

**EQUALITY SCHEME
FOR
STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

April 2000

FOREWARD

This Equality Scheme is an important document in that it is a statement of the Council's commitment to fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This Act places new duties on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The scheme is also important because it outlines a plan for the more effective mainstreaming of equality issues, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within the Council.

The Council recognises the importance of the statutory duties placed upon it and has impressed upon staff the need for compliance. The priority attached to the scheme is also reflected in the Council's commitment to the allocation of necessary resources to ensure that the statutory duty is complied with and that there are effective arrangements in place to ensure compliance and monitor and review progress.

Chairman

Chief Executive

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Strabane District Council – its role and functions	3
Organisational structure	4
Arrangements for assessing compliance with Section 75 duties	7
Approach to be adopted to screening and timetabling	8
Stage 1 Screening of policies	8
Stage 2 Timetable for setting priorities	8
Stage 3 Consultation of the proposed screening exercise	10
Stage 4 Report on the screening exercise	10
Equality impact assessments	10
Consultation	10
Monitoring	12
Publication of equality impact assessments and monitoring	13
Training	14
Public access to information and services	15
Publication of the scheme	16
Complaints	16
Review of the scheme	17
Summary action plan and timetable	18
<u>Appendices</u>	
List of Consultative Bodies	19
Consultation on the Draft Scheme	23
Letter accompanying scheme	26
Follow up letter to Consultees	27
Organisation Chart	29

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('the Act') requires the Council in carrying out its functions, powers and duties 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 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, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland 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. It is committed to allocating necessary resources (in terms of time, people and money) to ensure that the statutory duty is complied with and that the equality scheme is drawn up and implemented effectively and on time.

1.4 The Council will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the Section 75 obligations for all staff and elected members.

1.5 This equality scheme sets out how the Council proposes to fulfil the duties imposed by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Act.

1.6 In addition, without prejudice to its Section 75 obligations the Council, in carrying out its functions will also actively promote equality of opportunity for people with a learning disability.

1.7 The Council will ensure that effective internal arrangements are in place to ensure that the duties are effectively complied with and for monitoring and reviewing progress.

2. Strabane District Council - its role and functions

2.1 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.

2.2 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
- 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.

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 staff
- 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 policies relate to all aspects of the Council's business, including service provision and employment of staff. A detailed list of these policies will be made available for consultation during the screening process.

The Council intends to screen its existing functional responsibilities and policies in the manner set out at Section 6.

3. Organisational structure

3.1 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 Affairs Committee
- Economic Development Committee
- Recreation/Leisure, Culture and Arts Committee
- Environment Committee
- Audit and Staff Committee

Supporting these committees are the various departments of the Council.

- 3.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Management Team, which together with the councillors create the corporate body of the Council.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The Council has seven departments. (See appendix 5, Organisation Chart)
- The Chief Executives' Department has particular responsibility for Economic Development, Corporate Policy Development and Human Resources.
 - The Administration Department services the Council and its Committees. The Department is also responsible for the administration of burials as well as the registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
 - The Finance Department is responsible for monitoring Council expenditure and income. The Department is also responsible for creditors, and debtors services, controls the Council bank accounts, and financial resources. In addition the Department monitors expenditure on capital projects, and calculates the district rate.
 - The Technical Services Department provides waste collection and disposal, recycling, grounds maintenance, street cleansing and litter control, licensing administration, public toilets, bus shelters, road signs, building maintenance and minor building works, dog and litter control. The licensing function includes petroleum licensing, cinemas and hairdressers, entertainment licensing, street trading licensing and the issue of amusement permits.
 - The Recreation Department is involved in planning, developing and managing facilities such as the Leisure Centres, outdoor playing fields, play parks, woodland parks, tourist amenities, and cultural and community activities, including museums. It is also responsible for countryside access.
 - The Environmental Health Department encompasses food control including composition; labelling and inspection of food premises, monitoring food and water supplies with respect of bacteriological and chemical parameters; enforcement of noise and air pollution legislation; enforcement of consumer safety, public health, and street trading legislation; meat inspection and imported food control. The Department also promotes a healthy lifestyle for the people of the District and provides I.T. support service to the Council.
 - The Building Control Department ensures that when buildings are erected they are safe and easily accessible to users, furthers the conservation of energy, and acts as project manager for capital works. The Building Control Department is responsible for the administration and enforcement of regulations relating to the construction of new buildings, alterations to and extension of existing buildings and installation of fittings.

