

## EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

### Public Authority Progress Report 2004 - 2005

#### Template to assist Public Authorities to report on implementation of the equality and good relations duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998

The information required from public authorities will be based on the period from **1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005**. Please ensure that it is submitted to the Commission by **31 August 2005**, 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.

This year's progress report template builds upon earlier guidance, for purposes of consistency and comparison. It is important that the authority reports on what it views as being relevant in terms of progress made on the implementation of the statutory duties from April 2004 to March 2005. However, if no further progress has been made under a particular heading you may state 'Progress previously reported' indicating the year e.g. 2002/03, and provide the information from the relevant earlier progress report.

Name of public authority (Enter details below)

**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

Equality Officer name and contact details (Enter details below)

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## **SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Information concerning all developments regarding the mainstreaming of the equality agenda is contained in the main body of this report. However the following summary identifies the impact on the Council in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

### **1. Mainstreaming Equality**

The Council has been particularly effective in mainstreaming the equality agenda. The equality agenda is now seen as more efficient because staff are more aware of 'what they have to do' in terms of equality. The mystery of equality or perhaps the fear of the equality agenda has somewhat subsided. This has been, in part, a result of:

- the top level support from the Chief Executive and the Chief Officers to the equality agenda.
- the intensive training programme rolled out across the Council.
- the comprehensive equality committee reporting system which has been established.

### **2. Consultation**

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. As a result the following improvements have ensued:

- Consultative Forum has been established
- Pre consultation is now common place
- The reduction of EQIAs
- The revision of policies and services including the equality agenda.

### **3. Monitoring**

The Council is aware of the importance of monitoring. As a result of our commitment to being a more representative workforce work has begun on monitoring the employees.

### **4. Partnerships**

The Council is aware that other Councils and organisations have similar remits 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. Partnership working is evidenced throughout this report.

### **5. Communication**

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.

## **6. Outcomes for people in the nine equality categories.**

A list identifying the outcomes for people in the nine Section 75 categories is listed below. More information concerning these outcomes can be found throughout the body of the text.

- Equality is mainstreamed in the Council
- Staff better trained
- Improved access to information
- Consultation on all new or revised policies
- More targeted consultation
- Better access to services through the DDA group
- A more focused concentration on youth issues
- Specific targeted employee projects e.g. female gender balancing
- Access to key staff through the Consultative Forum
- Internal Work Life Balance policies
- Partnership approach has reduced consultation fatigue

## **7. Policy considerations and decisions**

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.

Major changes to our employment policies have occurred with the Work Life Balance strategy. In addition we have begun to address under-representation in the workforce. The Council is addressing these issues by outreach initiatives. Improvements to employee monitoring will give us more information about the composition of the workforce and allow us to address the ensuing issues.

We are currently revising our procurement policies and developing a comprehensive procurement strategy.

The Council has established an interdepartmental liaison group on Travellers comprising of key officers within the Council and invites interested parties to attend. These meetings are held regularly (every six weeks) to discuss ongoing issues in relation to community development and good relations. Responsibility for the provision of accommodation on Traveller sites has been transferred to the Housing Executive.

Belfast City Council is currently developing a comprehensive welcome pack for people who use our services and are unable to communicate in English. We anticipate using this pack as a signposting facility to other key organisations in the city.

## **8 Problems encountered and solutions developed in terms of achieving better equality outcomes.**

The major challenge in this current year was to embed equality into corporate systems. The challenge was met with the introduction of the equality considerations in the committee reporting system. This has been fundamental to mainstreaming equality throughout the Council. In effect, all decision makers and policy officers are conscious of the equality remit and consider the issues as a matter of course.

The issue of representation in the workforce is a challenge we are addressing by developing our monitoring systems.

To address better equality outcomes may be considered a proactive dynamic process; it is not merely a response to problems. At the Council we are finding that we are now looking for innovative ways to address the equality agenda in policy development, for example, partnership and alternative projects are becoming more commonplace. Evidence of this may be seen in the WINS project and the craft apprenticeship scheme as part of the human resources outreach activities.

### **SECTION 2: STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECTION 75 DUTIES**

2.1 At its meeting on the 2nd January 2001, the Council agreed to adopt Good Relations as its fourth Corporate Strategic Objective, demonstrating its commitment towards its Section 75 duties. The three other Corporate Strategic Objectives were Civic Leadership, Best Value and Sustainable Development.

2.2 The Council's four Corporate Strategic Objectives, as defined in its Corporate Plan, shape the future direction of all its services. All Departments are required to include within their annual Departmental Business Plans the actions they intend to take which support and help to achieve the Corporate Strategic Objectives.

2.3 The Council has established an Inter-Departmental Working Group of officers and a cross-party Steering Panel of Members and external representatives to implement the Good Relations Strategy. This Strategy encompasses all of the work the Council proposes to carry out in the areas of equality, cultural diversity and community relations.

2.4 The Good Relations Strategy is based on the following principles:

- to promote equality of opportunity in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities, taking into account the needs of persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, of men and women generally, of persons with a disability and persons without and of person with dependants and persons without
- to promote tolerance and understanding throughout the City by providing support, including the equitable use of available budgets, for appropriate initiatives which celebrate the cultural diversity of Belfast

- to promote good relations between people of different religious and political beliefs and different racial groups in every aspect of Council activities
- to use the Council's influence as a democratically elected body to promote good relations throughout society.

**Outline evidence of progress made in developing equality and good relations objectives, performance indicators and targets for inclusion in corporate and annual operating plans during 2004-05.**

2.5 Evidence for 2004–05 in Table 1  
Targets for 2005–06 in Table 2

**TABLE 1 – ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING GOOD RELATIONS AND PROMOTING FAIR TREATMENT, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL CULTURES**

WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE THIS DURING 2004/5:	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS IN 2004/5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review the 2003/2004 Good Relations Grant Aid programme and make any necessary changes to the funding criteria, how the forms are distributed etc.</li> <li>▪ Fund projects, through the Good Relations Grant Aid, including a number of key flagship projects, which promote good community relations and celebrate cultural diversity across the City.</li> <li>▪ Establish, a Community Relations Programme to support and promote good community relations across the City. This Programme will include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training employees, Councillors and local communities to improve understanding of community relations issues.</li> <li>▪ Creating a framework for discussing sensitive issues in Council work and policies.</li> <li>▪ Continually monitoring and evaluating the Programme to ensure that remains relevant and effective.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and amend the Good Relations Grant Aid programme as necessary with any learning incorporated into the revised Guidelines and Criteria by November 2004.</li> <li>▪ Distribute 100% of the grant received from the Community Relations Unit.</li> <li>▪ Develop Good Relations Training Strategy and agree implementation dates by January 2005 Commence roll-out across Council by March 2005.</li> <li>▪ Implement an interim awareness training programme for Council employees by July 2004.</li> <li>▪ Prepare Evaluation Report by April 2005.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially complete.</b> Report was taken in October. Decision taken to revise the report to include more extensive criteria. Discussions are ongoing and a further report will be taken mid-2005.</p> <p><b>Ongoing</b> – Reported monthly to Steering Panel and to the Policy &amp; Resources Committee. On target.</p> <p><b>Ongoing</b> – Extensive consultation and a large number of Focus Groups have been undertaken with staff. Draft Strategy will be available by March 2005.</p> <p><b>Complete</b> – Various awareness sessions have been undertaken with staff at all levels across the Council.</p> <p><b>Ongoing</b></p>

**TABLE 1 – ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING GOOD RELATIONS AND PROMOTING FAIR TREATMENT, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL CULTURES (continued)**

WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE THIS DURING 2004/5:	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS IN 2004/5	
<p>Continue to implement the recommendations in relation to the anti-sectarian resolution of the Council which commenced during 2003</p> <p>Establish a Cultural Diversity Programme to promote the shared history of Belfast. This Programme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ organising Council led initiatives, exhibitions and other events.</li> <li>▪ establishing an internal information campaign on the themes of diversity.</li> <li>▪ continually monitoring and evaluating the Programme to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.</li> </ul> <p>Continue implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Panel in relation to City Hall memorabilia.</p> <p>Complete 2003–2004 Equality Impact Assessments Commence 2004–2005 Equality Impact Assessments.</p> <p>Develop appropriate monitoring systems incorporating equality considerations.</p>	<p>Completion of comprehensive audit of good relations activities in the city by December 2004.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold two events by December 2004.</li> <li>▪ Establish by April 2004.</li> <li>▪ Annual Evaluation by March 2005.</li> <li>▪ Implement, by March 2005, the recommendations of the Advisory Panel in accordance with timescales approved by P&amp;R in Feb 2004.</li> <li>▪ Complete by September 2004.</li> <li>▪ Complete by October 2004.</li> <li>▪ Agree approach to monitoring with Section 75 groups by March 2005.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Complete.</b> Database is complete. Questionnaires have been circulated. Draft report has been received and is currently under consideration.</p> <p><b>Complete</b> – Irish Language event held in May 04; Test Act event in Sept 04; Unveiling of bust and re-naming of Committee Rooms in Dec 04; Ulster-Scots event planned for Feb 05. Two further events planned for March 2005.</p> <p><b>Complete</b> – continually reviewed.</p> <p><b>Complete</b> – reported on every month.</p> <p>Good Relations activities are <b>complete</b> – Memorabilia Sub-Group disbanded.</p> <p><b>Complete</b></p> <p><b>Complete</b></p> <p><b>Ongoing</b> – BCC was used as Pilot by OFMDFM and work is continuing.</p>

**TABLE 1 – ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING GOOD RELATIONS AND PROMOTING FAIR TREATMENT, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL CULTURES (continued)**

WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE THIS DURING 2004/5:	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS IN 2004/5	
<p>Establish a Consultation Forum for the Council comprising representatives from Section 75 groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish by March 2005</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing</b> – Forum to meet by end of March 05 – development and support work continues.</p>
<p>Complete the detailed 5 year training plan contained in the Equality Scheme’s Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete 100% of the tasks associated with training plan contained in the Equality Scheme’s Action Plan by June 2005.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing</b> – On target – the Equality Scheme Training Strategy is being amalgamated into the Good Relations Training Strategy in order to ensure the two dovetail and are complementary.</p>
<p>Establish corporate guidelines for new Targeting Social Need/Promoting Social Inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish guidelines by April 2005.</li> <li>▪ Commence mainstreaming into Council work by December 2005.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing</b> – Report taken to Policy &amp; Resources Committee in August 04. Work continuing to be developed alongside the mainstream Equality Agenda.</p>
<p>Continue to implement a number of targeting initiatives to increase applications from groups currently under-represented in the workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 50:50 gender work experience for 150 placements with 30 additional female placements for non-traditional roles.</li> <li>▪ 6 unemployed females to join a team within Contract Services.</li> <li>▪ Departmental quotas for disability placements to be met by March 2005 (total of 30 across Council).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially complete</b> – From 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2005 – 71 female placements and 81 male placements have been organised with a further 9 requests not yet confirmed. Only 1 female in non-traditional roles has been organised but a further 6 are being considered at March’s Council meeting.</p> <p><b>Removed</b> – Funding for Work Track Programme was withdrawn. However, the Contract Services Department has now initiated a WINS project (Women in Non-Traditional Sectors) which is promoting the employment of women in non-traditional areas of work e.g. Cleansing Services.</p> <p><b>Ongoing</b> – From 1 April 04 – 31 March 05 – 17 placements have been confirmed and 1 is currently being considered.</p>

FUTURE POSITION		
TABLE 2 RESPONSIBILITY:	ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING GOOD RELATIONS AND PROMOTING FAIR TREATMENT, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL CULTURES	
WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY 2006	WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE THIS DURING 2005/6:	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS IN 2005/6
<p>The Council will support the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence and aims to mainstream these concepts into all its activities, policies, structures and procedures. We will also work in partnership with other agencies to promote and encourage good community relations.</p>	<p>Review the current management arrangements for ensuring maximum effectiveness of the good relations strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review the membership, remit and purpose of the Good Relations Steering Panel and Good Relations Working Group following the local government elections of May 2005.</li> </ul>
	<p>Implement the good relations training strategy throughout the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and deliver awareness training for new Members post-May 05.</li> <li>▪ Implement awareness training for appropriate staff during spring/summer 2005.</li> </ul>
	<p>Implement the recommendations of the Morrissey report, commissioned in partnership with the Community Relations Council.</p>	<p>By March 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revise grant aid funding in light of issues identified in the Morrissey report.</li> <li>▪ Develop a co-ordinated Council approach to interface areas.</li> <li>▪ In partnership with the LSP and other appropriate external agencies, identify best practice and develop a programme in relation to conflict management and resolution.</li> </ul>
	<p>Continue to develop and deliver a Good Relations programme to reflect the cultural composition of Belfast.</p>	<p>By March 2006, Good Relations programme to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognition of events of international significance.</li> <li>▪ Organisation of events to denote the contribution of various communities in City.</li> <li>▪ Support for appropriate external requests for such events.</li> </ul>
<p>The Council will support the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence and aims to mainstream these concepts into all its activities, policies, structures and procedures. We will also work in partnership with other agencies to promote and encourage good community relations.</p>	<p>Contribute to the organisation of Council commemorative events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Host, by March 2006, commemorative events, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WW II in 2005.</li> <li>▪ additional Civic Commemoration Ceremony.</li> <li>▪ Capital Celebrations/City Hall Centenary 2005/6.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Review Equality Scheme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review by Dec 2005 in accordance with any appropriate</li> </ul>

FUTURE POSITION		
TABLE 2 RESPONSIBILITY:	ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING GOOD RELATIONS AND PROMOTING FAIR TREATMENT, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL CULTURES	
WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY 2006	WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE THIS DURING 2005/6:	HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS IN 2005/6
		Equality Commission Northern Ireland guidance.
	Continue to mainstream equality issues within the Council and in partnership with others within the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver assistance and support to Departments in relation to screening, consultation and policy development - ongoing to March 2006.</li> <li>▪ Consolidate Council Consultation Panel, to meet at least twice by March 2006.</li> <li>▪ Develop, by March 2006, appropriate internal and external monitoring systems incorporating equality considerations.</li> <li>▪ Establish, by March 2006, corporate guidance for New Targeting Social Need / Promoting Social Inclusion.</li> </ul>
	Continue to undertake initiatives to develop and promote a more representative workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop, by March 2006, internal employee and external forums to discuss issues relevant to employment in BCC.</li> </ul>

2.6 A copy of the current Corporate Plan is enclosed. It includes the most comprehensive outline of additional strategic areas the Council has identified for action during the operating period 05/06.

**Outline steps taken to work with other public authorities in progressing the duties.  
Outline any details of partnership work developed or further progressed with the voluntary and/or community sector as a consequence of Section 75 work.**

2.7 There are a number of strategic developments in each of the six departments which are ongoing and include the equality agenda at the earliest stage of policy development. The Equality Toolkit and Consultation Guidelines have been instrumental in mainstreaming the equality agenda. Please see below a list of Council policies/developments/strategies

- Planning the Emergency Plan - Consideration of specialist assistance for people with Disabilities/ethnic minorities/faith groups, with dependants and age.
- Partnership approach to air control has developed a multi agency action plan addressing air quality controls placed in four areas of Belfast. Belfast City Council are taking the lead and has embedded ongoing consultation in the process.
- As part of our ongoing commitment to improving service a draft environmental health strategy is being developed. As part of the responses to pre consultation a customer charter is being added to the developing strategy.
- The Community Safety Partnership is another excellent example of multi agency partnership working. The Chief Executive is committed to partnership working and takes the lead on this partnership across all major sectors across the city. The consultation process has been fundamental to the development of the Community Safety Strategy.
- Access Strategy is being developed and consulted on fully with the Disability Strategy. This strategy has been developed in response to a request from consultees on a comprehensive statement of all our activities for people with disabilities.
- Human Resources continue to proactively engage with Section 75 in terms of creating a more diverse workforce.
- Monitoring systems being developed.
- Specific projects addressing Women in the workforce are given special attention with the WINS project and Craft Apprenticeship scheme.
- The Good Relations Unit offers funding to community organisations to develop programmes and events that will encourage and promote new learning in relation to race, religion and politics.
- Ongoing service reviews and policy development in Leisure and Community have consulted with users groups in both the leisure centres and community centres as a matter of course. Policy work currently involved the introduction of an entry card which does not identify people who are eligible for reductions, pricing review of leisure services, and the use of photographic equipment.
- Major consultations on Grove Well Being Centre, Falls Leisure Centre, Parks and Open Space Strategy, the New Waste Management Strategy, and the Sports Development Strategy.

