

**Five Year Review**

**Section 75 of the  
Northern Ireland Act 1998**

**Belfast City Council**

**February 2005**

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# EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

## Public Authority Five Year Review Report

This report template includes a number of self assessment questions under the twelve key elements of an equality scheme. Please enter information at the relevant part of each Section in the template and ensure that it is submitted to the Commission electronically (by completing this template) **and** in writing, with a signed cover letter from the Chief Executive or, in his/her absence, the Deputy Chief Executive (or equivalent).

Name of public authority

**Belfast City Council**

Equality Officer Name and contact details

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## Executive Summary

**Please provide some main conclusions in terms of:**

**a) To what extent has your public authority's approved scheme provided a workable basis for mainstreaming the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations into policy-making over the past five years?**

- Belfast City Council's approved scheme provides a workable framework in which to discharge its statutory duty in relation to equality.
- The responsibility for the implementation of the scheme rests with the Elected Members of Council.
- To facilitate the process of implementation an Equality Officer was appointed at a principal officer level.
- High profile support from the Chief Executive ensured the Equality Scheme was given a key focus in the Council's work.
- A Good Relations Strategy was developed; a Good Relations Unit was established comprising of a Good Relations Manager, an Equality Officer, two Good Relations Officers, a Good Relations Assistant and administrative support.
- The Council's reporting mechanism ensures all Departments are represented on the Good Relations Working Group. Councillors and external agencies are represented on the Good Relations Steering Panel and all reports are considered by the Policy and Resources Committee before formal ratification by Council.
- The scheme alone would not ensure the effective promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations into policy making over the last five years. Top level commitment from Elected Members and the Chief Executive was essential in ensuring that the scheme was mainstreamed.

**b) What key lessons have been learnt over the past five years in terms of effectively implementing the approved equality scheme?**

- A developmental approach to training is an excellent way of building knowledge and experience into the employee's development. The equality agenda cannot be delivered in one training session as cumulative learning is essential.

- The commitment from the Chief Executive was key to the success of the equality training agenda. Equality and good relations were given high priority status by allocating a full one day slot on the Council's seven day Management Development Programme.
- Compliance is not enough. It is essential to challenge and engage staff in the equality debate. The presentation of the business case for equality of opportunity was essential and productive. The importance of consultation for both service users and providers is an excellent example. The win-win message is a key lesson and takes time to develop.
- Positive relationship building with the Section 75 groups is essential.

### **c) What more needs to be done to achieve outcomes for individuals from the nine equality categories?**

- The Council has developed excellent working arrangements to further our knowledge of the key issues of Section 75.
- Consultation is a key feature of all our policy development work. We are keen to hear views from the Section 75 groups on how we could improve our understanding of their needs. The Council has established a Consultation Forum to discuss developing policies. This is one of the best mechanisms to enable real and meaningful policy development in terms of equality of opportunity and good relations. However we are aware that many statutory organisations host consultation fora and this is a drain on the resources of Section 75 groups.
- It would be advantageous if the voluntary and community sector organisations, representing the Section 75 groups, were resourced to develop personnel who could directly respond to relevant consultation processes.
- The Council is aware that new issues are constantly developing. Continuous employee training is therefore required to keep up to date with all issues. Regular updates in best practice regarding Section 75 issues would be advantageous.
- The Council is aware that other councils and organisations have a similar remit to ourselves and that it is sometimes more productive to join forces to advance work. We believe that partnership working can be a more efficient and effective way to do business. Issues such as joined up consultative fora for Councils could possibly be addressed in the Review of Public Administration.
- Improved communication of our services is vital to keep the public informed. We have produced a magazine entitled 'City Matters' which is delivered to every house in Belfast. This enables us to be more effective and efficient in getting our message across and inform residents of changes and improvements to our services. We are always developing systems to improve communication.

## Purpose of the Scheme

### **1. A general introductory statement specifying the purpose of the scheme and the public authority's commitment to the statutory duties.**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('the Act') requires the Council, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties, 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,
- between men and women generally,
- between persons with a disability and persons without,
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Act requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Schedule 9 of the Act requires the Council to set out in an Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75.

The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation and will commit necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) to ensure that the statutory duties are complied with and that the Equality Scheme is implemented effectively and on time.

The Council ensures that there are effective internal arrangements in place to ensure that the duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress.

The Council has developed and delivered a planned programme of communication and training on the Equality Scheme.

Furthermore the Council adopted Good Relations as its fourth Corporate Strategic Objective in January 2001, demonstrating its commitment towards its Section 75 duties.

### **1a) To what extent were senior management involved in ensuring scheme compliance over the 5 year period and what further steps could be undertaken to ensure effective internal arrangements?**

The Council's Corporate Plan shapes the future direction of all its services. All Departments are required to include within their annual Departmental Business Plans and Service Business Plans the actions they intend to take which will support and help to achieve the Council's Corporate Priorities.

For 2003-2004, the Corporate Plan included 'Promoting Good Relations' as a Corporate Objective. The Corporate Plan itself included a number of specific actions for the year, indicated how success would be measured and outlined both Committee and Officer responsibilities in relation to equality and good relations.

The measures of success were clearly set out in the Corporate Plan as the establishment of a Good Relations Unit; the establishment of Community Relations and Cultural Diversity Programmes; the establishment of a Good Relations Fund; the formulation of a Good Relations training programme; 100% completion of the Equality Impact Assessments and other tasks as set out in the Equality Scheme; and the formulation of an Action Plan to address under-representation and/or imbalances in the Council's workforce. All these measures were either completed or substantially achieved during the year.

The Council unanimously adopted the Good Relations Strategy at its meeting in February 2003. The Good Relations Strategy has four themes – promoting community relations, celebrating cultural diversity, promoting equality through service delivery and promoting equality through a representative workforce. The Good Relations Strategy includes a number of activities to be achieved over the next few years and work is continuing on the development of more specific indicators and targets.

The Good Relations Strategy was publicly launched in January 2004 and a copy sent to the Equality Commission. The Good Relations Unit was formally set up in April 2004 to coordinate and integrate its work in equality and good relations. This Unit consists of the Equality Officer, who has direct responsibility for the implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme, and two Good Relations Officers, who report to a Good Relations Manager, along with administrative and business support. Staff costs of the Good Relations Officers are supported through funding from the Community Relations Unit within the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister. The costs of the equality work within the Council i.e. the salary of the Equality Officer, equality training and associated expenditure, are met entirely from Council revenue estimates.

Strategic implementation is enhanced through regular reporting on progress to the Good Relations Working Group, the Good Relations Steering Panel, Chief Officers' Management Team and to the Policy and Resources Committee, the principal Committee of the Council. These maintain the high profile given to equality and good relations matters in the organisation.

An entire one-day module on equality and good relations was included within the Council's Management Development seven day programme, which was rolled

out throughout to 280+ senior managers within the Council. This reflected the importance granted to equality and good relations within the Council.

The Council in general is moving towards a competency based framework in terms of recruitment, training and promotion, to enable career development for its employees. A commitment to equality and equal opportunities is included as a core competency within this framework and employees will have to demonstrate evidence of such a commitment. This will help to consolidate the culture of equality within the Council environment.

The officer based inter-Departmental Good Relations Working Group (GRWG) has responsibility for the operational monitoring and implementing of both the Equality Scheme and Good Relations Strategy. The Working Group meets on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by the Director of Legal Services. All draft reports including screening documents, impact assessments and responses to consultation documents are approved by the GRWG.

The Good Relations Manager reports on the progress of the implementation of Section 75, covering both equality and good relations, at a more strategic level on a quarterly basis to the Chief Officers' Management Team and Good Relations Steering Panel. These reports reflect progress against the detailed action/work plans.

These progress reports are also submitted to the meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis before adoption by full Council. The minutes of these meetings are available to the public via public libraries and the Council's website [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

The Annual Report on Progress to the Equality Commission is submitted also to the Good Relations Working Group, Chief Officers' Management Team, Good Relations Steering Panel and Policy and Resources Committee.

As we have mainstreamed the equality agenda, all committee reports consider equality early in the process. All committee reports will have considered the equality agenda prior to presentation; early consultation processes are now commonplace. This process ensures the monitoring of the equality agenda throughout Council policy development. This has had a significant impact in focusing all senior staff on the equality agenda.

The Equality Scheme Training Strategy ensured a comprehensive and systemic approach to raising awareness of the equality agenda. Furthermore the training strategy has been instrumental in mainstreaming the equality agenda in the Council.

The Council's commitment to the Equality Scheme, through staffing, resources, time and energy and the comprehensive reporting mechanism has enabled the smooth introduction and acceptance of the equality agenda. As time has developed effective mainstreaming has become a reality.

The forthcoming Review of Public Administration will have an impact on all Councils. In Belfast City Council there is likely to be a process of restructuring. Further opportunities to mainstream equality will arise. The most important aspect of development is to build on the lessons of the first five years of the Equality Scheme.

**1b) Outline annual direct expenditure of resources to ensure that the statutory duties were complied with, in terms of staff and money over the past 5 years, and comment on the extent that all necessary resources were allocated.**

The Council is committed to the implementation of the Equality Scheme and has provided adequate resources to support the process. Please note in that there was a separate budget for equality only in the first year 2000-2001; since then, it has been combined with the good relations budget.

**Salaries**

The Council has had an Equality Officer in post for the past five years. She has direct responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Equality Scheme, supported by other staff members, including managerial and business support.

The salary range for the post of Equality Officer for the period 2000/01 to 2004/5 was £33,984 - £36,402. The estimated combined additional supporting staff costs for the 5-year period 2000/01 to 2004/5 was in the region of £58,000.

