

Strategic Investment Board Limited

Disability Action Plan

**Drawn up in accordance with Sections 49A and 49B of
the Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

**as amended by the Disability Discrimination
(Northern Ireland) Order 2006**

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Translations and other formats

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This document can also be accessed on the SIB website at www.sibni.org

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1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The disability duties

1.1 Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) as amended by Article 5 of the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, the Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB) is required, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to –

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

1.2 Under Section 49B of the DDA 1995, SIB is also required to submit to the Equality Commission a disability action plan showing how it proposes to fulfil these duties in relation to its functions.

Functions of SIB

1.3 SIB was established in March 2003 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 (Northern Ireland) Order 2003). In summary, they are –

- 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.

1.4 SIB has formulated 3 objectives in respect of these functions:

- The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) – a strategy to 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 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.

1.5 Overall responsibility for SIB lies with the Northern Ireland Executive and is expressed through the OFMDFM which funds the company, and through the Board, which governs the company. The Chief Executive is responsible to the Chairman and the Board for the management of the company as a corporate body. The Board is the main decision making body; it meets on a monthly basis and consists of a Chairman and four Directors. There is also an Advisory Council, appointed by the OFMDFM, which advises the Ministers 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.

Public life positions

1.6 SIB has no responsibility for making public appointments as the members of the Board and the Advisory Council are appointed by the OFMDFM. However, it is acknowledged that the disability duties relate not only to formal public appointments but also to the way in which disabled people contribute to or are involved in policy decision making or decisions relating to the way in which public authorities carry out their functions. SIB will therefore consider ways to encourage disabled people to participate in any consultative groups it may establish in the course of exercising its functions.

Statement of commitment

1.7 As Chairman of the SIB Board and Chief Executive, we are committed to implementing effectively the disability duties and this disability action plan. We will allocate all necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) in order to implement this plan

effectively and build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

1.8 We will also put appropriate internal arrangements in place to ensure that the disability duties are complied with and this disability action plan is implemented effectively. We will ensure the effective communication of the plan to staff and provide all necessary training and guidance for staff on the disability duties and the implementation of the plan.

1.9 We are committed to engaging effectively with disabled people in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this disability action plan and to ensuring that consultation is inclusive and targeted. We will ensure that appropriate methods are used for all consultation (in line with the guiding principles set out in the Equality Commission guidance on Section 75) and that a period of at least 2 months is allowed.

1.10 The SIB Board will be responsible for the effective implementation of this disability action plan. The Chief Executive will be accountable to the Board for the implementation, review and evaluation of the plan. The HR Manager will be the point of contact in relation to the plan; her contact details are –

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1.11 We confirm our commitment to submitting an annual progress report on the implementation of this plan to the Equality Commission and carrying out a full review by September 2010 when we undertake the detailed review of our Equality Scheme.

1.12 A copy of the plan, our annual progress report to the Equality Commission and our five year review of the plan will be made available on the SIB website at www.sibni.org. The website is fully accessible to disabled people.

Tony Watson
Chairman

David Gavaghan
Chief Executive

2. PREVIOUS MEASURES TAKEN

2.1 Outlined below are the key measures which SIB has already taken to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage the participation of disabled people in public life.

Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people –

- following the adoption of the Section 75 Equality Scheme, SIB took steps to ensure that the website is fully accessible to disabled people.

Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life –

- SIB Board and Advisory Council meetings and information are fully accessible to disabled people.

3. ACTION MEASURES

3.1 Outlined below are the action measures SIB proposes to take over the period of this disability action plan, together with timescales and performance indicators and/or targets.

Measures

3.2 SIB will adopt a mainstreaming approach so that consideration of the disability duties is incorporated into the development of all policies at the appropriate stages and becomes central to policy decision making. The screening template used in relation to screening policies under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 will be revised to include a further question relating to the disability duties.

3.3 SIB will also review existing policies to determine whether they encourage disabled people to participate in public life or promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and whether there are opportunities to better promote positive attitudes or encourage participation. Where it appears that a policy has an adverse effect on the promotion of positive attitudes or the encouragement of participation in public life SIB will give due regard to the need to revise the policy. SIB will also give due regard to the need to develop new policies.

3.4 SIB acknowledges that in order to effectively implement the disability duties, it must ensure disability equality in the way disabled people are employed. Therefore, in reviewing existing policies SIB will pay particular attention to employment policies. It should be noted that, as part of the implementation of the Equality Scheme, SIB is currently undertaking an EQIA of the Equal Opportunities Policy and this may assist in identifying additional ways to promote a positive image of disabled employees.

3.5 It is also acknowledged that, in order to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people, SIB must consider what appropriate and effective measures can be taken as regards external and internal communication policies, practices and procedures. Particular consideration will therefore be given to these policies as part of the review.

3.6 All staff, Board Members and Advisory Council Members will be made aware of the disability duties, this disability action plan and SIB's commitment to the successful implementation of the plan. Awareness training on the disability duties will be included in future induction briefings. Training will be provided for all staff and office holders involved in the implementation and/or monitoring of this plan.

3.7 In order to encourage disabled people to participate in any consultation groups established by SIB, new opportunities will be brought to the attention of organisations representing the views of disabled people and to the attention of the general public through the SIB website.

Timescale

3.8 SIB has prioritised the review of policies and training and awareness raising. The review of existing policies will be completed within 6 months of submitting this disability action plan to the Equality Commission. Any actions arising from the review will be implemented within the following 6 months. Training and awareness raising activities will begin immediately after the submission of this disability action plan to the Equality Commission.

Performance indicators

3.9 Performance indicators have been identified for all proposed action measures; these are included in the summary table below. In addition to these performance indicators, SIB will monitor any relevant complaints or feedback, for example about disability harassment or regarding the display of negative attitudes.

3.10 All performance indicators will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Summary

3.11 The table overleaf summarises the action measures, timescale and performance indicators SIB will employ in order to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions.

Measures	Timescale	Performance indicators/ targets
1. Mainstream consideration of disability duties into the policy development process and assess the implications of proposed policies for the disability duties when carrying out screening in accordance with the Equality Scheme. Amend the screening template to include questions on the disability duties	Template amended by July 2007 Screening as and when appropriate	1. Number of screening reports per year identifying implications for the disability duties
2. Review existing policies in relation to the disability duties. Revise existing policies accordingly and/or develop new policies	Complete by December 2007 Revisions complete by June 2008	2. Number of policies revised/developed
3. Draw disability duties to the attention of all staff and office holders	Completed by November 2007	3. Number of communication channels utilised
4. Include awareness training on the disability duties in induction briefings	From July 2007	4. Number of staff undertaking induction
5. Provide training on disability duties for all staff & office holders involved in the implementation and/or monitoring of this plan	Completed by November 2007	5. Number of staff and office holders undertaking training
6. Encourage disabled people to participate in consultation meetings	Ongoing	6. Number of disabled people participating

4. PUBLICATION OF THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

4.1 A draft version of this disability action plan was published for consultation in April 2006 and comments were invited from a range of organisations representing the views of disabled people. We very much appreciate the comments received and have reflected them in this final version of the plan.

4.2 The final disability action plan is now available on the SIB website at www.sibni.org. Attention has been drawn to the plan through the use of press releases and by notifying those who responded to the consultation.

4.3 This disability action plan will be made available, on request, in alternative formats, for example, in Braille, on computer disk, on audio cassette or in large print or any other accessible format. A Plain English summary of the plan has been prepared and can be made available, on request; this may be of use to people with a learning disability and those for whom English is not the first language. We also have arrangements in place to provide copies of the summary in other languages, on request.