



Subject:	Diversity Action Plans
Date:	19 June 2026
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Julie Fleming, Principal HR Advisor, Development

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To agree the budget and appropriate resources for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 3 activities.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 3 costs.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.</p> <p>Actions are categorised under the following corporate plan priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing an inclusive economy • Living here • Cross cutting • Organisational priorities
3.2	<p>As part of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan the Council has committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Equality Action Plan. The three year Gender Action Plan and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan were approved at SP&R Committee in October 2024. Actions for Year 3 (2025/26) for both plans have been costed and are being presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.</p>
3.3	<p>Gender Action Plan (GAP)</p> <p>Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination, a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but also that inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women’s life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues such as lower life expectancy, bad health, lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.</p>
3.4	<p>The GAP 24-27 was agreed following consultation with Women’s Steering Group and the Women’s Network Group. Achievements in 2025/26 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the annual International Women’s Day event for staff in the City Hall • Delivery of Mock Committees for all relevant officers • Onus Domestic Violence Charter (employer award) retained Platinum level • Onus Safe City Accreditation – retained • Retention of the NI Gender Diversity Chartermark – Silver level (work continues towards Gold level)

- Funded and developed a programme of events for Women's Network Group – Choosing Confidence Workshop
- Funding provided for external IWD event
- Targeting of Employment and Upskilling Academies to women in low paid (female dominate) sectors including the provision of childcare
- Building an entrepreneurial mindset workshop
- Masterclass in Leading Meetings
- Confidence Training workshop
- Belfast Stories consultation workshop
- Staff networks coffee morning
- Good Relations event
- Domestic Abuse Awareness joint event with Proud
- European Week for Waste
- Reduction creative workshop
- Women in Leadership bitesize events
- Allyship and Bystander Interventions workshop, specifically for male colleagues and elected members, running as part of the international 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.
- In-person workshop on Sexual Harassment and Bystander in the Workplace

3.5

Year 3 actions are set out in Appendix One. In addition to the financial resources required, the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan. Chief Officers are asked to allocate the necessary resources to ensure delivery of the actions or ensure where appropriate, that actions are incorporated into existing projects and work plans.

3.6

LGBTQIA+ Action Plan

The LGBTQIA+ Action Plan for 2024-27, was developed in collaboration with the staff network "Proud" and this is also being presented, with costs for Year 3, for approval. Please see Appendix Two. The plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBTQIA+ communities.

3.7

Achievements in 2025/26 include:

- Fundraising bake sale

- Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Mental Health First Aid for Proud network members
- Network Planning Day
- Hosted the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event in the City Hall.
- Continued promotion, visibility and growth of staff network
- Attended Stonewall's Networking Event
- Participation in Belfast Pride
- Network Planning Day
- The display of Rainbow and Trans flags and lighting up of City Hall.

Disability Action Plan

- 3.8 Members will be aware that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ("DDA") Section 49 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. Our current Plan runs, approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and reported on annually, runs from 2022 until 2025.
- 3.9 There are many 'live' actions still being delivered which fall under the Disability Action Plan 2022-25. Engagement with key stakeholder groups on the new Disability Action Plan also commenced in 2025. Central to this engagement is understanding the needs of disabled people in Belfast. This information will be combined with statistical data to develop an increased understanding of the actions Council can take, both strategically and operationally. The improvements being made will inform closer alignment of the statutory duties with the corporate planning cycle through establishing more defined outcomes for all nine equality groups including disability.
- 3.10 An internal 'International Day for People with Disabilities' event was held on 3rd December 2026 at the City Hall which showcased lived experiences from people with disabilities and the work the Council is currently doing to make our services and facilities more accessible and inclusive.
- 3.11 During the last quarter of 2025/26, a draft Disability Action Plan 2026-2029 was developed. A new action measure has been added to the draft Disability Action Plan, highlighting a strategic and leadership commitment for the Council to commit to the planning, the design process and the implementation for Belfast to become an accessible city for people with disabilities residing, working or visiting Belfast.

3.12	<p>Detail on all of the actions delivered as part of the Disability Action Plan, the Gender Action Plan and the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan are included in the annual report to the Equality Commission due in August 2026.</p>
	<p>Race Equality Action Plan</p>
3.13	<p>Year 1 of the Race Equality Action Plan (REAP) was incorporated into the Corporate Delivery Plan and focused on foundational actions, with further planning to be undertaken in mid-2026 to agree actions for Year 2 and beyond. The Operational Equality Diversity Network (EDN) will be utilised to link with Departments and support delivery of actions, which will be monitored via the Corporate Delivery Plan. The networks will ensure that future actions are informed by knowledge of ongoing work programmes, resource availability and capacity to deliver.</p>
3.14	<p>The next phase of the action plan will include the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving data for policy development and service quality • Reflecting a diverse city • Serving a diverse city • Supporting a diverse and equal labour market in Belfast • Building a safer city • Supporting full civic participation • Visibility, inclusion and vibrancy for minority cultures in the city
3.15	<p>This approach will inform and support a structured public engagement process with minority ethnic and migrant communities, civil society organisations and service providers. The findings from these steps will be used to inform the subsequent phases of the Race Equality Action Plan.</p>
	<p>Financial & Resource Implications</p>
3.16	<p>The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan year 3 activities is estimated at £37,500. The cost of delivery of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 3 is estimated at £9,600 . Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.</p> <p>The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.</p>
	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p>
3.17	<p>The delivery of the Gender and the LGBT+ Action Plans will result in positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity entails more than the elimination of discrimination, it</p>

	requires proactive action. The actions contained within both plans will not only impact on internal operations but also have a positive impact externally on women and men and the LGBT+ community in our city.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix One - Gender Action Plan for 2024-27 - Year 3 Appendix Two - LGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2024-27 -Year 3