

**Comhairle an Iúir Mhurn
Newry and Mourne District Council**

Equality Scheme



FOREWORD

Newry and Mourne District Council has always shown a strong commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations. The Council welcomes the development of the statutory duties and Equality Scheme. The Equality Scheme gives a more rigorous and methodical approach in reviewing, and equality proofing policies in relation to all our functions powers and duties. The Council consulted all bodies listed in Appendix 2 on its scheme and took their comments into account. A copy of these comments and the Council's response is available on request. (See Section 14 for contact details).

This document sets out how the Council will fulfil its duties under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act. It shows how we will put equality of opportunity and good relations at the heart of our policy decisions.

As a formal expression of this commitment and our support, Newry and Mourne District Council undertakes to follow the principles and process set out in this Equality Scheme; to commit the allocation of necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) to ensure that the statutory duties are complied with; that the Equality Scheme is implemented effectively; and to embrace the views of the community the Council services through wide ranging and innovative approaches to consultation with all those representing people of different religious beliefs, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, people with disabilities, people of different ages and people with dependants.

The Council will ensure that effective internal arrangements are in place to ensure that our statutory duties are complied with. These arrangements will include monitoring, reviewing and reporting on progress in respect of our duties, functions, powers and policies. In this light, the Council will incorporate equality objectives into the Council's corporate plan for 2001 – 2005. These objectives will form part of the business planning of the Council at every level. Progress on performance and action taken will be reported regularly and publicly.

The Council recognises the importance of the statutory duties and will seek to promote the development of an equality culture internally, among all Elected Members and employees, and externally in our work with other organisations and individuals. An extensive programme of training will be undertaken to ensure that Elected Members and employees have a full understanding of the statutory duties and equality issues.

Newry and Mourne District Council will also expect all external organisations, which receive grants, contracts or supply goods and services to the Council to commit themselves and/or their organisation to the principles of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations.

The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all of its functions, powers and duties. The scheme covers all committees and sub committees of Council as approved by the Equality Commission in its letter dated, 9 June 2000.

Councillor Frank Feely
Vice Chairman on behalf of
Councillor Davy Hyland
Chairman

Thomas McCall
Clerk & Chief Executive

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council, in carrying out its functions, will in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:
- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
 - between men and women generally;
 - between persons with a disability and persons without;
 - between persons with dependants and persons without.
- 1.2 In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Council shall in carrying out its functions, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation and in all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland. It is committed to allocating necessary resources (in terms of time, people and money) to ensure that the statutory duties are complied with and that the equality scheme is drawn up and implemented effectively.
- 1.4 The Council will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the Section 75 obligations for all employees and members.
- 1.5 This equality scheme sets out how the Council proposes to fulfil the duties imposed through Section 75, Schedule 9 of the Act.

2. THE COUNCIL - ITS ROLE, FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES

- 2.1 The Council performs 5 principal roles within its local area and district:
- the direct provision of a number of services and facilities,
 - the promotion of the arts, tourism, community and economic development and sports development,
 - the regulation and licensing of certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety,
 - a representative role on a number of bodies, for example the Southern Education and Libraries Board,
 - a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other Government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

2.2 In the performance of the above roles the Council provides a wide range of services and functions, which include:

Arts facilities	Making of bye-laws
Cemeteries	Markets and fairs
Community relations	Museums
Community services	Pollution control
Consumer protection	Public conveniences
Countryside	Public health
Dog control	Refuse collection
Economic development	Registration of births, deaths and marriages
Food hygiene	Sports development
Grant aid	Sport/Leisure services
Grounds maintenance	Street cleaning
Health promotion	Tourism
Irish language development	Travellers site
Licensing and regulatory control	Waste disposal

2.3 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 employees,
- procure goods and services.

2.4 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council has adopted a number of policies. (These will be set out in detail during the screening process)

2.5 All Council policies and functions will be scrutinised and screened in the manner set out in Section 5.

3. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.1 The Council consists of 30 elected representatives, elected every four years who meet monthly in full session and more frequently in sub committees. The committee structure is currently under review but some of the main committees are:

- Technical & Environmental Services Committee,
- District Development Committee,
- Staff and Policy Committee.

Supporting these committees are the various departments of the Council which are listed below.