The Equality Officer is located in the Chief Executive's Department, originally in the Policy Services section during the period 2001-2004 and then, following a restructuring, in the Good Relations Unit from 2004-present. All direct costs in relation to the Equality Scheme implementation such as consultation, catering, meetings, conferences, consultants and fees for external professional services, i.e. to undertake the equality impact assessments required, are quantifiable as they are centrally controlled within the Chief Executive's Department. The following figures indicate costs associated with the direct implementation of the Equality Scheme:

00/01-£58,041  
01/02-£60,731  
02/03-£48,323  
03/04-£48,911  
04/05-£39,906

However, it should be made clear that the implementation of the equality agenda is not solely the responsibility of the Equality Officer or of one department. As the process of equality mainstreaming has developed and gained momentum

throughout the Council, all departments are now responsible for directing their services to meet equality issues as they arise.

The figures listed above therefore do not include the considerably broader allocation of Council resources for equality related issues. For example, the Council has spent over £4 million in up-grading its premises to meet the access requirements of the DDA legislation, including providing training for staff and the publication of a Disability Strategy.

## **2. An outline of how the public authority intends to assess its compliance with the Section 75 duties and for consulting on matters to which a duty under that section is likely to be relevant.**

### **2a) Outline impacts and outcomes (for the public authority and/or individuals from the nine equality categories) over the past five years and what further steps could be undertaken to build on these or address underreporting?**

Outcomes for people in Section 75 categories are listed below. Information relating to targets and outcomes for the past five years can be found throughout the body of the text and in Appendix 4.

#### **Internal**

For a detailed report refer to Section 7 a/b.

- Equality is mainstreamed in the Council
- Staff are better trained
- Employee monitoring has been established. As a consequence of more informed knowledge of the composition of our employees we will be able to target policies to assist development when and where required. Employees are indicating that they wish to be involved in equality focus groups addressing Section 75 issues.
- A more focused concentration on youth issues. A Youth Forum is in the early stages of development. A funding programme assisting youth projects has been developed.
- Specific targeted employee projects e.g. female gender balancing. The Women in non traditional roles (WINS) project. The aim of this project is to attract women into non traditional roles.
- Work Life Balance policies assists all staff to improve their work life balance. The main areas of interest include flexible working arrangements, leave provision, child care vouchers, occupational health and employment counselling. Whilst all staff benefit from the Work Life Balance policies we can see that people who are in a caring role are greatly encouraged by the option in this policy.

- A disability strategy has been developed. The strategy highlights the achievements to date and the action plans in terms of policies and developments for people with disabilities. Both employees with disabilities and people with disabilities accessing goods, services and facilities are addressed by this strategy. A major disability training initiative has been rolled out throughout the Council.
- The Good Relations Strategy addresses both Section 75 (1) and Section 75 (2). Officers have been employed to address the main issues relating to community relations and cultural diversity. A funding programme for cultural diversity and community relations issues has been developed.

### **External**

- A Consultative Forum has been established comprising of Section 75 groups providing information on policies and the screening process. Section 75 groups get access to key staff through the Consultative Forum.
- The Equality Officer chairs an officer group from other statutory agencies to keep informed and share best practice.
- Consultation on all new or revised policies has kept Section 75 groups informed of all developments within the Council. In addition all information is published on the website keeping the public up to date on all developments within the Council.
- The Equality Officer has assisted all Departments in the Council to better target consultation to relevant groups in relation to pre - consultation, consultation and post consultation.
- Relationships with Section 75 groups are maintained by attending meetings, seminars, workshops, AGM's, launches and other general invitations.
- Community Safety Policies are developed to ensure that we address the areas of concern for the residents of Belfast, tackling themes such as crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour.
- Community Support Plans have been developed by Community Services to engage more fully with local communities in a meaningful way.

### **Outcomes**

The changes ensuing from the EQIA's directly improve our services and in turn impact on all our customers.

- Improvements in our community outreach work and targeted recruitment drives.
- Improvements in communication to stakeholders
- More awareness of Section 75 issues internally and externally
- Improved policy development processes

- Better partnership working
- Informed decision making
- Increased participation in decision making
- More knowledge of customers from monitoring exercises
- Addressing representation in the workforce
- Focus on disability issues.

### **Impacts and Outcomes**

- The overall outcome is that there is a noticeable difference in the attention afforded to equality of opportunity and good relations issues.
- All committee reports presented to Council are required to have an equality policy statement. This addresses equality in all documents in every Department.
- Annual reports are a good vehicle for recording the development cycle of equality.
- North Down had developed a consultation forum early and this was an excellent example to learn from. Belfast City Council has also established a Consultative Forum.
- Annual reports are written and circulated internally to senior officers and the Chief Executive before being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Council.
- The Equality Commission presented progress reports highlighting good practice. These reports were an excellent mechanism for indicating and alerting good practice from other statutory bodies.
- Work with the Local Government Staff Commission has enabled the Council to share good practice in an informal development mechanism. Regular meetings were held to discuss common issues.

### **2b) Outline the number of equality scheme related consultation exercises undertaken by your authority over the past five years? Set out the number and percentage related to screening exercises and to EQIAs and indicate the extent that your scheme helped you to engage with external stakeholders?**

A variety of methods were used to conduct Equality Scheme related consultations indicated below.

1. Pre consultation
2. Consultation on Scheme

3. EQIA Consultation (Public, focus groups, staff)
4. Pre Consultation on Developing Policies
5. Screening Consultation
6. Consultation Forum

The Equality Officer was involved in all EQIA consultations and Consultation Forum meetings.

However, the Council is a large organisation and individual Departments are responsible for conducting their own pre consultation and consultation processes in relation to policy development. It is therefore difficult to ascertain the total number of consultation exercises undertaken throughout the Council.

The Equality Officer was directly involved in 38 consultation exercises relating to the screening process since 2002.

The Council is committed to effective consultation and conducts its consultation in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Council's Equality Scheme which contains over 200 groups and organisations on the AA list with whom the Council consults during the EQIA Process.

Consultation with Section 75 groups is a major element of the Council's commitment to the equality agenda. In addition some Council departments and services are now using a collaborative process with Section 75 groups and other affected groups to inform and develop new Council policies.

The Council developed its own set of Consultation Guidelines, informed by a consultation exercise with Section 75 groups to determine how they wished to be consulted. The Council continues to conduct consultation in accordance with these guidelines. The major methods of engaging with Section 75 groups include focus groups, stakeholders groups, section 75 group panel, disability organisations, youth organisations and surveys.

Many groups with whom we consult have expressed their concern at the number of requests being made to them by public authorities in relation to written consultation responses. Section 75 groups report that they do not have the financial resources, time and staff to meet this growing demand.

In order to address and meet this growing challenge we established a Consultative Forum for Belfast City Council. The Council is aware that Consultative Forums are not a substitute for other forms of consultation and are merely part of the overall process which must include wider consultation and the use of focus groups for specialist issues.

The Equality Officer created a reporting procedure to mainstream equality at the heart of the Council's decision making process. Every report presented to Council must enclose an equality statement in relation to the screening procedure. This has led to a greater appreciation of the equality agenda. It has

embedded equality in the general work structure and practices of Council officers in the early stage of policy development.

Every year the Council's Disability Access Group organises a focus group meeting with organisations representing disability to discuss progress. This is an extremely effective consultation mechanism. The Council has developed excellent working relationships with disability organisations.

Lunchtime seminars were conducted as a means of attracting working people to discuss improved employment practices at the Council.

The most effective methods of consultation involve face to face contact with the Section 75 groups, targeted focus groups and building relationships with key people in the relevant Section 75 sectors. The annual disability focus group and the consultative forum are the most successful equality consultative events the Council engages in annually. The Consultative Forum is welcomed by the Council departments as an excellent method of communication and consultation. The least effective method of consultation has been advertising and hosting public meetings. The exception was the EQIA on indoor leisure facilities, which did generate considerable response.

The equality consultation process has become more structured throughout the Council since the introduction of the Equality Toolkit in 2003-2004. The toolkit included information on the equality considerations in the policy development process and consultation guidelines.

Every year the Council consults with stakeholders in relation to developing policies and the EQIA process. Relevant staff have been trained on pre consultation, consultation and final consultation processes.

In the first few years of the Equality Scheme consultations in relation to EQIAs and screening processes were conducted by the Equality Officer. As the equality agenda has become mainstreamed the various departments conduct consultation processes specific to their section with advice from the Equality Officer.

The Equality Officer is responsible for the co ordination of the formal screening processes for the Council, the dissemination of this information to the stakeholders and ensuring that the responses from stakeholders are satisfactorily addressed.

The Equality Scheme has greatly helped the both Councillors and Council's Officers to engage with external stakeholders.

As a result the following improvements have ensued:

- Consultative Forum has been established
- Pre consultation is now commonplace
- The reduction of EQIAs

- The revision of policies and services including the equality agenda.

**2c) Indicate if your list of consultees was amended during the 5 year period and what further steps could be taken to develop your level of engagement and consultation?**

The list of consultees on the AA has been amended twice during the past five years, once in 2003 and most recently November 2005. All those on the AA list were contacted by post to check details and enquire if they wished to remain on the list. Most people wanted to remain on the list. A letter was sent to all consultees requesting information on how they wish to be consulted. Many opted for electronic data, some wished to be removed. We have recently conducted an audit for a second time; this exercise was conducted on the telephone. We have also had requests from organisations to join our consultee list.

**2d) To what extent did your authority consult directly with directly affected individuals as well as with representative groups, particularly in relation to young people and those with learning disabilities, and was this sufficient?**

Please refer to Section 2(b) for a comprehensive breakdown of our consultation processes. Each department and section has its own stakeholder list. In addition each new policy is assessed and additions to the stakeholder list are added when appropriate.

