



**Belfast
City Council**

Equality Screening Template

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

April 2016

Equality Screening Template

The Council has a statutory duty to screen. This includes our strategies, plans, policies, legislative developments; and new ways of working such as the introduction, change or end of an existing service, grant funding arrangement or facility. This screening template is designed to help departments consider the likely equality impacts of their proposed decisions on different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors.

Before carrying out an equality screening exercise it is important that you have received the necessary training first. To find out about the training needed or any other queries on screening, contact the Equality and Diversity Officers (job-share) Stella Gilmartin or Lorraine Dennis on extension 6026/7 or by email equality@belfastcity.gov.uk

The accompanying **Screening Guidance** note provides straightforward advice on how to carry out equality screening exercises. Detailed information about the Section 75 equality duties and what they mean in practice is available on the Equality Commission's website¹.

The screening template has 4 sections to complete. These are:

Section A - provides details about the policy / decision that is being screened

Section B – gives information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts on all equality groups.

Section C - has 4 key questions in relation to obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order

Section D - is the formal record of the screening decision.

¹ <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

1. Title of policy / decision to be screened:-

The Belfast Planning Service Statement of Community Involvement

2. Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council's policy for involving the community in the production of Belfast's Local Development Plan (LDP) and the consideration of planning applications.

The requirement to produce a SCI was introduced in the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the 2011 Act) which introduced a new reformed two-tier planning system. The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out how this should be done.

The SCI sets out how the community will be involved in the areas of:-

- The preparation of the Local Development Plan
- Development Management
- Planning Enforcement
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Conservation Area Designation
- Simplified Planning Zone Designation

3. Aims and objectives of the policy / decision to be screened:-

The aim of the SCI is to set out who, how and when the community will be invited to participate in the stages of both LDP formulation, the determination of planning applications, enforcement, preparation of guidance and designation of other land uses with the objective that the Council working with local people can create a clear vision of how the Council area should develop. The LDP must be prepared in accordance with the SCI. The SCI is by its very purpose about illustrating how the Council intends to involve the wider community including section 75 groups and how they will engage in all aspects of the planning system.

4. On whom will the policy / decision impact?

Consider the internal and external impacts (both actual or potential) and explain:-

Staff	YES
Service users	YES
Other public sector organizations	YES
Voluntary / community groups / trade unions	YES
Others, please specify (Any person or body who makes a representation to the LDP or planning application)	YES

5. Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?

The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 was written by Planning Policy Division of the Department of the Environment (DOE). The Councils SCI must be submitted to and agreed by the DOE and this Department will maintain an oversight role for many of the Council's planning functions. The SCI details when the DOE are to be informed throughout the LDP process, its development management function and any land use designations.

The SCI lists statutory consultees to be consulted when determining a planning application and general and specific consultation bodies for Local Development Plan documents. Key statutory/Government Departments will co-operate and collaborate in the plan making process as described in the SCI.

Section B

Information on the consultation process, supporting evidence gathered and has 4 key questions outlining the likely impacts for equality and good relations

6. Outline consultation process planned or achieved

The policy underpinning the 2011 Act was subject to equality, regulatory and human rights impact assessment, and to extensive public consultation from July to October 2009 by the Department of the Environment before finally being agreed by the Executive in February 2010. The Act was subject to scrutiny in the Assembly from December 2010 to March 2011. The Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 as derived from the Planning Act 2011 also make provision that allow a council to carry out a discretionary public consultation on the SCI if it so wishes.

The draft SCI was presented to Planning Committee in June 2015 for agreement to public consultation which ran from September 2015 to December 2015. The Council received 11 responses from a wide of interests ranging from Local Government, the wider economy, individuals, community/academic and businesses. The SCI in its final form having regard to these consultation responses and a summary of these consultation responses were presented to Planning Committee on the 16th February 2016 for agreement and noted at Strategic and Resources Committee on the 19th February 2016.

The SCI is a statement of how the Council will shape and inform future consultation and involvement with the community and sets out how and when this consultation will happen.

