



Brentwood
Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council

Corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy

Version 0.6

March 2010

Foreword

Brentwood Borough Council is committed to providing excellent services for citizens and businesses by providing great value and creating and spreading opportunities for all those that live and work in the borough.

We want to create a Borough of Choice and Opportunity for all where people want to live and work. The Borough Council will ensure that all sections of our community are able to reap the benefits of the beautiful and prosperous place that is Brentwood. Our ambitions can only be realised if our services reflect the needs and aspirations of all of the communities we serve. We need to help to develop sustainable and inclusive communities, free from unlawful discrimination, where everyone has the opportunity to participate in public life and enjoys fair access to all of our services.

Diversity and Equality principals are key if we are to achieve our ambitions and remove the barriers that prevent fair access. This strategy sets out our Equality and Diversity Objectives and how we intend to achieve them both as a provider of services and as a key employer within our borough.

Louise McKinley

Message from Joanna Killian, Chief Executive, Brentwood Borough Council.

Brentwood boasts an enviable geographical position. It is on the doorstep of one of the true global cities yet enjoy open spaces, beautiful countryside, culture and History. We also enjoy low crime, good schools, high civic pride and good transport links. It is for these reasons that residents choose to live in Brentwood, building careers, raising families and enjoying retirement.

We have developed a Borough of Choice and Opportunity Programme which sets our vision and direction for the next three years. The purpose of the programme is to harness the energy and ambition of the Borough. By working with our communities we can identify ways to improve quality of life.

Families, business, volunteering, democratic participation and community leaders help communities build and renew themselves. We must support and enable this civic, place-shaping activity, ensuring that all of the communities and equality groups have a voice and are able to contribute to, and benefit from, an inclusive Brentwood community.

Over the next three years we will continue to ensure that services to our customers are reviewed, planned and provided to take account of the needs and views of all of our citizens and equality groups. This "equality lens" approach will ensure that customers are at the heart of everything that we do.

Our Equality and Diversity Strategy sets out the Brentwood Approach to achieving this "equality Lens" approach, celebrating the diversity and achieving equal and inclusive outcomes. The Strategy is underpinned by an equality framework for the plans, policies, procedures and standards which Brentwood Borough Council intends to use to achieve our equality and diversity objectives for employment and service delivery.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the Equality and Diversity Strategy and will hold us to account for reporting on progress through the forthcoming engagement opportunities.

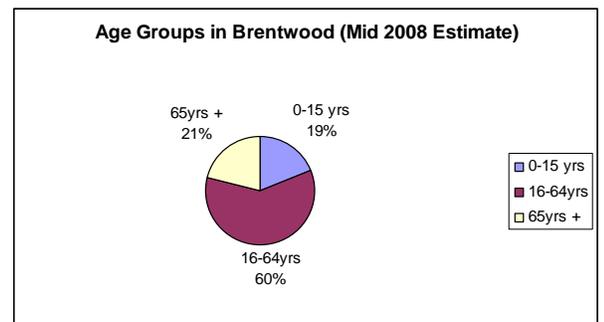
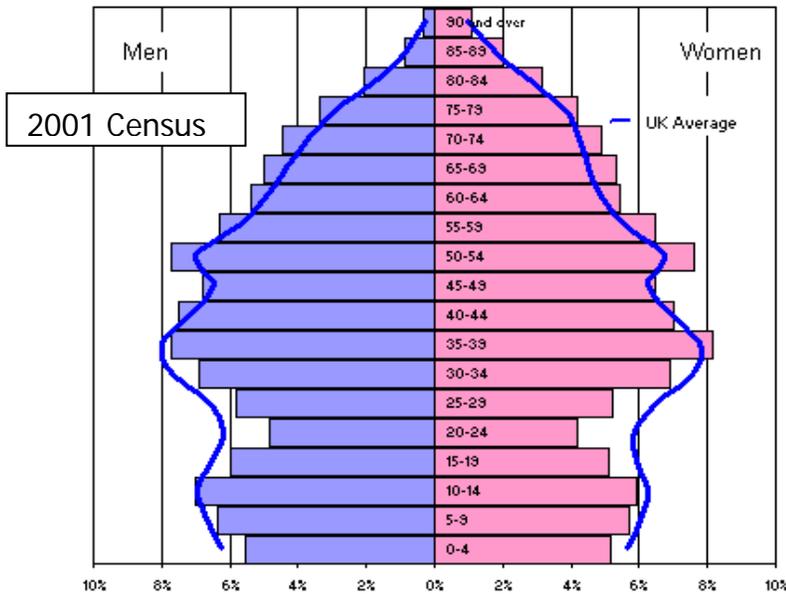
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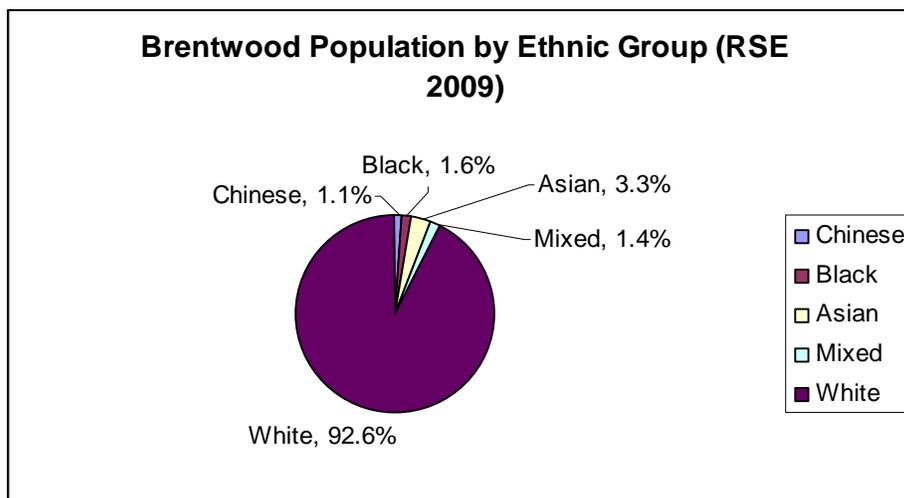
Introduction to Brentwood

Brentwood Borough is a small local authority in the southwest of the county of Essex. It covers 15000 hectares with 71,500 residents.

Brentwood is one of the least populated boroughs although the population of around 71,600 live in a geographically small area. The numbers of men and women in the borough is relatively even (48.4% male and 51.6% female). The age of residents closely follows the national average.



In the census of 2001 15% of people in the borough self declared as having a long term debilitating illness. (NB: Having an impairment does not equate to having an 'illness' however this is the closest indicator to disability provided by the Census 2001. The definition is due to be amended in line with the DDA)



Brentwood has a very low proportion of ethnic minority groups. 7% against the national average of 11%. The borough is relatively affluent, and no areas in Brentwood fall into the 10 per cent most deprived areas in England.

Unemployment rates are low, with the majority of employment concentrated in the service sector. Nevertheless, a high proportion of residents commute out of the borough to work, particularly to London. Average earnings for people living in Brentwood are considerably higher than the regional and national average. House prices are some of the highest in the county and around 50 per cent higher than the national average. The health of the Brentwood population is generally better than the England average although there are still inequalities, particularly around life expectancy.

Local residents are very satisfied with Brentwood as a place to live. The recent Place Survey showed that 89.8 per cent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied living in Brentwood.

Our Council

Brentwood Borough Council employs 320 staff to deliver varied services to its citizens. Brentwood is organised into 5 service Areas:

- Sustainable Communities and Public Places
- Business Improvement
- Resources – Including IT, Finance and HR
- Planning and Regulation
- Governance

Our Partnerships

Brentwood Borough works in partnership with many key Partners to deliver services. We work closely with Essex County Council, sharing a Chief Executive. We also work with surrounding districts and boroughs, 1 Health Authority, 9 Parish Councils and a broad selection of public service agencies such as the police and fire authorities. We also work with third sector partners.

We lead the local LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) which is split into 6 Thematic Sub Groups:

- CDRP (Crime and Disorder Partnership)
- Childrens Trust
- Economic Development
- Environment
- Communities and Infrastructure
- Healthy Living

Our Commitment

We are committed to achieving a borough of Choice and Opportunity for our customers. This Equality and Diversity Strategy sets out Brentwood's Approach to ensure that we enhance the life chances of all those who live and work in the borough by addressing persistent inequalities.

We will do this by adopting an "Equality Lens" approach. We will review our existing services, policies, procedures and strategies by carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's). The EIA process will include consultation with Knowledgeable Stakeholders who understand and represent the views of the identified Equality Strands which are:

- Disability
- Age
- Gender
- Religion or Belief
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Rural Isolation
- Financial Disadvantage

We will ensure that our EIA process achieves real outcomes that drive improvement and achieve real measurable changes that benefit our communities.

We will monitor and measure our successes in that process as part of our corporate performance monitoring arrangements.

Strategic Framework

Our Corporate Strategy echoes and enhances the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Corporate Strategy Vision is:

“To create a Borough of Choice and Opportunity for all, providing excellent value for money services and securing the future of its residents and businesses”.

The Borough of Choice and Opportunity Programme will deliver this vision. By working with our communities and the rest of our public sector partners we will identify ways to improve quality of life. This three year programme is based on the results of extensive public engagement and has informed our Borough Councillors decision to adopt three priorities:

- Value for Money: policies that invest in Key services to create opportunities for all, provide better value for Brentwood’s taxpayers and enhance the borough’s infrastructure whilst modernising and transforming Brentwood Borough Council. We will re-prioritise and focus our resources and be innovative in our approach.
- Our Borough: Policies which promote our environment, promote sustainability, and protect our heritage and countryside. We will provide responsive, accessible and forward thinking services for vulnerable residents, supporting people back into work and providing good quality housing,
- Conditions to Prosper: Actions to sustain low crime rates to create communities where people are happy, safe and proud to live. Providing responsive, accessible and forward thinking services for the vulnerable. Through partnership working we will support existing businesses by creating the conditions for growth; attracting new business to set up and locate in the Borough.

We will know that we have achieved our goals when we see in three years time:

- By gaining an ‘Excelling’ rating for our Equality and Diversity practice
- By being recognised as a Top 100 public sector employer
- By achieving recognition in public sector awards for innovation
- By achieving a customer Satisfaction rating of 92%
- By working in partnership to deal with antisocial behaviour and crime effectively to achieve a target of 40% in improving perception that Police and other public services are successfully dealing with antisocial behaviour and crime locally (NI21)
- By being recognised as a “good” local authority by the Audit Commission.

Equality and Diversity Strategy

We are committed to tackling inequality, achieving social inclusion and improving the life chances of our people. We will uphold our public duty to promote equality of opportunity. No member of the public, service user, elected member, employee, volunteer, agency worker, contractor or staff working with partner organisations will be unlawfully discriminated against because of their:

- Disability
- Age
- Gender
- Religion or Belief
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Location in the borough (Rural Isolation)
- Socio-economic status (Financial Disadvantage)

Brentwood Borough Council's councillors and officers will work to:

- Recognise and take account of people's differences
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment
- Promote good relations between different groups in the community
- Promote equality of opportunity and inclusion
- Remove the barriers to accessing goods, facilities and services
- Ensure that employees are respected and supported, especially at risk groups such as carers, pregnant women and transgendered people.

We recognise that the Equality and Diversity arena is complex requiring specialist expertise and advice to ensure that officers and councillors understand their responsibilities, and to ensure that equality outcomes are achieved and maximised. To this end Brentwood Borough Council has entered into a partnership arrangement with Essex County Council to provide the Specialist Equality Advice and support required by officers and members.

All employees, commissioned service, contractors, partners and councillors are responsible for the promotion and delivery of our Equality Policy – Appendix 1.

Brentwood Borough Council has adopted the Equality Framework for local Government and will use this to measure success (Appendix 2).

Engaging and understanding our communities is key to the successful delivery of our "equality lens" approach. We are undertaking a comprehensive review of all

of our services to ensure that equality and diversity issues are identified and addressed.

We will also make effective use of our growing customer insight and community data to inform and influence decision making, using Equality Mapping and evidence based monitoring to support our activities.

As a significant employer we embrace our social and legal responsibilities to support the economic sustainability of our borough, welcoming applications for employment from citizens in all of our communities. We aim to employ a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, and we will ensure that we maintain a welcoming and supporting culture which removes barriers that prevent fair access and equality of opportunity.

Brentwood Borough Council launched its revised Equality and Diversity Programme in July 2009. The programme provides a framework to ensure that Equality and Diversity values are at the centre of everything we do. Our leader, Councillors and Directors are driving the programme which is seen as a delivery tool for the implementation and embedding of the Choice and Opportunity Values at all levels of our decision making process.

Equality Legislation, General and Specific Duties

This strategy and linked documentation bring together the requirements of the equality legislation and statutory codes of Practice:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Human Rights Act 1998

It also takes into account the proposed changes within the Equality Bill.

As a local Authority we recognise our Duties under this legislation:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity
- To promote good race relations between people of different racial groups, promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and equal opportunities for men and women
- To eliminate harassment
- To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment
- To encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Publish an equality scheme including an action plan and review it every three years
- Assess and consult on the likely impact of proposed policies
- Monitor policies for any adverse impact
- Publish the results of such assessments and consultation
- Address any gender pay gap
- Ensure public access to information and services
- Gather information on the effects of its policies and practices in employment particularly in recruitment, development and retention of staff
- To train staff in the duties
- To eliminate age discrimination

Our linked documents include:

Brentwood Borough Council Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy

Brentwood Borough Council Disability Equality Scheme

Brentwood Borough Council Gender Equality Scheme

Brentwood Borough Council Race Equality Scheme

Brentwood Borough Council Equality Impact Assessment Framework

Brentwood Borough Council Equality Actions Monitoring

These documents are published on the Brentwood Borough Council Website.

Brief outlines of these documents are included at the end of this strategy document.

Governance

The Equality and Diversity governance arrangements provide the structure and process to ensure the Service Areas are managed effectively and efficiently, and in the best interests of our citizens.

The Theme Team Lead is the custodian of the governance arrangements. They are expected to ensure business decisions not only support the Brentwood Borough priorities and objectives but are also transparent, well communicated and actioned by the relevant people within the organisation. They will ensure that each governance meeting is provided with appropriate and timely information to enable/ promote:

Decision Making	Effective decision making .
Strategy	The development of strategy in line with the Choice and Opportunity Priorities.
Performance	Monitor performance against goals and targets to achieve pace and motivation.
Risk	Manage risk in a defensible and robust way.

Officers in all services are actively involved in the Brentwood Equality and Diversity Programme which is underpinned by consultation with knowledgeable stakeholders, community and staff. Each service area has committed to carrying out a number of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and these are detailed in the Equality Impact Assessment Framework which sets out the EIA's which will be undertaken over the next three years. As EIA's are completed the resulting actions will be included in the relevant unit plans and personal 121 plans. The actions will also be summarised in the Equality Actions Monitoring Document. These documents are published on the Brentwood Borough Council website.

Governance Structure

The following picture sets out the roles responsibilities and structure.

