



Revised Equality Scheme for Antrim Borough Council

**Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and
Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

*This document is available in a range of formats on request.
Please contact us with your requirements
(see page 8 for contact details)*

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Approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on

Foreword

“Antrim ... A Place for All”

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act¹.

We have made the highest level commitment through our Corporate Plan 2011-2015 in which we have made the commitment to make Antrim ‘a place for all’.

In our equality scheme we set out how we propose to fulfil the Section 75 statutory duties.

We will commit the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to make sure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is implemented effectively, and on time.

We commit to having effective internal arrangements in place for ensuring our effective compliance with the Section 75 statutory duties and for monitoring and reviewing our progress.

We will develop and deliver a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring that all our staff and elected members are made fully aware of our equality scheme and understand the commitments and obligations within it. We will develop a programme of awareness raising for our consultees on the Section 75 statutory duties and our commitments in our equality scheme.

We, the Mayor and Chief Executive of Antrim Borough Council, are fully committed to effectively fulfilling our Section 75 statutory duties across all our functions (including service provision, employment and procurement) through the effective implementation of our equality scheme.

We realise the important role that the community and voluntary sector and the general public have to play to ensure the Section 75 statutory duties are effectively implemented. Our equality scheme demonstrates

¹ See section 1.1 of our Equality Scheme.

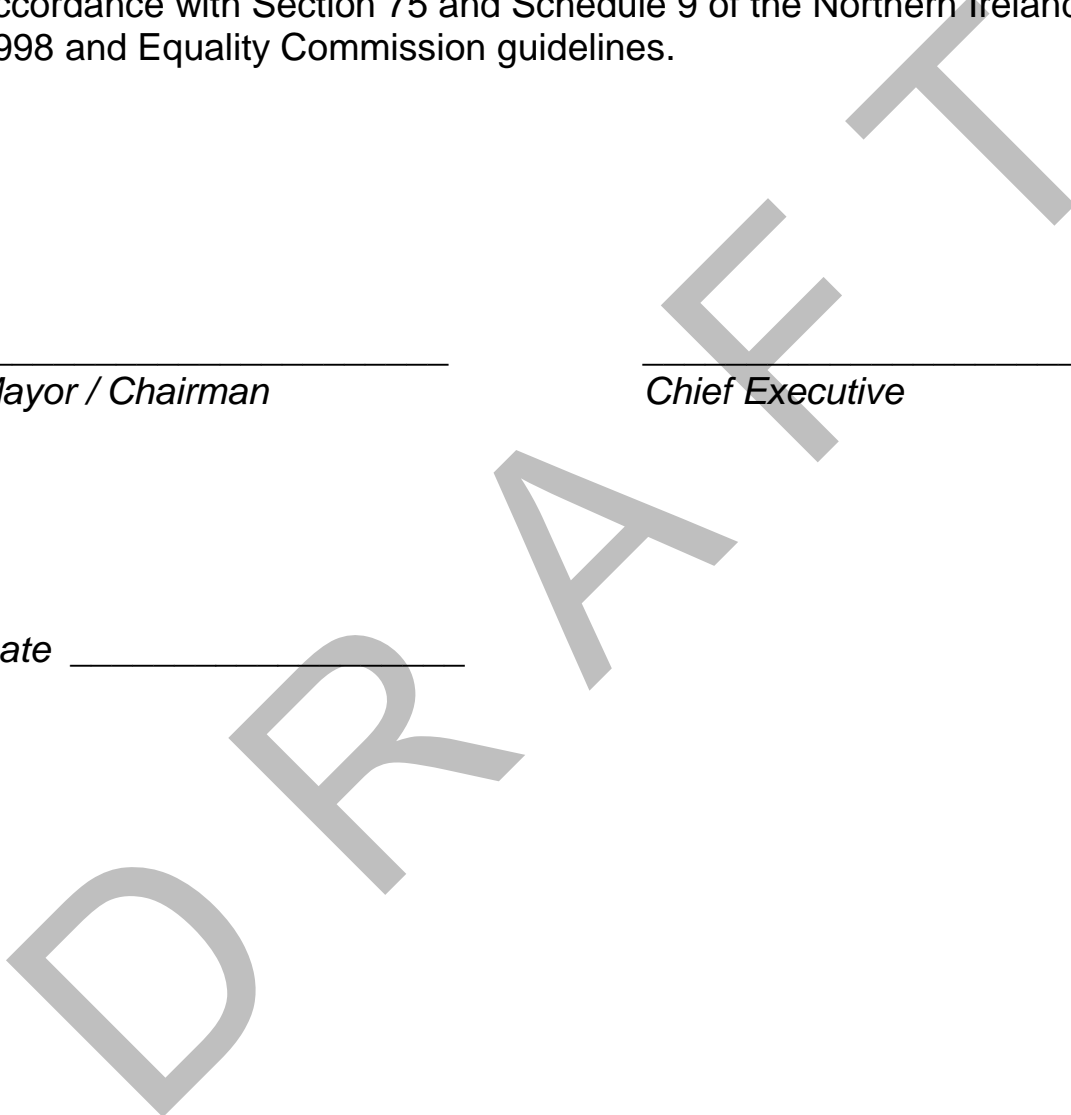
how determined we are to ensure there are opportunities, for people affected by our work, to positively influence how we carry out our functions in line with our Section 75 statutory duties. It also offers the means whereby persons directly affected by what they consider to be a failure, on our part, to comply with our equality scheme, can make complaints.

On behalf of Antrim Borough Council and our staff we are pleased to support and endorse this equality scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Commission guidelines.

Mayor / Chairman

Chief Executive

Date _____



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1 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Antrim Borough Council to comply with two statutory duties:

Section 75 (1)

In carrying out our functions relating to Northern Ireland we are required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Section 75 (2)

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, in carrying out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland we are required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

“Functions” include the “powers and duties” of a public authority². This includes our employment and procurement functions. Please see below under “Who we are and what we do” for a detailed explanation of our functions.

How we propose to fulfil the Section 75 duties in relation to the relevant functions of Antrim Borough Council

1.2 Schedule 9 4. (1) of the Act requires Antrim Borough Council as a designated public authority to set out in an equality scheme how it proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 in relation to its relevant functions. This equality scheme is intended to fulfil that statutory requirement. It is both a statement of our arrangements for fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties and our plan for their implementation.

² Section 98 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

1.3 We are committed to the discharge of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our organisation and we will commit the necessary available resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the Section 75 statutory duties are complied with and that our equality scheme can be implemented effectively.

Who we are and what we do

The roles and functions of councils, established in the Local Government Act 1972 and in other legislation, fall into three types:

- **Direct** - councils are responsible for the provision and management of services.
- **Representative** - council nominees sit on statutory bodies.
- **Consultative** - councils reflect community views in the operation of range of statutory bodies, community concerns or give views on proposed decisions.

Antrim Borough Council comprises 19 Elected Members and due to the diverse nature of its roles and responsibilities conducts its business through a Committee system. The Full Council, however, is the corporate decision making body and meets monthly to consider the Committee recommendations.

