

**Disability Duties
Disability Action Plan**

for

Strabane District Council

2010-2011

This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from Strabane District Council in alternative formats, including in large print, in Braille, on audio cassette and on computer disc. It can also be downloaded from the Council's website. If you would like a copy in an alternative format, please contact:

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Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is an important document in that it is a statement of Strabane District Council's commitment to and proposals for fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). This Act places new duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions to have regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

The Plan is also important because it outlines how disability issues can be more effectively mainstreamed within the Council, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making.

Strabane District Council is committed to allocating the necessary resources in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the statutory duty is complied with and effectively implemented.

Chairperson

Clerk & Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006 requires the Council, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

1.2 Strabane District Council is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and has set out how it intends to do this in this Disability Action Plan (the Plan).

1.3 Strabane District Council will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for all staff and elected members.

2. Purpose of the disability action plan

2.1 This Plan sets out how the Council proposes to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions.

3. The Council – its role and functions

3.1 The Council performs five 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,
- the regulation and licensing of certain activities relating to environmental health, consumer protection and public safety,
- a representative role on a number of bodies and Boards including Education and Health,

- a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other Government bodies and agencies on issues such as planning, water, roads and housing.

3.2 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 disposal
- 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
- registration of births, deaths and marriages
- 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.

3.3 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 staff
- procure goods and services.

3.4 To support and implement the above statutory functions and provision of services and facilities, the Council has adopted a wide range of policies.

4. The Council's commitment to the effective implementation of the disability action plan

- 4.1 The Council is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members. Day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Elected Members lies with the Chief Executive and he will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by the Council in carrying out its functions.
- 4.2 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within the Council including individual staff objectives and annual plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties will be monitored and reported upon at the most senior level within the organisation on a bi-annual basis. Individual performance will be monitored and reviewed through personal development plans.
- 4.3 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included annually in the Council's newsletter.

5. Internal arrangements

5.1 The Council consists of 16 elected representatives, elected for a four year period who meet monthly in full session and more frequently in five sub committees namely:

- Corporate and Regulatory Services
- Economic Development
- Culture, Arts & Leisure
- Environment
- Audit & Staff

Supporting these committees are the various departments of the Council.

5.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Corporate Management Team, which together with the councillors create the corporate body of the Council.

5.3 The 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.

5.4 The Council has six departments, each of which is headed by a Chief Officer/Head of Department.

- Chief Executives' Department
- Finance
- Technical Services
- Environmental Health
- Culture, Arts & Leisure
- Building Control

5.5 Ms Paula Donnelly, Human Resources Manager, will be the point of contact for the Equality Commission and the central point of contact for complainants.

6. Effective engagement

6.1 The Council is committed to engage effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan. Further information on how this will be done is outlined in Section 10 on Consultation.

7. Annual report

7.1 The Council will prepare an annual report on the implementation of its Plan. The annual report will be included as part of the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission on the implementation of our equality scheme.

7.2 A copy of the annual report will be made available on the Council's website.

8. Action measures

8.1 Attached is a table outlining the measures which the Council intends to take in order to implement the new disability duties in 2010/11.

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN MEASURES
2010-2011**

Action Measure	Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility and Resources	Timescale
Screen all new policies to assess the significance of the policy on the disability duties.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	All new and revised policies screened for impact on disability duties.	Chief Officers/Heads of Department/Human Resources Manager and Corporate Policy Officer	March 2011
Provide induction training to all new employees on the Council's Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan.	Increased awareness of disability issues. Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.	All new employees trained on disability awareness within 3 months of commencing employment.	Human Resources staff Officer time	May 2011
Provide equality and disability awareness training for staff and elected members.	Increased awareness of disability issues. Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.	50% of elected members and staff received training.	Human Resources/ Chief Officers/ Heads of Departments Training Fees	May 2011
Arrange regular meetings with recently established local Disability Forum.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	4 meetings having taken place.	Chief Executive and Human Resources Manager	May 2011

Action Measure	Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility and Resources	Timescale
Consult with the local Disability Forum in relation to the development of the Council's new corporate plan.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	Groups consulted with.	Corporate Policy Officer	May 2011
Increase awareness among staff of the Disability Champion and the Disability in Local Council's initiative.	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	Attendance by Disability Champions at relevant courses/events.	Disability Champions Course Fees	May 2011
Assist with the delivery of the CAWT Project, (Corporation and Working Together) community awareness programme to enable citizenship for adults with a disability.	Increased awareness and understanding of disability within the community. Improve choice and access for people with a disability to services and facilities.	Action plan developed.	CAWT Steering Group and Chief Executive	March 2011

Action Measure	Expected Outcome	Performance Indicator	Responsibility and Resources	Timescale
Increase participation in sport and physical recreation among those with a disability through the Active Communities programme and other sporting initiatives.	Increased participation in sport and physical recreation among those with a disability.	15% of those participating in the Active Communities programme have a disability.	Community Sports Officer Officer time and coaching time	March 2011
Engage with disability groups to make them fully aware of the assisted Bin Lift scheme.	Increased awareness of the assisted Bin Lift scheme.	A review completed of the assisted Bin Lift scheme	Chief Technical Services Officer Officer time	March 2011
Provide work experience placements for disabled persons	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.	3 work placements.	Human Resources Manager Officer time	March 2011
Review and report on progress of the Disability Action Plan annually.	Increased awareness of Council's achievements in relation to disability duties.	Annual progress report completed and forwarded to the Equality Commission	Human Resources Manager Officer time	March 2011

DISABILITY ACTION ACHIEVED 2009/2010

- The Council participated in the Disability in Local Councils Initiative and appointed an officer and elected member Disability Champions to lead the initiative at Council level.
- Strabane District Council successfully bid to become a partner organisation in a £0.5m project, Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) Community Awareness Programme to support people with disabilities in the 2009/10 financial year.

Project aim

The overall aim of the Citizenship Project is to enable citizenship for adults with a learning and/or physical and/or sensory disability by creating locally based alternatives to the traditional model of day care which will be developed and delivered in partnership with the individuals themselves, their families and friends and existing local voluntary, community and statutory sector organisations.

Objectives of the project

- Increase awareness and understanding of disability within local communities
 - Support people with a disability to maximise use of the existing infrastructure within their local community
 - Improve choice and enhance access for people with a disability to services and facilities in their local community
 - Create locally based alternatives to traditional models of day care
 - Disseminate the good practice and learning from the project
- External funding was received from Sports Northern Ireland for an Active Communities programme. The aim of this programme is to increase participation in sport and physical recreation among under-represented groups including women and those with a disability.
 - The Council's Alley Theatre received the William Keown Trust's coveted Prestige Access Award, highlighting the venues' excellent design, access and service to people with disabilities.