Draft Equality Screening Report for the:

Council decision to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres

Please note this draft screening report accompanies the public consultation to be carried out from 1/11/19 – 10/1/20

Following consultation, a recommendation on the screening decision will be made to the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Further screening exercises may be completed at appropriate stages of implementation of the Council's Language Policy.

Introduction

This Equality Screening Report is a key document in the public consultation on the Council decision to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres

For more details on the consultation please go to our website:

http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/consultations/ourconsultations.aspx

On the website you will find details of a short questionnaire. We do encourage responses through the questionnaire but do understand that we accept all comments and can be accepted in any format.

If there is any information in this report which is not clear, or if you require further information, please contact the Equality and Diversity Officer on the number below.

Access to Information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. We would therefore be happy to provide any of the information in this document in alternative formats on request. If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

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Freedom of Information Act 2000

In accordance with the Freedom of Act 2000 all responses to consultations may be disclosed if requested. We will contact you before any disclosure to get your views about Freedom of Information requests received.

Background

Further to its original Language Policy (2006), in 2018 the Council adopted a Language Strategy 2018 - 2023. In keeping with the Council's long term vision for the city, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, the strategy aspires to create a place where linguistic diversity is celebrated and respected, and where those who live, work and visit Belfast can expect to access what Belfast has to offer, using forms of language with which they are familiar and comfortable. The aims of the strategy are to:

- Address language and communication challenges and opportunities within the Belfast Agenda outcomes;
- Establish a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city;
- Increase the profile of different languages along with awareness and understanding of associated cultures, heritage and traditions;
- Engage with language communities to address language barriers and promote equality of opportunity through the development and integration of different languages into mainstream civic life;
- Enhance good relations within the city through the promotion of linguistic diversity and to celebrate the significance of language in the history and culture of the city;
- Address staff training and capacity building needs in relation to the role linguistic diversity has in the workplace and in the delivery of services.
- Work in partnership to promote linguistic diversity across the city, to move toward our shared vision of inclusive growth, where no one is left behind.

In adopting this strategy, the Council was mindful of various legal positions including Counsel's opinion and international and domestic legal obligations and standards. It was also informed by demands for minority languages and feedback from wide ranging consultation.

The strategy contains an overarching Language Framework which allows for the development of three separate policies on Irish, Ulster-Scots and Other Languages (including sign languages). This includes a commitment to adopt the use of Irish and Ulster Scots in signs, and in particular where, 'it will be seen primarily by users of Irish / Ulster-Scots'.

Based on this information, the strategy recommended an approach which included the development of:

- An overarching Language Strategy, which articulated our commitment to supporting minority languages whilst allowing the different needs of speakers of Irish, Ulster-Scots and other minority languages to be addressed appropriately and effectively.
- An Irish Language Policy which focused primarily on the enhancement and protection of the language;
- An Ulster-Scots Language Policy which looked more to the promotion of the language and the cultural and heritage aspects of the language rather than the need for translation of documents and interpretation services.

- A policy on other minority languages (including sign languages) which focused on ensuring good communication and increasing awareness and understanding of minority cultures

The Language Strategy was subject to a formal consultation period which ran from 23 May 2017 to 18 July 2017. An equality screening process accompanied the consultation and it was duly 'screened out' (i.e. no need for a further equality impact assessment).

Section 75

This screening is being carried out in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Section 75 requires the Council, in carrying out its functions in 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.

Without prejudice to these obligations, the Council is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion or racial group.

Schedule 9 of the Act sets out the detailed procedure for the implementation of these duties including the conduct of screening exercises and EQIAs of policies.

Although the Language Strategy 2018 – 23 was screened out for further equality impact assessment, it was agreed that decisions made with regard to the roll out of the strategy should be screened as and when appropriate. The consultation decision to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres was seen as one example of the roll out of the strategy and hence has been screened for adverse impacts.

Section A

Details about the policy / decision to be screened

1. **Title of policy / decision to be screened:-**
   Council decision to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres

2. **Brief description of policy / decision to be screened:-**

This is a decision which relates to the roll out of the Language Strategy 2018 - 23.
In developing the strategy, the Council was mindful of various legal positions including Counsel's opinion and international and domestic legal obligations and standards. The strategy contains an overarching Language Framework which allows for the development of three separate policies on:

- Irish Language
- Ulster-Scots Language
- Other Languages (including sign languages)

Following a Special Council meeting on Friday 11 October 2019, Council agreed to the installation of multilingual welcome signs in all our leisure centres with immediate effect and to carry out a public consultation regarding bilingual / multilingual signage in four leisure centres.

The Council is consulting on the proposals, which have been drawn up in line with its Language Strategy, regarding external naming and internal directional signage at the four citywide leisure centres which are being delivered as part of the Council's £105m Leisure Transformation Programme: Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore. It is also proposed that internal directional signage should include pictorial signage to enhance accessibility, for example, to our new communities and disabled people. The Council is mindful of the location and history of each centre, along with the needs of new communities and disabled people.

Council minute:

'The Council's policy on Linguistic Diversity was subject to a public consultation in 2017. As a result of this the council agreed to rebrand it as a Language Strategy. This policy has at its core the need to embrace diversity in our ambition for Belfast to be a welcoming and inclusive city for all. The opening of the Council's new leisure centres provides a unique opportunity to live the principles of diversity contained in the Language Strategy.

Based on the principles of equality and linguistic diversity, this Council agrees the following:

1 To engage in a citywide consultation in respect of bilingual and/or multilingual naming and the type of signage to be used in the centres designed to have a citywide catchment, as guided by local consultation. The process referred to will commence after agreement of a framework for the consultation, which will be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 25 October 2019, with that Committee having delegated authority to approve the framework referred to. Agreement on the framework to be reached at that meeting;

2 To apply the Council policy on bilingual naming of local facilities in respect of Brook Leisure Centre and to agree to the principle of the installation of bilingual signage, subject to review at the close of the consultation period;

3 Notwithstanding that the citywide consultation process will not have closed, to grant

delegated authority to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee permitting it to authorise the bilingual and such other signage to be procured and installed for the opening of Andersonstown Leisure Centre (the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to meet no later than week commencing 26 January, 2020). In taking this decision, the Committee will consider the consultation response received up to the date of that meeting;

4 That the consultation response will be used to review and inform decisions in respect of bilingual and/or multilingual naming and signage in each citywide centre and that regard will be had to the language needs of all citizens, as reflected in the consultation response; and

5 To the installation of multilingual welcome signs in all leisure centres with immediate effect.'

3. Aims and objectives of the policy / decision to be screened:-

The council decision is in line with the aims of the Language Strategy 2018 – 23, to commit to supporting minority languages while allowing the different needs of speakers of Irish, Ulster-Scots and other minority language, including sign language, to be addressed effectively. In particular, to effect the roll out of the Council's Language Strategy by providing appropriate bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres.