In the performance of the above roles the Council carries out functions in the following areas:

- the provision of facilities for recreational, social and cultural activities including leisure centres, community centres, parks, open spaces, sports grounds and places of entertainment
- street cleansing
- waste collection and treatment
- the provision of burial grounds
- the provision of grant aid to support the Arts, community development and the promotion of tourism and economic development
- the administration and regulation of certain matters relating to the environment, public health and public safety including building control, food safety, statutory nuisance, dangerous buildings, air pollution, noise pollution, dog control, consumer protection and health and safety
- the licensing and regulation of street trading, places of entertainment, amusement centres, sex establishments, societies lotteries, cinemas and petroleum stations
- the making of bye-laws and regulation of same.

To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:

- acquire and dispose of land
- borrow money
- employ staff
- procure goods and services.

Councils also have a role in:

- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Community Safety Sports Development
- Summer Schemes

Contact Details

If you have any queries regarding the Equality Scheme or wish to make a complaint alleging a potential failure to comply with the scheme please contact:

The Policy Officer
Antrim Borough Council
Antrim Civic Centre
50 Stiles Way
ANTRIM
BT41 2UB

Tel: 028 9446 3113
Textphone: 028 9448 1343

Email: corporate@antrim.gov.uk

The Equality Scheme and relevant documents will be made available as appropriate on the Council website:

www.antrim.gov.uk

2 Our arrangements for assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties (Schedule 9 4. (2) (a))

Responsibilities and reporting

2.1 We are committed to the fulfilment of our Section 75 obligations in all parts of our work.

2.2 Responsibility for the effective implementation of our equality scheme lies with the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Council for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the equality scheme in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including any good practice or guidance that has been or may be issued by the Equality Commission.

2.3 If you have any questions or comments regarding our equality scheme, please contact in the first instance the Policy Officer at the address given below and we will respond to you as soon as possible:

The Policy Officer
Antrim Borough Council
Antrim Civic Centre
50 Stiles Way
Antrim
BT41 2UB
Tel: 028 9446 3113

2.4 Objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties will be integrated into our strategic and operational business plans³.

2.5 Employees' job descriptions and performance plans reflect their contributions to the discharge of the Section 75 statutory duties and implementation of the equality scheme, where relevant. The personal performance plans are subject to appraisal in the annual performance review.

³ See Appendix 4 'Timetable for measures proposed' and section 2.11 of this equality scheme.

2.6 The Council prepares an annual report on the progress we have made on implementing the arrangements set out in this equality scheme to discharge our Section 75 statutory duties (Section 75 annual progress report).

The Section 75 annual progress report will be sent to the Equality Commission by 31 August each year and will follow any guidance on annual reporting issued by the Equality Commission.

Progress on the delivery of Section 75 statutory duties will also be included in our annual report.

2.7 The latest Section 75 annual progress report is available on our website www.antrim.gov.uk

or by contacting:

The Policy Officer (see page 7 for contact details)

2.8 The Council also receives regular progress reports on the implementation of our scheme

2.9 The commitment to the Scheme starts with our corporate plan and is cascaded throughout Council via our business plans / section plans and performance improvement plans. Operational responsibility for the delivery of the scheme lies with the Policy Officer who reports to the Director of Corporate Services and Resources Committee on progress and issues regarding Section 75.

Action plan/action measures

2.10 The Council has developed an action plan to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This action plan is set out in Appendix 6 to this equality scheme.

2.11 The action measures that will make up our action plan will be relevant to our functions. They will be developed and prioritised on the basis of an audit of inequalities. The audit of inequalities will gather and analyse information across the Section 75 categories⁴ to identify the inequalities that exist for our service users and those affected by our policies⁵.

⁴ See section 1.1 of this equality scheme for a list of these categories.

⁵ See section 4.1 of this equality scheme for a definition of policies.

2.12 Action measures will be specific, measurable, linked to achievable outcomes, realistic and time bound. Action measures will include performance indicators and timescales for their achievement.

2.13 We will develop any action plans for a period of between one and five years in order to align them with our corporate and business planning cycles. Implementation of the action measures will be incorporated into our business planning process.

2.14 We will seek input from our stakeholders and consult on our action plan before we send it to the Equality Commission and thereafter when reviewing the plan as per 2.16 below.

2.15 We will monitor our progress on the delivery of our action measures annually and update the action plan as necessary to ensure that it remains effective and relevant to our functions and work.

2.16 The Council will inform the Commission of any changes or amendments to our action plan and will also include this information in our Section 75 annual progress report to the Commission. Our Section 75 annual progress report will incorporate information on progress we have made in implementing our action plans/action measures.

2.17 Once finalised, our action plan will be available on our website or on request - see contact details on page 7. If you require it in an alternative format please contact us at the above

3 Our arrangements for consulting

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (a)) - on matters to which a duty (S75 (1) or (2)) is likely to be relevant (including details of the persons to be consulted).

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b)) on the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by us on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3.1 We recognise the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of our statutory equality duties. We will consult on our equality scheme, action measures, equality impact assessments and other matters relevant to the Section 75 statutory duties.

3.2 We are committed to carrying out consultation in accordance with the following principles (as contained in the Equality Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*'):

3.2.1 All consultations will seek the views of those directly affected by the matter/policy, the Equality Commission, representative groups of Section 75 categories, other public authorities, voluntary and community groups, our staff and their trades unions and such other groups who have a legitimate interest in the matter, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.

Initially all consultees (see Appendix 3), as a matter of course, will be notified (by email or post) of the matter/policy being consulted upon to ensure they are aware of all consultations. Thereafter, to ensure the most effective use of our and our consultees' resources, we will take a targeted approach to consultation for those consultees that may have a particular interest in the matter/policy being consulted upon and to whom the matter/policy is of particular relevance. This may include for example regional or local consultations, sectoral or thematic consultation etc.

3.2.2 Consultation with all stakeholders will begin as early as possible. We will engage with affected individuals and representative groups to identify how best to consult or engage with them. We will ask our consultees what their preferred consultation methods are and will give consideration to these. Methods of consultation could include:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/opt out of the consultation
- Internet discussions or
- Telephone consultations.

This list is not exhaustive and we may develop other additional methods of consultation more appropriate to key stakeholders and the matter being consulted upon.

3.2.3 We will consider the accessibility and format of every method of consultation we use in order to remove barriers to the consultation process. Antrim Borough Council is committed to achieving effective two way communication with customers and will take account of best practice and guidance. We will evaluate the range of tools and technological innovations which may be used to communicate with customers.

Information will be made available, on request, in alternative formats⁶, in a timely manner, usually within 15 working days. We will ensure that such consultees have equal time to respond.

3.2.4 Specific training is provided to those facilitating consultations to ensure that they have the necessary skills to communicate effectively with consultees.

3.2.5 To ensure effective consultation with consultees⁷ on Section 75 matters, we will develop a programme of awareness raising on the Section 75 statutory duties and the commitments in our equality scheme by undertaking the following:

- Issue a press release when the Equality Scheme is approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland;
- Inform all consultees of how to access a copy of the final Equality Scheme and Action Plan within one month of approval by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in a manner suitable to each consultees' needs;

⁶ See Chapter 6 of our equality scheme for further information on alternative formats of information we provide.

⁷ Please see Appendix 3 for a list of our consultees.

- Provide information in the Council Eye magazine which is distributed to all homes and businesses in the Borough.

3.2.6 The consultation period lasts for a minimum of twelve weeks to allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view. However, in exceptional circumstances when this timescale is not feasible (for example implementing EU Directives or UK wide legislation, meeting Health and Safety requirements, addressing urgent public health matters or complying with Court judgements), we may shorten timescales to eight weeks or less before the policy is implemented. We may continue consultation thereafter and will review the policy as part of our monitoring commitments⁸.

Where, under these exceptional circumstances, we must implement a policy immediately, as it is beyond our authority's control, we may consult after implementation of the policy, in order to ensure that any impacts of the policy are considered.

3.2.7 If a consultation exercise is to take place over a period when consultees are less able to respond, for example, over the summer or Christmas break, or if the policy under consideration is particularly complex, we will give consideration to the feasibility of allowing a longer period for the consultation.

3.2.8 We are conscious of the fact that affected individuals and representative groups may have different needs. We will take appropriate measures to ensure full participation in any meetings that are held. We will consider for example the time of day, the appropriateness of the venue, in particular whether it can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be conducted, the use of appropriate language, whether a signer and/or interpreter is necessary, and whether the provision of childcare and support for other carers is required.

3.2.9 We make all relevant information available to consultees in appropriate formats to ensure meaningful consultation. This includes detailed information on the policy proposal being consulted upon and any relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

⁸ Please see below at 4.27 to 4.31 for details on monitoring.

3.2.10 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.

3.2.11 We provide feedback to consultees in a timely manner. A feedback report is prepared which includes summary information on the policy consulted upon, a summary of consultees' comments and a summary of our consideration of and response to consultees' input. The feedback is provided in formats suitable to consultees. (Please see also 6.3)

3.3 A list of our consultees is included in this equality scheme at Appendix 3. It can also be obtained from our website at www.antrim.gov.uk or by using the contact details on page 7.

3.4 Our consultation list is not exhaustive and is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to our functions and policies.

We welcome enquiries from any person/s or organisations wishing to be added to the list of consultees. Please contact the Policy Officer to provide your contact details and have your areas of interest noted or have your name/details removed or amended. Please also inform us at this stage if you would like information sent to you in a particular format or language.

4 Our arrangements for assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

(Schedule 9 4. (2) (b); Schedule 9 4. (2) (c); Schedule 9 4. (2) (d); Schedule 9 9. (1); Schedule 9 9.(2))

Our arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity

4.1 In the context of Section 75, 'policy' is very broadly defined and it covers all the ways in which we carry out or propose to carry out our functions in relation to Northern Ireland.

4.2 In making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted, we take into account any assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy, as required by Schedule 9 9. (2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

4.3 The Council uses the tools of **screening** and **equality impact assessment** to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. In carrying out these assessments we will relate them to the intended outcomes of the policy in question and will also follow Equality Commission guidance:

- the guidance on screening, including the screening template, as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)*' and
- on undertaking an equality impact assessment as detailed in the Commission's guidance '*Practical guidance on equality impact assessment (February 2005)*'.

Screening

4.4 The purpose of screening is to identify those policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.5 Screening is completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development/review process. Policies which we propose to adopt will be subject to screening prior to implementation. For more detailed strategies or policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages, we will screen at various stages during implementation.

4.6 The lead role in the screening of a policy is taken by the policy decision maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy. However, screening will also involve other relevant team members, for example, equality specialists, those who implement the policy and staff members from other relevant work areas. Where possible we will include key stakeholders in the screening process.

4.7 The following questions are applied to all our policies as part of the screening process:

- What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (minor/major/none)
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

4.8 In order to answer the screening questions, we gather all relevant information and data, both qualitative and quantitative. In taking this evidence into account we consider the different needs, experiences and priorities for each of the Section 75 equality categories. Any screening decision will be informed by this evidence.

4.9 Completion of screening, taking into account our consideration of the answers to all four screening questions set out in 4.7 above, will lead to one of the following three outcomes:

1. the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment
2. the policy has been 'screened out' with mitigation⁹ or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted
3. the policy has been 'screened out' without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.

⁹ Mitigation – Where an assessment (screening in this case) reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity and / or good relations, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories.

4.10 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'minor' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may on occasion decide to proceed with an equality impact assessment, depending on the policy. If an EQIA is not to be conducted we will nonetheless consider measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Where we mitigate we will outline in our screening template the reasons to support this decision together with the proposed changes, amendments or alternative policy.

4.11 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'major' in respect of one, or more, of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we will normally subject the policy to an equality impact assessment. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Director within the Council.

4.12 If our screening concludes that the likely impact of a policy is 'none', in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, we may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, we will give details of the reasons for the decision taken. This screening decision will be 'signed off' by the appropriate Assistant Director within the Council.

4.13 Screening templates will be available on request using the contact details on page 7.

4.14 If a consultee, including the Equality Commission, raises a concern about a screening decision based on supporting evidence, we will review the screening decision.

4.15 Our screening reports are published annually.

Equality impact assessment

4.16 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, whether that policy is formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that policy. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the Section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a

policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

4.17 Once a policy is screened and screening has identified that an equality impact assessment is necessary, we will carry out the EQIA in accordance with Equality Commission guidance. The equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the policy development process, before the policy is implemented.

4.18 Any equality impact assessment will be subject to consultation at the appropriate stage(s). (For details see above Chapter 3 “Our Arrangements for Consulting”).

Our arrangements for publishing the results of the assessments of the likely impact of policies we have adopted or propose to adopt on the promotion of equality of opportunity.

(Schedule 9 4. (2); Schedule 9.9 (i))

4.19 We make publicly available the results of our assessments (screening and EQIA) of the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

What we publish

4.20 Screening reports - these are published quarterly. Screening reports detail:

- All policies screened by the Council over the three month period
- A statement of the aim(s) of the policy/policies to which the assessment relates
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Screening decisions, i.e:
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened in’ for equality impact assessment.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ with mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
 - whether the policy has been ‘screened out’ without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted.
- Where applicable, a timetable for conducting equality impact assessments
- A link to the completed screening template(s) on our website

4.21 Screening templates - for details on the availability of our screening templates please refer to 4.13.

4.22 Equality impact assessments - EQIA reports are published once the impact assessment has been completed. These reports include:

- A statement of the aim of the policy assessed
- Information and data collected
- Details of the assessment of impact(s)
- Consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact
- Consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity
- Consultation responses
- The decision taken
- Future monitoring plans.

How we publish the information

4.23 All information we publish is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please see 6.3 below.

Where we publish the information

4.24 The results of our assessments (screening reports and completed templates, the results of equality impact assessments) are available on our website www.antrim.gov.uk and by using the contact details on page 7.

4.25 In addition to the above, screening reports (electronic link or hard copy on request if more suitable for recipients) which include all policies screened over a 3 month period are also sent directly to all consultees on an annual basis.

4.26 We will inform the general public about the availability of this material through communications such as press releases where appropriate.