2.8 The Chief Executives' Group representing Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Eastern Health & Social Services Board, North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust, Belfast Education and Library Board, Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education requested their respective equality officers to organise a joint consultation event. The joint consultation event was held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2004 and the main topics to be discussed were monitoring and consultation.

2.9 The Equality Officers of the organisations mentioned above continue to meet to discuss possible joint projects in the future.

2.10 The Equality Officer has been called upon to advise, lecture and present to other Councils and other statutory bodies for example invitation, to present the Equality agenda in Serbia and Montenegro, presentation of Belfast City Council's work in relation to disability issues with the Employers Forum on Disability. On many occasions assistance is required in clarifying statutory requirements, and sharing good practice.

2.11 The Equality Officer continues to liaise and network with Equality Officers from a range of other Councils. The Officers meet to discuss common equality issues.

2.12 The Equality Officer in conjunction with the Human Resources Section organised a series of lunchtime discussions with various Section 75 groups to discuss equality representation in the Council's workforce. To date meetings have been arranged with the minority ethnic groups, women's groups and disability groups.

2.13 The Council has a Disability Discrimination Act Group. The DDA group meets monthly, chaired by the Director of Corporate Services, to assess the Council's requirements for meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). A programme of audits and works are advanced along with consultation with disability organisations.

2.14 The DDA group has registered with the Disability Action Business Support Scheme. The Business Support Scheme is a partnership between companies and Disability Action in their approach towards good practice on disability issues. The aim of the scheme is to encourage companies to be forward thinking in their approach to disability issues within the workplace, to improve their services for people with disabilities and to acknowledge their efforts.

2.15 The DDA group held the annual focus group meeting for organisations representing people with disabilities at Malone House on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004. The Equality Officer presented an update on equality issues. Discussions concerning how Belfast City Council can improve its services and facilities were discussed. Following on from this annual focus group, the DDA has been working on a Disability Strategy for the Council which will be out for consultation between June – August 2005 and launched in September 05.

2.16 A group of young people with disabilities who meet in Divis Community Centre has organised a series of meetings and seminars. The Council fully endorse their efforts to raise awareness for the difficulties faced by young people with disabilities in our society. The Divis Community Centre manager and the Equality Officer attend these meetings. Other organisations such as the Equality Commission, Human Rights Commission and Translink are also invited.

2.17 The success of our lunchtime seminars in relation to disability was in part due to the fact that we worked in partnership with a person from the disability community to organise the event. This partnership working sent a powerful message that we are serious about engagement and dialogue. The seminar was well attended.

2.18 In December 2004, the Council agreed to sign up to the Barcelona Declaration, the aims of which are to promote better awareness among local authorities and the general public of the rights,

needs and potential of people with disabilities and to encourage local government to make provision in its services for the needs of people with disabilities. The Council will also take the lead in promoting the Declaration to other local statutory bodies, which have key roles not just in the physical environment of the city but the well-being of all their citizens.

2.19 One major partnership programme under development is the Sports Development Plan (physical activity strategy). This strategy is being developed for the City of Belfast with other key partners. Belfast City Council is the lead partner and has begun the preliminary consultation process.

2.20 Other examples of partnership working include the organisation of the Joint Consultation Event. The Joint Panel of Equality Officers employed a Consultant to organise the event. The event employed Section 75 groups to administer the day in terms of chairing the break out session and note taking. There was a great sense of shared ownership with this event both in terms of statutory organisations and the Section 75 groups.

2.21 Consultation work with internal staff and the Section 75 groups was advanced in relation to the creation of a Consultative Forum for the Council. Extensive research and best practice enabled us to get the best fit model for the Council. The consultation process enabled the Equality Officer to get early buy-in to the process and the Consultative Forum is now firmly established.

2.22 The Equality Directorate Research Branch of OFMDFM and the Equality Commission appointed the Economic Research and Evaluation Consultancy Group to undertake a research project with the aim of informing the development of guidance for public authorities and others in relation to Section 75 monitoring. The Council acted as a case study, as part of the research project.

2.23 The Good Relations Unit was officially established in early 2004 and is comprised of the Good Relation Manager, the Equality Officer, two Good Relations Officers, a Good Relations Assistant and two administrative support staff.

2.24 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, fees of consultants engaged to undertake EQIAs, equality training and associated expenditure, are met entirely from Council revenue estimates.

The current annual budget for the Good Relations Unit, as shown in the Council annual estimates, is £220,000, excluding salaries, which covers all equality and good relations work.

### **SECTION 3: SCREENING & EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)**

3a) **If a Screening Report has not yet been submitted to the Commission please advise us on the current position with regard to producing this report and forwarding to the Commission.**

A Screening report has been submitted to the Commission.

3b) A Screening Report and EQIA Timetable is provided in Appendix A

Updates provided in Appendix A indices

### **SECTION 4: TRAINING**

**Indicate your organisation's progress on delivery of Section 75 related training and development during the period. Please state if the training is delivered within a 5-year Training Plan.**

4.1 Belfast City Council has expended considerable efforts and resources in developing a 5-year training plan and strategy in consultation with representatives from the Section 75 groups as well as employees of the Council. The training strategy is based around 16 components:

- 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

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

4.3 Specific training was carried out for those employees involved in the Year's EQIAs. In addition a mechanism of rolling out Equality Training for all staff is now complete. All managers were trained and they are cascading this training to their staff. The Equality Training Team regularly monitors and evaluates the equality training.

4.4 The fifth and final year of the Equality Training Strategy is due to finish at the end of May 05. All future developments in relation to the Equality agenda will be amalgamated into the Good Relations Training Strategy, currently under development which will complement the Equality Training Strategy.

4.5 During the period 04-05 approximately 77% of employees (out of a total of 2400+ staff) have received training; our target was 75%.

4.6 All new staff receives equal opportunities training as part of the induction process. During 04-05 the equal opportunity training was revised and combines equal opportunities, equality and a good relations dimension.

4.7 The major training development during the 05-06 period was the Disability Awareness Training. A focus group of people with disabilities plus a group of employees with disabilities helped discuss ideas regarding the content of disability training and provided suggestions for its design.

4.8 The Disability Awareness Training Programme is ongoing.

4.9 Evaluation is an integral part of all equality training.

### **Outline details of staff and Management Board/Committee training associated with the Section 75 duties/Equality Scheme requirements.**

#### **Elected Members**

4.10 The Equality Officer has organised specific seminars for elected Members of Council, held over lunchtime to facilitate Councillors, to keep them up to date on equality matters.

4.11 In addition elected members of Council are welcome to attend any other general equality training seminars being delivered.

#### **Employees**

4.12 The Council developed a Management Development Programme based around seven management issues. One of these modules was entitled Managing Equality, indicating the significance allotted to equality issues within the Council. As responses to the MDP programme in 03-04 changes were made this module evolved during the period 04-05. The Equality module was revised to include Good Relations and was delivered jointly by the Equality Officer and a Good Relations Officer. The programme was targeted at Directors, Heads of Service and other Council officers with responsibility for managing people.