Governance and Structure

Title	Membership	Function
Member Support	Cllr Noelle Hones	Promoting and championing E and D Activity with Members, including cross party activities
CLB Lead	Alison Crowe	Corporate Lead for Equality and Diversity. Ensuring comprehensive implementation throughout all Service Areas
Equality and Diversity Board (CLB bi-monthly reforms as E & D Board)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Noelle Hones (Member Rep) * • Alison Crowe (H of PS) * • Steve Boyle (Theme Lead) • Brian Keane (HOS) • Peter McKenzie (HOS) • Steve Summers (HOS) • Tim Madden (HOS) • Barry Fagg (HOS) • John Whelpdale (HOS) • E & D Specialist * • HR Specialist * • Lisa Strougler (Comms/Cust Insight) 	Decision making: e.g. Direction of travel; Key policies and documents. Help to remove blocks if necessary and support embedding of principals within services.
Equality and Diversity Theme Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Boyle (Theme Lead) • Leanna Watts (Co-ordinator) • E & D Specialist • Service EIA nominees • Officers from Specialist Support Services inc Customer Insight & HR 	The “Doers” – Staff involved in the day to day achievement of E & D – the make up may change as the EIAs progress but the Group info should be available to the widest audience so that all services and linked work areas understand their role.
Equality and Diversity and Standing Item on Team Meeting Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA leads provide progress updates 	Teams monitor the progress and actions of EIAs undertaken locally.
E and D Programme Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Boyle • Leanna Watts • E and D Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic direction and expertise. • Provide Challenge • Collate EIA • Arrange training • Monitor and report progress against targets • Ensure legal responsibilities of the organisation are met. • Publish EIAs etc.

Scrutiny – The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider whether our progress is making a real difference in service delivery. Knowledgeable Stakeholders will be invited to review progress as appropriate.

The Equality and Diversity Theme Team

The Equality and Diversity Theme Team meets regularly and monitors the progress made by individual service areas to undertake their EIA's. They provide the drive and support to ensure that Equality outcomes are achieved, and ensure that data and best practice are shared across the organisation to achieve real service improvements. Together with the customer insight team, they maintain a Knowledgeable Stakeholder Register to ensure that effective consultation can be achieved during the EIA process. The Theme Team also inform the Equality Board of progress towards targets.

The Equality Board is made up of Councillors and Heads of Service who champion equality and diversity values, and drive direction and priorities. Heads of Service agree the EIA plan for their areas and sign off completed EIA's to ensure that actions resulting from them are delivered.

Commitment of our Councillors.

The Equality and Diversity Programme benefits from cross party political support. All Councillors champion the Equality and Diversity values, and in particular Councillors have been nominated from all of the three main political parties who have specific interest in and responsibility for Equality and Diversity. These councillors work very closely with the Theme Team to ensure that equality and Diversity values are embedded into all areas of council business.

The Role of Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel ensures that the services provided by the authority are effective and appropriate. Councillors will provide confirmation that our progress is making a real difference. They may be supported by invited knowledgeable stakeholders to add value and clarity to this process.

The Role of the Policy Board

The Policy Board will ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed in the formulation and delivery of all new and existing policies and services.

Brentwood as an Employer

Brentwood Borough Council employs 320 staff in varied roles across the borough. The Council is committed to achieving a workforce reflective of the local community and attract the best people to deliver quality services for our citizens.

48% of the population within Brentwood are women. 46% of the workforce are women In December 2009, 20.25% of the Council's highest paid employees were women.

Black and Minority ethnic communities are growing within the borough, especially 'white non-british'. Latest figures suggest that 7% of people in Brentwood are from BME Communities, although this is thought to be a low. Accurate figures will not be available until the results of the 2010 census are published. In September 2009, 2.22% of employees were from BME communities. In December 2009 6.75% of our top earners were from these BME groups.

Currently 4.41% of the Council's workforce declared themselves to be disabled. In December 2009 none of our top earners were disabled employees. Brentwood Borough Council is committed to the Social Model of Disability. The British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) describes the model as:

"Nothing more complicated than a clear focus on the economic, environmental and cultural barriers encountered by people who are viewed by others as having some form of impairment- whether physical, sensory and intellectual. The barriers disabled people encounter includes inaccessible education systems, working environments, inadequate disability benefits, discriminatory health and social support services, inaccessible transport, houses and public buildings and amenities, and the devaluing of disabled people through negative images in the media – films, television and newspapers."

The Council recognises that women, BME and disabled people have historically been disadvantaged in the workplace, due to a number of factors, and in many organisations, including Brentwood Borough Council, they are under-represented in senior roles. Our focus is on the attraction, recruitment and retention of talented people. We are seizing the opportunity to develop our workforce, to ensure they are best placed to succeed in promotion opportunities. The Council will also develop and nurture local talent to build upon achieving sustainable communities.

Our Priorities:

- To achieve our goal the Council will build upon our understanding of the local, regional and national talent pool, the changing demography within the

borough and plan for future labour demands within the council to develop future workforce goals and targets.

- Brentwood Borough Council will carry out an equal pay review during 2010 and will implement actions to address any pay inequalities as part of this review. We will then continue to monitor future pay decisions.
- Carry out adjustments to the work environment where reasonably practical.
- Create career development opportunities to achieve a workforce culture where individual needs and circumstances can be met.

Training and Development

Brentwood Borough Council offers a targeted suite of training for staff at all levels which reflects our corporate priorities. All of our training courses have been reviewed to ensure that Equality and Diversity principals and issues are an integral part in all training experiences.

During 2007, as part of our work with the Essex Strategic Partnership, our staff attended Diversity Training (Inspiring Diversity, Valuing Others). We intend to repeat this type of diversity training as the organisation moves forward.

We have also rolled out a programme of specific equality training, briefings and surgeries to train and support staff who are directly involved in Equality Impact Assessments, and provide bespoke training and update sessions for councillors, managers and teams. Some of this activity is undertaken through our partnership arrangements with Essex County Council's Diversity and Equality Team.

Our Procurement Officers and Partnership Manager are developing working arrangements to ensure that staff and partners are aware of the specific duties that the council has to promote and to embed the equality and diversity agenda.

Our Priorities:

- EIA Training
- Diversity Awareness
- Greater understanding of issues pertinent to specific equality groups
- Member Briefings and Support
- Service Specific Training

Access to Services

As a provider of key services, the Council recognises the need to remove barriers which make it impossible or unduly difficult for people to access services. The priority is therefore to remain committed to removing physical, attitudinal and communications barriers.

We will identify issues through our Equality Impact Assessments as well as our general consultation with citizens, Knowledgeable Stakeholders and staff groups, user feedback and complaints process.

Our Priorities

Our “equality lens” approach will initially concentrate on three themes:

- Accessibility of Brentwood Borough Councils information, services, building and job opportunities.
- Reviewing and improving services to ensure that they are more inclusive.
- To focus on achieving real outcomes which have a positive impact on our communities; to monitor and measure these outcomes

These themes will form an integral element of the unit plans within service areas.

Purchasing Services – Procurement

The Council's Procurement Strategy underpins the effective delivery of all Brentwood Borough Council's services. With an annual expenditure of c£20m on goods and services a robust procurement strategy and an effective procurement function play a distinctive role in ensuring the most efficient, economic and effective use of resources in the pursuit of the Council's vision and aims.

The Procurement Strategy is intended to secure demonstrable value for money from the commercial arrangements Brentwood Borough Council make, supporting the delivery of innovative, cost effective and high quality services to the people of Brentwood, meeting the highest legal and procurement practices and undertaking such activities in the most effective manner.

In summary the key principles of the Procurement Strategy are:

- Value for Money
- Partnering and Collaboration
- Transparency, Openness and Fairness
- Equality and Diversity Improving Life Chances, Regeneration and Sustainability

We will use our influence to promote a positive approach to equality and diversity in our procurement processes and we will:

- give our suppliers advice on equality issues
- ensure that contracts promote equality and diversity
- stimulate interest in working with the council amongst under represented groups.

Working with our Communities and Partners.

Brentwood is one of the smallest borough councils in Essex. Our size presents both opportunities and challenges. We have the opportunity to consult specifically with minority groups and hear their issues and concerns first hand and we are able to share this information across the organisation effectively using established communication routes including the Customer Insight Team and the Equality and Diversity Theme Team.

However our size does not allow us to employ specialists in all fields and we therefore have to, at times, rely on specialist advice and support from outside agencies and partners. Many of our officers must cover many and diverse areas of work and this presents prioritisation pressures on their time.

It is imperative for the continuity of good practice that the working relationship initiative set up with Essex County Council on Equality & Diversity issues is continued and has full commitment in terms of sharing best practice and funding.

We do have a Customer Insight Officer who can ensure that all sections of the community have an opportunity to have a say in how our services and our organisation develops to meet community needs.

We also have a Partnership and Funding Officer who ensures that we develop effective relationships with partners to allow us to deliver quality services to all of our citizens.

Our Equality and Diversity work is an integral part of our customer insight and Partnerships Strategies and, using Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and Knowledgeable Stakeholders we are able to identify, record and react to issues as they are identified.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA2), and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) have been developed to identify, with our partners, the key strategic needs of the County of Essex and the Borough of Brentwood. All areas of the LAA2 underwent Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that Equality and Diversity Issues were identified and addressed. EIA's will be undertaken for the LSP Priorities.

Our Priorities:

- To use our available data to undertake equality mapping.
- To support officers undertaking EIA's so that appropriate data is gathered and effective consultation is undertaken
- To ensure that our knowledgeable stakeholders represent as many equality groups and sub groups as possible, that we understand the consultative needs of these groups and give them every opportunity to present their views.
- To develop our Partnerships and relationships with groups ensuring that equality groups are represented at all levels in the organisation.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) provide a tool which helps our officers to test the impact that new and existing policies and services will have on people in our communities. The assessment will help us to find out if there is any adverse impact or illegal discrimination or any unmet need or requirements.

Their key purpose is to help us identify direct or indirect discrimination, institutional discrimination and any gaps in service provision. Assessments inform our decision making processes to ensure that our priorities reflect the needs of everyone living in our communities.

Our assessments focus on 8 equality strands, 6 universally recognised: Race and Culture; Religion and Belief; Age; Sexual Orientation; Gender; Disability; and two additional locally prioritised strands: Rural Isolation and Financial Disadvantage. Officers consider the service, policy or process through an "equality lens", considering the potential issues for each equality group. They then undertake a planned consultation with knowledgeable stakeholders to understand issues and develop solutions.

The assessment process will reveal aspects of policy or service that may "unwittingly" exclude or negatively impact upon sections of the community and therefore, be definition remain invisible and unchallenged for years. EIA's also identify areas of unmet need where new services may need to be developed.

To achieve positive outcomes and real change, Brentwood Borough Council has developed a structured process to ensure that all areas are assessed appropriately. The EIA Framework manages a comprehensive list of all assessments and implementation plans which sets out when EIA's will be undertaken. Service Areas are responsible for the delivery and completion of the EIA's. The Theme Team provides support and advice to service areas, and

monitors progress and quality as EIA's are planned and completed, and actions for change are undertaken.

Action Planning

The actions resulting from EIA's are included in Unit Plans and/or personal 121 development and Performance Plans. Actions, and progress achieved towards the completion of those actions are also centrally recorded on the Equality Actions Monitoring Document and monitored by the Theme Team and Equality Board. Where appropriate those actions are also mapped to the appropriate Equality Scheme.

The Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes set out in detail how the Council proposes to remove barriers to achieving equal and inclusive outcomes for the diverse communities within the borough.

Monitoring

The Council is passionate about achieving our desired outcomes. We will measure and monitor our performance against equality targets and performance indicators. These objectives serve to ensure we are able to meet our corporate objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan.

Performance Indicators will act to serve as early warning of possible risks to us achieving our goal and determine mitigating actions. The Equality and Diversity Theme Team is responsible for monitoring performance and members of the Theme Team will ensure the day to day delivery of equality objectives within their service areas. Quarterly reports will inform the Equality Board of progress made and any areas of concern.

Unit Plans show in more detail how individual services and teams will deliver the Equality and Diversity agenda within the corporate plan and other strategic priorities. Plans will also take into account the actions identified within the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes. These plans will identify the resources that each team will allocate to key improvement areas and any risks faced in delivering the plan and how they are managed.

Progress on the actions contained within the Council's Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes will be reviewed and a report produced each year. It is anticipated that, in line with best practice, these schemes will be developed into a Single Equality Scheme which will be monitored and revised every three years.

Governing Policies and Documents

Brentwood Borough Council Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy

Our policy sets out the strategic direction of the Council's Equality and Diversity work, setting out high level aims and objectives.

Brentwood Borough Council Disability Equality Scheme

This scheme has been developed in partnership with the Disability Focus Group. Following consultation it sets out the issues facing people with disability in the borough and a three year programme for improvement alongside an action plan which is reviewed by the group annually to ensure real improvements are achieved.

Brentwood Borough Council Gender Equality Scheme

This scheme has been developed following consultation and data collection with gender related groups nationally and within the borough. It sets out specific gender priorities and includes an action plan for the next three years and progress will be reviewed annually by the Equality and Diversity Theme Team.

Brentwood Borough Council Race Equality Scheme

This scheme has been developed with guidance from the Race Equality Council. It sets out the local race equality issues in Brentwood alongside a three year action plan for improvement. The scheme will be fully reviewed annually and updated in 2010/11 by the Equality and Diversity Theme

Brentwood Borough Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Framework

The EIA Framework sets out the EIAs that will be undertaken by the authority over a three year cycle. It sets out the EIA process target dates and stages completed.

Brentwood Borough Council Equality Actions Monitoring

The Equality Actions Monitoring Document sets out all the identified actions from Schemes (DES, GES, RES) and completed EIA's with key milestones and dates for completion. The Equality Theme Team review the action plan on a regular basis reporting achievements and issues to the Equality and Diversity Board and responsible officers. This document also sign posts the reader to the Unit Plan or Officers one2one objectives plan where the action can be found.

These documents are published on the Brentwood Borough Council Website. Brief outlines of these documents are included at the end of this strategy document.

Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy

This policy is for all officers and Elected Members in all their activities on behalf of Brentwood Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council is committed to providing excellent services for citizens and businesses by providing great value and creating and spreading opportunities for all those that live and work in the borough. Brentwood Borough Council values the communities it serves and will help develop strong, inclusive communities, free from unlawful discrimination. We are committed to enabling all Brentwood residents to achieve their potential by removing barriers that prevent fair access to services, to participation in public life, and to employment with the Council itself. We will do this to promote the well-being of our citizens and improve the quality of the services we provide to our community.

This policy sets out our responsibility to ensure that these principles underpin our community leadership, the services we commission and provide, and how we recruit and manage our staff.

The agreed outcomes for this policy can be found on page 2.

Policy agreed by Members on 10th March 2010

Policy effective from 11th March 2010

Policy review due by March 2013

Agreed Outcomes

Brentwood Borough Council will uphold our public duty to promote equality of opportunity. No member of the public, service user, elected member, employee, volunteer, agency worker, contractor or staff working with partner organisations will be unlawfully discriminated against because of:

- race,
- gender,
- disability,
- religion or belief,
- sexual orientation,
- age.
- rural isolation
- financial disadvantage

Brentwood Borough Council will achieve the “Developing” stage of the Equality Framework for Local Government by April 2010, “Achieving” by April 2011, and continue progress to gain “Excellence” thereafter.

The Council, its elected members and its officers will work to:

- recognise and take account of people’s differences;
- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- eliminate harassment;
- encourage good relations between different groups in the community;
- promote inclusion and equality of opportunity.

All employees, commissioned services, contractors, partners and elected members are responsible for the promotion and delivery of this policy.

