

Strategic Investment Board Limited

Equality Scheme

Drawn up in accordance with Section 75 of  
the Northern Ireland Act 1998

*November 2005*

**Strategic Investment Board Limited  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SR**

**[www.sibni.org](http://www.sibni.org)**

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## FOREWORD

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As Chairman and Chief Executive of the Strategic Investment Board Limited, we are pleased on behalf of the management, Board and staff to support this Equality Scheme which arises out of the implementation of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Act requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions, powers and duties, to promote equality of opportunity and good relations among a range of groups. Each public authority is required to produce an Equality Scheme stating how it proposes to do this and submit it to the Equality Commission for approval. This Equality Scheme sets out how SIB will meet its commitments under Section 75 in respect of all its functions, powers and duties relating to Northern Ireland.

SIB is committed to ensuring that all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) are made available to support the effective promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in all its policies and practices through the development and implementation of this Equality Scheme. This includes establishing and enhancing internal arrangements to ensure that the duties are effectively complied with in accordance with the timescales specified and for monitoring and reviewing progress.

SIB will develop a programme of communication and training with the aim of ensuring all staff are made aware and understand the new equality obligations as they relate to SIB functions affecting Northern Ireland. As SIB is a relatively small organisation, all staff will be involved in ensuring that the Equality Scheme is effectively implemented and the management Board will closely monitor the progress made.

Tony Watson  
Chairman

David Gavaghan  
Chief Executive



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires SIB, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties affecting Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

1.2 Section 75 also requires SIB to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.3 In accordance with Schedule 9 of the Act, SIB has developed this Equality Scheme to show how it intends to fulfil these duties. The Scheme includes:

- a summary of functions and duties
- details of how SIB will assess whether it is complying with the duties imposed by Section 75
- a commitment to consultation on all matters to which Section 75 is relevant
- arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity
- how SIB will monitor any adverse impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity
- arrangements for publishing the results of equality impact assessments and monitoring
- arrangements for the training of staff
- arrangements for ensuring public access to information
- details of how the Equality Scheme will be published, implemented, monitored and reviewed and how any complaints received will be handled.

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## 2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SIB

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### **Functions**

2.1 The Government announced the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative in May 2002 to address the perceived deficit in public service investment in Northern Ireland. To obtain the level of resources needed to achieve the renewal of infrastructure required in Northern Ireland, it is necessary to consider the use of private finance and so a key recommendation was the establishment of a powerful Government body to leverage greater private sector investment and promote Public Private Partnership (PPP) activity across Northern Ireland.

2.2 Following the passage of enabling legislation in February 2003, the Strategic Investment Board Limited was therefore created as a company limited by guarantee wholly owned by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). SIB's functions are defined under the legislation (the Strategic Investment and Regeneration of Sites (NI) Order 2003) as :

- advising the Executive in relation to the formulation and implementation of its programme of major investment proposals, including advising and assisting with the planning and prioritisation of programmes/projects and the funding and implementation of projects
- advising and assisting bodies carrying out major investment projects including providing research, consultancy, advisory and other services and, in some cases, participating in the carrying out of the projects.

2.3 The Order requires all Government Departments to have regard to any advice given by SIB but does not give SIB any decision making powers in respect of Departmental functions. In particular, it should be noted that SIB does not decide on its supported projects. Its involvement in projects is at the direction of the Executive (and, under direct rule, the Minister).

## **Initial objectives**

2.4 SIB has formulated 3 initial objectives:

- The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) – a strategy which will determine the future of strategic investment in Northern Ireland and how it may be funded
- The Strategic Investment Programme (SIP) – a programme of major projects that in itself is part of the ISNI but represents those projects where SIB provides support and expertise given their critical nature to the overall £16 bn of investment set out in the draft ISNI
- Reform – SIB will work closely with existing reform initiatives and drive some specific reform agendas to ensure that the ISNI works effectively and that public sector procuring authorities get the best out of their investment programmes.

### **(a) *Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland***

2.5 SIB is currently working closely with all Government Departments that are planning significant investment in Northern Ireland's public infrastructure over the next few years to develop the ISNI. This provides an opportunity for Departments to pool their resources to maximise the impact of public investment. The final decision will be taken by the Minister and implemented by the appropriate Departments; SIB will provide advice to the Minister on how the investment programme should be prioritised and financed and, where directed to do so, will help the Departments deliver their investment projects.

### **(b) *Strategic Investment Programme***

2.6 The SIP was announced in February 2003 and contains 3 different categories of project:

- Category 1 – projects where the approach to financing has not yet been decided where SIB is responsible for advising on how best to proceed
- Category 2 – projects which are expected to use a PPP approach

- Category 3 – projects that are well advanced using conventional capital procurement.

2.7 SIB will contribute (alongside the Department of Finance and Personnel) to the procurement approach for all SIP projects. However, as there are a large number of projects, it will be impractical for SIB to be actively involved in all of them and some projects will therefore be designated as Supported Projects. The Minister designated the initial list of Supported Projects and added other projects - for example, the electronic Human Resource service and the Multisports Stadium – to the list in subsequent months. In future, potential projects will be identified in the ISNI by the Executive (and, under direct rule, the Minister). Those Departments responsible for projects which are not supported will still have access to SIB advice through a helpdesk facility.

**(c) Reform**

2.8 As part of the remit to work closely with existing reform initiatives, SIB will contribute to the options appraisal and will support the overall preparation, planning and implementation of water sector reform. SIB will also support the OFMDFM's efforts to bring forward for development strategic sites which have a close connection to the period of conflict, such as the Maze Prison.

**(d) Other tasks**

2.9 Other tasks include:

- developing a standardised PPP contract for use in Northern Ireland in order to reduce transaction costs and speed up the PPP procurement process – this will include guidance on the statutory equality duties
- providing a helpdesk facility on all aspects of PPP
- facilitating training programmes and other means of developing skills in PPP procurement and contract management within the Northern Ireland Civil Service
- sponsoring conferences, workshops and published articles to ensure that competition for projects is maximised.

2.10 SIB employs 17 members of staff and operates from offices in Castle Buildings in the Stormont Estate. A range of employment policies and other policies required to allow SIB to operate efficiently (including the procurement of goods and services for its own use) are being developed. The Equality Scheme will, of course, apply to these internal policies as well as to the main advisory functions set out above.

### **Promotion of equality of opportunity**

2.11 By acting in accordance with this Equality Scheme, SIB will contribute to the process of ensuring that statutory equality duties are complied with when Government's programme of major investments for Northern Ireland is implemented. SIB is an advisory body that will assist Government Departments, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other agencies to make informed decisions on major investments. When formulating such advice, SIB will follow best practice as defined by the Treasury and will have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in the context of major infrastructure development.

2.12 Although SIB will not be responsible for investment decisions and therefore will not be responsible for developing any policies required or assessing the equality implications, it will be in a position to pass on the lessons learned from each project to subsequent projects, including those relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity. SIB's contribution to the promotion of equality of opportunity will be drawing attention to best practice in relation to the equality implications of investment decisions.

### **Organisational structure**

2.13 Overall responsibility for SIB lies with the Executive (and, under direct rule, the Minister) and is expressed through the OFMDFM which funds the company, and through the Board, which governs the company.

2.14 The Chief Executive is responsible to the Chairman and the Board for the management of the company as a corporate body.

2.15 The Board is the main decision making body and consists of a Chairman and four Directors. (See Appendix 6 for current membership.) The Board meets on a monthly basis.

2.16 There is also an Advisory Council, appointed by the OFMDFM, which advises the Minister(s) responsible for OFMDFM and DFP on strategy and policy on the development and procurement of the Administration's investment in reviewing Northern Ireland's public service infrastructure, taking account of the Government's wider economic and social initiatives. (See Appendix 7 for current membership.)

2.17 SIB's organisational structure consists of a Chief Executive, Strategic Advisers and support staff (see Appendix 1). SIB has considered whether any organisational changes are necessary in order to implement the Equality Scheme and has decided that the current organisational structure can accommodate the responsibility for implementation. However, responsibility for the management of the Equality Scheme will be included in the job descriptions of certain key staff.

### **3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 75 DUTIES**

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3.1 SIB is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 75 obligations in all parts of its work. Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the Scheme lies with the Chairman of the Board and the Chief Executive.

