



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

DRAFT EQIA

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

**Mark Ashton Memorial Plaque
Portrush Town Hall**

October 2026

Purpose and current position

This draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) considers the proposal to install a commemorative plaque to Mark Ashton within Portrush Town Hall. The proposal is being considered in accordance with the Council's Public Memorials Policy Framework (2024).

The purpose of EQIA is

- to assess actual and perceived impacts across Section 75 categories
- consider the good-relations implications of the proposal
- identify possible mitigation or enhancement measures
- and provide an evidence-based report to assist the Council's decision-making.

The assessment has been structured around the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) seven-stage EQIA process. At this stage, the available material indicates a likely positive impact in relation to sexual orientation through recognition and visibility of local LGBTQ+ history. It also identifies potential educational and wider inclusion benefits. Some submissions raise concerns relating principally to religious belief, political opinion, the proposed location and good relations within a shared civic space.

The concerns raised are relevant to understanding how the proposal may be experienced and will be considered alongside the other available evidence. A concern about perception may be relevant where it could affect confidence in, or feelings about, a shared civic space. The assessment must also consider whether the evidence indicates an actual or potential differential effect on a Section 75 group and, if so, the nature and likely extent of that effect.

The evidence gathered during preliminary consultation does not demonstrate a change to access to, participation in, or use of Portrush Town Hall by any group. Formal consultation is nevertheless required before the assessment can reach final conclusions on the scale of any impact upon religious belief, political opinion or good relations. This draft therefore proposes proportionate mitigation and a structured formal consultation process, while keeping the final assessment open.

1. Introduction and status of the assessment

Section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires designated public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between the nine statutory categories. Section 75(2) requires public authorities, without prejudice to that duty, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

This EQIA follows an equality screening exercise which identified potential perception-based sensitivities relating to political opinion and religious belief, a potential positive equality impact in relation to sexual orientation, and possible implications for good relations which required further assessment.

ECNI describes an EQIA as a detailed assessment of a policy or policy option likely to have a significant impact on one or more Section 75 groups. Its guidance provides for evidence-led assessment, consultation on what has been assessed, consideration of mitigation and alternatives, and provision of the completed material to the decisionmaker before the final decision is taken.

2. The proposal and its aims

2.1 Background

In June 2021 the Council approved a Notice of Motion which noted Mark Ashton's work for LGBTQ+ rights and workers' rights, particularly his role during the 1984-85 miners' strike; recognised the importance of commemorating people from the Council area who fought for the rights of others; and called for a suitable site for a memorial to be identified in consultation with family and LGBTQ+ groups.

Following the adoption of the Council's Public Memorials: A Policy Framework in 2024, a formal application was submitted seeking a plaque within Portrush Town Hall. The application indicates that the family will fund the plaque, with installation, maintenance and oversight undertaken by the Council subject to approval.

2.2 Proposed inscription and location

Proposed wording

In Memory of Mark Ashton (1960-1987)
Political Activist, Humanitarian, and Co-Founder of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM)
Born in Oldham, Raised in Portrush
"One community should give solidarity to another."

The proposed location is beside the stage within the upstairs events room of Portrush Town Hall.

2.3 Objective

The objective of the Council's decision is to place a commemorative plaque beside the stage within the upstairs events room of Portrush Town Hall, recognising the life, local connection and public contribution of local resident Mark Ashton, in accordance with the Council's Public Memorials Policy Framework. (However, the initial assessment indicates that the space beside the stage may not be suitable for the plaque because of the physical limitations of the area. This will be considered further as part of the assessment). The plaque seeks to acknowledge Ashton's role as an LGBTQ+ rights and workers' rights activist, provide an inclusive and educational civic marker for all visitors and ensure consistent and transparent application of the Council's policy on public memorials.

2.4 Scope of the EQIA

This EQIA will examine the Council's decision on the proposed installation of a commemorative plaque to Mark Ashton beside the stage within the upstairs events room of Portrush Town Hall, in accordance with the Council's Public Memorials Policy Framework (2024). The scope includes the location and civic context of the plaque, together with the Council's decision-making process associated with its consideration and approval.

The EQIA will assess actual, potential and perceived impacts on all Section 75 equality categories, including children and young people, older people, families and carers, and on good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group. It will take account of the consultation evidence, stakeholder engagement and issues arising from the use of a shared civic space.