- 3.5 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation. Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the scheme lies with the Council. Day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Elected Members lies with the Chief Executive and he/she will be responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Section 75 duty is complied with by the Council in carrying out its functions.
- 3.6 To ensure the effective implementation of the scheme, the Council has introduced the following arrangements:

i) Co-Ordination of Implementation

Ms Paula Donnelly, the Human Resources Officer, reports directly to the Chief Executive and will have primary responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Scheme and will be the point of contact for the Equality Commission and Consultees. He or she will also co-ordinate the training for all staff and elected members. Ms Donnelly can be contacted at the following address:

Strabane District Council
47 Derry Road
Strabane
Co Tyrone
BT82 8DY

Tel: 028 71 382204 EXT 220
Email: pdonnelly@strabanedc.com

ii) Implementation of Scheme

Each Chief Officer/Head of Department will be responsible for implementing the Equality Scheme within their area of responsibility.

iii) An Inter-Departmental Working Group

An inter-departmental working group has been set up to oversee the development and implementation of the Council's Equality Scheme. This group comprises of the Chief Executive, Management Team and includes the Human Resources Officer as well as one of the Council's Community Relations Officers. This group will meet on a quarterly basis. The Human Resources Officer will report to this group on progress. The Chief Executive will report progress to Council on a quarterly basis through the Human Resources Officer's report at the Corporate Affairs committee. This group will also undertake the screening process.

iv) The Council will review these internal arrangements on an annual basis.

4. Arrangements for assessing compliance with Section 75 duties

- 4.1 The Council will assess over a five-year period how each of its policies can contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations within the terms of Section 75 of the Act. This will be done through equality impact assessments (see Paragraph 9. below) and the timetable at paragraph 7.2 will be followed.
- 4.2 The Council will also develop a programme of work on good relations. It will liaise with the Community Relations Council to further develop its Community Relations strategy and to carryout a Community Relations Audit. It will also liaise with the Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities to carryout a Racial Audit and the Traveller Movement (NI) to consider and promote the needs of the travelling people.
- 4.3 As part of its corporate planning process, the Council will build objectives and targets relating to the statutory duty 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 statutory duty will be monitored and reported upon by the Chairman and Chief Executive on a quarterly basis through the Human Resources Officer's report at the Corporate Affairs committee. Individual performance will be monitored and reviewed through performance review arrangements.
- 4.4 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the statutory duty will be included in the Council's annual report
- 4.5 The Council will conduct an annual review of its progress, which will include an assessment of the progress made and the limitations experienced concerning the implementation of the arrangements specified in the equality scheme and in complying with the duties. This will also include progress on the good relations duty. This review, which will include progress made in respect of all of the Council's functions 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 to the Act. This review will be made public.
- 4.6 The Council will consult as appropriate with the Equality Commission and the Community Relations Council on issues relevant to the fulfilment of the Section 75 obligations. The Council will liaise with the Equality Commission to ensure that the progress outlined in the annual review of progress is maintained. It will respond constructively to proposals from those bodies relating to its compliance with the Section 75 obligations.

5. Approach to be adopted to screening and timetabling

5.1 The Council is currently engaged in a 2 stages screening process, details of which are contained below.

6. Stage 1 Screening of policies

6.1 The Council intends to screen its policies in order to determine which would require a fuller equality analysis in the form of an impact assessment.

6.2 The screening criteria which the Council will use 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?

6.3 If the answer to any of the criteria set in paragraph 6.2 is positive, consideration will be given to whether to subject the policy to impact assessment.

6.4 The Council will adopt a two phase approach to consultation. The first phase of consultation involves seeking views on the Council's policies and on whether all policies have been identified, how they affect the Section 75 category groups in terms of equality of opportunity and their priority for equality impact assessment. The second phase will involve consultation on the conclusions reached from consultees in the first phase.