Developing our young people is a key priority for the Council. We have an internal Young Peoples Working Group, appointed a full time youth coordinator and established an external group comprising of all major organisations representing youth in the City. Using this external group as the conduit for gaining access to the youth sector has been invaluable. Great progress has been made in relation to establishing the Shadow Youth Forum. It is envisaged that the Shadow Youth Forum will be an ideal mechanism for consulting with young people on all Council business. The youth sector is represented on the Consultative Forum.

Belfast City Council consults extensively with the disability sector as described in Section 2b. Both directly affected individuals and representative organisations are consulted. Mencap and Shopmobility are represented on the Consultative Forum.

The Council adopted a policy of providing a full response to all consultees who responded to our consultation documents. The responses were recorded in a matrix format and presented at the end of the final EQIA document. Each respondent received a letter thanking them for their response and a further letter indicating the Council's response to their comments. Comments received from

the screening process were followed up by letter, phone call and, in some cases, face to face meetings.

The main impediments to effective consultation are:

- the lack of resources in the voluntary and community sector
- the volume of requests from the statutory sector
- the complexity of the consultation documents.

When the Council produces large and complex policy documents it is understandable that people and organisations may not have the resources to spend time on them. Whilst we endeavour to highlight the key issues and make the documents meaningful and relevant, this does not eliminate consultation fatigue. It would be of great benefit to discuss a more creative workable process for the future with a consortium of policy makers in the relevant Section 75 groups.

### **3. The authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

#### **3a) Outline and discuss the number of policies your authority subject to screening over the past five years, setting out the number and percentage of 'policies screened in' on the basis of equality considerations and the percentage 'screened in' on the basis of the good relations duty.**

A full and detailed report on the Council's approach to screening and its programme of Equality Impact Assessments was submitted to the Equality Commission in May 2001.

The following documents are listed in Appendix 1:

- all the policies screened in and screened out
- additional EQIA's
- new policies screening outcomes
- amendments to the EQIA schedule.

At the beginning screening was daunting for staff. Some policies were 'screened in' which were inappropriate e.g. transport. We have amended the EQIA schedule and consulted on this process. Some policies were re screened and screened out as major policy and service reviews were being developed.

Two additional EQIA's were conducted during the period 2003/2004 namely the Strategic Review of Leisure and the Flying of the Union Flag. Both EQIA's were screened in on a combination of issues including good relations.

The Council was delighted to receive responses to the EQIA consultations. In accordance with our equality scheme we respond to all comments and include a matrix detailing the responses in an appendix to the EQIA.

In view of its experience in Years 1 & 2 of the EQIA programme, the Council continued to examine its screening process to ensure that it was relevant and effective. The screening procedure and screening form were revised and incorporated into an Equality Toolkit, developed as a step by step guide to developing new policies. Training in equality screening and mainstreaming equality through policy development was delivered to all key decision makers in the Council.

All key decision makers in the Council are requested to screen new policies on an on-going basis and submit them to the Good Relations Working Group. All consultees are informed of our screening decisions on an annual basis.

The Council has spent considerable time and energy developing the most appropriate systems to perfect the screening process. We have established a system to ensure equality issues are considered in the committee reporting procedure. All committee reports have an attached equality comment which ensures considerations of equality matters at the earliest stage of policy development. This has been a key feature of equality mainstreaming.

The Council will continue to ensure effective screening arrangements by maintaining the equality check in all reporting mechanisms.

**3b) To what extent did your authority's consideration of the screening criteria not identify equal opportunity implications on any of s75 categories, but for which consultees then highlighted problems?**

In the initial stages a comprehensive consultation process was undertaken to ascertain the outcome of the policies required to equality impact assess. This led to the five year EQIA schedule. An explanation of the changes to the five year schedule were consulted on and responded to. Concern was raised by Disability Action in relation to some policies. The Equality Officer met with the Officers involved and with Disability Action to explain the policies and changes in detail. Disability Action was content with the explanation. Subsequent changes have arisen out of these discussions. Service reviews are currently being conducted in relation to Environmental Health and Consumer Protection policies. All new policies will be consulted on in due course.

**3c) Outline over the past five years how many EQIAs your authority commenced as a result of i) initial screening and ii) as a result of screening new/revised policies subsequently, and**

**discuss the extent that your authority has become more effective at identifying equality of opportunity dimensions in its policies.**

### **Equality Impact Assessments Completed**

10	EQIAs have been conducted due to initial screening
2	EQIAs have been conducted since the initial screening exercise.
Total 12	EQIAs completed

As we have mainstreamed the equality agenda, all committee reports consider equality early in the process. All committee reports will have considered the equality agenda prior to presentation; early consultation processes are now commonplace. In addition the extensive staff training on equality has ensured the early consideration of equality matters. This has resulted in an improvement in the screening stage and a reduction in completing full EQIA's.

Changes were made to the equality schedule and new policies were screened. All consultees were notified of the changes. Please refer to 3 (a) for further information.

**3d) Outline over the past five year period the percentage of your authority's initial EQIA timetable that reached i) stage 6 of the EQIA process i.e. decision making, and ii) stage 7 of the EQIA process i.e. annual monitoring & publication of results, and indicate the extent that your authority has become more effective at progressing EQIAs.**

All EQIA's have reached stage 7 of the EQIA process. The outcomes of the EQIA Stage 7 process have been circulated to the AA list. The outcomes are listed in Appendix 2.

The Council has notified all consultees of changes and updates on an annual basis. We are aware of consultation fatigue and endeavour to keep mailings to a minimum. We are aware that policy documents are dry and we are challenged to make them more accessible to the general reader.

The Consultative Forum provides a mechanism to meet the officers involved in policy development and have an open discussion concerning the issues.

#### **4. The authority's arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

##### **4a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to collect data relating to the nine equality categories to monitor the impact of policies and what could your authority do in future to develop monitoring arrangements?**

An EQIA Team was established to support each department carrying out an EQIA. Members of these teams collated information databases and other sources of data which related to the service. In addition, considerable statistical information is held centrally within the Council e.g. the Baseline Profile of Belfast, which is updated annually and used in the development of the Council's Corporate Planning process.

The Council undertakes a major public consultation exercise every two to three years. This consists of a representative sample involving 1500 residents and focus groups with Section 75 groups. The results of these surveys have been used to inform and direct the Council's Corporate Plan. Other external data is also used to inform the development of both policy and procedure within the Council. These include the Census, workforce profiles, customer surveys and focus groups.

A very successful consultation exercise was carried out in April 2003 for all consultees on issues related to the Council's approach to disability issues. The agenda consisted of an updated report concerning work carried out since March 2002, a presentation of the EQIA on disability and a request for comments on the Council's progress. The meeting was well attended and well received by a large group of representatives from organisations addressing disability, along with relevant Council staff. This has since become an annual event which is used as a method of monitoring and evaluating our work and consulting on the outcomes.

The development of the Disability Strategy has provided a basis on which to develop improved monitoring systems for people with disabilities.

Statistical evidence in respect of the EQIA's namely; Access Policy, Human Resources, Flying of Flags on Council property, Community Services Grant Aid, Culture and Arts Plan, Indoor Leisure are updated annually at the relevant EQIA monitoring and evaluation meetings. The Council consults on monitoring and evaluation outcomes annually. EQIA Stage 7 updates have been circulated to all consultees.

The Council monitors uptake of services as part of its normal procedure but details and standards vary. Consultation with service users is also common with many services having user forums, customer panels etc.

The Equality Officer is in the process of facilitating more comprehensive equality monitoring systems throughout the Council's services and facilities. Existing procedures will be audited and developed to have specific regard to equality considerations.

An employment monitoring system has been developed. Internal focus groups are being established for Section 75 groups. All employees have been invited to attend these equality groups.

**5. The authority's arrangements for publishing the results of equality impact assessments and of monitoring any adverse impact of policies adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity.**

**5a) Indicate the number of reports published outlining the results of EQIAs and monitoring over the past five years, and outline what your authority could do in future in relation to improving the publication of EQIA results and monitoring.**

- Appendix 3 outlines the results of EQIA's stage 7 process.
- All EQIA's have been consulted upon on an annual basis. In addition all changes to policies as a result of ongoing evaluation and monitoring are consulted on through the information presented annually.
- Information is placed on the web, consulted by post and discussed at the Council's Consultative Forum.
- All the Council's major public documents are available in alternative formats on request, i.e. in other languages, in disc or audio cassette, large print or in Braille.
- Some requests for documents in alternative formats have been received over the past five years (one copy in Braille, one copy on audio cassette).

**6. A commitment that in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, that the public authority shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.**

**6a) In terms of the number of EQIAs that reached stage 6 (i.e. decision making) to what extent were mitigation measures and alternative policies adopted?**

All EQIA's identified issues to be addressed and included a summary of actions in the executive summary. A full account of the issues arising from the EQIA's

were considered, followed up and reported on in the EQIA stage 7 monitoring and evaluation process. The outcomes are included in Appendix 3. Information regarding the outcomes and ensuing changes from the EQIA process have been consulted on.

Disability Action commented on a consultation document relating to our screening outcomes. A follow up meeting discussed the issues. In this instance feedback to the relevant department resulted in a service review. This is ongoing.

All comments received from our EQIA consultation process are reported in a matrix which is included at the end of the EQIA final report. All consultees receive a hard copy of the EQIA and can be accessed on the Council's website.

### **6b) To what extent did consideration of EQIAs and consultations contribute to a change in policy, as opposed to policy decisions which would probably have been made in any event by your authority?**

In general the EQIA process has been instrumental in the mainstreaming of the Council's equality agenda. The consultation process has been incredibly useful when the affected groups respond. Particular attention must be given to the policy of Disability Action who responds to all consultation documents. Disability Action's response to documents has been invaluable. We do appreciate that this is costly and labour intensive.