4. On whom will the policy / decision impact?

Consider the internal and external impacts (both actual or potential) and explain:-

Staff YES, all staff and including in particular those who work and use the four centres.

Service users YES, and in particular those who use/visit each of the four centres

Other public sector organizations YES, including representative groups, individuals and community associations

Voluntary / community groups / trade unions YES

Others, please specify YES, all interested parties within the city and beyond

5. Are there linkages to other Agencies/ Departments?

In January 2015, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) published a Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language over the period 2015-2035 (Straitéis le Forbairt na Gaeilge a Fheabhsú agus a Chosaint). Part of the strategy is to work towards securing legislative protection of the Irish language, consultation took place in 2015 but the results have not yet been published.

At the same time DCAL also published a Strategy to Enhance and Develop the Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture over the period 2015-2035 (Roadin furtae Brïng Forrits an Graith tha Ulstèr-Scotch Leid, Heirskip an Cultùr).

Section B

6. Outline consultation process planned or achieved

The Language Strategy has been subject to extensive consultation including the following:

- Two public meetings on the draft *Policy on Linguistic Diversity*
- Four targeted focus groups on each of the individual strands:
  (i) Irish Language Policy;
  (ii) Ulster-Scots Language Policy;
  (iii) Two separate events for the Other Languages Policy
- Questionnaire on Citizen Space
- Internal engagement with HR, staff and Trade Unions.

It is proposed that the present consultation will include:

- Engagement events will be arranged in the local area of the four leisure centres: (Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore);
- Belfast City Council staff and GLL staff will receive an online survey and have the opportunity for face-to-face engagement;
- An online questionnaire survey will be made available to the public, along with hard copies for those who are unable to access the material electronically;
- Engagement with disabled communities including the Council's Disability Advisory Panel;
- Focus Groups engaging with representatives of the Irish Language and Ulster Scots communities;
- Engagement with the Council's Equality Consultative Forum;
- Engagement with the Council's Migrant Forum;
- Engagement with external consultant by arrangement;
- Published on Belfast City Council website and Council social media channels.

7. Available evidence

What evidence / information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Set out all evidence below to help inform your screening assessment.

It is important to record information gathered from a variety of sources such as: monitoring information; complaints; research surveys; consultation exercises from other public authorities.

(i) Legal position

(a) Counsel's opinion

In relation to the Language Strategy itself, in January 2013 the Council sought the opinion of Mr Richard Gordon QC, who is widely recognised as a leading counsel on constitutional, administrative, public and civil liberties law. Mr Gordon was asked to advise:

- whether the Council is in any legal conflict with the provisions of the European Charter and whether the current policies in relation to the use of Irish meet with the spirit and requirements of the Charter;

- whether the current language policies are open to legitimate criticism.

Mr Gordon advised that there would be potential for judicial review in relation to allegations of the Council's non-compliance with the European Charter and recommended that the Council should – as a minimum – have in place a clear strategy which can be shown to be implemented for facilitation of the Irish language so as to meet all the requirements of Article 10 of the European Charter. He suggested that the Council should reformulate the Language Policy in a comprehensive and easily accessible form and should attempt to itemise in the clearest terms what is being done to implement the policy.

(b) High Court ruling

In December 2014, the High Court ruled on an application for judicial review by Eileen Reid of a decision taken by Belfast City Council to refuse to erect an additional street name plate in Irish at Ballymurphy Drive, Belfast. The application was made on five grounds, one of which was that the Council's street naming policy was inconsistent with its commitment to act in accordance with the European Charter. The ruling stated that, as a general proposition, international treaties or agreements which have not been incorporated into national law are not enforceable and went on to say:

> 'a public authority … cannot be obliged to treat itself as bound to act in compliance with international obligation. Even where it does so it is clear from the authorities that the courts will adopt a very light touch review which will not extend to ruling on the meaning or effect of the International Treaty.'

(c) International and domestic legal obligations and standards

In addition to the European Charter, there are several international and domestic legal obligations and standards that are relevant to the use of minority languages, including:

- the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement;
- the Northern Ireland (St Andrew's Agreement) Act 2006;
- the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;
- the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- the European Convention on Human Rights.

(d) Judicial Review Application Conradh Na Gaeilge March 2017

The High Court found that the Executive Committee of the NI Assembly had failed to comply with obligations flowing from the NI Act 1998 requiring it to adopt a strategy in respect of the Irish language and that consideration was not sufficient to discharge the duty arising under the Act.

(ii) <u>Central government strategies</u>

Structural changes within central government have resulted in this work being taken forward by the Department of Communities.

(a) Irish Language Strategy

In January 2015, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) published a Strategy to Enhance and Protect the Development of the Irish Language over the period 2015-2035 (Straitéis le Forbairt na Gaeilge a Fheabhsú agus a Chosaint).

The key aims of the strategy are:

- support quality and sustainable acquisition and learning of the Irish language;
- enhance and protect the status and visibility of the Irish language;
- deliver quality and sustainable Irish language networks and communities; and
- promote the Irish language in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.

In relation to the delivery of public services, the strategy envisages that public authorities will facilitate the use of Irish both orally and in writing and will produce and adhere to a Code of Courtesy that meets the needs of those who wish to conduct their business through Irish. The strategy notes that language awareness and language training programmes need to be provided so that a higher proportion of public service staff can effectively deliver services in Irish to customers who seek them.

Local councils will be expected to:

- adopt Irish language policies and plans and appoint Irish language officers;
- initiate or expand facilities for the use of Irish in their council and committee meetings;
- increase the visibility of the Irish language by publicising the availability of their Irish language services;
- provide an Irish or bilingual version of publications, official documents and forms in line with the approach of the Strategy and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- facilitate the proper preservation and signposting of Irish place-names and the naming of new housing developments; and
- encourage tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish.

(b) Consultation on proposed Irish Language legislation

In accordance with the Strategy, DCAL is working towards introducing legislation to secure legislative protection of the Irish language and issued a consultation document in February 2015 setting out the provisions that might appear in an Irish Language Act. The consultation period closed in May 2015 but the results have not yet been published. Some of the key proposals are summarised below:

- Irish will be defined as an Official Language in Northern Ireland in such a way as to guarantee services through Irish on a par with those available through English.
- There will be provision to create the position of an Irish Language Commissioner whose functions would include approving language schemes and providing advice to the public and public bodies.
- The Irish Language Commissioner would have the power to instruct public bodies to draft language schemes.
- Public bodies, including district councils, will have a statutory duty:
    - to ensure that correspondence sent to them in Irish is replied to in Irish without undue delay;
    - to ensure that when information is provided to the public, the communication is in Irish and English;
    - to publish simultaneously in Irish and English documents setting out public policy proposals, annual reports, audited accounts or financial statements etc.;
    - to agree language schemes with the Irish Language Commissioner and to implement the commitments of such statutory schemes; and
    - to undertake public consultation exercises to assist in the preparation of language schemes.