- Administration,
 - Building Control,
 - District Development,
 - Environmental Health,
 - Finance,
 - Technical and Leisure Services.
- 3.2 The Clerk and Chief Executive oversee the work of the six Council Departments through the Management Team, which together with the Elected Members create the corporate body of the Council.
- 3.3 The Clerk and Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic direction and advice to the Council, for the day to day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.
- 3.4 The Council has 6 departments, each of which is headed by a Chief Officer (Director).
- **Administration:** responsible for the Council's Equality Scheme, Best Value, Public Relations, Community Relations, Personnel, Registration, Markets, support services for official meetings held by the Council and support for elected members.
 - **Building Control:** responsible for enforcement of Building Regulations including control of dangerous buildings, the issuing of property certificates, postal numbering and street naming, entertainment licensing, petroleum licensing and cinema licensing.
 - **District Development:** responsible for a wide range of services including community services, economic development, sports development, tourism, rural development, and Irish language development.
 - **Environmental Health:** responsible for protecting the well being of the district in many areas including monitoring and evaluation of air quality, noise control, food safety, consumer protection, dog control and litter control.
 - **Finance:** responsible for all aspects of the Council's finances, purchasing and all information technology issues.
 - **Technical and Leisure Services:** responsible for refuse collection, waste disposal, leisure services, street cleansing, vehicle maintenance, building maintenance, public conveniences, grounds maintenance, cemeteries and engineering services.

- 3.5 The Council is committed to fulfilling its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members.
- 3.6 While the statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of this Equality Scheme lies with the Council, the Clerk and Chief Executive will have responsibility for ensuring the policy determined by the Elected Members is carried out. The Director of Administration will be responsible for all issues in the day-to-day implementation of administrative arrangements, which ensure that the Council, in carrying out its functions, complies with the Section 75 duties.

The Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) will be the point of contact for the Equality Commission and the point of contact for complaints.

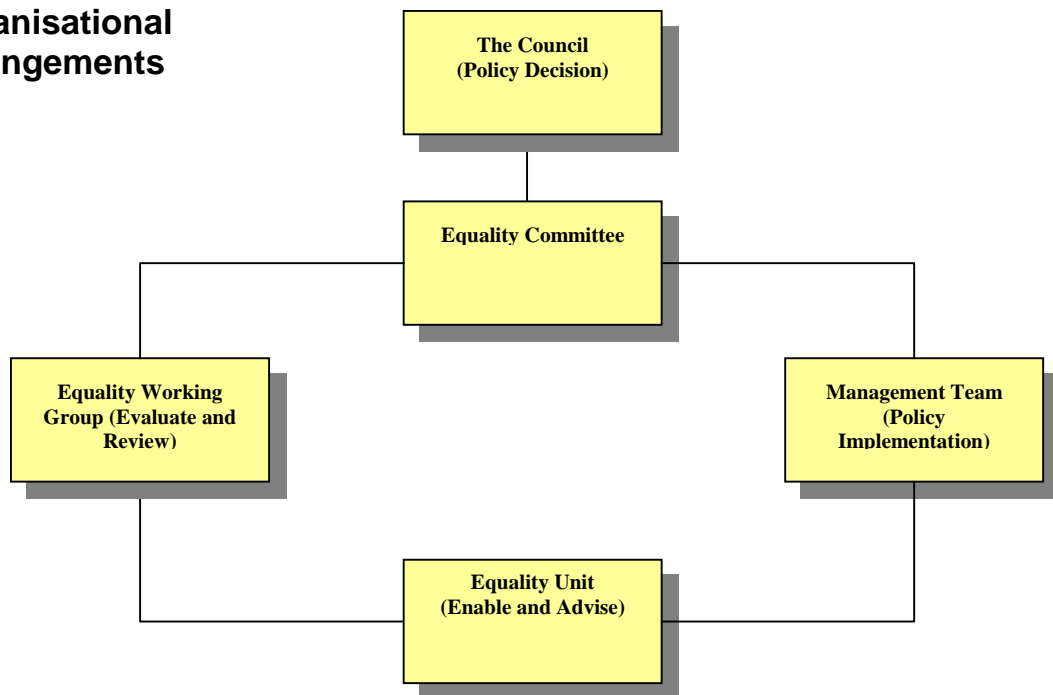
Assistant Director of Administration (Equality)
Newry and Mourne District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry, Co Down,
BT35 8DJ
e-mail equality@newryandmourne.gov.uk

Telephone (028) 3031 3031
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- 3.7 An Equality Unit has been established in the Administration Department to provide specialist support and advice to Council and officers in matters relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations and best value. The public relations function is also located in this unit.
- 3.8 An Equality Working Group has been established. It is made up of Elected Members, Directors, the Assistant Director of Administration (Equality), the Assistant Director of Administration (Personnel), the Equality and Community Relations Officers, the Community Relations Assistant, representatives from Trade Unions, the REDI Development Group and the REDI Trade Union sub-committee. The role of this working group is to progress and monitor the implementation of the equality scheme. The Equality Working Group is chaired by the Director of Administration, who reports directly to the Clerk and Chief Executive. The Equality Working Group reports to the Equality Committee. They meet on at least a quarterly basis.
- 3.9 Progress on the Council's statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations is reported to the Equality Committee at least on a quarterly basis. This Committee is comprised of all Elected Members, the Clerk and Chief Executive, all Directors and members of the Equality Unit and a representative of the REDI development and REDI Trade Union Sub-committee group. Decisions and reports from the Equality Sub-committee progress to full Council for consideration and approval.