Key principles

Equality framework for local government



EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT



part of the **LGA group**

Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA)

The IDeA works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better.

We use experienced councillors and senior officers, known as peers, who support and challenge councils to improve themselves.

We enable councils to share good practice through the national Beacons scheme and regional local government networks.

The best ideas are put on the IDeA Knowledge website.

Our Leadership Academy programmes help councillors become better leaders so they can balance the diverse demands of people living in the same community.

The IDeA also promotes the development of local government's management and workforce. We advise councils on improving customer service and value for money. And we help councils work through local partnerships to tackle difficult problems such as crime and poor public health.

The IDeA is a member of the LGA group, comprising of five partner organisations who work together to support, promote and improve local government. It is owned by the Local Government Association (www.lga.gov.uk) and belongs to local government.

Key principles of the Equality Framework for Local Government

Since 2001 the Equality Standard for Local Government has helped local authorities make real progress in mainstreaming equality. However, over time the strengths and weaknesses of the Standard have become clearer. An equality performance and improvement framework also needs to respond to new thinking on equality outcomes and the new challenges that local authorities face today.

In 2007 we therefore decided to run a consultation on revising the Standard. We received over 200 replies with many detailed comments. A large majority (70 per cent) agreed with our proposals for a new Equality Framework for Local Government and we have incorporated many of the suggestions and ideas that were contributed.

The Framework builds on and recognises the work that councils have already undertaken under the old Standard, but contains many new features. At heart it aspires to be:

- simpler
- smarter
- proportional and relevant.

It is based on three levels of achievement, '**developing**', '**achieving**' and '**excellent**', rather than the five levels of the old Standard. This reduces the actions from 167 to 88, which authorities can implement in ways that are relevant and proportionate to their needs.

At the same time we want to avoid duplication and extra work. So the Framework embodies the 'COUNT' principles – count once and use numerous times.

The Framework highlights, by the way of colour codes, actions that:

- will aid compliance with the equality public duties
- could provide self-assessment evidence for the comprehensive area assessment (CAA) and the IDeA's 'Locality self evaluation: a toolkit for partnerships'¹
- will help meet high standards of customer care²
- will provide evidence on equality and diversity for a local authority's organisational assessment.

The Framework also contains new features including:

- a wider definition of equality, based on equal life chances
- a new section on 'Knowing your communities and equality mapping'
- a focus on equality outcomes for all sections of the community, mapping and narrowing gaps
- a central role for self-assessment and peer challenge.

1. is www.idea.gov.uk

2. Further information on the Government's Customer Service Excellence can be found on their website: www.cse.cabinetoffice.gov

1. Understanding equality

The new Framework uses a wider definition of equality, which was originally set out in 'The Equalities Review,'³ based on the idea of equal life chances.

“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.”

This definition is more aspirational than the formal legal definitions of equality. It is about what we can do to create a fairer society and recognises that:

- equality is an issue for us all
- we don't all start from the same place
- to create a fairer society we need to recognise different needs.

'The Equalities Review' also suggested that the life chances of different groups could be measured against ten key 'domains' or outcomes. These are very similar to the outcome approach of 'Every child matters'⁴ and are set out in Appendix 1 (see page 17). You may find this a useful way of mapping inequalities and defining priorities.

3. Cabinet Office (February 2007) 'Fairness and Freedom: The Final Report of the Equalities Review,' available from: www.archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/

4. 'Every child matters' available from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

This definition includes the groups that are protected by discrimination law. Local authorities will therefore need to continue to consider the impact that race, gender and transgender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief may have on the life chances of members of their communities.

But it will also encourage councils to understand the relationship between these characteristics and socio-economic status and the experience of other vulnerable groups like looked after children and white working class boys with poor educational attainment.

The definition of equality in the Framework is very close to the way inequality and vulnerability is defined by the Audit Commission and other inspectorates for the purposes of the CAA.

“Effective local public services target effort where improvement is most needed to tackle inequalities within and between communities. This may include focusing on the particular needs of people who are disadvantaged or discriminated against through age, disability, race, gender or transgender, religion or belief and sexual orientation. It may also include efforts to reduce child poverty or other inequalities within communities. We will consider how well local partners know and understand the nature and extent of inequality and disadvantage within their communities and how effectively they are working to reduce or eliminate discrimination.”⁵

5. Audit Commission (February 2009) ‘Comprehensive Area Assessment, Framework document’, available from: www.audit-commission.gov.uk

2. The five performance areas

The five areas of performance are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

Knowing your communities and equality mapping

Our society is becoming more diverse. Understanding differences is no longer just an issue for urban areas with large black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. The prosperity and cohesion of all communities are affected by differing age, gender, disability, religious and sexual orientation profiles. It is also important to understand differences within communities. There are many forms of disability, gender is a very wide category and there will be great differences, as well as similarities, in the experience of women. Many areas of the country are also very ethnically diverse and the experience of all groups will be affected by socio-economic factors. Today it is impossible to assume we know the composition of our communities – we have to find that out.

We believe that work on ‘Knowing your communities and equality mapping’ will also provide the evidential base for other work on community cohesion and customer care, and will be the basis for work on the public duties and CAA.

The term 'equality mapping' has been added to the more familiar 'knowing your communities' to emphasise the importance of understanding difference in the context of other major issues such as health, education, community safety, access to work, and identifying where the equality gaps are for different groups. Measuring the gaps should be the basis of identifying local priorities and key outcomes. It will be impossible to develop an outcome focused approach without this core evidence.

The CAA framework also makes clear that in assessing progress on delivering outcomes and improvements the Audit Commission will look for an understanding of the range of performance that a single indicator may hide.

"For example, inequality may be masked by averaging out data on a single measure. Some information on rates of inequality is available from national data, but councils and their partners need to understand the importance of diversity and reducing inequalities in their communities and monitor the impact of their work in reducing inequality regularly."⁶

Equality mapping will require councils to make use of both national and local data and where possible to share evidence with other partners in the public sector.

Most councils will be committed to evidence based policy but not all will have thought about evidence in relation to their work on equalities. We also know that national equality data is often patchy and local data is not always available.

6. *ibid*

The IDEAs website has a section on equality mapping which contains a number of useful resources. We will also be working with partners both regionally and locally to improve the availability and access to local equality data.

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

We know that strategic leadership – both political and managerial – is key to improving equality outcomes. Local councillors in particular have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the council's performance and strategic aims. Very often it will be ward councillors who have the greatest knowledge of the needs of different sections of the community and changes in the population of their local area.

Knowledge of the needs of different communities and key equality gaps should inform strategic priorities like the sustainable community strategy, local development framework and local area agreements (LAAs). It is in these documents what we have called the 'story' or 'vision' of equality should find expression.

The Framework also emphasises the importance of working in partnership with local primary care trusts, the police, fire and rescue services and the voluntary and community sector. Local strategic partnerships (LSPs) will often be the natural vehicle for such partnerships. Narrowing equality gaps and improving the life chances of different groups will require a pooling of evidence, resources and action planning.

For areas with district and county councils working together on equalities will often be the necessary and most efficient way of addressing local inequalities.

Finally, the Framework requires evidence of organisational commitment in terms of resource allocation, compliance with public duties, democratic engagement, scrutiny, service planning and procurement.

Community engagement and satisfaction

Most local authorities recognise the importance of community engagement and participation and have moved far beyond simple consultation exercises, important as they can be, to find innovative ways of involving communities and neighbourhoods. However, communities of place are not always synonymous with communities of interest and it remains important to have the means to involve these communities of interest in decision making as well as service and workforce planning.

The CAA framework emphasises the importance of the involvement of groups who may experience disadvantage and inequality.

“We expect local services to be effective at giving a voice to people who are vulnerable or at greater risk of disadvantage and inequality, identifying their potential and supporting them to achieve the levels of choice, autonomy and improved outcomes that other citizens enjoy. This will vary according to the local context but will include the groups previously identified [see section on understanding equality] and will include groups which local partners have a requirement to consult and engage with under equality legislation.”⁷

Responsive services and customer care

Service provision, whether provided directly or procured/ commissioned, remains a central function for local authorities. The Framework will help authorities personalise services to meet the needs of people with different backgrounds and ensure fair access.

Of particular importance will be a robust process for equality impact assessments (EqIAs) and the implementation of action plans, equality proofing procurement and commissioning, and monitoring access.

In the course of the consultation several people said that the term 'equality impact assessment' was off-putting. We understand this view and note that some authorities use the term 'people impact assessments' or even 'service impact assessments' which they feel are more user-friendly. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is working on new guidance for EqIAs so we have continued using the term pending further advice on the name and process.

When consulting on the Framework we asked whether authorities felt that it should include human rights. Opinion was split on this issue and we concluded that at this stage authorities were not sufficiently prepared to take on board an equality and human rights framework. However, there are many service issues for the most vulnerable where human rights are of particular importance and we have therefore included actions in this section that relate to a knowledge and understanding of human rights.

7. *ibid*

The IDeA will also be organising a number of pilots with local authorities to gain a better understanding of the place of human rights in local government.

A modern and diverse workforce

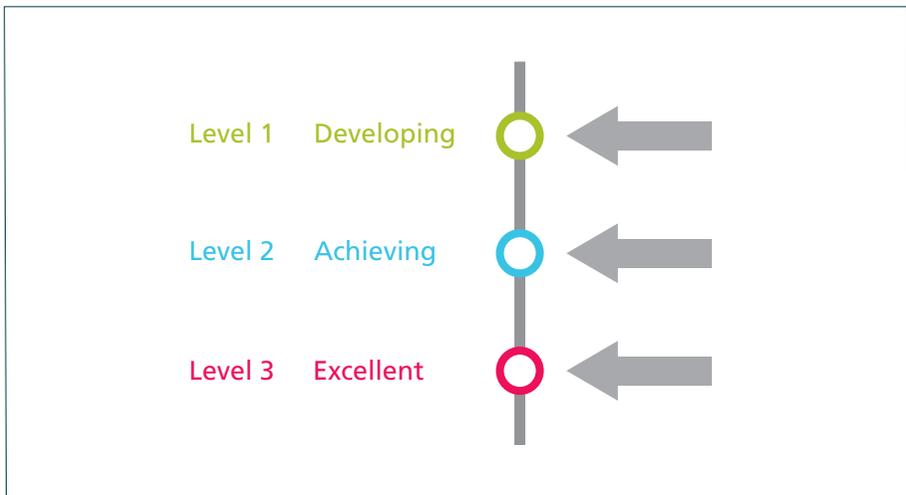
The ability to deliver responsive, personalised services will depend in a large part on the composition, skills, understanding and commitment of a workforce. The Framework therefore looks at ensuring that:

- relevant equality objectives are built into workforce strategies
- an understanding of the local labour market and the barriers equality groups face informs the setting of equality employment objectives
- all major employment policies are equality assessed
- plans are in place to improve representation at senior levels of women and BAME officers
- training and development programmes address equality issues
- there is effective action to address equal pay
- there is a workplace culture in which staff are treated with dignity and respect.

3. The three levels of performance

The Framework is still designed to allow authorities to benchmark their performance, but instead of the five levels in the old Standard there will now be three levels of performance.

At each level authorities will be able to self-assess against the five performance areas set out above.



The 'individual level sections' sets out the characteristics of an authority at each stage along with key actions and examples of evidence of performance against each action.

4. Working with the Equality Framework for Local Government

Although we have distinguished three different levels of achievement, in fact it is best thought of as a process of continuous improvement.



We suggest that in planning to work on the Framework authorities look first at the requirement for **'excellent'** so that they can see clearly where they want to be. For many authorities there will be aspects of their work which in fact may be at the **'achieving'** or **'excellent'** stage although as a whole they would still self-assess as **'developing'**.

The document entitled 'The achievement journey' gives a simple overview of the actions that will progress authorities from the **developing** through to the **achieving** and **excellent** level.

The objective of the Equality Framework for Local Government is to mainstream equality into authorities' key performance management systems so that equality objectives do not sit apart from core council business.

5. Migrating achievements from the Equality Standard to the Equality Framework

Authorities that have reached levels 1 and 2 will be treated as **'developing'**. Those at level 3 will be treated as **'achieving'**. Those at level 4 will be classified as **'moving towards excellence'** and those at level 5 as **'excellent'**.

The **'moving towards excellence'** classification is intended to recognise the achievements of level 4, but it is not a level under the new Framework. It is a transitional stage that will be phased out within two years since the handful of authorities currently at level 4 will be expected to start working to the **'excellent'** stage of the Framework.



6. Peer challenge

We want to encourage self-assessment and sector-led learning on equality.

The Diversity Peer Challenge that is already working for level 3 of the old Standard has been revised to provide a means of benchmarking achievements under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

It will consist of two parts:

- a review by peers of the authority's own self-assessment, including appropriate supporting evidence
- an on-site visit by peers to conduct interviews and focus groups with employees, councillors and other stakeholders.

Self-assessments at the '**achieving**' and '**excellent**' levels will be validated by the peer challenge. Authorities will be given a Framework recognition award for reaching the '**achieving**' and '**excellent**' levels.

It is expected that all local authorities will be reassessed every three years, or in time with their business cycle if that is earlier.

To distinguish between the two levels, the peer challenge for '**excellent**' authorities will be slightly longer and be carried out by highly experienced peers. '**Achieving**' and '**excellent**' authorities will be expected to apply for re-evaluation every three years, or in accordance with their business cycles, whichever is the more sensible. This is to ensure that continuous improvement is taking place and that the authority's performance has not stagnated or declined.

From April 2009 those who are claiming to be either '**achieving**' or '**excellent**', but have not had any external assessment to date (valid external assessments will include the Equality Mark, Diversity Peer Challenge, or an accredited IDeA consultant), will have two years before they will be expected to undertake a peer challenge.

Appendix 1

The 10 dimensions of equality	
Longevity	including avoiding premature mortality
Health	including wellbeing and access to high-quality healthcare
Physical security	including freedom from violence and physical/sexual abuse
Education	including being able to be creative, to acquire skills and qualifications and having access to training and lifelong learning
Standard of living	including being able to live with independence and security and covering: nutrition, clothing, housing, warmth, utilities, social services and transport
Productive and valued activities	such as access to employment, a positive experience in the workplace, work/life balance, and being able to care for others
Individual, family and social life	including self-development, having independence and equality in relationships and marriage
Participation, influence and voice	including participation in decision-making and democratic life
Identity, expression and self-respect	including freedom of belief and religion
Legal security	including equality and non-discrimination before the law and equal treatment within the criminal justice system

These dimensions are taken from 'The Equalities Review,' published on 28 February 2007. To read the review in full go to:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

The Equality and Human Rights Commission are currently working on key indicators to measure equality gaps in these domains. Further information will be available on their website.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

The achievement journey

Colour coding

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

This document gives a simple overview of the actions that will progress authorities from the **developing** through to the **achieving** and **excellent** level.