3.2 The Chief Executive will be accountable to the Board for the development, maintenance and review of the Equality Scheme in accordance with the legislation, including any good practice or guidance that may be issued by the Equality Commission.

3.3 Responsibility for driving forward implementation of the Equality Scheme and the point of contact within SIB will be:

Name	Tony McKenna
Title	Strategic Adviser
Address	Strategic Investment Board Ltd. Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast BT4 3SR

Tel No	028 9052 2954
Fax No	028 9052 2432
E Mail	<a href="mailto:tony.mckenna@sibni.org">tony.mckenna@sibni.org</a>

3.4 This officer will report regularly to the Chief Executive on the progress made in implementing the Equality Scheme and will respond to any queries from those affected by the statutory duties.

3.5 Objectives and targets relating to the Section 75 duties will be integrated into SIB's three year corporate plan and the annual business plan as appropriate and achievements against them will be monitored and reported to the Board as part of the monthly progress report against business objectives. Initially the targets will relate to implementation of the approved Equality Scheme (see Appendix 4) but they will be reviewed annually to reflect objectives identified as the implementation of the Scheme progresses. It is envisaged that consultation, impact assessments and monitoring, in particular, will assist SIB to identify more focused targets leading to greater effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity.

3.6 SIB has developed a system of performance appraisal for staff which includes the development of personal performance plans. Implementation of Section 75 duties will be included in the personal performance plans of all staff who are directly engaged in this work. In addition, a commitment to Section 75 duties will be included in all job descriptions.

3.7 SIB will conduct an annual review of progress in relation to the implementation of the Equality Scheme and in complying with statutory duties and will forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission. A summary of the findings of the review will also be included in SIB Annual Report.

3.8 SIB is committed to ensuring that all necessary resources (in terms of people, time, money and training) are made available to support the effective implementation of the statutory duties through the development and implementation of this Equality Scheme.

## 4. CONSULTATION

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### **Statement of commitment**

4.1 SIB recognises the importance of consultation in all aspects of the implementation of the statutory equality duties and is committed to full and meaningful consultation on all aspects of this Equality Scheme. All consultation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out by the Equality Commission in the 'Guide to the Statutory Duties' in a timely, open and inclusive way. Information will be offered to consultees in a range of accessible formats and comments and feedback will be accepted in the format preferred by each consultee.

### **Consultees**

4.2 SIB will consult as widely as possible to ensure that it engages with any organisation or group which has a legitimate, particular interest in its work and the impact of its policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

4.3 SIB will include the following in all consultations whether or not they have a direct economic or social interest in the subject of the consultation:

- the Equality Commission
- the Community Relations Council
- organisations representing the categories included in Section 75
- voluntary groups
- community groups
- Trade Union groups
- public authorities
- other groups with a legitimate interest in the matter.

4.4 With respect to the representative groups and individuals in the Section 75 categories, SIB will work with them to identify how best to consult with them on an ongoing basis. This may involve face-to-face meetings, advisory groups, surveys, consultative panels, Internet discussions and other innovative ways of consulting. SIB acknowledges that there will need to be different means of consultation with different groups and is committed to establishing a basis for dialogue and engagement which will ensure the most effective implementation of its Equality Scheme.

4.5 A list of those to be consulted on matters which are relevant to the Section 75 duties, including screening and equality impact assessments and the Scheme itself, is set out in Appendix 2. The list is not exhaustive and may be amended and reviewed throughout the lifetime of the Equality Scheme to ensure that consultation is as inclusive as possible. SIB welcomes enquiries from any organisation wishing to be added to the list of consultees, and invites them to contact the officer named in paragraph 3.3 above.

### **Timescale for consultation**

4.6 In order to facilitate meaningful consultation, SIB will ensure that consultation with groups and individuals on any matter relating to Section 75 duties will begin as early as possible.

4.7 SIB is aware that some groups will need time to consult among themselves and formulate a response, so it will aim to allow a period of at least 2 months for consultation, except in cases where there is a degree of urgency, for example, in order to protect health and safety or comply with court rulings.

4.8 SIB will make every effort to minimise the number of exceptions to good practice guidelines regarding the timescale for consultation. SIB will plan consultation processes carefully so that it should not be necessary to reduce the consultation period. Exceptions will be monitored, kept under review, justified very clearly and reported in the annual report to the Equality Commission.

### **Ensuring inclusive consultation**

4.9 SIB will use simple language in all consultation documents and will make arrangements so that they can be made available on request and in a timely fashion in formats such as Braille, large print, disk and audiocassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English. Extra consideration will be given on each occasion to ensuring that all consultations reflect the needs of young people and those with learning disabilities through the provision of accessible information in a timely manner. In this regard, SIB will liaise with representatives of young people and learning disability organisations and take account of good practice.

4.10 SIB believes it is especially important that sufficient timely and appropriate information is provided to enable all affected groups and individuals to consider the full implications of proposals which are the subject of consultation, and will take steps to ensure this by making all relevant information available including quantitative and qualitative data that it holds or has referred to and other documents such as consultants' reports. Whenever possible, this information will be included in SIB website ([www.sibni.org](http://www.sibni.org)). This will apply to all consultations and all necessary resources will be provided to ensure inclusiveness.

4.11 Specific training will be arranged for SIB staff undertaking consultation to ensure they have the necessary skills. SIB is committed to obtaining the best possible training for staff from a wide range of appropriate providers including affected groups.

4.12 Steps will also be taken to ensure full participation in any consultation meetings that are held. When making arrangements, SIB will consider (among other things) the time of day, the suitability of the venue, whether the venue can be accessed by those with disabilities, how the meeting is to be run, the use of languages other than English, whether a signer is needed and child care arrangements. SIB is committed to ensuring that meetings are fully accessible. Where there is a need to meet access related costs in order to ensure that all appropriate parties can participate, this need will be met.

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## 5. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF POLICIES

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### **Screening**

5.1 SIB is committed to screening all policies by a process of systematic review to determine whether there are any implications for equality of opportunity, and, if so, whether they are significant. For each policy SIB will apply the following criteria:

- is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups within any of the nine categories as a result of the policy?
- is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?
- is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations by changing the policy or working with others in government or the community at large?
- have consultations with relevant representatives, organisations or individuals within groups indicated that particular policies create problems that are specific to them?

5.2 The main groups within each of the 9 categories are identified in Appendix 3.

5.3 Where the answer to any of these questions is positive, SIB will conclude that there are equality implications and will consider whether to subject the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure. As part of this consideration, SIB will apply the following prioritisation criteria, as well as taking full account of the views of consultees:

- the significance of the policy in relation to the formulation and implementation of the programme of major investment proposals
- the effect of the policy on economic, social and human rights
- the significance of the policy in terms of targeting social need
- the potential effects of the policy on people's daily lives.

5.4 SIB is committed to timely, open and inclusive consultation as part of the screening process in accordance with all the principles set out in Section 4

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above. SIB will therefore prepare a report on the outcome of any screening process and circulate it for consultation.

**(a) Current policies**

5.5 As soon as this Equality Scheme has been approved, SIB will give detailed consideration to the impact of all current and proposed policies on equality of opportunity in terms of the nine categories listed in Section 75. In this context “policies” includes all decisions which govern the way SIB delivers services and refers to unwritten as well as written practices. SIB will prepare a report listing all current policies and those policies which are currently being developed with sufficient detail to allow consultees to identify whether each policy has a particular relevance to them. The report will also include SIB’s views on how the policies might affect people in the nine categories listed in Section 75, details of the criteria to be used to screen the policies and those to be used to prioritise equality impact assessments (see paragraphs 5.1 and 5.3 above).

5.6 SIB will consult on this report by circulating it to all consultees listed in Appendix 2 and this will constitute Stage 1 of the screening consultation. During the Stage 1 consultation views will be sought on whether all policies have been identified, how they affect the groups being consulted in terms of equality of opportunity, and the factors to be used to determine and prioritise equality impact assessments. This consultation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out by the Equality Commission in the ‘Guide to the Statutory Duties’ and the principles set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.12 above.

5.7 SIB will then prepare a further paper outlining the findings from the Stage 1 consultation, the results of applying the screening criteria to the policies, conclusions on the policies to be subjected to equality impact assessment (if any), and the timetable for these assessments. In arriving at the draft timetable for assessments, SIB will show how the prioritisation criteria have been applied and how consultees’ views have been taken into account. SIB will then consult further on the basis of this paper and this will constitute Stage 2 of the screening consultation.

5.8 The rationale for this two stage approach is to ensure that affected groups have sufficient time to engage with SIB and respond and also that the process achieves the necessary level of transparency, involvement and

understanding, so that affected groups will have confidence in the consultative process.

5.9 The timetable envisaged for this two-stage consultation process is as follows:

- Stage 1 consultation to be completed by February 2006
- Stage 2 consultation to be completed by May 2006.

5.10 SIB will then submit a report to the Equality Commission regarding the policies to be subjected to equality impact assessment (if any) and the timetable for assessments, taking full account of the comments made during each stage of the consultation. The report will include details of:

- those policies which will be subjected to equality impact assessment
- those policies which consultees have suggested should be subjected to equality impact assessment which have not been subsequently included, with an explanation for this course of action
- the factors for prioritising equality impact assessments
- the timetable for equality impact assessments.

5.11 SIB will also notify all consultees of this information.

**(b) Future policies**

5.12 In future SIB will subject all new and proposed policies to the screening process at the earliest opportunity, prepare a report on the outcome of each screening process and circulate it for consultation. This consultation will be carried out in accordance with all the principles set out in Section 4 above.

5.13 In addition, a detailed report of all screening exercises will be included in the annual report sent by SIB to the Equality Commission giving similar details to those listed in paragraph 5.10 above.

**(c) Supported Projects**

5.14 The policy framework for PPP in Northern Ireland was published in February 2003 under the title 'Working Together in Financing Our Future'. This policy had been subjected to an equality impact assessment and 42 responses had been received during the consultation period. Comments

included concerns that the statutory equality duties would not be fully complied with under PPP arrangements.

5.15 In response to these comments, the Government agreed that PPP projects should be screened at an early stage to identify any significant equality issues that would point to a need for an EQIA over and above that undertaken at the policy and programme level. In line with contracting authorities' responsibility for ensuring that their objectives under Section 75 to promote equality are met fully, the policy framework states that the screening process will be kept under review, as the PPP project progresses, to ascertain if any significant new circumstances have emerged that would merit any change in that approach.

5.16 This screening process is the responsibility of the contracting authority (the Government Department, associated Agency or Non Departmental Public Body) and will be carried out in accordance with their Equality Scheme. However, in the case of Supported Projects, SIB will ensure that proper attention is paid to the need to keep the screening process under review as the project progresses. SIB will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that the equality implications of PPP projects are identified and that the relevant learning points are carried forward from one project to the next.

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

5.17 All equality impact assessments carried out by SIB will be conducted in accordance with all the procedures outlined in the Equality Commission's 'Guide to the Statutory Duties' and 'Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment'. In respect of each policy being subjected to equality impact assessment, SIB will:

(a) Consider available data and research to enable SIB to make a judgement of the extent of impact on affected groups. This will include the collection and analysis of existing quantitative data by relevant characteristics, use of qualitative or evaluative research carried out by other bodies where relevant and the commissioning of new qualitative or quantitative data where necessary.

(b) Assess the impacts to decide whether there is, or is likely to be, a differential impact on any of the relevant groups. SIB will do this on the basis

of the data and research gathered and by discussing potential implications with organisations representing people in the relevant groups.

(c) Consider the measures which might be taken to mitigate any adverse impact and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity. This will include consideration of whether separate implementation strategies are necessary for the policy to be effective for the relevant group.

(d) Consult formally on the actual impact of existing policies and the likely impact of proposed policies. When consulting, SIB will apply all the principles set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.12 above and will ensure that the process is fully inclusive and carried out in a timely and open manner. SIB will make available all information required to enable consultees to understand the measures being proposed and will offer information in a range of accessible formats. A range of consultation methods will be used and comments will be accepted from consultees in an appropriate format.

(e) Make a decision on the policy under consideration, taking into account the results of the equality impact assessment and the consultation carried out. The way in which these results have been taken into account will be made explicit in the record of the decision.

(f) Publish the results of the equality impact assessment. The published results will include a statement of the aims of the policy to which the assessment relates, details of any consideration given to measures which might mitigate any adverse impact of the policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and details of any consideration given to alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

(g) Monitor for adverse impact in the future and publish the results of such monitoring. As part of the decision making process a system will be established to monitor the impact of the policy in order to find out its effect on the relevant group or groups. The results of the monitoring will be published in accordance with the principles set out in paragraphs 5.20 to 5.26 and Section 7 below.

5.18 When consulting on equality impact assessments, SIB will seek the views of the consultees listed in Appendix 2 and also those of any other groups or individuals who are directly affected by the policy.

**Decision making**

5.19 In making any decision on a current or proposed policy, SIB is fully committed to taking into account any equality impact assessment and the consultation carried out in relation to the policy. If, for any reason, the views expressed by consultees cannot be taken into account, the reasons why will be clearly recorded and explained.

**Monitoring adverse impact**

5.20 SIB will establish a system to monitor the impact of all policies in order to identify their effects on the relevant groups on an ongoing basis. This system will involve:

- the collection and collation of existing relevant primary quantitative and qualitative data;
- the collection and collation of existing relevant secondary sources of quantitative and qualitative data;
- the identification of cases where more detailed data is needed in order to have the necessary information on which to base decisions;
- commissioning the collection of new data where necessary.

5.21 The information obtained under the monitoring system will be considered on an annual basis and the results will be reported as part of the annual report to the Equality Commission. The monitoring system itself will also be reviewed on an annual basis and amended as necessary.

5.22 If monitoring and evaluation show that a policy results in greater adverse impact than predicted, or if opportunities arise which would allow for equality of opportunity and/or good relations to be promoted more effectively, SIB will ensure that the policy is revised accordingly.

5.23 In all cases relating to the holding of monitoring information or the collection of data, SIB will act sensitively in accordance with Equality Commission guidance and the wishes of representatives of Section 75 organisations.

**Publication of the results of equality impact assessments and monitoring**

5.24 SIB will make publicly available the outcome of any equality impact assessment and of any monitoring undertaken to measure the adverse impact of policies. The general principles to be applied when publishing information are set out in Section 7 below and SIB will comply with guidance outlined by the Equality Commission in its 'Guide to the Statutory Duties'.

5.25 SIB will inform the general public about the availability of this information, including the arrangements for obtaining it in various formats, through public relations such as press releases and media coverage. SIB will also directly inform consultees (those bodies listed in Appendix 2) when this information is available and will arrange for information to be placed in publications associated with Section 75 categories as appropriate.

5.26 SIB will publish information on equality impact assessments that:

- includes the aims of the policy to which the assessment relates
- details the consideration given to mitigating any adverse impacts of the policy on the grounds of equality of opportunity
- details the consideration given to any alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.

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## 6. TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

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6.1 SIB will ensure that an effective communication and training programme is developed and implemented for all staff in order to:

- raise awareness of current anti-discrimination legislation, including the provisions of Section 75 and Section 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, including an explanation of the duties and implications for all employees and the contents of the Equality Scheme
- provide those employees involved in the screening of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provide those employees involved in the equality impact assessment of policies with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provide those employees who deal with complaints in relation to the implementation of SIB's Equality Scheme with the necessary skills and knowledge to investigate and monitor complaints effectively
- provide those employees involved in consultation processes with the necessary skills and knowledge to do this work effectively
- provide those employees involved in the implementation and monitoring of the effective implementation of SIB's Equality Scheme to do this work effectively
- evaluate the extent to which all participants in the training programme have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve each of the above objectives.

6.2 SIB will draw up a detailed training plan for all its staff over the 5 year period to which this Scheme refers which will aim to achieve these objectives. SIB is committed to providing the best possible training for staff from a wide range of appropriate providers including affected groups. In order to share resources and expertise, SIB will work closely with other bodies and agencies in the development and delivery of training, especially the OFMDFM.

6.3 A report indicating the extent to which the training objectives have been met will be included in the annual report to the Equality Commission.

6.4 All staff in SIB have already undertaken training to make them aware of the duties set out in Sections 75 and 76 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Similar awareness training will be provided for all new staff as part of the induction process on an ongoing basis. More focused training to meet the above objectives will be provided for staff in management roles and those involved in research and data collection, policy development, service design, monitoring and evaluation. As SIB has a relatively small number of staff, training will generally be provided across the whole organisation. Access to training will not be dependent on grade or responsibilities and any training needs assessment will be undertaken in such a way as to ensure that SIB's obligations are not diluted in any way.