Our arrangements for monitoring any adverse impact of policies we have adopted on equality of opportunity
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (c))

4.27 Monitoring can assist us to deliver better public services and continuous improvements. Monitoring Section 75 information involves the processing of sensitive personal data (data relating to the racial or ethnic origin of individuals, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, etc). In order to carry out monitoring in a confidential and effective manner, the Council follows guidance from the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Equality Commission.

4.28 We monitor any adverse impact on the promotion of equality of opportunity of policies we have adopted. We are also committed to monitoring more broadly to identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations in line with Equality Commission guidance.

4.29 The systems we have established to monitor the impact of policies and identify opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are:

- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- The collection, collation and analysis of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data across all nine equality categories on an ongoing basis
- An audit of existing information systems within one year of approval of this equality scheme, to identify the extent of current monitoring and take action to address any gaps in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions
- Undertaking or commissioning new data if necessary.

4.30 If over a two year period monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, we will ensure that the policy is revised to achieve better outcomes for relevant equality groups.

4.31 We review our EQIA monitoring information on an annual basis. Other monitoring information is reviewed as and when the opportunity presents itself.

In addition a range of information is gathered from customers who access council facilities.

Our arrangements for publishing the results of our monitoring
(Schedule 9 4. (2) (d))

4.32 Schedule 9 4. (2) (d) requires us to publish the results of the monitoring of adverse impacts of policies we have adopted. However, we are committed to monitoring more broadly and the results of our policy monitoring are published as follows:

4.33 EQIA monitoring information is published as part of our Section 75 annual progress report [see 2.7]

4.35 All information published is accessible and can be made available in alternative formats on request by using the contact details on page 7.

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5 Staff training

(Schedule 9 4.(2) (e))

Commitment to staff training

5.1 We recognise that awareness raising and training play a crucial role in the effective implementation of our Section 75 duties.

5.2 Our Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Council to the Section 75 statutory duties, both internally and externally.

To this end we have introduced an effective communication and training programme for all staff and an awareness raising programme for all Elected Members. We will ensure that our commitment to the Section 75 statutory duties is made clear in all relevant publications.

Training objectives

5.3 The Council will provide training for its staff and Elected Members which will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to raise awareness of the provisions of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, our equality scheme commitments and the particular issues likely to affect people across the range of Section 75 categories, to ensure that our staff and elected members fully understand their role in implementing the scheme;
- to provide those staff involved in the assessment of policies (screening and EQIA) with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- to provide those staff who deal with complaints in relation to compliance with our equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively;
- to provide those staff involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively;
- to provide those staff involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Council's equality scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.

Awareness raising and training arrangements

5.4 The following arrangements are in place to ensure all our staff and elected members are aware of and understand our equality obligations.

- We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.
- We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.
- Council staff will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within six months of approval of the equality scheme by the Equality Commission.
- The Section 75 statutory duties form part of induction training for new staff.
- Focused training is provided for key staff within the Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation).
- Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.
- When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.

5.5 Training and awareness raising programmes will, where relevant, be developed in association with the appropriate Section 75 groups and our staff.

In order to share resources and expertise, the Council will, where possible, work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training.

Monitoring and evaluation

5.6 Our training programme is subject to the following monitoring and evaluation arrangements:

- We evaluate the extent to which all participants in this training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.
- The extent to which training objectives have been met will be reported on as part of the Section 75 annual progress report, which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

DRAFT

6 Our arrangements for ensuring and assessing public access to information and services we provide

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the information we disseminate and the services we provide are fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland. We keep our arrangements under review to ensure that this remains the case.

6.2 We are aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. In particular:

- People with sensory, learning, communication and mobility disabilities may require printed information in other formats.
- Members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, may have difficulties with information provided only in English.
- Children and young people may not be able to fully access or understand information.

Access to information

6.3 To ensure equality of opportunity in accessing information, we provide information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. Where the exact request cannot be met we will ensure a reasonable alternative is provided.

Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The Council liaises with representatives of young people and disability and minority ethnic organisations and takes account of existing and developing good practice.

We will respond to requests for information in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within one month of receipt of the request.

Managers will consider how best to provide information to ensure that it reaches and is appropriate for the target audience.

6.4 In disseminating information through the media we will seek to advertise in the press where appropriate.

6.5 We will also publish information relating to our equality scheme on our web site on a regular basis.

Access to services

6.6 The Council are committed to ensuring that all of our services are fully accessible to everyone in the community across the Section 75 categories. The Council also adheres to the relevant provisions of current anti-discrimination legislation.

6.7 The Council has carried out accessibility audits and taken appropriate action based on these to ensure public access to services.

Assessing public access to information and services

6.8 We monitor annually across all our functions, in relation to access to information and services, to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted.

6.9 Monitoring will be carried out by the Policy Officer and information included in the Annual Progress Report.

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7 Timetable for measures we propose in this equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (b))

7.1 Appendix 4 outlines our timetable for all measures proposed within this equality scheme. The measures outlined in this timetable will be incorporated into our business planning processes.

7.2 This timetable is different from and in addition to our commitment to developing action plans/action measures to specifically address inequalities and further promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We have included in our equality scheme a commitment to develop an action plan. Accordingly, this commitment is listed in the timetable of measures at Appendix 4. For information on these action measures please see above at 2.11 – 2.18.

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8 Our complaints procedure

(Schedule 9 10.)

8.1 The Council are responsive to the views of members of the public. We will endeavour to resolve all complaints made to us.

8.2 Schedule 9 paragraph 10 of the Act refers to complaints. A person can make a complaint to a public authority if the complainant believes he or she may have been directly affected by an alleged failure of the authority to comply with its approved equality scheme.

If the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complaint can be brought to the Equality Commission.

8.3 A person wishing to make a complaint that the Council has failed to comply with its approved equality scheme should contact the Council as indicated on page 7.

8.4 We will in the first instance acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 5 working days.

8.5 The Policy Officer will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and will respond substantively to the complainant within one (1) month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint. Under certain circumstances, if the complexity of the matter requires a longer period, the period for response to the complainant may be extended to two (2) months. In those circumstances, the complainant will be advised of the extended period within one month of making the complaint.

8.6 During this process the complainant will be kept fully informed of the progress of the investigation into the complaint and of any outcomes.

8.7 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, the Council will co-operate fully, providing access in a timely manner to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require.

Similarly, the Council will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-paragraph 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

8.8 The Council will make all efforts to implement promptly and in full any recommendations arising out of any Commission investigation.

9 Publication of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 4. (3) (c))

9.1 Our equality scheme is available free of charge in print form and alternative formats from the Council (see page 7).

9.2 Our equality scheme is also available on our website at: www.antrim.gov.uk

9.3 The following arrangements are in place for the publication in a timely manner of our equality scheme to ensure equality of access:

- We will make every effort to communicate widely the existence and content of our equality scheme. This may include press releases, prominent advertisements in the press, the internet and direct mail shots to groups representing the various categories in Section 75.
- We will email a link of our approved equality scheme to our consultees on our consultation lists. Other consultees without e-mail will be notified by letter that the scheme is available on request. We will respond to requests for the equality scheme in alternative formats in a timely manner, usually within 15 working days.
- Our equality scheme is available on request in alternative formats such as Easy Read, Braille, large print, audio formats (CD, mp3, DAISY) and in minority languages to meet the needs of those not fluent in English.