- 3.10 The placement of the Equality working Group and Equality Sub-committee ensure that the promotion of equality is dealt with both at the most senior level and in an inclusive way.
- 3.11 The Council recognise that they have a statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of an equality scheme. Our statutory duties will be delivered using the organisational arrangements below.
- 3.12 The Council's approach to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations will be strengthened by the pioneering work of Newry and Mourne District Council in developing the Relationships in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (REDI) project. This is a pilot project with the aim of mainstreaming community relations' policies and practices thus placing issues of fairness and respect for difference at the heart of the Council's operations.
- 3.13 The Elected Members, Management, employees and Trade Unions have all signed up to the REDI principles, as set out in Appendix 1, making Newry and Mourne the first District Council in Northern Ireland to adopt such a comprehensive approach to dealing with issues of community division.

Organisational Arrangements



- 3.14 A representative from the REDI Development Group, which is responsible for bringing the Declaration of Principles to life in the workplace and the community, will sit on the Equality Working Group to ensure progress and ideas are shared between the two groups. Further information is available on the project from the Council's Community Relations section.
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- 3.15 The Council's REDI Initiative is aimed at promoting good relations and minimising sectarian divisions. The Council also recognises that it has a statutory duty to promote good relations between people of different religious belief and political opinion and between people of different racial groups and will undertake to carry out this duty in full.

4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 75 DUTIES

- 4.1 The Council will assess over a 5-year period how each of its policies can contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations within the terms of Section 75 of the Act. This will be done through the screening of **all policies** (which will include written and unwritten policies and common practices); the carrying out of Equality Impact Assessments; and the monitoring of outcomes.
- 4.2 The timetable set out in Section 7.7 is the already established timetable for the carrying out of reviews under the Government's Best Value initiative. The Council believe that integrating the statutory duties with the already established Best Value timetable is the best use of public funds, Elected Members and employees' time and other resources. Where priorities are identified following consultation on the screening process, the timetable for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments will be reviewed and may be reordered.
- 4.3 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build equality objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties into the Council's Corporate View, Performance Improvement Plan for 2001-2005 and any underlying business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the statutory duties will be monitored and reported to the Council's management team and to the Equality Committee, who report to Council at least on a quarterly basis. This process will ensure that equality issues are dealt with at the most senior level.
- 4.4 The Council is involved in the process of Best Value where every aspect of service delivery is reviewed. As a development of this process, each directorate is in the process of developing business plans, which reflect our corporate objectives and include equality objectives. As a further development, operational plans will evolve that will enable the setting of performance targets, the achievement of which will be assessed and reported in the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission.

This process will not be fully developed until 2002. To ensure that the Council is able to measure progress on equality of opportunity and good relations at operational level, each Director is responsible for reviewing the work of their department on a regular basis.

They will contribute to the quarterly reporting to the Management Team and the Equality Committee on progress and on the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

- 4.5 The Council will conduct an annual review of progress on the steps that have been taken by it during the year and the progress made to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. An annual report will be compiled which will be sent to the Equality Commission to assist it in compiling the Commission's Annual Report, as required by sub-para 5(1)(b) of Schedule 8 of the Act. The Council's report will be an assessment of the progress made, and limitations experienced, concerning the implementation of the arrangements specified in the Equality Scheme in complying with Section 75 Statutory duties.
- 4.6 The Council will take all steps to ensure that this information is widely accessible and available. It will advertise the availability of this report publicly through various media in accordance with sections 13 and 14 of this scheme and distribute it to those bodies listed in Appendix 2. Details of progress will also be included in any annual report published by the Council.
- 4.7 The Council will liaise with the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council on issues relevant to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations, with a view to ensuring that the progress outlined in the annual review of progress is maintained. The Council will respond constructively to proposals from these bodies to ensure that progress is made, and maintained, in respect of meeting our statutory obligations.
- 4.8 In all its consultations, the Council will seek the views of the community, voluntary, business, other statutory bodies and those organisations listed in Appendix 2 . This list is not exhaustive and will be amended in light of experience.
- 4.9 The Council will review this scheme within 5 years of its submission to the Equality Commission. This review will include an assessment of how the Council has complied with its Section 75 obligations and how equality of opportunity and good relations have been advanced in relation to areas over which the Council have powers, functions and responsibilities. The Council will consult with those bodies listed in Appendix 2 as part of its review before submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. This review will be made public (see section 14).

5 SCREENING OF POLICIES

- 5.1 In fulfilling its statutory obligations, the Council will identify which of its policies will be subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment and how these will be prioritised. This is known as screening.