### **Communication**

6.7 The Chief Executive wishes to positively communicate the commitment of SIB to the statutory duties (both internally and externally). SIB will therefore:

- develop a summary of the Equality Scheme and make it available to all staff
- provide access to copies of the full Equality Scheme for all staff
- ensure that SIB's commitment to the statutory duties are made clear in publications
- ensure that any queries from staff are addressed effectively.

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## 7. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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7.1 SIB is committed to ensuring that the information it disseminates is made accessible to ensure equality of opportunity. SIB is aware that some groups will not have the same access to information as others. These include:

- children and young people who may have difficulties in accessing or understanding information
- people with sensory and learning disabilities who may have difficulties with information in print
- members of minority ethnic groups, whose first language is not English, and who may have difficulties with information provided only in English.

7.2 SIB will ensure that accessible information is provided in a timely manner to all these groups and will put suitable arrangements in place for providing information in formats such as Braille, large print, disk, audio cassette and minority ethnic languages. This list of alternative formats is not meant to be comprehensive and SIB will respond to the needs expressed.

7.3 Within a year of approval of this Scheme, SIB will review its arrangements for providing information in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, disk, audio cassette and minority ethnic languages. The review will aim to identify improvements to the arrangements so that SIB can better ensure public access to information and will take account of:

- the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the likely demand for information in various formats in relation to the main policy areas
- the resource implications (bearing in mind the commitment that all necessary resources will be made available to support the effective implementation of the Equality Scheme) and
- recommendations from the Northern Ireland cross-departmental Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) working groups on minority ethnic people and on access to information.

7.4 Where the review shows that public access to information can be better ensured by improving arrangements for providing information in different formats and languages, SIB will revise its arrangements accordingly. SIB will publicise the current situation, the findings of the review, and any proposed

changes to any aspect of the provision of information to appropriate groups and individuals.

7.5 In disseminating information through the media, SIB will seek to advertise in the press including the three main newspapers circulating in Northern Ireland (the Newsletter, the Irish News and the Belfast Telegraph, including the North West edition). SIB will also place information in publications associated with Section 75 categories as appropriate. This arrangement will be kept under review, in terms of promoting wide access throughout the implementation of statutory equality duties. SIB intends that all public information should be fully accessible to all parts of the community in Northern Ireland.

7.6 SIB will ensure that no section of the community is deterred for whatever reason from visiting its offices when there is a need to do so. SIB offices will maintain a welcoming and harmonious environment and SIB will adhere to relevant provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

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## **8. IMPLEMENTING THE EQUALITY SCHEME**

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### **Publication of the Equality Scheme**

8.1 Following approval by the Equality Commission, the Equality Scheme will be made available in printed form, and alternative formats, free on request following the principles set out in Section 7 above. A Plain English summary of the Equality Scheme will also be developed and made available. Both the summary and full versions will be posted on SIB website, using appropriate means, for example, the Bobby standard program to ensure that the website is fully accessible to people with disabilities. SIB will issue a press release and place a prominent advertisement in the three main newspapers circulating in Northern Ireland (the Newsletter, the Irish News and the Belfast Telegraph, including the North West edition) and send copies of the Scheme to groups representing the various Section 75 categories and other key stakeholders.

### **Action plan for Implementing the Scheme**

8.2 An action plan for implementing the Equality Scheme, including target dates for the completion of each task, is set out in Appendix 4.

### **Progress reporting**

8.3 SIB will conduct an annual review of progress in relation to the implementation of the Equality Scheme and compliance with statutory duties and will forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission. A summary of the findings of the review will also be included in SIB's Annual Report.

8.4 SIB will liaise with the Equality Commission in order to build a close working relationship so that progress on the implementation of the Equality Scheme is maintained.

### **Review of the Scheme**

8.5 SIB will conduct a thorough review of the Equality Scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission. This review will evaluate the effectiveness of SIB in meeting its Section 75 obligations. A report of this review will be made public using the methods outlined in paragraph 8.1 above

and Equality Commission guidance. The report will also be sent to the Equality Commission.

### **Complaints**

8.6 SIB will make information available on its complaints procedure to all those affected by this Equality Scheme on request. Any individual or group who wishes to lodge a complaint on the grounds that SIB has failed to comply with this Equality Scheme should address the complaint to:

Name	Tony McKenna
Title	Strategic Adviser
Address	Strategic Investment Board Ltd. Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast BT4 3SR
Tel No	028 9052 2954
Fax No	028 9052 2432
E Mail	<a href="mailto:tony.mckenna@sibni.org">tony.mckenna@sibni.org</a>

8.7 Complaints will be accepted in any format (including letter, fax, e mail or telephone call) and SIB will make every effort to provide any reasonable assistance required to enable a group or individual to submit a complaint.

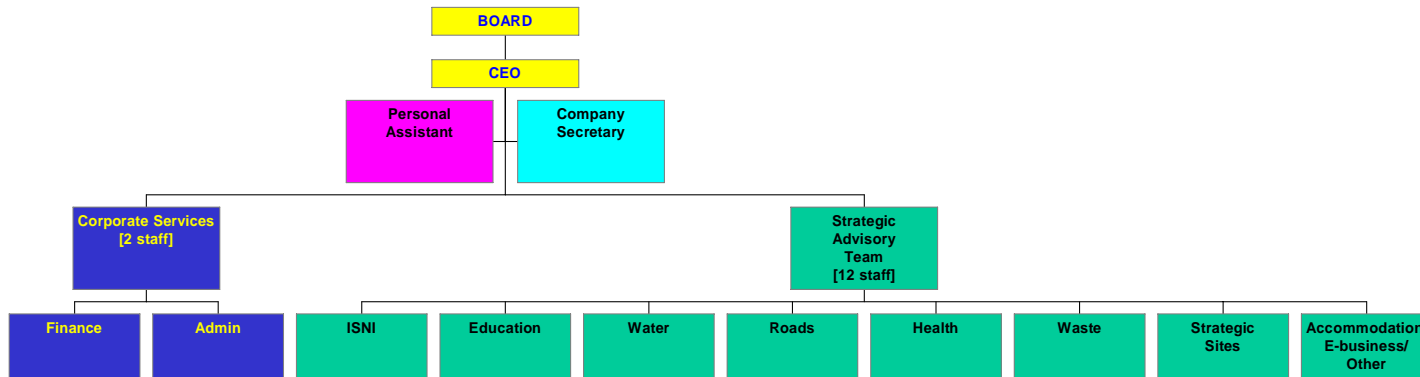
8.8 The officer will carry out an internal investigation of the complaint and respond to the complainant within one month of receipt in a format appropriate to the complainant. During the investigation, the complainant will be kept fully informed of the procedures for dealing with the complaint under Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act. SIB will also undertake to provide assistance to any complainant who requires information in a format that ensures equality of opportunity.

8.9 In any subsequent investigation by the Equality Commission, SIB will co-operate fully, providing access to any relevant documentation that the Equality Commission may require. Similarly, SIB will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality Commission under sub-para. 11 (1) (b) of Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

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**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF SIB**

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**Appendix 2**

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**CONSULTATION LIST**

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The following list (in alphabetical order) includes the bodies to be consulted on matters which are relevant to the Section 75 duties, including screening and equality impact assessments and the Equality Scheme itself. The list is not exhaustive and additional bodies may be added during the lifetime of the Equality Scheme .