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

4.14 The Equality Officer attends Senior Management Teams meetings providing updates,

awareness raising sessions and information sessions. This is the best way to provide immediate updates to senior staff throughout the Council who in turn can relay the message to other staff.

4.15 The Equality Officer developed the equality screening of new policies and procedures using the Council's established Committee and Sub-Committee structure. All relevant staff received comprehensive notes on how to implement the new procedures.

#### **4.16 Provide details of training on awareness raising for new staff and refresher training for existing staff.**

Training delivered from April 2004 – March 2005:

- **Disability Awareness Training attendance figures:**
- Managers & Supervisors: **271**
- Front Line Employees: **609**

**4.17 Programme for Managers' & Supervisors:** An awareness programme designed to impart specialist knowledge on disability issues to employee's representative of different grades. This includes reference to specific service related issues and is targeted at employees who do not necessarily interact with people with disabilities on a regular basis but who require awareness of the issues to fulfil the requirements of the jobs, i.e. managerial and supervisory positions.

**4.18 Programme for Front Line Employees:** An awareness programme designed for front-line employees who may come into contact with people with disabilities on a daily basis. This is a practical and interactive programme and also includes reference to specific service related issues.

- **Equal Opportunities Training (which has also included the Equality Scheme Video's) – 631 employees trained**
- **Recruitment & Selections Training (for Managers sitting on interview Panels) – 101 trained**
- **Corporate Induction training –** this training session includes a brief on the Councils Objective (Promoting Good Relations) and the various priority areas.

#### **4.19 Provide details of how affected groups have been involved in the development and/or delivery of training.**

Prior to the rollout of the Disability Awareness Training programmes:

- Representatives from Section 75 groups attending the annual DDA Group meeting were asked for suggestions on what the programme should include.
- Focus groups with employees from a cross section of the organisation were also carried out.

Evaluation and feedback on the 5 year Equality Scheme Training Strategy has been considered as part of the development of the Good Relations Training Strategy.

## **Summary of training evaluations and comments on the benefits of such training:**

### **Disability Awareness Training Programmes:**

Overall participants found both programmes very informative. Some comments made have included:

- The course was excellent and enabled me to gain a very good insight into all the aspects relating to disability awareness.
- I found both courses very informative – it was good to have written information on the Disability Act.
- Eye opening and very interesting.
- It makes people understand a lot more about people with disabilities.
- Informative – plenty of 'real life' situations.
- Great awareness course – surprised.
- A good insight into the feeling of people with disabilities.
- Excellent and useful training, food for thought.
- Challenging and thought provoking.
- Hopefully will have learnt something positive – not least to reflect on my own attitudes.
- A valuable, sometimes surprising insight. Disability is a very 'individual' condition.
- Very beneficial, feel more confident knowing how to interact with people with disabilities.
- Very educational – I will be able to return to the workplace and use the knowledge gained today.
- Very interesting content will be helpful in dealing with colleagues and customer in future.
- Informative/enlightening. Excellent interaction and good anecdotal examples.

## **SECTION 5: COMMUNICATION**

### **Provide details of internal and external communication of the authority's commitment to the statutory duties.**

5.1 The work of the Good Relations Unit which comprises both Equality and Good Relations work is directed by the interdepartmental working group the Good Relations Working Group (GRWG). The GRWG meets every two months. The GRWG monitors budgets and work plans, and advances policy. In addition a Good Relations Steering Panel comprised of Councillors and representatives of the main Churches, Trade Unions, the CRC, the business sector and the minority ethnic groups meets monthly. (see Section 11)

5.2 The Equality Officer and Good Relations Officers report on the progress of the implementation of Section 75 at a more strategic level on a quarterly basis to the Good Relations Working Group, Good Relations Steering Panel, Chief Officers' Management Team. These reports reflect progress against the detailed action/work plans.

5.3 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, the Council's website and at City Hall.

5.4 The Chief Executive was called upon regularly to deliver talks on the Council's work on good relations and related equality issues. His willingness to contribute to these seminars, conferences and events, both internal and external, highlights a commitment to equality at the highest level of the Council's business.

5.5 On occasions the Good Relations Unit staff are interviewed by external agencies in relation to the Council's Equality and Good Relations work. As evidenced by the Corporate Plan, the Council is committed to civic leadership and promoting equality and good relations. The Equality Officer was requested by the British embassy in Serbia and Montenegro to present at seminars on equality legislation in N. Ireland. In addition she gave a presentation on the Council's work under Section 75 and the Council's progress with issues relating to disability to the Employers Forum on Disability.

### **Provide details of how the authority communicates progress on delivery of the statutory duties**

5.6 Opportunities are taken where possible, to communicate the Council's commitment to equality and good relations. These include speeches given by the Lord Mayor and Chairmen of Committees and Sub-Committees and introductions to the Council's public documents such as the Corporate Plan. On a more informal basis, the Equality Officer and Good Relations Team give advice to various Departments on a range of issues.

5.7 Internal Council newsletters are used as a vehicle to provide up-dates to inform employees of equality/good relations developments and future issues. The website is continually updated on equality matters.

5.8 The external Council newsletter – City Matters – includes articles and up-dates to inform the wider population about developments in the field of equality and good relations.

5.9 The Council was delighted to receive many comments to the EQIAs from the consultees. In accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme we respond to all comments and include a matrix detailing the responses in the appendix to the EQIA.

5.10 The statutory duty is maintained in relation to communicating with our consultees on the AA list. We consult with user groups, targeted stakeholders and Section 75 groups in the early stages of development of new policies, service reviews or changes to our original EQIA schedule. The screening decisions are consulted through a report to the AA list, focus groups and on our website.

5.11 The external communication of the authority's commitment to the statutory duties and communicating progress on statutory duties has been enhanced with the creation of the Consultative Forum.

5.12 The Lord Mayor's Office was in frequent dialogue with the staff from the Unit on a range of issues relating to equality and good relations. Events held during the year covered a range of relevant issues, including a group discussion on interface issues in Belfast, human rights and ethnic minority issues.

5.13 Communication plans are actively created in various services throughout the Council regarding policy proposals. At present new communication plans are being developed in relation to the following policies:

- Corporate and Civic Hospitality
- Waste Management
- Park and Open Spaces
- Disability Strategy
- Pricing Review
- Community Safety
- Leisure Centres Pricing Policy
- Capital Celebrations
- Sports Development Strategy
- Public Conveniences service review

The policies listed below are policies proceeding to the pre consultation phase

- Procurement Strategy
- Home Safety Strategy
- Review of Pest Control Service
- Updating and reviewing procedure for dealing with complaints relating to illegal eviction and harassment

**Provide details of any review of communication activities to ensure effective communication on progressing the statutory duties.**

5.14 The staff in the Good Relations Unit attend many lectures, seminars and conferences throughout the year and actively seek to develop our service. Every year as part of our business planning cycle we debate and reflect on how we meet performance targets. Every year we discuss the effective and the less effective methods of communication, the most notable outcome of this process was the Consultative Forum.

5.15 The Council looks forward to the review of the Equality Scheme directive from the Equality Commission. The review of the Equality Scheme will enable us to review communication activities more effectively to ensure maximum effectiveness.

## **SECTION 6: DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS**

### **Describe systems established to supplement available statistical and qualitative research including consideration given to using internal organisational data and external networks**

6.1 An EQIA Team was set up to support each Service carrying out an EQIA. Members of these Teams collated any existing internal information databases and other sources of data which relate to the Service. In addition, considerable statistical information is held centrally within the Council e.g. the Baseline Profile of Belfast, which is up-dated annually and used in the development of the Council's Corporate Planning process.

6.2 The Council carries out a major Public Consultation exercise every two years and included a sample boost in its 2001 survey to ensure that it was representative of all nine groups defined in the equality legislation. The results of this survey 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.

6.3 A very successful consultation exercise was carried out in April 2004 for all consultees on issues related to the Council's approach to disability issues. 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. The major outcome of this event has been the development of a disability strategy.

