

Derry City and Strabane District Council



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

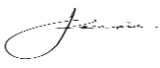
Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Destrack Coouncil

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

Contact details:

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme	Ellen Cavanagh, Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer and Hollie Carroll, Policy Officer (Equality) Telephone: +442871253253 Email: equality@derrystrabane.com
Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan	As above ☒
Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:	www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/equality
Signature:	 John Kelpie, Chief Executive

This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2025 and March 2026.

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

- 1** In 2025-26, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

Our compliance with the section 75 duties

During 2025-2026 Derry City and Strabane District Council continued to progress equality and good relations work under year 2 of the Equality Action Plan 2024-2027.

This report reflects progress on the Measures in the Equality Action Plan (and the Disability Action Plan, also under year 2).

Council reviewed its Equality Scheme at the end of 2025 and an updated Scheme, without any substantive changes, was considered at the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 2 December 2025 (Min Ref GSP233/25) and ratified at the Council meeting on 17 December 2025 (Min Ref C479/25). This decision was not subject to screening in line with advice.

Our implementation of our statutory equality and good relations duties and our Equality Scheme

Assessing, monitoring and publishing the impact of policies

The following policies were screened during 2025-26, in line with our Equality Scheme:

1. Counter Fraud Policy
2. Anti-Bribery Policy
3. Raising Concerns Policy
4. Local Development Plan 2032 (Plan Strategy)
5. Street Trading Policy
6. Child Friendly Derry and Strabane Sustainability Plan
7. Sports Delivery Plan 2025-26
8. Strabane Leisure Centre project
9. Templemore Leisure project
10. Proposal for pitch replacement at Ryan McBride Brandywell Stadium
11. Melvin Arena upgrade
12. Treasury Management Policy
13. Minimum Revenue Policy
14. Financing Plan – capital strategy and community projects updates
15. Rates estimate 2026-27

16. Applications to erect Memorials in Castlederg, Ardstraw and Urney cemeteries
17. DAERA Bovine TB regionalisation project
18. Social Supermarket Service Action Plan
19. Internal Audit Plan 2026-2027
20. City of Derry Airport Budget 2026-2027
21. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
22. Proposal to appoint Vacant Properties Officer
23. Review of Council Property Certificate fees 2026
24. Review of administration fee for refunds on Council Property certificates submitted in error
25. Draft Asset Acquisition and Disposal Policy
26. Directorate Delivery Plan 2026-2027 (Strategic Planning and Support Services)
27. Draft Council Meeting Schedule 2026-2027
28. Update to Citizen Recognition Policy
29. Proposal to extend Vending Services contract for one more year
30. Corporate Plan 2025-2026 and Improvement Plan 2025-2026
31. Review of Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People)
32. Review of Safeguarding Policy (Adults)
33. Anti-poverty action plan
34. Implementation of the Age-Friendly employer's pledge
35. Oakland Park Pitch improvement works
36. Good Relations: Additional funding for racial and social unrest 2025-26
37. Street Trading Policy 2.0
38. City Deal and Inclusive Future Fund / Social Value
39. Pride of Place Investment Plan

Published policies and screenings are available at [Screenings 2025-2026](#). The screening reports include questions on section 75 duties, as well as questions on promoting good relations and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 duties. Screenings was also sent directly to the consultee list every quarter. Beginning in 2026-2027 Council will make clear if policies were screened in, screened out without mitigation or screened out with mitigation and will highlight the mitigating measures taken.

Consulting

Public consultations were carried out across directorates. For example, two capital projects, Strabane Leisure Centre and the Templemore Leisure project both consulted the public and their equality screenings concluded that these two projects may warrant further consultation as they develop, including equality screening.

Progress made on building equality of opportunity and good relations into key initiatives

Progress has been made on building equality of opportunity and good relations into key Council initiatives and day-to-day activities. Examples include:

- 4 meetings of the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group, with attendees focusing on gender, race and disability in particular. This group fed back directly to relevant officers and changes to day-to-day activities were observed in leisure for example. Furthermore Human Resources were invited to collaborate with one group member and as a result have now facilitated 3 work placements for students with disabilities;
- Officers and Elected Members attended the LGBTQIA+ working group throughout the period. One of the group's members expressed disappointment at perceived lack of support from Council at LGBTQIA+ events. As a direct result the next event held, celebrating LGBT history month, was attended by many Elected Members and several Council officers. This went some way to the group feeling more supported by Council;
- Council has now achieved recognised status as a UNICEF child friendly city and community. As such, children in our city and district have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives. The continuation of the North West Ministry of Youth has supported young people to influence Council policy;
- The Internal Equality Working Group was established and convened twice during the period. It has been key in collating good practice and promoting collaborative learning across all directorates;
- The Community Development team developed an extensive consultation exercise on the design of the new Good Relations Strategy, to include taking the views of the general public, Council staff and a range of internal fora;
- Delivery of the PEACEPLUS Programme continues, and in particular Council's focus has been theme 1.1, the co-designed local community PEACE Action Plans. As a result of the Our arrangements for consulting training, PEACE staff have become a renewed resource for staff who wish to consider data and anecdotal evidence when completing their screening forms;
- Human Resources have shared a number of healthcare initiatives via the BeWell app whereby staff can participate or seek advice. These include skin cancer, prostate cancer and mental wellbeing.
Details of press coverage of a range of initiatives targeting Section 75 groups is provided in Appendix 2.
- Council progressed a gender budgeting pilot within its leisure services.

Mayor's Initiatives

The following initiatives were championed by the two Mayors during the period:

- Mayor's Intergenerational Event (Our Guildhall, Our Space)
- Mayor's Youth Event (Our Guildhall, Our Space)
- Mayor's Charity Event (Derry Rocks for BUD Club)
- Showcasing small community groups of various religious and political background across every District Electoral Area (and Strabane Town)
- Promoting the UNICEF Gaza Appeal for children and families in crisis
- Hosting social evenings for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities (leading to awareness training being delivered to bars and restaurants in Strabane Town)
- Promoting the work of the Mayors' chosen charities; the BUD Club, Castlederg Patient Comfort and Terminally Ill Fund and PIPS Suicide Prevention Ireland

Motions carried

During the year Elected Members carried motions/resolutions in relation to Section 75 groups (some of which will be completed in 2026-2027) as a result of which:

- a) Council resolved to write to the Minister of Education and Minister for Communities concerning accessibility and inclusion of physical activity for people with disabilities. Council reaffirmed its commitment to equality, inclusion and the promotion of health and wellbeing for all residents of the Derry and Strabane District, including in our Council operated facilities and called for urgent action to ensure that people with disabilities are not left behind in sport and physical activity ([C303/25](#));
- b) Council noted with concern the lack of an available, purpose-built youth facility in Strabane Town. Council recognised and commended the invaluable work by community groups and youth workers and committed to write to the Education Minister to secure funding, and to work with the Education Authority to identify a suitable site. Council resolved to write to the entire Stormont Executive on the same issue, calling for it to be resolved ([C408/25](#));
- c) Council recognised the benefits of free school meals and agreed to write to the Minister of Education calling on him to work with the Minister of Finance to publish a funded plan with timelines to extend free school meals to all school children by 2030 ([C37/26](#));
- d) Council agreed to formally seek to become a regional pilot area for the rollout of the "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" training programmes, developed under The Executive's Office's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. Council resolved to write to all Executive Ministers to ensure that this training is piloted within our council area as a matter of urgency.

Council agreed to also set up a working group to actively work on ending violence against women and girls.

Council agreed to write to the Stormont Executive on this issue.

Council agreed to send a clear message and one of zero tolerance that misogyny will not be tolerated in the workplace and agreed that this message will be relayed to all staff as a matter of urgency.

Council agreed to build on the White Ribbon campaign and explore the opportunity to become affiliated and accredited by same ([C107/26](#));

- e) Council agreed to establish a working group to explore further the inclusion of Makaton in new playpark developments and mandate officers to explore opportunities for Makaton to be a prominent feature of Council facilities and events ([C143/26](#));
- f) Council agreed to call on the Irish Government to engage in dialogue with the Minister for the Economy and Minister of Education to align Central Applications Officer results and university admission dates with the UCAS system to create a more streamlined university application process. Council agreed to write to the Minister of Education to scrap his proposed reform of GCSE, AS and A-Levels and to do more to ensure that A-Level students are fully aware of options that exist island-wide ([C144/26](#)).
- g) Council recognised the hardships currently faced by many students, with cost of living and housing related charges and committed to undertake a range of actions to support them. ([C181/25](#)) Council also called for universities to abolish fee increases ([C225/25](#))
- h) Council called for legislation to lower the voting age to be enacted in time for the 2027 electoral cycle ([C275/25](#))

Deputations

The Council received a number of deputations related to the Section 75 groups during the period, including the examples that follow.

1. Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group and Ulster University presented Gender Budgeting: A tool for transforming public finance (see [GSP100/25](#))
2. Angel Eyes NI provided a progress update on the QR code campaign (see [HC85/25](#))
3. The Hygiene Bank made a presentation on their services (see [HC164/25](#))
4. North West Breastfeeding and Perinatal Support provided a briefing on their work (see [SHC14/26](#))
5. Co-operation Ireland presented on the Voice Matters initiative (see [HC59/26](#))

Staff training

Examples of training provided during the period are as follows:

- “Equality Duties” training delivered to 165 officers / Elected Members. This training includes understanding our equality duties in the context of our Equality Scheme, how to equality screen, and when to consider an Equality Impact Assessment.
- “Sight Loss Awareness Training” delivered to 24 staff by RNIB, as part of a 3 - year Visually Aware Action Plan
- “Code of Practice on Producing Information Policy Awareness training” to 19 officers
- “Our arrangements for consulting” training delivered to 16 officers. This training covers the key commitments we have made in our Equality Scheme and equips staff to seek consultation internally and externally, both informally and through EQIAs.
- “Demonstrating Effective Leadership: Section 75 for Elected Members and Senior Leadership Team” was delivered by the Equality Commission to 20 people (numbers included in 165 figure)
- “Hidden disability” training delivered to 60 staff, through our Access and Inclusion (culture) team
- An information event for LGBT History month
- A launch event for LGBT Awareness week.

Apart from equality scheme related training, equality /good relations/harmonious working environment training was provided to more than 200 staff during 2025/6.

Following the review of Council’s Equality Scheme, staff and consultees were advised of the revised scheme using the following approaches:

Dissemination Approach	Date
Email of Equality Scheme to 196 consultees	8 th January 2026
Equality Scheme added to the intranet and webpage	8 th January 2026
A hard copy of a summary of the Equality Scheme was sent to all premises	March 2026
The Equality Scheme and a Summary of our Equality Scheme was emailed to 764 staff	4 th March 2026
All staff received a Summary of our Equality Scheme via the app BeConnected and were asked to click the “check box” to confirm they read it	May 2026

An in-person staff briefing on the Equality Scheme	5 th May 2026 Strand Road offices, Level 5. 10.00-10.30am
	12 th May 2026 Foyle Arena, Derry, 10.00-10.30am
	19 th May 2026 Strand Road Level 5 meeting room, Derry, 12.00-12.30pm
	9 th June 2026 Strahan's Road Recycling Centre 11.00-11.30am
A Microsoft Teams briefing on the Equality Scheme for staff	Friday 12 th June and Monday 15 th June 2026 10.30-11.00am

Ensuring public access to information and services we provide

Information on Council services is available via our website, at our facilities, by telephone, in person and in a range of formats, including other languages by request. Provision is made at facilities and events to ensure accessibility.

All Council websites/pages comply with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA9, and are approved by recognised accreditation organisations such as Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST, also known as "Bobby Approved".)

A review of the Code of Practice for Producing Information was commenced during the period, with engagement with relevant Council officers and with representative organisations such as RNIB. Nineteen officers completed training on the Code of Practice which included explaining the features of Council's website accessibility tool, ReachDeck.

Complaints

There were no complaints received during the period.

In February 2024 the Equality Commission NI began an investigation of a complaint that the Council failed to comply with commitments set out in Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5 of our Equality Scheme. The investigation concluded in 2025 and the Equality Commission upheld the complaint with regard to equality assessment and staff training, it did not uphold the complaint with regard to failure to consult. A set of

recommendations were made and Council has since provided a report to the Equality Commission on how it has acted in accordance with these recommendations.

Publication of our Equality Scheme

Our Equality Scheme and a Summary of our Equality Scheme are available here:

www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/equality/equality-scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 2** Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

See attached plan (Appendix 1) with updates on action measures/progress highlighted.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

The application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in changes in the following 4 key ways:

- **Assessing our compliance with the section 75 duties**

As a result of the review of the Equality Scheme, and its subsequent adoption by Council there has been an increase in communication from the Policy Officer (Equality) with Council staff, and Senior Leadership Team concerning equality duties. In applying the Equality Scheme commitments set out in Chapter 2 there has been notable enhanced collaboration in monitoring and reporting of progress across some parts of the organisation. Additionally, in line with 2.18 a summary leaflet providing details of the approved Equality Scheme were distributed throughout Council's facilities and to all of its consultees.

- **Our arrangements for consulting**

In line with our Equality Scheme 3.2.4 specific training was provided to those facilitating both formal and informal consultations during the year. A change in practice has already been noted, with more staff making requests to table agenda items at the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group. Anecdotally staff also felt more comfortable approaching the Growth Partnership Boards, the Rural Issues Group and the formal council working groups.