1. Action Group for Irish Youth
2. Age Concern NI
3. Alliance Party
4. Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union
5. Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Associations
6. Baha'i Office for NI
7. Barnardos NI
8. Barnardos, Tuar Ceatha Project
9. Belfast Butterfly Club
10. Belfast Gay Pride Committee
11. Belfast Hebrew Congregation
12. Belfast Traveller Education & Development Group
13. Belfast Traveller Support Unit
14. Black and Ethnic Minority Group
15. British Deaf Association NI
16. Bryson House
17. Carafriend
18. Carers NI
19. Child Accident Prevention Trust
20. Child Poverty Action Group
21. Childcare NI
22. Children's Law Centre
23. Chinese Chamber of Commerce
24. Chinese Lay Health Project
25. Chinese Welfare Association NI Ltd
26. Christian Action Research and Education
27. Chrysalis Women's Centre
28. Church of Ireland
29. Clerk to the Committee of the Centre
30. Coalition on Sexual Orientation

31. Coiste na n-iarchimi
32. Committee on the Administration of Justice
33. Community Relations Council
34. Community Relations Training/Learning Consortium
35. Confederation of British Industry
36. Council for the Homeless NI
37. Counteract
38. Craigavon Traveller Supportive Committee
39. Cruse Bereavement Care NI
40. Democratic Left
41. Democratic Unionist Party
42. Derry Traveller Support
43. Derry Well Woman
44. Disability Action
45. Down's Syndrome Association
46. East Belfast Community Development Agency
47. Equality 2000
48. Equality Commission for NI
49. Falls Community Council
50. Falls Women's Centre
51. Family Planning Association NI
52. First Division Association
53. First Key NI
54. Foundry Regeneration Trust
55. Foyle Friend
56. Foyle Women's Information Network
57. Foyle Women's Network
58. Gay and Lesbian Youth NI
59. General Consumer Council for NI
60. Gingerbread NI
61. Help the Aged NI
62. Include Youth
63. Indian Community Centre
64. Initiative Economic
65. Industrial Society
66. Institute of Directors NI Division
67. Italian Society
68. Labour Party
69. Law Centre NI
70. Lesbian Line

71. Library, Parliament Buildings
72. Local Government Staff Commission
73. Magherafelt Women's Group
74. MENCAP (Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children & Adults)
75. Methodist Church in Ireland
76. Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
77. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
78. National Union of Students/Union of Students in Ireland NI Student Centre
79. Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens' Consortium
80. Newry and Mourne Women
81. Nexus Research
82. NI African Cultural Centre
83. NI Anti-Poverty Network
84. NI Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
85. NI Association for Mental Health
86. NI Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions
87. NI Council for Voluntary Action
88. NI Gay Rights Association
89. NI Human Rights Commission
90. NI Islamic Centre
91. NIPPA
92. NI Public Service Alliance
93. NI Unionist Party
94. NI Voluntary Trust
95. NI Women's Aid Federation
96. NI Women's Coalition
97. NI Women's European Platform
98. NI Youth Forum
99. North West Community Network
100. North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Derry)
101. North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Enniskillen)
102. Parents Advice Centre
103. Parents and Professional and Autism
104. POBAL
105. Presbyterian Church in Ireland
106. Press for Change
107. Progressive Unionist Party
108. Public Sector Support Services Forum
109. Putting Children First

110. Queer Space
111. Relate
112. Roman Catholic Church
113. Royal Hospital
114. Royal National Institute for the Blind
115. Royal National Institute for Deaf People
116. Rural Community Network NI
117. Rural Development Council
118. Save the Children
119. Social Democratic and Labour Party
120. Sense NI
121. Sikh Cultural Centre
122. Simon Community NI
123. Sinn Féin
124. Southern Travellers Early Years Partnership
125. Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
126. The Blind Centre NI
127. The Cedar Foundation
128. The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
129. The Rainbow Project
130. The Women's Centre
131. The Workers Party
132. Traveller Movement NI
133. UK Unionist Party
134. UltachTrust
135. Ulster Peoples College
136. Ulster Scots Heritage Council
137. Ulster Unionist Party
138. Unicorn Consultancy
139. Unison
140. Venture International
141. Volunteer Development
142. West Belfast Economic Forum
143. West Belfast Partnership
144. Women Together for Peace
145. Women's Forum
146. Women's Group (BIC)
147. Women's Information Group
148. Women's Resource and Development Agency
149. Women's Support Network

150. Youth Council for NI

Also

Members of the Legislative Assembly (108)

## Appendix 3

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**MAIN GROUPS RELEVANT TO SECTION 75 CATEGORIES**


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<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>MAIN GROUPS</b>
Religious belief	Protestants; Catholics; people of non-Christian faiths; people of no religious belief
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party
Racial group	White people; Chinese; Travellers; Indians; Pakistanis; black people
Age	Children under 16; people of working age (16/65); people over 65
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual people; homosexual people; bisexual people
Men and women generally	Men (including boys); women (including girls), transgendered people, transsexual people
People with a disability	People with a physical, sensory, <b>mental</b> or learning disability as defined in sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
People with dependants	People with personal responsibility for the care of a child; people with personal responsibility for the care of someone with an incapacitating disability; people with personal responsibility for the care of a dependant elderly person

## Appendix 4

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**ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EQUALITY SCHEME**


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**A. Arrangements for assessing compliance with Section 75 duties**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 3.5	Integrate objectives and targets on Section 75 duties into SIB Corporate Plan and annual Business Plans	December 2005 and annually starting April 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 3.5	Report to the Board on achievements against these objectives and targets	3 monthly starting March 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.3	Review progress on implementation of the Equality Scheme	Annually starting April 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.3	Report progress to the Equality Commission on an annual basis	As part of annual report to Equality Commission starting May 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.3	Include a summary of the progress report in SIB Annual Report	Annually starting June 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.4	Liaise closely with the Equality Commission	On an ongoing basis	Strategic Adviser

**B. Arrangements for access to information**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 4.4	Discuss best means of consultation with representative groups and individuals in Section 75 categories	January 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 4.9, 7.2	Make arrangements to provide information in alternative formats on a timely basis	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 7.3	Review arrangements for providing information in alternative formats on a timely basis	October 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 7.4	Revise arrangements as appropriate	October 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 7.4	Publicise results of the review and subsequent revisions to appropriate groups and individuals	October 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 7.5	Review arrangements for advertising in the press	Annually starting April 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 4.8	Monitor occasions when a consultation period on any matter is less than 2 months and report to the Equality Commission	As part of annual report to Equality Commission starting May 2006	Strategic Adviser

**C. Arrangements for assessing the implications of policies for equality of opportunity****C1 Screening of current policies**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 5.5	List all current and proposed policies and identify potential impact on equality of opportunity	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.5	Prepare a report on these policies for consultation	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.6	Circulate the report for consultation as Stage 1 of the screening consultation	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.7	Prepare a further report outlining the conclusions reached from the Stage 1 consultation and a draft timetable for EQIA	February 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.7	Circulate the report for consultation as Stage 2 of the screening consultation	February 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.10	Submit a report to the Equality Commission outlining the EQIA timetable as part of the annual report	May 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.11	Notify consultees of the results of the screening consultation and the EQIA timetable	May 2006	Strategic Adviser

**C2 Screening of future policies**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 5.12	Conduct screening of all new and proposed policies	At earliest opportunity	Officers involved in policy development
Para. 5.12	Prepare a report on the conclusion of the screening	After each screening process	Officers involved in policy development
Para. 5.12	Circulate the report for consultation	At earliest opportunity	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.13	Report conclusions of all screening exercises to the Equality Commission	As part of annual report to Equality Commission	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.16	Ensure attention is drawn to the need to keep the screening of Supported Projects under review as the project progresses	As new information arises	Officers involved in Supported Projects

**C3 Publication of the results of each equality impact assessment**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 5.25	Issue a press release on the results of each EQIA	At earliest opportunity following decision	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Arrange additional media coverage of the results of each EQIA as appropriate	At earliest opportunity following decision	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Inform all bodies on the list at Appendix 2 of the Equality Scheme that the results of an EQIA are available	At earliest opportunity following decision	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Place information in publications associated with Section 75 categories as appropriate regarding the results of each EQIA	At earliest opportunity following decision	Strategic Adviser

**D. Arrangements for monitoring policies for adverse impacts**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 5.20	Establish a system to monitor the impact of policies	February 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.21	Review all information obtained under the monitoring system	Annually starting April 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.22	Revise policies where monitoring information indicates a need	Annually starting April 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.21	Forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission	As part of annual report to Equality Commission starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Issue a press release on the results of the annual review of monitoring information	Annually starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Arrange additional media coverage of the results of the annual review of monitoring information	Annually starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Inform all bodies on the list at Appendix 2 that the results of the annual review of monitoring information are available	Annually starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.25	Place information in publications associated with Section 75 categories	Annually starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser
Para. 5.21	Review the effectiveness of the monitoring system and revise as necessary	Annually starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser

**E. Arrangements for training staff**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 4.11, 6.2	Draw up a detailed training plan, including induction training, liaising with other bodies and agencies as appropriate	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 6.1	Implement the training plan	January 2006 onwards	Strategic Adviser
Para. 6.3	Review extent to which training objectives have been met	Annually starting October 2006	Strategic Adviser
Para. 6.3	Forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission	As part of annual report to Equality Commission starting May 2007	Strategic Adviser

