

EQUALITY SCHEME
FOR
MOYLE DISTRICT COUNCIL

FOREWORD

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, when carrying out all its functions, powers and duties (relating to Northern Ireland). This Act places new duties on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. The Council undertakes responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of this scheme.

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 taking all the necessary steps including the allocation of necessary resources, in terms of people, time and money to ensure that the statutory duty is complied with and that the scheme is drawn up and implemented effectively and on time.

The Council welcomes this opportunity, as a significant part of its policy and decision making process, to proactively engage in an ongoing open and inclusive consultation process with individuals, the community and organisations.

Cllr D McAllister
Chairman

Mr R G Lewis
Clerk and Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 ('the Act') requires the Council in carrying out its functions, 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;
 - between persons who have and do not have criminal convictions where those convictions would not be considered as incompatible with these services or opportunities provided,
 - between persons with or without a residential address.
- 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. It is committed to allocating the 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.

2. The Council - its role, functions and policies

- 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 and sports grounds,

- 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 provision of harbours and marina
- 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 include:

- the awarding of Grant Aid to community and voluntary groups,
- the awarding of Grant Aid to the Arts,
- charging policy for hire and usage of leisure and community centres, harbours and marina,
- policies relating to procurement of goods and services,
- policies relating to employment,
- various policies relating to service delivery.

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

3. Organisational structure

3.1 The Council consists of 15 elected representatives, elected for a four year period who meet twice monthly in full session.

Supporting these meetings are the various departments of the Council.

3.2 The Chief Executive oversees the work of the departments through the Corporate Management Team, which together with the councillors create the corporate team 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 six main departments:

- The Finance and Administration Department is responsible for finance, human resources, administration and registration.
- The Development Department is responsible for economic development, community development, community relations and the Arts.
- The Environmental Health Department is responsible for environmental health which includes food standards and hygiene, health and safety at work, pollution control and various licensing functions.
- The Building Control Department is responsible for building control, petroleum and entertainment licensing and dangerous structures.
- The Technical Services Department is responsible for refuse collection and disposal, street cleansing, vehicle and building maintenance and harbour management.
- The Leisure Services Department is responsible for parks, leisure and amenities, tourism and countryside access.

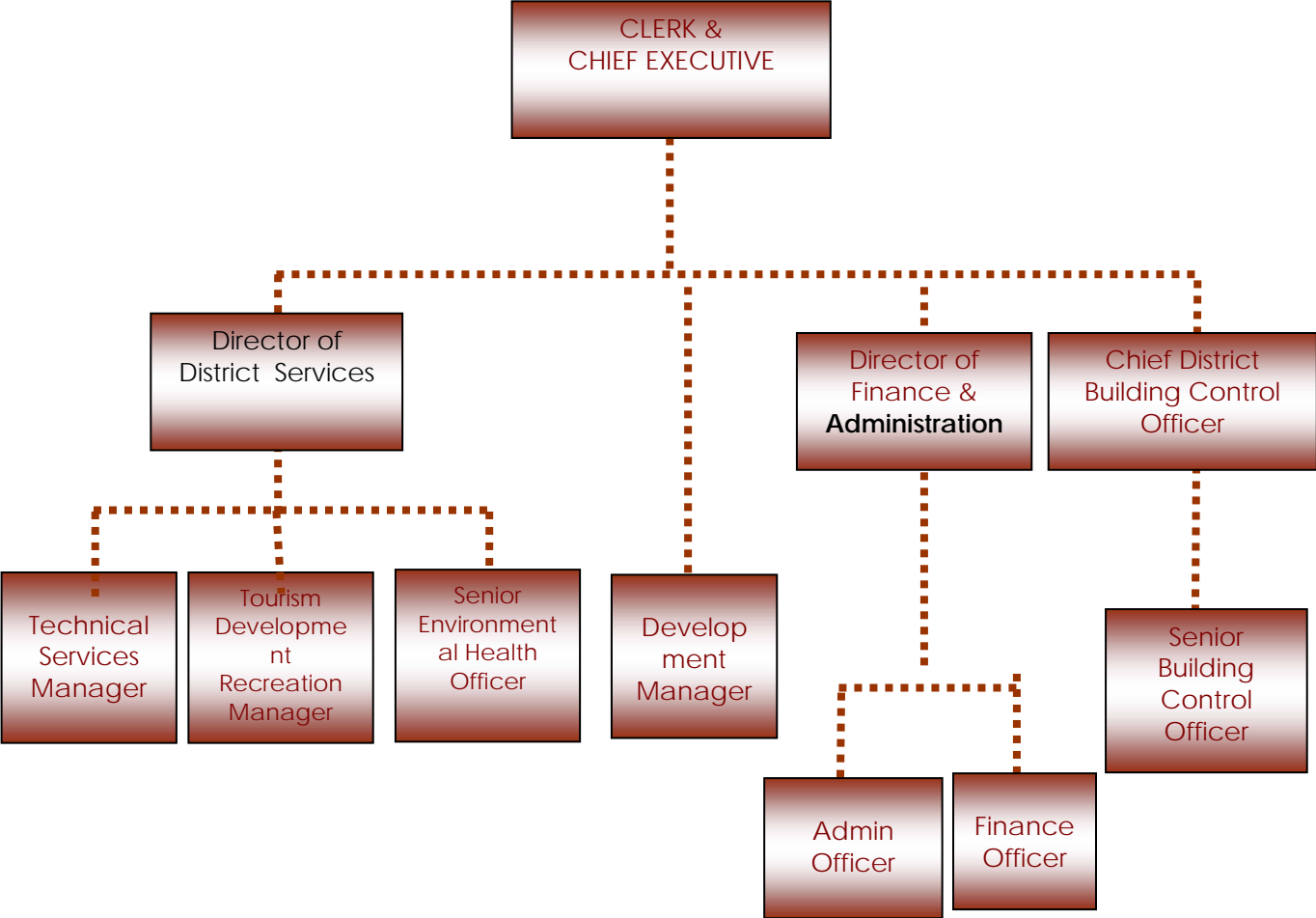
3.5 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Elected Members. Day to day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Elected Members 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.