6.4 Statistical evidence in respect of the EQIAs conducted in this 2003-2004, namely Access Policy, Human Resources, Flying of Flags on Council property and Community Services Grant Aid, Culture and Arts Plan is continually updated.

### **Describe any systems established to monitor the future adverse impact of policies that have been equality impact assessed.**

6.5 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.

6.6 The Good Relations Working Group is in the process of developing more comprehensive monitoring systems throughout the Council's services and facilities.

6.7 A comprehensive system of monitoring with equality considerations will be phased into the various systems and structures, in two Phases. Phase One of the process, which is now complete, is to audit all existing structures and make recommendations for Phase Two, the amendment of monitoring systems. The importance of monitoring and equality considerations has been a direct

result of the Equality Impact Assessments. The pilot phase of Phase Two will concentrate on employee monitoring. This work is ongoing.

6.8 The inclusion of Section 75 categories in monitoring systems will be progressed with the involvement of service users and providers through a series of meetings. It is anticipated that this will be extremely important to the development of mainstreaming equality throughout the Council. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of monitoring will be considered.

6.9 The OFMDFM recently completed a research project on monitoring systems in local government in NI and used the Council as a case study. This research supported the need for robust monitoring systems.

6.10 The Council monitors completed EQIAs to ensure compliance with their findings. These meetings are held annually. One outcome from these meetings has been a request to hold a joint meeting of EQIA review teams to check cross over issues. The interest has arisen from the EQIA pricing and access team.

## **SECTION 7: INFORMATION PROVISION, ACCESS to INFORMATION and SERVICES**

7.1 The Council is committed to providing information in alternative formats as stated in its Equality Scheme. Links have been made and arrangements are in place with key agencies and organisations to produce work in alternative formats and languages as required.

7.2 The Equality Officer has had a series of informal discussions with representatives of Section 75 categories addressing information provision and access to services.

7.3 The Equality Officer is a member of the DDA Group specifically to progress the equality agenda. The Council has adopted the BS 8300 standard in relation to compliance with the DDA Act 1995.

7.4 The DDA group registered with Disability Action Business Support Scheme. The Business Support Scheme is a partnership between companies and Disability Action in their approach towards good practice on disability issues. The aim of the scheme is to encourage companies to be forward thinking in their approach to disability issues within the workplace, to improve their services for people with disabilities and to acknowledge their efforts. We were delighted to receive a certificate for completing all necessary actions under the Scheme.

7.5 The DDA group is developing an Access Strategy for the Council. This strategy is the main vehicle for reviewing and updating all areas of access to Council goods, services and facilities. This work is ongoing. Major developments include staff training, website revision and employee monitoring.

7.6 A signage group has been established as a sub group of the DDA group. This group is concentrating on all types of wayfinding and signage for the Council in an attempt to be innovative and proactive.

7.7 All Departments have been requested to include the Council's textphone number on their

stationery and other publications where their phone number is included.

7.8 All the Council's major public documents – e.g. the Corporate Plan, City Matters, EQIA Executive Summaries – can be made available in alternative formats on request, i.e. in other languages, in disc or audio cassette, large print or in Braille.

7.9 Signers have been employed at focus group meetings, seminars, interviews and launches as appropriate.

7.10 The Council is committed to increasing our representation of people with disabilities in the workforce. Since our lunchtime seminar with representatives of disability organisations we have raised the availability of workplace placements from 20 to 30. Development work is ongoing.

7.11 The Human Resource team are developing community outreach initiatives to increase participation of women in non traditional roles. The team has visited both boys and girls schools in relation to craft apprenticeship schemes.

7.12 The Council is the lead partner in an EU funded project known as the WINS (Women into Non Traditional Roles) project. The aim of this project is to attract women from across all sectors to consider non traditional work. The work is ongoing.

7.13 The Human Resources team has attended meetings with ethnic minority groups to improve networks and relationships in a bid to increase our representative of ethnic minorities in our workforce.

7.14 The Council is aware of the need to develop more robust monitoring systems. To this end we are committed to improve our monitoring systems. A pilot project is currently under way to monitor our employees across all the section 75 groups. It is intended that the outcome of this monitoring process will enable us to improve access to our services both internally and externally.

7.15 The Council is aware of the growing population of people in Belfast who do not have English as a first language. These issues are being addressed. It is intended that the Council will develop a welcome pack which will include a signposting service to other organisations in the city.

## **SECTION 8: COMPLAINTS**

No Section 75 complaints were received during this period.

## SECTION 9: SCHEME TIMETABLE

### **EQIA Schedule Revised (Year 3) (June 03/04)**

		<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 (Year 4) (June 04/05)**

		<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

## New Policies

### Screening Outcome Belfast City Council

#### SCREENING of POLICIES in ACCORDANCE with SECTION 75 of the NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1989

#### OUTCOME OF POLICIES SCREENED DURING PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2003 – 31 MARCH 2004

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Policy aim</b>	<b>Brief description</b>	<b>Screening outcome</b>
Review of Civic Amenity Site Operational Requirements	To provide recycling/civic amenity site facilities which are more suited to customers needs	A review of civic amenity site operational requirements will include a review of site locations and functions; opening hours; staffing; duties and responsibilities and site security.	EQIA carried out by Arc 21 and Equality Considerations built into new Waste Management Strategy in development Equality Considerations have been met. Screened Out.
Belfast Waterfront Hall Art, Education and Community Development Strategy	To increase Access for All	Main Blueprint Ideology  Subsequent Policies	Screened Out
Capital City	Belfast City Council Development Agenda for Next Four Year	Help Belfast Becoming Better and Assist Regeneration in the City	Screened Out
Conference Subvention Policy	Provision of Financial Support to attract National and International Conferences to Belfast	Promotion of Belfast	Screened Out
Cultural Tourism Strategy	Develop Cultural Tourism	Developing Partnerships and Projects between Tourism and Cultural Sectors	Screened Out
Pedestrian Signage Scheme	Pedestrian Signage Scheme	To Install a series of Pedestrian Signs in City Centre	Screened Out

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Policy aim</b>	<b>Brief description</b>	<b>Screening outcome</b>
Major Civic and Public Events	Delivery Management of Public and Civic Leadership Events	Civic Leadership and Improving the Quality of Life	Screened Out
Community Support Plan	To develop Belfast City Council's Community Support Plan	Outlines the role Belfast City Council can play in addressing needs of community and voluntary sector and proactively form partnerships with other agencies	Screened out

### **Recent Consultation Documents**

The policies listed below were consulted upon In January 05

- Equality Consultative Forum
- Community Safety
- Leisure Centres Pricing Policy
- Capital Celebrations
- Sports Development Strategy
- Public Conveniences service review
- Waste Management Strategy
- Parks and Open Spaces

The policies listed below are policies proceeding to the pre consultation phase

- Procurement Strategy
- \*Home Safety Strategy
- Review of Pest Control Service
- Updating and reviewing procedure for dealing with complaints relating to illegal eviction and harassment
- Leisure Centre Disability Summer Scheme review
- Partnership with Health trusts on exercise referral schemes
- Review of summer schemes as a result of consultation with participants( young people)

\*The Home Safety Strategy was screened out and was consulted upon. Comments arising from the consultation process have resulted in a need to review this area of work. The Council is awaiting the new DHSSPS Home Strategy before proceeding.

## **SECTION 10: CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

**Provide details of organisational arrangements for managing S 75 consultation exercises and processes e.g. system, processes, methods and communication channels used.**

**Provide details of processes adopted to participate/engage with affected groups.**

10.1 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.

10.2 Consultation with Section 75 groups is a major element of the Council's commitment to the equality agenda. In addition some Belfast City Council departments and services are now using a collaborative process with the Section 75 groups and other affected groups to inform and develop new Council policies. For example, in the recent Public Consultation Exercise, conducted every two years, a number of focus groups comprised members of the nine equality categories.

10.3 The Council has 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 the 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.

