance with guidelines from the Equality Commission for NI.

## **8 Consultation**

8.1 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the guiding principles set out in the Equality Commission guidelines and recognise the need for such consultation to be timely, open and inclusive.



- 8.2 We are keen to seek the views of disabled people on this revised and updated Plan. We will:
- consult our AA list (a list of consultees identified in our Equality Scheme);
  - present the Plan to the council's consultative forum which includes representatives from disability organisations; and
  - inform attendees at our bi annual disability related event.
- 8.3 The anticipated outcomes of this robust consultation exercise are to:
- identify barriers faced by disabled people in public life and specifically any barriers they've encountered when dealing with us;
  - identify past examples where we have not promoted positive attitudes towards disabled people and identify future opportunities to promote positive attitudes;
  - set priorities and identify solutions to take remedial action; and
  - monitor and review how effective these measures have been.
- 8.4 When consulting on any matter relating to the duties, we will work with representative groups, individuals with disabilities and Section 75 groups on the best way to get their views. This may take the form of face to face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, internet discussions and other methodologies identified as best practice. Consultee responses to the consultations and our response will be recorded. All consultees will receive a copy of our response to their comments.
- 8.5 We will place 'the Plan' on our website asking for feedback from individuals and organisations.
- 8.6 As part of the consultative process, we will remove barriers by making sure documents are available in alternative formats, including large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer disk, easy read, and plain language. This will be

done in a timely fashion and we'll establish the basis for dialogue and engagement with disabled people during the life of 'the Plan'.

- 8.7 We'll develop best practice in communicating with young disabled people as well as looking at additional dimensions which create multiple identities such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief.
- 8.8 We believe that it's important for disabled people to be involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. The initiatives we want to implement will be developed and submitted within 6 months from 1 April 2015. We are keen to hear your views and comments and will update our actions in line with your feedback.

## **9. Measures to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life**

\*\* Action Measures for the New Council will be identified once the new arrangements are in place.

Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

- A range of Equality and Disability Training programmes
- Induction Programmes
- Selection & Recruitment Training
- Disability Awareness Training
- Developing our website
- Workplace policies and reasonable adjustments;
- Targeted recruitment policies;
- Accessibility policies;

- Equality screening exercises

Encourage the participation of disabled people in public life

- Workplace policies
- Recruitment policies
- Accessibility policies
- Policy screening
- Disabledgo Project
- Consultative Forum and other Stakeholder groups

For further details of the full range of measures previously undertaken by the council, contact the Equality and Diversity Officer (see page 5 for contact details).

## **10. Action Measures**

Objectives and the initiatives we want to implement will be developed and submitted within 6 months from 1 April 2015:

Signed  
Chief Executive

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