(c) Ulster-Scots Strategy

In January 2015 DCAL also published a Strategy to Enhance and Develop the Ulster-Scots Language, Heritage and Culture over the period 2015-2035 (Roadin furtae Brïng Forrits an Graith tha Ulstèr-Scotch Leid, Heirskip an Cultùr).

The strategy has four key aims:

- promote and safeguard the status of, and respect for, the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture;
- build up the sustainability, capacity and infrastructure of the Ulster-Scots community; and
- foster an inclusive, wider understanding of the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture in a way that will contribute towards building a strong and shared community.

In relation to public services, the strategy indicates that Departments, councils and public bodies need to:

- facilitate and encourage the use of Ulster-Scots in public life;
- increase awareness and visibility of the Ulster-Scots services they provide;
- encourage the promotion of Ulster-Scots cultural and heritage tourism initiatives;
- ensure that respect for Ulster-Scots within the context of cultural diversity is an element of their commitment to good relations;
- facilitate the proper preservation and signposting of Ulster-Scots place names.

The strategy also says that awareness training for relevant staff needs to be a good practice requirement.

(iii) Advice from Language Agencies

(a) Guidance from Foras na Gaeilge

In March 2015 Foras na Gaeilge (the statutory body charged with the promotion of the Irish language) published a Guidance Document: Irish Language Services in the New Councils. Foras na Gaeilge has been assisting councils to develop their service provision in Irish since 2006, principally through the Irish Language Officers' Scheme. Under this scheme, joint funding for a three year period is provided towards the salary of an Irish Language Officer, provided that a Council Action Plan is prepared in collaboration with Foras na Gaeilge. The most recent scheme ran from 2013-2016. Foras na Gaeilge has advised that a review of the Scheme has been initiated to take account of the changed environment following local government reorganisation. A consultation on the Scheme will be carried out in early 2017.

Foras na Gaeilge recommends that each council should include the Irish language in their Community Plans, adopt a strong Irish Language Policy and adopt a strategy for the development of Irish both within the council and in the community. They suggest that development of a strategic approach should be based on:

- consultation with local Irish speaking communities to gather information on which Irish language services would be beneficial to them and which they would be most likely to use; and
- an audit of the Irish language skills of existing staff.

The Guidance Document sets out examples of good practice in terms of support for minority languages and offers practical advice on ways to support and promote the

Irish language; these are set out as a 'menu' ranging from the simplest actions to a more comprehensive approach (Appendix 5).

(b) Guidance from the Ulster-Scots Agency

The Ulster-Scots Agency has highlighted that it is essential that, when public authorities are undertaking actions to promote Ulster-Scots, they reflect the situation of the language, in accordance with the European Charter. The Ulster-Scots Agency has adopted the Fishman Model for reversing language shift, which sets out an eight stage process for language development. The Model states that efforts should be concentrated on the earlier stages of restoration until they have been consolidated before proceeding to the later stages. The stages are:

1) Acquisition of the language by adults, who in effect act as language apprentices (recommended where most of the remaining speakers of the language are elderly and socially isolated from other speakers of the language).
2) Create a socially integrated population of active speakers (or users) of the language (at this stage it is usually best to concentrate mainly on the spoken language rather than the written language).
3) In localities where there are a reasonable number of people habitually using the language, encourage the informal use of the language among people of all age groups and within families and bolster its daily use through the establishment of local neighbourhood institutions in which the language is encouraged, protected and (in certain contexts at least) used exclusively.
4) In areas where oral competence in the language has been achieved in all age groups encourage literacy in the language but in a way that does not depend upon assistance from (or goodwill of) the state education system.
5) Where the state permits it, and where numbers warrant, encourage the use of the language in compulsory state education.
6) Where the above stages have been achieved and consolidated, encourage the use of the language in the workplace (lower worksphere).
7) Where the above stages have been achieved and consolidated encourage the use of the language in local government services and mass media.
8) Where the above stages have been achieved and consolidated encourage use of the language in higher education, government, etc.

(iv) <u>Policies of other councils</u>

It should be noted that, since April 2014, four councils have adopted formal language policies:

- Fermanagh & Omagh DC has adopted an overarching Linguistic Diversity Policy;
- Derry City & Strabane DC has introduced separate policies on Irish and Ulster-Scots;
- Newry, Mourne & Down DC has adopted a Bilingual Language Policy to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and English language in the Council area;
- Mid Ulster DC adopted an Irish Language Policy in December 2015 and has conducted an EQIA on a proposed Ulster-Scots policy.

(v) Language Legislation in the UK and Republic of Ireland

(a) Wales

The Welsh Language Act 1993 established the principle that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the Welsh and English Languages should be treated on the basis of equality. Public bodies, including local councils, are required to prepare a Welsh Language Scheme to outline the Welsh language services they will provide and state how and when those Welsh services will be available.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced many of the provisions of the Act and established official status for the Welsh language in Wales. The Measure created a new legislative framework to impose a duty on public authorities to comply with standards relating to the Welsh language, with these standards replacing existing Welsh Language Schemes over time. The purpose of introducing standards was to provide greater clarity to public authorities regarding their duties and to Welsh speakers about the services they could expect to receive in Welsh. Standards will also ensure greater consistency of Welsh language services and improve their quality. The Measure also required public authorities to use the Welsh language in a reasonable and proportionate manner.

Local councils in Wales have had Welsh Language Schemes in place for a number of years. Typically, these cover three specific areas:

- Dealing with the Welsh speaking public (including correspondence, meetings and by telephone);
- The Council's public image (including corporate identity, signs, publications, forms, advertising, news releases, exhibitions, surveys, public notices and recruitment advertisements);
- Staffing issues (including recruitment, language training and vocational training).

(b) Scotland

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 established the status of the Gaelic language as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect with the English language. It also established Bòrd na Gàidhlig as a public body with responsibility for preparing a National Plan for Gaelic every five years. The Bòrd has powers to require public authorities, including local councils, to draft and implement a Gaelic Language Plan. Each individual plan must take into account the National Plan and the extent to which Gaelic is used within, and in relation to, the work and services of the public authority.

The Bòrd has identified four core areas of service delivery that it wishes public authorities to address when preparing Gaelic Language Plans. These are:

- Identity (including corporate identity and signage);
- Communication (including reception, telephone, mail and e mail, forms, public meetings and complaints procedures);
- Publications (including public relations and media, printed material, websites and exhibitions);
- Staffing (including training, language learning, recruitment and advertising).