10.4 Final EQIA documents were consulted on in relation to all of the EQIA's conducted during the period i.e.

- Human Resource (premature retirement, recruitment and selection)
- Access Policy
- Flying of the Union Flag
- Grant Aid for Community Organisations
- Culture & Arts Funding

10.5 A group of Equality Officers from District Councils continues to meet to discuss relevant equality matters.

10.6 Unfortunately many of the groups with whom we consult have expressed their concern at the number of requests being made to them by public authorities. Consultation processes in general included face to face meetings, focus groups and documentation circulation. Section 75 groups report that they do not have the financial resources, time and staff to meet this growing demand.

10.7 In order to address and meet this growing challenge the Council established a Consultative Forum for Belfast City Council. 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.

10.8 The Equality Officer created an equality 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 and embedding in the general work structure and practices of council officers an increased consultation mechanism in the early stage of policy development.

10.9 The Chief Executives' Group representing Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Eastern Health & Social Services Board, North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, South & East Belfast Health & Social Services Trust, Belfast Education and Library Board, Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education requested their respective equality officers to organise a joint consultation event. The joint consultation event was held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2004 and the main topics to be discussed were monitoring and consultation fatigue. The Joint Panel engaged section 75 groups to conduct the process. This was an excellent example of participation and engaging meaningfully with the section 75 groups.

10.10 Every year the Disability Group in the Council organises a focus group meeting with organisations representing disability, to discuss progress. This is extremely effective consultation mechanism.

10.11 Lunchtime seminars were an effective discussion mechanism for improved employment practice.

10.12 The most effective methods of consultation involve face to face contact with the Section 75 groups, targeted focus groups and building relationship with key people in the relevant Sections 75 sectors. The Consultative Forum is very new and is welcomed by the Council departments as an excellent method of communication and consultation. The least effective method of consultation was advertising in the press for public meetings.

## **SECTION 11: THE GOOD RELATIONS DUTY**

### **Provide details of steps taken to implement or progress the good relations duty.**

#### **Award for development of the Good Relations Strategy**

11.1 The Good Relations Strategy, entitled 'Building Our Future Together', was formally adopted by the Council in February 2003. The development of the strategy was judged overall winner in its category of the William Johnston Memorial Fund competition for local government projects and the Good Relations Unit received a cut glass bowl as an award in early 2004.

11.2 The annual report submitted last year to the Equality Commission, to cover the year 2003-04, contained substantial detail on the development of the strategy, background and context, the methodology employed, audits, consultation, definition and the establishment of the Good Relations Unit etc. This section summarises the work of the Unit during the year 2004-05.

#### **Good Relations Steering Panel**

11.3 As Councillor Tom Ekin was elected Lord Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council in June 2004, he had to resign as Chairman of the Good Relations Steering Panel. A new Chairman, Councillor Carmel Hanna, was elected in August. Councillor Eoin O'Broin resigned from the Council and was replaced on the Good Relations Steering Panel by Councillor Michael Browne.

## **Good Relations Working Group**

11.4 An inter-Departmental Working Group of officers manages the Good Relations programme and directs the work of the Good Relations Unit. This Working Group is now chaired by the Director of Legal Services; it was previously chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive who retired from the Council in January 2005. The Good Relations expenditure is monitored regularly by the Good Relations Working Group and remains within budget.

## **Good Relations Unit – communication and reporting lines**

11.5 The equality and good relations duties are co-ordinated and integrated within the Good Relations Unit of the Council. To ensure good communication and accountability, the Good Relations Unit produces a quarterly report detailing its work. This report is circulated to the Chief Officers' Management Team, the Good Relations Steering Panel and the Policy & Resources Committee of the Council.

## **Good Relations Grant Aid Fund**

11.6 The financial year April 2004 – March 2005 represented the first full year of operation of the Council's Good Relations Fund and proved to be a very busy and productive period. All grant applications are assessed by the Good Relations Officers who make a summary of the applications and provide a recommendation regarding the amount of grant that should be awarded. The Good Relations Steering Panel considered a total of 67 applications requesting grant-aid during the year and approved 61 of them, at a total amount of £244,349. The Council's grant aid has given practical and financial assistance to local groups in Belfast who are involved with a wide range of projects which support and promote good community and race relations.

11.7 The Steering Panel's recommendations are forwarded to the Policy and Resources Committee for ratification, before full Council's final decision. These recommendations and funding decisions are included in the Council minutes, which, in accordance with local government procedures, are publicly available both in hard copy and on the website to ensure accountability and transparency.

11.8 The grants awarded under the Good Relations Fund ranged in amount from £140 to £10,000; the average grant awarded was £4005.

Of the 61 grants which were approved:

- 61% (37) were cross-community in nature, with participants from both a protestant and catholic background;
- 29% (18) were based on cultural diversity and included participants from a minority ethnic background;
- 10% (6) were from a single identity community background.

## **St. Patrick's Day**

11.9 The Council also approved a small grants scheme of £30,000 for local community groups to celebrate St. Patrick's Day 2005. The Good Relations Unit prepared application forms, advertised the fact that funding was available and developed a scoring matrix for assessment of applications. As

with last year, this proved to be very popular. 54 applications were received from all areas of the city and 51 were approved, totalling over £34,300 of grant aid. The average grant awarded was £670, with the maximum possible being £1,000.

11.10 St Patrick's Day Concert held in the Waterfront Hall in association with the BBC, featuring a range of well known artistes, was broadcast live on Radio Ulster. An application for grant-aid for an outdoor event was received from the St Patrick's Carnival Committee but was not approved by Council.

## **Evaluation**

11.11 All organisations and groups receiving grant aid are requested to complete and return an evaluation form. These are examined and retained for reference by the Unit in dealing with queries regarding the projects and future applications.

11.12 To ensure effective administration of the fund, staff from the Good Relations Unit attended a very useful two-day training session on the administration of a grant aid process, organised by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy.

11.13 The Council is satisfied that its grant-aid programme is of direct assistance in helping to attain our vision of a more tolerant society. The procedure adopted – i.e. consideration by the Good Relations Steering Panel and then the Policy and Resources Committee – ensures that all applications are considered by a broad range of people and a fair decision reached. It also means that knowledge of the Grant Aid Fund reaches a wide audience and elected representatives take ownership of projects undertaken in their own local areas.

## **Community Relations Week**

11.14 In early April 2004, Members from the Good Relations Steering Panel took part in a public debate on racism entitled 'Shared City' in the City Hall, to mark Community Relations week. Speakers included David White from the Civic Forum and Anna Lo from the Chinese Welfare Association and feedback was positive.

11.15 As part of Community Relations Week 2005, two events were organised by the Unit. A Panel discussion entitled "And I am ....?" involving members of the Good Relations Steering Panel was held on 7 March and a social evening entitled "One City, Many Cultures" was held on 10 March 2005.

## **Interface issues**

11.16 At its meeting in September 2004, the Steering Panel received a presentation from the Director of the Belfast Interface Project and agreed that the important issue of the interfaces should be brought into the wider Council agenda. At the end of September, the Lord Mayor hosted an evening reception for representatives from the interface communities, where he assured them that he would try to use his influence to further their cause.

11.17 Arising from these meetings, a report was submitted to the Chief Officers' Management Team and an inter-Departmental group of officers was set up. This group undertook an internal audit of

work done by the Council in interface areas and made a short joint presentation to the interface groups at a second event in February 2005, again hosted by the Lord Mayor.

11.18 Interfaces have been specifically identified in the recent 'Shared Future' report as requiring particular attention. One of the Government's stated aims in this report is "to reduce tension and conflict at interface areas" and it recognises that this requires "a combined short, medium and long-term approach that is earthed in encouraging local dialogue and communication, shared resources and set in a wider context of social and economic renewal".

11.19 The Government states that a "more coherent longer-term approach is needed to tackle the problems of interface areas (and those areas at risk of becoming flash points)" and states that these are "best taken forward as part of a more integrated local planning framework, led by local councils in collaboration with key agencies and other stakeholders". The Unit has already begun work in this important area of good relations.