In order to ensure that Section 75 is complied with the following arrangements have been made:

- The Chief Executive will be responsible for giving effect to the development, maintenance and review of the Scheme in accordance with the legislation, and for the effective implementation of arrangements approved by the Council. This includes:-
- The setting up of an inter-departmental equality working group whose membership includes the Chief Executive, Director of District Services, Chief Building Control Officer, Director of Finance and Administration and the Community Relations Officer. This group will agree the policies to be subjected to impact assessment and an appropriate methodology for impact assessment.

- Delegation of responsibility to the Equality working group for the administration of the Council's duties under Section 75 at a corporate level. The Director of Finance and Administration will be the point of contact for the Equality Commission and for complainants in the first instance.

Moyle District Council Organisation Profile



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 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. Each equality impact assessment for functions or policies will include a section on the promotion of good relations.
- 4.2 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 at the most senior level within the organisation on a quarterly basis. Individual performance will be monitored and reviewed through performance review arrangements.
- 4.3 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the statutory duty will be included in the Council's annual report.
- 4.4 The Council will also prepare an annual statement on the steps which have been taken by it during the year to promote equality of opportunity. This statement 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.
- 4.5 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. It will respond constructively to proposals from those bodies relating to its compliance with the Section 75 obligations.
- 4.6 The Council has a commitment to ensure that the Community Relations principles of equity, respect for diversity and interdependence are integral in its relationship and dealings with individuals, communities and organisations. An independent audit has been conducted on the Community Relations Programme and the resulting strategy endorses the Council's policy for the development and implementation of training provision for all staff and elected members on their statutory duty in relation to equality and the promotion of good relations internally and external to the organisation. The Council also commits to establishing a Community Relations Forum – representative of the statutory and voluntary organisations in its district. The Forum will ensure that the Community Relations Programme meets its objectives as defined in its strategy and will make recommendations for the future development and delivery of the programme.

5. Approach to be adopted to screening and timetabling

5.1 In fulfilling its statutory obligations, the Council intends to adopt a four stage approach:

Stage 1	Screening of policies
Stage 2	Timetable for setting priorities
Stage 3	Consultation on the proposed screening exercise
Stage 4	Report on the screening exercise

6. Stage 1 Screening of policies

6.1 The Council intends to screen its policies, through the inter-departmental equality working group, 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?
- **Where there is little or no information available, the Council will consult with the relevant groups in order to evaluate performance against the above criteria.**

6.3 The Council will subject all of its policies detailed at paragraph 2.4 to the screening criteria within 3 months from the date of the commencement of this equality scheme. 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.