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Knowing your community and equality mapping				
Developing Understanding the importance of equality		Achieving Developing better outcomes		Excellent Making a difference
How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
<p>1.1 ●●●</p> <p>The authority has in place plans to gather evidence on the profile of their communities, the extent of inequality and disadvantage within their communities and to identify priorities across the authority.</p>	→	<p>2.1 ●●●</p> <p>Relevant and appropriate information is gathered efficiently using a range of techniques, across the local community, to inform the authority's; corporate policy and strategy, the sustainable community strategy, local area agreements and to identify key equality gaps.</p>	→	<p>3.1 ●●●</p> <p>It has good quality evidence, which is regularly updated and used, of the equalities profile of its communities and their changing needs.</p>
<p>1.2 ●●</p> <p>Systems are being developed corporately and across services to collect and analyse soft and hard data/intelligence about the community, their needs and aspirations. (Links to 1.20)</p>	→	<p>2.2 ●●</p> <p>Information and data are disaggregated and analysed corporately and at service/unit level to monitor and assess and set equality objectives. (Links to 2.4, 2.17 and 2.25)</p>	→	<p>3.2 ●●</p> <p>Equality objectives and outcomes are reviewed and evaluated regularly, corporately and at service level based on updated equality data. (Links to 3.18)</p>
<p>1.3 ●●</p> <p>Plans are in place to collect, share and use equality information with partners.</p>	→	<p>2.3 ●●●</p> <p>Relevant and appropriate information and data (including data relating to the National Indicator Set) is mapped, disaggregated and used with partners, to assess and set equality objectives.</p>	→	<p>3.3 ●●</p> <p>Partners are able to identify how communities are changing and the impact this may have on equality priorities.</p>

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment				
Developing Understanding the importance of equality		Achieving Developing better outcomes		Excellent Making a difference
How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
<p>1.4 ●●●</p> <p>Leader, chief executive and partners commit publicly to improving equality outcomes and can tell the equality story for their community.</p>	→	<p>2.4 ●●●</p> <p>Clear organisational and partnership equality priorities have been set and are owned and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector. (Links to 2.2)</p>	→	<p>3.4 ●●●</p> <p>The authority can demonstrate success in meeting a range of equality objectives working with partners in the public, community and voluntary sectors and is reviewing them on a regular basis. (Links to 3.6, 3.7 and 3.19)</p>
<p>1.5 ●●●</p> <p>Sustainable community and other partnership strategies and working arrangements – including the local strategic partnership, local area agreement and multi-area agreement – have been reviewed with the voluntary and community sector and the community to deliver locally identified equality outcomes. (Links to 1.6 and 1.14)</p>	→	<p>2.5 ●●●</p> <p>Equality and cohesion priorities are monitored regularly by partners, the authority’s political and senior managerial leadership, and appropriate resources are being allocated. (Links to 2.20)</p>	→	<p>3.5 ●●●</p> <p>There is a coherent vision of equality which is shared and owned by the authority, its partners and the local community.</p>
<p>1.6 ●</p> <p>A corporately prioritised programme of equality impact assessments (EqIAs) is in place. Corporate strategies and policies are being impact assessed on an ongoing basis and published. (Links to 1.17 and 1.26)</p>	→	<p>2.6 ●</p> <p>Action is being taken to implement commitments within the equality schemes and monitored regularly by political and senior managerial leadership.</p>	→	<p>3.6 ●</p> <p>The authority can demonstrate improvements and outcomes as a result of its equality schemes. (Links to 3.4 and 3.7)</p>

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
1.7 ● A corporately prioritised programme of equality impact assessments (EqIAs) is in place. Corporate strategies and policies are being impact assessed on an ongoing basis and published. (Links to 1.17 and 1.26)	→	2.7 ● Appropriate resources have been allocated and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and improve equality outcomes where shortfalls have been identified. (Links to 2.18)	→	3.7 ● ● Equality objectives arising out of EqIAs have been integrated into strategic plans. Priorities and equality outcomes are being achieved. (Links to 3.4, 3.7 and 3.20)
1.8 ● ● Corporate and service level structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of the equalities agenda.	→	2.8 ● ● Political overview and scrutiny processes review equality impacts and objectives.	→	3.8 ● ● The authority scrutinises and challenges its own and its partnerships' performance with regard to equality impacts and objectives.
1.9 ● Internal, external and partnership communication strategies are designed to promote good relations across all local communities.	→	2.9 ● ● The authority communicates effectively about its equality and cohesion priorities, how it is responding to its communities' needs and promoting good relations.	→	3.9 ● It has gained a reputation within the community and with its strategic and voluntary and community sector partners for championing and achieving equality outcomes and promoting good relations. (Links to 3.14)
1.10 ● ● ● Procurement and commissioning frameworks and processes take account of the differing needs of users and citizens. (Links to 1.17)	→	2.10 ● ● ● The authority ensures that contractors, commissioned services and grant receivers regularly review their services and access to them to ensure they continue to be appropriate and accessible. (Links to 2.19)	→	3.10 ● ● ● The authority can demonstrate that commissioned/procured services are delivering its equality related objectives. (Links to 3.4)

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
<p>1.11 ●</p> <p>In line with public duty requirements, plans are in place to improve the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life, in particular with regard to disabled people.</p>	→	<p>2.11 ●</p> <p>Work is being undertaken to promote equality of opportunity in terms of the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life, including as elected representatives.</p>	→	<p>3.11 ●</p> <p>There is an improvement in the participation rates of under-represented groups in civic and public life.</p>
<p>1.12 ●</p> <p>Structures are in place within the authority and across partnerships to promote positive relations, enable different groups of people to get on well together and deal with harassment and hate crimes effectively.</p>	→	<p>2.12 ●</p> <p>The quality of community relations and harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.</p>	→	<p>3.12 ●</p> <p>More people believe that there has been an improvement in relations across diverse communities and harassment and hate crimes are dealt with effectively.</p>
				<p>3.13</p> <p>Councillors and senior officers demonstrate personal leadership and understand the relevance of equality and cohesion to their local communities.</p>
				<p>3.14 ● ●</p> <p>The authority benchmarks its achievements against comparable others and shares its experience in developing good practice across the public sector. (Links to 3.9)</p>

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Community engagement and satisfaction				
Developing Understanding the importance of equality		Achieving Developing better outcomes		Excellent Making a difference
How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 1.13 ● ● </div> <p>Inclusive community engagement structures are being developed throughout the authority and its partnerships which include communities of interest. (Links to 1.31)</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 2.13 ● ● ● </div> <p>Community engagement structures are working efficiently and effectively. (Links to 1.31)</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 3.15 ● ● ● </div> <p>The authority has a sophisticated and segmented understanding of its local communities which influences and informs policy developments.</p>
<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 1.14 ● ● ● </div> <p>The authority involves and consults with all its communities, including disabled people, on an ongoing basis before priorities are agreed. (Links to 1.16)</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 2.14 ● ● ● </div> <p>Involvement and consultation influences and informs equality priorities and feedback is given to those consulted.</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 3.16 ● ● ● ● </div> <p>All sections of the community are satisfied that the authority and its partners have taken their views into account.</p>
<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 1.15 ● ● ● ● </div> <p>The authority involves and consults with vulnerable and marginalised groups to ensure their views are taken account of.</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 2.15 ● ● ● </div> <p>Consultation influences and informs equality priorities and feedback is given to those consulted.</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 3.17 ● ● ● </div> <p>Effective forums are in place to enable all equality stakeholders/representatives of vulnerable and marginalised groups to challenge, scrutinise and evaluate priorities.</p>
		<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 2.16 ● </div> <p>Partners work together to balance diverse, but sometimes conflicting interests, in the locality.</p>	→	<div style="background-color: #2c5e6c; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> 3.18 ● </div> <p>Partners review priorities regularly in the light of changing and conflicting community needs and interests. (Links to 3.2)</p>

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Responsive services and customer care				
Developing Understanding the importance of equality		Achieving Developing better outcomes		Excellent Making a difference
How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
<p>1.16 ●●●●</p> <p>Services ensure that local communities are consulted and/or engaged with appropriately about service planning and delivery. (Links to 1.14)</p>	→	<p>2.17 ●●●●</p> <p>A set of equality outcomes/objectives/goals have been produced at service/unit level to meet the needs of identified equality target groups, and those who are most vulnerable. (Links to 2.2 and 2.4)</p>	→	<p>3.19 ●●●●</p> <p>The authority has achieved positive progress across all departments/service areas against the equality outcomes/objectives it set. (Links to 3.4, 3.7 and 3.22)</p>
<p>1.17 ●</p> <p>EqlAs involve appropriate community and/or stakeholder groups and are made public. (Links to 1.6 and 1.26)</p>	→	<p>2.18 ●</p> <p>Appropriate resources have been allocated and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and improve equality outcomes where shortfalls have been identified. (Links to 2.6)</p>	→	<p>3.20 ●</p> <p>EqlAs are built into all aspects of decision making and policy and service reviews. (Links to 3.6)</p>
<p>1.18 ●●●</p> <p>All commissioning and procurement processes take account of equality issues. Contracts include a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service fairly and equitably. (Links to 1.10)</p>	→	<p>2.19 ●●●</p> <p>Mechanisms are in place to ensure that service equality objectives are delivered by contractors and providers through contract management, and that they are monitored properly. (Links to 2.10)</p>	→	<p>3.21 ●●●</p> <p>The authority is able to show improving satisfaction with and perceptions of procured services from all sections of the community. (Links to 3.24)</p>

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
1.19 ●● Structures are in place to ensure equality outcomes are integrated into service objectives and targets.	→	2.20 ●● Equality and cohesion objectives are monitored regularly by portfolio holders and departmental management teams. (Links to 2.7, 2.22 and 2.23)	→	3.22 ●● Services can demonstrate that improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered. (Links to 3.19)
1.20 ●●● Appropriate measures are put in place to ensure the service needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are identified, and that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect. (Links to 1.2)	→	2.21 ●●●● The identified needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are addressed and services are designed to ensure that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect.	→	3.23 ●●●● There is an improvement in outcomes for all communities, including those who are vulnerable and marginalised, and more people believe they are treated with dignity and respect.
1.21 ●●● Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that human rights considerations are identified when planning services.	→	2.22 ●●● Human rights issues are considered and addressed when delivering services to customers and clients. (Links to 2.7 and 2.20)	→	3.24 ●●● More people believe that they have been treated fairly and that their human rights have been respected.
1.22 ●●●● The authority is developing systems to collect, analyse and measure data on how all sections of the community are able to access services.	→	2.23 ●●● Access to and appropriateness of services is monitored regularly by portfolio holders and departmental management teams. (Links to 2.7 and 2.20)	→	3.25 ●●●● There is increased satisfaction with services amongst all users, including vulnerable and marginalised groups. (Links to 3.21)

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

A modern and diverse workforce				
Developing Understanding the importance of equality		Achieving Developing better outcomes		Excellent Making a difference
How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
1.23 ● ● The authority's workforce strategy identifies key equality issues.	→	2.24 ● ● The equality aspects of the workforce strategy are implemented and monitored.	→	3.26 ● ● A range of innovative processes are in place which deliver equality outcomes for the whole workforce. (Links to 3.29)
1.24 ● ● It understands its local labour market, the barriers equality groups face and the impact this has on achieving a diverse workforce. (Links to 1.1)	→	2.25 ● ● Employment objectives have been set based on internal monitoring, staff consultation and the assessment of the local labour market and barriers. (Links to 2.2)	→	3.27 ● ● It can demonstrate movement towards greater equality in its workforce profile, including the representation of women and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups in senior management.
1.25 ● It ensures that all employment procedures comply with equality legislation and employment codes of practice.	→	2.26 ● The authority regularly monitors, analyses and publishes employment data to fulfil its statutory duties.	→	3.28 ● Adverse trends identified from the monitoring and analysis of employment data is acted upon.
1.26 ● The authority has a prioritised programme for carrying out EqlAs on major and new employment policies. These are made public. (Links to 1.6, and 1.17)	→	2.27 ● All employment procedures have been impact assessed and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and promote equality outcomes.	→	3.29 ● ● The implementation of equality objectives is resulting in the potential of all staff being maximised. (Links to 3.26)

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?		How was this done and what is the evidence?
1.27 ● ● The authority has made a commitment to equal pay and started work on its equal pay review.	→	2.28 ● ● The authority has made significant progress on its equal pay review and is working towards reaching agreement with unions.	→	3.30 ● ● Action has been taken to ensure equal pay is fully implemented.
1.28 ● It carries out a training needs assessment of the development required to deliver equality outcomes.	→	2.29 ● It delivers a range of learning and development opportunities to support councillors and officers to deliver equality outcomes.	→	3.31 ● ● ● Councillors understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources. Services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of local communities.
1.29 ● ● Structures are in place to identify, prevent and deal effectively with harassment and bullying in the workplace.	→	2.30 ● ● Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.	→	3.32 ● ● Harassment and bullying at work are dealt with effectively and more staff say that they are treated with dignity and respect.
1.30 Equality issues are integrated into appraisal systems.	→	2.31 Equality implications inform the setting of objectives in management and individual appraisals.	→	3.33 Managers and staff are delivering improvements based on objectives.
1.31 ● A range of inclusive structures are in place to engage and involve staff before priorities are set. (Links to 1.13)	→	2.32 ● ● Staff are engaged positively in service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working.	→	3.34 ● ● The authority has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups.

Notes

Notes

A developing authority understanding the importance of equality

A developing authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers understand the significance of equality of opportunity in creating local areas that people want to live and work in. They visibly lead partnerships that address inequality.
- It has demonstrated clear plans to undertake equality mapping and understands the profile and needs of communities of interest within its locality.
- It has publicly committed to improving equality outcomes and the elimination of discrimination in both service delivery and employment based on race, gender, disability, age, religion and/or belief and sexual orientation and other areas of disadvantage.
- It is compliant with all legal requirements, including having all the public duty equality schemes in place.
- It has systems in place at corporate and service/unit levels to ensure the delivery, review and scrutiny of its equality and cohesion priorities.
- Key internal and external stakeholders and community members are involved in and consulted on equalities issues.
- It has earmarked specific resources for improving equality practice.
- It is carrying out both retrospective and prospective equality impact assessments.
- It is clear about its workforce profile and has plans to ensure equal pay and to improve representation where appropriate.

A developing authority understanding the importance of equality

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place, but needs improving
4. In place and effective

- Corporate service excellence standard
- Corporate area assessment
- Public duties

Knowing your community and equality mapping	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
<p>1.1 ● ●</p> <p>The authority has in place plans to gather evidence on the profile of their communities, the extent of inequality and disadvantage within their communities and to identify priorities across the authority.</p>					<p>Is the authority clear about what sources of information (both local and national) might be relevant and useful?</p>		
<p>1.2 ● ●</p> <p>Systems are being developed corporately and across services to collect and analyse soft and hard data/intelligence about the community, their needs and aspirations. (Links to 1.20)</p>					<p>Is the authority aware of what information is already being collected – within services, corporately, or by its partners? Are there any repositories of local information eg observatories? Does the authority have systems for collating and analysing the different sets of data being collected? How is information collected by front-line staff or councillors taken account of? How are local people’s needs identified? Is the authority able to gauge how its communities might be changing? How frequently is data gathered and analysed? How is it used to inform the setting of objectives?</p>		

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>1.3</p> <p>Plans are in place to collect, share and use equality information with partners.</p>					<p>Are there protocols in place for sharing information? Is the authority working with its partners to ensure information is shared effectively? How do partners ensure efficient collection of data that avoids duplication?</p>	

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
<p>1.4</p> <p>Leader, chief executive and partners commit publicly to improving equality outcomes and can tell the equality story for their community.</p>					<p>What public statements have been made? Are they meaningful? What documentation details the authority's and partnerships' commitment to equality and community cohesion? How is the 'equality story' integrated into partnership/corporate documents?</p>		

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	1	2	3	4			
1.5 ● ● Sustainable community and other partnership strategies and working arrangements including the local strategic partnership, local area agreement and multi-area agreement have been reviewed with the voluntary and community sector and the community to deliver locally identified equality outcomes. (Links to 1.6 and 1.14)					How are equalities issues addressed within the sustainable community strategy, local area agreement, local strategic partnership, and community cohesion strategy? Is equality integral to the voluntary and community sector compact?		
1.6 ● The authority has compliant equality scheme(s) under the public duties in place.					Do the equality schemes meet statutory requirements, including involving the relevant target groups with clear action plans relating to both employment and service delivery?		
1.7 ● A corporately prioritised programme of equality impact assessments (EqIAs) is in place. Corporate strategies and policies are being impact assessed on an ongoing basis and published. (Links to 1.17 and 1.26)					Is there a list of functions and priorities or an action plan with a timetable which sets out which EqIAs will be undertaken and when by? Is there a corporate EqIA framework and guidance? Are EqIAs available publicly? What is the quality of the EqIAs – are they meaningful or do they ‘tick the box’? Do the corporate and financial plans and strategies of the authority take account of equalities issues?		