7 Stage 2 Timetable for setting priorities

7.1 Having screened its policies as outlined in Stage 1 and defined which policies it believes should be subjected to full impact assessment, the Council will prioritise these in order to establish a meaningful timetable.

7.2 The Council proposes to prioritise these impact assessments based upon its Best Value programme.

Year 1:

- Economic Development
- Community Services and Community Relations

Year 2:

- Building Control
- Leisure Services

Year 3:

- Administration
- Finance
- Human Resources

Year 4:

- Environmental Health
- Technical Services

Year 5:

- Recreation, Arts and Tourism

7.3 The Council will review this programme at the end of year one and may independently or through consultation change it in the light of policies which, should be acted upon immediately. The Council will also review the programme following the completion of the screening process and may reprioritise in light of the results.

7.4 New policies which, cannot yet be specified may be developed during the five year period. Any new policies will be screened for fuller impact assessment using the criteria identified at paragraph 6.2.

8. Consultation on the proposed screening exercise

- 8.1 It will then consult with the organisations listed at Appendix 1 on the result of the screening and the timetabling/ prioritisation exercise.

9. Report on the screening exercise

- 9.1 The Council will submit its screening report to the Equality Commission in June 2001. The report will detail which policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment have not been included and why. This report will include a list of those policies to be impact assessed and a timetable outlining when these policies will be assessed.

10. Equality impact assessments

- 10.1 The Council intends to carry out equality impact assessments to seek to identify the impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted on the promotion of equality of opportunity. Equality impact assessments will be conducted in accordance with the advice contained in annex 1 of the guidelines and any subsequent advice to be published by the Equality Commission.
- 10.2 The Council is committed that in making any decision with respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, the Council will take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.
- 10.3 The Council will consult with those directly affected by the policy to be assessed, whether or not they have a direct economic or personal integrity as well as other public bodies, voluntary, community, trade unions and other groups.

11. Consultation

- 11.1 The Council recognises the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of its statutory equality duties. It affirms that all consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Equality Commission's guiding principles as detailed in its "guide to statutory duties". In particular, it will endeavour to conduct all consultations in a timely, open and inclusive way in accordance with the equality commission's guiding principles.

The Council will consult as widely as possible to ensure that any organisation or group which has a legitimate, particular interest in its work and/or the likely impact of its policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations will be included in the process of engagement. Consultation with groups and individuals will begin as early as possible.

- 11.2 The Council is required to state its arrangements for consulting on matters to which an equality of opportunity promotional duty or a community relational duty is likely to be relevant. The Council is committed to carrying out consultation and in doing so will use one or more of the following:

- letters;
 - meetings with the public, in groups or as individuals;
 - standing or ad hoc consultative fora;
 - attitude surveys of service users and potential service users;
 - resources and data from groups
 - consultative panels;
 - press releases/advertisements;
 - internet;
 - direct invitation to groups.
- 11.3 The Council will work with representative groups and individuals of the Section 75 categories in order to identify how best to obtain their views. This may also include advisory groups, citizen juries and other innovative ways for consulting as there will be different means of consultation for different groups and it will be important to establish the basis for dialogue and engagement during the life of the scheme.
- 11.4 In choosing the appropriate method of consultation, the Council will follow the guidelines of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland on how to best communicate information to young people. The Council will also follow the guidelines of Mencap on how best to communicate information to people with learning disabilities.
- 11.5 Information is available on request in accessible formats such as large font, braille, disc and audio cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. The Council will ensure that the barriers to proper consultation will be removed.
- 11.6 The Council considers it particularly important that sufficient, timely and appropriate information is provided to enable all affected groups and individuals to consider the full implications of proposals, and it will take steps to ensure this.
- 11.7 Information will be made available in consultation with the effective groups to ensure the highest level of inclusivity in any policy decision making.
- 11.8 The Council will ensure that all staff engaged in consultation exercises receive specific training. This training will be developed in consultation with effective groups.
- 11.9 The Council is committed to ensuring full participation in any meetings that are held and will give consideration to how the meeting is to be run, and the use of appropriate language. The Council on request will arrange meetings in a facility with a loop system and provide a signer or interpreter if requested. The Council will also consider the time of day, the appropriateness of venue and whether it can be accessed by those, with disabilities and the elderly. The Council will endeavour to assist with child care if requested and will consider assisting with reasonable travel costs.

