Corporate Equality Scheme 2008-11

FINAL DRAFT

Subject to approval

Contents

1. About this Scheme

Oxford City Council and our partners on the Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) have agreed a vision for Oxford to become a world-class city for everyone. The partnership represents local government and the health, police, universities, business, and voluntary and community sectors across Oxford. The OSP believes that, in a competitive world, our city must continually work to build a sustainable economy and an improving quality of life for all our citizens. The OSP also believes that the diversity of our population is our city's greatest strength and most valuable asset.

A world-class city needs to be supported by a world-class city council. In order to be a world-class council, equality and diversity must underpin all our strategic priorities and activities. Our strategic priorities are:

- Stronger and more inclusive communities
- More housing, better housing for all
- Improve the local environment, economy and quality of life
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Tackle climate change and promote environmental resource management
- Transform Oxford City Council by improving value for money and service performance.

The council is fully committed to equality of opportunity and we believe that all individuals have an equal right to develop and achieve their full potential. We have a legal and moral duty to lead in the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity. We will promote equality and challenge all forms of discrimination through our role as a service provider, community leader and employer.

Equality of opportunity means more than disregarding differences such as gender, race, disability, religious or political belief, sexuality, age, nationality, pregnancy, or membership or non-membership of a trade union, gender reassignment, or HIV status. It means ensuring proactively that different people receive services, consultation and employment opportunities in a fair and equal way. This means recognising, accommodating and valuing diversity across the City of Oxford. The council has a duty to make enquiries for certain occupations and will require criminal checks where appropriate.

We firmly believe that our work with local communities, and other agencies, will promote a culture that celebrates and welcomes diversity.

In keeping with our commitment to equality and diversity for all and the requirements of the Equality Act 2006, we will ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against, or receives less favourable treatment, by virtue of their: age; religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Purpose and Scope of this Scheme

This Scheme encompasses our statutory Race Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme.

We have brought the actions to deliver these schemes together into a single action plan. This Equality Scheme sets out how we will work towards promoting equality of opportunity across the full range of services that we deliver. It sets out how we will ensure that discrimination is challenged and eliminated through legislation and positive action. It also sets out the responsibilities of our elected members, staff members and actions that we will take to ensure full compliance with this policy.

2. Our Legal Responsibilities

We have a legal duty to ensure compliance with the various legislation and regulations including:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975, 1986, (including 2005 amendments)
- Race Relations Act 1976, (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000)
- Equal Pay Act 1970, (including 1983 amendments)
- Public Order Act 1986
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2007
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

Promotion of Race Equality & Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a General duty on Oxford City Council to promote race equality. We have a specific duty to design and publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out its plans for meeting the requirements of the new duties.

In meeting the new duty, we have produced a three year Race Equality Scheme developed to assist us to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity, and
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Promotion of Gender Equality & Gender Equality Scheme 2007-2010

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1986 and 2005 amendments combine to outlaw sex discrimination for both women and men. The Equality Act 2006 further strengthens this legal obligation and places a new duty on all public bodies, of which the Council is one, to promote gender equality.

In meeting the new duty we have produced a three year Gender Equality Scheme developed to assist us to:

- eliminate unlawful gender discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity, and
- eliminate sexual harassment.

Promotion of Disability Equality & Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a new General duty on us to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. We also have a specific duty to produce a three-year Disability Equality Scheme.

The duty to promote disability equality came into force on 4 December 2006. This General duty requires us, in the carrying out of its services and functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunities between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life, and

- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

Power of Wellbeing

In areas where there are no legal duties placed on the Council, we may exercise the Power of Wellbeing (Local Government Act 2000) for the benefit of the local community. This can include extending the principles of any equality legislation to cover other equality areas.

3. Race Equality Scheme

Introduction to the Scheme

We have developed this Race Equality Scheme as part of our Corporate Equality Scheme to ensure that black and ethnic minority groups have equality of access to all the services we provide. We will vigorously review policies to identify, remove or modify potential barriers to meet the needs of all our residents, councillors and members of staff and will look to plan and provide our services in a fair, inclusive and equitable way.

The Scheme itself identifies how we intend to meet, not only the spirit of the legislation, but the general duties and the need to have due regard for the needs of our black and minority ethnic (BME) residents and employees.

Legislative requirements

The Race Relations Act 1976 outlaws racial discrimination in employment, training, education, housing, public appointments and the provision of goods, facilities and services. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has placed a general duty on Oxford City Council, in common with a wide range of other public bodies, to promote race equality. The duty aims to make the promotion of race equality central to the way public authorities work.

This duty means that, in everything it does, the Council must have due regard to the need to:

■ eliminate unlawful racial discrimination

■ promote equality of opportunity

■ promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

It will help the Council make steady progress in achieving race equality in its policy development and service delivery, and in its role as an employer.

The Council also has a specific duty to publish a Race Equality Scheme setting out its plans for meeting the requirements of the duty. This is that Scheme. It sets out how the Council proposes to assess the impact of its functions and policies on the race equality duty.

A Race Equality Scheme shall state in particular:

■ those of its functions and policies or proposed policies which the Council has assessed as relevant to its performance of the General duty; and the Council's arrangements for:

    i.   assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality

    ii.   monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality

    iii. publishing the results of such assessments, consultation and monitoring

    iv. ensuring public access to information and services which it provides

    v.   training staff in connection with the duties imposed by Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act.

■ This assessment has to be reviewed every three years

In addition to publishing a Race Equality Scheme, the Council also has, under the Acts and Regulations, specific employment duties.

The employment duty of the Council is to monitor, by reference to racial groups, the numbers of:

    i.   staff in post

    ii.   applicants for employment, training and promotion

    iii. benefit or detriment as a result of appraisal and assessment procedures for minority ethnic groups

    iv. involvement in grievance and disciplinary procedures

    v.   ethnic minority staff who leave the Council (exit interviews).

Race equality in service provision and community leadership

We will:

- Work with black and minority ethnic groups to meet their needs and reduce the inequalities between different ethnic groups
- Promote good relations between people of different ethnic groups
- Enable and encourage citizens and communities from all ethnic groups to participate in community life.

We already have some activities in place to achieve these objectives, which include:

- A Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy
- Involvement in the Multi-Agency Network to Tackle Racism and Harassment
- Promotion of Council benefits including people from black and minority ethnic groups who have low take-up
- Provision of food hygiene courses in languages other than English
- Coordinating the Oxford Mela, which celebrates the different cultural traditions in Oxford
- Local food development work which is targeted on groups including black and minority ethnic residents, asylum seekers and refugees
- Training 'community champions'
- The Asian Families Liaison and Development Worker works with Children's Centres to better engage with women and young children from Asian families
- Providing information in a range of formats on request, including document, telephone and face-to-face translation
- Training 'community champions' who can represent different minority groups in Oxford
- Involvement in Oxfordshire Employers' Race Equality Network.

We have written an action plan which sets out what we are planning to achieve these objectives. This action plan will be continually revised over the next three years, particularly through our programme of equality impact assessments which assess the equality impact of all our services and policies.

Race equality in employment, training and development

We will:

- Seek to employ a workforce which is, at all levels and across all sections, representative of the black and minority ethnic population
- Seek to eliminate racial harassment and discrimination through a 'zero tolerance' approach

To achieve this we will:

- Develop systems to monitor all activities around recruitment, employment, promotion, pay, gradings, disciplinary proceedings, staff complaints, training, probation reports, exit interviews and health and safety by reference to ethnic group
- Use this information to identify areas of inequality, review targets and take the necessary actions as required
- If monitoring shows that any one group does not succeed as well as others within the Council, as well as reviewing our procedures and practices, we may consider whether legal positive action measures are appropriate
- Challenge inappropriate behaviours and attitudes and work towards a corporate set of behaviours that we expect all council staff to follow
- Ensure that everyone who is responsible for recruiting and managing employees receives appropriate training and guidance on our equality and employment policies and understands their responsibilities
- Ensure that all adverts, job descriptions and person specifications reflect a clear and realistic view of the job and do not include any subjective or irrelevant criteria

- Encourage applications from under-represented groups, including using specialist press for job advertisements where appropriate

- Ensure that we monitor the impact of our recruitment and selection process on all jobs and use the data to enhance future recruitment campaigns

- If tests are used as part of the selection process, we will ensure that they administered by qualified assessors and that the tests do not discriminate against any group

- Ensure that all our employees have equal access to any promotion opportunities and that no one is excluded

- Monitor the internal and external promotions

- Ensure a working environment in which all our employees are free from harassment and bullying

- Any behaviour or conduct which results in discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or intimidation will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

The specific duty on employment requires the Council to monitor, by reference to the racial groups to which they belong, the numbers of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion. It must also monitor by racial group those who receive training and performance assessment, who are involved in grievance and disciplinary procedures, and who leave the authority. The results of such monitoring are to be published annually - our workforce monitoring statistics for 2007 are attached as an appendix.

Race equality impact assessment

We have developed a process for equality impact assessment which covers all six equality strands including race. Our approach is outlined in our Corporate Equality Scheme and our timetable of equality impact assessments for 2008-11 is set out in **chapter 13**. An example of the completed initial equality impact assessment is set out in **chapter 14**.

Access to information

Our approach to providing access to information includes provision of appropriate translations, and is outlined in our Corporate Equality Scheme.

Consultation

We are fully committed to consultation with all our staff, residents and service users and actively encourage consultation with black and minority ethnic groups as part of this. Our approach is outlined in our Corporate Equality Scheme.

In developing this Scheme we held a race equality partnership consultation event with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust, The Ridgeway Partnership (Learning Disabilities Trust) and Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals Trust. We are committed to developing this partnership approach in order to engage with BME representatives and community groups.

Training

We will provide training on race equality as part of our corporate equality training programme which is outlined in the Corporate Equality Scheme.

Race equality monitoring

We have retained the following Best Value Performance Indicators for race equality:

BVPI2b   The duty to promote the Communities Race Equality Checklist score.

BVPI11b   The percentage of senior management posts filled by BME groups.

BVPI17a   The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the Council's catchment area.

BVPI174   The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population.

BVPI175   The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action.

Publication and review

This Race Equality Scheme will be published on our website. We will also provide paper copies and other formats upon request.

We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting equality, including race equality. To help us do this effectively, we will ask our BME community and relevant stakeholder organisations for their feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how the BME communities are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.

This Race Equality Scheme will be fully revised in three years' time.

4. Gender Equality Scheme

Introduction to the Scheme

We have developed this Gender Equality Scheme to ensure that all people have an equal opportunity to access all the services the Council provides. We will vigorously review policies and procedures to identify, remove or modify potential barriers to meet the needs of all our residents, councillors and members of staff and will look to plan and provide our services in a fair, inclusive and equitable way.