Please see below some of the outcomes of the EQIA' process:

- Improvements in our community outreach work and targeted recruitment drives
- More active addressing of the issue of a more representative workforce in general across the section 75 categories
- An effort to increase the numbers of people with disabilities participating in the disability employment support scheme
- Improvements to our consultation processes
- A Mitigation Plan as a result of the proposed closure of Maysfield Leisure Centre
- Improvements to our communication plans throughout service delivery
- Broadening of our Access Audits to cover all 9 equality dimensions
- Addressing of issues concerning way finding (signage) and mobility e.g. age and dependency
- Better information to consultees re. the Council's response to all the issues raised in relation to a EQIA in a matrix format at the end of the final EQIA report
- The acknowledgement of the need to progress the development of more robust monitoring systems.

The outcomes listed above have been progressed and new policies are being developed. Please refer to Appendix 3 for further information.

The EQIA process has had an impact on the consideration of equality issues in policy development. There is a need to consider that the EQIA format was 'of its time.' It is envisaged that the same degree of rigorous EQIA focus will not be required in the future as equality mainstreaming becomes a reality. A shorter more streamlined version is required and would be a more appropriate tool for public service managers in line with our requirements to provide quality services at best value.

## **7. The authority's arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to the duties.**

### **7a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to develop and deliver a training programme in accordance with scheme commitments?**

A comprehensive review of Equality Training since 2001 is included in Section 7b. The text below covers the information required by 7a) and 7 b)

### **7b) Have all staff received awareness training and what could your authority do in future to deliver an effective training programme?**

Belfast City Council has expended considerable efforts and resources in developing a five year training plan and strategy in consultation with representatives from both Section 75 groups and employees of the Council.

The Council's Equality Scheme Training Strategy (ESTS) was introduced to support the delivery of the Council's Equality Scheme and contributes to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.

The ESTS commenced in June 2000 and concluded in June 2005. The ESTS was based around 16 key components which clearly defined training and development activities for each of the 5 years of the strategy. Details of the 16 key components and examples of associated training and development activities undertaken during the five year period are listed below;

- Equality Awareness Programme
- New Employee Induction Programme - with Equality dimension built in
- Equality Videos
- Managing Equality
- Leading for Equality
- Equality and Governance

- Recruitment and Selection
- Customer Care and Equality
- Training the Trainers
- Specialist Programmes
- Service Improvement
- Seminars and Events
- Equality Resource Bank
- Evaluating Equality Outcomes
- Capacity Building for Equality
- Affirmative Action Skills Enhancement Programmes for employees who are members of under-represented groups.

Key milestones of training and development activity were set on an annual basis and these were evaluated to ensure progress of the strategy. Regular reporting on progress of the strategy was provided to the Chief Officers' Management Team, the Policy and Resources Committee and the Equality Commission. All key components of the ESTS have been addressed during the delivery of the strategy and any outstanding or future activity will be incorporated into the Good Relations Learning & Development Strategy.

An inter-Departmental Equality Training Sub-Group was established in 2001 to implement the training plan. This Sub-Group reported to the Good Relations Working Group, which provided regular reports to the Chief Officers' Management Team and Policy and Resources Committee.

The ESTS was evaluated in year 5. Appendix 4 indicates the key components and examples of completed training and development activities completed over a five year period.

### **Examples of completed training and development activities**

Specific training was carried out for those employees involved in the EQIAs. In addition a mechanism of rolling out Equality Training for all staff is now complete. Briefing sessions on equality and good relations have been arranged for Councillors. All managers were trained and they cascaded this training to their staff. The Equality Training Team regularly monitored and evaluated the equality training.

A one day disability awareness course for managers and supervisors is underway. After initial evaluation the original half day course was extended to a full day session. A half day disability awareness programme for front-line employees is also in the process of being rolled out across the Council.

The Council developed a Management Development Programme based around seven management issues. One of these modules was entitled 'Managing Good Relations and Equality', indicating the significance allotted to equality and good

relations issues within the Council. The Equality Officer and members of the Good Relations Working Group assisted in the compilation of the module. The programme was targeted at Directors, Heads of Service and other senior council officers with responsibility for managing people.

The Council developed an equality training pack designed for use both within the Council and by external organisations. The equality training pack was a great success and was requested by Councils and organisations in N. Ireland and other parts of the UK.

The equality pack was used for in-house training induction courses, for new staff, and also in the Employee Equality Awareness programme, which commenced in 2002.

The induction programme for newly appointed employees has been revised to include an equality and good relations module. This training is compulsory for all new staff and is identified as awareness raising in our equality training strategy.

A specialist programme entitled 'Equality Considerations for Policy Developers' was delivered to approximately 80 senior officers in May and June 2003.

The Equality Officer and Good Relations Officers attend Senior Management Teams meetings providing updates, awareness raising sessions and information sessions. This is an excellent way to provide immediate updates to senior staff throughout the Council who in turn can relay the message to other staff.

The Council is conscious of the need to keep the training process dynamic and challenging. Training has to be continuous and innovative to keep equality issues at the heart of decision making and policy development. Specialist training on the use of the Equality Toolkit - equality proofing, policy development and screening - was provided to all policy makers and key decision makers in the Council beginning in April 2003.

## **8. The authority's arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and to services provided by the authority.**

### **8a) To what extent were sufficient arrangements put in place to ensure and assess public access to information and to services provided by the authority?**

Sufficient arrangements were put in place to ensure public access to information and services provided by the Council e.g. Council minutes are available to the public both in hard copy and on the website. All documents are available in alternative formats on request. All published equality documents have a clear

statement indicating alternative formats are available. A relatively small number of requests have been made for information in alternative formats.

Information concerning events was sent to consultees at least six weeks in advance of the event date. Information regarding special requirements was sought and provided, for example, an interpreter service, dietary requirements, translations of information into alternative formats and car access for people with disabilities.

The access to information and services throughout the Council is continually being evaluated. Examples of ongoing work in relation to accessing information and services:

- Improved communication of pricing policy in Leisure
- Waste Management Communication Strategy
- Review of Website design
- Development of the Belfast Portal
- Outreach work in Human Resources
- Consultation Guidelines to relevant staff
- Disability Strategy

## **9. The authority's timetable for measures proposed in the scheme.**

### **9a) Outline the extent to which measures set out in the original timetable have been implemented. Any detailed information should be included in as an appendix to the report.**

The Council is pleased to report that it has achieved substantial progress during the past five years and no major delays have occurred. The attached Appendix 1b indicates the changes from the original timetable. The changes to the timetable were consulted on. Comments received were responded to. The report highlights the rationale for delays or changes to timetable and procedures.

### **9b) If your authority was to be reconstituted in the next five years what would be the main scheme actions/equality considerations that an incoming authority should address? Any detailed information should be included in as an appendix to the report.**

Belfast City Council is currently the largest Council in Northern Ireland and will remain virtually intact under the proposed Review of Public Administration. The estimated ideal size of the new Councils is likely to be similar to Belfast Council.

The Council will continue to implement the equality duty and improve consultation mechanisms. It will address the evolving equality issues as they arise in a creative and dynamic fashion.

The Council is willing to share good practice to those Councils who are likely to change considerably in the next few years and indeed the Equality Officer is often requested by the Local Government Staff Commission to discuss our expertise with smaller Councils.

## **10. Details of how the scheme will be published.**

### **10a) Were scheme commitments in this section delivered and what evidence supports this view?**

On approval of the Council's Equality Scheme in April 2001, a letter highlighting the Council's commitment to Section 75, together with a summary version of the Equality Scheme was distributed to all employees. Further to this all Members and employees working in the area of policy formulation received the full version of the Equality Scheme. The table below illustrates the distribution of the Equality Scheme to date.

#### **Distribution of Approved Equality Scheme 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002**

<b>Distributed To</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Date</b>
All Council Employees	Summary ES	2500	April 2001
Members Summary	Summary ES Equality Scheme	51 51	April 2001 April 2001
Employees involved in policy formulation	Equality Scheme	200	April 2001
Appendix AA consultees	Summary ES Equality Scheme	500 500	April 2001 April 2001

The Council also placed advertisements in the local press, following the approval of its Equality Scheme, informing the public of its availability. Executive Summaries were circulated to all Council premises for distribution to employees and the general public.

In February 2002, the Council launched its Equality Scheme Training Strategy and Pack. The event was well attended by employees and representatives from other public authorities, participants from the videos and the community and

voluntary sector. There was excellent media coverage of the launch. Through this Training Pack, the Council has developed an important and high quality training tool that will assist in the delivery of its Equality Training objectives. This tool is available to other organisations.

Internal Council newsletters have included frequent up-dates to inform employees of equality/good relations developments and future issues will further communicate the delivery of the Equality Awareness training programmes.

Opportunities are taken where possible, to communicate the Council's commitment to equality and good relations; these include speeches by the Lord Mayor and Chairmen of Committees, and the introductions to the Council's public documents such as the Corporate Plan and Annual Report. On a more informal basis, the Equality Officer has been asked to give advice to various departments on a range of equality issues.

## **11. The authority's arrangements for dealing with complaints arising from a failure to comply with the scheme.**

### **11a) Outline the number and nature of complaints received by your authority, and what your authority could do in future to develop its complaints handling process and learn from complaints.**

#### **Complaints**

One complaint was received in October 2001 from a Councillor in relation to the display of flags, emblems, and other symbols at the City Hall. This resulted in the carrying out of an EQIA on the Council's policy of flying the Union Flag on Council properties.

One complaint was received in February 2004 from an organisation representing Sexual Orientation who had expressed concern in respect of the Consultation process. The issues raised concerned Belfast City Council's use of Consultants, the consultation process in general and the lack of sensitivities around people being 'out'.