### **Good Relations Training and Learning Strategy**

11.20 Trademark, independent consultants commissioned by the Council to draft an internal training and learning strategy to complement the current Equality Scheme Training Strategy, carried out a wide ranging exercise within the Council, conducting a total of 11 focus groups and 30 interviews with staff from a range of Departments.

11.21 The officer-based training sub-group considered a draft training strategy report in early December, including advising on the principles of the strategy, its implementation and the attendant resource implications. The strategy will be finalised in 2005, with the programme roll-out beginning later this year.

11.22 Staff from the Good Relations Unit designed and delivered a module of the Council's own internal Management Development Programme on equality and good relations issues. They also helped with the delivery of equal opportunities training within the Council.

### **Baseline Profile Survey**

11.23 Dr. Mike Morrissey, of PSc Management Consultants, has been commissioned by the Council in partnership with the Community Relations Council, to undertake a comprehensive audit/mapping exercise of good relations activities and initiatives in Belfast. The survey work is currently being finalised and should be completed by the summer of 2005.

11.24 We envisage that this will identify areas (e.g. interfaces) towards which we should concentrate our efforts. It will also identify any gaps or duplication which exist, to ensure that we make best use of our resources in future.

### **Hate Crime**

11.25 The Steering Panel noted in August that the 'Hate Crime' legislation would be extended to include crimes against people with disabilities. The Panel also agreed that the Good Relations Manager should represent the Council and present evidence to the NI Affairs Committee as part of that Committee's current inquiry into Hate Crime in Northern Ireland.

11.26 The Good Relations Manager attended the NI Affairs Committee session held in the Europa Hotel in September 2004 and gave evidence on behalf of Belfast City Council, along with representatives from Down and Strabane Councils.

### **Anti-Racism**

11.27 In May 2004, staff from the Good Relations Unit joined staff from the Chinese Welfare Association in a two-day anti-racism training programme.

11.28 The Steering Panel issued two Press Releases in the Chairman's name condemning the racist attacks in Belfast.

### **'One Small Step' Campaign**

11.29 The 'One Small Step' Campaign made a presentation to the Steering Panel in February 2005. The Council subsequently signed up to the principles of the campaign and an e-mail was sent out to all Council staff, informing them of the campaign and how to register their support for it.

### **Communication**

11.30 As part of its plan to raise awareness of the Council's commitment to cultural diversity principles, the Good Relations Unit designed and circulated drinks coasters and issued a number of internal e-mails to staff to highlight celebrations of various faith events and significant calendar dates. This series has received positive feedback both from within and outside the Council, including the Community Relations Unit of the OFMDFM.

### **Internal Working Groups**

11.31 Staff from the Unit have taken part in several internal officer working groups including the Commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE/VJ Day; Bonfires Working Group; Travellers Liaison Group; Murals Working Group and Greater Village Group. All of these groups are working towards lessening the social divisions in our city and achieving a better quality of life for all.

### **Communication of Good Relations principles and strategy**

11.32 The Unit was invited to make a number of presentations on the implementation of the Good Relations Strategy to both external and internal groups including:

- visitors from Bradford City Council
- the Council's own trainers within the Human Resources section
- community groups in East Belfast.
- NI Higher Education Equality Consortium
- A group of visiting public servants from Bosnia-Herzegovina
- A number of internal departmental teams
- NICVA
- Habitat for Humanity
- VSB
- NILGA
- Irish Association Seminar at Queen's University.

## **Policy Responses**

11.33 As part of its work in mainstreaming the principles of good relations into every aspect of Council business, the Good Relations Unit contributed to responses made on behalf of the Council to consultations on: Ageing in an Inclusive Society (OFMDFM); the Draft Economic Vision for NI; the Draft Priorities and Budget (OFMDFM); NI Draft Multiple Deprivation Index (DSD); the Weighted Capitation Formula (DHSSPS); New TSN/ NI Anti-Poverty Strategy; A Shared Future; and A Healthier Future, 20 year Vision, DHSSPS.

## **Events**

11.34 The Good Relations Unit organised a number of public events during the year, to demonstrate its commitment to the aim of promoting good community and race relations and to encourage a wider appreciation of cultural diversity issues in the city. The following events represented a broad based balanced and inclusive programme.

### **Pobal event**

11.35 In May 2004, the Council hosted a very successful Irish language arts evening in the City Hall as part of its cultural diversity programme. It was organised by Pobal, the Irish language umbrella lobby body and marked the launch of their Irish Language Roadshow which then travelled around a number of other local Council areas.

### **Test Act**

11.36 A lecture on the Test Act of 1704 was given by Professor David Heaton, QUB, in the City Hall on 27 September 2004. It was well attended and Nae Goat's Toe (made up of members from the Ulster-Scots Orchestra) provided appropriate musical entertainment. Feedback from the audience indicated an interest in future events.

### **Belfast Festival at Queen's**

11.37 As part of the Belfast Festival at Queen's programme, an event entitled 'Belfast: as it used to be', was organised in association with Red Lead Arts. The two evening performances in November 2004 explored the shared industrial heritage of the city through music, archive materials and drama. The event was very well attended with very good audience feedback.

### **Mary Ann McCracken**

11.38 The Steering Panel had agreed a programme of actions to implement the recommendations of the City Hall Advisory Panel on Memorabilia which were approved by Council in March 2004. These included the commissioning of a piece of art or sculpture to mark the contribution of women to life in Belfast.

11.39 In December the Good Relations Unit hosted an event in the City Hall at which a bust of the social campaigner Mary Ann McCracken was unveiled in a prominent position on the Rotunda. The Committee Rooms were also re-named as the Conor and Lavery Rooms, where high-quality

reproductions of their paintings were displayed. This event, which was open to the public, was very well attended and received good media coverage.

### **Lord Mayor's Christmas event**

11.40 The Unit assisted in the organisation of the Lord Mayor's Christmas event which this year had the theme of 'Home from Home' and reflected the positive role played in Belfast by members from minority ethnic communities; this also received good media coverage.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

11.41 Last year, in Belfast's hosting of the National Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration, postcards and Books of Commitment were distributed to all the District Councils in Northern Ireland for people to sign, to indicate their support for the aims and principles of Holocaust Day.

11.42 On 27 January 2005, Holocaust Memorial Day, the Lord Mayor presented the completed Book of Commitment and a sculpture, designed in the shape of a candle and made from the postcards, to the local synagogue in Somerton Road, marking the valuable contribution made by the Jewish community to life in Belfast.

### **Ulster Scots Heritage Council Evening**

11.43 On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005 the Council hosted a very successful event, the Ulster-Scots Gaitherin, in the City Hall, to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council.

### **Anne Frank Exhibition**

11.44 In September 2004, the Steering Panel agreed that the Council should display the Anne Frank exhibition in the Waterfront Hall in April 2005, to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, in which regiments from N Ireland played a prominent part. This would form part of the Council's wider commemorative programme to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of World War II and would demonstrate the Council's commitment to the promotion of tolerance.

### **Community Relations Council Launch**

11.45 The launch of the Community Relations Council's 'Good Relations Framework' was held in the City Hall at the end of September. The Lord Mayor introduced the event and the Chief Executive made a short presentation on the work of the Council in the field of good relations. In this, as in various other events, the Council's commitment to the principles of good relations at the highest level was publicly demonstrated.

### **Community Relations Officers Conference**

11.46 The Good Relations Officers and Good Relations Manager attended the annual conference of the Community Relations Officers from all the Councils in N Ireland, organised by the Community Relations Unit, within the OFMDFM. Staff gave a presentation on their work and the 'Belfast model' of good relations was the subject of discussion in a number of workshops.

## **Progress against targets**

11.47 In line with the Council's corporate performance management procedures, all aspects of the Unit's work are monitored in relation to established targets. The progress made during the past year is indicative of the Council's substantial commitment in this field and we are confident that this will be sustained in the future. The Good Relations Unit is happy to provide further detail on any of its areas of work.