## F. Arrangements for completing and publishing the Equality Scheme

References	Action	Target Dates	Responsibility
Para. 1.4	Prepare final draft of the Equality Scheme taking full account of all comments received	November 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 1.4	Submit to the Equality Commission	November 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.1	Prepare summary version of the final Equality Scheme in Plain English	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.1	Issue a press release	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.1	Insert advertisements in appropriate newspapers	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.1	Post copies of the summary and full versions of the Equality Scheme on the SIB website	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.1	Send copies of the summary version of the Equality Scheme to Section 75 groups and other key stakeholders	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 6.7	Send copies of the summary version of the Equality Scheme to all members of staff	December 2005	Strategic Adviser
Para. 6.7	Make arrangements for all staff to have access to the full version of the Equality Scheme	December 2005	Strategic Adviser

**G. Arrangements for reviewing the Equality Scheme**

<b>References</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Para. 8.5	Conduct a thorough review of the Equality Scheme and revise as necessary	June 2010 (or earlier if appropriate)	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.5	Forward a report of this review to the Equality Commission	September 2010	Strategic Adviser
Para. 8.5	Publicise the report using the methods employed to publicise the original Equality Scheme (see F above)	September 2010	Strategic Adviser

**Appendix 5**

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**REPORT OF CONSULTATION**

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**Methodology**

SIB draft Equality Scheme was circulated to all organisations listed in Appendix 2 on 25 May 2004 with a request for comments to be submitted by 27 July 2004. The covering letter stated that all comments would be welcome but, in particular, views on the following issues would be appreciated :

- whether the arrangements in the draft Equality Scheme had taken full account of requirements relating to training, publication of information and access to information
- whether the proposed arrangements for assessing and consulting on the impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity fully met consultees' needs
- whether the timetables included in the draft Equality Scheme were appropriate.

The list of consultees in Appendix 2 had been copied from the list maintained by the OFMDFM. Consultees were invited to inform SIB if they wished to continue to be included in consultations or if they wished to be deleted from the list and also to suggest any other organisations which they thought should be added to the list.

The letter also invited any further comments about the consultation process in general.

On 19 July 2004 a reminder letter was sent to selected organisations which had commented on the EQIA on the policy framework on Public Private Partnerships in Northern Ireland in 2003.

### **Responses received**

Three responses were received by the closing date from the :

- West Belfast Economic Forum (WBEF)
- Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
- Royal Hospital

After the closing date 4 further submissions were received from :

- Disability Action
- UNISON NI
- Northern Ireland Committee – Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU)
- Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)

The Royal Hospital simply indicated an interest in being consulted during the two stage screening process. The WRDA also expressed an interest in being involved in the consultation on the screening process and requested clarification on a number of issues. The other five organisations made specific comments on the draft Equality Scheme.

The substantive comments made by all respondents are set out in the table below together with SIB response. Where appropriate the text of the Equality Scheme has been amended to reflect these responses.

Reference in Equality Scheme	Comments made	SIB response
Foreword	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> In the interests of transparency and ease the names of the Chairman and Chief Executive should be included in the Foreword.</p>	Agreed. The names have been included in the revised draft.
2.3 Functions	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> The Scheme should set out in detail where the boundaries of SIB's decision-making powers begin and end, the bodies it interfaces with and who else has decision-making power.</p>	Paragraph 2.3 has been amended in the revised draft to clarify that SIB is an advisory body and does not have decision making powers in respect of projects.
2.5 Investment Strategy	<p><b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> It needs to be made clear who has the lead role for developing/implementing the Investment Strategy and Investment Programme and consequently who is responsible for screening and, if appropriate, impact assessment of these and any policies emanating from them. All Departments concerned will need to take account of the SIP in their own Equality Schemes and in relation to procurement.</p>	Agreed. Paragraph 2.6 has been amended to clarify that the decision will be taken by the Minister and implemented by appropriate Departments.

<p>2.10 Other tasks</p>	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> SIB should make a specific commitment in its Scheme to discharging the equality obligation in its function of employment.</p> <p><b><u>WBEF</u></b> Clearly acknowledge that procurement is a function to which the equality duty applies.</p>	<p>Agreed. An additional paragraph (2.10) has been added to the revised draft to clarify that the Equality Scheme will also apply to internal policies.</p>
<p>2. 11 Promotion of equality of opportunity</p>	<p><b><u>CAJ</u></b> We would like to see SIB outline more specifically how the Equality Scheme can promote equality across the actual areas of work of SIB. This would include an outline of the particular challenges facing SIB in securing greater equality of opportunity in its areas of responsibility. CAJ would recommend that this section be redrafted in order to highlight, by way of examples, how equality considerations can be specifically integrated into the function of SIB.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> SIB has failed to produce guidance on the application of the statutory duty to its core</p>	<p>Agreed. New paragraphs have been included in the revised draft (2.11 and 2.12) outlining how the Equality Scheme can help to promote equality of opportunity across SIB’s areas of work.</p> <p>Note : UNISON also provided templates on procurement and employment policies which contain a large amount of information on equality implications. SIB will take this advice into account when screening its policies.</p>

	function as advisor on procurement. There is also no learning capacity built into the Scheme to develop the application of the equality duty to such advice.	
2.13 Responsibility for SIB	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> We suggest that the sentence regarding overall responsibility for SIB should be placed at the start of the section on organisational structure.	Agreed. This change has been made in the revised draft.
2.14/2.15 Composition of Board and Advisory Council	<b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action requires information on the composition of the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council to enable informed comment to be made.	More information on the Board and Advisory Council has been included in the revised draft.
2.16 Organisational structure	<b><u>CAJ</u></b> The Equality Commission guidelines require consideration of whether any structural or organisational changes are necessary for implementing the Equality Scheme. It would be helpful if the final draft addressed this requirement. <b><u>UNISON</u></b> The Equality Commission guidelines require consideration of whether any structural or organisational changes are required for	SIB is a very small organisation and all staff will take account of the statutory duties in carrying out their work. No organisational changes are necessary to enable the Equality Scheme to be implemented. This point has been clarified in the revised draft.

	implementing the Equality Scheme. Further information in this regard would be useful.	
3.3 Contact details	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action believes SIB contact details should include a Textphone number to enable deaf people the same access as those who are hearing.</p>	SIB will monitor the need for the provision of text phone facilities and decide whether to purchase one when reviewing arrangements for providing information in alternative formats (provisionally scheduled for October 2006).
3.5 Objectives and targets	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> It would be useful for SIB to present some analysis and information on how it currently relates to the affected groups and to clarify what objectives and targets are to be set for the statutory duty.</p> <p><b><u>CAJ</u></b> We were unable to find a commitment to build objectives and targets relating to equality duties into annual operating plans.</p>	The first draft of the Scheme included such a commitment in paragraph 3.5. This paragraph has now been amended to include more information on the objectives and targets to be set.
3.7 Annual review	<b><u>CAJ</u></b>	The first draft of the Scheme included a

	<p>We look forward to seeing a commitment to conduct an annual review of progress made in implementing the arrangements specified in the Equality Scheme and in complying with statutory duties.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> We would welcome the inclusion of a commitment to build objectives and targets relating to Section 75 into annual operating plans and a commitment to an annual review of progress made in implementing the arrangements specified in the Equality Scheme and in complying with statutory duties.</p>	<p>commitment to conducting an annual review of progress in paragraph 8.3. For clarity, the revised draft also includes a reference in paragraph 3.7.</p>
3.8 Resources	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> Within this section SIB should state that both necessary resources in terms of people, time and money and necessary training for all staff will be provided to ensure the effective implementation of the statutory duty.</p>	<p>The first draft of the Scheme included such a commitment in the Foreword. For clarity, the revised draft also includes a reference in paragraph 3.8.</p>
3.6 Staff commitment	<p><b><u>WBEF</u></b></p>	<p>Any issues relating to failure to meet obligations</p>