9.4 For a list of our stakeholders and consultees please see Appendix 3 of the equality scheme, visit our website at www.antrim.gov.uk or use the contact details on page 7.

10 Review of our equality scheme

(Schedule 9 8. (3))

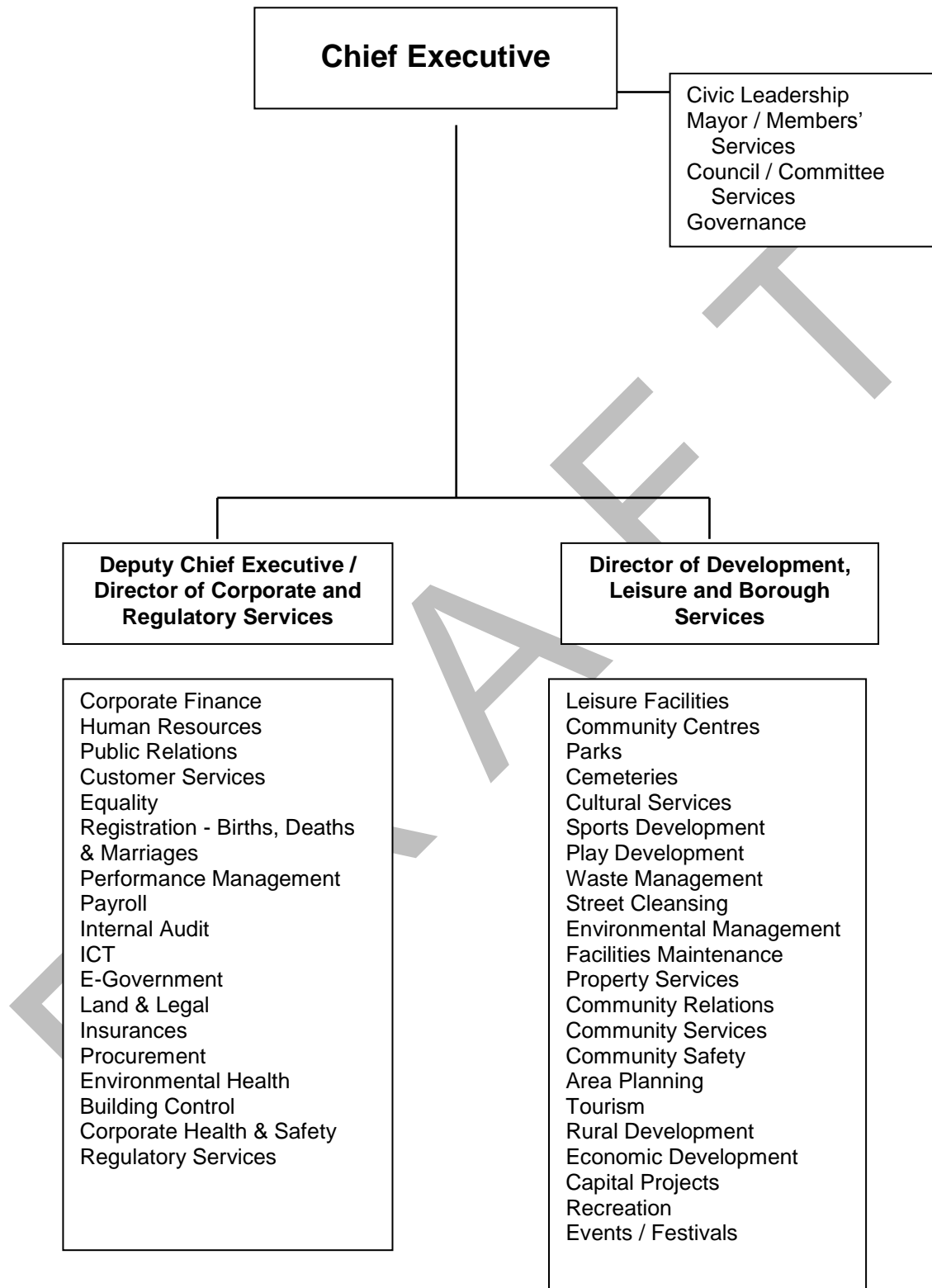
10.1 As required by Schedule 9 paragraph 8 (3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will conduct a thorough review of this equality scheme. This review will take place either within five years of submission of this equality scheme to the Equality Commission or within a shorter timescale to allow alignment with the review of other planning cycles.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of our scheme in relation to the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties relevant to our functions in Northern Ireland.

10.2 In undertaking this review we will follow any guidance issued by the Equality Commission. Availability of a report of this review will be made public through our web site and a copy sent to the Equality Commission.

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Appendix 1 Organisational Chart



Appendix 2 Example groups relevant to the Section 75 categories for Northern Ireland purposes

Please note, this list is for illustration purposes only, it is not exhaustive.

Category	Example groups
Religious belief	<p>Buddhist; Catholic; Hindu; Jewish; Muslims, people of no religious belief; Protestants; Sikh; other faiths.</p> <p>For the purposes of Section 75, the term “religious belief” is the same definition as that used in the <i>Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order</i>¹⁰. Therefore, “religious belief” also includes any <i>perceived</i> religious belief (or perceived lack of belief) and, in employment situations only, it also covers any “<i>similar philosophical belief</i>”.</p>
Political opinion ¹¹	Nationalist generally; Unionists generally; members/supporters of other political parties.
Racial group	Black people; Chinese; Indians; Pakistanis; people of mixed ethnic background; Polish; Roma; Travellers; White people.
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); Trans-gendered people; Transsexual people; women (including girls).
Marital status	Civil partners or people in civil partnerships; divorced people; married people; separated people; single people; widowed people.
Age	Children and young people; older people.
Persons with a disability	Persons with disabilities as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
Persons with dependants	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; for the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
Sexual orientation	Bisexual people; heterosexual people; gay or lesbian people.

¹⁰ See Section 98 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which states: “*In this Act... “political opinion” and “religious belief” shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(3) and (4) of the Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998.*”

¹¹ *ibid*

Appendix 3 List of consultees

Age Concern N.I.
Age Concern Antrim
Help the Aged N.I.
Newtownabbey Senior Citizens Forum
NUS-USI N.I. Student Centre
Child Care N.I.
Putting Children First
Barnardos
NSPCC
Children's Law Centre
Save the Children
Child Poverty Action Group
Youth Council for N.I.
Chinese Welfare Association
Indian Community Centre
Multi Cultural Resource Centre
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Traveller Movement N.I.
Northern Ireland African Cultural Centre
Coalition on Sexual Orientation
The Rainbow Project
Gay and Lesbian Youth N.I.
Lesbian Line
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Queer Space
Disability Action
MENCAP
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
Parents and Professionals and Autism
Royal National Institute for Deaf People
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Downs Syndrome Association
The Cedar Foundation
Sense N.I.
Northern Ireland Women's Aid
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
The Women's Centre
Women's Forum N.I.
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource and Development Agency

Women's Support Network
Family Planning Association
Carers National Association N.I.
Gingerbread N.I.
NIC-ICTU
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Committee on the Administration of Justice
Employers Forum on Disability
Rural Community Network
Community Relations Council
Equality Forum N.I.
The Local Government Staff Commission
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Community Relations Training and Learning Consortium
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations
Community Development and Health Network N.I.
British Deaf Association N.I.
Equality Commission for N.I.
Family Caring Centre
Futureways
Heritage Lottery Fund
IFI Community Bridges
Industrial Development Board
Institute of Directors
Japan Society of N.I.
Invest N.I.
Local Government Audit Branch
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
The Policy Unit N.I. Housing Executive
Northern Ireland Filipino Association
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Northern Ireland Tourist Board
Afro-Asian Residents Group N.I.
Antrim Borough Partnership
Antrim Citizens Advice Bureau
Antrim Inter Agency Group
Antrim Youth Council
Arts Council
Belfast Islamic Centre
Blind Centre for N.I.