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

Staff have demonstrated a greater understanding of the importance of consultation for the purposes of equality and greater competence in completing screening forms. There was a clear improvement in overall timeliness of equality screening, whereby screening was completed at the earliest opportunity in the policy development or review process. The resulting impact was that the quality and quantity of equality

screening during the period has increased and improved and is expected to continue to do so in 2026-2027. (During the year 39

policies were equality-screened and submitted to Committees.)

Council's Senior Leadership Team has actively supported the role of the equality function by encouraging an internal challenge function to policymakers across all functions of the organisation. This has been evidenced by the return of incomplete or poor screening assessments back to policymakers for revision. Furthermore, the procedure for submitting equality screenings to Committees simultaneously with their policies was enforced robustly.

By way of example to changes in practice by officers, this was observed through the screening of the Assets Acquisition and Disposal Policy. Following advice from the temporary Policy Officer (Equality) consideration of equality (and rural needs) implications were added to the procedures section of the policy, so they are considered when making decisions on assets. A commitment was also added to the monitoring, that is, "There will be an annual review of all assets acquired or disposed of during the previous year to establish who or which areas have benefited or been affected and in what way".

The Policy Officer (Equality) updated the equality webpages, with the new format not only being more accessible but also enhancing the user experience.

In the final quarter of the period, Council trialled a new set of screening forms, to include questions on children's rights, safeguarding, ending violence against women and girls and tackling social deprivation. A review of this trial will commence in 2026-2027.

Further to a query from the Equality Commission, Council would note that no issues were raised for referral to a Designated Working Group relating to Dual Language Street names during the reporting period, or at any time. During the current reporting period no Designated Working Group meetings were convened as zero policies were referred to same.

- **Commitment to staff training**

One hundred and sixty five officers have completed equality duties training during the period. This has refreshed staff's skills and knowledge to effectively equality-assess policies and anecdotally staff feel more confident in beginning or completing equality screening. By way of example, the Labour Market Partnership team have agreed to monitor their participants in more detail than what is required by their funder (Department for Communities). They have also decided to monitor early leavers of the programme, to determine if any barriers exist.

Staff have an increased understanding of the importance of monitoring and an audit of monitoring arrangements will be carried out in 2026-2027.

- 3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

Learning was shared from the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group with City Deal, Community Development and Leisure. This will benefit our service users, particularly those involved in the age-friendly work, those from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and people who are LGBTQIA+. This approach will help continue to mainstream equality across the organisation for staff and customers across all section 75 categories.

In terms of the changes to staff behaviour on how we consult, our Head of Community Development and Leisure has been consulting with the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group specifically on disability issues. He has made assurances to the group on three key actions and as a direct result the group are invited to consultation on a new capital development project in Leisure. This makes a difference to these individuals with disabilities in two ways – their voice is heard and they are potentially having an impact on the design of the new leisure centre.

Increased staff collaboration on delivery of our equality and disability action plans will ensure successful achievement of these action plans over the forthcoming year across benefiting people from across all section 75 categories (and specifically those with a disability).

Additionally, as a direct result of delivering our training plan, staff are more confident in consulting on equality through the Local Growth Partnership Boards, the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group and through Council's formal working groups. This will result in a more inclusive and robust approach.

The changes to the equality webpages will increase accessibility for people who use assistive technologies, including those with disabilities. Nineteen officers have been trained in ReachDeck, the assistive technology on Council's website, and these staff can now advise and signpost those with disabilities and many others to this facility. This is expected to be particularly useful for people whose first language is not English (through the translation function), people with sight impairment and anyone who may be fatigued or overstimulated by screens, including neurodiverse people and those with cognitive impairment.

Service monitoring data will provide a baseline for forthcoming audits of inequality. The forthcoming audit will also help identify gaps in provision for any of the section 75 categories. The Labour Market Partnership monitoring may have a beneficial impact on those with disabilities and on females, two of the target groups of the programme.

RNIB, Council's partner in the Visually Aware Action Plan, have also significantly supported the review of the Code of Practice on Producing Information. This will particularly benefit individuals with sight loss.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

The screening of the Assets Acquisition and Disposal Policy, the Local Market Partnership Programme and the Social Supermarket lead to a change in criteria considered and in monitoring behaviour.

☐ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

There were no EQIAs conducted during the period.

☒ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

Labour Market Partnership staff decided to expand the monitoring they were doing, to beyond the scope of what is required by their funder, with a view to identifying any gaps in accessibility or provision. Community Development also decided to ask their three Social Supermarket partner organisations to begin collecting monitoring data, so that they could evaluate its success across section 75 categories.

☒ As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Reviewing our Code of Practice on Producing Information and applying the code to our website has enhanced access to information and services.

Nineteen officers attended a briefing on ReachDeck, the assistive technology Council uses on its corporate website.