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>1.8</p> <p>Corporate and service level structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of the equalities agenda.</p>					Who is responsible for delivering the agenda at councillor and officer level? Is there a corporate equalities group? Are there service level equalities groups?	
<p>1.9</p> <p>Internal, external and partnership communication strategies are designed to promote good relations across all local communities.</p>					How does the authority's communication strategy take account of equalities? Do authority and partnership publications and press releases reflect a diverse community and workforce in terms of both content and images? Is the authority's website accessible and informative? What is done to promote good relations across communities?	
<p>1.10</p> <p>Procurement and commissioning frameworks and processes take account of the differing needs of users and citizens. (Links to 1.17)</p>					Is there corporate guidance on the equality and diversity requirements for the procurement and commissioning process? Are there standard equality clauses for contracts? How do specifications take account of the different needs of users?	

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>1.11 ●</p> <p>In line with public duty requirements, plans are in place to improve the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life, in particular with regard to disabled people.</p>					How is the authority involving local people, including disabled people, and keeping them informed about civic and public participation opportunities, eg becoming a school governor?	
<p>1.12 ●</p> <p>Structures are in place within the authority and across partnerships to promote positive relations, enable different groups of people to get on well together and deal with harassment and hate crimes effectively.</p>					Are there joint partnership/ corporate structures and guidance on recording and dealing with such behaviour? How does the community safety strategy address this area? What events are held to promote positive relations?	

Community engagement and satisfaction	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
<p>1.13 ● ●</p> <p>Inclusive community engagement structures are being developed throughout the authority and its partnerships which include communities of interest. (Links to 1.31)</p>					What engagement structures are in place? How are marginalised and vulnerable people included? What mechanisms are used to engage different groups, including communities of interest?		

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	1	2	3	4		
1.14 ● ● ● The authority involves and consults with all its communities, including disabled people, on an ongoing basis before priorities are agreed. (Links to 1.16)					What evidence is there that consultation, involvement and inclusion are integral to the way the authority prioritises and plans its service outcomes?	
1.15 ● ● ● The authority involves and consults with vulnerable and marginalised groups to ensure their views are taken account of.					Does the authority engage with advocacy organisations which represent vulnerable and marginalised groups and equality groups? How does it ensure that mechanisms and events are inclusive?	

Responsive services and customer care	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
1.16 ● ● ● Services ensure that local communities are consulted and/or engaged with appropriately about service planning and delivery. (Links to 1.14)					Is there evidence that relevant voluntary and community sector groups, employees and the community have been involved in the process?		

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- Public duties

	1	2	3	4		
1.17 ● EqlAs involve appropriate community and/or stakeholder groups and are made public. (Links to 1.6 and 1.26)					What evidence is there of stakeholder consultation in EqlAs? Are EqlAs published regularly?	
1.18 ● ● All commissioning and procurement processes take account of equality issues. Contracts include a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service fairly and equitably. (Links to 1.10)					Are EqlAs undertaken when procuring or commissioning services? Are the outcomes reflected in the specifications for the service and in the procurement process? Does the specification set measurable standards for the contractor? How are equalities addressed or assessed in the stages of the tendering process, eg preparing the specification, pre-qualification, tender assessment? How do managers ensure that suppliers/service providers have an understanding and commitment to the principles and practice of equality in what they do?	

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>1.19</p> <p>Structures are in place to ensure equality outcomes are integrated into service objectives and targets.</p>					<p>Are equality objectives integrated into service plans? Are there departmental equalities groups? Are monitoring or progress reports produced on a regular basis? Are these fed into service assessments?</p>	
<p>1.20</p> <p>Appropriate measures are put in place to ensure the service needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are identified, and that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect. (Links to 1.2)</p>					<p>Do customer care policies highlight the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups? How are complaints dealt with? Are there mechanisms in place to enable staff to introduce local service improvements? What information is available from user surveys?</p>	
<p>1.21</p> <p>Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that human rights considerations are identified when planning services.</p>					<p>Do customer care policies highlight human rights considerations? Do staff have the competence to identify potential human rights issues? What training has been provided to service planners?</p>	
<p>1.22</p> <p>The authority is developing systems to collect, analyse and measure data on how all sections of the community are able to access services.</p>					<p>Do services carry out any mapping exercises to identify and review current participation and to highlight gaps?</p>	

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A modern and diverse workforce	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
1.23 The authority's workforce strategy identifies key equality issues.					Is there a workforce strategy? How is equality mainstreamed?		
1.24 It understands its local labour market, the barriers equality groups face and the impact this has on achieving a diverse workforce. (Links to 1.1)					Is the authority clear about its local labour market? Was any equality mapping data used as part of the analysis? What information did it use to make an assessment? Has it begun to identify the steps it needs to take to achieve a diverse workforce across all equality groups?		
1.25 It ensures that all employment procedures comply with equality legislation and employment codes of practice.					Are all human resources policies regularly reviewed to ensure they are compliant with the latest developments?		
1.26 The authority has a prioritised programme for carrying out EqlAs on major and new employment policies. These are made public. (Links to 1.6, and 1.17)					Are EqlAs being done for major employment policies and new policies and procedures?		

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- Corporate service excellence standard
- Corporate area assessment
- Public duties

	1	2	3	4			
1.27 The authority has made a commitment to equal pay and started work on its equal pay review.					Has the authority developed an equal pay policy, set out a timetable for carrying out its pay review and started work on its equal pay review?		
1.28 It carries out a training needs assessment of the development required to deliver equality outcomes.					Has an assessment been made as to what training, learning or development will be required? Have the appropriate competencies been identified? How? Does the learning and development plan take account of equalities issues? Does it include councillors?		
Structures are in place to identify, prevent and deal effectively with harassment and bullying in the workplace.					Is there a dignity at work or harassment and bullying policy? Are there any support structures for staff?		
1.30 Equality issues are integrated into appraisal systems.					Has the appraisal system been reviewed to take account of equality issues?		
1.31 A range of inclusive structures are in place to engage and involve staff before priorities are set. (Links to 1.13)					What staff engagement structures are there? Are there any staff support networks? Are there any groups for particular networks of staff?		

We have identified the following areas for improvement	Priority 1–10 (1 is high)	Who?	Resources needed

A developing authority
understanding the
importance of equality

- Corporate service excellence standard
- Corporate area assessment
- Public duties

Potential barriers	Potential solutions	If appropriate, how are we planning to involve stakeholders and community members?

An developing authority illustration

understanding the importance of equality

This illustration provides an example of how an authority at the **developing** stage might look.

Context

Wingfield District Council is a sparsely populated district with approximately 90,000 residents. There are 129 rural parishes and half of the population lives in five small towns. At 397 square miles, it is the largest district in the county in terms of area. The district has one of the highest percentages of retired residents in the United Kingdom and the proportion of residents with a disability is slightly above the national average. Within the population, based on the 2001 census, 3.1 per cent are non-white or non-British, which is well below regional and national averages. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been an increase in these numbers with the influx of Eastern Europeans to work in the local hospitality and tourism industry.

Wingfield is generally affluent, but has significant pockets of deprivation, especially in two of the towns. Average earnings are £345 per week, below the national average of £402 per week. Unemployment is low at less than 1.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.5 per cent. Recorded crime is low, although fear of crime and anti-social behaviour are issues for residents, particularly older people.

The district is governed by a leader and executive system, with the leader chairing the executive committee which is the decision-making forum. A recent peer review commended the council for developing a good performance management framework and scrutiny and overview process.

The chief executive leads a management board which consists of four corporate directors, responsible for corporate resources; housing and health; leisure and environment; and strategic services. It employs 420 full-time equivalent staff. The 2006 customer satisfaction survey places the council in the top 5 per cent of the English district councils.

Wingfield's vision is:

“The district should remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work.”

Its strategic objectives are to:

- achieve a balanced housing market
- protect and enhance the environment
- increase prosperity
- improve the safety of communities
- promote a mix of leisure for all ages
- promote healthier communities
- champion local transport needs
- ensure a well managed council.

The council received a comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) score of 'good' in 2004 and in April 2007 the Audit Commission gave it a positive 'direction of travel' statement.

Background

Given its commitment to providing a high quality service to all its communities the council has tried hard to meet the requirements of equalities legislation, since the introduction of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It has had a race equality scheme since 2002. Given the small black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) community in the area it has tended to use the local (county-wide) racial equality council (REC) to carry out its consultations. It has published an annual review, which is available on its website. Following complaints from the REC, it reviewed its language provision and has started using Language Line to provide interpretation services.

As a starting point, in the autumn of 2003 the chief executive nominated one of the corporate directors to take the work forward on trying to meet the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government and the newer strands of equalities legislation. However, officers had difficulty making real connections between the broader requirements of the Standard and their day-to-day work. Moreover, diversity was seen to be a race issue. Neither officers nor members made the connections with regard to the wider issues relating to age, disability, gender, sexual orientation and religion and/or belief, despite having such a large population of retired people.

A corporate equality and diversity group (CEDG) was set up with a remit to meet every three months to drive this agenda and each service was invited to nominate an officer to attend. The group was committed but, because that they could not see how this related to day-to-day service provision, and because many of their colleagues and councillors saw this as 'yet another initiative', work was carried out in a mechanistic way, rather than in a way that made a real difference to service outcomes. Progress on meeting the requirements of the equalities agenda progressed in an unfocused way over several months.

Statements of commitment were included in the council's overarching documents. For example, the community strategy, community safety strategy, corporate plan, and there appeared to be a good theoretical framework for taking the equality agenda forward. The council had an EqlA toolkit in place and a significant number of EqlAs had been carried out. However, except in a few exceptional cases, the EqlA process was not being used as a way of testing or challenging proposed or current policies or services or for improving policy or service outcomes with managers struggling to understand the purpose or relevance of an EqlA.

The council had started to put together a consultation strategy in response to a request from services which seemed unaware of the amount of information collected and already available within the council. However, the information was not always analysed effectively, nor was it always able to be disaggregated demographically.

A Developing authority – understanding the importance of equality

An inspection by the Audit Commission in early 2006 commented, "...despite having a well established customer care culture and providing adequate access arrangements to its services, the council needs to introduce a systematic approach to take into account the needs of all its communities within the district". Following this, the council decided to appoint a policy officer with specific responsibility for improving customer care. This gave a new impetus to the equality and diversity agenda.

The officer, who had come from an **excellent** authority, began working with the CEDG to refocus their thinking around why the equality agenda was relevant to the customer care agenda. In particular, they were able to get the group to see that race was not the only issue that needed addressing, but that

given the information from the annual residents' survey, and other forms of customer feedback, older and younger residents and people with disabilities had specific areas of concern.

Connecting the work of the CEDG with the mainstream business of the council enabled the corporate director to provide clear and visible leadership. The CEDG began to meet more frequently, every two months, and began to use these meetings to assess and audit the organisation's performance with regard to equalities and act as a forum for cross-organisational challenge, support and learning. The membership of the group was reviewed and it was agreed that a member of staff working on reception be included. They were able to inform the group about changes on the 'front line' in terms of the enquiries coming in, particularly housing and education enquiries from Polish people.

The corporate director put together a report to take to the cabinet, which recommended the appointment of a portfolio holder with responsibility for customer care and suggested that leading councillors would benefit from having some training in diversity. A portfolio holder was appointed and he began to attend CEDG once in a while in order to ensure that he was kept abreast of developments, but also so

that he could feed councillor concerns into the process. In particular, he was able to bring up customer care concerns that had been picked up by ward councillors during surgeries and visits. Issues raised included the lack of knowledge of some older people about the range of benefits they were entitled to, including the council's 'leisure card' scheme, which entitled them to free access to leisure centres at particular times.

As a result of changes to the CEDG and the information coming in, it was agreed that a 'mapping' exercise needed to be undertaken to collate all this 'informal' intelligence, to identify gaps, and to ensure that any consultation strategy involved the recently arrived communities, and younger people – a group that had been overlooked previously.

Working with the officer responsible for putting together the consultation strategy, they reviewed what and how information had been collected to date, what methodologies had been used to engage with local communities and how information was analysed and used to set organisational priorities or improve service outcomes. They also reviewed what types of information were available nationally or regionally and considered whether information could be disaggregated demographically to reflect the different communities locally. It became clear that this work

would need to be done in conjunction with both the county and other partners. A discussion took place at a local strategic partnership meeting to consider the best way forward.

The cabinet decided that any equality and diversity training should be open to all councillors and, in line with its commitment to partnership working, councillors of neighbouring district councils were invited to attend. Half-day seminars were run, outlining their responsibilities with regard to the legislation and the EFLG and case studies based on real scenarios were used to illustrate some of the issues that councillors might need to address.

As a result of the joint councillor training, the discussions about consultation, and the need to work more effectively with partners, it became clear to the corporate director that it would be beneficial if all those working on the equality agenda across the public sector in the county met every six months to learn from each other. As a result of this initiative, the districts and the county developed a more streamlined and simpler EqlA framework which they all committed to use.

The CEDG also decided to devise a clear timetable for carrying out EqlAs – both prospective as well as retrospective – which was prioritised. The programme covered all the services and included HR policies. This enabled proper resources to be allocated and enabled the authority to ensure that EqlAs were meaningful and involved the appropriate community, users and stakeholders as necessary. Rather than training a lot of managers on how to carry out EqlAs, it was decided that members of the CEDG would be trained and would act as ‘mentors’ and support other officers. This, it was felt, would ensure consistency of quality.

Feedback from both officers and community groups is that using the EqlA framework in this way has led to better decisions and improved policy making. Officers have thought about the specific needs of different groups in a way they have not done before. The overview and scrutiny committee has now asked that any policy or initiative being scrutinised by them must be accompanied by an EqlA.

At the same time the performance team began to consider how any targets or objectives arising from EqIAs could be integrated into the main organisational performance management framework, especially the service planning process.

A major challenge for the authority has been engaging with 'hard-to-reach' groups, one of the reasons being limited resources. Again the council decided to work with its partners and in devising its disability and gender equality schemes in 2006 and 2007, they decided to consult with the community on a joint basis. This approach was welcomed by the voluntary and community sector as it enabled them to marshal their resources effectively. Face-to-face meetings were supplemented with an online questionnaire and the consultation process was run by a local academic institution on behalf of all the partners. As a result the district was able to involve a wide range of the community and to ensure that the resulting action plans for both schemes were relevant. This also ensured that each partner was able to deal with and pick up on issues which related specifically to them.