Cost is not within the scope of this EQIA. The application indicates that the plaque will be funded externally by the family, and no equality or good-relations impact has been identified in relation to Council expenditure or resource allocation.

The assessment is concerned with the equality and good-relations implications of this proposal. Wider political, religious or historical perspectives, and views concerning other memorials, will be considered where they are relevant to those implications.

3. Methodology: ECNI seven-stage approach

The assessment follows the arrangements in the Council's Equality Scheme and the ECNI Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment. The stages are:

1. define the aims of the policy;
2. consider available data and research;
3. assess the likely impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations;
4. consider measures to mitigate adverse impacts and alternative policies;
5. consult on the draft EQIA;
6. take and publish the final decision, including the Stage 6 report; and
7. monitor the actual impact of the policy.

ECNI advises that evidence should be relevant to the policy area and capable of supporting rational and coherent conclusions. Generic demographic data has therefore been used as context rather than treated as proof of impact. Particular weight is given to policy-specific qualitative evidence, including submissions from people and organisations who may experience the proposal differently.

4. Information and evidence

4.1 Materials reviewed

- the Council's consultant brief and attached equality screening form;
- the proposed wording and location information;

- the Council's Public Memorials Policy Framework extracts provided for this assessment;
- The Council's Equality Scheme
- the Notice of Motion approved in June 2021;
- the available supporting submissions and objections;
- the preliminary consultation report;
- applicant-reported digital engagement and petition data;
- 2021 Census material included in the screening form;
- comparative material concerning commemorations elsewhere; and
- ECNI guidance on Section 75, EQIAs, consultation and monitoring.
- Public Commemoration in Wales: Guidance for Public Bodies (Welsh Government, March 2024).

4.2 Local demographic context

The 2021 Census recorded a usual resident population of 141,746 in the Causeway Coast and Glens local government district and a population of approximately 6,150 for Portrush in the material supplied. The Borough includes people across all Section 75 categories. The screening material records, among other matters, a religious-background profile of 51.17% Protestant and other Christian, 40.12% Roman Catholic, 0.78% other religions and 7.94% none or not stated. It also records that 1.43% of Borough residents aged 16 and over identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or another sexual orientation, with 7.29% preferring not to say or not stating an orientation.

As a visitor destination, Portrush experiences seasonal variations in population. The resident population figures should therefore be treated as background information and not as a complete measure of the people who may use the Town Hall or encounter the proposed plaque.

These statistics establish context but do not demonstrate how any group will experience the plaque. ECNI cautions against reliance on generic data that does not relate directly to the policy impact. Consultation and other policy-specific evidence are therefore necessary.

4.3 Preliminary consultation and engagement

Preliminary consultation and engagement have now been completed: 20 substantive written responses have been received and two engagement sessions. The responses include both support for and objections to the proposal. Engagement also took place with Council officers and the Council's Memorial Advisory Group. The Royal British Legion was consulted concerning the proximity of the war memorial, and no response had been received at the conclusion of the preliminary consultation. The issues raised are relevant particularly to sexual orientation, religious belief, political opinion, location and the use of a shared civic building.

4.3.1 Issues emerging from preliminary consultation

The preliminary consultation responses provide useful qualitative evidence about how the proposal may be experienced. In keeping with the Equality Commission for Northern

Ireland Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, these views are considered alongside the available policy information, demographic material and other relevant evidence. The assessment will be updated again following formal consultation.

Supportive responses point to possible benefits through LGBTQ+ visibility, representation, dignity and inclusion. They also refer to local and wider social-justice history, community solidarity and educational relevance, including for younger people. Organisational responses describe the plaque as an opportunity to broaden the history represented within a shared civic building and for LGBTQIA+ people to see themselves reflected in civic space. These matters support the provisional finding of a likely positive impact in relation to sexual orientation.

Opposing responses raise concerns about religious belief, political ideology, the strength of Mark Ashton's local connection, Council neutrality and possible community division. Other points concern confidence within parts of the unionist community, the experience of people affected by terrorism, the practical suitability of the proposed position and the relationship with the nearby war memorial. Some responses suggest another position within the Town Hall or refer to other possible forms of commemoration. These matters are considered where they may indicate an equality or good-relations impact arising from the present proposal.