☒ Other *(please specify and give details):*

Our commitment to our staff and elected member training programme 2025-2026 lead to an increase in quantity and quality of equality screening and increased the availability and consideration of screening documents / equality issues prior to decision-making.

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes, organisation wide

☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Included as standard in all staff job descriptions is the requirement to comply with and actively promote Council's policies and procedures, including all equality legislation, including the section 75 and Disability Duties, as appropriate to the role.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes, organisation wide

☒ Yes, some departments/jobs

PART A

- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

At an operational level the section 75 duties are integrated into all Directorate Delivery Plans.

Whilst all staff job descriptions include section 75 responsibilities, specific staff have key responsibilities for implementing the duties, which is reflected in personal work plans.

- 6 In the 2025-26 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☒ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- ☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- ☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2025-26 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Directorate Delivery Plans include a section on the section 75 duties as appropriate to the function. The Directorate Delivery Plans are a key part of the Council's overall performance management framework and they provide a vital link between the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032 (Community Plan), and corporate objectives through to frontline services.

All directorates have responsibility for delivering aspects of the Equality Action Plan.

Equality action plans/measures

- 7** Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

3

Actions ongoing:

43

Actions to commence:

3

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Actions are part of a three-year work plan. Thirty-one actions were completed for the period, but remain “ongoing” as they are repeated in year 3.

The following actions are completed: M8, M16 and M48.

The following actions are to commence: M15, M23 and M30.

- 8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

No changes were made during the period.

- 9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

☒ Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality

☐ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way

☐ Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities

☒ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

I Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

- 10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

☒ All the time

☐ Sometimes

☐ Never

- 11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2025-26 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

Public consultations were undertaken across directorates. Strabane Public Realm and Council's Draft Improvement Objectives 2026-2027 were subject to public consultation. Two capital projects, Strabane Leisure Centre and the Templemore Leisure project both consulted the public and their equality screenings concluded that these two projects may warrant further consultation as they develop.

- 12** In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

☒ Face to face meetings

☒ Focus groups

☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing

☒ Questionnaires

☒ Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation

☐ Internet discussions

PART A

☒ Telephone consultations

☐ Other (*please specify*): Click or tap here to enter text.

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

The Equality Assurance and Oversight Group were consulted on leisure projects and the membership present in those face-to-face meetings were primarily concerned about disability issues, opportunities for females and opportunities for people from ethnic minorities. Telephone consultations were held between Council staff in the review of the Code of Practice on Producing Information.

Focus groups and telephone consultation was conducted during the review of the Code of Practice for Producing Information. The main concerns expressed during this process surrounded accessibility for those with disabilities.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

On 8th January 2026 Council emailed its reviewed and ratified Equality Scheme to 196 consultees.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

Screening reports and other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published here:

www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/equality

- 15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

39

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

0 Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

0 Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

0 Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

- 17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

Any consultation on assessments was carried out informally with relevant officers and representative groups during the drafting of the assessment (rather than a formal consultation/EQIA after drafting the assessment).

Formal consultation was previously conducted through an EQIA in 2019 on the Local Development Plan 2032 Plan Strategy, and informally for its two addenda of 2021 and 2025.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No concerns were raised
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☒ Not applicable

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, already taken place
- ☒ No, scheduled to take place at a later date

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Existing monitoring arrangements that have been progressed during the period include:

- Human Resources are currently developing a plan to monitor post-entry employment in relation to all section 75 equality categories, which is anticipated to commence by September 2026.
- The Policy Officer (Equality) has scheduled two Monitoring Awareness training in 2026-2027.

Council continues to monitor the make-up of our Elected Members, the participation of staff and Members in training where feasible, and service participation in a number of areas including: leisure services, Older people who participate in activities as part of the Age Friendly Strategy, funding beneficiaries, participation in Arts and Cultural activities, and Home Safety Service users. Individuals providing feedback to Council (via the feedback/ complaints handling and consultation processes) are requested to provide equality monitoring data.

A corporate audit of monitoring is scheduled for 2026-2027.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Both the Community Development team and the Business team conducted equality screening which revealed that not all section 75 categories were being monitored within the Social Supermarket and Labour Market Partnership programmes. Both teams decided their projects would benefit from more data collection and they put arrangements in place to do so.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

No examples identified.

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

While all service delivery is monitored in relation to programme or service objectives, monitoring for equality purposes is still a developing area and will be a focus of the Council's equality work in the coming period. Functions where service monitoring is informing service planning include sports/leisure services and funding programmes. Monitoring of customer feedback and complaints routinely informs service delivery, particularly in relation to highlighting accessibility issues.

The examples below include Community Development, Leisure, City Deal and Democratic Services. Work was also carried out by the Policing and Community Safety Partnership and Good Relations.