The authority carried out a council-wide job evaluation exercise in 2004. Although this goes some way to show that equal pay issues have been addressed, the council recognises the need to continue monitoring to ensure there is parity between men and women's pay levels and working towards achieving harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment. It regularly monitors the corporate workforce best value performance indicators and is performing well with regard to the top 5 per cent in terms of women. It is doing less well with regard to disability and race and as part of the new workforce strategy it will consider what needs to be done to improve the situation. As part of the gender equality scheme action plan it has also committed to examining and countering occupational segregation.

Conclusion

The council now feels that since refocusing its agenda to recognise that equality is a mainstream issue, both officers and councillors have worked hard to enable the council to reach the **developing** stage of the Equality Framework for Local Government. They are clear that there is obvious evidence that the council has begun to mainstream equalities into its service delivery and employment processes and they feel that if the present momentum is maintained it will continue to make real progress in this area. They have also recognised that making meaningful progress takes time and so are being much more realistic about how quickly they will reach the **achieving** stage.

(This illustration has been drawn together by combining the experiences of a number of authorities at the **developing** stage.)

An achieving authority
developing better outcomes


EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
ACHIEVING

An achieving authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers take direct and personal responsibility for promoting greater equality and test themselves on progress by the outcomes they achieve.
- It has undertaken equality mapping and has a good understanding of its communities, including the extent of inequality and disadvantage, and used the information to inform corporate and service priorities.
- It has set stretching equality priorities in consultation with partners in the public and voluntary and community sectors and these are reflected in its sustainable community and other relevant strategies, local and multi-area agreements, and local targets.
- It works with partners in the public and voluntary and community sectors to develop joint equality strategies.
- It uses equality impact assessments (EqIAs) to review all major corporate and service changes in policy and regularly conducts service and employment EqIAs.
- It has set appropriate corporate and service/unit objectives to address persistent inequalities and to narrow the gap related to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and/or belief, or other areas of inequality for service delivery. This is based on impact assessments and consultation with internal and external stakeholders and partners.
- It has set appropriate corporate and service/unit employment and pay related objectives for race, gender, disability and age, religion and/or belief and sexual orientation.
- Equality objectives are integrated into the local authority's business and service planning processes.
- All relevant data on service access is monitored against the equality strands.
- There are good practices of delivery in all the sections of the council with few adverse impacts found in impact assessments. Where adverse impacts have been found these have been mitigated.
- Key stakeholders and community members, including those who are vulnerable and marginalised, are able to scrutinise and challenge performance on equalities issues.
- It has developed information and monitoring systems that allow it to disaggregate data where appropriate and to assess progress in achieving objectives and targets. It reviews them in the light of changing needs, when necessary.

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place, but needs improving
4. In place and effective

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Knowing your community and equality mapping	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
<p>2.1 ●●●</p> <p>Relevant and appropriate information is gathered efficiently using a range of techniques, across the local community, to inform the authority's: corporate policy and strategy, sustainable community strategy, local area agreements and to identify key equality gaps.</p>					<p>Are different techniques being deployed to gather data? How often is data gathered? Are national and regional data used and analysed? What systems are in place to assess the changing nature of local communities? Is information from ward councillors gathered in a systematic way? How are equality gaps identified and measured?</p>		
<p>2.2 ●●</p> <p>Information and data are disaggregated and analysed corporately and at service/unit level to monitor and assess and set equality objectives. (Links to 2.4, 2.17 and 2.25)</p>					<p>Is information disaggregated and analysed on a regular basis? What changes have been made as a result?</p>		

An achieving authority
developing better outcomes

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	1	2	3	4		
2.3 ● ● ● Relevant and appropriate information and data (including data relating to the National Indicator Set) is mapped, disaggregated and used with partners, to assess and set equality objectives.					What information is available across partnerships? Is data disaggregated using the same or similar categories? How is the information being used to inform and achieve equality outcomes?	

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.4 ● ● ● Clear organisational and partnership equality priorities have been set and are owned and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector. (Links to 2.2)					Is there evidence of a link between equality schemes, equality objectives, corporate and service plans, and the corporate performance management system? Are equality objectives integrated into partnership strategies? What evidence exists to demonstrate challenge by all stakeholders? Does this challenge contribute directly to the development of the authority's targets and objectives?		

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>2.5 ● ● ●</p> <p>Equality and cohesion priorities are monitored regularly by partners, the authority's political and senior managerial leadership, and appropriate resources are being allocated. (Links to 2.20)</p>					<p>In what ways do partners and the authority's leadership demonstrate that they continuously monitor, review and evaluate the performance of equality objectives? Is equality integrated into performance management frameworks? Do councillors/partners scrutinise EqlAs and action plans which lead to major new policies or initiatives?</p>	
<p>2.6 ●</p> <p>Action is being taken to implement commitments within the equality schemes and monitored regularly by political and senior managerial leadership.</p>					<p>How are the schemes monitored and reviewed? How often? What steps are taken if deficiencies are identified? Is the community involved in the monitoring? How?</p>	
<p>2.7 ●</p> <p>Appropriate resources have been allocated and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and improve equality outcomes where shortfalls have been identified. (Links to 2.18)</p>					<p>Are the outcomes of all EqlAs fed into service planning and corporate business planning processes? Are there clear links between EqlAs and service improvements? Have corporate priorities been revisited as a result? Have resource implications been properly assessed?</p>	

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>2.8 ● ●</p> <p>Political overview and scrutiny processes review equality impacts and objectives.</p>					<p>How does the overview and scrutiny function scrutinise equality issues? How are the public involved? How challenging is the scrutiny? Is information available on the website? How do councillors scrutinise EqIAs and action plans or other equality issues? Is progress on equality issues included in scrutiny reports?</p>	
<p>2.9 ● ●</p> <p>The authority communicates effectively about its equality and cohesion priorities, how it is responding to its communities' needs and promoting good relations.</p>					<p>How is 'equality' success defined and communicated? What methods are used? How does the authority promote good relations across the whole community?</p>	
<p>2.10 ● ● ●</p> <p>The authority ensures that contractors, commissioned services and grant receivers regularly review their services and access to them to ensure they continue to be appropriate and accessible. (Links to 2.19)</p>					<p>How does it ensure that contractors, grant receivers and others continue to meet the changing needs of clients? What is written into the contract? How is the contract managed over time to support good practice and continuing service improvement?</p>	

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	1	2	3	4		
2.11 ● Work is being undertaken to promote equality of opportunity in terms of the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life, including as elected representatives.					How is the community being made aware of the opportunities that are available? Has any outreach work or public campaigning been undertaken?	
2.12 ● The quality of community relations and harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.					What data is available? How frequently is it analysed and acted upon? Have there been any changes? Are relevant stakeholder groups and customers involved in the monitoring? How?	

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Community engagement and satisfaction	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
<p>2.13 ● ● ●</p> <p>Community engagement structures are working efficiently and effectively.</p>					Does community engagement take place on an ongoing basis? How is its effectiveness monitored? Are there inclusive, open, and participative forums where community groups can participate? What arrangements are made to meet special needs? What ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) provision is there? How are interpretation services organised? Are there facilities for disabled people who are attending? What is the experience of the community and the voluntary and community sector?		
<p>2.14 ● ● ●</p> <p>Involvement and consultation influences and informs equality priorities and feedback is given to those consulted.</p>					Are there processes and plans throughout the authority to ensure stakeholder and voluntary and community sector involvement in informing equality priorities? How is feedback given? How often? How are people in the community able to challenge? How are their views taken account of?		

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	1	2	3	4		
2.15 ● ● ● Consultation influences and informs equality priorities and feedback is given to those consulted.					Are there processes and plans to ensure the involvement of equality stakeholders and representatives of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the planning and delivery of services?	
2.16 ● Partners work together to balance diverse, but sometimes conflicting interests, in the locality.					Are there any examples where the authority and its partners have had to take unpopular decisions to prioritise but still managed to keep local communities on board?	

Responsive services and customer care	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
2.17 ● ● ● A set of equality outcomes/objectives/goals have been produced at service/unit level to meet the needs of identified equality target groups, and those who are most vulnerable. (Links to 2.2 and 2.4)					How have these objectives been arrived at? What will the outcomes for users be? How are the objectives addressing inequality and equality gaps?		

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	1	2	3	4		
<p>2.18 ●</p> <p>Appropriate resources have been allocated and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and improve equality outcomes where shortfalls have been identified. (Links to 2.6)</p>					<p>Are the outcomes of all EqlAs fed into service planning processes? Are there targets with specific accountabilities and timescales? Are there indicators of how success will eventually be measured? How have targets been integrated into service plans? Have resource implications been properly assessed?</p>	
<p>2.19 ●●●</p> <p>Mechanisms are in place to ensure that service equality objectives are delivered by contractors and providers through contract management, and that they are monitored properly. (Links to 2.10)</p>					<p>Are there monitoring requirements built into contracts to ensure equality issues are addressed? Is there evidence that provision is being monitored using quantitative and qualitative analysis, and the results considered and analysed by both contractor and client? How do authorities ensure that contractors, grant receivers and others continue to meet the changing needs of clients? What is written into the contract? How is the contract managed over time to support good practice and continuing service improvement?</p>	

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<p>2.20 ●●</p> <p>Equality and cohesion objectives are monitored regularly by portfolio holders and departmental management teams (DMTs). (Links to 2.7, 2.22 and 2.23)</p>					In what ways do portfolio holders and DMTs demonstrate that they continuously monitor, review and evaluate performance for equality objectives? Is equality integrated into the service performance management framework?	
<p>2.21 ●●●●</p> <p>The identified needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are addressed and services are designed to ensure that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect.</p>					How are the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups taken account of? What specific initiatives have been taken?	
<p>2.22 ●●●</p> <p>Human rights issues are considered and addressed when delivering services to customers and clients. (Links to 2.7 and 2.20)</p>					How are human rights issues taken into account? What guidance is available for staff? Are manuals updated regularly with regard to changing case law?	
<p>2.23 ●●●</p> <p>Access to and appropriateness of services is monitored regularly by portfolio holders and DMTs. (Links to 2.7 and 2.20)</p>					How do portfolio holders and DMTs demonstrate that they continuously monitor, review and evaluate access to services?	

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Modern and diverse workforce	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
<p>2.24 ● ●</p> <p>The equality aspects of the workforce strategy are implemented and monitored.</p>					<p>How are the equality aspects of the workforce strategy being implemented and tracked? Are specific actions being taken? How are processes changing?</p>		
<p>2.25 ● ●</p> <p>Employment objectives have been set based on internal monitoring, staff consultation and the assessment of the local labour market and barriers. (Links to 2.2)</p>					<p>What objectives have been set? Where workforce data indicates that targets or objectives are not being met, are there appropriate examples of positive action to ensure they can be met? Where there is evidence of disproportionality, what action is being taken to reverse the trends?</p>		
<p>2.26 ●</p> <p>The authority regularly monitors, analyses and publishes employment data to fulfil its statutory duties.</p>					<p>Is there evidence that workforce data is analysed and published to help establish targets and objectives? What information is published and where? Are trends identified? What action has been taken as a result of the monitoring? Is monitoring SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)? What has been the councillor/scrutiny response?</p>		

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	1	2	3	4			
All employment procedures have been impact assessed and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and promote equality outcomes.					Have people management processes been impact assessed against all the equality strands? What action has been taken to ensure equality outcomes?		
2.28 ● ● The authority has made significant progress on its equal pay review and is working towards reaching agreement with unions.					Has the review checked for equal pay gaps? Has a new pay structure been agreed, even if not all issues and gradings have been finalised? Have the new proposals been impact assessed? Has an offer been made to the unions in good faith? Are negotiations continuing where final agreement has not been reached? Have managers and employees received information about equal pay?		
2.29 ● It delivers a range of learning and development opportunities to support councillors and officers to deliver equality outcomes.					Are different methods used to promote learning to a wide audience? For example standard courses, coaching, mentoring. Does equality and diversity form part of councillor training and development? What evidence is there that that equality issues are mainstreamed into all training (eg training on customer care and segmentation)?		

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2.30 ● ● Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.					Are harassment and bullying incidents monitored? What action is being taken to address problems? What information/support is available to staff?		
2.31 Equality implications inform the setting of objectives in management and individual appraisals.					How do appraisal processes ensure staff and managers are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities? How are employees made aware of equality objectives or any changes or improvements?		
2.32 ● ● Staff are engaged positively in service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working.					What evidence is there that staff have been proactively engaged? Are there any improvements?		

We have identified the following areas for improvement	Priority 1–10 (1 is high)	Who?	Resources needed

Potential barriers	Potential solutions	If appropriate, how are we planning to involve stakeholders and community members?

An achieving authority illustration

developing better outcomes

This illustration provides an example of how an authority at the **achieving** stage might look.

Context

Greenshire is a county with diverse geographic areas. The east and west of the county is largely rural with some sparsely populated areas. The county is made up of 50 per cent 'green belt' land and has numerous local nature reserves as well as an area which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Natural heritage is an important aspect for the county council and local residents. Freeborough, the county's biggest town, sits in the middle of the county and has a well-regarded university.

The county has a growing population of approximately 573,000, the majority of whom live in the three main towns of Freeborough, Northam and Peterham. This is projected to rise to approximately 715,000 residents by 2029.

The cost of living is high in the county with house prices 20 per cent higher than the national average and it is difficult for young professionals to buy houses in the county. The area is growing rapidly and there are 62,000 new homes planned to be built over the next 15 years. This is a major issue for the council as it seeks to balance preserving the heritage of the county with the inevitable consequences of growth.

It is a prosperous county with few pockets of deprivation that has attracted high technological businesses, film, media and financial services. There is also a highly skilled and well educated labour force. Unemployment is lower than the national average but there are some industries that find it hard to recruit, such as health and social care, construction and retail.

People from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities made up just over 9 per cent of the population in 2004, with the largest groups being of Asian or Asian British origin (6.4 per cent) and particular concentrations in Northam and Peterham. Among white minority groups there are significant communities of Irish and Eastern European origin, as well as groups of Gypsies and Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers. Migration out of Freeborough, together with the arrival of economic migrants, is leading to more diverse communities.

The age structure of the county is similar to the national and regional averages: 21 per cent of residents are under 16 years, 64 per cent are of working age and 15.2 per cent are over 65 years. However, the proportion of people aged over 50 is projected to increase to 38 per cent by 2011 and 41 per cent by 2016. Life expectancy is above the national average, placing the county in top quartiles nationally for both males and females.

Greenshire County Council has 48 councillors.

The cabinet is made up of a leader and five portfolios:

- strategic planning and transportation
- environment
- adult and community services
- children's services
- corporate resources.

The cabinet is supported by the community overview and performance overview committees and its decisions are scrutinised by the audit and scrutiny committee.

The council reorganised its senior management structure in 2006. The new structure consists of the chief executive who is supported by five directors with responsibility for strategic planning and transportation, environment, adult and community services, children's services and corporate resources. The council employs 15,485 people representing 9,866 full time equivalent posts.

Background

In 2001, the county council appointed an equal opportunities officer on a fixed-term contract based in personnel services. Their job was to progress work on improving physical access to buildings in response to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and to draw up a race equality scheme, in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002. The equal opportunities officer initiated the setting up of an interdepartmental equality forum with interested representatives from each service to take forward the work following the end of their contract.