(c) Republic of Ireland

The Irish Constitution establishes that the Irish language is to be regarded as the first official language, while the Official Languages Act 2003 provided the public with the right to conduct business with the state solely through Irish. The Act requires the preparation by public authorities of Irish Language Schemes, specifying which

services will be provided exclusively in Irish, exclusively in English and through the medium of both languages. Each scheme must set out the measures that the public authority will adopt to ensure that any services that are not currently provided in Irish will be so provided over a period of time. In developing its scheme, the public authority may take into account the underlying level of demand for specific services in the Irish language and the resources and capacity to develop or access the necessary language capability.

(vi) Demand for Minority Languages

(a) Census

The 2011 Census also includes information on the main languages spoken by residents of Belfast and knowledge of Irish and Ulster-Scots, and the School Census 2014/15 provides information on the number of schools in the Belfast City Council area providing teaching through the medium of Irish. The figures (which relate to the Council's extended boundary) show that:

- 13.45% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) have some ability in Irish, compared with 10.65% of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole;
- over 16,000 people in Belfast speak, read, write and understand Irish;
- just under 3,000 pupils receive education through the medium of Irish in the Council area;
- 5.23% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) have some ability in Ulster-Scots, compared with 8.08% of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole;
- just over 2000 people in Belfast speak, read, write and understand Ulster-Scots;
- 5.47% of people in Belfast are deaf or have partial hearing loss – 18,261
- 4.94% of Belfast households contain at least one person who does not have English as a main language and in 2.71% of Belfast households, no-one has English as a main language;
- the most commonly spoken languages in Belfast (excluding English and Irish) are Polish, Chinese, Tagalog/Filipino and Slovak (NISRA have indicated that all Chinese languages are grouped together for the purposes of the 2011 Census).

The tables below provide a more detailed analysis of minority languages.

Irish

Table 1 shows that 13.45% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) have some ability in Irish, compared with 10.65% of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole. Over 16,000 people speak, read, write and understand Irish and this is the group most likely to benefit from the provision of services in Irish.

Table 1

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Understand but cannot read, write or speak Irish	15,069	4.70	70,501	4.06
Speak but do not read or write Irish	6,129	1.91	24,677	1.42
Speak and read but do not write Irish	1,555	0.49	7,414	0.43
Speak, read, write and understand Irish	16,440	5.13	64,847	3.74
Other combination of skills	3,913	1.22	17,459	1.01

Total - Some ability in Irish	**43,106**	**13.45**	**184,898**	**10.65**

Table 2 shows the percentage of people in the four Assembly Areas/Parliamentary Constituencies (Belfast East, North, South and West) who have some ability in Irish; however, it should be noted that these areas do not coincide exactly with the new city council boundary and include approximately 60,000 people who live outside the Belfast boundary. Figures are much higher in the Belfast West constituency which includes the established Gaeltacht area.[1]

Table 2

	East	North	South	West
Understand but cannot read, write or speak Irish	1.49	4.19	4.69	7.05
Speak but do not read or write Irish	0.47	1.77	1.41	3.41
Speak and read but do not write Irish	0.15	0.46	0.52	0.69
Speak, read, write and understand Irish	1.26	4.3	4.97	8.15
Other combination of skills	0.38	1.10	1.33	1.69
Total - Some ability in Irish	**3.75**	**11.72**	**12.92**	**20.98**

Irish Medium Education (IME)

Table 3 provides information on the number of pupils receiving education through the medium of Irish. The data is drawn from the School Census 2014/15.

Table 3

	No. of establishments	No. of pupils 2014/15
Naíscoileanna (Nursery/Pre-School Units)	13	442
Gaelscoieanna (Primary Schools/Units)	9	1,194
Gaeloideas Dara Leibhéil (Secondary Stream)	1	580
Youth club provision	7	760
Total		**2,976**

There are also 16 secondary schools teaching Irish within the Council area.

Ulster-Scots

Table 4 shows that 5.23% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) have some ability in Ulster-Scots, compared with 8.08% of the population of Northern Ireland as a whole. Just over 2000 people speak, read, write and understand Ulster-Scots and this is the group most likely to benefit from the provision of services in Ulster-Scots.

Table 4

	Belfast		Northern Ireland	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Understand but cannot read, write or speak	11,028	3.44	92,040	5.30

[1] [1] The boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter was agreed at Committee on 2/10/92

Ulster-Scots				
Speak but do not read or write Ulster-Scots	889	0.28	10,265	0.59
Speak and read but do not write Ulster-Scots	575	0.18	7,801	0.45
Speak, read, write and understand Ulster-Scots	2,205	0.69	16,373	0.94
Other combination of skills	2,061	0.64	13,725	0.79
Total - Some ability in Ulster-Scots	**16,758**	**5.23**	**140,204**	**8.08**

Table 5 shows the percentage of people in the four Assembly Areas/Parliamentary Constituencies (Belfast East, North, South and West) who have some ability in Ulster-Scots.

Table 5

	East	North	South	West
Understand but cannot read, write or speak Ulster-Scots	4.87	3.28	4.40	1.60
Speak but do not read or write Ulster-Scots	0.36	0.27	0.34	0.14
Speak and read but do not write Ulster-Scot	0.26	0.16	0.25	0.05
Speak, read, write and understand Ulster-Scots	0.82	0.89	0.68	0.46
Other combination of skills	0.87	0.57	0.91	0.25
Total - Some ability in Ulster-Scots	**7.18**	**5.17**	**6.57**	**2.51**

(b) 2013/14 Continuous Household Survey (Northern Ireland data)

Data relevant to the Irish Language

Knowledge of Irish

In the 2013/14 Continuous Household Survey, 14.9 per cent of the population have some knowledge of Irish (i.e. can understand, speak, read or write Irish). This is an increase on the 13.1 per cent of the population who had some knowledge or Irish in 2011/12.

Understand Irish

More than one in ten (12.2 per cent) of the population can understand Irish. One out of every hundred (0.6 per cent) people in Northern Ireland can understand complicated spoken sentences, so could understand programmes in Irish on the radio or television. A further two out of hundred (2.4 per cent) people can under a conversation in Irish conducted at a simple level so, for example, could understand directions given in the street. An additional three out of hundred (3.2 per cent) of the population can understand simple spoken sentences or passages, e.g. ‘It’s half past three’, while a further 6.0 per cent can understand single spoken words or simple phrases, e.g. ‘Hello’ or ‘How are you?’.

Speak Irish

One in ten (9.8 per cent) of the population can speak Irish. Two out of a hundred people (1.7 per cent) can carry on a complicated conversation in Irish, e.g. talking

about any subject, or carry on an everyday conversation, e.g. could describe their day. Four out of hundred (3.6 per cent) can use simple sentences in Irish, e.g. ‘Can I have a cup of tea?’, while a further 4.2 per cent can use single words or simple phrases, e.g. ‘Hello’ or ‘How are you?’.