Community Development

Community Development monitored Council staff through its survey on the development of the Good Relations Strategy and Action Plan. The survey asked a number of questions around expressing identity at work and good relations, and the results of this will be shared with Human Resources for consideration.

Leisure

Leisure experience 1.5-2 million visits per annum from service users, and during the period monitored in the following ways:

- Through membership and participation monitoring. The data from this helped identify underrepresented section 75 groups and informed the design of targeted outreach initiatives, building from 2024-2025 data;
- Through monitoring specific programmes for externally-funded programmes. This information was used to inform planning for future funding opportunities;
- Information gathered from user feedback and consultation through the meeting of the Equality Assurance and Oversight Group has been used to inform our new capital development projects in Leisure (particularly concerning disability and accessibility);

- Leisure have reported internally on monitoring results throughout the year, ensuring continuous review of how Council meets the needs of customers from across section 75 categories;
- During the period relevant monitoring data has been used to inform equality screenings of subsequent policies.
- Council also progressed a gender budgeting pilot.

City Deal

On 3rd December 2025 the Equality and Assurance Oversight Group was consulted on the design of social clauses in the City Deal capital projects, many of which had a focus on disability and accessibility. This information has been shared across the wider capital development team.

Democratic Services

Additional monitoring, review and evaluation has been included in the revised Citizen Recognition Policy to identify and address any unintended or unforeseen outcomes and to reflect the wider context of Mayoral recognition initiatives. Monitoring will be extended to include all recognition mechanisms across Council including Mayoral receptions so as to consider the impacts across all section 75 groups

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Training commitment in the Equality Scheme (section 5.4)	Extent to which commitments have been met
We will develop a summary of this equality scheme and make it available to all staff.	Fully met. The summary is available on our website, on our BeConnected App, across our premises and it was also sent out via email.
We will provide access to copies of the full equality scheme for all staff; ensure that	Fully met. The Equality Scheme is available on our website and staff received an email inviting questions of clarification. Sixty officers have also accessed the full

any queries or questions of clarification from staff are addressed effectively.	equality scheme through Equality Duties training during the period.
Staff in Derry City and Strabane District Council will receive a briefing on this equality scheme within 6 months of the approval of this scheme.	The Equality Scheme (as revised in 2025) had no substantive changes and therefore remains “approved”, however we decided to deliver briefings on the Scheme in May 2026 (which will be reported on in the 2026-2027 report).
The Section 75 statutory duties will form part of induction training for new staff.	Fully met – a new training resource was designed by the Policy Officer (Equality) and implemented by HR for new staff.
Focused training is provided for key staff within Derry City and Strabane District Council who are directly engaged in taking forward the implementation of our equality scheme commitments (for example those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, conducting equality impact assessments, consultation, monitoring and evaluation.)	Fully met. One hundred and sixty five key staff / Elected Members across all Directorates and work areas completed Equality Duties training during the period. Nineteen officers completed Our Code of Practice on Producing Information Awareness Training. Sixteen officers attended Our arrangements for consulting training.
Where appropriate, training will be provided to ensure staff are aware of the issues experienced by the range of Section 75 groups.	Fully met. • 24 staff completed Sight Loss Awareness Training • 60 staff attended Hidden Disability training • 30 staff attended Disability Awareness Training • A mix of staff and stakeholders attended the LGBT Awareness Week History event. • A mix of Senior Leadership Team and Elected Members attended
When appropriate and on an ongoing basis, arrangements will be made to ensure staff are kept up to date with Section 75 developments.	Fully met through the Senior Leadership Team Meetings.

The Policy Officer (Equality) regularly circulated webinars hosted by the Equality Commission and encouraged staff to register for relevant training.

Additionally, Human Resources have regularly circulated information and signposting on wellbeing and disability support, including skin cancer, prostate cancer and the Samaritans.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

100% of participants who completed feedback on **Equality Duties** stated that instructional materials were effective. The following feedback was also recorded:

- “[An] excellent workshop – a dry subject brought to life by the trainer.”
- “This session clarified the purpose of equality impact assessments. Overall I will be more confident in completing any equality impact assessments in future.”
- “The real world examples helped to explain the subject more clearly.”
- “I was sceptical about using the exercises but they were incredibly useful in making me think about and understand the importance of screening”.
- “The training was interesting and practical and [the Policy Officer (Equality)] is very helpful and explains the material very well.”

100% of participants who completed feedback stated that they were satisfied with the knowledge gained from the **Code of Practice on Producing Information Awareness training**. The following feedback was also recorded:

- “The course was both informative and well delivered”.
- “This was a very useful piece of training – with a lot of new information.”
- “Excellent course with clear content.”