Following their departure and the adoption of the Equality Standard for Local Government in 2002, it became clear that if the county was to continue making progress on this agenda, it would need to make a permanent appointment. An equalities officer was appointed, and in addition, a corporate equality steering group (CESG) was established chaired by the adult and community services director.

The CESG, under the leadership of the adult and community services director, was instrumental in introducing a clear equality impact assessment (EqIA) methodology and putting in place a realistic and prioritised timetable to ensure that EqIAs were undertaken across the county.

The equalities officer also introduced a mechanism for ensuring that the quality of EqIAs was tested at CESG meetings to ensure consistency across the organisation, but this did not happen on a regular basis due to the heavy agenda. However, whenever EqIAs were assessed it was obvious that their quality was variable and that not everyone was clear about their purpose.

The ad hoc assessments of EqIAs at CESG showed that the good quality EqIAs were being used to improve new and existing policies and functions, and clear and meaningful targets were being set as a result. However, the process of using EqIAs to improve decision making was not being replicated consistently across the county council. Moreover, although Greenshire's EqIA methodology required managers to consider all six equality strands, it was clear that officers tended to only look at issues related to race and disability.

In response, an external consultant was approached to deliver training to 65 managers across the council who were identified as being responsible for carrying out EqlAs. This resulted in some improvements.

Discussions at CESG have made it clear to the adult and community services director that those directorates with effective directorate equality steering groups are delivering on this agenda. This is a weakness that will need to be rectified if the county is to progress.

Another major weakness identified by the CESG in taking the equality work forward, particularly in terms of assessing the communities' needs, is the lack of detailed research on the specific needs of all sections of the community. The type of information about customers, including how ethnicity is monitored, held by individual directorates is not consistent. In addition the lack of a corporate customer database or corporate system for complaints and feedback has exacerbated the situation. Information about its customers and learning from their experiences cannot be shared easily across all service providers.

The county has a diversity and equalities strategy and it reviewed and updated its race equality scheme in 2005. It has since developed a disability equality scheme and gender equality scheme to comply with its statutory duties.

An achieving authority

Following a comprehensive performance assessment late in 2005, overall the council was deemed to be performing strongly, well above minimum requirements. The report stated that “the county council, with its partners, has a clear and challenging long-term vision to create sustainable communities”.

It went on to say that:

“The diversity and equalities strategy provides focus for this area of work. It is having real impact in improving community cohesion across the county with the role of the council commended from all sections of the community. The council specifically targeted work with schools and youth groups, for example, holding a celebration of different faiths, and celebrating Black History Month. The Youth Service worked closely with the BAME communities on a number of levels, including informal engagement ‘on the streets’. This is helping to break down barriers and improve understanding between different communities.

Effective forums for BAME and other minority groups, including older people and those affected by rural isolation, are helping to reduce inequalities and social isolation. The council has negotiated a compact with the voluntary and community sector which is broadly seen as effective.”

However, despite this the report stated that, “the council needs to improve in its strategic approach to diversity”.

Following a discussion at the chief officers’ away-day to address the recommendations of the report, the adult and community services director was given the mandate to “do whatever’s necessary to get us there before the next assessment”.

As a starting point a joint briefing was arranged for the leader, the cabinet and chief officers on the current strengths and weaknesses as identified by CESG.

The briefing consisted of three parts:

- a short presentation by the equalities officer on the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government and legislation
- a presentation by the adult and community services director on the county's strengths and weaknesses
- a presentation by a voluntary and community sector representative on their perspective.

Following this a number of priorities were identified for action, which were to:

- a. Undertake a needs assessment exercise or equality mapping
- b. Ensure EqIAs are being undertaken consistently across the county council, including commissioned services, and are published regularly
- c. Ensure equalities issues and objectives are clearly integrated into service planning and performance management frameworks
- d. Audit the effectiveness of and streamline the consultation process both departmentally and corporately

- e. Improve community involvement in taking the equality agenda forward
- f. Review the workforce strategy and personnel policies to ensure they promote best practice

It was agreed that a six-monthly report would be presented to cabinet outlining progress against these priorities to ensure progress. In addition community overview and performance overview committees would ask to see EqIAs related to the area or function under scrutiny.

a. Undertake a needs assessment exercise or equality mapping

The county has invested in a geo-demographic classification tool, produced by a major local business that describes the UK population in terms of their typical demographics and their social, economic, cultural and lifestyle behaviour to enable it to target its resources and communications more effectively. For example, during the course of the EqIA on council tax collection it became clear that council tax payments would be more reliable if residents paid by direct debit. Using this dataset, the county was not only able to increase the uptake of direct debit significantly but was also able to target a benefit take-up campaign.

b. Ensure EqlAs are being undertaken consistently across the county council, including commissioned services, and are published regularly

A sub-group of the CESG was set up to meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the fact that EqlAs were taking place corporately and to challenge their quality. As a result all six equality strands are now addressed. The membership of the group was widened to include trade union representatives and representatives from the disability and BAME staff networks. Summaries of EqlAs are now published annually on the council's website.

c. Ensure equalities issues and objectives are clearly integrated into service planning and performance management frameworks

Equalities issues were explicitly considered when drawing up the local area agreement, with each target or indicator being screened to ensure that any action plan specifically looked at how services would need to take account of the six strands. The service planning framework was reviewed and more detailed and explicit guidance was issued about setting high-level equality targets in all the service and financial plans and strategies, and also how actions arising from EqlAs should be integrated. Moreover, equalities monitoring has been integrated into the corporate balanced scorecard.

d. Audit the effectiveness of and streamline the consultation process both departmentally and corporately

Corporate consultation guidelines outlining consultation standards, with clear objectives, principles and standards for consultation and engagement for all services, have been drawn up. In addition a consultation portal was launched to provide a diary of all consultations taking place throughout the council. This enables employees to assess whether they can combine consultations where the aim is to consult with similar groups over similar timescales. The portal holds results of previous consultations and, therefore, enables staff to use these results to inform their EqlAs. The portal also enables members of the public to access, through the council's website, details of current and planned consultations and gives them the opportunity to respond to consultations on the central database.

e. Improve community involvement in taking the equality agenda forward

To improve the community's involvement, the Greenshire Community Forum was set up. This was advertised as a way for people from ethnic minority and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, disabled and older people to be involved in the development of local services provided by the council, the primary care trust and the police. It is managed by the council. A separate youth parliament is being considered. Although called a 'forum', meetings and events take place twice a year and it is possible for members to be involved without coming to meetings. Forum members choose how they like to receive communication: by letter, email, text message, via the website or by phone (although it may be necessary to back up phone calls by letter or email). The council does its best to provide information in members' preferred format. If people do come to a meeting or focus event, their travel expenses are reimbursed. Forum members are able to provide input into any major forthcoming changes to services and challenge the council on past performance on the equality agenda.

f. Review the workforce strategy and personnel policies to ensure they promote best practice

A training session specifically aimed at human resources (HR) and policy managers on equalities resulted in the workforce strategy being reviewed together with all the county's HR policies. Following the upgrade of the HR management information systems there is a good corporate workforce monitoring framework in place and high quality information is available about corporate targets and how these are being achieved. The county is now in the process of working out how these corporate targets are going to be translated into meaningful and achievable departmental employment targets. Following the equal pay review the county is negotiating with the trade unions on the detail of how to implement its findings. Processes have been put in place, including training, team briefings and discussions at senior managers' conferences, to ensure that staff understand equalities issues. Equalities objectives and targets are explicitly built into the management appraisal process.

Conclusion

Since the last comprehensive performance assessment both the cabinet and senior officers feel that significant progress has been made over the last two years. Greenshire is confident that when the peer team comes in to assess it against the new Equality Framework for Local Government, it will meet the requirements of the **achieving** stage. It is in no doubt that as a result of the work undertaken it will be able to show that customer satisfaction levels are high and continue to improve; that it has a broad understanding of the make-up and needs of its community and targets its services efficiently; and that consultation and engagement with all sections of the community are effective. The recent staff survey shows that staff think the county's performance on equalities issues has improved significantly, both in the way that it delivers its services and in the way it employs people, citing in particular the new flexible working policy.

(This illustration has been drawn together by combining the experiences of a number of authorities at the **achieving** stage).

An excellent authority
making a difference



EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
EXCELLENT

An excellent authority has the following characteristics:

- Councillors and officers have a reputation for championing equality issues and ensure that the equality issues relevant to their communities are embedded in their sustainable community strategy, strategic plans, local area agreements and local delivery plans.
- It works with all strategic partners and the voluntary and community sector acting as advocates to achieve defined equality outcomes.
- It has good evidence of the equalities profile of the community based on national and local data that is regularly reviewed.
- It is measuring progress on equality outcomes, is able to disaggregate data on relevant performance indicators and can demonstrate real outcomes that have improved equality in services and employment.
- It identifies the changing nature of its communities and their expectations and then prioritises its activities and explains its decisions.
- It provides good customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their communities.
- It has improving satisfaction and perception indicators from all sections of the community and staff.
- Equality groups are integrally involved in community engagement programmes.
- There are forums for all equality stakeholders to share experiences and evaluate the authority's progress.
- All parts of the authority can show tangible progress towards achieving outcomes which address persistent inequalities and narrow the gaps.
- It has implemented action for equal pay outcomes and demonstrates progress on under-representation, flexible working, access to training and development and promotes an inclusive working culture based on respect.
- It reviews its equality strategy and public duty equality schemes every three years and seeks innovative improvement challenges.
- Through its achievements, it is an exemplar of good practice for other local authorities and agencies and works with others to share best practice.

An excellent authority making a difference

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4. In place and effective

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- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Knowing your community and equality mapping	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
3.1 ●●● It has good quality evidence, which is regularly updated and used, of the equalities profile of its communities and their changing needs.					How are changing needs identified, prioritised and met? How is information disaggregated and analysed on the basis of equality groups?		
3.2 ●● Equality objectives and outcomes are reviewed and evaluated regularly, corporately and at service level based on updated equality data. (Links to 3.18)					How is the achievement of outcomes measured? What evidence is there of gaps being narrowed? How is performance measured?		
3.3 ●● Partners are able to identify how communities are changing and the impact this may have on equality priorities.					How do partners ensure that changing needs are identified? How-up-to date is the information that is used?		

An excellent authority making a difference

1. Not in place
2. Currently being established
3. In place, but needs improving
4. In place and effective

- Customer services excellence standard
- Comprehensive area assessment
- Public duties
- Organisational assessment

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
3.4 ● ● ● The authority can demonstrate success in meeting a range of equality objectives working with partners in the public, community and voluntary sectors and is reviewing them on a regular basis. (Links to 3.6, 3.7 and 3.19)					What evidence is there of improved outcomes? Can staff, the community or the community and voluntary sector give any good examples of improved service outcomes? What review mechanisms are in place? Do the corporate and service level equalities groups regularly review performance? Is there any cross-organisational learning taking place?		
3.5 ● ● ● There is a coherent vision of equality which is shared and owned by the authority, its partners and the local community.					What 'story' is the authority and its partners able to tell about improved outcomes? Have partnership objectives/targets been refreshed?		
3.6 ● The authority can demonstrate improvements and outcomes as a result of its equality schemes. (Links to 3.4 and 3.7)					What evidence is there of improved outcomes? Are schemes regularly updated?		

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	1	2	3	4			
3.7 ● ●					Do the sustainable community strategy, corporate service plans and equality schemes review past performance, demonstrate how past targets have been achieved, review performance and set new targets?		
3.8 ● ●					Do the authority and its partners assess their performance against comparable organisations in both the private and the public sector? What review mechanisms are in place?		
3.9 ●					Is the authority approached to share information about its achievements? Can staff, the community or the voluntary and community sector give any good examples of the promotion of good relations?		

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<p>3.10 ●●●●</p> <p>The authority can demonstrate that commissioned/procured services are delivering its equality related objectives. (Links to 3.4)</p>					<p>What feedback is there that procured services meet the needs of all, including marginalised and vulnerable groups? What evidence is there of improved outcomes? Can contractors/partners give any good examples of improved service outcomes?</p>		
<p>3.11 ●</p> <p>There is an improvement in the participation rates of under-represented groups in civic and public life.</p>					<p>What improvements have been achieved? Are more people from under-represented groups participating across a wider range of activities? Are councillors from a wider range of backgrounds?</p>		
<p>3.12 ●</p> <p>More people believe that there has been an improvement in relations across diverse communities and harassment and hate crimes are dealt with effectively.</p>					<p>What information is available to show there has been an improvement – perception surveys, qualitative data, and media reports?</p>		
<p>3.13</p> <p>Councillors and senior officers demonstrate personal leadership and understand the relevance of equality and cohesion to their local communities.</p>					<p>Do councillors and officers 'walk the talk'? Do they act as ambassadors for the equality agenda? What is their understanding?</p>		

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	1	2	3	4				
3.14 ●●					Is the authority approached on a regular basis to provide examples of, or showcase good practice? Has it been asked to work with others to improve performance on equality and diversity?			
The authority benchmarks its achievements against comparable others and shares its experience in developing good practice across the public sector. (Links to 3.9)								

Community engagement and satisfaction	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
3.15 ●●●					Are all sectors of the community involved? How well does the authority know its different communities? Is there a pattern of regular engagement with the community? Are a range of methodologies used?		
The authority has a sophisticated and segmented understanding of its local communities which influences and informs policy developments.							
3.16 ●●●●					Is information related to satisfaction collected across all the equality groups and disaggregated? What information is available from partners? How is this analysed?		
All sections of the community are satisfied that the authority and its partners have taken their views into account.							

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	1	2	3	4			
3.17 ●●●● Effective forums are in place to enable all equality stakeholders/representatives of vulnerable and marginalised groups to challenge, scrutinise and evaluate priorities.					How are people from vulnerable and marginalised groups encouraged and enabled to participate? Have any priorities been changed? On what evidence/basis?		
3.18 ● Partners review priorities regularly in the light of changing and conflicting community needs and interests. (Links to 3.2)					How do partners manage the conflicting needs of their communities? How do they go about negotiating and changing priorities?		

Responsive services and customer care	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
3.19 ●●●● The authority has achieved positive progress across all departments/service areas against the equality outcomes/objectives it set. (Links to 3.4, 3.7 and 3.22)					What evidence is there of improved or improving outcomes?		
3.20 ● EqIAs are built into all aspects of decision making and policy and service reviews. (Links to 3.6)					What evidence is there that EqIAs have influenced key policy changes?		

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	1	2	3	4			
3.21 ●●●					Is there any evidence of how levels of satisfaction have improved over time with regard to procured services? Are there any examples of different customers' experiences being analysed by contractors?		
3.22 ●●					Is it clear who the service users are? Have gaps been identified in terms of who may not be using the service? Has action been taken to change services in response?		
3.23 ●●●●					What evidence is there of improved or improving outcomes? Is there evidence of improving perceptions?		
3.24 ●●●					Is there any evidence of improvement over time? Are there any examples of different customers' experiences being analysed and acted upon?		

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	1	2	3	4			
3.25 ● ● ● ● There is increased satisfaction with services amongst all users, including vulnerable and marginalised groups. (Links to 3.21)					Is there any evidence of how levels of satisfaction have improved over time? Are there any examples of different customers' experiences being analysed and acted upon?		