Royal National Institute for the Blind
Care for N.I.
North Eastern Education and Library Board
Northern Health and Social Services Board
Research and Evaluation Services
The Sports Council
Tara Chind Vij Centre for Racial Awareness
The Equality Unit Stormont
TIDAL
School of the Built Environment University of Ulster
West Belfast Economic Forum
Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Cooperation Ireland
Council for Ethnic Equality
Counteract
DHSS Castle Building
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Department of Economic Development
Department of Education
All Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Methodist and Baptist
churches in the Borough of Antrim
Antrim Chinese Development Group
Randalstown Chamber of Trade
Women's Aid Antrim
Relate
Rehability
Antrim and District Spina Bifida Association
Praxis Mental Health
Society of Friends and Parents Muckamore
Parkinsons Disease Society
NSF Carer Support Scheme
Creggan and District Community Development
Arches
Crumlin Festival Group
Crumlin Development Association
High Street Presbyterian Youth Club
Bridge Association
Home Start Antrim
Mid Antrim Pony Club
Poultry Industry Education Trust
Crumlin Festival Group
Randalstown Community Playgroup
Stiles Youth Project

Old Mill Community Association
Muckamore Womens Institute
Antrim Baptist Campaigners
Killultagh Historical Society
St. Comgalls Senior Citizens Club
Templepatrick Action
Antrim Womens Institute
Langford Education and Cultural Society
Antrim Independent Chest, Heart and Stroke Club
St. Josephs Guide Unit
St. Comgalls Playgroup
Toome and District Senior Citizens Club
Templepatrick Womens Institute
St. Judes Mothers Union Muckamore
1st Crumlin Boys' Brigade
1st Randalstown BP Scout Group
St. Josephs Nursery School
Society of Parents and Friends of Muckamore Abbey
Crumlin Presbyterian Womens Association
Globe Afterschool club
Antrim Trefoil Guild
Antrim Gospel Hall
Greystone/Stiles Community Playgroup
Friends of Clotworthy Arts Centre
Cumann Larscoil Ghleann Darach
Antrim and District Historical Society
Mums and Tots 1st Antrim Presbyterian Church
Women in Touch
Townparks South Youth and Entertainment Group
1st Antrim Youth Club
1st Donegore Boys' Brigade
St. Macnissi Pre-School Playgroup
AMH New Horizons
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Antrim
Randalstown Historical Society
Antrim Art Club
Haven Christian Centre
Antrim Lions Club
Multiple Sclerosis Society Antrim
South Antrim Community Transport
Rathenraw Community Development Project
Caddy Womens Group
Neilsbrook Community Development Group

Antrim Family Centre
Burnside Ulster Scots Society
O'Neill Summer School Randalstown
Ballycraigy and Environs Development Association
Antrim Chinese Community Development Association
Muckamore Cultural Society
Randalstown Seniors Club
Royal Society for the protection of Birds Muckamore
Probation Board for N.I. Antrim
Ulster Scots Development Trust Antrim
Harper Adams in Ireland Antrim
Antrim Reminiscence Group
Crumlin Womens Institute
Vicky Agnew Memorial Disablement Group
Stiles Community Association
Antrim Stroke Scheme
Parkhall Youth and Community Club
Rathenraw Youth Scheme
Gingerbread N.I.
All Saints Mothers Union Antrim
Rehability Antrim
Greystone Thursday Club
238 Lylehill Girls Brigade Crumlin
Springfarm and District Community Association
Family Caring Centre Rathenraw
Crosskennen Lane Animal Sanctuary
229th Greystone Road Girls Brigade
Crumlin Together
Muckamore Presbyterian Church Girls Brigade
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Antrim
Antrim YMCA
Toomebridge and District Womens Group
Neillsbrook Fold Tenants Association
Re-think Antrim
Inter Estate Partnership Antrim
Adoption UK Antrim
Meeting House Randalstown
Greystone Residents Association
1st Antrim Girls Brigade
Camlin Credit Union Crumlin
Steeple Community Association
Muckamore Pre-School Educational Playgroup
Dundrod and District Rural Association

Antrim Community Development Association
Birch Hill Youth Club Massereene Community College
1st Muckamore Scouts
4th Antrim Scouts
Crumlin Young Farmers Club
Caddy and District Community Group
TACT Wildlife Centre
Steeple Nursery School
Rathmore Young Farmers
Toome Association of Community Groups
Oriel Theatre Club Antrim
Dunadry Community Association
Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary
Antrim Choral Society
Templepatrick Girl's Brigade
Loanends Youth Club
Parkhall Senior Citizens Club
53rd Ballycraigy Girls Brigade
Parkhall Scout Group
1st Muckamore Boys' Brigade
Antrim Community Forum
Ballylurgan Ulster Scots Heritage Association
3rd Antrim Boys Brigade
Home Mission Society Antrim
Musicians of Antrim District Development
Apostolic Church Antrim
223rd Killead Girls Brigade
Parkinsons Disease Society Dunsilly Lodge Antrim
Clonkeen Gospel Hall
Randalstown Womens Institute
Antrim Probus Club
Stiles Circle Ardview Centre
1st Templepatrick Brownies
1st Donegore Girls Brigade
Antrim Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Crumlin
Randalstown OC Youth Club
1st Templepatrick Boys' Brigade
Rathenraw Community Association
Gables Community Group Randalstown
Dublin Road Community Association
Townparks South Community Association
Association of Baha'i Women Antrim

Toome Residents Association
Parkgate District Community Association
Dungonnell Ulster Scots Group
Tiny Tots Playgroup Toomebridge
Lylehill Young Farmers Crumlin
Antrim Retirement Group
Randalstown Parent and Toddler Group
210th Crumlin Presbyterian Girls Brigade
Crumlin Development Association
South Antrim Rural Network
Ballydunmaul Community Association
Loughside Volunteer Centre Antrim
Mothers Union Crumlin
Housewives Club Antrim
Round Tower Community Playgroup
Apostolic Works Crumlin
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Antrim
Randalstown Young Farmers
Randalstown OC Girls Brigade
149th Templepatrick Girls Brigade
2nd Randalstown Campaigners
16th Antrim Scouts
St. Comgalls Youth Club Antrim
1st Aldergrove Scouts Crumlin
Young Doves Youth Club Toomebridge
2nd Antrim Girl Guides
1st Randalstown Boys' Brigade
1st Killead Boys' Brigade
3rd Antrim Girl Guides
2nd Antrim Boys' Brigade
1st Randalstown Brownies
1st Randalstown Girl Guides
Crumlin Presbyterian Youth Club