80% of participants who completed feedback on “Our arrangements for consulting” training stated they were satisfied with the overall content of the session. The following feedback was also recorded:

- “Accessible, to the point and valuable.”

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Two alternative format requests were received by the Policy Officer (Equality) during the period, both of which were responded to within 5 working days. One of the requests was from a person with a disability who sought paper copies of timetables and access arrangements for our leisure centres. Additionally the following requests were received for translation services:

Alternative requested	No. of requests in period
Irish	37
Ulster Scots	4
Braille	1

ouncil has updated the equality webpages on its website, to enhance access to information.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 3: Looking Forward

- 28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

By December 2030.

- 29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Council will continue to focus on screening and training, and there will be an enhanced focus on monitoring of our service users and staff (post-entry).

- 30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Goods, facilities and services
- ☐ Legislative changes
- ☐ Organisational changes/ new functions
- ☐ Nothing specific, more of the same
- ☒ Other (please state):

Further advice in relation to addressing the impact of the Supreme Court judgment in 'For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers'.

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

23	4	5
Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
Local ⁱⁱⁱ	1.1 and 3.1 Hold at least 2 Equality Assurance and Oversight Group (EAOG) meetings per year to discuss policy and service development in Council. Rebuild/enhance membership of people with a disability/representative groups.	4 EAOG meetings held.	People with a disability were more involved in decision-making.
Local	1.2 Continue to screen all new policies to assess the significance of the policy on the disability duties.	39 policies screened during the period .	Better promotion of equality for those with a disability.

PART B

Local	1.3 Involve people with a disability in service planning and predevelopment exercises.	HR liaised with key disability and representative groups, promoting early engagement and ensuring reasonable adjustments and lived-experience insights informed policy and service design.	Better services for people with a disability.
Local	1.5 Ensure that training on screening includes Disability Duties.	165 officers/Elected Members attended Equality Duties training during the period, which included Disability Duties within it.	Increased awareness of employees' responsibility towards Council's compliance and achievements in relation to disability duties. Anecdotally the training has impacted some "hearts and minds" by demonstrating how easily some of the duties can be implemented.
Local	1.6 Feedback encouraged from people with a disability and their representative groups on the disability duties.	Needs and issues were highlighted at the EAOG meetings on 3 rd November and 3 rd December 2025.	Head of Community Development and Leisure and City Deal team reflected these in Council's plans.
Local	2.1 Celebratory / Training event (host and organise awareness event in association with disability group(s) and key stakeholder/public sector partners	The Labour Market Partnership launched the Inclusive Employment Programme.	This has helped people with disabilities to prepare for and access meaningful employment, while also helping local employers build more inclusive workplaces.
Local	2.6 Awareness raising work with representative Disability organisations to provide opportunities for job shadowing/work experience.	Job shadowing/work experience opportunities were offered to 3 students from Rutledge Recruitment and Training.	An improved sense of achievement, confidence and value.

PART B

Local	2.11 Provide staff on selection panels for ring-fenced posts with enhanced disability awareness training.	All staff who sit on selection panels were required to complete recruitment and selection training in line with Local Government NI guidance. This includes disability awareness content.	All applicant who have a disability will be treated with respect and dignity during the selection process.
Local	3.2 Encourage involvement and participation in the development of Local Area Growth Plans including the Cluster Village Plans.	Partnership Boards were designed to be as inclusive as possible.	People with a disability are more involved with decision making.
Local	3.3 Capacity and Confidence Building. Re-introduce a shadowing initiative to allow people with a disability to spend a day with the Mayor/Deputy Mayor.	Four people with a disability (members of Better Connected) shadowed the Mayor for a day each.	Increased awareness for people with a disability about the everyday work of Elected Members and Local Democracy.
Local	3.6 Events. Involve people with a disability in the planning and development stage of events.	Council events were accessible to people with a disability and their families.	Increased participation of people with a disability and their carers.
Local	3.7 Develop bespoke initiatives for targeted disability needs (including Autism, dementia and mental health).	Staff in our cultural venues were trained in: • Hidden disability • Disability awareness • JAM card 500 people attended FestivALL.	Increased participation of people with a disability.