Legislative requirements

The duty to promote gender equality came into force in April 2007. The duty requires that public authorities shall, in carrying out their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- promote gender equality

- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act

- eliminate harassment which is related to a person's gender.

In addition, we will:

- measure progress of the scheme regularly and use the results to inform future action plans

- report annually on the scheme and revise it within three years of the date of first publication

The duty therefore requires this Council to adopt a proactive approach to mainstreaming gender equality into all its decisions and activities.

Gender equality in service delivery and community leadership

We will:

- Ensure that our services meet the needs of people regardless of gender

- Seek to reduce domestic and sexual abuse, by working with our partners.

Oxford City Council has always been proud of its services which are designed to increase the quality of life for all its residents. The Council has always endeavoured, and will continue, to improve and make changes to its services to help make them more equitable and accessible to women who visit, live or work in the City of Oxford. Some of these services support the carers of children and young people, who are more likely to be women. These include:

- The Domestic Violence Coordinator works with other organisations in Oxford to reduce domestic and sexual abuse and increase reporting. The coordinator also develops services to respond to abuse

- We provide single sex sessions at our swimming pools

- The Well Being Hub aims to increase participation in physical activity in target groups including women

- The Asian Families Liaison and Development Worker works with Children's Centres to better engage with women and young children from Asian families

- The Local Food Development Officer supports project to improve access to healthy food and targets families, children and young people.

Gender equality in employment, training and development

We will:

- Create a working environment that actively encourages parents and carers to have equal access to employment opportunities

- Ensure we operate an equal pay policy

- Seek to eliminate gender-based harassment and discrimination through a 'zero tolerance' approach.

To achieve this we will:

- Where the requirements of service delivery are not compromised, ensure that all staff have access to flexible working and that the benefits of work-life balance are recognised

- Challenge inappropriate behaviours and attitudes and work towards a corporate set of behaviours that we expect all council staff to follow

- Ensure that everyone who is responsible for recruiting and managing employees receives appropriate training and guidance on our equality and employment policies and understands their responsibilities

- Use this information to identify areas of inequality, review targets and take the necessary actions as required

- If monitoring shows that any one group does not succeed as well as others within the Council, as well as reviewing our procedures and practices, we may consider whether legal positive action measures are appropriate

- We will ensure that our induction programme takes into account different working patterns and uses varied training methods

- We will ensure that all adverts, job descriptions and person specifications reflect a clear and realistic view of the job and do not include any subjective or irrelevant criteria

- If tests are used as part of the selection process, we will ensure that they are administered by qualified assessors and that the tests do not discriminate against any group

- We will ensure that all our employees have equal access to any promotion opportunities and that no one is excluded

- We will monitor the internal and external promotions

- We will ensure a working environment in which all our employees are free from harassment and bullying

- Any behaviour or conduct which results in discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or intimidation will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures

- We will ensure an equal pay structure through implementing the Single Status agreement

- We will ensure that all future vacancies have been through the job evaluation system

- We will conduct a regular equal pay audit and address any issues that arise from the audit.

Gender equality impact assessment

We have developed a process for equality impact assessment which covers all six equality strands including gender. Our approach is outlined in our Corporate Equality Scheme and our timetable of equality impact assessments for 2008-11 is set out in **chapter 13**.

Access to information

Our approach to providing access to information includes provision of appropriate translations, and is outlined in our Corporate Equality Scheme.

Consultation

We are fully committed to consultation with all our staff, residents and service users and actively encourage consultation both local and national Women's Organisations as part of this. Our approach is outlined in our Corporate Equality Scheme.

Training

We will provide training on gender equality as part of our corporate equality training programme which is outlined in the Corporate Equality Scheme.

Gender equality monitoring

We have retained the following Best Value Performance Indicators for gender equality:

BVPI11a   The percentage of senior management posts filled by women

Publication and review

This Gender Equality Scheme will be published on our website and on our staff intranet. We will also provide paper copies and other formats upon request.

We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting equality, including gender equality. To help us do this effectively, we will ask women and relevant stakeholder organisations for their feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how women are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.

This Scheme will be fully reviewed in three years' time.

5. Disability Equality Scheme

This Disability Equality Scheme was first published in December 2006 but is reproduced here as part of our Corporate Equality Scheme. There have been some minor amendments to reflect the new Corporate Equality Scheme objectives and organisational changes.

Introduction to the scheme

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 imposes a statutory duty on local authorities to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. This Disability Equality Scheme will assist the Council in meeting this duty by setting out what we should plan, deliver and how to evaluate the action plan in order to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

The main requirements are:

- Consult with disabled people on their needs
- Prepare and publish a Disability Equality Scheme
- Implement the Scheme
- Annually report on the progress of the Scheme.

Oxford City Council is a district Council covering 17.6 square miles. In the last census the question was asked 'do you have a long term illness or disability that limits daily activity or work?' 14% of the total City population said yes but in wards such as Barton and Blackbird Leys the number was as high as 18-19%. In addition on the Indices of Deprivation, one part of Carfax is in the most deprived 10% in England for health and disability.

Oxford City Council is committed to promoting a society in which people can participate fully and equally. We also recognise that there are legislative duties regarding access, service delivery and housing.

We recognise we have no powers in this area and that we have restrictions imposed due to budgetary requirements and staffing levels. However we have designed the Disability Equality Scheme, as outlined in this document, to address equality and to ensure we achieve our aims as far as possible.

For the purposes of this scheme, the following definitions apply:

Disability is defined as the lack of opportunity to take part in day- to-day activities due to physical, attitudinal, organisational or social barriers.

Impairment is defined as an illness, injury or condition that results in a change of physical function or psychological function.

We recognise the importance of our role:

- As a major provider of services within Oxford
- As a lead agent in the development of services delivered by and in partnership with other organisations
- As a leader in promoting community initiatives
- In encouraging tourism within Oxford and encouraging business development
- As a major employer.

This document builds on the current Access Strategy. It sets out the framework and principles which will enable us to deliver services in an equal and appropriate manner. It also explains how we intend to meet our statutory duty to promote disability equality.

Legislative requirements

We recognise that rights exist under legislation, which give protection against discrimination.

- We will not treat any person less favourably for a reason related to their disability.
- We will always challenge and aim to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation for reasons of disability.

The legislation relevant to this Scheme includes:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

- Amended by Special Educational Needs
- Disability Discrimination Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act (amendment) regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Guidance Documents

The Scheme is supported by relevant guidance documents and the Action Plan. These documents will give Councillors and Officers the tools and information they need to be able to meet the Scheme's requirements and to facilitate consistent application of them.

The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and the Scheme every three years.

Aims and objectives

Our aim is to work towards Oxford being an equal and accessible society for everyone and to give people with disabilities opportunities by:

- Eliminating disability related harassment
- Promoting equal opportunities
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Promoting positive attitudes towards people with disabilities
- Encouraging participation by disabled persons in public life.

We will seek to eliminate disability-based harassment and discrimination in services and employment through a 'zero tolerance' approach.

We also aim to deliver services in an inclusive and accessible way. Our objectives in service provision are:

- Create and promote equality of access to our services
- To ensure our buildings open to the public are as accessible as possible
- To identify all forms of discrimination and to eliminate them
- To promote the principles of Inclusive Design within the built environment
- To encourage participation of disabled people by engaging in meaningful consultation.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring our services can be accessed with assistance if needed
- Publicising services in a fair and equal manner
- Ensuring effective training is provided so that no member of staff carries out a discriminatory act
- Audit our key processes and procedures to ensure that they do not inadvertently lead to discrimination.

Corporate Commitment

As a major provider of services and information we are committed to providing a society in which everyone can participate equally. We will do this by encouraging:

- Community participation in all aspects of our work
- Provision of services that are fair and accessible to all
- Equality of access to our services.

All Members and Officers are responsible for the implementation of this Scheme. The Scheme will be delivered by:

- The Equalities Board which will develop a Disability Action Plan within its wider Equalities Action Plan
- Service Area Impact Assessments will contribute to this Action Plan which will be developed and progressed through the Annual Service Transformation Plans with the support of the Equalities Board
- The Action Plan will mainstream disability equality into existing plans, such as the Oxford Plan (our corporate plan).

The progress of the Disability Equality Scheme will be reported to the Corporate Performance Board and Executive Members regularly.

Publicity

This scheme will be available to members of the public in any recognised format requested. Staff will be able to access the information on the intranet and will be made aware of the Scheme through induction, disability awareness training and ongoing promotion of the work of the Equalities Board.

Complaints

Any complaints will be dealt with in an accessible format and according to our Corporate Complaints Policy.

Action Plan

Service Areas will highlight potential impacts, which will inform the Action Plan. The Equality Steering Group will use the Action Plan to check and prioritise actions. Through the Action Plan we will check our provision and delivery of service, identify any discrimination and take action by changing any policy, practice or procedure that discriminates.

We will provide any reasonable adjustments necessary to ensure fair and equal access to service, for example by:

- Providing auxiliary aids
- Overcoming any physical barriers to service provision by removal, alteration or alternative methods of service delivery.

Consultation and Participation

Disabled Staff Workshop

A workshop was arranged for disabled staff to discuss the DES. During the workshop a Disability Audit was discussed and a trial sample taken. It was clear from this sample that Learning and Development was a key focus for the scheme and that consultation was another important aspect. The results from this workshop are available on request.

Disability Staff Audit

All staff were given the opportunity to give their views on the disability provision within the Council. The results of this survey are available on request. The key issues were:

- Awareness of the needs of disabled colleagues
- Provision of support for disabled staff from the point of recruitment and also managerial support
- Provide information on the intranet to inform and support staff in disability issues.

Public Consultation for Disability Groups

Disabled groups and individuals were consulted regarding the Disability Equality Scheme to ensure their views are taken into account in relation to what we aim to do and how we aim to achieve it. In order to minimise 'consultation fatigue' this has been carried out in partnership with the County Council, University of Oxford, Brookes University and South Oxford District Council. The results of this consultation will inform the Action Plan.

In June 2006 local disability groups/organisations were invited to Headington Hall to for a discussion and workshop on the issues they consider relevant to the services that Oxford City provide. The results of this day are available on request.

Consultation with members of the public

In October 2006 the public was invited to attend a consultation exercise at the Town Hall. Invitations were sent to:

- Access Forum
- Talkback Panel
- Shopmobility Members
- Members of local disability groups

■ Posters were sent to Doctors' surgeries, sheltered housing etc.

The workshop was attended by 12 members of the public. Various topics were discussed. Members were asked to raise issues and suggest possible solutions. The results of this consultation are available on request.