Appendix 4 Timetable for measures proposed
(Schedule 9 4.(3) (b))

Measure	Lead Responsibility	Timetable
Annual Review <i>Section 75 Annual Progress Report [2.7]</i>	<i>Policy Officer</i>	<i>31 August (annually)</i>
Action Plan <i>Consultation on draft action plan [2.15]</i> <i>Arrangements for monitoring progress in place [2.16]</i> <i>Finalised action plan published [2.18]</i>	<i>Policy Officer</i> <i>Policy Officer</i> <i>Policy Officer</i>	<i>Nov - Jan 2011</i> <i>February 2012</i> <i>Following approval of Scheme by Equality Commission</i>
Consultation <i>Consultation list reviewed and updated [3.4]</i>	<i>Policy Officer</i>	<i>September (annually)</i>
Screening <i>Screening reports [4.15]</i>	<i>Policy Officer</i>	<i>April (annually)</i>
Monitoring <i>Review of monitoring information [4.31]</i>	<i>Policy Officer</i>	<i>Annually</i>
Training <i>Development of summary scheme [5.4]</i> <i>Development of overall training programme [5.5]</i> <i>Evaluation of training [5.6]</i>	<i>Policy Officer</i> <i>Policy Officer / Training and Development Manager</i> <i>Training and Development Manager</i>	<i>Within 3 months of approval of scheme</i> <i>Within 6 months of approval of scheme</i> <i>Annually</i>

<p>Information access</p> <p><i>Assessing access to information and services [6.9]</i></p>	<p><i>Policy Officer</i></p>	<p><i>Annually</i></p>
<p>Publication</p> <p><i>Communication of equality scheme [9.3]</i></p> <p><i>Notification of consultees [9.3]</i></p>	<p><i>Policy Officer</i></p> <p><i>Policy Officer</i></p>	<p><i>Within one month of approval of scheme</i></p> <p><i>Within one month of approval of scheme</i></p>
<p>Review of scheme</p> <p><i>Review of equality scheme [10.1]</i></p>	<p><i>Policy Officer</i></p>	<p><i>In conjunction with timescale for Corporate Plan</i></p>

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Appendix 5 Glossary of terms

Action plan

A plan which sets out actions a public authority will take to implement its Section 75 statutory duties. It is a mechanism for the realisation of measures to achieve equality outcomes for the Section 75 equality and good relations categories.

Action measures and outcomes

Specific measures to promote equality and good relations for the relevant Section 75 and good relations categories, linked to achievable outcomes, which should be realistic and timely.

Adverse impact

Where a Section 75 category has been affected differently by a policy and the effect is less favourable, it is known as adverse impact. If a policy has an adverse impact on a Section 75 category, a public authority must consider whether or not the adverse impact is unlawfully discriminatory. In either case a public authority must take measures to redress the adverse impact, by considering mitigating measures and/or alternative ways of delivering the policy.

Affirmative action

In general terms, affirmative action can be defined as being anything consistent with the legislation which is necessary to bring about positive change. It is a phrase used in the Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI) 1998 to describe lawful action that is aimed at promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

Article 55 Review

Under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, all registered employers must conduct periodic reviews of the composition of their workforces and of their employment practices for the purposes of determining whether members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities are enjoying, and are likely to continue to enjoy, fair participation in employment in each employer's concern.

These reviews, which are commonly known as Article 55 Reviews, must be conducted at least once every three years.

Audit of inequalities

An audit of inequalities is a systematic review and analysis of inequalities which exist for service users and those affected by a public authority's policies. An audit can be used by a public authority to inform its work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties. It can also enable public authorities to assess progress on the implementation of the Section 75 statutory duties, as it provides baseline information on existing inequalities relevant to a public authority's functions.

Consultation

In the context of Section 75, consultation is the process of asking those affected by a policy (ie, service users, staff, the general public) for their views on how the policy could be implemented more effectively to promote equality of opportunity across the 9 categories. Different circumstances will call for different types of consultation. Consultations could, for example, include meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, covers virtually the entire European continent, with its 47 member countries. Founded on 5 May 1949 by 10 countries, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

Desk audit

An audit of a draft equality scheme to ensure that the scheme conforms with the requirements on form and content as detailed in the Commission's Guidelines (the Guide).

Differential impact

Differential impact occurs where a Section 75 group has been affected differently by a policy. This effect could either be positive, neutral or negative. A public authority must make a judgement as to whether a policy has a differential impact and then it must determine whether the impact is adverse, based on a systematic appraisal of the accumulated information.

Discrimination

The anti-discrimination laws prohibit the following forms of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect Discrimination
- Disability Discrimination
- Victimisation
- Harassment

A brief descriptions of these above terms follow:

Direct discrimination

This generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, on one or more of the statutory non-discrimination grounds. A decision or action that is directly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless: (a) in an age discrimination case, the decision can be objectively justified, or (b) in any other case, the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it – such as a genuine occupational requirement exception; or, a positive action exception which permits an employer to use “welcoming statements” or to take other lawful positive action to encourage participation by under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged groups.

Indirect discrimination

The definition of this term varies across some of the anti-discrimination laws, but indirect discrimination generally occurs where a public authority applies to all persons a particular provision, criterion or practice, but which is one that has the effect of placing people who share a particular equality characteristic (e.g. the same sex, or religious belief, or race) at a particular disadvantage compared to other people. A provision, criterion or practice that is indirectly discriminatory will normally be unlawful unless (a) it can be objectively justified, or (b) the public authority can rely on a statutory exception that permits it.

Disability discrimination

In addition to direct discrimination and victimisation and harassment, discrimination against disabled people may also occur in two other ways: namely, (a) disability-related discrimination, and (b) failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

(a) Disability-related discrimination generally occurs where a public authority, without lawful justification, and for a reason which relates to a disabled person’s disability, treats that person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) other people to whom that reason does not (or, would not) apply.

(b) Failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments: One of the most notable features of the disability discrimination legislation is that in prescribed circumstances it imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public authorities to take such steps as are reasonable to remove or reduce particular disadvantages experienced by disabled people in those circumstances.

Victimisation

This form of discrimination generally occurs where a public authority treats a person less favourably than it treats (or, would treat) another person, in the same or similar circumstances, because the person has previously exercised his/her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, or has assisted another person to do so. Victimisation cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Harassment

Harassment generally occurs where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is related to a non-discrimination ground with the purpose, or which has the effect, of violating their dignity or of creating for them an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment cannot be justified and is always unlawful.

Economic appraisal

An economic appraisal is a systematic process for examining alternative uses of resources, focusing on assessment of needs, objectives, options, costs benefits, risks, funding and affordability and other factors relevant to decisions.