- 5.2 The functions, services and facilities that the Council is responsible for providing are listed in paragraph 2.2 above. The range, level and standard of these functions are determined by policies agreed by the Council at various times. Various Council departments are responsible for carrying out these functions.
- 5.3 The term 'policy' is defined as "a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual."¹
- 5.4 A policy therefore is all the ways in which the Council carries out or proposes to carry out its functions. All policies will not have implications on equality of opportunity. The Council will screen all its policies in relation to its functions to assess those which have implications on equality of opportunity and good relations. As stated in 4.2 the Council intends to screen its policies in line with the already established Best Value timetable and as set out in section 7.7. Where priorities are identified following consultation on the screening process, the timetable for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments will be reviewed and may be reordered.
- 5.5 All policies will be screened using the criteria set out in Paragraph 6.1. No policies will be screened out due to lack of information. Qualitative, quantitative data and any other relevant information gathered during consultation will be used to assist the screening.

6 CRITERIA FOR SCREENING

- 6.1 The criteria, which the Council will use for screening all its policies are:
- Is there any evidence, or other reason to believe, that there is higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?
 - Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy issue?
 - Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy or working with others in government or in the wider community?
 - Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems, which are specific, to them?
- 6.2 Where the answer to any of these criteria is positive, consideration will be given to whether to subject the policy to an Equality Impact Assessment.

¹ New Oxford Dictionary of English

7 TIMETABLE FOR EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 As stated in 4.2, the Council proposes to integrate the Council's statutory duties with the already established Best Value timetable, stated in paragraph 7.7. The Council intends to work to this timetable unless it determines, through consultation, or independently that policies should be acted upon immediately. While the timetable may be revised, Equality Impact Assessments will not be postponed.

7.2 The Council will consult during its screening exercise on the list of policies, which it has determined reflect its operations and the proposed timetable for Equality Impact Assessment. To ensure that consultation is comprehensive and inclusive, the Council will provide more detailed explanations of policies and of the process involved.

7.3 The Council will take a 2-stage approach to consultation.

Stage 1: Interactive consultation to enhance understanding of Council services and engage interest in the area of consultation in relation to screening of policies.

Stage 2: Formal consultation over at least an 8-week period on policy list and timetable for Equality Impact Assessment seeking comments on:

- Appropriateness of initial screening against 4 criteria (set out in Section 6.1)
- Appropriateness of the priority ranking for Equality Impact Assessment

This process will be completed by August 2001 and Equality Impact Assessments will begin by September 2001.

7.4 Participants in consultation will be asked if they can prioritise policies based on the following factors:

- How important is the policy in terms of targeting social need?
- To what extent does the function impact upon people's daily lives?
- How significant is the effect on peoples' economic, social and human rights?

7.5 It should be noted that the programme set out below is subject to the results of the consultation exercise. Policy areas, identified through the consultation process as high priority for Equality Impact Assessment, will be advanced.

7.6 The phased approach to the carrying out of Equality Impact Assessments over 5 years will allow consideration of how each policy effects or is affected by the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

7.7 The Council, through consultation and the approval of its Equality Committee and full Council, has agreed the following timetable for Equality Impact Assessment.

Year 1 (2001 – 2002)

- Building Maintenance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Tourism
- Personnel
- Licensing, naming and numbering, energy management and architectural services
- Health Promotion, Consumer Protection, Agenda 21
- Pollution control
- Food Control
- IT Services
- Purchasing

Year 2 (2002 – 2003)

- Waste disposal
- Payroll, Internal Audit, Financial services

Year 3 (2003 – 2004)

- Arts / Culture, Newry Museum, Irish Language
- Member services, Administration, Registration
- Equality Unit

Year 4 (2004 – 2005)

- Refuse Collection
- Leisure Services
- Economic Development
- Community Services

Year 5 (2005 – 2006)

- Street cleansing, Public Conveniences, Litter control
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Dog Control
- Sports Development
- Building Regulations
- Travellers Site

7.8 Other new policies may be developed during the 5-year period, which cannot yet be specified. Any new policies will be screened for fuller Equality Impact Assessment using the criteria set out in section 6.1.

- 7.9 The Council will include a detailed report on the screening exercise in its annual report to the Equality Commission. The report will detail which policies will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment, and which policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for Equality Impact Assessment, have not been included and why. It will also include the timetable for Equality Impact Assessments as determined following consultation on screening.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 8.1 The Council intends to carry out Equality Impact Assessments to seek to identify whether within each relevant Section 75 category, the policy under consideration creates impact or has the potential to enhance equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 8.2 The Council will consult during its Equality Impact Assessments on policies as timetabled. To ensure that consultation is comprehensive and inclusive, the Council will provide more detailed explanations of policies and processes involved.
- 8.3 Consideration will be given to all available qualitative, quantitative and other relevant data when carrying out consultation and Equality Impact Assessments.
- 8.4 The Council will use the results of the Equality Impact Assessments both in the formulation of new policies and the review of existing policies with a view to considering how Council can mitigate any adverse impact and promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 8.5 The Council will in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, take account of any Equality Impact Assessment and consultation carried out in relation to this policy.
- 8.6 The methodology, which the Council will use for an Equality Impact Assessment, is set out in Annex 1 of the Equality Commission's Guide to Statutory Duties. In recognition of the developing nature of work in relation to statutory duties and Equality Impact Assessments, the Council undertake to use any further guidance which becomes available.