In response to this complaint the Council established new guidelines in respect of consulting with the LGBT community. A series of changes ensued from this complaint, namely:

- All consultants are advised of our commitment to the section 75 groups.
- Training on consultation guidelines issued to senior staff
- Key personnel made more conscious of the issue
- Staff attend consultations with consultants when and where applicable
- There is no reason to amend the equality complaint system.

**12. A commitment to conducting a review of the scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission and to forwarding a report of this review to the Equality Commission.**

**12a) what has been your authority's experience of conducting this review? To what extent has the Commission's guidance been useful in undertaking the review?**

Reviewing any scheme is useful. Many of the issues reported however are already listed in the annual reports for the last five years.

Reviewing the last five years has given us a great opportunity to see how far the equality agenda has progressed, how it has been mainstreamed and how much more we have to do.

# Appendices

## **APPENDIX 1A**

### **PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

#### **June 2001 YEAR 1**

HR/Equal Opportunities	Equal opportunities policy statement
	Policy on sexual harassment in the workplace
	Community outreach programme
	Employment support scheme
	Agenda for positive action
Council Facilities Pricing Policy	Community and leisure centres/facilities pricing policies
	Parks pricing policy
	Zoo pricing policy
	Waterfront Hall pricing policy
Community Services	Provision of sites for travellers in Belfast

#### **June 2002 YEAR 2**

Economic Initiatives	Economic development policy
	Art grant aid policy
	Heritage policy
Human Resources Employee Resourcing	Recruitment and selection procedures
	Placing of job advertisements
	Removal expenses
Access policies	Waterfront Hall policy on access
	Building access and facilities for disabled people
Community Services	Playcentre pre-school playgroup policy
	Grant aid policy

**June 2003 YEAR 3**

Parks and Amenities (+Contract Services)	Scale of charges
	Public access to the countryside
	Planning of open space
	Strategy for the provision of playgrounds
	Zoological Gardens customer care
Capital works/ Procurement	Supplier Charter
Waste Management (+Contract Services)	Public conveniences - provision and maintenance
	Recycling centres
	Charge for wheeled dustbins
	Refuse collection specification and monitoring

**June 2004 YEAR 4**

HR/Employee Relations	Premature retirement
Leisure Services (+Contract Services)	Leisure centres specification and monitoring
	Provision of events and sports development
Business Improvement	Best Value Strategy
Chief Executive's	Equality Scheme
	Admission of public to Council meetings
	Receiving deputations at Committee meetings
Consumer Protection	Provision of consumer advice
	Charging for training
	Home safety (promotion)
	Home safety check scheme
Building Control	Street names in a language other than English
Health Protection	Procedure for investigating complaints relating to illegal eviction and harassment
	Provision of free pest control service to individuals in receipt of certain benefits

## APPENDIX 1B

### EQIA Schedule Revised (2002 - Year 3)

		<b>New Policies to be Screened</b>
Parks & Amenities (& Contract Services)	Scale of charges	Now part of the Open Space Strategy currently being developed
	Public access to the countryside	As above
	Planning of open space	As above
	Strategy for the provision of playgrounds	As above
	Zoological Gardens customer care	As above
Capital Works/Procurement	Supplier charter	Development of a new procurement policy currently ongoing
Waste Management (& Contract Services)	Public conveniences – provision and maintenance	Service review on public conveniences currently ongoing
	Recycling Centres	New Waste management Strategy being developed
	Charge for wheeled dustbins	As above
	Refuse collection specification and monitoring	As above

### EQIA Schedule Revised (2004 – Year 4)

		<b>New Policies to be Screened</b>
HR/Employee Relations	Premature retirement	Already conducted EQIA year 2
Leisure Services (& Contact Services)	Leisure centres specification and monitoring	No longer applicable due to internal restructuring
	Provision of events and sports development	New Sports Development Strategy being developed
Business Improvement	Best Value Strategy	Adopted the government guidelines which have already been equality assessed
Chief Executive's	Equality Scheme	Due for Revision in Year 5
	Admission of public to Council meetings	Re-screened Screened Out
	Receiving deputations at Committee meetings	Re-screened Screened Out
Consumer Protection	Provision of consumer advice	Re-screened Screened Out
	Charging for training	Re-screened Screened Out
	Home safety (promotion)	Re-screened Screened Out
	Home safety check scheme	Re-screened Screened Out
Building Control	Street names in a language other than English	Re-screened Screened out
Health Protection	Procedure for investigating complaints relating to illegal eviction and harassment	Re-screened Screened Out
	Provision of free pest control service to individuals in receipt of certain benefits	Re-screened Screened Out

## APPENDIX 1C

### EQIA'S not on original schedule

<b>DEPARTMENT / UNIT</b>	<b>POLICY</b>
Chief Executive's	Flying of the Union Flag
Recreation & Community Development	Strategic Review of Leisure

## APPENDIX 1D

### Screening of New Policies

Dept/Unit	Policy	Screening outcome
Chief Executive's	Equality/Consultative Forum	Screened out
Community Safety	Community Safety Strategy	Screened out
Recreation & Community Development	Leisure Centres Pricing Policy	Screened out
Recreation & Community Development	Sports Development Policy	Screened out
Recreation & Community Development	Open Space Strategy	Screened out
Health & Environmental Services	Public Conveniences	Screened out
Corporate Services	Policy on use of the City Hall	Screened out
Corporate Services	Council policy committing to Fair Trade	Screened out
Corporate Services	Council No Smoking policy	Screened out
Corporate Services	Access to City Hall courtyard	Screened out
Corporate Services	Flexible hours working scheme	Screened out
Corporate Services	Smoking at Work code of practice	Screened out
Chief Executive's	Good Relations Strategy	Screened out
Health & Environmental Services	Review of Civic Amenity Site operational requirements	New Waste Management Strategy in development
Chief Executive's	Records Management Policy	Screened out
Health & Environmental Services	Environmental Policy	Screened out
Belfast Waterfront Hall	Art, Education & Community Development Strategy	Screened out
Development Department	Conference Subvention Policy	Screened out
Development Department	Cultural Tourism Strategy	Screened out
Development Department	Pedestrian Signage Scheme	Screened out
Development Department	Major Civic and Public Events	Screened out
Community Safety	Community Support Plan	Screened out

# APPENDIX 1E

## Status of New Policies

<b>Dept/Unit</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Current status</b>
Legal Services	Bye-laws	Out for pre-consultation
Development	Procurement Strategy	Currently in development
Development	Capital City 2	Currently in development
Development	Integrated Cultural Strategy	Out for consultation
Recreation & Community Development	Facilities Management of pitches	Currently in development
Health & Environmental Services	Waste Management Strategy	Currently in development
Chief Executive's	5 year Equality review	Currently in development
Health & Environmental Services	Home safety check scheme and promotion	Reviewing and developing strategy
Health & Environmental Services	Pest control charging policy	Under review
Health & Environmental Services	Advice on illegal eviction	Under review
Health & Environmental Services	Charging for training provided by the Department	Under review
Health & Environmental Services	Provision of Consumer Advice	Under review

## APPENDIX 2

### Equality Impact Assessment Current Stage report

<b>Title of EQIAs which have been completed up to the end of January 2006</b>	<b>Stage (Steps 1-7 of EQIA process)</b>
1. Pricing Policy	1-7
2. Model Equal Opportunities Policy	1-7
3. Sexual Harassment Policy	1-7
4. Community Outreach Programme	1-7
5. Human Resources: i) Recruitment and Selection procedures ii) Placing of job advertisements iii) Removal expenses	1-7
6. Access Policies: Access to buildings and associated facilities	1-7
7. Flying of the Union Flag	1-7
8. Grant Aid for Community Organisations	1-7
9. Culture and Arts Funding	1-7
10. Strategic Review of BCC Leisure Facilities	1-7

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **EQIA STAGE 7 PRICING POLICY**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

The Council's Pricing Policy was identified as one such policy and, following consultation, was scheduled to be carried out in Year One of the EQIA programme. The stated aim of the Pricing Policy is: 'To operate a tariff of charges for the provision of facilities and services so as to recoup a reasonable proportion of the Council's expenditure while acting in a fair and equitable manner towards both residents of and visitors to the City.' For the purposes of the EQIA, the Policy has been restricted to those facilities and services where the Council is able to operate some discretion in the levying of charges. Therefore the Pricing Policy EQIA relates mainly to the following facilities: Leisure and Community Centres, Outdoor Leisure, Belfast City Hall, the Ulster Hall / Group Theatre, Waterfront Hall, Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle, Malone House, Cemeteries and the Crematorium. The Council's management / leasing agreements concerning certain sporting and community facilities are also included in this assessment.

In carrying out the EQIA the Council has taken into account information and data from a number of sources. These sources did not suggest that the Council's Pricing Policy had been a significant cause for concern among residents of Belfast. Indeed it was felt that the actions of the Council generally had been directed towards providing concessions for a number of the equality categories in order to promote equality of opportunity. However, mindful of the duty to promote equality of opportunity and good relations it was felt important to review the pricing schedules which operate at each location to consider whether adverse impact may occur.

An assessment of the impact of the Council's Pricing Policy was then conducted in respect of the nine equality dimensions identified in Section 75 and a number of issues were identified.

#### **Monitoring update**

**Admission and membership** - A consistent approach regarding admission and membership will apply to the Council's leisure centres and outdoor leisure facilities and the Council will ensure that similar rates of concession apply to council-owned facilities governed by management agreements. A proposed Pricing Policy for Leisure Centres was agreed by Community & Leisure Sub Committee in January 2006. This proposed pricing policy will require endorsement by the Community and Recreation Committee in January 2006 and

the approval of full Council in February 2006 before the policy can be implemented. It should be noted that the comments regarding Leisure Centre charges included in the following paragraphs are based on the proposed pricing policy.