The information from these consultation exercises has been used to inform the Action Plan.

Consultation Strategy

We have a Consultation Strategy, which covers all aspects of consultation. In relation to disability we will:

■ Consult with people with disabilities on service provision/policies

■ Develop and maintain a corporate approach to consulting with people with disabilities so that information is not duplicated

■ Review our consultation procedures and practices to ensure they are inclusive

■ Produce practical guidelines on accessible information, communication and consultation, ensuring that the purpose of the exercise is clear and to the point

■ Ensure that all consultation material is available in a range of accessible formats

■ Review the Consultation Strategy regularly to ensure it is up-to-date and inclusive.

We will ensure that Service Areas develop clear and effective methods for consultation. This may be through forums, focus groups, user groups, committees etc or through the use of questionnaires or satisfaction surveys.

We will work to improve the process of meaningful involvement and user-led services, where appropriate, involving people with disabilities in the democratic process.

We will include disabled service users and organisations in developing policy and decisions that effect people with disabilities.

We will establish a forum to encourage regular involvement and dialogue between the Council and service users.

We will ensure that feedback is given on any participation or consultation.

We aim to ensure that meeting venues are accessible to all sections of the community.

Delivering our Services

Standards and Guidance

We have adopted the social model of disability that accepts that people with impairments are further disabled by the barriers created in society (e.g. physical, environmental, organisational, attitudinal etc). We are committed to removing these barriers to our services wherever possible.

We will ensure that our policies, practices and procedures do not create barriers, either physical or attitudinal, which make it difficult for people to access our services, buildings or employment.

Employment, Training and Awareness

Employment

We will proactively seek to remove barriers in recruitment, selection and development by:

■ Interviewing all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities

■ Ensuring that there is a mechanism in place to discuss with disabled employees what we can do to develop and use their abilities

■ Make reasonable adjustments to facilitate continued employment of people who are or become disabled, where possible

■ Provide an appropriate level of disability awareness training that is open to all employees to make our commitments work.

- Provide advice and support to managers of disabled employees

- Address individual acts of discrimination through the Staff Complaints Policy and disciplinary policy

- Regularly review our policies to identify what has been achieved and ways to improve and ensure that our managers are equipped with the necessary knowledge of polices and procedures

- Procedures will be put in place to gather evidence on the effects of disability equality on recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees.

Training

We recognise that we are responsible for the actions of our employees during the course of their employment. We will provide managers and staff with training in Disability Awareness/Equality either through the Induction Process or individually tailored courses for specific service areas.

Disability Equality training will be based on the social model of disability and will include a section on the duties and responsibility of the Council and employees in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act.

In addition we will ensure that staff have appropriate training in access auditing, each service areas has staff aware of the use of auxiliary aids to meet the needs of customers and that the appraisal system is used to identify any specialist training necessary.

Disability Equality Monitoring

We have retained the following Best Value Performance Indicators for disability equality:

BVPI11c   The percentage of senior management earners that have a disability

BVPI16a   Employees declaring a disability in accordance with the DDA.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Action Plan will incorporate targets and milestones as well as key actions, so will also form a monitoring and evaluation tool. The Action Plan will form the basis of the work of the Equalities Steering Group, which will monitor progress on a quarterly basis.

Evidence will be provided by:

- Monitoring Form

- Impact Assessments

- Performance Indicators

- Service level monitoring / up-take of services etc

- HR Management Information System.

The results will inform future policy and procedure changes, the Corporate Plan and Service Transformation Plans. The scheme will be reviewed annually and updated with any new legislation, guidelines etc.

Publication and review

This Gender Equality Scheme will be published on our website and on our staff intranet. We will also provide paper copies and other alternate formats upon request.

We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting equality, including gender equality. To help us do this effectively, we will ask women and relevant stakeholder organisations for their feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how women are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.

This Scheme will be fully reviewed in three years' time.

6. Age equality

Oxford City Council is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for older and younger people.

The Council's normal retirement age is 65. In line with the age discrimination legislation's exemptions, the Council does not accept applications from people over 65 years of age or who are within 6 months of our normal retirement age.

The Council recognises that society has negative attitudes, myths and stereotypes about aging, youth, older and younger persons. These negative attitudes and beliefs can lead to both younger and older people being economically and socially disadvantaged, marginalised and excluded.

Age related discrimination generally consists of unequal treatment against people based on their chronological age. This can include unfair treatment linked to a specific age or within an age range. It can also include categories such as 'old', 'young' or the perceived age of a person that someone may be associated with, for example, the carer of an older person.

This Authority believes that older and younger people have the right to equality of opportunity and we acknowledge that all people, irrespective of age, make a significant and valuable contribution to the community that we strive to serve.

Age equality means securing equality of participation in our society for people of every age. We need to ensure the correct balance between equal citizenship, equality of outcome, equality of opportunity and respect for difference.

Legal Responsibilities

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations came into force on 1 October 2006. This new Regulation makes it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age. The Regulations protect everyone from direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment in employment and vocational training on the grounds of age.

The Regulations cover recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissal and training. They do not, however, currently cover the provision of goods and services.

The Regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of age to:

- discriminate directly against anyone or treat them less favourably because of their age, unless this treatment can be objectively justified

- discriminate indirectly against anyone, that is, to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of a particular age, unless it can be objectively justified

- subject someone to harassment because of their age. Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances, including the perception of the victim

- victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on the grounds of age

- discriminate against someone, in certain circumstances, after the contractual working relationship has ended.

Employers could be responsible for their employees who discriminate on the grounds of age. Upper age limits on unfair dismissal and redundancy will be removed. There will be a national default retirement age of 65, making compulsory retirement below 65 unlawful unless objectively justified. Employees will have the right to request to work beyond 65 or any other retirement age set by the Council. The Council has a duty to consider all such requests.

To make sure age discrimination is eliminated from the Council's workforce we will review all existing policies to ensure that no age discrimination takes place in the following areas:

- recruitment, selection and promotion

- training

- pay, benefits and other conditions

- bullying and harassment

- Retirement.

The Council will consider the make-up of our workforce and whether positive action is required to tackle any age imbalance.

Impact assessment

The impact of functions and policies on age equality will be considered as part of our three-year programme of equality impact assessments.

7. Sexual orientation equality

Oxford City Council is fully committed to combating the discrimination faced by lesbian women, gay men and bisexual (LGB) people.

The Council will respect the rights of LGB individuals to be open and honest about their sexual orientation. We will tackle homophobia, challenge stereotyping, harassment and discrimination of LGB people. We will actively strive to improve all of our local community's knowledge about LGB communities, both internally and in the wider community as a whole.

Oxford City Council recognises that the Civil Partnerships Act 2005 introduces new legal rights and responsibilities for same sex couples in registered partnerships. The Council will fully respect these rights.

Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people still feel unable or unsafe to reveal their sexual orientation at work. lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and service users now find themselves in the position where they are protected from discrimination. Employers and service providers that fail to acknowledge, or are unaware of their legal responsibilities may leave themselves open to legal challenge.

Lesbians, gay and bisexual people are represented throughout the district. The LGB community make a significant economic, social and cultural contribution to Oxford and although there is no hard data on the number of LGB people locally and nationally, as sexual orientation is not a specific category in the national census, it is estimated that LGB people make up at least 10% of both the local and national population.

In recent decades there has been a positive improvement to the civil and human rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. However, many still face open hostility, prejudice and discrimination. This Policy will outline the Council's commitment to sexual orientation equality.

Legislative requirements

Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment practices has been unlawful since December 2003 in the workplace. Legal protection is given to lesbian, gay and bisexual employees through the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003. These Regulations which came into force on 1 December 2003 make it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an employee on the grounds of sexual orientation.

The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 came into force on 30 April 2007 and is Part 3 of the Equality Act 2006. It contains measures prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, services and facilities. The 2007 Regulations provide protection from sexual orientation discrimination on par with protection already provided on the grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief.

The Regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of a person's:

- actual sexual orientation
- the sexual orientation he/she is thought to have and/or
- the sexual orientation of someone with whom he or she is associated.

Sexual orientation is defined as an individual's sexual orientation towards

- people of the same sex as him or her (Gay or Lesbian)
- people of the opposite sex (heterosexual)
- people of both sexes (Bisexual).

It does not include transsexuality which is related to gender and is covered by sex discrimination legislation.

The Regulations apply to all forms of goods, services and facilities and cover:

- access to and use of a place that the public is permitted to enter
- accommodation and establishments, such as hotels and boarding houses
- facilities for banking, insurance, grants, loans, credit or finance
- facilities for entertainment, recreation or refreshment
- facilities for travel or transport
- professional or trade services.

Discrimination is unlawful whether or not a charge is made for the goods, facilities or services.

Discrimination against Lesbians, Gay men or Bisexuals can be both direct and indirect. The Regulations do not change the existing legal position regarding civil partnerships. Businesses and local authorities will not be able to discriminate between married persons and civil partners on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Civil partners will now be able to bring a claim of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation against a provider of goods or services who denies them access to a benefit or service being offered to a married person in a similar situation.

The Regulations make it unlawful to adopt or maintain a discriminatory practice. Similarly the Regulations make it unlawful to publish an advertisement for goods, facilities or services that discriminates on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Under the Regulations, employers are liable for the action of their employees and agents, whether or not they know about or approve of the act. It is a defence, however, for the employer to prove that they took such steps that were reasonable and practicable to prevent discrimination taking place. Organisations will therefore need to take steps to ensure that their employees and agents are aware of the Regulations, and understand the implications for their employment and service delivery.

Impact assessment

The impact of functions and policies on sexual orientation equality will be considered as part of our three-year programme of equality impact assessments.

8. Religion or belief equality

Oxford City Council is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity in religion or belief.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, which came into force on 2 December 2003, made discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief unlawful in employment and vocational training in Britain. The Equality Act 2006, Part 2, has extended this duty to cover service delivery. Developing an understanding of different faith communities, their practices and beliefs is therefore essential in meeting the requirements of this legislation.

Religions deal with many basic questions, from how life began to what happens to us when we die. Each religion has developed its own beliefs, rituals and ideas on these matters. Though many religions claim to be inspired by God, we need to remember that all religions originated and developed in particular historical, geographical and cultural situations that moulded and influenced them. Religion links together societies and individuals who share the same range of general beliefs, values, codes of behaviour, practices and traditions. Religion also links the present day with the customs and practices of the past.

Religion generally includes the following:

- Faith and experience - a sense of belonging and commitment to something greater than one's self
- Creed and doctrine - the system of beliefs and ideas held about a God, other divinities, creation and salvation
- Codes and ethics - the way people behave because of their beliefs or non-beliefs
- Ritual - all that is involved in practicing the belief
- Community - the social aspects of a religion.