Equality impact assessment

The mechanism underpinning Section 75, where existing and proposed policies are assessed in order to determine whether they have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity for the relevant Section 75 categories. Equality impact assessments require the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Equality of opportunity

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on grounds of characteristics including sex, marital status, age, disability, religious belief, political opinion, dependants, race and sexual orientation.

The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It requires proactive measures to be taken to secure equality of opportunity between the categories identified under Section 75.

Equality scheme

A document which outlines a public authority's arrangements for complying with its Section 75 obligations. An equality scheme must include an outline of the public authority's arrangements for carrying out consultations, screening, equality impact assessments, monitoring, training and arrangements for ensuring access to information and services.

Good relations

Although not defined in the legislation, the Commission has agreed the following working definition of good relations: 'the growth of relations and structures for Northern Ireland that acknowledge the religious, political and racial context of this society, and that seek to promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms'.

Mainstreaming equality

The integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of public authorities from the outset. In other words, mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that equality considerations are built into the policy development process from the beginning, rather than being bolted on at the end. Mainstreaming can help improve methods of working by increasing a public authority's accountability, responsiveness to need and relations with the public. It can bring added value at many levels.

Mitigation of adverse impact

Where an equality impact assessment reveals that a particular policy has an adverse impact on equality of opportunity, a public authority must consider ways of delivering the policy outcomes which have a less adverse effect on the relevant Section 75 categories; this is known as mitigating adverse impact.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of continuously scrutinising and evaluating a policy to assess its impact on the Section 75 categories. Monitoring must be sensitive to the issues associated with human rights and privacy. Public authorities should seek advice from consultees and Section 75 representative groups when setting up monitoring systems.

Monitoring consists of the collection of relevant information and evaluation of policies. It is not solely about the collection of data, it can also take the form of regular meetings and reporting of research undertaken. Monitoring is not an end in itself but provides the data for the next cycle of policy screening.

Northern Ireland Act

The Northern Ireland Act, implementing the Good Friday Agreement, received Royal Assent on 19 November 1998. Section 75 of the Act created the statutory equality duties.

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

A statutory body established under Section 68 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which works to ensure that the human rights of everyone in Northern Ireland are fully protected in law, policy and practice.

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). They provide statistical and research information regarding Northern Ireland issues and provide registration services to the public in the most effective and efficient way.

OFM/dFM

The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is responsible for providing advice, guidance, challenge and support to other NI Civil Service Departments on Section 75 issues.

PAFT

The Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment (PAFT) Guidelines constituted the first non-statutory attempt at mainstreaming equality in Northern Ireland in January 1994. The aim of the PAFT Guidelines was to ensure that issues of equality and equity informed policy making and activity in all spheres and at all levels of government. PAFT has now been superseded by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Policy

The formal and informal decisions a public authority makes in relation to carrying out its duties. Defined in the New Oxford English Dictionary as 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government party, business or individual'. In the context of Section 75, the term **policies** covers all the ways in which a public authority carries out or proposes to carry out its functions relating to Northern Ireland. Policies include unwritten as well as written policies.

Positive action

This phrase is not defined in any statute, but the Equality Commission understands it to mean any lawful action that a public authority might take for the purpose of promoting equality of opportunity for all persons in relation to employment or in accessing goods, facilities or services (such as health services, housing, education, justice, policing). It may involve adopting new policies, practices, or procedures; or changing or abandoning old ones. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination.

Positive discrimination differs from positive action in that positive action involves the taking of lawful actions whereas positive discrimination involves the taking of unlawful actions. Consequently, positive action is by definition lawful whereas positive discrimination is unlawful.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data refers to the experiences of individuals from their perspective, most often with less emphasis on numbers or statistical analysis. Consultations are more likely to yield qualitative than quantitative data.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data refers to numbers, typically derived from either a population in general or samples of that population. This information is often analysed by either using descriptive statistics, which consider general profiles, distributions and trends in the data, or inferential statistics, which are used to determine 'significance' either in relationships or differences in the data.

SACHR

The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights (SACHR) has now been replaced by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. SACHR, as part of its review of mechanisms in place to promote employment equality and reduce the unemployment differential, recommended that the PAFT Guidelines should be made a statutory requirement.

Screening

The procedure for identifying which policies will be subject to equality impact assessment, and how these equality impact assessments will be prioritised. The purpose of screening is to identify the policies which are likely to have a minor/major impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to improving these policies. Screening requires a systematic review of existing and proposed policies.

Schedule 9

Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out detailed provisions for the enforcement of the Section 75 statutory duties, including an outline of what should be included in an equality scheme.

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act provides that each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:-

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, each public authority in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Section 75 investigation

An investigation carried out by the Equality Commission, under Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998, arising from the failure of a public authority to comply with the commitments set out in its approved equality scheme.

There are two types of Commission investigation, these are as follows:

1. An investigation of a complaint by an individual who claims to have been directly affected by the failure of a public authority to comply with its approved equality scheme;

An investigation initiated by the Commission, where it believes that a public authority may have failed to comply with its approved equality scheme.

**Appendix6
2012-2016**

Action Plan / Action Measures for

Identified Inequality	Objective (goals, intended impact)	Action (steps to achieve objective)	Measured by / PI / Timescale
<p>Participation in sport, leisure and physical activity: All Section 75 categories</p>	<p>To promote equality through sport, leisure, recreation, health and well being and physical activity</p>	<p>Proactively market to under-represented groups and promote inclusivity</p>	<p>Number of marketing campaigns by March 2015</p>
		<p>Review all classes, courses and programmes</p>	<p>Ongoing review and recommendations for change</p>
		<p>Make facilities available to under-represented groups</p>	<p>Number of previously under-represented groups using facilities</p>
		<p>Monitor uptake of classes and courses by different groups</p>	<p>Effective monitoring arrangements in place by March 2013</p>

Identified Inequality	Objective (goals, intended impact)	Action (steps to achieve objective)	Measured by / PI / Timescale
Promotion of Good Relations: Religious belief / Political opinion / Racial group	To promote good relations across the borough through a diverse programme of activities both internal and external to the Council	A Good Relations Audit has been completed and Action Plans developed each year	A report submitted to OFMDFM each quarter
		Identify any development needs for staff on cultural diversity and take action to resolve	Development needs identified each year and action taken.
Employment Opportunities: Age and Disability	To actively encourage and help young people and those with disabilities to find employment	Facilitation of week-long work placements from local schools	Number of placements with the Council
		Facilitate placements for individuals with a disability through local enterprise	Number of placements with the Council
		Identify any development needs for staff on disability and take action to resolve	Development needs identified each year and action taken
Provision of Council facilities: All Section 75 categories	To ensure that Council facilities are accessible and meet local needs.	Collate and review relevant data when assessing the need to improve or develop Council facilities	Number of facilities improved / developed Number of requests / complaints

			received regarding accessibility
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Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Confidentiality of Consultations

The Council will produce a summary of responses to the consultation. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Council can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit a response, please read the paragraphs below on confidentiality as they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOI) gives the public a right of access to most information held by a public authority, i.e. the Council in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation.

The Council cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public please include an explanation in you response.

FOI means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Council should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Council's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- The Council should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature;
- Acceptance by the Council of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at:

<http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>).