	The Equality Scheme should outline what sanctions you consider are appropriate if your staff fail to meet the obligations of the equality duty and how these will be applied.	will be dealt with under the appropriate SIB policy. SIB does not consider that it would be appropriate to include such detailed information in the Equality Scheme.
4.1 Commitment to consultation	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b></p> <p>Disability Action strongly recommends that a statement offering a range of accessible formats should be placed at the beginning of the main consultation document and in any future documents. Additionally, SIB should state that it will accept comment/feedback in the format preferred by the consultee.</p>	Agreed. Paragraph 4.1 has been amended to reflect these points.
4.8 Timescale for consultation	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b></p> <p>Disability Action welcomes SIB's statement regarding exceptions to the normal 8 week consultation period; however, with appropriate and careful planning, Disability Action feels that such reduced periods should be unusual.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b></p> <p>An 8 week response period should be seen as the absolute minimum. The reason for any failure in this regard must be detailed fully and be open to annual review and consultation.</p>	Agreed. For clarity, paragraph 4.8 has been amended to emphasise these points.
4.10 Ensuring inclusive	<b><u>UNISON</u></b>	Agreed. Paragraph 4.10 has been amended to

consultation	<p>We would welcome the inclusion of equality related documents on SIB website.</p> <p>To comply with the Guidelines, SIB must also provide the “necessary resources” to ensure that both information which is disseminated and that the services provided are made accessible in a way which ensures equality of opportunity.</p>	reflect these points.
5.1 Screening criteria	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b></p> <p>The issue of “evidence of higher or lower participation” should be further explained.</p>	<p>The wording in the first draft of the Scheme reflected that in the Equality Commission Guidelines. As part of the process of reviewing current monitoring and setting up a procedure for monitoring the impact of policies on equality of opportunity, SIB will address the evidence which can be obtained to illustrate higher or lower uptake or participation in its activities. SIB has not amended the wording in the Scheme at this stage.</p>
5.2 Main equality groups	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b></p> <p>Please amend persons with a disability to read – persons with a physical, sensory, mental or learning disability.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b></p> <p>Such categorisation as appears in Appendix 3</p>	<p>The list in Appendix 3 was taken from the Equality Commission’s Model Scheme. We consider that it is a useful guide for staff and have therefore retained it in the revised version with the amendment requested by Disability Action. However, it should be noted that the</p>

	should be withdrawn as it misunderstands multiple identity and multiple discrimination.	issue of multiple identity features strongly in training courses run by SIB.
5.5 Screening of current policies	<b><u>WRDA</u></b> Clarify whether all policies will be screened once approval of the Scheme is achieved.	It is SIB's intention to screen all policies, but it should be noted that the screening of policies relating to specific projects on which SIB offers advice is the responsibility of the contracting authority itself. Paragraph 5.5 in the revised draft has been amended to clarify this intention.
5.5 Screening of current policies	<b><u>WBEF</u></b> The screening of policies cannot be restricted by budgetary constraints as you seem to indicate.	There are no references to budgetary constraints in relation to screening in the Equality Scheme. The commitment set out in the Foreword to ensuring that all necessary resources are made available to support the effective implementation of the Equality Scheme applies to the screening process as well as to all other activities relating to the statutory duties.
5.5 Screening of current policies	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> SIB needs to make it clear that "policies" includes unwritten as well as current written and	Agreed. Paragraph 5.5 has been amended to clarify this.

	<p>proposed policies.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b>                  We would welcome a recognition that many practices are not the subject of written policy documents.</p>	
5.5/5.6 Screening of current policies	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b>                  The Scheme does not impart any sense of what the policies mean or how someone would identify if a policy had a particular relevance to their interest group. A much clearer and fuller analysis is required.</p> <p><b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b>                  SIB states that it will “prepare a report containing details of SIB’s current policies and those policies currently being developed...” We would expect this to be a complete list of SIB’s policies so are not sure why 5.6 states that SIB will “seek views on whether all policies have been identified”.</p>	<p>As stated in paragraph 5.5, the first stage of the screening process will include the preparation of a report containing details of SIB’s current policies and those policies which are currently being developed together with views on how they might affect people in the nine categories listed in Section 75. This information will be made widely available during the Stage 1 consultation. Paragraph 5.5 in the revised draft has been amended to clarify this. In the Stage 1 consultation views will be sought on whether the policies listed appear to external organisations to represent the full range of activities carried out by SIB.</p>
5.6 Screening consultation	<p><b><u>WRDA</u></b>                  Clarify who will undertake the consultation role</p>	<p>The principles underlying how SIB will consult were set out in Section 4 of the first draft of the</p>

	and how you will consult.	Scheme. Paragraph 5.6 of the revised draft has been amended to make this clearer.
5.16 Supported projects	<p><b><u>WBEF</u></b> The public sector should do all within its power to extend the principles envisaged by the Equality Duty to the private, voluntary and community sectors.</p>	SIB is responsible for advising on the content of PPP contracts and such advice will include references to the statutory equality duties. A reference to this effect has been included in Paragraph 2.9.
5.16 Supported projects	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Regarding the screening process to review PPP projects as they progress, Disability Action feels that a detailed outline of how this will be accomplished, including expected outcomes and a timeframe, should be included in the revised Equality Scheme to enable informed comments to be made.</p> <p><b><u>CAJ</u></b> Clearly it will be imperative that SIB consider in detail how all proposals regarding the use of Public Private Partnerships impact on equality of opportunity across the Section 75 categories. We would have concerns that the wording is insufficient for ensuring that individual PPP</p>	Paragraph 5.16 has been amended to clarify that SIB will liaise closely with the Equality Commission to ensure that the equality implications of PPP projects are identified and that the relevant learning points are carried forward from one project to the next.

	<p>contracts comply fully with Section 75. In relation to “Supported Projects” for example, it is important that consultees are made fully aware of developments regarding PPPs in order to ensure that where necessary an EQIA will be carried out at the stage at which it can have most impact. We would recommend that wording be included that will ensure that an EQIA will not only take place, where needed, for individual PPP projects, but also that the EQIA will occur at the most appropriate stage of the project for ensuring the delivery of equality objectives.</p>	
5.14 Supported projects	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b></p> <p>It is Disability Action’s view that each Public Authority will be responsible for complying with Equality Scheme duties for any policy formulated, adopted by the Authority or imposed on the Authority by any other Authority. A public body cannot opt out of its legal responsibility to ensure that any policy that affects its work and service delivery is independently assessed to ensure the</p>	<p>SIB uses the term “Supported Projects” to indicate projects which are the responsibility of other bodies but on which SIB plays a key advisory role. The project remains the responsibility of the initiating body at all times and that body’s decisions have no effect whatsoever on the way in which SIB carries out its functions. This is not a situation where the policy of another body is imposed on SIB and therefore SIB does not believe that this</p>

	<p>Authority's own compliance with statutory obligations. Such policies once accepted and put into practice within the Authority concerned becomes its policy. Disability Action believes that such policies must be included in the screening process to ensure that a chain of Public Authorities do not abdicate responsibility.</p>	<p>comment is appropriate. It would be inappropriate for SIB to screen a policy which is the sole responsibility of, for example, a Government Department.</p>
5.17 Equality Impact Assessments	<p><b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> It would be helpful if SIB spelt out the separate elements listed by the Equality Commission on the procedure for conducting equality impact assessments in its Guide to the Statutory Duties.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> The Scheme must more fully detail the consultation process envisaged with regard to impact assessments and provide explicitly for subsequent stages of impact assessment.</p>	<p>Agreed. Paragraph 5.17 has been amended to include more information on the conduct of equality impact assessments, including the consultation process envisaged.</p>
5.19 Decision making	<p><b><u>CAJ</u></b> The Equality Commission guidelines require "a commitment that in making any decision with</p>	<p>Paragraph 5.19 in the first draft of the Scheme reflected the wording in the Equality Commission guidelines and the Model Scheme.</p>