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. This would ensure a cost effective and comprehensive review of the policy in question. It is therefore likely that those policies identified at Stage 1 above for full impact assessment would be dealt with under the following timetable:-

Year 1: October 2000 – June 2001

Payroll
Financial Services
Community Relations Development
Community Services

Year 2: July 2001 – June 2002

Food Control
Health and Safety
Consumer Protection
Environmental Control
Corporate
Refuse Collection including Bulk Collection
Refuse Disposal
Grounds Maintenance
Ballycastle Tennis Courts
Personnel and Administration
Street Naming and Postal Numbering
Building Regulations
Dangerous Structures
Property Certificates

Year 3: July 2002 – June 2003

Arts and Culture
Countryside Access
Giant's Causeway Visitors Centre
Ballycastle Tourist Information
Street Cleansing
Public Conveniences
Beach Maintenance
Caravan Site Operation
Playing fields and play areas

Year 4: July 2003 – June 2004

Tourism Marketing
Museum Service

Year 5: July 2004 – June 2005
Entertainments Licensing/Petroleum Licensing
Betting, gaming, lotteries and miscellaneous
Regulatory/Enforcement
Bushmills/Mosside Community Centres
Rathlin Boathouse Visitors Centre
Vehicle Maintenance
Sports Development
Sheskburn Recreation and Community Centre
Building Maintenance
Harbour Management

7.3 The Council intends to work to this timetable unless, independently or through consultation at the screening stage with affected parties, policies, which should be acted upon immediately because of their significant social, political or cultural impact, are identified.

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

8. Stage 3 Consultation on the proposed screening exercise

8.1 The Council will carry out Stages 1 and 2 within 3 months of submitting its scheme to the Equality Commission. It will then consult with the organisations listed at Appendix 1 on the result of the screening and the timetabling/prioritisation exercise. Stage 3 will be carried out within a further 3 month period.

9. Stage 4 Report on the screening exercise

9.1 The Council will include a detailed report of the screening exercise in its annual report to the Equality Commission by 1 January 2001. The report will detail which policies proposed by those consulted as appropriate for impact assessment have not been included and why.

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.

10.2 The methodology which the Council will use for an equality impact assessment is set out in Appendix 2.

11. Consultation

11.1 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 inclusive

consultation in a cost effective manner and in doing so may use any of the following:

- letters;
- meetings with the public, in groups or as individuals;
- standing or ad hoc consultative forum;
- attitude surveys of service users and potential service users;
- consultative panels;
- press releases/advertisements;
- internet;
- direct invitation to groups.

- 11.2 The Council will ensure that there is full participation in consultation meetings by considering the time of day, appropriateness of the venue, use of appropriate language, use of signer and provision of childcare.
- 11.3 In choosing the appropriate method of consultation, the Council will be responsive to the needs of the consultees as identified in any previous consultation exercises.
- 11.4 Information will be made available on request in accessible formats such as large print, disc and audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. A summarised version of the scheme will be made available in plain English.
- 11.5 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.
- 11.6 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 amended in the light of experience.
- 11.7 Appendix 3 contains an analysis of the initial consultation exercise for the draft scheme.
- 11.8 The Council is fully committed to and is fully aware of the importance of consultation and will strive to ensure that meaningful consultation will be achieved in a cost-effective manner.

12. Monitoring

- 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. The monitoring process will take account of the sensitivity of any information provided which

shall be treated in the strictest confidence. 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)

(It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and may be added to in the light of experience)

12.2 In some cases an equality impact assessment may identify an anticipated differential adverse impact on particular groups within the Section 75 categories. Where there is an adverse impact, and is it possible, the policy will be reviewed. Assuming that no alternative policy is feasible, steps will be taken, wherever possible, to mitigate such anticipated adverse impact. The Council may, in these circumstances, commission special monitoring to confirm the extent of the adverse impact and/or the success of any mitigating measures. Information collected in this special monitoring would be taken into account in any future review of the policy.

12.3 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.

12.4 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.moyle-council.org. It will also be available in printed form by writing to the Council's offices at **Sheskburn House, 7 Mary Street, Ballycastle, BT54 6QH**, phoning on **012657 62225** or by email at info@moyle-council.org. The Council may inform the general public about the availability of this material through press releases and the display of public notices and posters. 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 large print, disc and audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.

14. Training

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 welcome and harmonious working 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 **Sheskburn House, 7 Mary Street, Ballycastle, BT54 6QH**. It can also be accessed on the Council's website at www.moyle-council.org. The Council will also issue a press statement and will send a copy of the scheme to those bodies listed at Appendix 1.