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Consultation is integral to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations. It will be ongoing throughout the implementation of this equality scheme.

- 9.2 The Council will consult on all matters to which the statutory duties are likely to be relevant including:
- the Equality Scheme
 - the initial screening of policies and the timetable for Equality Impact Assessment
 - Equality Impact Assessments
- 9.3 In addition to consultation on these areas the Council will also, from time to time, have a need to consult on legislation, strategies, reviews and other plans.
- 9.4 The Council will actively seek to consult with:
- The general public
 - Voluntary and community groups
 - Trade Unions
 - Relevant public sector organisations
 - Other affected groups and individuals with a legitimate interest, including those directly affected by the policy to be assessed, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal interest.
- Appendix 2 contains a list of those to be included in consultation on matters relevant to the statutory duties. This list is not exhaustive and will be amended in light of experience.
- 9.5 The Council commits to ensuring that consultation with groups and individuals will begin as early as possible and will provide a minimum of 8 weeks to carry out consultation. There may be circumstances however, when this timetable is not feasible, for example in order to ensure continuity of service in an emergency. Any such occurrences will be monitored, kept under review, justified clearly and reported in the Council's annual review to the Equality Commission.
- 9.6 The Council will be proactive in its work with representative groups and individuals of the Section 75 categories to identify how best to obtain their views. This may involve face-to-face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, Internet discussions, citizens' panels and other innovative ways of consulting as there will be different means of consultation for different groups and it will be important to establish the basis and engagement during the life of the scheme.
- 9.7 The Council will make sure it listens to the needs of consultees. Participative and user-friendly consultation techniques will be used to make sure that consultation is innovative, inclusive and meaningful.

- 9.8 In all its consultation processes the Council will make sure that any barriers to effective communication are removed. The Council will find out about the barriers that exist through consultation and proactively working with groups and individuals that represent the Section 75 categories. The Council in particular will work to develop consultation with young people, and with people with learning difficulties, to ensure their views are sought and considered in any decision-making process. The Council will proactively develop links with groups and organisations to ensure this is achieved.
- 9.9 Other barriers to people's participation in consultation can range from their unavailability at certain times of the day, the location of the venue, lack of childcare for example. The Council will ensure full participation for the groups being consulted. Consideration will be given to the time and venue for meetings, accessibility of venue, the use of appropriate language, and whether a signer, translator or childcare is required, for example.
- 9.10 The Council considers it particularly important that sufficient, timely and appropriate information is provided to consultees so that they can consider the full implications of policy or proposals, and it will take steps to ensure this.
- 9.11 Information will be made available in consultation with affected groups to make sure of the highest levels of inclusivity in any policy decision-making.
- 9.12 The Council will make sure that systems are in place so that information can be made available in accessible formats and in a timely way. Information will be made available on request in accessible formats such as Braille, audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. We will also provide information in accordance with our Bi-Linguism Policy where requested.
- 9.13 All qualitative, quantitative and other documentation, including consultants' reports will be made available in respect of all consultations.
- 9.14 Aware of its responsibilities to provide Best Value, the Council will endeavour to ensure that it forms appropriate partnerships and working relationships with bodies in the public, statutory and voluntary sectors to enable the most successful means of carrying out consultation and Equality Impact Assessments.
- 9.15 Details of Equality Impact Assessments and progress to promote equality of opportunity and good relations will be reported annually to the Equality Commission. At the end of individual consultation exercises, feedback will always be provided to participants. This will be made available to the general public through public advertisement and in accordance with Sections 13 and 14.
- 9.16 Senior officers will be involved throughout the consultation exercise.

10 MONITORING

- 10.1 The Council will establish a system to monitor the impact of policies in order to identify their effects on the relevant groups. This will be reviewed on an annual basis and the findings will be widely and openly published through a variety of media that have been identified as meeting the needs of the categories listed in Section 75. This information will also be reported to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
- 10.2 Knowledge of the uptake of services provided by the Council and the impact of its policies on the different groups within the Section 75 categories will be of assistance in assessing progress towards equality of opportunity and good relations. Within one year of approval of this scheme, the Council will assess the extent of existing monitoring arrangements, the scope for extending these and develop a mechanism for assessing the effect of the implementation of policies. In addition to the value of any further information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity and good relations, this review will also take into account the following factors:
- resource implications
 - readiness of the public to supply information
 - availability of alternative measures
- 10.3 If monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than anticipated, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity and good relations to be promoted, the Council will ensure the policy is revised.
- 10.4 The Council will seek to co-operate closely with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in its review of existing monitoring arrangements and its consideration of special monitoring of anticipated adverse impacts.
- 10.5 Other data sources the Council may use include;
- Information from other Councils in Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland if relevant
 - Census
 - Labour Force Survey
 - Continuous Household Survey
 - Pressure group data
 - Statutory agencies
 - Deprivation studies (Robson Index) and other appropriate indices
 - Published research reports
 - Community views

- 10.6 The Council are aware of the sensitivities around the collection and treatment of data relating to specific groups noted in the legislation. All steps will be taken to ensure the effective, and where necessary, confidential handling of such information.