	<p>respect to a policy adopted or proposed to be adopted by it, that the public authority shall take into account any equality impact assessment and consultation carried out in relation to the policy.” We were unable to find a clear and explicit commitment of this nature within the draft.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> The Scheme must specify that adequate consideration will be given to impact assessments in policy making.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> The Scheme must set out a clear procedure to ensure that the views of those consulted have been fully considered and incorporated into the decision-making process or that reasons why are produced where those views have not been included.</p>	<p>This commitment has been retained in the revised draft and expanded for clarity.</p>
<p>5.20 Monitoring adverse impact</p>	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Regarding commissioning the collection of new data where necessary, Disability Action asks</p>	<p>In line with SIB’s policy on the commissioning of consultants, a business case is prepared before any consultancy support is sought. The</p>

	that SIB ensures that any consultant commissioned is fully conversant with specific equality issues pertinent to the targeted groups.	business case requires that the consultant is fully conversant with all issues relating to the project, including equality issues.
5.25 Publication of the results of equality impact assessments	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> SIB should also commit to sending the outcome of any equality impact assessment to those on its consultee list.	Paragraph 5.25 in the first draft of the Scheme included a commitment to directly informing the bodies listed in Appendix 2. Paragraph 5.25 has been amended to clarify that the list in Appendix 2 is the list of consultees.
6.1 Training programme	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> There is an omission in the last line of the first bullet point in paragraph 6.1	The word “including” was omitted from the first draft; the paragraph has now been amended.
6.2 Timeframe for training	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> We believe it is important that key staff undergo training as soon as possible. We would therefore recommend a more detailed timetable for staff training be included in the Scheme that shows who will be trained and over what particular period.  <b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action requires specific actions, targets and a timeframe to enable informed	As stated in paragraph 6.2 and Appendix 4, SIB will draw up a detailed training plan by October 2005. This will include actions, targets and a timeframe. The detailed plan is not available for inclusion in the draft Scheme at this stage.

	comment to be made.	
6.4 Specialised training	<b>CAJ</b> We believe that more information should be included on training designed for those in management roles.	As indicated in paragraph 6.4 of the first draft of the Scheme, we intend to provide training on all aspects of the statutory duties to all staff. Paragraph 6.4 has been amended to reflect the points made by the CAJ.
6.4 Specialised training	<b>UNISON</b> UNISON would urge SIB to ensure that the Scheme make explicit that training will not be dependent on grade, responsibilities or any training needs assessment that will in any way dilute their obligations under the Guidelines.	Agreed. Paragraph 6.4 has been amended accordingly.
6.4 Induction training	<b>CAJ</b> The Equality Scheme must include a commitment to provide induction training for new staff.	Paragraph 6.4 of the first draft of the Scheme included the statement that “Similar awareness training will be provided for all new staff as part of the induction process on an ongoing basis.” This has been retained in the revised draft.
6.7 Communication	<b>Disability Action</b> Disability Action is concerned that SIB is “providing access to copies” rather than giving a	A copy of the full Equality Scheme will be provided to all staff in electronic format. SIB is a small organisation and all staff have full

	<p>copy of the full Equality Scheme to all staff.</p> <p><b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> The Equality Commission's Guide asks that all staff receive a copy of the Scheme, not just that they will have access to one.</p>	access to electronic information.
7.2 Provision of accessible information	<p><b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> More detail on the suitable arrangements re provision of accessible information would be helpful.</p>	Agreed. Paragraph 7.2 has been amended to provide more detail.
7.3 Review of arrangements for providing information	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action would query SIB's decision to review the arrangements for providing a range of accessible formats. Disability Action would advise that whilst SIB must ensure that the anti-discrimination legislation of the Disability Discrimination Act is adhered to, the Statutory Duties require SIB to promote equality of opportunity rather than avoid discrimination. Disability Action is also concerned that SIB will take into account resource implications.</p>	<p>The purpose of the review was alluded to in paragraph 7.4 of the first draft of the Scheme, namely – to identify improvements to arrangements which can better ensure public access to information. SIB believes that this process will assist in promoting equality of opportunity as a well as avoiding discrimination. Paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4 have been amended to clarify this.</p> <p>The Foreword includes the statement: “SIB is committed to ensuring that all necessary resources (in terms of people, time</p>

		and money) are made available to support the effective promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations in all its policies and practices through the development and implementation of this Equality Scheme.” Any references to resources in the text should be read in the light of this statement and paragraph 7.3 has been amended to clarify this.
7.5 Disseminating information	<b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Regarding informing the general public via the “media generally”, Disability Action would recommend the use of the specialist press of the 9 affected groups listed under Section 75.	Agreed. Paragraph 7.5 has been amended appropriately.
7.5 Disseminating information	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> It would be helpful if SIB included details of which press it will be advertising in.	Agreed. Paragraph 7.5 has been amended appropriately.
8.1 Publication of the Equality Scheme	<b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> As at 7.5 above, it would again be helpful to include details of which press will be used.	Agreed. Paragraph 8.1 has been amended appropriately.
8.1 Publication of the Equality Scheme	<b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action recommends SIB to purchase the Bobby standard programme to ensure that	Agreed. Paragraph 8.1 has been amended to reflect this point.

	their website is fully accessible to people with disabilities.	
8.3 Progress reporting	<p><b><u>CAJ</u></b> We look forward to seeing a commitment to conduct an annual review of progress made in implementing the arrangements specified in the Equality Scheme and in complying with statutory duties.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> We would welcome a commitment to an annual review of progress made in implementing the arrangements specified in the Equality Scheme and in complying with statutory duties.</p>	Paragraph 8.3 of the first draft of the Scheme included such a commitment. The paragraph has been amended slightly in the revised draft for clarity.
8.5 Review of the Scheme	<p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action strongly feels that good practice would dictate that a 3 year review takes place.</p>	Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires that an Equality Scheme must include a commitment to conducting a review of the Scheme within five years of its submission to the Equality Commission. SIB has reflected this wording in paragraph 8.5 of the Scheme but will give consideration to conducting a review at an earlier date if circumstances warrant this.

8.6 Complaints	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> We would expect that the final Scheme contain specific proposals that match best practice complaint handling models.</p> <p><b><u>NIC-ICTU</u></b> There needs to be detail on how a complaint is to be made, for example, in writing or by phone. Can another person write on behalf of the complainant if they have difficulty writing?</p> <p><b><u>Disability Action</u></b> Disability Action believes that the complaints procedure should outline how it will support the individual to being his/her complaint. The complaints procedure must be fully accessible and proactively disseminated to those affected by the Section 75 duties.</p>	Agreed. Paragraphs 8.6 and 8.7 have been amended to reflect these points.
Appendix 4 : Action Plan	<p><b><u>UNISON</u></b> The majority of the actions for the implementation of the Equality Scheme are</p>	The preparation and approval of the final version of the Equality Scheme have been delayed. Appendix 4 has been amended to

	<p>slated to begin in 2005. We urge much earlier implementation given the ongoing impact of current policies.</p> <p><b><u>UNISON</u></b></p> <p>The timetable must contain more detail with regard to training, the screening of policies for equality impact assessment, undertaking equality impact assessments, the production of an annual report and carrying out the review process.</p>	<p>ensure that actions to implement the Equality Scheme are taken promptly.</p> <p>When the Action Plan is read in conjunction with the appropriate paragraphs in the Equality Scheme (which are clearly cross referenced) SIB considers that sufficient detail is provided.</p>
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## Appendix 6

### Board Members

**Tony Watson, Chairman**

Chief Executive, Hermes Pensions Management

**David Gavaghan**

Chief Executive, SIB

**Nigel Hamilton**

Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Permanent Secretary, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

**Greg Sparks**

Joint Managing Partner, FGS (Farrell Grant Sparks)

**James Stewart**

Chief Executive, Partnerships UK

**David Dobbin**

Group Chief Executive, United Dairy Farmers

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**Appendix 7**
**Advisory Council on Infrastructure Investment**

The Advisory Council provides a forum through which key stakeholders can have an on-going and meaningful influence on developing best practice in regard to PPP policy development and procurement.

**Current Members (September 2004)**
***Appointed by open competition***

Independent Chair	John Keanie MBA
Independent Member	Victor Brownlees
Independent Member	Gerard Cawley
Independent Member	William F Gillespie OBE
Independent Member	John Gillvray OBE

***Appointed by nomination***
Political parties

UUP	Leslie Cree MBA MLA
SDLP	Joe Byrne
DUP	George Dawson MLA
Sinn Féin	Sam Porter
Alliance	Seamus Close MLA
PUP	David Ervine MLA
Women's Coalition	Monica McWilliams

*Note: One seat will be shared between the PUP and the Women's Coalition*

Business representatives

CBI	Richard Sterling OBE
Business Services Association	Allison Maclaine
Construction Employers Federation	Tony Duran OBE
NI Bankers Association	Colin Dundas

Community and voluntary sector

NICVA	Seamus McAleavey
NICVA	Cherry Dickson
NICVA	Avila Kilmurray
NICVA	Bob Stronge

Trade Unions

NIC-ICTU	To be confirmed
NIC-ICTU	To be confirmed
NIC-ICTU	To be confirmed
NIC-ICTU	To be confirmed

Equality Commission

Equality Commission	Antoinette McKeown
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