The preliminary consultation also points to possible mitigation or enhancement through neutral and factual wording, proportionate contextual information, a clear account of Mark Ashton's connection with Portrush, careful consideration of the precise position of the plaque, an explanation of the Council's memorial criteria and funding arrangements, and a link to further factual information about Mark Ashton. The suggestion that curtains could be available to cover the plaque in particular circumstances has been recorded.

5. Themes arising from preliminary consultation

5.1 Supportive themes

- Mark Ashton's childhood and family connection with Portrush, including his and his mother's reported involvement in dramatic productions at Portrush Town Hall;
- his public contribution and the recognition Mark Ashton has received beyond the Borough, including internationally;
- the importance of recording LGBTQ+ history and increasing visibility in civic space;
- educational value for residents and visitors.

5.2 Concerns and objections

- religious objections to LGBTQ+ identity or activism;
- possible division or discomfort within a shared civic building;
- the appropriateness and practical suitability of the proposed location, the Council's memorial-policy criteria and suggestions of an alternative position or location; and
- misunderstandings about the proposal's form, location and funding.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Practical Guidance requires an EQIA to assess the nature and extent of the likely impact of a policy and to take account of the available evidence. The concerns raised should therefore be recorded and considered respectfully, with attention given to whether they indicate an actual or potential differential impact on a Section 75 group or a good-relations issue. Where a response appears to be based on a misunderstanding of the proposal, the factual position can be clarified without making a judgement about the respondent or the views expressed.

5.3 Historical and contextual material

The proposal describes Mark Ashton as having been raised in Portrush and as a political activist, humanitarian and co-founder of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM). The consultation responses also refer to his work for LGBTQ+ rights, his support for mining communities during the 1984-85 miners' strike and his political associations. These aspects of the proposal are relevant to the assessment of potential impacts relating to sexual orientation and political opinion.

The responses interpret this history in different ways. Supportive responses emphasize solidarity, humanitarian activity and cooperation between groups. Some opposing responses place greater emphasis on Mark Ashton's political associations and express concern about the message conveyed by civic recognition. For the purposes of this EQIA, these differing views are relevant insofar as they help to identify how the plaque may be experienced and whether any differential equality or good-relations impact may arise.

5.4 Evidence from other organisations and commemorative practice

Comparative examples have been considered to identify how other public bodies have approached memorials, symbols and contested history. They raise relevant considerations about wording, context, location, representation, accessibility and shared space. While the circumstances of each case differ, the approaches taken provide useful context for this assessment and for the consideration of possible mitigation or enhancement measures.

Organisation / example	Equality issues identified	Approach and relevance
Ards and North Down Borough Council - Queen Elizabeth II memorial	Religious belief, political opinion, shared civic space and inclusivity.	screened in for full EQIA; neutral wording and civic context identified as possible mitigation.
Northern Ireland Assembly Commission - NI Centenary Stone	Religious belief, political opinion, prominence, shared space and access.	involving a change of location; illustrates the importance of testing siting and prominence.

Organisation / example	Equality issues identified	Approach and relevance
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council - VE Day 80	Differential cultural significance, political opinion, accessibility and participation.	Inclusive, non-partisan messaging and accessible arrangements used in the relevant assessment.
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council - VE Day 75	Religious belief, political resonance, shared space and accessibility.	Neutral civic presentation and open participation identified as mitigation.
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council - NI Centenary Stones	Religious belief, political opinion, location sensitivity, cohesion and consultation reach.	Targeted consultation, careful siting and contextualisation used as relevant considerations.
Omagh District Council - Bobby Sands / hunger-strike memorial	Religious belief, political opinion, contested symbolism and shared-space confidence.	Formal equality assessment and contextualisation are relevant approaches.
Belfast City Council - City Hall memorabilia and centenaries	Religious belief, political opinion, contested narratives, shared civic space and education.	Full EQIA, curated display, relocation and balanced interpretation are possible approaches.
West Lancashire District Council - war memorial names protocol	Fair criteria, bereavement, gender representation, cohesion and accessibility.	A transparent criteria-based protocol and consultation with affected families are recorded.
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council - Centenary Field	Inclusivity, community identity and accessibility.	Inclusive messaging and unchanged access are supporting a screened-out decision.
Scottish Government / local-authority commemorations review	Race equality, colonial and slavery-related harm, cohesion and options appraisal.	Contextualisation, education, relocation and reinterpretation identified as options.
Cardiff and Glasgow civic commemoration reviews	Race equality, historical context, representation and inclusion.	Interpretive material, review and diversification used in the relevant assessment.