Faith communities are groupings of people who belong to the major world religions and of those who follow other forms of religious expression, this includes those that do not have a faith or religious belief.

Public sector organisations, including Oxford City Council, will now need to address issues of faith in a more systematic and structured approach. It is now necessary that we understand the values of faith, our residents, customers, staff, contractors and elected members, wherever possible, demonstrating a consensus between their faith values and those of the Council.

Many employees and customers have experienced tensions between the values that come from their beliefs and those of the organisation. Historically, many members of staff have raised issues of faith with sympathetic managers, but these debates have been 'informal' in nature leading to little or no action being taken. Similarly, little has been done in the area of service delivery.

Legislative requirements

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations came into force on 2 December 2003. This Regulation makes it unlawful to discriminate against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their religion or belief. The Regulations were further extended by Part 2 of the Equality Act 2006 to include all aspects of service delivery. The Equality Act 2006 protects everyone from direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment in employment, vocational training and service delivery on the grounds of religion or belief.

The Regulations cover recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissal, training and all practices and procedures involved in service delivery.

The Regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of religion or belief to discriminate on the basis of:

- A person's actual religion or belief
- A religion or belief they are thought to have
- The religion or belief of someone else with whom they are associated (for instance, someone such as a friend or member of their family)

They also prohibit discrimination against a person because they do not hold a religion or belief.

Part 2 protects people from being discriminated against because, for example:

- They hold a particular religion

- They are married to a person of a particular religion

- They appear to be of a particular religion because of the way they dress

- They are not of a particular religion.

Part 2 also outlaws discrimination on the grounds of lack of a religion or belief. It will therefore be unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds that they do not belong to a particular religion, or any religion at all.

Part 2 of the Equality Act 2006 also prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. This extends protection to cover victimisation.

The Act also provides protection against discriminatory advertisements, instructing or causing discrimination. Employers are liable for the actions of their employees and agents, whether or not they know about, or approve of, the Act.

Part 2 applies to all forms of goods, services and facilities and it is unlawful to discriminate in the following:

- Access to, and use of, a place - that the public is permitted to enter

- Accommodation - in establishments such as hotels and boarding houses

- Facilities for banking, insurance, grants, loans, credit or finances

- Facilities for entertaining, recreation or refreshment

- Facilities for transport or travel

- Professional or trade services.

Impact assessment

The impact of functions and policies on religion or belief equality will be considered as part of our three-year programme of equality impact assessments.

9. Putting principles into practice

Equality in service provision and community leadership

The Council is committed as a service provider, community leader and employer to ensure that discrimination, harrassment or victimisation does not take place within the work place, or in the way services are delivered or functions and duties carried out.

To achieve this we will:

- Work with our diverse communities to meet their needs
- Enable equal participation in community life that generates confidence and trust
- Improve community relations and reduce levels of inequality between and within communities
- Work effectively with our partners e.g. community groups, Oxfordshire County Council and health services, to deliver the best possible service to all communities. This includes those who provide goods and services on our behalf.

We have written an action plan which sets out when we are planning to achieve these objectives. This action plan will be continually revised over the next three years, particularly through our programme of equality impact assessments which will assess the equality impact of all our services and policies.

We already have some activities in place to achieve these objectives, which include:

- Providing information to our residents and service users in a range of different formats (see below)
- Ensuring our buildings are as accessible as possible by making all necessary reasonable adjustments
- Ensuring that all publicity materials present appropriate and positive images of women, disabled people and minority groups
- Improving the availability of leisure activities to certain groups - through our Well Being Hub in Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, free swimming for children, holiday play schemes and single-sex swim sessions
- Coordinating the Oxford Mela, which celebrates the cultural diversity of Oxford
- Providing grants to community and voluntary organisations
- Promoting Council benefits to improve their take-up
- A Disability Unit which provides the Shopmobility service and provides information on access issues
- A Social Inclusion Strategy which highlights the inequalities in Oxford and sets out our actions to reduce these
- Training 'community champions' who can represent different minority groups in Oxford
- Running the concessionary bus fares service
- Ensuring that organisations who provide services for us meet certain equal opportunities standards.

Communication

We understand the importance of communication in regard to service delivery. We will work to ensure that we communicate in a fair and accessible manner by:

- Providing information in the preferred method of communication every time we are contacted. This may be large print, Braille, audiotape, BSL, etc
- Encouraging Plain English in our communications
- Supporting managers and staff by providing key documents on disability access in the Disability Information Pack for Managers.
- Ensuring that the council has various methods of providing translations of documents relating to council services and of telephone and face-to-face interpreting. These include telephone and face-to-face interpreting services provided by Language Line, approved translators and staff with particular language skills.

Council website

Our website is constantly under review with special emphasis on accessibility standards. The website has introduced 'Text 2 Speech' which enables persons who may find it difficult to read print, have a sight problem, or may not have English as a first language, to hear the website read out loud. The site also has a number of other accessibility features including access keys which enable users with mobility problems to navigate the site. As well as continuing to improve the site to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0 standards, disabled users have tested the site and provided feedback.

In the future we are going to continue to improve the site by taking a dual approach of electronic testing to meet WCAG standards as well as continuing user testing. In the coming 12 months we will apply for Shaw Trust status. They use disabled users to test sites, and only award approval to sites that meet the needs of all types of disabled users.

Corporate Identity

We will ensure that our corporate identity reflects the people we provide services to by:

- The use of positive language/images
- The use of consultation to find out what people want
- The use of appropriate publicity to reflect the diversity of the City.

Customer Care

We will provide services that are efficient, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of our customers by:

- Ensuring that our customers can access our services easily and on equal terms
- Aiming to do things right first time
- Working with customers and partners to improve our services.

Procurement, Partnerships and Projects

Oxford has a rich and diverse culture - a community made up of people from different races, backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. This diversity is reflected in the economic life of the city and it should also be reflected in our procurement processes.

In developing a local procurement policy framework the City Council and its partners are committed to pursuing social progress, equity, and diversity in order to build a city that all our people can be proud of.

We will:

- Actively encourage disability equality by ensuring our contractors consider disability equality in their policies, practices and procedures.
- Aim to develop a thriving economy providing jobs, housing, and services for local people while at the same time preserving the diversity that makes Oxford uniquely attractive.
- Aim to "encourage strength, diversity, and social inclusion across the city's economy in its broadest sense, covering both paid and unpaid work, in workplaces, out in the community, or in the home".

Equality in employment, training and development

As an employer we will:

- Ensure our recruitment methods encourage applications from all groups in the community and particularly those which are under-represented
- Create a working environment which actively supports the development of our employees and is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or intimidation.

To achieve this we will:

- Monitor all activities around recruitment, employment, promotion, pay, gradings, disciplinary proceedings, staff complaints, training, probation reports, exit interviews and health and safety
- Use this information to identify areas of inequality, review targets and take the necessary actions as required

- If monitoring shows that any one group does not succeed as well as others within the Council, as well as reviewing our procedures and practices, we may consider whether legal positive action measures are appropriate

- Where the requirements of service delivery are not compromised, develop systems to be able to ensure that all staff have access to flexible working and that the benefits of work-life balance are recognised

- Challenge inappropriate behaviours and attitudes and work towards a corporate set of behaviours that we expect all council staff to follow

- Ensure that everyone who is responsible for recruiting and managing employees is offered appropriate training and guidance on our equality and employment policies and understands their responsibilities

- Take effective action to attract, develop and retain leaders of today and the leaders of tomorrow

- Conduct a staff survey every two years and use the feedback to enhance our policy development programme.

Induction

- We will ensure that all employees have access to an induction programme and that the programme includes an overview of the corporate equality objectives

- We will ensure that the programme takes into account different working patterns and uses varied training methods.

Recruitment and Selection

- We will ensure that all adverts, job descriptions and person specifications reflect a clear and realistic view of the job and do not include any subjective or irrelevant criteria

- We will encourage applications from under-represented groups, including using specialist press for job advertisements where appropriate

- We will ensure that we monitor the impact of our recruitment and selection process and use the data to enhance future recruitment campaigns

- If tests are used as part of the selection process, we will ensure that they are administered by qualified assessors and that the tests do not discriminate against any group

- We will offer feedback to all unsuccessful candidates about their application and performance at interview.

Performance appraisal

- We will ensure that all staff have an annual appraisal with regular one-to-one meetings with their line manager

- We will ensure that all staff undertake a discussion with their line manager on their current diversity awareness and any training needs are reflected in their development plan.

Learning and development

- We recognise that our employees have varying needs and a comprehensive training plan is linked to our appraisal process

- We are committed to our Skills for Life programme and we will ensure that equalities is embedded into all of our external training contracts

- We believe that everyone should be given the opportunity to reach his or her potential

- We will ensure that there is equality of opportunity of access to development

- All decisions for requests for training will be based on merit.

Promotion

- We will ensure that all our employees have equal access to any promotion opportunities and that no one is excluded

- We will develop systems to monitor the internal and external promotions

- We will develop our own staff where there are identified skill shortages

- We will offer support from the internal coaching network.

Disciplinary, harassment, staff complaints

- We will ensure a working environment in which all our employees are free from harassment and bullying

- Any behaviour or conduct which results in discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or intimidation will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

Health and safety

- We will ensure that the 'Attendance Management Policy' which is being developed incorporates steps for rehabilitation, reasonable adjustments and redeployment.

Equal Pay

- We will ensure an equal pay structure through implementing the Single Status agreement

- We will ensure that all future vacancies have been appropriately evaluated

- We will conduct a regular equal pay audit and address any issues that arise from the audit.

10. Consultation and engagement

We are committed to engaging with our residents and service users to meet their needs, and with our staff to ensure we create a working environment which promotes equal opportunities for all.

We are currently developing a new consultation strategy that will be supported by a practical guide on public consultation. This guide will pay particular attention to ensuring we use the most appropriate consultation methods for the diverse range of people in the city. We will encourage the use of new methods which increase community capacity to prioritise local services.

We use a variety of consultation methods to encourage participation from our citizens. These include online and postal surveys, workshops, focus groups, citizens' juries, public meetings and mystery shopping exercises. We also have a citizens' panel called Talkback that consists of 1,000 residents who regularly give us feedback on our services.

Consultation was carried out to inform the development of this equality scheme before it was drafted. The consultation included:

- A Talkback panel survey on equality in service provision
- A survey of our elected members about service provision
- A survey on our website about service provision
- A staff survey about equality in the workplace
- A partnership consultation event on race equality
- Discussion with union representatives.

This equality scheme was also subject to a further period of consultation before it was adopted by the Council. This included presentations to community groups, display stands at our leisure centres and distributing summaries of the scheme with feedback forms to staff and special interest groups. This was also available on our website.

We are committed to extending our partnership work on equality. In developing this Scheme we held consultation events on disability equality and race equality in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and other NHS bodies. We recognise that we have a shared duty as public service providers to promote equality and work in partnership.

We will carry out ongoing consultation and engagement as our programme of equality impact assessments is conducted over the next three years. The consultation which arises from equality impact assessments will be coordinated through our consultation officer to ensure that people are not 'over-consulted'. We will also ensure we provide regular feedback.

11. Mainstreaming equality and diversity

The Equality Standard

We have adopted The Equality Standard for Local Government as our driver for mainstreaming equalities throughout the organisation.

The Equality Standard for Local Government provides a framework which local government can use to address its legal obligations and promote best practice in equality and diversity. The five levels are:

Level 1: commitment to a comprehensive equality policy and to the concepts of equality and diversity

Level 2: engagement through assessment and consultation.

Level 3: performance setting: setting equality objectives and targets.

Level 4: performance monitoring: information systems and monitoring against targets.

Level 5: performance review: achieving and reviewing outcomes.

We have committed to demonstrating leadership and best practice in equality and diversity by reaching Level 3 by 2011.

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve our work by making sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, it promotes equality. It involves anticipating the consequences of policies and projects on the target groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

Our process is aimed at assessing the impact of policies, strategies, functions or projects across the six equality groups - race, gender, disability, religion or faith, age and sexual orientation. We will look at both negative impacts and positive impacts.

An equality impact assessment will be carried out when:

(a) Developing a new policy, service, strategy, procedure or function.

(b) Reviewing existing policies, procedures, or functions.

(c) A policy, procedure, function or strategy has been identified as requiring an EqIA by partnership working, directorates, Executive, or elected members.

A timetable for reviewing our existing functions and policies over the next three years is set out in **chapter 13**. This timetable has been developed in priority order, those which are considered highest priority will be impact assessed in the first year of this scheme. The priority order has been determined by considering:

- Relevance: is there an opportunity to fulfil the general duties to promote race, disability or gender equality through this function or policy?

- Differential impact: is the function or policy likely to have a differential impact on any of the six equality groups race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age?

- Proportionality: how many people does this function or policy affect?

Heads of Service are responsible for incorporating equalities into their policies, procedures, functions or strategies, and for assessing the equalities impacts. This should be a continuous cycle, starting at the very beginning of the process. If there is any doubt as to whether a policy, strategy or function requires initial screening, managers should contact the Diversity Co-ordinator.

The Equality Impact Assessment consists of two parts - the initial screening process and a more thorough full assessment if the initial screening has identified an adverse / negative impact. A full assessment involves engaging with representatives from equality groups who are likely to be affected by the policy, strategy or project. This could include engaging with staff and members, staff networks or trade unions, other public bodies or voluntary and community groups. Sufficient time and resources will be dedicated to the consultation process to encourage full participation, particularly by those groups we have traditionally failed to reach.

Full guidance and report templates are available on our intranet for staff carrying out equality impact assessments. The results of equality impact assessments will be published on the website and made available

in other formats on request.

Staff equality and diversity training

We recognise that our staff are our key resource in improving our services, and that providing training on equality and diversity is vital to meet our equality objectives. The training that we will provide over the next three years will cover all six equality strands - race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age - and will include:

- Corporate induction programme - this includes half a day for equality & diversity, and half a day for access & disability awareness

- A new 90 minute "toolbox talk" type induction to be delivered from 2009 for operational staff who are not able to attend the full corporate induction programme. This will include a customer-service focussed equality and diversity module

- In-depth training on equality and diversity for human resources staff and managers involved in recruitment or policy development. Around 50 staff will be trained in 2008/09 with further top-up training to be delivered in subsequent years

- Additional equality impact assessment training to top-up the 30 people trained during 2007/08

- A new programme of drama-based equality and diversity awareness training will be started in Autumn 2008, focussing initially on staff who missed their diversity induction and/or the previous equality and diversity refresher training programmes in 2005/06. This will be a three-year cycle covering around 500 staff per year.

Responsibilities for equality and diversity

Certain individuals have additional responsibilities under this Scheme.

- Executive members are responsible for agreeing the policy content and monitoring its implementation

- The Chief Executive and Executive Directors are responsible for the strategic ownership and delivery of this Policy and associated Equality Schemes

- Heads of Service will have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this Policy and associated Equality Schemes. Each Head of Service is required to set out the core objectives for the service over the next year in an annual service transformation plan. This plan includes a commitment to deliver our equality objectives and specific actions to achieve this. Some of these actions are reflected in the corporate equality action plan as set out in **chapter 12**. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of their legal responsibilities under equal opportunity legislation, reviewing and monitoring the operation of this Policy and associated Equality Schemes

- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff understand equal opportunities and that they report all incidents of harassment and discrimination. They are also responsible for ensuring that all staff have equality of access and resources

- All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted. They should also ensure that on-going dialogue about equality of opportunity issues and practices take place with partner organisations, contractors and customers/service users.

- The Diversity Coordinator based in Policy, Performance and Communications has day-to-day responsibility for overseeing progress on equality and diversity and facilitating the work of the Equalities Board.

Monitoring Arrangements

We have a corporate Equalities Board which meets monthly. The Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Corporate Equality Scheme including the action plan, equality training, monitoring indicators, equality impact assessment programme and equalities communication.

The Board is chaired by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communications and has representatives from Service Areas across the Council. It reports to the Corporate Performance Board, which is chaired by the Chief Executive.

We are retaining the Best Value Performance Indicators which relate to equality and diversity although they have now been replaced by the new National Indicators. We will also develop local performance indicators which reflect the objectives set out in this Equality Scheme. Performance information is published on our

website at: www.oxford.gov.uk/council/performance.cfm

We collect a range of information across our services about service users and levels of usage, satisfaction levels, service outcomes and complaints. Much of this information can be broken down by ethnic group, gender, disability and age, and is a key resource for equality impact assessments. The impact assessment process will also highlight areas where our monitoring systems are not adequate and action will be taken to improve them where this is the case.

Equality monitoring

We have retained the following Best Value Performance Indicator:

BVPI2a   The level of the Commission for Racial Equality's Standard for Local Government to which the Council conforms.

Publication and review of the Corporate Equality Scheme

This Corporate Equality Scheme will be published on our website. We will also provide paper copies and other formats upon request.

We will report annually on the progress we have made towards promoting disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief equality. To help us do this effectively, we will ask all members of our community and relevant stakeholder organisations for their feedback. As part of these reviews, we will consider the information we collect on how our community are accessing our services and employment opportunities to ensure that we are making progress.

This Equality Scheme will be subject to on-going review and along with its action plan should be considered a 'live' document. The Scheme will be fully revised in three years' time.

12. Corporate Equality Action Plan 2008-11

This chapter sets out our Corporate Equality Scheme and provides a key to the delivery of our objectives.

Key to supporting objectives

For race equality we aim to:

R1: Seek to employ a workforce which is, at all levels and across all sections, representative of the black and minority ethnic population

R2: Work with black and minority ethnic groups to meet their needs and reduce the inequalities between different ethnic groups

R3: Promote good relations between people of different ethnic groups

R4: Enable and encourage citizens and communities from all ethnic groups to participate in community life

R5: Seek to eliminate racial harassment and discrimination through a 'zero tolerance' approach

For gender equality we aim to:

G1: Create a working environment that actively encourages parents and carers to have equal access to employment opportunities

G2: Ensure we operate an equal pay policy

G3: Ensure that our services meet the needs of people regardless of gender

G4: Seek to reduce domestic and sexual abuse, by working with our partners

G5: Seek to eliminate gender-based harassment and discrimination through a 'zero tolerance' approach

For disability equality we aim to:

D1: Proactively seek to remove barriers in recruitment, selection and development

D2: Create and promote equality of access to our services

D3: Ensure our buildings open to the public are as accessible as possible

D4: Promote the principles of 'Inclusive Design' within the built environment

D5: Encourage participation of disabled people by engaging in consultation

D6: Seek to eliminate disability-based harassment and discrimination through a 'zero tolerance' approach

Ensure our recruitment methods encourage applications from all groups in the community and particularly those which are under-represented.

Action	Timescale	Lead service area	Supporting objectives
Publish a workforce monitoring report for the financial year 2007-08	July/Sep 2008	HR	R1, G1, D1
Ensure that human resources systems are able to analyse the number ofpeople receiving training by equality groups	Dec 2008	HR	R1, G1, D1
Reasons for leaving from exit interview questionnaires should be collated and analysed	Dec 2008	HR	R1, G1, D1
Review existing local labour market assessments, workforce profiling and equal pay reviews. Explore a joint employment equality assessment with other local public bodies.	Mar 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1
Set employment and pay targets	Mar 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1
Use the results of the workforce monitoring report to inform actions to improve the diversity of the Council's employees	Mar 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1
Ensure that all Human Resource policies have been assessed for equality impact	April 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1

Ensure that all recruitment policies and practices provide equality of access	April 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1
Regain our Two Ticks status	April 2009	HR	D1
Consider whether to collect information on employees by transgender, sexual orientation and religion/faith	April 2009	HR	To follow
Monitor requests for reasonable adjustments and report to Equalities Board	April 2009	HR	D1
Ensure equal access to the induction training on diversity	Dec 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1
Operate an equal pay policy	Dec 2009	HR	G2
Monitor that opportunities for and access to learning and career development are provided fairly, using lawful discrimination (positive action) as appropriate	Dec 2009	HR	R1, G1, D1
Implement the new equality and diversity training programme for staff	Mar 2011	HR	R1, G1, D1

Create a working environment which actively supports the development of our employees and is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or intimidation.

Continue support for the staff disability forum and involve in policy changes	Ongoing	CD	D1, D6
Implement the new equality and diversity training programme for staff	Mar 2011	HR	R5, G5, D6
Review existing harassment policies and ensure they cover all types of harassment. Communicate these to staff	Mar 2009	PPC/HR	R5, G5, D6

Work with our diverse communities to meet their needs.

Collection of domestic waste – assisted & clinical collection and bulky items	2008/9	CW	D2
Collection of domestic recycling	2009/10	CW	D3
Safe and easy access to markets	2009/10	CW	D3
Install and replace tactile paving on key areas of the highway	2009/10	CW	D2
Provide signage and information in different languages and pictorially	Ongoing	CW	D2
Car Parks – ensure adequate provision of disabled, parent/carer and child parking spaces	2008/9	CW	D2
Address park accessibility through green flag status	Ongoing	CW	D2
Address park accessibility through Green Flag status	Ongoing	CW	D2
Work with estate managers to ensure Council tenants' bin collection needs are met	October 2008	CW	D2
Provide a weekend burial service to take account of different faiths	Ongoing	CW	To follow
Provide customer service which is accessible to people with physical disabilities	Ongoing	CS	D2
Provide British Sign Language interpreters on an ad hoc basis	Ongoing	CS	D2
Maintain contract to provide interpretation services	Ongoing	CS	R2
Extend call centre hours	Mar 2009	CS	D2
Provide information in different formats to take account of disability or language	Ongoing	CS	D2, R2
Implement the new equality and diversity training programme for staff	Mar 2011	HR	R2, G3, D2
Continue our programme of Plain English training and promotion	Ongoing	HR	D2

Provide single sex swimming sessions	Ongoing	CL	G3
Implement the 2007 Tenant and Leaseholder Compact and work with the Equalities Topic Panel to influence council housing services	Ongoing	OCH	R2, G3, D2
Implement the Oxford City Homes Comprehensive Service Standards	Ongoing	OCH	D2
Operate an adaptations policy for disabled people	Ongoing	OCH	D2
Remove barriers to enable access to the Choice Based Lettings scheme	Ongoing	CHCD	R2, G3, D2
Support community centres to provide activities for all members of the community, including people with disabilities and disability support groups	Ongoing	CHCD	R2, G3, D2
Establish means of communicating with Eastern European groups	Mar 2009	ED	R2
Maintain Shopmobility service	Ongoing	CD	D2
Continued investment to ensure all council buildings offering public access comply with the Disability Discrimination Act	Work plan in place	CD	D3
Review our alternative formats policy	Sept 2008	PPC	R2, G3, D2
Continue electronic testing of our website to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0	Ongoing	PPC	D2
Make informational videos available on the website to assist people with disabilities or poor English	Mar 2009	PPC	D2, R2
Apply for Shaw Trust status for the website	Mar 2009	PPC	D2
Review our monitoring and information systems as part of the equality impact assessment process	Mar 2009	PPC	R2, G3, D2
Produce a diversity profile of Oxford's residents, workers and visitors, including information about the needs of different groups in the city	Mar 2009	PPC	R2, G3, D2
Further development of website to enable online transactions and improved information	Ongoing	PPC/CS	D2
Complete equality impact assessments three-year timetable	Mar 2011	All	R2, G3, D2

Enable equal participation in community life that generates confidence and trust

Develop a strategy for community participation in equality	Mar 2010	PPC	D5, R4
Adopt a new Consultation Strategy and Toolkit	Sep 2008	PPC	D5, R4
Continued investment in technology to ensure all members of the public can participate in council meetings including area committee meetings	Mar 2010	PFM	D5
Consultation on equalities to be incorporated into development of new Sustainable Community Strategies	Mar 2011	CD	D5, R4
Develop the capacity of stakeholders to scrutinise procedures, including the community champions and Access Forum	Mar 2010	PPC/CHCD/CD	D5, R4
Ensure that appropriate language, translation and interpretation facilities are in place for consultation and that buildings used for consultation are accessible to all potential users	Ongoing	PPC/CHCD	D5, R4

Improve community relations and reduce levels of inequality between and within communities

Campaign to increase take-up of council tax benefits	Ongoing	CS	R2
Provide free swimming sessions to children and young people			

under 17 years	Ongoing	CL	R4, G3, D2
Ensure equal access to all leisure service users, including people on a low income, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities and people from black and minority ethnic groups	Mar 2009	CL	R2, G3, D2
Review images available for use in publications, including recruitment literature, to ensure they are representative of different groups and different environments including work, leisure, education and home	Sept 2008	PPC	R3, D6
Increase engagement with socially excluded groups to increase use and attendance of community centres	Mar 2009	CHCD	R2, R3, G3, D3
Exploit opportunities to provide social and other low cost housing in areas of traditional BME settlement	Ongoing	CHCD	R2
Continue support for the annual Mela event	Ongoing	CHCD	R3
Continue support for the Oxford Council of Faiths	Ongoing	CHCD	To follow
Obtain 'regional homelessness champion' status for the South East	Mar 2009	CHCD	To follow
Implement the Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy	Dec 2009	CHCD	R2
Analyse differences in reasons for homelessness between white and black & minority ethnic households	Dec 2009	CHCD	R2
Implement the Elderly Persons Housing Strategy	Dec 2009	CHCD	To follow
Extend the range of support available for elderly persons' housing and support including Telecare and Extra Care	Dec 2009	CHCD	To follow
Improve take-up of environmental health services by black and minority ethnic groups	Dec 2009	ED	R2
Develop a work programme to tackle inequalities with Oxford Strategic Partnership Health & Social Inclusion Group	Ongoing	CHCD/CD	R2
Look at methods of payment to ensure they are accessible to all	Mar 2009	CS/Fin	D2

Work effectively with our partners e.g. community groups, Oxfordshire County Council and health services to deliver the best possible service to all communities. This includes those who provide goods and services on our behalf

Encourage a healthy lifestyle and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in partnership with others through providing opportunities for sport & leisure	Ongoing	CL	R4, G3, D2
Partnership Manager to ensure equality content of Local Area Agreement plans	Sept 2008	CD	R2, G3, D2
Improve domestic abuse services in the city to reduce harm and risk to women and prevent homelessness	Dec 2009	CHCD	G4
Ensure links to partnership working to encourage healthy lifestyles and communities and enable access to lifestyle choices	Mar 2009	CHCD	R4, G3, D2
Carry out an equality impact assessment on the procurement tender process function as part of the development of a new procurement strategy	Mar 2009	SP	R2, G3, D2
Ensure that all corporate procurement activity and supply chain contract management meet equalities guidance	Mar 2009	SP	R2, G3, D2
Provide training and/or guidance to the procurement team so that they can train all staff involved in evaluating tenders for equality impact	Mar 2009	SP	R2, G3, D2

Improving our processes

Action	Date	Service area	Status
Consult upon and adopt Corporate Equality Scheme	June 2008	PPC	To follow
Equalities Board to develop an equality communications plan to be reviewed regularly	July 2008	PPC	To follow
Establish monitoring systems and reporting processes for Equalities Board	July 2008	PPC	To follow
Set corporate age objectives	Mar 2009	PPC	To follow
Corporate targets set for all objectives	Mar 2009	PPC	To follow
Develop a corporate list of all policies and strategies with date of introduction, date of review and person responsible	Mar 2009	PPC	To follow
Review equality monitoring and information systems including setting up planning groups	Mar 2009	PPC	To follow
Produce a single annual equality report	April 2009	PPC	To follow
Corporate objectives and targets set for sexual orientation and religion	June 2009	PPC	To follow
Ensure that equality progress has been verified through self-assessment, scrutiny and audit and have been validated externally through an accredited assessor	Mar 2011	PPC	To follow
Establish corporate guidelines for information gathering and equality monitoring	Mar 2010	PPC	To follow
Include equality impact assessment in project management guidance	Mar 2009	BT	To follow
Consider including an 'equality impact assessment' section on the committee report template for executive decisions	Sept 2008	LD	To follow
Each directorate to set race, gender, age and disability objectives and targets	Mar 2010	All	To follow
Each directorate to set sexual orientation and religion objectives and targets	Mar 2011	All	To follow

Key to service areas:

BT: Business Transformation	CD: City Development
CHCD: Community Housing & Community Development	CL: City Leisure
CS: Customer Services	CW: City Works
ED: Environmental Development	Fin: Finance
HR: Human Resources	LD: Legal & Democratic Services
OCH: Oxford City Homes	PFM: Property & Facilities Management
PPC: Policy, Performance & Communications	SP: Strategic Procurement & Shared Services

13. Equality Impact Assessment timetable 2008-11

Chief Executive - Policy, Performance and Communications

Policy/Function	Year
Consultation Strategy	2008/09
Communications Strategy (including internal communications, corporate communications and branding, media relations, Council website and intranet, support for partnership websites)	2008/09
Customer Contact Strategy	2008/09
Social Inclusion Strategy	2008/09
Performance management Analytical and research function	2009/10
Service planning	2010/11
Audit and inspection lead role	2010/11
Corporate Equality Scheme	2010/11
Corporate Plan	Annually

Chief Executive - Executive Support

Corporate Complaints Policy & implementation	2008/9

Chief Executive - Strategic Procurement & Shared Services

Procurement Strategy & implementation	2008/09

Corporate Services - Finance

Housing benefit fraud investigations	2008/9
Cashiering	2010/11

Corporate Services - Human Resources

Attendance Management	2008/09
Performance Management	2008/09
Recruitment and Selection	2008/09
Pay and Reward	2009/10
Work-Life Balance	2009/10
Learning and Development	2010/11
Health and Safety	2010/11
Payroll	2010/11

Corporate Services - Legal & Democratic Services

Elections and electoral registration	2008/09
Democratic / corporate governance	2009/10

Corporate Services – Business Transformation

Service Desk	2009/10
Data Protection	2009/10
IT advice and guidance	2009/10

Corporate Services - Property & Facilities Management

Technical support for council meetings	2008/09
Implementation of DDA works to ensure accessibility of the Council's public buildings	2008/09
After hours security service	2009/10
Strategic management of the Council's properties	2010/11
Estate management and maintenance of the Council's properties	2010/11

City Regeneration - City Development

Planning control (pre-application advice and planning applications)	2008/09
Partnerships team	2008/09
West End Area Action Plan	2008/09
Building regulations, plan checking and site approval of construction work.	2008/09
Inspecting safety of sports grounds, fairs and occasional theatres	2008/09
Provision of a wheelchair and scooter loan service	2008/09
Advice and guidance on DDA issues	2008/09
Culture Strategy incl. Oxford Inspires, arts, dance and events, community recreation	2009/10
Planning Enforcement	2009/10
Tourism Strategy & development work (incl. Tourist Information Centre)	2009/10
Museum of Oxford	2009/10
Town Hall development and use	2009/10
General Advice and consultancy work in Building Control	2009/10
Working with partners to increase the accessibility of the City	2009/10
Provision of the Access Forum	2009/10
Training on DDA issues	2009/10
Economic Development Strategy & support	2010/11
Reception, Admin/Tech Support, planning phoneline and email	2010/11
Conservation, archaeology, trees	2010/11
Planning Policy	2010/11
International Exchange	2010/11
Carfax Tower	2010/11
Issuing demolition licences and inspection sites	2010/11
Dealing with dangerous buildings and emergency call outs	2010/11
Naming of new streets and house numbering	2010/11

City Regeneration - Community Housing & Community Development

Vulnerable young people - diversionary activity and young offenders	2008/09
Oxford Community Safety Rolling Plan 2008-11 (including City Council coordination of CDRP and CCTV)	Annually
Oxfordshire Drug Strategy	To be agreed in partnership
Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy (incl. Nightsafe)	To be agreed in partnership
Domestic violence coordination (including honour-based violence, sexual violence and victims with no recourse to public funds,	To be agreed in partnership

Oxfordshire Domestic Violence Strategy)	
Neighbourhood policing coordination	To be agreed in partnership
Area Committees (including Area Plans, discretionary project funding, project development)	2008/09
Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion	2008/09
Housing Strategy	2008/09
Homelessness Strategy	2008/09
Allocations	2008/09
Housing Options	2008/09
Empty Homes Strategy	2008/09
CANAcT	2009/10
Street Wardens	2009/10
Administration of Grants to local Community & Voluntary sector	2009/10
Older Persons Housing Strategy	2009/10
BME Housing Strategy	2009/10
Temporary Accommodation	2009/10
Rough Sleepers	2009/10
Home Choice	2009/10
Sub-regional Choice-Based Letting	2009/10
Code of Conduct for Housing Needs	2009/10
Health and Housing Assessments	2009/10
Emergency Planning	2010/11
Neighbourhood Environmental Action Teams	2010/11
Community Centres	2010/11
Private Sector Housing Strategy	2010/11
Appeals / Reviews	2010/11
Home visits	2010/11
Affordable Housing Development Strategy	2010/11
General Service Standards (Housing Needs)	2010/11
Elderly Services – Mobile wardens	2010/11
Elderly Services – Contact centre	2010/11

City Regeneration - Environmental Development

Taxi licensing services	2008/09
NB - other environmental development functions and policies were impact assessed just before the start of this cycle and will be included again in the next three-year cycle	

City Services - Oxford City Homes

Exemption scheme/policy	2008/09
Adaptations Policy	2008/09
Handbooks Cluster	2008/09
Tenancy Agreement	2008/09

Tenant Compact	2008/09
Procedure for monitoring productivity and performance of Operational Staff	2008/09
28 Day visit checklist Annual Visit Checklist Tenancy Update Questionnaire	2008/09
Complaints Cluster	2008/09
Eviction Tenancy Services Eviction Void Property Officers	2008/09
Noise Nuisance Nuisance caused by pets	2008/09
Mediation Referral Referral to floating support Welfare concerns Vulnerable Persons security measures	2008/09
Domestic Violence Racial Harassment Protection from abuse	2008/09
Asbestos policy	2008/09
Responsive Repairs procedures Repair Priorities Right to Repair	2008/09
Out of Pocket Expenses	2008/09
Customer Contact Cluster	2008/09
Decent Homes Policy	2008/09
Visiting Customers Cluster	2008/09
Gas Team Cluster	2008/09
Removal of items to Storage File storarge Rubbish Untidy Gardens Abandoned Vehicles	2008/09
Decants Cluster	2008/09
Subcontractor Cluster	2008/09
Right to Buy Policy and Procedure	2008/09
Service Standards	2008/09
Equality and Diversity Statement	2008/09
Garage procedure	2008/09
Voids Cluster	2008/09
Transfer Mutual Exchange Checklist	2008/09
Instruction to Legal Services Terminating Tenancies with a will Public Trustee – Death without a will Receipt of notice to Terminate Tenancy Ending Tenancies – housekeeping Death in a Property Succession (statutory)	2008/09

Abandoned Properties	
Mortgage Reference	2008/09
Gardening Scheme	2008/09
Customer Care Code of Conduct	2009/10
Annual Service Contract Viewing Procedure	2009/10
Rents Teams Service standards document	2009/10
Estate Officer Cluster	2009/10
Recharge policy	2009/10
Electrical Quality Team Cluster	2009/10
Phones: voice mail, telephone standards, mobile phones	2009/10
Staff Policies and Procedures Cluster	2009/10
Procedure for applying for a possession order Procedure for referring a case for eviction Procedure for attending a possession order hearing Procedure for requesting possession action Receipt of notice procedure	2010/11
Authorised signature list	2010/11
Health and Safety Cluster	2010/11
Credit Refunds Procedure Note	2010/11
Voids Cluster (2) - remaining processes/procedures	2010/11
Security Cluster	2010/11
Transport Cluster	2010/11
Operational Guidance Manual A collection of existing P & P for Operational Staff	2010/11

City Services - Customer Services

Benefit Take-up/ Promotions	2008/09
Visiting Officers Front-line Customer Services Officers	2008/09
DHPs	2008/09
Backdated benefit payments	2008/09
Benefit notification letters Benefit application forms Leaflets	2009/10
Complaints	2009/10
Billing/debt recovery	2009/10
LHA safeguard policy	2009/10
Appeals	2010/11
Discounts/Reductions	2010/11
Caution list	2010/11
Benefit payments	2010/11
Benefit assessment	2010/11

City Services - City Leisure

Sport & Leisure Centres	2008/09
Slice Card	2008/09
Sports Development	2008/09
Leisure/Business Development	2009/10
Promotion & Advertising	2009/10
Aspires	2009/10
Training	2010/11
Sport Centre Maintenance	2010/11

City Services - City Works

Cemeteries/Bereavement Service	2008/09
Countryside Service	2008/09
Parks Rangers	2008/09
Parks administration	2009/10
Events	2009/10
Parks Development	2009/10
Play Areas	2009/10
Allotment Function	2010/11
Grounds Maintenance	2010/11
Trees	2010/11

City Services - Policy mapping

Car Parks – Provision of Disabled Parking Facilities	2008/09
Car Parks – Parent/Carer and Child Parking	2008/09
Domestic Waste – Bulky Household Items and Collection of Fridges and Freezers	2008/09
Domestic Waste – Assisted Collections	2008/09
Domestic Waste – Clinical Collections	2008/09
Trade refuse and recycling – Special Collections	2009/10
Trade refuse and recycling – Purchase and Control of Containers	2009/10
Trade Refuse and Recycling – Bad Debtors and Doubtful Debts	2009/10
Domestic Recycling – Recycling	2009/10
Street Cleansing – Maintenance of Street Furniture, Flytipping, Flyposting, Graffiti, Public Toilets, Abandoned Shopping Trolleys, etc	2009/10
Engineering – Sign Manufacture, Dropped Kerbs, Pot Holes, Tactile Paving	2009/10
Motor Transport – Taxi Licences, Driver Training for Cycling Awareness	2009/10
Markets – Covered, Open and Farmers Markets	2009/10
Car Parks – Enforcement	2009/10
Street Cleansing/Motor Transport – Abandoned Vehicles	2010/11

14. An example of a completed initial impact assessment form

Directorate:	Section:	Person responsible for the assessment:	Date of Assessment:
Oxford City Homes	Tenancy Services	Jarlath Brine, Sally Short, Jo Bullock	18 March 2008

1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy

The Tenants Handbook is not a legal document but is integral to the services delivered by OCH. It sets out in detail information covering the housing services provided by OCH and refers to legal rights, e.g. tenancy agreement, rents, housing benefits, service charges, complaints, improvements, tenant & leaseholder involvement, customer commitment, housing services. The handbook contains key contacts (these are regularly updated). It backs up the sign-up process administered.

2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy, please explain

1. Support tenancy agreements.
2. Support sustainable tenancies.
3. Communication to tenants of how to access services.
4. All Councillors and key officers receive a copy of each new edition.
5. Access to information supported by an online version that is regularly reviewed and updated.

3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way?

All existing and future tenants. It is a public document (also online from 2006) and is on display in the main OCH reception and housing surgeries. The benefit is a full understanding of our services.

4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy?

1. Setting tenants up to succeed. Up front knowledge talked through at the sign up stage, ref. tenancy agreement.
2. The handbook means that tenants can check information out of office hours and is referred to by officers when we communicate with them.
3. Strengthen partnerships with tenant groups who were consulted and involved with the development of the 2005 edition.
4. Reduce customer complaints/ confusion.
5. Opportunity to include this in future staff induction for both office and non-office based staff.

5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?

Sheer amount of information could put tenants off = possible negative.

Available in alternative formats. Introduction translated into five key languages.

Ensure that everything is written to plain English guidelines.

6. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy?

Current and future tenants/ leaseholders. Tenancy services/ contact centre staff/ operational staff/community housing et al

7.	**Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy?**	Cross business unit (ref. Community Housing/ Customer Services). OCH rents, tenancy services, voids, estate managers, customer contact centre etc.
8.	**Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on racial groups?**	Yes, but. Not currently translated as a key document but could consider requests. No adapted packs currently available (diversity info. only available for the transfer of existing tenants, sometimes from housing associations). Contact details change. Highlight the key link with Housing Options and the need for the accuracy of tenant information before sign up.
	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Front page is to be translated (3rd edition 2008) into five key languages. These are still appropriate although demographics are changing, e.g. more eastern European tenants.
9.	**Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to gender**	Certainly post 2005 this should not be an issue. Might just query whether allocations are still made with the male name on the offer letter. Check with Housing Allocations.
8.	**Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on racial groups?**	<u>Yes</u> / No Yes, but. Not currently translated as a key document but could consider requests. No adapted packs currently available (diversity info. only available for the transfer of existing tenants, sometimes from housing associations). Contact details change. Highlight the key link with Housing Options and the need for the accuracy of tenant information before sign up.
	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	?
10.	**Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact due to disability**	Yes / <u>No</u> Caveat that OCH follows best practice and ensures that alternative formats are more readily available and wide reaching. Query heading of "special needs" within the TH and whether this should be re worded. Addressing summer 2008.
11.	**Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation**	Yes / <u>No</u>
	What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	?
12.	**Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their age**	Yes / <u>No</u> Refer to exemption schemes and eligibility criteria. These are cross-referenced in the TH.

13. Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief	Yes / <u>No</u> Adaptations policy is based on demonstrable need for sustainable tenancies rather than lifestyle adaptations following on from religious belief/ faith.
What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	?
14. Could the differential impact identified in 8-13 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy?	Yes / <u>No</u> Please explain Tenant Survey Response Autumn 2001 = 88% easy/ very easy to understand, 85% information useful/ very useful, 71% looked at the TH more than three times, 84% looked at the TH at least once or twice. Can also check on the hits on the website. Also check satisfaction via Tenant Topic Panels.
15. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason.	Yes / No Please explain for each equality heading (question 8-13) on a separate piece of paper.
16. Should the policy proceed to a partial impact assessment? **Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by**	Yes / No If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA? Yes / No

Signed (completing officer) J.Brine, S.Short, J.Bullock

Signed (Lead Officer)

15. Profile of city residents, workers and visitors and employee profile

Profile of city residents, workers and visitors

The population of Oxford in mid-2006 was estimated to be 149,100. The population has increased since 2001 and will continue to increase to 2016.

In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and cultural diverse with the third highest minority ethnic population in the South East. In 2001, the non-white population was 12.9% compared to 8.7% in England & Wales. By mid-2004 it is estimated by National Statistics that this had increased to 15.3%. The projected population changes to 2011 by ethnicity are shown below, as estimated by Oxfordshire Data Observatory.

Black and minority ethnic groups in Oxford, 2001
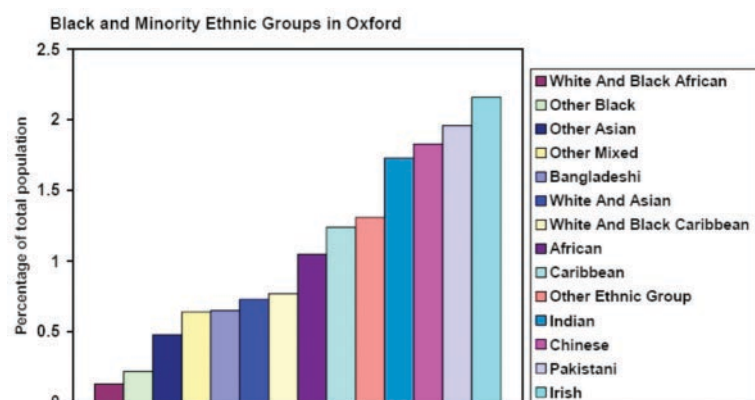
Estimate of population by ethnic group, 2006 and 2011 for Oxford

Ethnic Group		Total people		% change 2001-2011
	2001	2006	2011	
British White	103,794	103,182	102,752	-1.0
Other White	14,120	15,000	15,587	10.4
Mixed	3,306	4,043	4,881	47.7
Carribean Black	1,677	1,642	1,577	-6.0
Other Black	1,746	1,959	2,133	22.2
Indian	2,354	2,489	2,594	10.2
Pakistani	2,650	2,671	2,709	2.2
Other Asian	1,546	1,634	1,709	10.5
Chinese	2,519	3,152	3,659	45.2
Other	1,799	2,078	2,293	27.5
Grand Total	135,511	137,848	139,894	3.2

Source: Oxfordshire Data Observatory experimental statistics, www.oxfordshireobservatory.info

The ethnic diversity among young people is especially high, at 19.8% of under-16s (in 2001), compared to 3.6% of those aged 65 years and over. Oxford also has the second highest proportion of people born outside the UK in the South East.

Due to the large student population, the city has the highest proportion of students in England and Wales. This means that Oxford has a high proportion of 16-29 year olds; 32%, which is twice the national average.

Oxford age structure
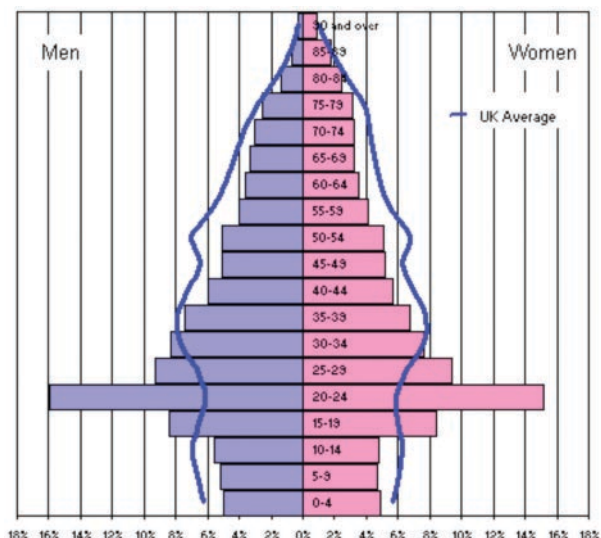
The city is home to around 3,300 businesses providing 108,000 jobs. Oxford has a high level of in-commuting, with around half its workforce living outside its boundary. Also, there is relatively little out-commuting, with only 25% of economically active Oxford residents working outside the city. As a result, commuters add 26,000 to the daytime population.

Economically active population (Jul 2006-Jun 2007)

	Oxford (numbers)	Oxford (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Males				
Economically active	39,100	79.0	86.9	83.3
In employment	35,700	72.5	83.0	78.5
Employees	31,300	64.3	67.6	64.8
Self employed	4,300	8.3	15.0	13.3
Females				
Economically active	31,000	66.0	76.7	73.5
In employment	30,400	64.7	73.8	69.8
Employees	27,800	59.5	67.1	64.2
Self employed	#	#	6.2	5.1

Sample size too small for reliable estimate

Oxford also has a large number of tourist visitors who swell the daytime population - an estimated 8.8 million every year.

There has also been a large recent migration of people from new European Union countries. In 2001, there were around 1700 residents of Eastern European origin (including 300 Polish). During the period 2004-07, 2095 nationals of new EU countries registered to work in Oxford. Two-thirds of these were Polish nationals. There has also been a very large increase in number of foreign nationals joining the tax system. During 2002-05 there were around 2500 foreign nationals per year registering to work in Oxford. In 2005-06 this doubled to over 5000. However, little is known about how long these migrants stay for.

NI number registrations by foreign nationals
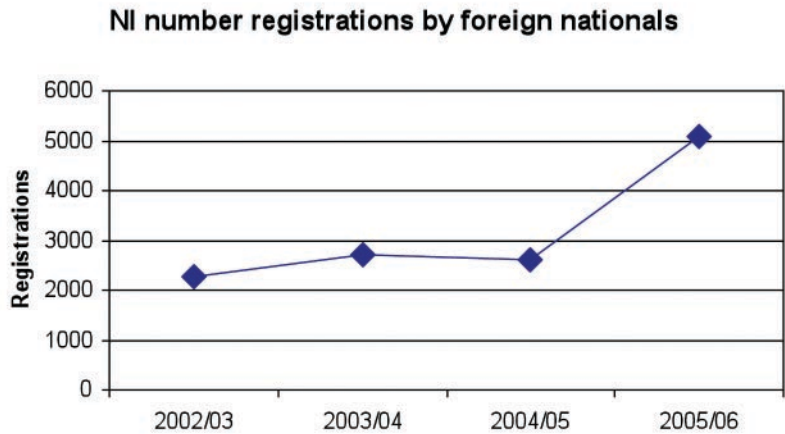
The following table sets out the levels of disability, referred to as long-term illness, in the City of Oxford, the South East region, and England using the 2001 census data.

People with a long-term illness, 2001

	Oxford City	South East	England
Population	134,248	8,000,645	49,138,831
Number of people with a long-term illness	18,495	1,237,399	8,809,194
% of people with a long-term illness	13.8%	15.5%	17.9%

Source: 2001 Census, National Statistics

The following table shows that the majority of Oxford's population identify themselves as Christian, and a quarter state that they have no religion.

Population by religion, 2001

	All people	Males	Females
Christian	60.4%	56.6%	64.1%
Buddhist	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Hindu	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Jewish	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%
Muslim	3.8%	4.1%	3.6%
Sikh	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Any other religion	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
No religion	23.9%	27.1%	20.8%
Religion not stated	8.7%	9.0%	8.4%

Source: 2001 Census, National Statistics

Employee profile - 2007 calendar year

Indicator	Gender		Ethnicity		Disability		Age	
	Male	Female	White	Non-white	Not disabled	Disabled	Up to 50 years	51+ years
Looking for work with the Council								
Number of applications for employment	1230	846	1466	325	2066	32	1592	217
Numbers selected	75	72	122	11	145	3	126	14
Percentage selected	6.1%	8.5%	8.3%	3.4%	7.0%	9.4%	7.9%	6.5%
Working for the Council								
Numbers of staff in post (BV16a, 17a)	903	578	1381	93	1415	67	1054	428
As percentage of all staff	61.0%	39.0%	93.7%	6.3%	95.5%	4.5%	71.1%	28.9%
Percentage with part-time contracts	5.9%	40.5%	18.5%	32.3%	19.0%	26.9%	19.5%	18.9%
Percentage in top 5% of earners (BV11)	6.0%	3.8%	5.5%	0%	5.3%	1.5%	5.5%	0.2%
Numbers receiving training	Not currently available							
Numbers receiving appraisals	23.3%	45.3%	31.1%	44.1%	31.6%	35.8%	32.4%	29.9%
Harassment and discrimination complaints	Too few to report							
Disciplinary decisions per 100 employees	1.8	0.2	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.2	0.9
Leaving the authority								
Numbers leaving per 100 employees	13.6	21.5	15.8	29.0	16.7	16.4	19.0	11.0
Percentage of leavers completing exit interview questionnaires	6.5%	6.5%	6.4%	7.4%	5.9%	18.2%	6.0%	8.5%

This information should be treated with caution as it only shows headline figures which need further investigation. Apparent differences between different demographic groups may not be statistically significant due to the relatively small numbers involved.

Version control

0.1   Mark Fransham   Original draft   31/03/08

0.2   Mark Fransham   Redrafted text, included existing Disability Equality Scheme, new structure, info on existing services - 21/04/08

0.3   Mark Fransham   Added revised objectives, employer text, consultation section, equality impact assessment timetable and statistical appendix - 24/04/08

0.4   Melanie Faulkner-Barrett   Redrafted wording – to highlight areas where systems are currently being developed to monitor the Equality Strands

0.5   Melanie Faulkner-Barrett   Final draft

0.6   Melanie Faulkner-Barrett   Update

16. Complaints under this Corporate Equality Scheme

Complaints - Employment

Oxford City Council operates a comprehensive suite of staff grievance, disciplinary and complaints policies. This is available on request from Human Resources.

Complaints - Service Delivery

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service provided by the Council or its staff. A complaint can be made by anyone, either on their own behalf, or for someone else who is unable to make their complaint themselves.

Complaints Procedure

Oxford City Council has a complaints procedure available to anyone who feels dissatisfied with the level of service they have received from the Council or its staff. Once a complaint has been formally received by Oxford City Council it will be acknowledged by an Officer in writing within 5 working days. An investigation will be carried out and reported on within 20 working days. Further details of the 4 stages of complaint are available on request.

If you wish to make a complaint please direct it to Oxford City Council's main address.

Phone: 01865 249811

Fax: 01865 252256

Email: complaints@oxford.gov.uk

Address: Oxford City Council
               PO Box 10
               Oxford
               OX1 4EY

Translations available

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Policy, Performance & Communications
Oxford City Council
Town Hall
St. Aldate's
Oxford OX1 1BX

T: 01865 252131
E: mfaulkner-barrett@oxford.gov.uk
www.oxford.gov.uk