Read Irish

More than one out of twenty adults (7.3 per cent) can read Irish. One out of a hundred people (0.5 per cent) can read and understand complicated passages, so could read a book or newspaper written in Irish. A further two out of a hundred (1.6 per cent) can read and understand difficult sentences and less complicated passages, so could read a letter or email written in Irish. An additional three out of every hundred (3.1 per cent) of the population can read and understand simple sentences or passages, so could read a postcard written in Irish. A further 2.2 per cent can read and understand single words or simple phrases, e.g. ‘Entrance’ or ‘No smoking’.

Write Irish

One in twenty adults (5.4 per cent) can write Irish. One out of a hundred people (0.3 per cent) can write complicated passages, e.g. could translate part of a book or report into Irish, or write difficult sentences and moderately difficult passages, e.g. could write a letter or email in Irish. An additional two out of a hundred (2.1 per cent) of the population can write simple sentences or passages, so could write a postcard in Irish, while a further 1.9 per cent can write single words or phrases, e.g. ‘Hello’ or ‘How are you?’.

Use of Irish

Four out of a hundred people (3.5 per cent) use Irish at home, conversing with family or housemates, either on a daily basis or occasionally. A similar proportion (4.1 per cent) use Irish socially, either on a daily basis or occasionally, conversing with friends or acquaintances.

Data relevant to the Ulster-Scots Language

Knowledge of Ulster-Scots

In 2013/14, 16.4 per cent of the population have some knowledge of Ulster-Scots, i.e. can understand, speak, read or write Ulster-Scots. This is similar to the 15.1 per cent of the population who had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots in 2011/12.

Understand Ulster-Scots

More than one in seven (14.6 per cent) of the population can understand Ulster-Scots. Two out of a hundred (1.6 per cent) people in Northern Ireland can understand complicated spoken sentences, so could understand programmes in Ulster-Scots on the radio or television. A further four out of every hundred (4.5per cent) people can understand a conversation in Ulster-Scots conducted at a simple level so, for example, could understand directions given in the street. An additional five out of every hundred (4.8 per cent) of the population can understand simple spoken sentences or passages, e.g. ‘It’s half past three’, while a further 3.8 per cent can understand single spoken words or simple phrases, e.g. ‘Hello’ or ‘How are you?’.

Speak Ulster-Scots

More than one in twenty (5.6 per cent) of the population can speak Ulster-Scots. One out of a hundred people (0.6 per cent) can carry on a complicated conversation in Ulster-Scots, e.g. talking about any subject, while 1.5 per cent can carry on an everyday conversation, e.g. could describe their day. Two out of a hundred (1.9 per

cent) can use simple sentences in Ulster-Scots, e.g. ‘Can I have a cup of tea?’, while a further 1.6 per cent can use single words or simple phrases, e.g. ‘Hello’ or ‘How are you?’.

Read Ulster-Scots

Just under one out of twenty adults (4.3 per cent) can read Ulster-Scots. One out of a hundred people (0.8 per cent) can read and understand complicated passages, so could read a book or newspaper written in Ulster-Scots. A further one out of a hundred (1.2per cent) can read and understand difficult sentences and less complicated passages, so could read a letter or email written in Ulster-Scots. An additional one out of every hundred (1.5 per cent) of the population can read and understand simple sentences or passages, so could read a postcard written in

Ulster-Scots. A further 0.9 per cent can read and understand single words or simple phrases, e.g. ‘Entrance’ or ‘No smoking’.

Write Ulster-Scots

One in every hundred adults (1.4 per cent) can write Ulster-Scots.

Use of Ulster-Scots

Six out of every hundred people (6.0 per cent) use Ulster-Scots at home, conversing with family or housemates, either on a daily basis or occasionally. A similar proportion (6.5 per cent) use Ulster-Scots socially, either on a daily basis or occasionally, conversing with friends or acquaintances.

(vii) Council Policies and Decisions

The Council’s Language Strategy was formally adopted in April 2018. However, the Council also has in place other policies and has made a number of ad hoc decisions which have a bearing on the strategy, mainly in relation to signage. The following paragraphs summarise the decisions made.

Street naming power

The Council has a statutory power under Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 to erect nameplates expressing street names in English and any other language. When exercising this power, the Council must have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street. The Council has a well-established street naming policy which allows anyone to request a dual language sign; the Council will carry out a survey and erect dual language signs if two-thirds of the occupiers in the street are in support. The relevant Committee (formerly Health and Environmental Services) has the power to review the street naming policy at any time; it was last reviewed in February 2012 when the Committee agreed that it should not be changed.

As outlined above under ‘High Court Ruling’ under in December 2014, the High Court ruled on an application for judicial review by Eileen Reid of a decision taken by Belfast City Council to refuse to erect an additional street name plate in Irish at Ballymurphy Drive, Belfast. The Court ruled that the Council’s policy and process were not unlawful and the application failed.

Signage

- On 7 December 1999 the Parks & Amenities Sub-Committee agreed that a welcome sign in English and Irish should be installed at the entrance of Falls Park.

- On 18 May 2012 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed that hoardings and signs relating to the delivery of the Investment Programme projects in the Gaeltacht Quarter should be bi-lingual (English/Irish).[2]
- On 7 September 2012 the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed that the Nollaig Shona sign (donated by An Cultúrlann) be erected again at the East entrance to the City Hall.
- It should be noted that the Council considered a draft policy on dual language (English/Irish) signage in November 2007 but decided that signage should be in English only, with the exception of multi-lingual welcome signs where there is appropriate demand.

Equality Scheme

The Council's Equality Scheme (approved in 2015), which sets out the Council's arrangements for complying with the equality duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, includes a commitment to providing information in alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable. The Scheme states that alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language

(viii) Advice from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Response by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to the Consultation by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on a *Strategy for protecting and enhancing the development of the Irish Language,* November 2012

Para. 12: The Commission considers that the use of any language should be a neutral act and that the speaking of Irish or its more general use in the community should not diminish the entitlements of those whose right to their British identity is guaranteed in the Good Friday Agreement. Similarly, the Commission considers that the wider use of Ulster Scots should not in any way diminish the entitlements of those whose right to their Irish identity is similarly guaranteed. The speaking of any language in Northern Ireland should not be perceived as a threat to any individual or group, nor should it be intended in such a manner.

Following discussion at the Joint Diversity Group, 18 October 2013, an enquiry was made to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) regarding Newry & Mourne Council's Language Policy. ECNI responded:

'We have commented that Newry & Mourne has a clear policy in place to promote the Irish Language and the Commission has provided advice, when requested, in relation to the implementation of the policy. In general we consider the language rights issue to be more a human rights issue than an equality issue although there is an intersection with employment and good relations aspects'.