Modern and diverse workforce	1	2	3	4	How was this done and what is the evidence? Questions/issues authorities might consider	Where relevant, what do stakeholders and community members say about how this indicator is being met?	What difference will this make?
3.26 ● ● A range of innovative processes are in place which deliver equality outcomes for the whole workforce. (Links to 3.29)					What strategic, innovative and holistic approaches have been considered to improve outcomes? Is there good use of flexible work and other actions which are beginning to positively affect gender segregation? Are there career pathways for part-time staff and lower graded women and black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff?		

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	1	2	3	4			
3.27 ● ●					How have targets been set? What evidence is there of them being achieved? How do succession plans address under-representation? What action has been taken to increase diversity of senior managers and councillors in the medium and longer term? Evidence that disabled people are increasingly able to enter the workforce and move up?		
3.28 ●					Is the workforce profile updated regularly? What action has been taken to reverse adverse trends?		
3.29 ● ●					Have positive and tangible outcomes been delivered as a result of the implementation of the workforce strategy?		
3.30 ● ●					Overall, is there evidence that men and women are receiving equal pay (subject to any major industrial, legal or other barriers)? Is the situation being monitored/audited regularly?		

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	1	2	3	4		
3.31 ●●●● Councillors understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources. Services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of local communities.					What changes have come about as a result of any equalities training? Do staff feel their skills have improved? Are staff able to deal effectively with a range of clients? Are they able to answer questions from the community about the council's equalities priorities? Is there any feedback from users?	
3.32 ●●●● Harassment and bullying at work are dealt with effectively and more staff say that they are treated with dignity and respect.					What information is available to show there has been an improvement – monitoring data, perception surveys, qualitative data?	
3.33 ●●●● Managers and staff are delivering improvements based on objectives.					Are managers and staff accountable for ensuring equality outcomes? Is good performance being recognised?	
3.34 ●●●● The authority has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups.					Do staff feel engaged? What do staff surveys say? Are staff surveys carried out regularly? Do they show improvement over time? Is there any evidence of how levels of satisfaction have improved over time? Are there any examples of different staff experiences being analysed?	

We have identified the following areas for improvement	Priority 1–10 (1 is high)	Who?	Resources needed

Potential barriers	Potential solutions	If appropriate, how are we planning to involve stakeholders and community members?

An excellent authority illustration making a difference

This illustration provides an example of how an authority at the **excellent** stage might look.

Context

Innerborough is a relatively affluent borough of inner London which nevertheless has areas where deprivation remains relatively high. One of the larger of the inner London boroughs, it includes some very expensive private housing as well as some pockets of high-rise social housing. The average household income in Innerborough is above the London average and it is ranked 125 out of 354 local authorities in England in terms of average deprivation (where one is most deprived). No wards fall in the most deprived 10 per cent nationally but there is considerable variation across the borough and within wards.

Of the 272,000 people living in Innerborough in 2006, 42 per cent were aged 20 to 39 compared to a London average of 36 per cent, with correspondingly lower proportions of children and older people. The relatively young population and the high proportion of privately rented accommodation are reflected in high levels of mobility. The borough's population has been growing since 1997 and is projected to grow a further 6 to 9 per cent by 2021. There is a pattern of single adults moving into the borough while, against the national trend, the population aged over 64 is falling.

There is great diversity in Innerborough. Ethnic minorities make up 28 per cent of the population. 31 per cent of this ethnic minority population are aged 18 or under. Around 55 per cent of residents are born in the UK compared to a London average of 73 per cent. There are over 160 different nationalities and over 100 languages spoken by school pupils. All major faiths co-exist in Innerborough.

Unemployment is low at 2.1 per cent. However, this masks stark contrasts in some parts of the borough where unemployment reaches 5.8 per cent and 6.2 per cent.

The cabinet is composed of the leader, the deputy leader and five other cabinet members. Portfolios are cross-cutting and cover resources and strategy (the leader), children's services, housing, adults, health and social care, the environment and regeneration and crime. Six overview and scrutiny committees hold the cabinet to account. The council leads the 'Innerborough Together Partnership' which was established in 1999. The partnership comprises a board of representatives from the public, business and voluntary sectors and is chaired by the leader of the council. The partnership is supported by a local public service board, a business forum and a community and voluntary sector network, which brings together all the main stakeholders in the borough. In 2005 the local strategic partnership (LSP) signed a local area agreement (LAA), one of only two pilots in London.

Background

The recent comprehensive performance assessment in 2007 stated that:

"The council performs well in how it meets the needs of its diverse communities. This is based on a thorough understanding of their needs, good engagement and a commitment to improve their quality of life. The overall percentage of BAME staff (26 per cent) is broadly reflective of the local population. At senior management level women are well represented although BAME and disabled staff are under-represented. The council is aware of this and has identified measures to address the issue. The council has achieved level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and is making good progress towards achieving level five."

Innerborough Council has a long record of commitment to the promotion of equalities. It was one of the first London boroughs to set up race and women's committees in the 1980s and moved towards a mainstreaming approach to equalities well before the introduction of the Equality Standard for Local Government. It was also one of the first local authorities to adopt the Commission for Racial Equality's Standard for Racial Equality in local government.

Both councillors and officers have championed equalities issues. The leader, who is responsible for resources and strategy, also takes the lead for equality and diversity. He champions equalities at the 'Innerborough Together Partnership'.

The sustainable community strategy has equalities mainstreamed throughout its four key priorities which are:

- a sustainable Innerborough that adapts to a growing population
- a strong Innerborough economy that includes everyone
- a connected Innerborough community where people lead active, healthy lives
- a safe Innerborough that is a vibrant part of our world city.

The strategy is available in six community languages.

The council is taking a proactive role in coordinating the development of a comprehensive equality scheme for the borough, with key strategic partners in the public, community and voluntary sectors, through the 'Innerborough Equalities Partnership' project.

Following the recent stabbing of a teenager by a newly arrived migrant in Innerborough, the leader and chief executive worked closely with the police and other agencies to calm tensions within the community.

The officer lead for equality and diversity is the director of regeneration and crime. She chairs the strategic equalities board (SEB), which meets monthly and is attended by officers at second-tier level who either lead a service or have responsibility for performance. The SEB provides the strategic focus for equalities issues, horizon scanning and best practice.

SEB representatives within each directorate ensure that corporate best practice regarding EqlAs, monitoring, consultation, etc are understood and followed by all services. Each department has a departmental equalities board (DEB) which reports directly into departmental management teams.

Getting to excellent

The Equality Standard for Local Government has provided the council with a structured process to progress the work on the equalities agenda. Consultation mechanisms have been consolidated and streamlined, user and stakeholder groups have been developed and strengthened, procurement processes have been equality proofed, EqIAs are routine and regular monitoring is taking place. The council and its partners have also put considerable energy into ensuring that they have up-to-date data about the changing nature of communities and their needs.

The corporate procurement team (CPT) have developed an evaluation model which tests a tenderer's ability to undertake an EqIA once a service is transferred over or a contract is let. Once the contract has been awarded the CPT ensures that a requirement is included within contracts for external agencies to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

Equality targets and performance indicators are reviewed against monitoring information and reports are produced for the joint cabinet and chief officers meetings on a quarterly and annual basis. The overview and scrutiny committee has

the authority to call in any of these reports. The annual budget setting process is also subject to an EqIA.

The annual residents' survey and annual staff organisational health survey can be disaggregated by equalities groups and is used to inform policy objectives and targets. For the past three years, equalities issues have been specifically commented on in the annual residents' survey report enabling services to quickly identify and understand the areas where equalities groups are being positively or negatively impacted. This evidence is used by all services to inform service development and improvement.

Good processes aside, what really interests councillors, and more importantly the community, are whether there have been any tangible outcomes. Innerborough is confident that it is able to show that adopting the Equality Framework for Local Government has made a real difference. It can point to a number of examples of good, if not excellent, practice and outcomes across a range of services.

- “It’s made such a difference to our lives.”

Following a meeting with the carers of children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities it became clear that standard accessible toilets (disabled toilets) did not meet their needs. This led to a cross-departmental team being set up to design and locate a toilet in the main shopping centre. The ‘changing places toilet’, resulted not only in the council winning a number of awards, the toilet design is now being used nationally.

- The teenage pregnancy unit has commissioned services from ‘Working with Men’, a voluntary organisation that focuses on the development of boys and men, and has also appointed a reintegration worker, whose role is to ensure young mothers reintegrate into education and training.
- 12 secondary schools in Innerborough are taking part in the ‘black pupils’ achievement programme’, which aims to raise the achievement of African-Caribbean and mixed heritage pupils. One of the three initial schools on this London-wide programme reduced its GCSE 5 A* – C achievement gap between black African-Caribbean boys and the rest of the school to less than 3 per cent in 2005, compared to a 17 per cent gap in 2002.

- The commissioning and contracts team in adults, health and social care commission culturally relevant services from a wide range of providers. A number of specialist services have been commissioned specifically for BAME adults. The Kasbah Day Centre caters for multi-ethnic service users and there are tailored residential and nursing placements for Jewish clients as well as other clients from different cultures. Culturally appropriate domiciliary and day care is provided through voluntary and community organisations such as the Chinese Centre.
- The bereavement service has radically changed to meet the needs of a multi-religious community. Burial plots, backfilling of graves, shroud burials and next-day burial for Muslims are available. Muslim families are able to prepare and wash deceased relatives at the mortuary; Hindus and Sikhs are able to use their own religious symbols; tokens are allowed to be burnt at Buddhist services.
- The Refugee Access into Sustainable Employment (RAISE) team in association with Refugee Council and the London Development Agency launched a practical toolkit for partners delivering information, advice and guidance to refugees. The WEL-COM-E toolkit is the product of a collaboration between agencies in three countries aimed at securing

sustainable employment through work experience, matching potential employers and employees and providing practical solutions for employers who wish to employ refugees.

- The creation of a girls' football development officer position has allowed for a large increase in the number of opportunities for girls to play football. There are approximately 16 sessions a week (excluding matches); some of these are drop-in sessions open to anyone (8–16 years), while others are team training sessions. This should help the council achieve its targets in relation to reducing obesity.
- A new caseworker service has been launched involving fortnightly sessions run by the homeless households support service (HHSS) for people with learning disabilities and their carers. The aim of the service is to prevent homelessness by helping people with learning disabilities find appropriate housing options, including supporting them to remain in existing housing if appropriate.
- 1,250 residents over 60 have benefited from free home security equipment including window locks, door locks and bars.
- A community safety outreach worker has been funded since April 2005 at the lesbian, gay, bisexual

or transgender (LGBT) forum to provide outreach and casework support on homophobic crime and to provide support and information to LGBT people reporting homophobic crime and completing reporting forms.

- In employment the percentage of BAME employees has increased to 29 per cent and the proportion of BAME staff at senior grades continues to increase. Women continue to be fairly represented across the grades up to PO6, with the top 5 per cent of earners who are women at 55 per cent. 6 per cent of staff have declared a disability, and the top 5 per cent of earners who are disabled is 9.3 per cent. The single status agreement has been implemented and despite some initial misgivings on the part of some staff, the last organisational health survey indicated that staff are broadly happy with its implementation.

The annual residents' and other satisfaction surveys indicate that resident satisfaction is continuing to increase across all services, although there are a couple of areas, in particular, enviro-crime where more work needs to be done. At a recent conference the voluntary and community sector pointed to the significant improvements in recent consultations, with their views being taken account of in a number of instances.

Innerborough is regularly contacted by other local authorities for advice on equalities and has been exemplified in a number of publications by the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) describing good practice.

However, Innerborough is not complacent – there are still areas that need further work. Both councillors and officers recognise that work on this agenda must continue and that unless the authority continues to use the Framework as a continuous framework for improvement, it will fail to meet the needs of its diverse communities.

For example:

- targeted work needs to be done to reduce the numbers of BAME exclusions
- the youth offenders team are planning to tackle homophobic attitudes held amongst young offenders
- despite the numbers of staff grievances going down overall, BAME staff continue to be disproportionately represented in disciplinary, capability and grievance cases
- the under-representation of BAME groups in tenant participation structures continues to be an issue and tenant participation services needs to look at ways of increasing participation and involvement of BAME tenants

- the council needs to ensure that all young people are able to engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school through the 14-19 agenda and through opportunities in the wider community
- the community safety partnership needs to undertake further work to enable targeted support to be provided to gay men who are victims of domestic violence – an issue highlighted by the LGBT forum.

Conclusion

The leader and the chief executive are justly proud of the fact that Innerborough can claim to be an **excellent** authority within the Equality Framework for Local Government. A recent report from the Audit Commission which draws upon the findings from the comprehensive performance assessment, inspections, performance information and national surveys, showcased the work of Innerborough and stated that:

“The London Borough of Innerborough is a national leader in its work to understand local peoples’ diverse needs and its consultation, research and community engagement continues to improve. Its achievements in equalities and diversity are outstanding.”

(This illustration has been drawn together by combining the experiences of a number of authorities at the **excellent** stage.)

Help

Equality Framework for Local Government



EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT



part of the **LGA group**

Help with the Equality Framework for Local Government

To help you use the Framework we will provide:

- web based links to resources
- help from peers in our Community of Practice
- an online evidence collection tool
- seminars, workshops and conferences
- accredited Framework consultants or experienced IDEA improvement managers.

Over time we intend to build on these resources with the good practice and helpful hints that you send to us and that we learn from peer challenges.



The IDeA's website

Our website has a substantial section on equality and diversity with links to other relevant issues such as the workforce strategy, community engagement, voluntary and community sector and commissioning and procurement.

We will also publish examples of the evidence that councils have used to work across the performance areas of the framework.

www.idea.gov.uk/diversity

Communities of practice

A community of practice is a dedicated online community for sharing information and joint learning. Our core Equality CoP has over 850 members (March 2009). There are also a number of sub-CoPs dealing with procurement, equality impact assessments and effect. We also run 'hot seats' where an officer or councillor with particular knowledge or experience can answer questions from other CoP members.

The CoP is open to all local government councillors and officers. You can join by contacting elizabeth.gardiner@idea.gov.uk.

The IDeA also facilitates communities dealing with community cohesion, migration and preventing violent extremism.

www.communities.idea.gov.uk

ef:ect – the Equality Framework evidence collection tool

ef:ect replaces the electronic recording tool, es@t, that was developed for the Equality Standard for Local Government.

This new tool is an easy way to measure progress against the Framework creating an evidence library. Information is 'tagged' so that a search and reporting facility can navigate and retrieve evidence from the library.

ef:ect provides:

- open and flexible reporting which allows for multiple ways of structuring and viewing the same body of evidence
- that evidence only needs to be uploaded once
- evidence relating to particular issues for example comprehensive area assessment or compliance with the public duties, can be viewed separately.

For further information contact ihelp@idea.gov.uk

Seminars, workshops and conferences

We organise a variety of workshops, seminars and conferences on equality and cohesion issues. All details are published on our CoPs and website. In 2009/10 we will also be working closely with regional improvement and efficiency partnerships in different regions.

www.communities.idea.gov.uk

Individual support and advice

We can draw on a number of accredited IDeA consultants and managers to give specific support to authorities as requested.

For further information contact:
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The Local Government Association is the national voice for more than 450 local authorities in England and Wales. The LGA group comprises the LGA and five partner organisations which work together to support, promote and improve local government.

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