- 11.10 The Council will allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves as part of the process of forming a view and will therefore aim to provide a period of at least two months for consultation exercises. The Council will also be sensitive to the different needs and customs of consultees. However there may be circumstances when this timescale is not feasible, for example, in order to ensure continuity of the provision of services in an emergency. These circumstances will be monitored, kept under review, justified and reported on in the Council's annual review of progress.

The Council will ensure that all quantitative and qualitative data and other documentation, including consultants' reports, will be made available for consultations. The Council will also make arrangements to ensure that all relevant information is available for release for all consultations.

- 11.11 Appendix 1 contains a list of those to be included in consultation on matters relevant to the statutory duty. This list is not exhaustive and may be added to or amended at any stage.

12. Monitoring

The Council will ensure that a system will be established 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 results must be widely and openly published.

If 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, Strabane District Council will ensure that the policy is revised.

- 12.1 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. Within one year of approval of this scheme, the Council will assess the extent of existing monitoring and the scope for extending it. In addition to the value of any further information required for assessing progress towards equality of opportunity, this review will also take into account the following factors:

- resource implications
- readiness of the public to supply information
- availability of proxy measures (eg postcode analysis)

- 12.2 The Council will seek to co-operate closely with the NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) in its review of existing monitoring arrangements and its consideration of special monitoring of anticipated adverse impacts.

12.3 Other data sources the Council may use include:

- Information from other Councils in NI and UK
- 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

13. Publication of equality impact assessments and monitoring

- 13.1 The Council will make publicly available the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring undertaken in relation to Section 11 above. This material will be accessible at the Council's website at www.strabanedc.org.uk It will also be available in printed form by writing to the Council's offices at **Strabane District Council, 47 Derry Road, Strabane, Co Tyrone, BT82 8DY**, phoning on **028 7138 2204** or by email on strabanedc@nics.gov.uk The Council will inform the general public about the availability of this material through press releases and the display of public notices and posters. Information will be made available to publications and media associated with the Section 75 categories, eg. talking newspapers and publications in languages other than english.

The Council will also follow the guidelines of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland on how to best communicate information to young people and the guidelines of Mencap on how best to communicate information to people with learning disabilities. It will also inform bodies listed at Appendix 1 when this material is available.

- 13.2 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;
- details of any consideration given by the Council to any alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

- 13.3 Information will be made available on request in accessible formats such as Braille, disc and audio cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

14. Training

The Council will prepare a detailed training plan for all authority staff over a 5 year period to which the equality scheme refers, which will aim to achieve the objectives outlined below.

- To raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, including the provisions of Section 75, schedule 9 and Section 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This will include an explanation of the duties and their implications for all employees.
- To provide those employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- To provide those employees involved in the equality impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- To provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of the authority's scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively.
- To provide those employees involved in the consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- To provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of the authority's equality scheme with the necessary skills to do this work effectively.
- To provide those employees involved in dealing with complaints with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively.
- All staff and councillors within the Council will receive training within one year of the approval of the scheme (including those being inducted). Thereafter focused training will be provided for all specialist staff within the Council, and specific training will also be provided for those engaged in consultation.
- The Council will consult representatives of Section 75 groups in the development of a training plan.
- The Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of the Council to the statutory duties (both internally and externally). The Council will:
 - Develop a summary of the scheme and make it available to all staff and councillors;
 - Provide access to copies of the full scheme for all staff and councillors;
 - Ensure that the Council's commitment to the statutory duties are made clear in commission publications (such as the annual report); and
 - Will ensure that any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.

- 14.1 The Council will ensure that all staff 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. The Council will liaise with training providers and any other relevant agencies and bodies to develop a detailed training programme for all staff.
- 14.2 Within two years of the approval of the scheme, all staff and Elected Members will be trained. All new staff and newly elected or co-opted Elected Members will be informed of the requirements of Section 75 and this equality scheme in their induction training.
- 14.3 The Council will provide copies of this scheme to all management and supervisory staff.