ECNI also summarised their response to Committee of Experts on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages:

> 'Our response had made the point that the notion that providing equality or protection for one group limits their availability for another is both unfounded in itself and acts to the detriment of all who seek to live in a society that is fair and equitable and should be avoided in the drafting of public policy.'

Response by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to the Consultation by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on *Proposals for an Irish Language Bill,* May 2015

Para. 3: On the relatively few occasions that language issues have been brought to our attention, it has come about because they were raised in the context of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and/or the provisions of the anti-discrimination legislation, specifically the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. The Commission's advice to public authorities has been specific to the context presented by the public authority. It has referenced our position on minority languages (as set out below), the public authority's compliance with its Equality Scheme commitments and the Commission's guidance, as well as the provisions of the relevant anti-discrimination legislation, if appropriate.

Para. 11: An important aspect of language policy is the interrelationship between individuals or groups that speak different languages. Any duty placed on public authorities should ensure that the development of provisions to protect and promote the language is viewed within the context of the duty to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations within the provision of public services. Public authorities should consider aspects of mutual understanding, co-operation, communication and partnership between different 'language communities', including engagement with relevant communities to seek to explore and take reasonable account of concerns or perceptions about the promotion of minority languages.

(ix) Academic research

Language, Politics and Identity in Ireland: a Historical Overview – Tony Crowley

Crowley provides an insight into the significance of linguistic diversity, placed at the heart of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (1998), which brought about new constitutional arrangements between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, and a new structure of governance within Northern Ireland. The text of the concord included the following general declaration:

> 'All participants recognise the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to linguistic diversity, including in Northern Ireland, the Irish language, Ulster-Scots and the languages of the various ethnic minorities, all of which are part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.' (Belfast Agreement 1998: 19)

Crowley observes, 'In the context of a document that outlined the contours of a major historical settlement, this is a striking statement about the significance of language(s) in Ireland which indicates the continuing social and political status of 'the language question(s)' in Irish history'.

(x) Feedback from pre-consultation

Various meetings were held with representative groups in drawing up the Language Strategy 2018 - 23. The list below is a combination of key factors identified at such meetings.

Irish language sector

Various practical suggestions to build on currently available services were made, including:

- information on services currently available for Irish speakers could be provided on the Council's website together with a link from the homepage to Irish language and culture sector websites; key Council documents could also be provided in Irish on the website;
- there could be better promotion of the availability of tours of the City Hall in Irish and an increase in the number of such tours available; consideration could also be given to making tours of other venues available in Irish;
- greater access to Council venues and facilities for Irish language and culture events could be facilitated and opportunities to present joint heritage exhibitions could be pursued;
- initiatives should be implemented to raise awareness among Council staff of the current language policy and the practical issues around translation; staff could also be made more aware of the work of the Irish language sector in Belfast;
- the possibility of appointing an Irish Language Officer could be considered.

Ulster-Scots sector

The sector representatives indicated that Irish and Ulster-Scots were at different stages of development and the use of the Ulster-Scots language was not received in Belfast in the same way as in other parts of Northern Ireland. There was an underlying prejudice with the use of Ulster-Scots and there was a need for wider cultural engagement with Ulster-Scots heritage as well as language and for celebration of the culture in a more open way.

The sector representatives wished to see a focus on the cultural and heritage aspects of the language rather than promote the need for translation services. They welcomed the Council's commitment to support Ulster-Scots traditions and cultural activities in practical ways; however, they were concerned that the promotion of any language might be seen to be political and lead to division.

New communities

The sector representatives suggested that:

- the Council's Welcome Pack should be more widely publicised and an electronic link to the Welcome Pack could be included in a regular electronic update circulated to appropriate organisations;
- Council staff should be made more aware of the Big Word interpreting service and trained in how to use it;
- a leaflet could be made available to Council staff so that they can assist service users to identify the language translation required;
- the Council could support initiatives to promote the heritage and traditions associated with different languages spoken in Belfast.

People with sensory or learning disabilities

- Our website is clear and provides technology for people who are blind and partially sighted
- The Council needs to think about how we make our information accessible to everyone
- As civic leader we need to lead others by example, in having menus in braille and large print
- There are so many Council services that people don't always understand that there are things there which are of interest – how does Council link with groups for people with disabilities
- Hearing loops should be included in the new exhibition
- Signed tours of City Hall could be offered and promoted

<table>
<tr><th>Section 75 category</th><th>Details of evidence/information and engagement</th></tr>
<tr><td>Religious belief</td><td>In 2015, the council boundary extended as a result of local government reform and the census data shows that 49 per cent of the usual residents were from a Catholic community background compared with 42 per cent from a Protestant or other Christian related background.

The Continuous Household Survey 2013/14 data showed that:

• A higher proportion of both Protestants (22.4 per cent) and those with other or no religion (18.1 per cent) have knowledge of Ulster-Scots than Catholics (9.1 per cent).
• A higher proportion of Catholics (30.4 per cent) have knowledge of Irish than both those with other or no religion (12.3 per cent) and Protestants (2.9 per cent).
• Adults living in the most deprived areas are less likely to have knowledge of Ulster-Scots than those living in the least deprived areas (9.4 per cent and 18.7 per cent respectively). Similarly, a lower proportion of adults living in urban areas (13.2 per cent) have knowledge of Ulster-Scots than those living in rural areas (23.0 per cent).
• The proportion of those who live in the least deprived areas of Northern Ireland who have knowledge of Irish increased from 7.8 per cent in 2011/12 to 13.0 per cent in 2013/14. Similarly, for those living in urban areas, the proportion who had some knowledge of Irish increased from 11.2 per cent in 2011/12 to 14.6 per cent in 2013/14. All other groups and areas saw no change in the proportion who had some knowledge of Irish when 2011/12 and 2013/14 are compared.
• In addition, adults living in rural area are more likely to have some knowledge of Ulster-Scots in 2013/14 compared with 2011/12 (19.8 per cent and 23.0 per cent, respectively). All other groups and areas saw no change in the proportion who had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots when 2011/12 and 2013/14 are compared.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Political opinion</td><td>In the last local government election held on 2 May 2019, 28.2% of first preference votes were cast for Sinn Féin (SF), 21.6% for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), 15.7% for the Alliance Party, 9.1% for the Social, Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), 6.2% for the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), 6.0% for the Green Party, 5.2% for the People before Profit Alliance and 3.1% for the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP. A total of 60 councillors were elected to Belfast City Council. The table below provides an overview of the number of councillors by each political party.

<table>
<tr><th>Political Party</th><th>Number of councillors elected</th></tr>
<tr><td>Sinn Féin</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Democratic Unionist Party</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Alliance Party</td><td>10</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Social Democratic and Labour Party	6
Green Party	4
People before Profit Alliance	3
Ulster Unionist Party	2
Progressive Unionist Party	2

Racial group

Country of birth statistics taken from the last census in 2011, show that 6.55% of all usual residents were born outside the UK and Ireland. Almost a third of this group (2.1% of all residents) were born in Middle East & Asia.