PART B

Local	3.8 Put in place reasonable adjustments to support people with a disability to access and participate in Council events.	Access Rider was developed and made available online in various formats. Provision was made for disabled artists to communicate their needs ahead of performances. A template was designed to include accessible activities and workshops. Support was provided including quiet spaces, wrist bands, JAM cards, accessible toilets, changing places, accessible parking and accessible viewing points.	Council events are accessible to people with a disability and their families.
Local	3.11 Programme at least one show per annum which is delivered by/includes performers who have a disability.	FestivALL was delivered, with 500 attendees.	Increased participation of people with a disability in initiatives and performances.
Local	3.12 Ensure leisure services provide inclusive services for disabled users.	IFI accredited equipment in place in gyms. Specific disability programmes rolled out by sports development team. Inclusive swim sessions rolled out in wet centres.	Increased participation of people with a disability in sports and leisure.

PART B

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	2.3 Staff Training and Awareness Raising. Disability awareness delivered to all new staff within 3 months of commencing employment through online resource or face to face training.	Disability awareness training was delivered to new starters within their first three months, where possible. Disability awareness training was delivered to 30 staff. A new e-learning module called “Working with Disabled Colleagues” was selected for roll-out next year.	Increased awareness of disability issues and promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.
2	2.4 Staff Training and Awareness Raising. Training assets developed for use virtually or in person (includes complaint handling and target topic areas.)	Training resource “Working with Disabled Colleagues” developed and ready to go live from April 2026.	Increased awareness of disability issues. Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with a disability.
3	2.5 Ensure front line staff have received awareness training in areas such as Autism, JAM Card, Learning Disability (as well as physical disabilities).	Completed 2024-2025.	Improved customer care for service users with Autism and/or communication difficulties or learning disabilities.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

PART B

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	1.4 Review and report on progress of the Disability Action Plan annually.	Annual progress report completed and forwarded to the Equality Commission.	Increased awareness of employees' responsibility towards Council's compliance and achievements in relation to disability duties.
2	2.7 Sharing best practice with and learning from other Councils through the Statutory Duty Network.	Shared good practice at the Statutory Duty Network meeting on 8th September 2025 and 25th February 2026.	Improvement of opportunities through sharing best practice for people with a disability not only locally but also regionally.
3	2.9 To avail of NIUSE and Employers for Disability Job Bulletin Board to advertise ring-fenced job vacancies throughout the Disability community.	HR continues to circulate ring-fenced job vacancies to relevant agencies.	People with a disability have the opportunity to find out what jobs are available to them.

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others**' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	2.2 Participate in Diversity Ambassador Programme	The Policy Officer and Elected Members were available to attend events.	No events were held in the period.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

PART B

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
2	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	2.10 Attend Job Fairs and Job Shadow Days to raise awareness of Council's progress and opportunities in employing people with a disability.	Attend at least 2 events per year.	During the period HR have worked with Ardnsashee School and College to help prepare the future workforce.	Continuing to build relationships.
2	3.5 Involve people with a disability in the delivery of disability related training to elected members and staff.	At least 50% of face to face programmes to be delivered by people with a disability or representative groups.	Increased awareness of disability issues.	HR have worked with a number of disability groups over the period, but have not monitored whether these people have a disability.
3	4.1 Conduct a confidential employee survey to determine the number of staff with a disability, as per LGSC initiative.	Establish a baseline for the number of staff declaring that they have a disability.	Able to identify any reasonable adjustments required by staff with a disability.	HR have developed systems to capture the data, and expect to roll it out in September 2026.

PART B

4	4.2 Review/develop monitoring arrangement to audit access to communication arrangements for people with a disability (internally for staff members and externally for members of the community)	100% of information emanating from Council will be accessible to all.	All Council information will be accessible to all residents including those with a disability.	Audit began but not yet completed.
---	---	---	--	------------------------------------

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	2.8 Ring-fence at least 2 posts per annum for people with a disability. Target to be reviewed in year 2 with a view to increasing.	HR will revisit this commitment following consideration of further monitoring and possible delivery through the City Deal social clauses.
2	3.4 People with a disability are actively involved in devising a checklist and guidance on accessibility of Council facilities and open spaces.	This project is being scoped for delivery in 2026-2027.
3	3.9 Services and Facilities. Consult with and scope out the needs of the local d/Deaf community to meet their access needs in line with the commitment to the BDA Sign Language Charter/ in line with introduction of new sign language Bill.	This project is being scoped for delivery in 2026-2027.

PART B

4	3.10 Work in partnership with representative groups and statutory bodies to develop initiatives and explore funding opportunities which will enhance the lives of people with a disability.	This project is being scoped for delivery in 2026-2027.
5	3.13 Programmes and services are promoted to people with a disability using suitable channels/media.	This work is scheduled for delivery in 2026-2027.

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

The Equality and Assurance Oversight Group met on four occasions and has been effective in driving change in Leisure in particular.

(b) Quantitative

Through equality screening exercises, all project leaders encouraged to put in place appropriate monitoring arrangements for equality purposes.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

PART B

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.