15. Public access to information and services

- 15.1 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 three 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, may have difficulties with information provided only in English;
 - some local newspapers are read predominantly by members of only one community.
- 15.2 In disseminating information through the local press, the Council will ensure that press statements and public advertisements are accessible to both main communities. The Council will ensure that the arrangements outlined in paragraph 13.1 in relation to the provision of information relating to impact assessments will also apply to the general provision of information.
- 15.3 The Council intends that all of its services are fully accessible to all parts of the community. 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.
- 15.4 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. All public offices, leisure and community centres will promote a welcoming and harmonious environment. The Council will adhere to the relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

16. Publication of the scheme

- 16.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission, this scheme will be available from the Council's office at **Strabane District Council, 47 Derry Road, Strabane, Co Tyrone, BT82 8DY**. It can also be accessed on the Council's website at www.strabanedc.org.uk. The Council will also issue a press statement and will send a copy of the scheme to those bodies listed at Appendix 1.

The Council will ensure that systems are in place to ensure that the scheme is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion.

The Council will also ensure that the arrangements outlined in paragraph 13.1 in relation to the provision of information relating to impact assessments will also apply to the general provision of information.

17. Complaints

- 17.1 When a person believes that he/she has been directly affected by a failure of the Council, he/she should, bring their complaint to the attention of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will aim to give a substantive response to the complainant within one month. Mr McSorley can be contacted at the following address:

Strabane District Council
47 Derry Road
Strabane
Co Tyrone
BT82 8DY

Tel: 028 71 382204 EXT 201
Email: dmcsorley@strabanedc.com

- 17.2 The Council will respond to complaints that it has not fulfilled its statutory obligations and will seek to resolve such complaints bilaterally. It will aim to give a substantive response to complaints within one month. When a complainant claims to have been directly affected by a failure of the Council to comply with this scheme, he/she will be also be informed of the procedure for bringing such a complaint to the Equality Commission.
- 17.3 The Council will endeavour to support any individual to bring his/her complaint, for example, provide an interpreter or arrange specialised transport. The Council will also respond to the complainant in the preferred format.

18. Review of the scheme

- 18.1 Within 5 years of submitting this scheme to the Equality Commission, the Council will conduct a formal review of the scheme to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the statutory duty. 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 the direct services and key policies. The Council will consult with those bodies listed at Appendix 1 before submission of the review to the Equality Commission. This review will be carried out in accordance with any guidance provided by the Equality Commission. This review will be made public.

19. Summary action plan and timetable

- 19.1 The following timetable summarises the measures which the Council proposes to take during the five years following the commencement of the scheme:

Year 1

Screening of policies

Consultation on the proposed screening exercise (Stage 3)

Report on the proposed screening exercise (Stage 4)

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Economic Development
- Community Services and Community Relations

Review of monitoring arrangements.

Training of staff.

Preparation of a statement on the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Year 2

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Building Control
- Leisure Services

Training for all staff completed.

Preparation of a statement on the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Year 3

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Administration
- Finance
- Human Resources

Preparation of a statement on the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Year 4

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Environmental Health
- Technical Services

Preparation of a statement on the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Year 5

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Recreation, Arts and Tourism

Preparation of a statement on the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity which will be sent to the Equality Commission.

Review of the Equality Scheme

LIST OF CONSULTATIVE BODIES

Age Concern Northern Ireland
Age Concern, Castleberg
Age Concern, Plumbridge
Age Concern, Strabane
Aghyaran Community Association
Aghyaran Women's Group
Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union (ATGWU)
Ardstraw & District Community Development Association
Artigarvan Community Group
Ballycolman Community Association
Ballycolman Community Association
Ballylaw Community Association
Ballymagorry & District Development Association
Barnardos, Tuar Ceatha Project
Baronscourt Community Development Association
Bready Community Association
Bready Women's Group
British Deaf Association (NI)
C.A.S.E. Women's Group
C.R.A.I.C.
Calverts Community Association
Carers National Association Northern Ireland
Carlton Drive Community Association
Castleberg & District Community Development Association
Castleberg Chamber of Commerce
Castleberg Enterprise Agency
Castleberg Gingerbread
Chestnut Park/Chestnut Grove Association
Child Care Northern Ireland
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Church of Ireland Diocesan Office
Churchtown & Area Community Association
Citizens Advice Bureau
Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo)
Co-Leck Care Community Association
Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)
Community Relations Council (CRC)
Community Relations Training/Learning Consortium
Coolcreaghy Community Association
Cranagh Community Association
Democratic Unionist Party West Tyrone Constituency Office
Dennett *InterChange*
Derg Finn Partnership
Derry & Raphoe Action
Derry Traveller's Support Group
Disability Action