11 PUBLICATION OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND MONITORING

- 11.1 The Council will make the results of any Equality Impact Assessments and of monitoring undertaken publicly available. Details will set out any consideration given by the Council to measures, which might mitigate any adverse impact of the functions and policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations, and to any alternative policies, which might better, achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 11.2 The Council will inform the general public about the availability of such information through a variety of media that meet the needs of the categories listed in Section 75, and in particular young people and people with learning difficulties. The Council will consult with representatives of these groups to assess the most appropriate methods of making sure information is accessible and the Council commit to ensuring it is provided in a timely manner. Some media, which may be used include press releases through at least 2 local newspapers, ensuring access to both sections of the community, talking newspapers and publications in languages other than English. Such information will also be made available to the groups listed in Appendix 2.
- 11.3 This material will also be accessible at the Council's website at www.newryandmourne.gov.uk. (Please note the Council's website is currently under development and will not be available until late 2001).
- 11.4 Other information, which the Council will advertise the availability of, will include the annual report to the Equality Commission, Reports on individual consultation exercises, or other relevant material. Such material may be accessed in a variety of formats. (See sections 13 and 14 for details of formats in which information may be supplied)
- 11.5 Requests for information relating to the statutory duties may be made to:

Assistant Director of Administration (Equality)
Newry and Mourne District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry, Co Down,
BT35 8DJ
e-mail equality@newryandmourne.gov.uk

Telephone (028) 3031 3031
Mincom (028) 30257859

11.6 The published information on Equality Impact Assessment will include:

- the aim of the policy to which the assessment relates;
- details of any considerations given by the Council to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations;
- details of any consideration given by the Council to any alternative policies, which might better, achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

11.7 Information will be made available on request in formats such as Braille, audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. We will also provide information in accordance with our Bi-Lingualism Policy where requested.

12 TRAINING

12.1 The Council will ensure that all employees and Elected Members receive training on the Section 75 obligations, the requirements of this equality scheme and the arrangements for Equality Impact Assessment, appropriate to their grade and responsibilities. This training will be completed within two years of the Scheme introduction.

12.2 All new employees, newly elected or co-opted Elected Members will receive appropriate training in line with the training objectives listed below in 12.3 as part of their induction programme.

12.3 The Council undertakes to provide comprehensive training for all Council employees and Elected Members over the 5-year period. This will aim to:

- raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland including the provisions of Section 75, 76 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- provide employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provide those employees involved in the Equality Impact Assessments of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of Council's scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- provide those employees involved in the consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme to do this work effectively

- 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.
- 12.4 Affected groups will be involved in the development and delivery of the training programme so that the training objectives can be realised, and so that there is a real awareness of issues affecting the groups.
- 12.5 Where appropriate more focused training will be provided for those employees working in specialist roles, for example senior management, trainers, and employees involved in research and data collection.
- 12.6 Training will be provided in-house or by external trainers dependant upon the level of employees, the extent of their involvement in implementing the Scheme and the depth of knowledge required.
- 12.7 The Council will provide copies of this scheme to all Elected Members and employees. A summary of the scheme and regular updates on measures to promote equality of opportunity and good relations will be communicated to all Elected Members and employees.
- 12.8 The Council will also provide on an on-going basis, training for all Elected Members and employees on matters relating to promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations
- 12.9 The Council will report on the extent to which the above training objectives have been met in its annual review to the Equality Commission.

13 PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES

- 13.1 The Council is committed to effective communication with the public. It recognises, however, that there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing information provided by the Council. There are 4 particular risk areas:
- people with sensory and learning disabilities may have particular difficulties with information in print;
 - members of ethnic minority groups, whose first language is not English, and who may have difficulties with information provided only in English;
 - some local newspapers are read predominantly by members of only one community;
 - people of different ages, particularly the young and old.
- 13.2 The Council will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are accessible to all sections of the community.