17. Complaints

- 17.1 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 informed of the procedure for bringing such a complaint to the Equality Commission. Complaints may be made to the Director of Finance and Administration at Moyle District Council, Sheskburn House, 7 Mary Street, Ballycastle, Telephone 028 207 62225, Fax 028 207 62515, E-Mail info@moyle-council.org. Complaints can also be made by a person acting on behalf of someone who wishes to make a complaint but cannot do so directly, perhaps because of disability or language barriers. A complaint can be made by telephone, in writing or in person and each method of making a complaint is equally valid.

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.

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 July 2000 – June 2001

Screening of policies (July 2000 – September 2000)

Consultation on the proposed screening exercise (Stage 3) (October 2000 – November 2000)

Report on the proposed screening exercise (Stage 4) (December 2000)

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Payroll
- Financial Services
- Community Relations Development
- Community Services

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 July 2001 – June 2002

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Food Control
- Health and Safety
- Consumer Protection
- Environmental Control
- Corporate
- Refuse Collection including Bulk Collection
- Refuse Disposal
- Grounds Maintenance
- Ballycastle Tennis Courts
- Personnel and Administration
- Street Naming and Postal Numbering
- Building Regulations
- Dangerous Structures
- Property Certificates
- 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 July 2002 – June 2003

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Arts and Culture
- Countryside Access
- Giant's Causeway Visitors Centre
- Ballycastle Tourist Information
- Street Cleansing
- Public Conveniences
- Beach Maintenance
- Caravan Site Operation
- Playing fields and play areas

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

Year 4 July 2003 – June 2004

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Tourism Marketing
- Museum Service

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

Year 5 July 2004 – June 2005

Equality impact assessments of policies in relation to:

- Entertainments Licensing/Petroleum Licensing
- Betting, gaming, lotteries and miscellaneous
- Regulatory/Enforcement
- Bushmills/Mosside Community Centres
- Rathlin Boathouse Visitors Centre
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Sports Development
- Shesburn Recreation and Community Centre
- Building Maintenance
- Harbour Management

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

Appendix 1

List of Bodies to be Consulted

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Equality Forum Northern Ireland
The Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland
Community Relations Council
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Help the Aged, Northern Ireland
Age Concern
Employers Forum on Disability
Disability Action
NSPCC
Children's Law Centre
The Blind Centre Northern Ireland
The British Deaf Association
Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association
Womens Forum Northern Ireland
Carers National Association
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
General Municipal Boilermakers
Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union
Union of Construction Allied Trades
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
Altananam/Broombeg Community Association
Armoy Community Development Association

Ballintoy and District Community Development Association
Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce
Ballycastle Community Development Group
Bushmills and District Community Association
Bushmills Development Group
Bushmills Residents Group
Cairns Residents Association
Carey and Glenshesk Community Group
Carnanmore Community Group
Carnduff Residents Association
Cushendall Development Group
Cushendall Environment Group
Cushendun and District Development Association
Dundarave Residents and Environmental Forum
Glenariff Development Group
Glens Community Centre Group Ltd
Glens Rural Community Group
Liscolman Community Development Association
Mosside Entertainments Group
Moyle Womens Forum
North Antrim Community Network
Rathlin Development and Community Association
St Vincent De Paul
The Corrymeela Community
Moyle Sports Advisory Committee
Moyle District Partnership
Moyle Twinning Committee
Committee on the Administration of Justice
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities

Methodology for an Equality Impact Assessment

Having screened its policies (as outlined in Stage 1), the Council will determine which policies will be included for a fuller impact assessment and will determine a timetable for carrying out impact assessments (as outlined in Stage 2). In addition, when the Council is considering a new policy, it will determine whether the policy has the potential to have significant implications for equality of opportunity and if so it will conduct a full impact assessment. When undertaking impact assessments, the Council will follow the process set out below:

1. Available data

The Council will examine any data it already has, for example, attendance records, and any market research already undertaken.

2. Comparative data

The Council will examine any available comparative data, for example, from other councils in NI and the UK and other organisations providing similar services. Where resources are available, the Council may commission appropriate data.

3. Consultation

The Council will consult with those listed at Appendix 1 and will make available any relevant documents, materials and public submissions.

4. Impact assessments

The Council will examine the following questions in relation to the policy/service:

- Is there direct discrimination?
- Is there an adverse impact in terms of the rights, resources, participation or values and norms?
- If not unlawful, is the difference justified (eg affirmative action)?
- Is there equality of opportunity?

5. Alternatives

The Council will consider what alternatives are available.

6. Mitigation of adverse impact

The Council will consider how it might mitigate the adverse impact and promote equality of opportunity.

7. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future

The Council will state how it intends to monitor its direct services and key policies for adverse impact in the future, eg. surveys, sampling and questionnaires.