Organisation / example	Equality issues identified	Approach and relevance
Manchester and Sheffield public-realm reviews	Gender, race, class and balance of civic representation.	New inclusive memorials and broader representation identified as enhancement measures.

The examples do not suggest that contested commemorations should automatically proceed or be refused. They indicate that decisions should be criteria-based and evidence-led, with attention given to wording, prominence, location, context, accessibility and the continuing use of the space as shared and inclusive.

6. Preliminary assessment of impacts

The conclusions in this section are provisional and will be revisited after formal consultation on the draft EQIA. “Potential minor adverse” describes an impact which may affect perception or confidence but for which material exclusion, loss of access or changed use has not presently been demonstrated.

Section 75 category	Evidence and assessment	Provisional impact
Religious belief	Some responses indicate that the proposal may be experienced differently because of Christian belief and concerns about civic neutrality. Other submissions associate communist political ideology with hostility to religious freedom. The plaque contains no religious statement, and the proposal does not alter access to the Town Hall. The evidence identifies a possible perception-based impact requiring formal consultation but does not at this stage demonstrate exclusion or restricted participation.	Potential minor adverse / neutral, pending formal consultation
Political opinion	Some responses associate Ashton with communism, trade unionism or wider political causes and perceive civic recognition as endorsement. Other submissions question the level of local support, refer to the local experience of terrorism and argue that the proposal could affect confidence in the Council's political neutrality. Supportive responses instead present the plaque as recognition of solidarity, equality and a wider range of local history. The evidence is contested and remains subject to formal consultation.	Potential minor adverse / neutral, pending formal consultation

Section 75 category	Evidence and assessment	Provisional impact
Racial group	No policy-specific evidence of a differential racial impact has been identified. Accessible and inclusive consultation remains necessary.	No differential impact identified at this stage
Age	Supportive responses identify a potential educational benefit, particularly for younger people. Formal consultation with young people may assist the later assessment. Location, lighting and legibility may be relevant to older people and children.	Potential minor positive; no adverse impact identified
Marital status	No mechanism or evidence of differential impact has been identified.	No differential impact identified
Sexual orientation	Supportive evidence indicates increased visibility, recognition and belonging for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and recognition of LGBTQ+ history. Objections based on sexuality are also relevant to the context in which that positive impact may be experienced.	Likely positive impact
Men and women generally	No mechanism or evidence of differential impact between men and women has been identified.	No differential impact identified
Disability	No adverse impact arises from the subject matter itself. Physical positioning, legibility and accessible information could affect disabled users and should be confirmed.	Neutral if accessibility measures are applied
Dependents	No policy-specific evidence of differential impact has been identified. Accessible consultation and information should accommodate carers and families.	No differential impact identified

6.1 Assessment across the Section 75 categories

In considering each Section 75 category, the assessment looks at how people may experience the plaque; whether it could affect use of, participation in or feelings about the Town Hall; whether it could result in exclusion, discomfort or a hardening of boundaries; and whether it could create positive equality impacts. It also distinguishes, as far as possible, between evidence of an impact, evidence of a perception and a statement which still requires verification. The conclusions remain provisional pending formal consultation.

Religious belief

A number of responses describe discomfort arising from Christian teaching about sexuality and from Mark Ashton's political associations. Some consider that the proposal would not reflect the values they associate with Portrush. These submissions indicate that the proposal may be experienced differently by some people because of religious belief. No evidence has been identified at this stage that access to or participation in Town Hall services would be restricted.

No response reviewed to date states that the respondent or their organisation would cease using the Town Hall, and the proposed wording contains no religious statement. However, confidence in the neutrality of a civic venue and the possibility of discomfort are relevant considerations. The provisional assessment records a possible minor adverse perception-based impact, alongside the possibility that some people of faith may identify positively with the themes of compassion, solidarity and humanitarian action.

Political opinion

Objections refer to communism, trade-union activity and wider ideological associations. Some describe civic commemoration as Council endorsement of those views. One response also raises concerns about perceived historical associations, their possible effect on people affected by terrorism and confidence within parts of the unionist community. Supportive responses emphasise humanitarian action and solidarity between communities. The plaque's use of the term "Political Activist" makes political opinion directly relevant even though the purpose of the proposal is commemorative.