**Concessionary rate** - In terms of membership and admission to these facilities, persons aged 60 years and above will have 'free' access to leisure centres before 11am, Monday to Friday and will be required to pay a £1 concessionary charge per activity outside of these times. Admission prices will be reviewed in the Zoo. For Waterfront Hall Promotions - concessionary rate for persons aged 60 years and above; under 16 years; students; persons "unemployed"; and persons registered disabled. 50% reduction for wheelchair spaces. For Waterfront /Ulster Halls external promotions certain promoters will offer concessionary rates at their own discretion for persons aged 60 and over; under 16 years; persons with a disability and persons "unemployed".

**Children** - Children aged 3 and under will be admitted free of charge. However the Waterfront Hall policy in relation to the admission of children under the age of 3 will still apply; all juveniles, including those under the age of 3, will pay a concessionary rate, where applicable. The Zoo is free for children under 4 years of age. There are concessionary rate where applicable for Waterfront/Ulster Halls.

**Families** - A consistent approach regarding concessionary rates for family units with at least one adult and a maximum of two adults will apply. However the Waterfront Hall will only apply this family unit concession rate on appropriate performances and will continue to use the 'children' designation for those aged 16 years and under. The Zoo operates a Family Day Ticket. Waterfront/Ulster Halls apply Family Saver tickets where applicable.

**Hire charges** - Existing charges for hire of the Waterfront Hall, Ulster Hall/Group Theatre, Malone House, Belfast Castle and Belfast City Hall will continue to operate. Where concessionary rates may apply these will operate at the discretion of management. The rate charged for hire of the Ulster Hall will not differentiate between religious and voluntary groups. Rates of hire for the Waterfront Hall / Ulster Hall are currently under review, with revised scales due to be launched in the 2006-2007 financial year.

**Community Development Activity** - The concessionary rates made available to groups involved in Community Development Activity will continue to apply. The Waterfront Hall offers reduced room hire rates to Community Groups and a Community ticketing scheme offers reduced price tickets for selected shows.

**Concessionary rates** - The concessionary rates currently operated by the Waterfront Hall will continue to apply. Standby tickets for selected performances will be available to students only. For Waterfront/Ulster Halls a student standby rate is applicable for selected performances. A new incentive launch in Autumn

2005 as part of the Waterfront Hall's youth strategy offers complimentary tickets for selected performances to all under-18's.

**Burials and cremations** - A differential rate for burial and cremation will continue to operate between Belfast residents and others, with provision for older people who have lived in Belfast but have moved away from the City for residential or nursing care.

**Advertising** - The Council will publicise the availability of concessionary rates in all its facilities to ensure wider uptake, and will also contact groups representing relevant equality dimensions. Community & Leisure current practice is to publicise in all facilities. Leisure consulted fully with Equality Groups on proposed pricing policy. The rates advertised in the Zoo and on the website and Waterfront/Ulster Halls are publicised via flyers and website.

**Disability** - The Council will apply a consistent policy of permitting significantly reduced rates for hire of facilities by groups representing persons with a disability where the use of the facility is linked to therapeutic measures. Leisure will be based on ability to pay on income status in proposed pricing policy.

**Carers** - The Council is sympathetic to the extension of concessionary rates to those who are significant carers whose presence as a carer is essential to the attendance of the person with a disability. Carers are free in Leisure Centres. There is a 50% reduction for wheelchair users and carers only, for selected events in the Waterfront Hall

**Staff training** - All relevant staff will be trained in the Council's policy in relation to the granting of concessionary rates in order to ensure sensitivity and consistency of approach. In Recreation & Community, all Staff will be trained on the new pricing policy. All Staff are trained in Parks & Cemeteries & Waterfront/Ulster Halls.

The Council will endeavor to ensure that events/activities which are restricted to particular groups (e.g. women, men) will not be scheduled exclusively at peak-rate times. This is current practice in Recreation/Community.

The Council will review its arrangements for the granting of franchises within Council facilities to ensure that pricing schedules are fair and equitable in relation to the nine equality dimensions.

**Complaints** - The Council reviews its complaints procedure to ensure that all pricing complaints associated with pricing are registered and monitored centrally.

## **EQIA STAGE 7 HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Model Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

### **Community Outreach Programme**

#### **Background/Rationale to EQIA**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

#### **The Model Equal Opportunities Policy**

The aim of this policy, which covers all Section 75 categories plus trade union membership and those with a criminal record, is to communicate and demonstrate to employees and potential job applicants that the Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination in any aspect of employment and that selection will be made on the basis of merit.

#### **Community Outreach Programme**

The aim of this programme is to promote the Council as an attractive equal opportunity employer and to reach a wide pool of potential applicants representing the diversity of Northern Ireland's society.

#### **The Sexual Harassment Policy**

The aim of this policy is to ensure employees are not subjected to behavior that causes offence, harasses, humiliates, threatens, intimidates or causes apprehension because of their gender; it also provides procedures for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment.

#### **Monitoring Update**

- Representation in the workforce is a key priority area in the Good Relations Strategy

- Work experience requests from targeted under represented groups have been approved by Council
- A project entitled Women into Non traditional roles has been developed.
- The Council endorses projects such as Women into Politics and Women in Local Councils initiatives
- An employee monitoring programme has been introduced
- Unfair Treatment procedures have been approved by the Council
- Child Care Voucher scheme has been introduced
- A work life Balance Handbook has been produced and circulated to all employees. The monitoring and evaluation regarding the outcome of the work life balance policies is ongoing.

### **Complaints**

No complaints have been received

## **EQIA STAGE 7 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES**

### **Background/Rationale to EQIA**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

Belfast City Council's Recruitment and Selection procedures are based on the Local Government Staff Commission's (LGSC) Code of Procedures. The aim is to provide a best practice approach to recruitment and selection and to ensure consistency across Belfast City Council through the application of common procedures and in compliance with legislative requirements and standards.

The EQIA of this policy has identified that although there is some under representation in certain job groups, the Council is addressing this through complementary policies.

### **Monitoring update**

Issues were raised during the EQIA consultation process. As part of Stage 7 EQIA process all issues arising from the EQIA and consultation responses have been reviewed.

- Premature Retirement Policy – no comments were received in relation to this Policy and the Council did not identify any adverse impact.
- Advertising - All publicly advertised vacancies are now e-mailed to a range of under represented groups prior to advertisement e.g. Disability Action, NICEM, Age Concern etc.

The EQIA has highlighted issues which have now been completed, examples being voluntary monitoring and logging for reasonable adjustments.

As a result of review of policies, Unfair Treatment guidelines are now in place – these will determine the appropriate course of action after an initial interview. Other proactive measures included the Women into Non-traditional Sectors project, targeted outreach and positive recruitment of ethnic minorities.

An employee monitoring process has been established. Employees will be invited to attend particular equality theme groups. Issues such as multiple disadvantages will come under the work life balance scheme and will be addressed by the equality groups.

The Council continues to liaise with the Department of Education and Learning and has placed people under the Employment Support Scheme/New Deal.

### **Complaints**

No complaints have been received.

## **EQIA STAGE 7 ACCESS POLICY**

### **Background/Rationale to EQIA**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

The Council's Access Policy was identified as one such policy and, following consultation, was scheduled to be carried out in Year Two of the EQIA programme. The stated aim of the Access Policy is: "As far as is reasonably practicable and within its resource limitations, the Council will ensure that its buildings and associated facilities are accessible to all and that fair and equitable treatment will be given in the use of such buildings and associated facilities."

For the purposes of this EQIA, the policy has been restricted to buildings and associated facilities owned or managed by the Council. The Policy Aim is:

*"As far as is reasonably practicable and within its resource limitations, the Council will ensure that its buildings and associated facilities are accessible to all and that fair and equitable treatment will be given in the use of such buildings and associated facilities."*

### **Monitoring update**

Issues were raised during the EQIA consultation process. As part of Stage 7 EQIA process all issues arising from the EQIA and consultation responses have been reviewed.

The Pricing team has reviewed the pricing policies in relation to persons with a disability and carers.

As a direct result of the annual focus group meeting, all jobs are automatically circulated to Disability Action in advance of public advertisement.

The Council hosts an annual focus group for stakeholders on access issues.

The Council has developed a Disability Strategy using extensive consultation with our stakeholders.

An action plan has been drawn up and communicated to all stakeholders.

The Access audits cover all nine equality dimensions

The Council is monitoring employees on Section 75 categories.

Many of the actions in relations to access are included in the Disability Strategy Action Plan 2005-2006 as follows:

- Consult interested people on our disability strategy
- Tell our staff about the disability strategy
- Produce guidelines for signs and communicate these to employees
- Launch the strategy to disability organisation
- Deliver disability awareness training throughout the organisation
- Monitor applicants with disabilities, those we short-list and those we appoint from April 2005 to March 2006
- Develop a logging system to monitor reasonable adjustments we have considered and put into practice, or refused, for employees with disabilities
- Make available at least 30 work-experience placements for people with disabilities from April 2005 to March 2006
- Hold careers fairs and training in interview skills for people with disabilities
- Increase the number of placements in the Government's Employment Support Scheme from four to no more than eight
- Provide details of publicly advertised council vacancies to the Disablement Advisory Service and to individual disability organisations
- Develop an online recruitment system which will help applicants with disabilities, in line with guidance from the Employer's Forum on Disability (NI)
- Consider not applying recruitment and selection conditions for people with disabilities for certain posts, where this does not affect their ability to carry out the basic duties of the post
- Try out processes for testing people's skill for basic-grade clerical recruitment campaigns to encourage disabled applicants
- Complete the programme of access work
- Complete disability access audits

## **Complaints**

There have been no complaints received on access issues.