- 13.3 The Council will, as part of its communications strategy, undertake an assessment of its arrangements for providing information in Braille, disc audio cassette, signed video cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who do not understand or are not fluent in English. The Council will consult with representative groups as it carries out this assessment, report on any proposed amendments before they are introduced and consult on the findings and recommendations prior to implementation. The Council will also be guided by consultation with specialist advisors such as the Community Relations Council, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Education and Library Boards, and the Youth Council.
- 13.4 The assessment will take account of the likely demand and resource implications for information in such formats across its direct services and key policy areas.
- 13.5 The Council intends that all of its services are fully accessible. Equality Impact Assessments will highlight any factors, which indirectly discriminate by making a particular service less accessible to particular groups. The Council will monitor access to information and services to ensure equality of opportunity and good relations.
- 13.6 In all Council premises open to the public, the Council will seek to promote equality of opportunity and good relations within the terms of Section 75 of the Act. In all public offices and facilities, such as leisure and community centres, the Council will promote a welcoming and harmonious environment. The Council will adhere to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

14 PUBLICATION OF THE SCHEME

- 14.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission, this scheme will be available by contacting the Equality Officer or the Assistant Director of Administration (Equality) at:

Newry and Mourne District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry, Co Down,
BT35 8DJ

e-mail equality@newryandmourne.gov.uk

Telephone (028) 3031 3031
Mincom (028) 30257859

The availability of the Scheme will be advertised in the press and can also be accessed on the Council's website at:

www.newryandmourne.gov.uk

The scheme will be available in accessible formats and the Council will through their ongoing work with young people, people with disabilities and people with learning difficulties find appropriate and innovative ways of communicating the scheme and its contents.

In accordance with the Council's Bi-Lingualism Policy, the Scheme is also available in the Irish language upon request.

Please note the Council's website is currently under development and will not be available until late 2001. The Council will also issue a press statement which will be publicised widely. Copies of the scheme will be sent to those bodies listed in Appendix 2.

- 14.2 All employees will receive a summary Scheme and be provided with a full Scheme on request.

15 COMPLAINTS

- 15.1 The Council will respond to complaints that it has not fulfilled its statutory obligations and will seek to resolve such complaints bilaterally. Complaints can be raised with the

Assistant Director of Administration (Equality)
Newry and Mourne District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry, Co Down,
BT35 8DJ

Telephone (028) 3031 3031

e-mail equality@newryandmourne.gov.uk Mincom (028) 30257859

Complaints should preferably be made in writing though this will not preclude any complaints made verbally.

- 15.2 Complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in a manner that takes account of the sensitivities of the matter in question and any request for confidentiality from the complainants. The Council will aim to give a substantive response to complaints within one month.
- 15.3 When a complainant claims to have been directly affected by a failure of the Council to comply with this scheme, he/she will be informed of the procedure for bringing such a complaint to the Equality Commission.

16 SUMMARY ACTION PLAN AND TIMETABLE

16.1 The following timetable summarises the measures, which the Council proposes to take during the five years following the commencement of the scheme.

Summary Action Plan and timetable

Year	Action
Year 1 April 2001 to March 2002	Launch of Equality Unit Review Scheme Initial screening of policies and functions Consultation on screening process Prioritise policies for Equality Impact Assessment Review Best Value Timetable) Carry out Equality Impact Assessments Assess current monitoring arrangements Define performance indicators in respect of Statutory duties Equality awareness training for Elected Members and employees Equality Impact Assessment training for Elected Members and employees Specialist training as required for officers involved in the implementation of the equality scheme. Report to Equality Committee Report to Management team Devise Action Plan and outreach programme in respect of Equality Scheme (Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations) Review Year 2 Equality Impact Assessment programme

Year	Action
Year 2 April 2002 to March 2003	Year 2 Equality Impact Assessment Programme Review monitoring system Publication of Equality Impact Assessments Ongoing training Annual review of progress and report to Equality Commission
Year 3 April 2003 to March 2004	Year 3 Equality Impact Assessment Programme Review monitoring system Publication of Equality Impact Assessments Ongoing training Annual review of progress and report to Equality Commission
Year 4 April 2004 to March 2005	Year 4 Equality Impact Assessment Programme Review monitoring system Publication of Equality Impact Assessments Ongoing training Annual review of progress and report to Equality Commission
Year 5 April 2005 to March 2006	Year 5 Equality Impact Assessment Programme Review monitoring system Publication of Equality Impact Assessments Ongoing training Annual review of progress and report to Equality Commission 5 year review of Equality Scheme and its implementation

Appendix 1- NEWRY AND MOURNE DISTRICT COUNCIL REDI PROJECT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

This declaration is supported and endorsed by the employees, Elected Representatives, Trade Unions and Management within Newry and Mourne District Council.