7. Available evidence

What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Set out all evidence below to help inform your screening assessment. It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as: monitoring information; complaints; research surveys; consultation exercises from other public authorities.

Section 75 category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	The SCI does not introduce any policy per se but is rather a reflection of the requirement set out in the Planning Act 2011 and Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The DOE undertook an equality impact assessment (EQIA) for the reform of the planning system published in March 2010 stemming from primary legislation, the Planning Act 2011. The Planning Act 2011 sets out the process for the	None

	<p>preparation of the SCI. This equality screening exercise for the SCI draws upon conclusions reached in the EQIA undertaken during consultation on reform. The DOE considered that the regulations would not disproportionately affect any section 75 group. There was no evidence of any impact in terms of equality of opportunity or good relations, as the aim is to improve the planning process to the benefit of all users including section 75 groups.</p> <p>Belfast City Council have an Equality Scheme which contains responsibilities to consult under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Belfast City Council Equality and Good Relations have been consulted throughout the development of the SCI.</p> <p>The SCI will be applied uniformly across all Section 75 categories without prejudice and as such will not positively or negatively discriminate towards any Section 75 group. It is expected to equally benefit all Section 75 categories.</p>	
Political opinion	As above	None
Racial group	From the 2011 Census it was identified that there are residents of Belfast Council area within minority ethnic groups where English may not be the primary language. It is acknowledged that this may pose a potential barrier to involvement within planning processes and therefore the SCI can be made available in alternative languages.	Minor
Age	As above	None
Marital status	As above	None
Sexual orientation	As above	None
Men and women generally	As above	None
Disability	It is acknowledged that the written form of the SCI may be a potential barrier to involvement within planning processes and therefore the SCI can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, audio, DAISY or Braille.	Minor
Dependants	As above	None

8. What is the likely impact (indicate if the policy impact is positive or negative) on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	<p>None were identified ahead of public consultation. Belfast City Council have an Equality Scheme which contains responsibilities to consult under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>Community involvement identified through the SCI will likely result in a positive impact upon equality of opportunity for all groups who engage with the planning system.</p> <p>There is no specific part of the SCI that will impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity.</p> <p>The SCI will have a positive impact on people from all religious groups as it will encourage participation in the planning process.</p>	No adverse impact anticipated
Political opinion	<p>As above</p> <p>The SCI will have a positive impact on people of all political opinions as it will encourage participation in the planning process.</p>	No adverse impact anticipated
Racial group	<p>From the 2011 Census it was identified that there are residents of Belfast Council area within minority ethnic groups were English may not be the primary language. SCI can be made in alternative languages to promote equality of opportunity.</p>	No adverse impact anticipated
Age	<p>As above</p> <p>The SCI will have a positive impact on people of all ages as it will encourage participation in the planning process.</p>	No adverse impact anticipated
Marital status	<p>As above</p> <p>The SCI will have a positive impact on people of all marital status as it will encourage participation in the planning process.</p>	No adverse impact anticipated
Sexual orientation	<p>As above</p> <p>The SCI will have a positive impact on people of all sexual orientations as it will encourage participation</p>	No adverse impact anticipated

	in the planning process.	
Men and women generally	As above The SCI will have a positive impact on people of all men and women as it will encourage participation in the planning process.	No adverse impact anticipated
Disability	It is acknowledged that the written form of the SCI may be a potential barrier to involvement within planning processes and therefore the SCI can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, audio, DAISY or Braille to promote equality of opportunity.	No adverse impact anticipated
Dependants	As above The SCI will have a positive impact on people both with and without dependants as it will encourage participation in the planning process.	No adverse impact anticipated

9. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	The Single Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) September 2015 states that the SCI is a key tool in increasing awareness of the scope for community participation and involvement. The SCI offers opportunities to promote equality of opportunity between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions and different racial groups by enhancing community involvement in the planning process. Enhanced community involvement will allow for a more inclusive process to the benefit of all.	This policy will apply equally to all users of the planning service.
Political opinion	As above	As above
Age	As above	As above
Marital status	As above	As above

Sexual orientation	As above	As above
Men and women generally	As above	As above
Dependants	As above	As above
Disability	The SCI can be made available in alternative formats.	As above
Racial group	The SCI can be made available in alternative languages.	As above

10. To what extent is the policy likely to impact (positive or negatively) on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? What is the level of impact?

