



Equality & Diversity
in Local Councils

(INSERT NAME) COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

This Framework details the Council's statement of intent and approach to ensure equality and diversity

Context

Councils are required to comply with anti-discrimination legislation and Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 (the Act). Section 75 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.

This Framework is designed to assist councils to meet their equality and diversity obligations and to demonstrate their compliance with them.

The Framework covers everyone who uses the Council's services, our facilities and accesses our information, including:

- Customers of the Council
- Members of the Public
- Partners and Other Stakeholders
- Contractors who deliver services on behalf of the Council
- Council Elected Members
- Council Employees
- Trade Unions
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- Business Sector
- Other Public Sector Bodies

In order to assist with the implementation of this Framework the Council has appointed a Councillor and Officer to **champion** equality and diversity across the Council by driving positive actions and acting as a contact point for issues relating to this equality and diversity framework.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FRAMEWORK

Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non-discriminatory environment, promote equality, and model best practice in equality and good relations

It is everyone's responsibility to:

- Treat everyone equally and with dignity and respect
- Think about how our actions affect others
- Help people change for the better through example by challenging unacceptable behaviour or language
- Be knowledgeable by taking personal responsibility for training around equality and diversity and good relations (mandatory training for all Council staff and managers is in place)

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance:

NI Code of Local Government Conduct, Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees, (*Chartermark, Customer Service Standards, etc*)

Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations

We will:

- Ensure that all policies, projects and programmes of work are screened and, where appropriate, impact assessed
- Publish all screening outcomes including any mitigation or alternative policies considered
- Involve the customers of the council, trade unions, business sector and voluntary and community sector on an on-going basis to assist us in the review and development of existing and new policies

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance:

Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan, Progress Reports, Screening Reports

Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information

We will take steps to improve access to services, facilities and information and be open about what we can and cannot do:

We will:

- Involve customers and stakeholders in the design, prioritisation and review of services
- Monitor and review services regularly to identify any under-representation or discrimination
- Make sure information is accessible using Plain English and other accessibility standards
- Provide alternative formats, translations and interpreters when needed
- Make sure buildings are accessible and welcoming to all
- Make sure meetings and events are easy to access

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance: Equality Scheme, Disability Action Plan, Translation and Interpretation Policy, Good Relations Strategy, (*Chartermark, Customer Service Standards, etc*)

Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly

The Council will make sure that we provide equality of opportunity to all in employment.

We will:

- Use non-discriminatory job criteria
- Take positive action to ensure a diverse workforce
- Apply fair selection procedures
- Monitor and review employment practice
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Support staff through appropriate networks

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance: Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, Local Government Competency Framework Staff Handbook, Welcoming Statement

Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive and pro-active way

Everyone has the right to complain about discrimination and harassment in good faith, without being victimised at any time.

We will:

- Handle complaints and grievances properly
- Resolve matters positively
- Respond to incidents of prejudice or hate crime

Relevant Policies, Procedures and Guidance: Complaints Policy and Procedure, Grievance Procedure, NI Code of Local Government Conduct, Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (*Chartermark, Customer Service Standards etc*)

MONITORING

The Council will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this Framework and will engage with Councillors, employees and the trade unions regarding any proposed changes to policies or practices.

SIGNED: _____

COUNCIL MAYOR/CHAIR

COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE

DATE: