

## Equality Monitoring Report 2007/08

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the second annual equality monitoring report providing members of the Committee with an up-date on the equality work that has been carried out in relation to the Council's various Equality & Diversity Policies. The Council has three separate action plans in relation to its three equality policies (Corporate Equality & Diversity Policy, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme). This report provides a summary of the work carried out during 2007/08. The three action plans are attached to this Appendix.
- 1.2 Progress made against the 3 Action Plans has been variable. This has been due to the Unitary situation. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 North Wiltshire District Council will no longer exist and therefore this has affected whether some of the actions have been carried out. For example, the continuation of Equality Impact Assessments has proved difficult as the Council has not for some time been in a position to introduce or revise policies or services as a result of the Unitary status and therefore the equality impact assessment process has been affected.
- 1.3 This report also provides an up-date on the status of the Council's performance against the Local Government Equality Standard and of the future changes proposed to the Equality Standard by the Improvement Development Agency.

### 2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Council has a number of Equality related policies and action plans, these include:-

#### Equality & Diversity Policy 2006-2009

This policy was adopted by full Council at its meeting on 21 February 2006. The Council's Race Equality Scheme has been incorporated into the E&D policy. It sets out how the Council will mainstream equality and make it central to the way the Council determines future policies and delivers services to our communities.

#### Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009

This Scheme was adopted by the Personnel, Licensing & Administration Committee at its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2006. The Scheme sets out how the Council will ensure that it promotes disability equality in its service provision and delivery and in its responsibility as an employer. It also sets out how the Council will ensure that it eliminates unlawful discrimination and harassment of disabled people.

#### Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

This Scheme was adopted by the Personnel, Licensing & Administration Committee at its meeting on the 21 May 2007. It sets out how the Council will ensure that it promotes equality of opportunity between men and women and eliminates unlawful sex discrimination and harassment.

### **3. Equality Standard for Local Government**

- 3.1 The Council adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) in 2005. The Equality Standard is a systematic framework to mainstream equalities into service delivery and employment. There are currently 5 levels within the ESLG.
- 3.2 North Wiltshire District Council claimed Level 2 as at March 2007 with a target set to reach Level 3 as at 31 March 2008. However, with Unitary fast approaching and following the work that NWDC was involved in as part of the Wiltshire Improvement Partnership equality and diversity capacity building project team, the five Wiltshire authorities agreed to concentrate on building best practice in equality and diversity into the new unitary Council rather than each authority aiming to work towards level 3 of the Equality Standard. The project team felt that there was a danger that potentially you could have one authority who reached level 3 but the others having not. In order to reach a particular level of the Equality Standard the whole authority has to meet the level.
- 3.3 The ESLG has helped to make equality an integral part of service delivery. However, to reflect recent demographic changes and emerging thinking on the nature of equality and diversity, the Improvement & Development Agency are developing a revised Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).
- 3.4 The new framework will complement the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy and the work of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships in improving performance on equality and diversity. A draft version of the new framework is currently out for consultation and North Wiltshire District Council will be responding as part of the consultation process. It is envisaged that the EFLG will be launched at the beginning of 2009. A significant change to the framework will be, instead of having 5 levels to reach, there will be three levels (**Emerging, Achieving** and **Excellent**).

### **4. Up-date on the work carried out in relation to the Council's various Equality Policies**

#### 4.1 Equality & Diversity Policy Action Plan

- 4.1.1 At the time of reporting to Committee in September 2007 a significant number of actions had already been met against this action plan and it was therefore agreed that the action plan be amended accordingly and to include any new actions that have arisen as a result of the work carried out across the Council in relation to all Equality & Diversity policies and schemes.
- 4.1.2 The following provides a summary on the status of some areas of work contained in the action plan:--
  - A number of equality and diversity training courses have been run for employees including Equality Impact Assessment training, Equalities in Procurement, Disability Awareness and Quality to Equality training.
  - Respect for People Diversity Training continues to be part of the Council's Induction Programme for both employees and Members.
  - Govmetric has been installed to monitor the various access channels that customers use, together with monitoring their satisfaction rates and equality monitoring profiling. Service managers are given monthly reports showing them how many comments have been received for their respective

service areas. Customers are asked to rate the service they have received as good, average, poor. This information will be able to assist the Council to identify who the majority of our customers are, if there are any groups not using our services and explore the reasons why. We will be able to identify if the satisfaction rates of a particular group are lower than other groups and make appropriate changes. It is uncertain at this stage whether Govmetric will be used in the new Unitary Authority.

- The Equality & Diversity Group have continued to meet on a monthly basis with representatives attending from the North Wiltshire Access Group, Westlea Housing and service area representatives within the Council. The Group has reduced in size due to a number of employees leaving the Council.
- The fourth Equality & Diversity newsletter reporting on the work that has been carried out has recently been written and will shortly be made available to everyone. The newsletter will be publicising the Black History Month in October 2008. Black History month has been celebrated across the UK for over 20 years and celebrates the achievements of the black community and uncovers hidden history.

## 5. Disability Equality Scheme

5.1 The following provides a summary on the status of some areas of work contained in the Disability Equality Scheme action plan:-

- The Council, in partnership with Westlea Housing and many other organisations, held a 'No Barriers Event' at the Neeld Hall in Chippenham on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007. The purpose of the event was to promote disability equality in Wiltshire and raise awareness about removing the barriers faced by disabled people. An accessibility survey was carried out to find out from members of the public how accessible they thought the Council's services were and suggestions were given for improvements.

In terms of how accessible customers found the Council services, the findings were:-

- 27% Good
- 39% Average
- 3% Poor

15% experienced difficulties in contacting the Council

15% were not aware of the services that the Council delivers

Some of the actions carried out as a result of the survey findings were:-

- New raised seating has been provided in reception at the Monkton Park offices following feedback from a customer who found the seating difficult for the elderly or less mobile customers.
- Information leaflets that were produced detailing the services the Council provides are now more widely advertised e.g. on the Council's website, available in reception via the plasma screen, on a pop-up display together with the leaflets being available in reception.

- The Council's Parking Civil Enforcement Officers have been working closely with the police to ensure that disabled bays are only used by disabled badge holders. Any vehicles observed parked in a disabled bay without displaying a valid disabled blue badge will be issued with a penalty notice.

The internal Equality & Diversity Group, in partnership with Westlea Housing are currently organising the next 'No Barriers' event that will take place on Wednesday, 3rd December 2008. The event will be one of many County wide events taking place during the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 aiming to raise the profile of disability equality throughout Wiltshire and to promote the inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of life in Wiltshire.

- A number of employees have benefited from services provided by Access to Work to enable them to carry out their jobs more easily. The Access to Work programme is available through Job Centre Plus. It provides support to both disabled people and the Council to help overcome work-related obstacles resulting from a disability.
- The Council continues to work closely with Shaw Trust to provide work placement opportunities for disadvantaged people in the labour market due to disability, ill health or social circumstances. Michael, through Shaw Trust, joined Human Resources during a 6 week period on a work placement undertaking clerical duties.
- The Council has recently been re-awarded, for the 5th year running, the Employment Service's two tick symbol 'positive about disabled people' which demonstrates to disabled job seekers and disabled employees that the Council has agreed to a number of commitments designed to ensure that people with a disability have every opportunity to access employment and develop their careers within the Council.
- A Learning Difficulties line is now available for use by Council customers with learning difficulties and their carers. Customer Relations Officers received advice during a team meeting on how to handle telephone calls from two service users who accompanied Leonie Jarvill from Wiltshire and Swindon User's Network following the introduction of the Learning Difficulties Line.

#### 4.3 Gender Equality Scheme

4.1. The following provides a summary on the status of some areas of work contained in the action plan:-

- An increase in the number of males and females applying for and being appointed to jobs that are predominately filled by one particular gender. Cleansing & Amenities now have a female Agency Refuse Driver and there has been an increase in female applicants for both street scene and refuse posts.
- The Council's workforce is fairly evenly split with 51% of all employees are female compared to 49% male. Within the Council, 19% of employees work on a part-time/job-share basis. Women make up 85% of employees who work on a part-time/job-share basis compared to 15% male.
- The Harassment Policy has been reviewed to include protection of transsexual and transgender employees from harassment and discrimination in accordance with the Gender Equality Duty. The Code is on the employee handbook or obtainable from Human Resources.

- The introduction of Govmetric will assist the Council to identify if different levels of customer satisfaction are being experienced by men and women and to examine the reasons for this.
- The next edition of the Equality & Diversity newsletter will be promoting the first ever Swindon Pride event that seeks to celebrate and positively promote the diversity of the lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender population.

## REVISED – CORPORATE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (2006 – 2008)

Action	Responsibility	Completion date	Status of Target:- Achieved/Progress Made/No longer applicable
1. Employees to carry out Equality Impact Assessments and setting equality targets in their relevant service areas.	Deputy Chief Executive Officer/Heads of Service/Team Managers	Ongoing from January 2006	<b>Progress made:-</b> A large number of Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out to date and are published on the Council's website and where applicable targets have been set in relevant service areas. However due to Unitary status the number of assessments have now decreased.
2. Train employees to effectively carry out Equality Impact Assessments.	Internal Equalities & Diversity Working Group	February 2006	<b>Achieved -</b> A total of 13 employees have received Equality Impact Assessment training that was delivered as part of the Wiltshire Improvement Partnership Equality & Diversity Project.
3. Deliver 'Respect for People' training programme to Members and employees.	Equality & Diversity Group		<b>Progress made:-</b> 86% of employees and 35% of members have undertaken the 'Respect for People' training. A training programme has recently been delivered to employees within Cleansing & Amenities to assist with their training. The Respect for People forms part of the Council's Member and Employee Induction programme.
4. Equalities to be integrated into all Business Area Plans, Service Plans and Individual Team Plans and through staff appraisals.	Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Heads of Service and Team Leaders	Ongoing from April 2006	<b>Progress made:-</b> One of the Council's key priorities within the Corporate Plan 2007/10 is to put our customers at the heart of everything we do – ensuring all our customers are able to access our services easily. The outcomes of the Equality Impact Assessments feed into Service Team Action Plans. Within all job descriptions there is a principal responsibility placed on all employees to ensure that they carry out their duties with due regard to equality & diversity.
5. Prioritise an Equalities training programme for Members and employees.	Training & Development Officer and Head of Human Resources	June 2006	<b>Progress made:-</b> A Training plan is in place. All Members and employees are required to complete the 'Respect for People' Diversity training. A number of E&D training courses have been

			<p>delivered to employees including:-</p> <p>Equalities in procurement          Equality to Quality          Embracing Change          Disability Awareness          Respect for People</p> <p>Training offered to Members have included:-          Community Cohesion and Engagement          Respect for People</p>
6. Work with the Wiltshire Constabulary and safety groups to ensure that incidents of hate crime are recorded and information shared amongst partners.	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	September 2006	<p><b>Progress made:-</b> The Community Safety Partnership continues to work closely with the Police and Voluntary groups to ensure that incidents of hate crime are reported and fully investigated, through groups such as Gay Policing Initiative. The Council has updated the way complaints and comments are recorded to incorporate incidents of anti social behaviour in order that all such incidents are flagged and recorded so that an audit trail is created to allow the incident to be tracked.</p>
7. Service areas to monitor the profile of customers and their satisfaction rates and reduce any differences.	Deputy Chief Executive Officers, Heads of Service & Team Leaders	Ongoing	<p><b>Progress made:-</b> The Council recently introduced 'Govmetric' to monitor the various access channels customers use, their satisfaction rates, together with equality monitoring profiling. This information will assist the Council to identify who the majority of our customers are, if there are any groups not using our services and explore the reasons why. Identify if the satisfaction rates of a particular group are lower than other groups and make appropriate changes.</p>
8. Wider publication of the services the Council delivers.	Communications Team/Equality & Diversity Group	March 2008	<p><b>Achieved:-</b> Work has been carried out to publicise Council services more widely. For example, information leaflets have been produced highlighting services available for disabled people. These leaflets have been circulated to the Town &amp; Parish Councils, CAB, Libraries, Westlea Housing, placed on the Council's website, in</p>

			reception, on the plasma screen together with a large stand-up board in reception.
9. Raise awareness and sharing of information of Equality & Diversity work carried out within the Council and with partner organizations.	Equality & Diversity Group/Human Resources		<b>Progress made:-</b> Twice yearly E&D Newsletters are produced reporting on progress/events taking place. 'Our Space' now has its own E&D Section which enables the E&D group to publicise all E&D information in one place and provide information about the aims and objectives of the group. In addition E&D information is publicised from Equality South West.



## UP-DATED DISABILITY EQUALITY (3 YEAR) ACTION PLAN (2006–2009)

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Completion Date	Status of Target:- Achieved/Progress made/No longer applicable
Prepare a Draft Disability Equality Scheme and promote involvement to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005	Effective involvement and feedback from disabled people on Draft Disability Equality Scheme	Lead Officer on Equality & Diversity	September 2006	<b>Achieved.</b>
Publish and promote full Disability Equality Scheme.	Scheme reflects the priorities of disabled people and is widely publicised.	Lead Officer on Equality & Diversity	By December 2006	<b>Achieved.</b>
Review and report on progress made on the Disability Equality Scheme with involvement of disabled people.	Demonstrate what progress has been made against the Scheme's action plan and of meeting the Council's legal duties.	Lead Officer on Equality & Diversity & HR	Annually	<b>Achieved</b> - report submitted to PLA in September 2007. In 2006 & 2007 the Council were involved in Disability Equality events that enabled us to report on the progress made. A further event is being arranged to take place on 3.12.08.
Produce a time-tabled programme of Equality Impact Assessments.	Equality Impact assessments to be carried out systematically to ensure all services/policies are assessed.	Lead Officer on Equality & Diversity	January 2007	<b>Achieved</b> - A time-table was completed and a number of assessments were carried out. However due to Unitary status the number of assessments have now decreased.
Service plans to include actions identified within Equality Impact Assessments.	Information systematically collected to measure gaps in service delivery, investigate any such gaps and take action to remove any disparities or disadvantage.	Team Leaders	Annually	<b>Progress made:-</b> Where applicable service plans included actions identified in Equality Impact Assessments.

Ensure procurement activity addresses disability equality issues.	Ensure that external providers of Council services meet their Statutory equalities requirements and the Council's equalities policies and practices.	Lead Officer on Procurement	Ongoing	<b>Progress made:-</b> The Council's Procurement Strategy states that contractors are required to comply with all current legislation as issued by the Equality Commissions.
Improve information on the Council's website under 'Job Vacancies'.	Ensure people are fully aware that information can be requested in alternative formats and who to contact for help/advice	Human Resources/ICT	December 2006	<b>Achieved:-</b> Applicants are asked to contact Human Resources if they require assistance in completing the application form or need to make their application in an alternative format.
Disability Equality Training.	Disability equality is better understood and that employees can take positive action to remove barriers	Equality & Diversity Group	Commencing October/ November 2006	<b>Achieved:- A</b> significant number of employees have benefited from undertaking disability Equality training.
Establish, through focus groups & surveys, the public's perception, particularly disabled people on accessibility of Council services and employment opportunities.	Identify and remove any barriers faced by disabled people and promote equality of opportunity.	Equality & Diversity Group/ Customer Services/ Human Resources	Annually	<b>Progress made:-</b> An accessibility survey was carried out during a 'No Barriers' event held in December 2007 and constructive feedback was given on how accessible the Council's services are to disabled people.
Agree a common standard for all Council-wide consultation to ensure the needs of disabled people can be identified.	A standard questionnaire format to be used when consulting with customers and where necessary shared across the organisation via. the Internal Equality & Diversity Group.	Communication and Consultation team.	December 2006	<b>Achieved:-</b> the Council has a Communications Protocol and guidelines detailing that documents should be written in clear and plain English, together with guidance on the type of font and colour etc.

Ensure employees are aware of the support available for disabled employees including monitoring of types of support requested, provisions made and improvements needed, e.g. provision of support worker, screen reading equipment.	Employees to be made aware of the support available for disabled employees or employees who may become disabled. Monitoring system to be established.	Human Resources	March 2007	<b>Progress made:-</b> Access to Work information is publicised on the employee handbook. A number of employees have benefited from the support from Access to Work.
Work more closely with JobCentre Plus (Access to Work), The Shaw Trust and other similar types of Organisations.	To improve employment/work placement opportunities for disabled people	Human Resources	On-going	<b>Achieved:-</b> A number of work placements were arranged through Shaw Trust and similar organisations. In addition employees have benefited from using Access to Work.
Improve communication – publicising the support/assistance available to disabled people.	Ensure that our service users know what support/assistance is available to them.	Equality & Diversity Officer group	March 2007	<b>Achieved:-</b> The information produced detailing services available to disabled people has been more widely publicised e.g. on Council's website, leaflets available in reception, information on pop-up display.
Establish Employee/Member Disability Action Group.	Identification of barriers in the workplace and influence the Council on its approach to improving accessibility.	Equality & Diversity Officer Group	March 2007	<b>Not achieved:-</b> Attempts were made to establish an employee/member disability group but unfortunately due to no interest shown, this was not possible.
Achieve the 'Louder than Words' Charter.	To provide the best level of service for deaf and hard of hearing customers and employees.	Equality & Diversity Officer Group	July 2007	<b>No longer an action:-</b> A number of improvements were made as a result of aiming towards this Charter, one of them being Disability Awareness training for all front line employees.

Review Harassment Policy for Employees & Members.	Record incidents of harassment including disability-related against employees and members of the Council and record positive steps to prevent such harassment.	Human Resources	July 2007	<b>Achieved:-</b> Harassment Policy has been reviewed and changes adopted by PLA Committee.
Review the Council's Comments & Complaints procedure and monitoring process.	Record incidents of harassment including disability-related in relation to services, how incidents are resolved and take positive steps to prevent such harassment.	Customer Services		<b>Progress made:-</b> A significant amount of work has been carried out to improve the monitoring of comments and complaints as well as the introduction of Govmetric.

## UP-DATED GENDER EQUALITY (3 YEAR) ACTION PLAN (2007 – 2010)

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	Completion Date	Status of Target:- Achieved/ Progress made/No longer applicable
1.Prepare draft Gender Equality Scheme and promote involvement of stakeholders.	Effective involvement from employees, community & voluntary organisations and statutory organizations.	Lead Officer - Equality & Diversity	March 2007	<b>Achieved.</b>
2.Publish and promote full Gender Equality Scheme.	Raise awareness of the Council's Scheme its Gender Equality targets.	Lead Officer – Equality & Diversity	April 2007	<b>Achieved.</b>
3.To take positive action through advertising, training, targeting schools, colleges etc in encouraging members of an under-represented sex to apply for jobs where one particular sex is unrepresented.	Increase in number of males and females applying for and being appointed to jobs that are predominately filled by one particular gender.	Human Resources All Managers responsible for recruiting	On-going	<b>Progress made:-</b> One female refuse driver team leader appointed together with one female applicant for Street Scene post appointed.
4.Review the Council's Carers' Policy.	To improve the support and assistance the Council currently offers to employees with caring responsibilities.	Human Resources	December 2007	<b>No longer applicable:-</b> Not taken forward due to Unitary status, however we will be seeking to follow the County Council's policy.
5.Promote flexible/job-share working at all levels of the Council.	To increase the number of opportunities at <u>all</u> levels for employees to work on a part-time/job-share/flexible & home-working basis.	All managers & Human Resources	On-going	<b>Progress made:-</b> The Council has a significant number of employees who work on a part-time or homeworking basis.
6.Review the Council's Harassment and Recruitment Policies.	To ensure that the policies adequately cover transsexual employees and potential employees.	Human Resources	December 2007	<b>Progress made:-</b> The Harassment Policy has been reviewed and approved by PLA Committee.

7.Regular statistical information to be provided to managers on gender profiling of employees across the Council.	Help identify and address any under-representation of a particular gender within specific roles of the Council.	Human Resources	Information provided on a 6 monthly basis.	<b>No longer applicable:-</b> Not taken forward due to Unitary status.
8.Monitor the satisfaction rates and usage of services by gender.	To identify if services are being received differently or are being under-used by a specific gender and if so to take appropriate action to address any inequality, disadvantage or discrimination.	All managers with overall responsibility for the delivery of services.	On-going	<b>Progress made:-</b> Govmetric monitors usage and satisfaction rates by gender.
9.Continue to undertake Equality Impact Assessments on all new and existing policies, services or procedures.	To identify if people are being or could be disadvantaged or discriminated against as a result of their gender and if so to take appropriate action to address any inequality and discrimination.	Managers of services	On-going	<b>No longer applicable:-</b> The Council has not for some time been in a position to introduce or revise policies or services as a result of Unitary status.
10.Undertake equal pay audits and formulate an Equal Pay Policy.	To ensure that the Council maintains equal pay and has no gender bias regular equal pay audits will be conducted.	Human Resources	July 2007	<b>No longer applicable:-</b> due to Unitary status.
11.Ensure procurement activity addresses gender equality issues. Development of a pre-contract questionnaire incorporating all equality issues.	Ensure that external providers of Council services meet their statutory gender equality requirements and the Council's equality policies and practices. Contractors & suppliers who are unable to meet equality requirements will not be allowed to	Lead Officer on procurement.	Ongoing Pre-contract questionnaire end May 2007	<b>Progress made:-</b> The Council's Procurement strategy states contractors are required to comply with all current legislation as issued by the Equality Commissions. Pre-contract questionnaire not taken forward due to Unitary.

	provide services/goods on behalf of the Council.			
12. Review and report on the progress made against the Council's Gender Equality Targets on an annual basis.	To demonstrate to employees and service users of the progress made.	Lead Officer – Equality & Diversity	Annual	<b>Achieved.</b>
13. Review the Gender Equality Scheme.	To make revisions to the scheme in order to make continuous improvement in promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination & harassment.	Lead Officer – Equality & Diversity	April 2010	<b>No longer applicable:-</b> due to Unitary status.
14. Pro-actively working with other local authorities to share best practice in promoting Gender Equality.	To build on partnership working with a view to ensuring best practice is shared.	Internal Equalities & Diversity Group	On-going	<b>Progress made:-</b> 5 Wiltshire authorities have been working together as part of the Wiltshire Improvement Partnership Equality & Diversity Project
15. Test customer satisfaction levels. This should include also an analysis of BME and Disability Gender Groups.	To establish whether different levels of customer satisfaction are being experienced by men and women and to examine the reasons for this.  Customer satisfaction levels should also be tested against BME and Disability Gender Groups.	Customer Contact Team and Consultation Unit	Annually	<b>Progress made:-</b> Govmetric has been introduced to monitor the various access channels customers' use, their satisfaction rates, together with equality monitoring profiling.