- The Elected Representatives, Employees, Management and Trade Unions within Newry and Mourne District Council fully commit themselves to the principles of Equity, respect for Differences and Relationship-building across sectarian divisions.
- We accept that everyone has the right to work and live free from any form of intimidation due to religious, political, cultural or national differences and commit ourselves to ensuring the freedom of all those who work for the Council from any form of discrimination by word or actions.
- Representation and promotion of our own cultural, political and religious identities should be achieved in a manner that shows respect for each other, promotes diversity and can lead to creating mutual respect and understanding.
- Any attempt to prevent the employment, continued employment or career development of any individual within the Council due to religious, political cultural or national differences will be vigorously opposed. Anyone involved in such activity will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- All employees are committed to ensuring that their behaviour can in no way make any other employees member feel uncomfortable or victimised because of their religious, political, cultural or national identity.
- Councillors will endeavour to use language and conduct themselves in a manner that makes no other Councillor, the community or members of employees feel belittled or degraded. They will endeavour to engage in respectful politics and avoid behaviour that could cause greater divisions within the wider Council area.
- The Council will endeavour to ensure all Council premises shall be environments where anything that identifies a particular community allegiance, that could give offence or cause discomfort to individuals, groups or the community would have to be acceptable to both 'majority' and 'minority' communities.
- The Council will proof the delivery of all services and fundraising against agreed 'Community Relations' principles.
- The REDI Development Group will regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Declaration and all associated structures, procedures and training. It will engage with Elected Representatives, Management, trade Unions and Employees on any changes, which may be required in the future to ensure continuous improvement.

Appendix 2 GROUPS FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES

The following organisations, groups and individuals have been consulted in relation to the development of the Equality Scheme. This list is not exhaustive and will be revised in light of experience. The groups, organisations and individuals listed will be consulted with for the purposes of meeting our Section 75 duties and for other consultation requirements as arise from time to time.

1. AEU
2. Age Concern Northern Ireland
3. Age Sector Reference Group
4. Alliance Party
5. Altnaveigh House Culture and Enterprise Society
6. Arts Council for NI
7. Arts Development Committee
8. Baptist Church
9. British Cultural Forum
10. British Deaf Association (NI)
11. Catholic Council for Maintained Schools
12. Chinese Welfare Association
13. Church of Ireland
14. Citizens' Advice Bureau
15. Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSO)
16. Committee on the Administration of Justice
17. Community Health Network
18. Community Relations Council (CRC)
19. Confederation of Community Groups
20. Conservative Party
21. Democratic Unionist Party
22. Department for Regional Development
23. Department for Social Development
24. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
25. Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
26. Department of Environment
27. Diocese of Armagh
28. Disability Action
29. Employers' Forum on Disability
30. Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
31. Free Presbyterian Church
32. Gateway Club
33. Gingerbread Northern Ireland
34. GMB
35. Green Party
36. Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
37. Indian Community Centre
38. Irish Language Development Committee
39. Kilkeel Community Association
40. Kilkeel Development Association
41. Knights of St Columbanus
42. LEADER

43. LEDU
44. Methodist Church
45. Metropolitan Church
46. Millview Resource Centre
47. Mourne Welfare Rights
48. Mourne Youth Action Zone
49. Newry Adolescent Partnership
50. Newry and Mourne Carers
51. Newry and Mourne District Community Services Council
52. Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
53. Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust
54. Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium
55. Newry and Mourne Travellers' Partnership
56. Newry and Mourne Women
57. Newry Baptist Centre
58. Newry Chamber of Commerce
59. Newry Chamber of Trade and Commerce, c/o Newry Town Partnership
60. Newry Heritage and Development Association
61. Newry Volunteer Bureau
62. Newry Welfare Rights
63. NI Unionist Party
64. NIPSA
65. Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church
66. Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
67. Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
68. Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
69. Northern Ireland Human Rights Association
70. Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
71. Northern Ireland Labour Party
72. Northern Ireland Museums Council
73. Northern Ireland Tourist Board
74. Northern Ireland Traveller Movement
75. Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
76. NSPCC
77. Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
78. Peace and Reconciliation Partnership
79. Presbyterian Church
80. Prince's Trust Volunteers
81. Reformed Presbyterian Church
82. ROMAL
83. Roman Catholic Church
84. RoSA
85. Rostrevor District Community Association
86. Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID Northern Ireland)
87. Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB Northern Ireland)
88. Rural Community Network
89. Rural Development Council
90. Salvation Army
91. Save the Children
92. SDLP

93. Sinn Fein
94. SIPTU
95. South Armagh Tourism Initiative (SATI)
96. South Armagh Youth Initiative
97. South Eastern Education and Library Board
98. Southern Education and Library Board
99. Sports Development Committee
100. TGWU
101. The Local Government Employees Commission for Northern Ireland (LGSC)
102. The Rainbow Project
103. The Sports Council for Northern Ireland
104. Tí Chulainn Cultural Activity Centre
105. Tourist Development Association
106. UCATT
107. UK Unionist Party
108. Ulster Democratic Party
109. Ulster Independence Party
110. Ulster Scots Committee
111. Ulster Unionist Party
112. Women on Rural Development
113. Women's Coalition
114. Women's Health Initiative
115. Workers Party
116. Youth Council for Northern Ireland