## **EQIA STAGE 7 FLYING OF THE UNION FLAG**

### **Background to EQIA**

The Council decided to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the current policy on the flying of the Union Flag on Council properties in October 2002, following a complaint made under the Council's Equality Scheme. The policy in October 2002 was that the Union Flag was flown:

- outside the City Hall on a permanent basis
- outside the Duncrue Complex and the Ulster Hall on specified days per year (15 Flag Days plus 4 additional days).

The EQIA has now been completed in accordance with the Equality Scheme and the guidance published by the Equality Commission. The Council considered a draft report of the EQIA findings in April 2003 when it agreed that widespread formal consultation should be carried out in the autumn of 2003. A final report, which included the results of the consultation and further advice from Senior Counsel, was considered on 24 March 2004. A decision was taken at Council on 4 May 2004 that no change should be made to the policy and the Union Flag continues to be flown at City Hall.

### **Monitoring update**

Issues were raised during the EQIA consultation process. As part of Stage 7 EQIA process all issues arising from the EQIA and consultation responses have been reviewed.

As part of the means of addressing the original complaint, the Council set up an Advisory Panel on Memorabilia, which examined the display of artifacts within the City Hall. The Advisory Panel recommended that nothing should be removed or taken down, but that in future, steps should be taken to ensure that the display was more balanced and inclusive.

The Council has taken action in a number of broader related areas since then. These include the commissioning of a bust of the radical reformer Mary Ann McCracken; the re-naming of Committee Rooms as the Conor and Lavery Rooms; the re-location of various portraits; and the broadening of the range of Council events to ensure that they reflect minority interests in the city e.g. Irish, Ulster-Scots, Chinese, Indian and Filipino.

In addition, the Council continues to undertake regular six monthly "good and harmonious" audits in all its workplaces.

The issue must be seen in the light of the wider equality/good relations context in the Council and city. The Council's Good Relations Steering Panel continues to work towards achieving political consensus on a wide range of controversial

topics and is, for example, currently debating the broader issue of flags in the city.

Since the decision of May 2004 not to change the original policy, this subject has been monitored informally through regular discussion with the party political groups within the Council.

### **Complaints**

No further complaints have been received or any similar issues raised since publication of the EQIA in May 2004.

# **EQIA STAGE 7 GRANT-AID FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

## **Background/Rationale to EQIA**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

The Grant Aid Policy was adopted in June 1999 and was intended to apply for 3 years. In the event, it was extended for a further year to allow a detailed review to be completed. The review resulted in a revised policy which was approved in June 2003. The EQIA focused on the operation of the policy over the first 3 years.

## **Monitoring update**

Issues were raised during the EQIA consultation process. As part of Stage 7 EQIA process all issues arising from the EQIA and consultation responses have been reviewed.

**Communication:** Grants are advertised widely in local press. A new post of grants advisory officer will be advertised shortly. This position will assist with communication issues. Grant forms, guidelines etc are available on the Council website.

**Targeted areas:** The department is now using ACORN (previously used Noble) and is continuously updating targeting social need guidelines. Monitoring of applications will be developed by the new grants advisory officer. Outreach officers encourage under represented groups to apply.

**Availability of grants information:** Information on allocation of individual grants is accessible through the BCC minutes on the website.

**Accessibility:** BCC will make Community Centres available free of charge if there are accessibility issues.

**Inter Agency Funders Forum:** The new grants advisory officer will be in a position to provide information to all requests regarding funding.

**Further work**

A Community Support Plan was developed and consulted upon. Section 75 issues in relation to targeted areas were addressed by this. A major review of the grant-aid in 2006 has emanated from this.

The grant aid procedure is still conducted in the same way. Funding is based on merit and not on historical precedent, and the funding cycles are still the same. There has been a change in the structure in that funding to resource centres has been stopped and replaced by capacity building funding. Following the consultation process changes were implemented.

**Complaints**

Two complaints have been received concerning the lack of clear appeals procedures. The appeals procedure is currently being reviewed.

## **EQIA STAGE 7 CULTURE & ARTS FUNDING**

### **Background/Rationale to EQIA**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions

Belfast City Council Development Department has been providing direct funding to arts organisations since the mid 1990s. Initially these grants were to support specific projects but the policy has evolved to include annual funding for professionally managed organisations to support a year long programme of arts initiatives. More recently the Council undertook a pilot scheme of grants to support development and outreach projects in specific areas of the city. The policy has also evolved to support a wider definition of culture which includes both arts and heritage initiatives.

Funding for culture and arts projects has been administered over the years under the auspices of a number of strategies and plans. However, although the strategies may have changed, the basic principles of the way funding has been provided have remained constant.

### **Monitoring update**

Issues were raised during the EQIA consultation process. As part of Stage 7 EQIA process all issues arising from the EQIA and consultation responses have been reviewed.

- Accessibility of information - All information relating to funds awarded is published on the BCC website and published in Culture & Arts documents.
- Development & Outreach (D&O) – the revised NOBLE indices are used. The scheme was reviewed at the end of the pilot year and is still running. It is being proposed that in 2006/07 the D&O initiative will be widened to include disability as a criterion. The D&O was designed to address imbalance in community applications. This has now been achieved.
- Assessment criteria – each criterion is weighted equally.
- List of applicants – a list of applicants is included in the final report and is widely available through minutes, website and on request from the Unit.
- Disability access – this is not a condition of funding. Good relations is one of the criteria under which the applications are assessed.
- Advice on applications – funding advice clinics are now being offered. These are advertised in the three main local papers, on the website and previous clients are also informed.

- Appeals procedure – an appeals mechanism has not been developed to date.

### **Further information**

The proposed new Integrated Cultural Strategy will supersede the Culture & Arts Plan. The Development Department Capital City II strategy will also contain the Culture & Arts policy. A new funding procedure is now in operation. This includes four areas of funding, namely Multi-annual, Annual, Development & Outreach & Rolling Programme funding. This has been fully consulted on, with no adverse impact indicated. Extensive consultation is continuing on the next plan.

The Unit continually monitors and evaluates systems in conjunction with stakeholders.

### **Complaints**

No complaints have been received.

# **EQIA STAGE 7 BCC OWNED INDOOR LEISURE FACILITIES**

## **Background/Rationale to EQIA**

Belfast City Council remains committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In its Equality Scheme, the Council gave an undertaking to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on each policy or group of co-joined policies where screening had indicated significant issues in relation to one or more of the nine equality dimensions.

The Council requested that an Equality Impact Assessment be undertaken pending the implementation of their decision of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 in relation to the Strategic Review of Belfast City Council owned Indoor Leisure Facilities.

Over the last number of years B.C.C. has conducted an in-depth review of leisure provision in the City Council area. As a result of the review the Council has taken the following decisions at a Council meeting held on 1 April 2003.

- (i) the transfer of the Beechmount Leisure Centre site to St Mary's University College and Forbairt Feirste;
- (ii) the closure of Maysfield Leisure Centre by the end of 2003/4 financial year and to the commencement of a new facility in South Belfast by the year 2006;
- (iii) continue to review the future format and operation of other Centres, including Shankill Leisure Centre, Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre, Loughside and Ormeau (Ozone) Centre; and
- (iv) the commencement of new facilities in North and East Belfast taking place during the period 2006 – 2009."

## **Monitoring update**

Issues were raised during the EQIA consultation process. As part of Stage 7 EQIA process all issues arising from the EQIA and consultation responses have been reviewed.

**Range and level of services** – All services and facilities are being dealt with on a site by site basis.

**Consultation** - Consultation will be undertaken at the appropriate time in relation to the facilities to be included in each new/replacement leisure centre, as well as other customer issues such as opening hours. The consultations will be targeted and include Section 75 groups.

**Access & socio-economic issues** – Access issues are covered by DDA audits in all our buildings. The indoor leisure pricing policy has been reviewed.

**Mitigation** - School users of Maysfield were given the option of using other leisure centres. Summer schemes have been financially supported across the city, via direct Council provision and grant aid to the voluntary and community sector.

### **Further information**

**Transfer of Beechmount to St Mary's College** - There has been a change in the transfer arrangements, but the outcome in terms of public use is the same. The land is to be sold or leased to the Department of Education, with the facility managed by Colaiste Feirste.

**Closure of Maysfield Leisure Centre** - Maysfield Leisure Centre closed in June 2004. Council has decided to locate the new South Belfast Leisure Centre in Ormeau Park. Additional public consultation will take place on the nature of facilities to be provided. Council has been approached regarding a possible City of Belfast Stadium in Ormeau Park, and it will be necessary to make a decision on this before progressing the leisure centre.

**Temporary closures for refurbishment** – Leisure and recreation centres are closing, a few at a time, to enable refurbishment work to be undertaken. Discussions are taking place with the North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust regarding the possibility of part of Shankill Leisure Centre being used as a day care centre for elderly people. Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre is due to be transferred to community management in the near future.

**North & East Belfast** - Council is working towards provision of new facilities for North and East Belfast. A joint centre in East Belfast, in conjunction with Castlereagh Borough Council, is one of the options. In North Belfast, two possible sites have been identified - Girdwood and the Waterworks. The outcome will be affected by the master-planning exercise which is currently underway in respect of the land at Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood.

### **Complaints**

Some complaints had been received regarding the closure of Maysfield Leisure Centre, as some groups were unable to be accommodated.