The Census showed that the most commonly spoken languages in Belfast (excluding English and Irish) are Polish (1.22%), Chinese (0.30%), Tagalog/Filipino (0.24%) and Slovak (0.17%).

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has recently published data on language use for Northern Ireland as a whole which shows that very high proportions of residents whose main language is Tagalog / Filipino (99%), Irish (98%) or Malayalam (92%) can speak English well or very well. However, the figures are much lower for those who speak mainly Chinese (61%), Lithuanian (62%), Slovak (64%), Polish (66%), Russian (66%), Hungarian (68%), Latvian (71%) or Portuguese (73%).

There are also variations in terms of age group with over 50% of those whose main language is not English aged between 25-44, compared with 28% of those whose main language is English.

Main languages spoken

The table below shows that 4.94% of Belfast households contain at least one person who does not have English as a main language and in 2.71% of households, no-one has English as a main language.

	Belfast		**Northern Ireland**	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
All people aged 16+ years in household have English as a main language	134,567	95.06	678,135	96.43
At least one but not all people aged 16+ years in household have English as a main language	2,734	1.93	8,618	1.23
No people aged 16+ years in household but at least one person aged 3-15 years has English as a main language	433	0.31	1,546	0.22
No people in household have English as a main language	3,833	2.71	14,976	2.13

Age

The age profile of Belfast is similar to that of the wider region. Almost one in five residents (19.23%) are aged under 16, slightly lower than

	the Northern Ireland average (20.95%). The working age population (aged 16-64 years) make up two-thirds (66.32%) of all Belfast residents. Older people (aged 65+) currently account for 14.44% of the Belfast population. The Continuous Household Survey 2013/14 data showed that: • Knowledge of Ulster-Scots increases with age, with those age 45 years and over being more likely to have knowledge than those aged 16-44 years (64.9 per cent and 34.3 per cent respectively). • Age and level of deprivation of the area they live in area also related to the likelihood of having knowledge of Irish. People aged 45 years and over are less likely to have knowledge of Irish than those aged 16 to 44 years (38.8 per cent and 52.3 per cent respectively). • In addition, adults living in the least deprived areas are less likely to have knowledge of Irish than those living in the most deprived areas (19.0 per cent and 12.9 per cent respectively).
Marital status	Just over one third (35.6%) of all usual residents in Belfast (aged 16+) are married – a relatively low proportion when compared with the Northern Ireland average (47.6%). Belfast has a higher percentage (45.3%) of residents who are single when compared with the Northern Ireland average (36.1%). There is also a higher than average proportion of people in Belfast who are separated (5.4% compared to 4% NI average) and divorced (6.2% to 5.5% NI average).Belfast also has 353 residents (0.1%) who are in a registered same-sex civil partnership, almost a third of all such partnerships in Northern Ireland. The Continuous Household Survey 2013/14 data showed that for those who are married/cohabiting, the proportion who had some knowledge of Ulster-Scots increased from 15.9 per cent in 2011/12 to 19.1 per cent in 2013/14. 2013/14 data showed that adults who are married/cohabiting or widowed (19.1 per cent and 19.0 per cent respectively) are more likely to have knowledge of Ulster-Scots than those who are single (11.2 per cent).
Sexual orientation	Several UK and NI based studies have attempted to quantify the number of people who identify as LGB. Estimates for LGB population range from 0.3-10% using different sources. A commonly used estimate of LGB people in the UK, accepted by Stonewall UK, is approximately 5-7% of the population.
Men and women generally	Belfast has a higher female population (52% of all residents), slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 51%. The difference is largest in the over 65 population, where 59.3% of all residents are female. The Continuous Household Survey 2013/14 data showed that the proportion of males who have knowledge of Ulster-Scots increased from 16.2 in 2011/12 to 19.9 per cent in 2013/14. 2013/14 data showed that men (19.9 per cent) are more likely to have knowledge of Ulster-Scots than women (13.5 per cent).

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Disability</td><td>Census figures show that almost one quarter (23%) of Belfast residents have a long-term health problem or disability which affects their day to day activities. This is a higher proportion than the Northern Ireland average (20.1%). Over one-third of Belfast residents reported that they had a long-term condition (defined as a condition which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months). The most common conditions were mobility or dexterity difficulty (39% of all those affected), pain or discomfort (34%), shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (31%) and emotional, psychological or mental health condition (23%).

<u>Deafness and hard of hearing</u>
The table below provides information on people with deafness (or partial hearing loss), blindness (or partial sight loss) and other communication difficulty. The Northern Ireland Census does not provide information on users of sign language or readers of Braille, but DCAL estimates that approximately 5,000 people in Northern Ireland use sign language as the preferred means of communication, with 3,500 using BSL and 1,500 using ISL.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="2">Belfast</th><th colspan="2">Northern Ireland</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>No.</th><th>%</th><th>No.</th><th>%</th></tr>
<tr><td>People with deafness or partial hearing loss</td><td>18,261</td><td>5.47</td><td>93,091</td><td>5.14</td></tr>
<tr><td>People with blindness or partial sight loss</td><td>6,729</td><td>2.02</td><td>30,862</td><td>1.70</td></tr>
<tr><td>People with a communication difficulty</td><td>6,460</td><td>1.93</td><td>29,871</td><td>1.65</td></tr>
</table>

DCAL set up a Sign Language Partnership Group in 2005 which produced best practice guidance on providing public services to Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL). Speaking in the Assembly on 1st December 2015, the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure said that the Partnership Group had contributed much to improving the lives of sign language users and their families but that she was convinced of the need to do much more. She indicated that the Deaf community had made it clear that they want legislation to safeguard their rights as a cultural and linguistic minority. The Minster said that she would take initial steps to address this issue before responsibility transfers to the Department of Communities in 2016. A draft Sign Language Framework was opened for public consultation from 15 March 2016 to 4 July 2016, the consultation report has not, to date, been published.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dependants</td><td>The Belfast City Council Residents Survey 2014, reported that 32.3% of the population have dependants or caring responsibilities. The 2011 Census shows that 28.58% of households in Belfast include dependent children, compared with the Northern Ireland average of 33.86%.</td></tr>
</table>

	The Continuous Household Survey 2013/14 data showed that a higher proportion of adults who do not have dependents (17.8 per cent) have knowledge of Ulster-Scots than those who have dependents (14.7 per cent).

8. What is the likely impact (indicate if the policy impact is positive or negative) on <u>equality of opportunity</u> for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? What is the level of impact?

