



Belfast District Council (Shadow)

Report to:	Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Draft Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan
Date:	29th August 2014
Reporting Officer:	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager
Contact Officer:	Stella Gilmartin, Equality and Diversity Officer

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>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.</p> <p>Section 49a of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (DDO), states that public authorities when carrying out their functions must have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people ;and• Encourage participation by disabled people in public life <p>Public Authorities are also required to produce an Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan which explains how they intend to fulfil these duties. In accordance with Northern Ireland Act 1998, any designated authority (i.e. Belfast District Council) will have six months from their establishment (i.e. 26 May 2014) to prepare and submit an Equality Scheme to the Equality Commission (therefore 26 Nov 2014).</p> <p>The Equality Commission requires that an Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan for Belfast District Council (Shadow) should be submitted within six months of the establishment of the Council.</p> <p>In order to meet this deadline a draft Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan has been prepared in accordance with the ECNI guidance. These documents do not differ in substance from the existing Equality</p>

	<p>Scheme and Disability Action Plan for Belfast City Council.</p> <p>The Commission recommended in its guide that a commitment to develop action plans to support the active implementation of the Council's Section 75 and Section 49a (DDO) duties is included in the Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan. However, the Commission has acknowledged that action plans may be more usefully developed post scheme. In accordance with this, the draft Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan includes a commitment to develop an action plan within six months of 1 April 2015 i.e. from the date of the new Council taking on its full functions.</p>
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2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Timescale</p> <p>The Council's current Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan were approved by the ECNI in 2012. The Council has been formally notified that it must prepare a further Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan to coincide with the establishment of the Shadow Council.</p> <p>The revised Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan are submitted for approval in draft by the Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee since it has to be the subject of a formal 12 week consultation period. The consultation period will run from 29th August to 21st November 2014.</p> <p>The revised Equality Scheme, in accordance with a model equality scheme for use by public authorities, and the revised Disability Action Plan should be submitted to the Equality Commission for approval by 26th November 2014.</p> <p>Committee members are reminded that this is in draft form and that comments may be submitted at any time during the period of the public consultation. Any substantial changes required as a result of the consultation will of course be reported back to the Committee before final submission to the Equality Commission.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Minimal – to be met from the Good Relations Unit's revenue budget</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	<p>The Equality and Good Relations considerations have been met. Positive Implications in relation to equality and good relations.</p>

5	Call In
5.1	This decision is subject to Call In.

6	Recommendations
6.1	<p>The Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note this report • Approve the attached documents. <p>These documents will go out for public consultation as set out above and will be submitted to the ECNI by the date required of 26th November 2014.</p>

7	Decision Tracking
Stella Gilmartin, Equality and Diversity Officer, Good Relations Unit	

8	Key to Abbreviations
<p>DDO : Disability Discrimination Order ECNI : Equality Commission of NI</p>	

9	Documents Attached
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft revised Equality Scheme • Draft Disability Action Plan 	