



Subject:	EQIA - Plan Strategy Stage 7 Year 1 (2024) Monitoring Report
Date:	18 June 2024
Reporting Officer:	Dermot O’Kane – Acting Development Planning & Policy Manager
Contact Officer:	Conor Campfield, Acting Principal Planning Officer

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the preparation of the Stage 7 Year 1 (2024) Monitoring Report of the Plan Strategy.
1.2	The Local Development - Plan Strategy was adopted on 2 May 2023. The Plan was prepared alongside a number of statutory assessments including an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) which assesses any possible 'adverse impact' on any group under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
1.3	There are 7 stages to Equality Impact Assessments. This Monitoring stage represents the final stage in the process. The process has identified no negative impacts on any S75 group. The EQIA concluded that all nine S75 groups will benefit from the policies through the provision of a broader mix of housing, more jobs, access to green infrastructure, including open space, walking and cycling routes and improved access to services and facilities.
1.4	The LPP which is currently underway will be assessed against the same mechanisms.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the report.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires all public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; and • persons with dependants and persons without.
3.2	In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
3.3	Within the Council's Revised Equality Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply screening to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment. This includes the Community Plan (Belfast Agenda) and the Local Development Plan (LDP).
3.4	Each stage of the LDP process includes consideration of equality matters through the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process. Belfast City Council undertook the first LDP (POP) stage during 2017.
3.5	The City Council has completed the second LDP stage with the adoption of the Plan Strategy (PS) in May 2023. As the PS is now adopted, the planning policies contained in it have been in effect from May 2023 and form the basis of planning application decision-making by the Council.

3.6	In line with Stage 7 of the Equality Commission Guidance, a final EQIA includes a process for monitoring to determine equality impacts, in the light of any changes made and any mitigating actions taken.
3.7	The PS EQIA found that there is unlikely to be any adverse impact against Section 75 groups associated with the implementation of the strategic and operational planning policies. It revealed that, generally, the PS policies will have a positive or neutral impact upon the entire population and will improve the overall quality of life for those who live in or visit Belfast. It noted that some Section 75 groups in particular will be positively impacted upon by the implementation of some of the PS policies, including in relation to affordable, adaptable and specialist forms of housing and access for all measures.
3.8	The PS EQIA concluded that all nine S75 groups will benefit from the policies through the provision of a broader mix of housing, more jobs, access to green infrastructure, including open space, walking and cycling routes and improved access to services and facilities. The EQIA identified no negative impacts on any S75 group. Furthermore, the EQIA assessment of impacts on religious, political and racial groups considered each group individually, as well as the three groups collectively, including in terms of promoting good relations.
3.9	Since the adoption of the Plan Strategy in May 2023, the strategic and operational planning policies now form the basis of all planning application decisions taken by the Council. As set out above, some positive impacts are anticipated, and no unintended or negative impacts have been identified to date.
3.10	In line with Stage 7 of the Equality Commission Guidance, monitoring of the policies for adverse impacts is required over a 2-year period. This is the Stage 7 Monitoring Report for year 1. Ongoing monitoring will continue to determine whether there is any effect over a longer period of time. A Stage 7 (Year 2) Report will be required in May 2025.
3.11	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no resource implications associated with this report.
3.12	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no equality or good relations implications arising from this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Plan Strategy Stage 7 Year 1 (2024) Monitoring Report