Section 75 category	**Likely impact?**	**Level of impact? Major/Minor/None**
Religious belief	We do not hold evidence at the current time that people from this group will be impacted by this decision. The consultation will help us to better understand how stakeholders may be affected by this policy, either positively or negatively, and the level of impact.	None
Political opinion	As above.	None
Racial group	It is recognised that people from a minority ethnic background may have more difficulties accessing public services, particularly if English is not their first language. Census data from 2011 shows that for 4.34% of the Belfast population (aged 3+) English was not their main language, a higher proportion than the Northern Ireland average (3.14%).	Positive - minor
Age	We do not hold evidence at the current time that people from this group will be impacted by this decision. The aim of the consultation is to better understand how stakeholders may be affected by this policy, either positively or negatively, and the level of impact.	None
Marital status	As above.	None
Sexual orientation	As above.	None
Men and women generally	As above.	None
Disability	People with sensory and/or learning disabilities may have difficulty in accessing Council services.	Positive-minor
Dependants	We do not hold evidence at the current time that	None

	people from this group will be impacted by the implementation of the policy. The aim of the consultation is to better understand how stakeholders may be affected by this policy, either positively or negatively, and the level of impact.	

9. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief	The aim of the consultation to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres is to roll out aspects of Language Strategy. This approach should allow the Council to articulate its commitment to supporting minority languages whilst allowing the different needs of speakers of Irish, Ulster-Scots and other minority language, including sign language, to be addressed effectively. Previous consultations have shown that different sectors have very different needs and aspirations. The consultation period will allow us to engage with groups and individuals to better understand their concerns, aspirations and priorities.	
Political opinion	As above.	
Racial group	As above.	
Age	As above.	
Marital status	As above.	
Sexual orientation	As above.	
Men and women generally	As above.	
Disability	As above.	
Dependants	As above.	

10. To what extent is the policy likely to impact (positive or negatively) on <u>good relations</u> between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? What is the level of impact?

Good relations category	Likely impact?	Level of impact? Minor/Major/None
Religious belief	The Language Strategy includes a language framework and three policies namely: • Irish • Ulster-Scots • Other languages Promoting the linguistic diversity of the city will bring language to a wider audience. This can challenge stereotypes and have a positive impact on inclusion and cultural diversity. The policy may remove barriers for those who would not otherwise be able to access council services. An interpretation of a policy which is aimed at a specific group will, by definition, have differential impact. It is also acknowledged that the introduction of any policy related to language may impact on an individual's sentiments, given the political and religious connections observed in the evidence. Such sentiments, whether real or perceived cannot and should not be ignored, either in relation to a staff member or service user. The public consultation on the Council decision will help us to better understand the concerns, needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, including staff and service users and the relevant impacts. <u>Staff</u> The Fair Employment and Treatment Order (NI places an obligation on both employers and employees to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and promote a good and harmonious working environment. Previous consultations from other councils have outlined concerns of the impact on the workforce when implementing policies relating to linguistic diversity. Specific consultation with staff will be undertaken to better understand concerns relating to this specific policy. <u>Service users</u> Previous consultations from other councils have outlined concerns of the impact on service users when implementing policies relating to linguistic	Minor – positive and negative

	diversity. Specifically in relation to promoting the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots language, data shows that there is an alignment of language, religious belief and political opinion which may have the potential to contribute to 'chill factors' for both staff and service users. The aim of public consultation will be to better understand the concerns of service users. <u>Political Opinion and Religious Belief</u> The data shows that there are more people in Belfast (13.45%) who have some ability in Irish, than in Northern Ireland as a whole (10.65%). The data shows that there are fewer people in Belfast (5.23%) who have some ability in Ulster-Scots, than in Northern Ireland as a whole (8.08%). Public consultation will help us better understand concerns, needs and aspirations of our stakeholders.	
Political opinion	As above	Minor – positive and negative
Racial group	For people from a minority ethnic background, promoting and exploring linguistic diversity can challenge stereotypes and have a positive impact on inclusion and cultural diversity. The policy may remove barriers for those who would not otherwise be able to access these council services	Minor - positive

11. Are there opportunities to better promote <u>good relations</u> between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good relations category	**If Yes, provide details**	**If No, provide reasons**
Religious belief	The implementation of this decision will be undertaken through communication and engagement with relevant stakeholders so as to better promote linguistic diversity.	

Political opinion	As above.	
Racial group	As above.	

Section C

Belfast City Council also has legislative obligations to meet under the **Disability Discrimination Order** and Questions 12-13 relate to these two areas.

Consideration of Disability Duties

12. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity for the Council to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

Explain your assessment in full
Implementation of the policy may promote positive attitudes to disabled people by addressing their needs, concerns and aspirations relating to enhanced communication and signage.

13. Does this proposed policy / decision provide an opportunity to actively increase the participation by disabled people in public life?

Explain your assessment in full
Implementation of the policy may increase participation in public life by disabled people by facilitating access to the leisure centres through appropriate signage.

14. Multiple Identities
Provide details of data on the impact of the policy with multiple identities

N/A

This is a draft screening report and further consultation is required prior to agreeing monitoring arrangements

15. Monitoring Arrangements

Section 75 places a requirement the Council to have equality monitoring arrangements in place in order to assess the impact of policies and services etc; and to help identify barriers to fair participation and to better promote equality of opportunity.

Outline what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the impact of this policy / decision on equality, good relations and disability duties.

Equality	Good Relations	Disability Duties

Section D
Formal Record of Screening Decision

This is a draft screening report and further consultation is required prior to adopting a screening decision

Title of Proposed Policy / Decision being screened
Council decision to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres

I can confirm that the proposed policy / decision has been screened for –

X	equality of opportunity and good relations
X	disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, I recommend that this policy / decision is – *(place an X in the appropriate box below)*

	*__**Screened In**__ – Necessary to conduct a full EQIA

	*__**Screened Out**__ – No EQIA necessary (no impacts) Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached:

x	* __**Screened Out -**__ Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) • Provide a brief note here to explain how this decision was reached: • Explain what mitigating actions and / or policy changes will now be introduced: The aim of the consultation on the council decision, to erect bilingual / multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres, is to better understand how stakeholders may be affected by this policy, either positively or negatively, and the level of impact. Further screenings may be carried out at appropriate stages in the implementation of the policy should these be deemed necessary.

Formal Record of Screening Decision *(cont)*

Screening assessment completed by (Officer level) -

Name: John Kremer Date:24th Oct 2019

Department : External Consultant

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Screening decision approved by -

Name: Stella Gilmartin Date: 24/10/19

Department:

Signature: please insert a scanned image of your signature below

Please save the final version of the completed screening form and forward to the Equality and Diversity Officer – equality@belfastcity.gov.uk. The screening form will be placed on the BCC website and a link provided to the Council's Section 75 consultees.

For more information about equality screening contact –

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