Donaghedy Youth Development Project
Donemana & District Community Association Ltd
Donemana Enterprise Agency
Douglas Bridge Community Care Scheme
Douglas Bridge Cross Community Association
Dreggish Community Project
Dunnalong Development Association
Early Years Committee
Eden Youth Association
Eleven to Noon Ladies Group
Employers' Forum on Disability
Equality Commission
Equality Forum NI
Equality Unit
Ex-Prisoners Association
Fountain Street Community Association
Fountain Street Women's Group
Foyle Friend
Garvagh & District Community Association
Gingerbread Northern Ireland
Glebe Cross-Community Association
Glenelly Community Association
Glenelly Development Trust
Glenelly Development Trust
Glenelly Tenants Group
Glenmornan Community Association
Glenside Community of Parents & Friends Association
Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
Indian Community Centre
Kilclean Community Association
Killen Community Association
Killeter & District Development Association
Killeter Historical Society
Koram Centre
Lampton Court Community Development Association
Lisnafin Park Community Association
Magheramason Area Women's Group
Magheramason Community Association
Mary Gray Rural Community Association
Mary Gray Women's Group
Melmount Community Association
Melmount Community Care
Melmount Community Forum
Melvin Park Youth Committee
MENCAP (Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults)
Methodist Church in Ireland
Millbrook Community Association
Mourne Partnership
Mourne Partnership
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre

National Schizophrenia Fellowship
Newtownstewart & District Development Association
Newtownstewart ABB Community Care Scheme
Newtownstewart Community Association
North West Ethnic Community Association
North West Forum of People with Disabilities
North West Forum of People with Disabilities
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health
Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU)
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC)
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
NSPCC
Omagh Women's Area Network
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Riverside Tenants Community Association
Road Safety Committee
Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID Northern Ireland)
Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB Northern Ireland)
Rural Community Network
Save the Children
Sawel Women's Group
SDLP West Tyrone Constituency Office
Services Industrial Professional Technical Union (SIPTU)
Sinn Fein Constituency Office
Sion Mills Community Association
Sion Mills Community Development Association
Sion Mills Community Trust
Sion Mills Management Committee
Spamount & Area Community Association
Sports Advisory Committee
Springhill Park Community & Tenants Association
St Eugene's Roman Catholic Cathedral
St Eugene's Youth Club
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
Strabane & District Development Trust
Strabane District Partnership
Strabane & District Scouting Association
Strabane Chamber of Commerce
Strabane Community Network
Strabane Community Project
Strabane Community Unemployed Group
Strabane District Women's Network
Strabane Enterprise Agency
Strabane Gingerbread
Strabane Initiative for Youth
Strabane Lifford Development Commission
Strabane Training Services
Strabane Women Together

Strabane/Lifford Women's Group
The Baha'j Community
The Buddhist Community
The Chinese Community
The Hindu Community
The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland (LGSC)
The Muslim Community
The Sikh Community
Traveller Movement Northern Ireland
Ulster Union West Tyrone Constituency Office
Urney & District Development Association
Victoria Bridge Community Association
Villages Together
West Tyrone Voice
Women's Forum Northern Ireland
Women's Information Group
Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Bodies who requested a copy of the Council's Draft Equality Scheme

C.A.R.E.
Disability Action, Dungannon
Donegal Local Development Company
North West Community Network
Simon Community Northern Ireland
West Belfast Economic Forum

Consultation on the Draft Scheme

A copy of the Draft Equality Scheme was sent to 159 bodies (appendix 1) on 3 May 2000. This was accompanied by a letter (appendix 5). A follow up letter was sent on 30 May 2000 (appendix 6). A number of responses were received after the deadline, however these responses were considered.

In addition six bodies requested a copy of the Council's Draft Equality Scheme (appendix 1).