The present evidence does not demonstrate that a person of any political opinion would lose access or participation. It does show different interpretations of the message conveyed by civic recognition. The final wording, explanatory context and precise position should therefore be considered through formal consultation. Historical claims raised in individual responses are recorded as the views of those respondents and are not treated as findings of this draft without supporting evidence.

Sexual orientation

The strongest policy-specific evidence of positive impact concerns sexual orientation. Supportive submissions describe visibility, recognition, belonging and the recording of local LGBTQ+ history. They also refer to the importance of role models for younger LGBTQ+ people and to the absence of comparable recognition within Ashton's childhood town. The plaque may therefore contribute to a more inclusive civic narrative and signal that LGBTQ+ lives form part of the Borough's history.

Some responses express objections in terms that refer directly to Mark Ashton's sexual orientation or LGBTQ+ activism. These views form part of the context in which the likely positive impact may be experienced. The assessment should respect freedom of religious belief and political difference while considering whether the available evidence identifies an actual or potential differential impact on a Section 75 group.

Racial group

No submission identifies a direct differential racial impact. Inclusive civic representation may contribute more broadly to a sense of belonging, but the present evidence does not support a specific positive racial-impact finding. The provisional conclusion is that no differential impact has been identified, subject to inclusive formal consultation and any additional evidence provided by minority ethnic communities.

Age

Supportive responses identify educational value and the potential for younger people, including younger LGBTQ+ people, to encounter local history and inclusive role models. Formal consultation with young people and relevant organisations may help to assess this opportunity further. Older people may have particular requirements relating to legibility, lighting and placement. A potential minor positive impact is recorded, with no adverse impact identified at this stage.

Disability

The installation does not alter the Town Hall's general physical access. Nevertheless, the position and design of the plaque could affect wheelchair users, people of short stature, people with visual impairment and people who require information in alternative formats. Accessibility should therefore be treated as a design requirement rather than an assumption. Subject to accessible placement and information, a neutral impact is anticipated.

Men and women generally; marital status; dependents

No policy-specific mechanism or evidence of differential impact has been identified for men and women generally or for marital status. No differential impact has been identified for people with or without dependents, although the timing and format of consultation should remain accessible to carers and families. These findings remain open to additional evidence and are not based simply on the proposal applying to everyone.

7. Good relations assessment

The statutory good-relations duty concerns religious belief, political opinion and racial group. The proposal has no identified racial dimension. Its principal good-relations issues arise from different interpretations of LGBTQ+ visibility, Ashton's political associations, and the use of an internal civic space.

The available evidence points in different directions. Supportive responses view the plaque and its solidarity message as inclusive and capable of widening civic representation. The most recent supportive submissions add evidence concerning Mark Ashton's local and Town Hall connections, his wider public contribution and the value of visible LGBTQIA+ recognition. Opposing responses express concern about political associations, religious belief, civic neutrality, the level of local support, the suitability of the proposed location and confidence within parts of the unionist community. Some also refer to the Council's memorial-policy criteria and suggest an alternative position or location. There is no current

evidence that users would cease to use the Town Hall or that access would change. Perceptions of civic neutrality and shared-space confidence nevertheless remain relevant to the assessment.

The proposed indoor location, modest form and factual wording may reduce the prominence of the plaque when compared with a monument in an open public space. The precise position and its relationship with the use of the surrounding civic space should continue to be considered. The Royal British Legion was consulted about the nearby war memorial, but no response was received during preliminary consultation.

Provisional good-relations finding

A potential minor perception-based impact has been identified in relation to religious belief and political opinion. Responses also raise the suitability of the proposed position and confidence within parts of the unionist community. There is also a potential positive opportunity to communicate solidarity and broaden civic representation. The nature and scale of these impacts remain open pending formal consultation.

8. Multiple identities and cumulative effects

People may identify with more than one Section 75 category. Examples relevant to this proposal may include younger LGBTQ+ people, older people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people of faith, people with political opinions informed by religious belief, and carers attending Town Hall activities. The evidence available does not allow reliable conclusions about these intersections. Formal consultation should therefore provide an opportunity for people to describe combined experiences without requiring disclosure of personal information that is unnecessary for the assessment.

9. Alternatives and mitigating measures

ECNI places consideration of mitigation and alternatives at the heart of the EQIA process. The Council remains responsible for identifying and considering these measures; consultation should inform this process.