Good relations category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	<p>Likely positive impact.</p> <p>The Single Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) September 2015 states that the SCI is a key tool in increasing awareness of the scope for community participation and involvement.</p> <p>Enhanced community involvement will allow for a more inclusive process to the benefit of all.</p>	No adverse impact anticipated
Political opinion	As above	No adverse impact anticipated
Racial group	As above	No adverse impact anticipated

11. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	<p>The Single Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) September 2015 states that the SCI is a key tool in increasing awareness of the scope for community participation and involvement.</p> <p>The SCI offers opportunities to promote good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions and different racial groups by enhancing community involvement in the planning process.</p> <p>Enhanced community involvement will allow for a more inclusive process to the benefit of all.</p>	This policy will apply equally to all users of the planning service.
Political opinion	As above	As above
Racial group	As above	As above

Section C

Belfast City Council also has legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order** and Questions 12-13 relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

12. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for the Council to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

The SCI will apply equally to all users of the planning service.

13. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life?

The SCI will enhance community involvement and allow for a more inclusive process to the benefit of all users of the planning service.

14. Multiple Identities

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy with multiple identities

The SCI will apply equally to all users of the planning service including section 75 groups.

Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

15. Monitoring Arrangements

Section 75 places a requirement the Council to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity.

Outline what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.

Equality	Good Relations	Disability Duties
Monitor and respond to comments and representations as they	Monitor and respond to comments and representations as they	Monitor and respond to comments and representations as they

<p>arise through feedback as part of the public consultation, launches, exhibitions, media releases, social media and engagement process.</p> <p>Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the process by which the SCI will be produced and states that the Council must keep the SCI under regular review.</p> <p>Any views on equality screening documents or draft EIA will be sought within the specified period of the local development plan process as set out in the SCI.</p> <p>The draft local development plan strategy and policies will be subject to independent examination.</p>	<p>arise through feedback as part of the public consultation, launches, exhibitions, media releases, social media and engagement process.</p> <p>Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the process by which the SCI will be produced and states that the Council must keep the SCI under regular review.</p> <p>Any views on equality screening documents or draft EIA will be sought within the specified period of the local development plan process as set out in the SCI.</p> <p>The draft local development plan strategy and policies will be subject to independent examination.</p>	<p>arise through feedback as part of the public consultation, launches, exhibitions, media releases, social media and engagement process from the disabled network.</p> <p>Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the process by which the SCI will be produced and states that the Council must keep the SCI under regular review.</p> <p>Any views on equality screening documents or draft EIA will be sought within the specified period of the local development plan process as set out in the SCI.</p> <p>The draft local development plan strategy and policies will be subject to independent examination.</p>
---	---	---

Section D

Formal Record of Screening Decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened

Belfast City Council Statement of Community Involvement

I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

X	equality of opportunity and good relations
X	disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is – *(place an X in the appropriate box below)*

	* Screened In – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA
--	---

X	* Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached: There is no need to mitigate the overall policy nor to seek an alternative as the basis for these policy proposals derive from the 2011 Planning Act which has been subject to public consultation, equality assessment and scrutiny through the Assembly process.
---	---

	* Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:• Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced:
--	--

Formal Record of Screening Decision *(cont)*

Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -

Name: Michelle Price

Date:23/5/2016

Department : Planning and Place

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Screening decision approved by -

Name: Dermot O’Kane

Date:23/5/2016

Department:
Planning and Place

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – equality@belfastcity.gov.uk. The screening form will be placed on the BCC website and a link provided to the Council’s Section 75 consultees.

For more information about equality screening contact –

Stella Gilmartin / Lorraine Dennis
Equality & Diversity Officer (*job-share*)
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS
Telephone: 028 90270511
equality@belfastcity.gov.uk