KEY POINTS ARISING FROM THE RESPONSES

Timetable for Setting Priorities

- A number of consultees commented on the Council's decision to prioritise its impact assessments based upon its Best Value programme.

The Council has therefore, included in its scheme a commitment to review the programme at the end of Year 1 and may independently or through consultation, change it in the light of policies which should be acted upon immediately. The Council will also review the programme following completion of the screening process and may reprioritise in light of the results.

Consultation Process

In relation to the consultation process, a number of approaches were recommended. These were as follows:

- Public meetings and focus groups should have a sign language interpreter, a loop system and be fully accessible.
- Information should be made available in larger font.
- Reasonable travel expenses should be paid.
- Child care should be provided if requested.

These issues have all been addressed in the amended scheme.

Organisational Structure

- As a result of comments from consultation, an organisational chart has been included in the scheme.
- The role of the status and nature of the inter-departmental working group has also been clarified.

Screening of Policies

- In its draft scheme the Council stated that where service expenditure is relatively small, it will not carry out an impact assessment. This has not been removed. The Council will ensure that its screening process is fully transparent and accountable.
- A number of consultees raised the point that the scheme should include a list of all policies written and unwritten. A full list of policies will be made available for consultation during the screening process.

Resources

Following consultees comments on resources, the Council has amended its scheme to state that the Council will make a commitment to the allocation of “necessary” resources.

Training

Following consultees comments on training the Council has made a commitment to train “all” staff.

It will also liaise with training providers and other relevant agencies and bodies to develop a detailed training programme.

Complaints

Following concerns from consultees the complaints procedure now outlines to whom an individual should bring his/her complaint. It also outlines how the Council will support an individual bring his/her complaint.

Good Relations Duty

Following comments that the scheme should include a programme of work on good relations, the Council has committed to develop a programme of work on good relations. It will liaise with the Community Relations Council to further develop its Community Relations strategy and to carry out a Community Relations Audit. It will also liaise with the Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities to carry out a Racial Audit. The Council will also liaise with the Traveller Movement (NI) to consider and promote the needs of the Travelling Community.

Other Issues

In its draft document the Council did not state how it will communicate with young people and those with learning disabilities. The Council has now included a commitment in its scheme to follow the guidelines of the Youth Council for Northern Ireland on how to best communicate information to young people and the guidelines of Mencap on how to best communicate information to people with learning disabilities.

In addition the Council has also included in its scheme a commitment to actively promote equality of opportunity for people with a learning disability.

A number of consultees raised the fact that the Council did not include a text phone number in its draft scheme. The Council is currently considering providing this facility and will issue the number to all consultees as soon as this is arranged.

Ref DMCS/AR

3 May 2000

To All Equality Scheme Consultees

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Draft Equality Scheme

I have pleasure in enclosing, for consultation a copy of our draft Equality Scheme, which we have prepared in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Act requires public authorities to prepare an Equality Scheme, which outlines the arrangements which will be put in place, to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

The enclosed draft Scheme demonstrates how we plan to fulfil these duties.

You are invited to present your views and opinions on our draft Scheme, in writing, before **Friday, 16 June 2000 at 12 noon** to:

**Mr Daniel McSorley
Clerk and Chief Executive
Strabane District Council
47 Derry Road
Strabane
Co Tyrone
BT82 8DY**

Your views will be carefully considered prior to the formal submission of the draft Scheme to the Equality Commission by 30 June 2000.

Yours faithfully

**Daniel McSorley
CLERK & CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Ref DMCS/AR

30 May 2000

TO ALL CONSULTEES

Dear Colleague

In early May, I forwarded you a copy of the Council's Draft Equality Scheme and I hope that you have had an opportunity to read the document.

I am sure you have been inundated with Draft Equality Schemes from many organisations, but I wanted to make contact with you to remind you about Strabane District Council's submission and to assure you that we are very keen to hear your views, and in particular to receive any suggestions or comments on how you feel the scheme might be improved.

The closing date for responses is **Friday, 16 June 2000 at 12 noon** and I look forward to hearing from you either by post or fax. Alternatively if you would like to meet to discuss the scheme, please contact my office and arrange accordingly.

Yours faithfully

Daniel McSorley
CLERK & CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