Option / measure	Equality and good-relations rationale	Points for consideration
Proceed with the proposed plaque and wording, subject to confirming the precise position within the Town Hall	Delivers recognition and likely positive sexual-orientation impact while retaining a modest internal form.	Practical suitability beside the stage, accessibility, consultees' experience and the use of the surrounding civic space.

Option / measure	Equality and good-relations rationale	Points for consideration
Provide factual context and a link to further information	A Council webpage, QR code or short interpretive note could explain local connection and historical context without overloading the plaque.	Accessibility, permanence, digital exclusion and editorial neutrality.
Alternative position within the Town Hall	May address concerns about prominence while maintaining public access and recognition.	Sightlines, existing memorials, accessibility, building use and symbolic relationships.

9.1 Proposed mitigation and enhancement

- take forward the proposal in accordance with the Council's decision, subject to completion of the EQIA and consideration of the practical suitability and accessibility of the proposed position beside the stage;
- ensure that any accompanying information is accurate, factual and proportionate and clearly explains the purpose of the commemoration;
- provide balanced contextual information about Ashton's local connection and public contribution, including consideration of a link to further accessible information;
- ensure installation height, contrast, type size, lighting and approach route are accessible;
- make consultation documents available in alternative formats and languages on request;
- undertake accessible formal consultation with relevant groups, while avoiding any assumption that a group has a single view;
- use the completed preliminary consultation report to inform formal consultation and prepare a further thematic analysis of formal consultation responses;
- manage any launch or associated Council communication as civic and non-partisan;
- correct misunderstandings about funding, form and location in consultation material; and
- adopt a proportionate monitoring and review arrangement if the plaque is installed, including consideration of relevant feedback concerning accessibility, use of space and good-relations impacts.

10. Consultation and engagement plan

Formal consultation will run from 26 October 2026 to 15 January 2027. The assessment would then be revised during January 2027, with the final EQIA and mitigation proposed for completion in February 2027.

Formal consultation will be undertaken on the approved draft EQIA in accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme. ECNI advises that consultation should normally remain open for 12 weeks, be accessible and inclusive, run alongside consultation on the policy itself, and include people directly affected, the Equality Commission and relevant interest groups. The Council will confirm the consultation period against its Equality Scheme and record reasons for any departure from the normal period.

Phase	Indicative timing	Purpose
Working draft and evidence development	September-October 2026	Complete preliminary consultation, verify evidence and prepare the draft for Council consideration.
Council consideration of draft	Before 26 October 2026	Approve the consultation draft and associated consultation arrangements.
Formal consultation	26 October 2026-15 January 2027	Consult on the approved draft EQIA, evidence, provisional impacts, alternatives and mitigation.
Post-consultation revision	18-29 January 2027	Analyse responses, revise the assessment and prepare the Stage 6 report for decision.
Final Council decision and publication	February 2027	Decision-makers consider the completed EQIA and consultation before deciding; publish in accordance with the Equality Scheme.

11. Provisional conclusions and next steps

The evidence currently available supports a provisional finding of likely positive impact in relation to sexual orientation through civic recognition and visibility. A potential educational benefit has also been identified, although further evidence is required before describing its scale.

Concerns relating to religious belief and political opinion are relevant to the assessment because they may affect perceptions of neutrality and confidence in a shared civic building. The preliminary consultation evidence does not demonstrate exclusion, restricted access or changed use. Formal consultation is nevertheless required to test the nature and likelihood of these impacts and the effectiveness of mitigation.

No policy-specific evidence of adverse differential impact has been identified at this stage for racial group, marital status, men and women generally, disability or dependents. That

finding is provisional and must not be based simply on the proposal applying to everyone. Accessibility measures and inclusive consultation remain relevant.

After consultation, the assessment will be revised to incorporate additional evidence, record how consultation influenced the analysis, identify the preferred option and mitigation, and provide decisionmakers with a final Stage 6 report before the Council confirms its final position following the EQIA.

12. Monitoring proposals

If the plaque is installed, monitoring should be proportionate to the nature of the decision and should examine the actual impacts of the proposal. ECNI guidance treats monitoring as an ongoing part of the EQIA process which should support review and improvement. The detailed monitoring and publication arrangements will be finalised in accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme. This may include, for example:

Measure	Source / frequency	Responsibility / response
Comments, incidents or complaints concerning equality, access or good relations	Existing Council channels; reviewed annually and reported through the Council's annual reporting arrangements to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, where relevant.	Civic and Equality leads; assess themes and recommend action.