## **SECTION 12: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON MAINSTREAMING**

12.1 The mainstreaming of the equality agenda has been successful. The Equality Officer worked alongside key staff in the Council to develop the equality considerations in the committee reporting structure. A copy of the new requirements has been sent to all officers responsible for writing reports. A pilot process was introduced and now the process is fully implemented. In effect all reports to the Committee structure are obliged to contain an equality statement. The equality statement ensures the equality issues have been considered, consulted upon and any potential adverse impacts mitigated for. In addition this process acts as the central screening point for all new policies.

12.2 The issue of equality remains permanently at the centre of decision making processes and is always on the agenda. There has been an increase in departmental enquires in relation to equality. The enquiries are made earlier in the policy development process which is a welcome relief as omissions are costly and time consuming. We continue to conduct in depth and ongoing consultation processes with all our policies and this remains the bedrock of the equality process. We anticipate monitoring procedures will increase our appreciation of the composition of the workforce and those to whom we deliver goods, services and facilities. A greater appreciation of our customers both internal and externally will enable us to target resources and direct new initiatives as appropriate.

**SECTION 13: CONCLUDING QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION A**

**Does the authority believe its work to date on implementing the statutory duties has produced positive benefits for the organisation? (Please tick) YES /\_\_\_ NO**

**If you answered yes to QUESTION A, please tick appropriate boxes below as to what extent the duties have:**

	<b>Very noticeably</b>	<b>Noticeably</b>	<b>No real change</b>
<b>Increased awareness of equality issues in policy making</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Increased ability to ensure policies are designed and targeted to reflect equal opportunities objectives</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Increased awareness of good relations issues in policy making</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Increased ability to ensure policies are designed and targeted to reflect good relations objectives</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Increased awareness of equality issues in service delivery</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Increased ability to ensure services are designed and targeted to reflect Section 75 requirements</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

**QUESTION B**

**Does the authority believe its work to date on implementing the statutory duties has produced positive benefits for groups within the Section 75 categories? (Please tick) YES \_NO \_\_\_**

**If you answered yes to the above QUESTION B, please tick appropriate boxes below as to what extent the authority's implementation of the statutory duties has increased equality of opportunity for:**

	<b>Very noticeably</b>	<b>Noticeably</b>	<b>No real change</b>
<b>Persons of different religious belief</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Persons of different political opinion</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Persons of different racial groups</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Persons of different age</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Persons with different marital status</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Persons of different sexual orientation</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men and women generally</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Persons with and without a disability</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Persons with and without dependents</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

## QUESTION C

If you answered **yes to QUESTION B**, for each of the categories where a noticeable or very noticeable change has occurred, please give examples of those changes to policies or practices which have resulted in positive change. If the change was a result of an EQIA please tick the appropriate box in column 3:

	<b>Policy or Practice</b>	<b>Column 3: Result of EQIA</b>
<b>Persons of different religious belief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Good Relations Strategy</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Persons of different political opinion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Good Relations Strategy</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Persons of different racial groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improved working relations/ networks</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved access to decision making</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Persons of different age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work In relation to Shadow Youth Council</b></li> <li>• <b>Appointed of Youth Co coordinator</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Persons with different marital status</b>		
<b>Persons of different sexual orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improved Consultation Process</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Men and women generally</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gender issues – WINS project</b></li> <li>• <b>Craft Apprenticeship Scheme</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Persons with and without a disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Disability Strategy</b></li> <li>• <b>Consultation</b></li> <li>• <b>Lunchtime seminars</b></li> <li>• <b>Human Resource Policies</b></li> <li>• <b>Training for All staff</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Persons with and without dependents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Human Resource Polices- Work Life Balance</b></li> </ul>	

## Appendix A Screening & EQIA Update

Please enter details relating to the authority's progress using the following matrices.

### i) EQIA Timetable – 2004-05

<b>Title of policy EQIA underway during April 2004- March 2005</b>	<b>Stage (as per Steps 1-7 of EQIA Process) As at end March 2005</b>	<b>If joint-EQIA please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Outline any adjustments to policy intended to benefit individuals from the nine equality categories and outline the relevant categories affected.</b>	<b>Were adjustments to policy a result of <u>A</u>ssessment of adverse impact/ feedback from <u>C</u>onsultation, or <u>B</u>oth <i>Please enter A, C or Both</i></b>	<b>If EQIA decision making stage completed, is amended policy being implemented? <u>Yes/No</u></b>
1.HR/ Employee Relations	Stage 5		Already completed in 2003-4		
2.Leisure Centres Specification and monitoring			No longer applicable due to internal restructuring		
3.Provision of event sand Sports Developments			New Sports Development Strategy being developed for the City- Belfast City Council Lead partner – to be screened		
4.Best Value			Adopted the governmental guidelines which have already been equality assessed		
5.Equality Scheme			Due for Revision – awaiting guidance from Equality Commission		
6.Admission of Public to Council; meetings			Re screened and screened out		
7.Receiving			Re screened and screened		

deputations at Committee meetings			out		
8.Provision of Consumer Advice			Re screened and screened out		
9.Charging for training			Re screened and screened out		
10.Home safety (promotion)			Re screened and screened out		
11.Home safety check scheme			Re screened and screened out		
12.Street Names in a Language other than English			Re screened and screened out		
13.Procedure for investigating complaints relating to illegal eviction and harassment			Re screened and screened out		
14.Provision of free pest control service to individuals in receipt of certain benefits			Re screened and screened out		

ii) Ongoing Screening Activities 2004-05

<b>Title of policy subject to screening during April 2004- March 2005</b>	<b>If joint policy please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Was initial screening decision changed following consultation? Yes/No</b>	<b>If Screening completed is policy being subject to EQIA?Yes/No</b>	<b>If EQIA planned indicate year for assessment</b>
1.Review of Civic Amenity Sites operational Requirements -	Arc 21	No	No	No
2.Belfast Waterfront Hall Art Education and Community Development Strategy		No	No	No
3.Capital City		No		No
4.Conference Subvention Policy		No	No	No
5.Cultural Tourism Strategy		No	No	No
6.Pedestrian Signage		No	No	No
7.Major Civic and Public Events		No	No	No
8.Community Support Plan		No	No	No
9.Admission of Public to Council meetings		No	No	No
10.Receiving deputations at Committee meetings		No	No	No
11.Provision of Consumer Advice		No	No	No
12.Charging for training		No	No	No
13.Home safety (promotion)		Yes		Policy development Revision due to new DHSSPS strategy
14.Home safety check scheme		Yes		Policy development Revision due to new DHSSPS strategy
15.Street Names in a Language other than English		No	No	No
16.Procedure for investigating complaints relating to illegal eviction and harassment		No	No	No
17.Provision of free pest control service to individuals in receipt of certain benefits		Yes		Policy Development New Policy

iii) Ongoing EQIA Monitoring Activities 2004-05

<b>Title of EQIA subject to Stage 7 monitoring during April 2004 - March 2005</b>	<b>If joint policy please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Indicate if differential impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>	<b>Indicate if adverse impacts previously identified have reduced or increased</b>
1.Human Resources- All EQIA's		reduced	reduced
2.Access		reduced	reduced
3.Pricing		now being reviewed	reviewed
4.Art Grant Aid Policy		reduced	reduced
5.Community grant aid policy		reduced	reduced

iv) 2005-06 EQIA Time-table

The mainstreaming of the equality agenda has been successful. All reports to Committee are obliged to contain an equality statement. The equality statement ensures the equality issues have been considered, and any potential adverse impacts mitigated for. This process acts as the central screening point for all new policies. The result of this policy screening ensures that EQIA have not been identified for 2005-2005. However in depth and ongoing consultation processes continue with all our policies.

<b>Title of EQIAs due to be commenced during April 2005 – March 2006</b>	<b>Existing or New policy? Please enter E or N below.</b>	<b>If joint-EQIA please state partner authorities</b>	<b>Please indicate expected date of completion of EQIA Stage 6 i.e. Decision making stage</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			