## APPENDIX 4

### Equality Scheme Training Strategy

#### Examples of completed training and development activities

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
<b>1 Equality Awareness Programme</b>	To increase understanding of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of equality</li> <li>• The Equality Scheme and related council policies</li> <li>• The diverse communities served by the council, the benefits for Belfast and the key implications for services</li> <li>• The obligations placed on the council and employees by equality legislation</li> <li>• The council's expectations of employee conduct</li> <li>• The Equality Scheme training strategy, processes for addressing equality matters for both employees and service users</li> <li>• Council achievements and best practice in relation top equality from within and outside the council</li> </ul>	<p>An Equality training resource pack was produced which includes 2 videos, case studies and a quiz, along with trainers notes. Managers received training to enable them to cascade the training to their respective teams. Briefing notes were also compiled for managers to assist them with the training.</p> <p>Good relations awareness presentations have been delivered to a number of services over the past year by the Good Relations Unit.</p> <p>A one day disability awareness course for managers and supervisors is underway. After initial evaluation the original half day course was extended to a full day session.</p> <p>A half day disability awareness programme for front-line employees is also in the process of being rolled out across the Council.</p>
<b>2 New Staff Induction Programme – Equality Dimension</b>	To ensure new employees and new Members have a clear understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of equality</li> <li>• The Equality Scheme and related council</li> </ul>	<p>Training for all members, including new members, took place in September 02 and specific training for P &amp; R Committee took place in April 03.</p> <p>A briefing session on good relations/equality issues for</p>

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
	<p>policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The diverse communities served by the Council , the benefits for Belfast and the key implications for services</li> <li>• The obligations placed on the Council and employees by equality legislation</li> <li>• The council's expectations of employee conduct</li> <li>• The Equality Scheme Training Strategy</li> <li>• Processes for addressing equality matters for both employees and service users</li> </ul>	<p>recently appointed members is currently being arranged.</p> <p>Details of Section 75 are contained within the Equal Opportunities course that all new employees must attend (including the 2 videos) and case study discussions.</p> <p>An overview of Good Relations is now included in the revised corporate induction programme.</p> <p>The requirement for an equality briefing session on service specific issues, as part of a new employee's induction, has been included in the recently developed induction guidelines for line managers.</p>
<b>3. Equality Videos</b>	<p>To produce two videos for use with employees focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness of equality constituencies</li> <li>• Providing advice on the key implications of equality on employees roles</li> </ul>	<p>Two videos are contained within the equality training resource pack.</p>
<b>4 Managing Equality</b>	<p>To increase managers' effectiveness in managing equality in employment practices and service provision, in the context of the Council's good relations objective including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance management; improving the responsiveness of services</li> <li>• Customer care and equalities; dealing with employee and user complaints, including</li> </ul>	<p>As part of the management development programme a module was developed in relation to 'Managing Equality'. This was initially delivered by an external training provider. Upon initial evaluation the module content was revised and the Equality Officer was then involved in part delivery. After further evaluation this one day module was re-designed further and has been renamed as 'Good Relations and Equality'. This is now being delivered in-house by the Good Relations Officer and the Equality Officer.</p>

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
	<p>instances of discrimination and harassment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing council policies</li> <li>• Understanding section 75 groups' needs</li> <li>• Partnership working and consultation with community organisations</li> <li>• The implications of equality legislation</li> <li>• Working with employee teams on equality matters</li> <li>• Mainstreaming equality</li> </ul>	<p>A disability awareness programme for managers and supervisors is underway. After initial evaluation this half day course was extended to a full day session.</p> <p>A half day disability awareness programme for front-line employees is also in the process of being rolled out across the Council.</p>
<p><b>5 Leading for Equality, ongoing screening and policy development</b></p>	<p>To enhance senior managers' effectiveness in developing appropriate strategies for progressing Equality Scheme objectives, in the context of the Council's 'Good Relations' objective, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading on equality – strategic and operational aspects</li> <li>• Developing responsive service provision</li> <li>• Best value implications</li> <li>• Following up Equality Impact assessments</li> <li>• Understanding section 75 groups' needs</li> <li>• Establishing performance indicators for the Equality Scheme Training Strategy</li> <li>• Managing employees' and users' complaints processes</li> <li>• Establishing a climate to facilitate learning within teams, between teams and departments, and between the Council and key stakeholders</li> <li>• Anti-discriminatory practices</li> </ul>	<p>An equality toolkit was produced and implemented by the Equality Officer. This is a useful guide when developing strategies, policies, plans, committee reports, codes of practice and guidelines within the Council.</p> <p>Equality implications are included in committee reports.</p>

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating affirmative action strategies to achieve equality outcomes for section 75 groups</li> <li>• Strategies for mainstreaming equality</li> </ul>	
<b>6 Equality training for Elected Members</b>	To enhance Members' awareness and effectiveness in relation to equality	A briefing session on good relations/equality issues for recently appointed members was carried out.
<b>7 Recruitment and Selection</b>	<p>To develop managers' recruitment and selection skills in an equality context, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining job and person requirements to meet service objectives for serving diverse communities</li> <li>• Writing job and person specifications</li> <li>• Interview techniques</li> <li>• Strategies for avoiding discrimination</li> <li>• The implications of employment and equality legislation</li> <li>• Mainstreaming equality</li> </ul>	The one day recruitment and selection skills course for panel members includes a focus on equality issues around Section 75 requirements.
<b>8 Customer Care and Equality</b>	<p>To improve employees skills in customer care and in working with users and groups in a diverse community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing section 75 groups' needs</li> <li>• Council expectations in relation to employees' conduct in dealing with members of the public</li> </ul>	<p>Equality and good relations issues are included in all customer care training.</p> <p>Equality awareness is also tested as part of the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) assessment.</p>
<b>9 Training the</b>	To enhance the skills of Council training officers,	Use of in-house expertise through delivery of MDP Module 4

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
<b>Trainers</b>	ensuring they are equipped to deliver appropriate parts of the training and development strategy	'Good Relations and Equality'
<b>10 Specialist Programmes</b>	To improve the understanding and skills of designated employees whose role is directly affected by particular aspects of the Equality Scheme	<p>A specialist programme entitled 'Equality Considerations for Policy Developers' was delivered to approximately 80 senior officers in May and June 2003.</p> <p>A disability awareness programme for managers and supervisors is underway. After initial evaluation this half day course was extended to a full day session.</p> <p>A half day disability awareness programme for front-line employees is also in the process of being rolled out across the Council.</p> <p>A half day 'Valuing Diversity' module is included in the Front-line development programmes that are currently being piloted with a sample of front-line employees.</p>
<b>11 Affirmative Action Skills Enhancement Programmes for employees who are members of under-represented groups</b>	To enhance the skills and experience of employees who are members of under-represented Section 75 groups, within the context of the Council's 'Good Relations' objective	<p>The WINS project has commenced. The aims of this project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct research across partner organisations into why women remain under represented in particular job types</li> <li>• Pilot pre-employment training programme which addresses the needs of women entering non-traditional employment</li> </ul>

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot employment tasters for those women which support the integration of women into non-traditional employment.</li> </ul>
<b>12 Service Improvement</b>	To equip managers and employees with the understanding and skills required to undertake specific tasks related to the implementation of service-related equality initiatives (e.g. equality impact assessments)	<p>Training on equality impact assessments has been delivered to elected members and EQIA teams. As part of consultants involvement in EQIAs they received EQIA training.</p> <p>There is ongoing liaison between services and the Equality Officer on equality issues e.g. EQIA's</p>
<b>13 Seminars and Events</b>	To create opportunities for managers and employees to engage with members of Section 75 groups in order for service developments to reflect appropriately the diversity of community requirements.	<p>The following community outreach initiatives have been undertaken or commenced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability careers event</li> <li>Sign Fair</li> <li>Mock interviews for female schools</li> <li>Apprenticeship Outreach Programme (8 apprentices have commenced in Facilities Management in Sep 05). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8 females pupils went to Cleansing for 1 day</li> <li>1 female pupil went to Grounds for 1 week</li> <li>- Meeting held with Belfast Islamic Centre – June 04</li> <li>- Meeting held with Indian Community – July 04</li> <li>- Approval has been granted to have people with disabilities on the job skills programme.</li> <li>- Work experience – Women's TEC – 6 placements in Grounds</li> <li>Work experience – Falls Community Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently have 18 work experience placements for those with a disability</li> <li>- 6 Site visits undertaken – 5 visits were for pupils to view</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
		<p>work taking place in Council venues. A visit was also hosted for teachers from special needs schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment Support Scheme – 5 people with a disability are on the Council’s employment support scheme</li> <li>- The Good Relations Working Group is currently considering a draft monitoring form – this will entail monitoring the workforce in terms of Section 75 categories (with exception of political opinion).</li> </ul> <p>A joint consultative event was held by the Equality Officer on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2004.</p> <p>A joint consultation forum for the Council was held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 05.</p>
<b>14 Equality Resource Bank</b>	<p>To ensure managers and employees remain up to date with equality developments within and beyond the Council</p> <p>To establish a Council resource bank of up to date information and training materials related to equality – the bank will include materials contributed/purchased from stakeholder organisations and will be a shared resource for us.</p>	<p>Good Relations and equality information is kept within the Good Relations Unit.</p>
<b>15 Evaluating equality outcomes</b>	<p>To evaluate the Equality Training Scheme Training Strategy outcomes and their impact on the achievement of Equality Scheme goals against agreed performance indicators</p>	<p>There is Regular reporting to the Good Relations Working Group, Chief Officers Management Team and Policy &amp; Resources Committee and evaluation of annual milestones are incorporated into the annual report to the Equality Commission.</p>

Component and Activity	Objective	Examples of Activities completed over 5 year period
<b>16 Capacity building for equality</b>	<p>To create a climate of learning within the council and between the Council and key stakeholders with the aim of building capacity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council to improve service provision, employment practices and partnership working on a continuous basis</li> <li>• Stakeholders to enhance their services for section 75 groups and partnership-working in order to achieve identified equality objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>A number of lunchtime sessions have been co-ordinated focusing on the areas of disability, ethnic minorities and women.</p>