

To: City Executive Board
Date: 18th February 2009 **Item No:** 13
Report of: Policy, Performance and Communications Manager
Title of Report: Corporate Equality Scheme 2008 - 11

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report:

To update the City Executive Board on the development of the Corporate Equality Scheme 2008 - 11

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Bob Price

Report approved by:

Finance: Sarah Fogden

Legal: Daniel Rawstorne

Policy Framework:

Corporate Plan – Stronger and more inclusive communities

Corporate Equality Scheme 2008 - 11

Recommendation(s):

1. Acknowledge the improvement from August to date
2. Note the comments from the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee
3. Note the Action Plan to achieve Level 2 by August 2009

Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 5th August 2008, Council adopted the Corporate Equality Scheme 2008-11 as part of the Council's policy framework with the aim of achieving Level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government 2007 by 2011. Included in the scheme were a three year Action Plan and an Equality Impact Assessment timetable.
- 1.2 City Executive Board on 23rd July 2008 agreed that it wanted to receive the quarterly monitoring reports to Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee in respect of equalities issues.
- 1.3 This report provides a comprehensive update on the significant progress that the Council has made to date on equalities issues, in particular those identified in the Action Plan and the Equality Impact Assessment timetable.
- 1.4 The update was reported to Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2009.

Background

- 2.1 The Council has a number of different roles with regard to equalities: as an employer, as a service provider and as a community leader.
- 2.2 It has a general statutory duty to promote equalities (the Equality Duty, currently in race, disability and gender) alongside a specific statutory duty to publish three Equality Schemes: Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality.
- 2.3 Members will recall that in the Audit Commission's report on the Cultural Service received in January 2008, the Council's equality and diversity policies were identified as being poor. The Cultural Inspection did identify our equalities standards as weak but they also recognised that the community development work that we do is targeted and supports community cohesion and promotes equality in communities. The Audit Commission's Annual Audit Report and Inspection Letter received in March 2008 commented that the Council had been slow to maximise its overall impact on equality and diversity issues because there had been no effective corporate co-ordination and progress against equality standards had been slow, even though its commitment had been demonstrated through a number of services that promote social inclusion.

Equality Standard for Local Government 2007

3.1 There are currently five levels within the Equality Standard 2007 for Local Government. The Equality Standard provides a standard, which Local Government can use to address its legal obligations and promote best practice in equality and diversity. They are:

- Level 1 - Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Level 2 - Assessment and community engagement
- Level 3 - Setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4 - Information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level 5 - Achieving and reviewing outcomes.

3.2 A major criticism of the Equality Standard was that it was too process orientated and unnecessarily resource intensive. A new framework has been identified that condenses the existing five strands into three:

- Emerging - Equivalent to Levels 1 and 2
- Achieving - Equivalent to Levels 3 and 4
- Excellent – Equivalent to Level 5

The new standards build on the need for a robust and transparent process of recording the impact of the Council's action plan.

3.3 The Equality Standard emphasizes the importance of promoting equality and diversity best practice in employment, the delivery of quality services appropriate to need and the provision of access to those services for the whole community. Moreover, it is designed specifically for the management and improvement of performance in equalities for the entire organization. Of particular note is that while the Standard is concerned with the establishment of process to manage equalities, the fundamental aim is the delivery of continuous improvement that is focused on outcomes with real improvements in equality reflecting best practice in employment and service provision, locally determined and delivered.

3.4 To meet the Equality Standard's different levels, the Council is expected to provide appropriate evidence that the necessary processes have been adopted and established as an inherent part of its employment policies and the delivery of its services. The assessment of the progress the Council has made to promote its real corporate commitment to equality will be based on the council's overall achievement. The level the Council reaches will be measured against the lowest level achieved by an individual service area. However, a reporting system has been developed that identifies and supports any services that may not be reaching the requisite level as quickly as some of the others.

Current Progress

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made to ensure that the Council is on target to reach its aim of achieving Level 5 in 2011 and that equalities is seen as a routine but integral work consideration in all service areas. All the Service Transformation Plans, which are currently being finalized, will include an Equalities section that will include measurable targets.
- 4.2 The report considered by the City Executive Board recommended that Council should adopt the Corporate Equality Scheme 2008-11 included a timetable and a series of achievements to be met before 2011. The progress to date is summarized in the table at 9.1.
- 4.3 Particular emphasis has been placed on the work of the Council's Equalities Board, the need to complete the Equality Impact assessments and the partnership working on equalities issues with which the Council has been involved and has largely taken the lead. Further details are provided in the paragraphs immediately below.
- 4.4 All the work undertaken takes into account the new Equality Bill that is currently going through Parliament. The Bill aims to reduce nine major pieces of legislation, and around 100 statutory instruments into a single Act. The proposed Bill also aims to introduce transparency in the workplace and extend the Equality Duty upon public authorities to cover sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, age and religion and belief. The equality section in the Service Transformation Plans will demonstrate this transparency.

Equalities Board

- 5.1 The Equalities Board's terms of reference were agreed in October 2008. The terms of reference are included at Appendix 1, which includes the membership. The Board has representation from most of the Service areas, UNISON, UNITE and a Member. All representatives on the Equalities Board are Equality Champions.
- 5.2 The Board has already undertaken a considerable amount of work to enable the Council to move forward on equalities issues. It examined the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) for the Audit Commission's assessment contained in the Annual Audit Report and Inspection Letter. Consequently, it identified the gaps that showed that progress had been slow because, corporately there was no effective co-ordination to indicate whether standards were being achieved.
- 5.3 To improve co-ordination, the Board has used the Audit Commission's self assessment tool to draw together the evidence of progress, details of which

will be posted on the Council's dedicated web page for the Council's equalities progress in January 2009.

Equality Impact Assessment Plans

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessment plans are required for Policies and Procedures, functions and services, systems and processes and customs and practices across the Council's services. Work on producing the assessments had begun before the Corporate Equality Scheme 2008-11 was adopted and has continued since August. The work has involved discussions with the respective managers of each of the service areas for which an assessment was needed. The assessment plans identify clearly how equalities are addressed as part of the routine work of the service area. Appendix 2 is an example of a completed Impact Assessment.
- 6.2 Considerable progress has been made, to the extent that 54 Equality Impact Assessment plans have been completed to date.
- 6.3 The plans will be published on the website in January 2009. A summary of each of the Impact Assessments will be provided at the next meeting.

Partnership Working

- 7.1 Community engagement is a key feature of achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard. The Council has worked closely and successfully with other agencies and the local community on a number of projects that promote equalities and social inclusion.
- 7.2 The projects include "Embracing Diversity", an equalities event run jointly with Thames Valley Police in December 2008, the Cowley Road Mela, where the Council assisted the local community with the organization of the event that took place in June 2008, Oxford Pride, which took place in August 2008, where the Council supported Homophobic Awareness Liaison Team (HALT) and Zivanai festival in October 2008. The Council's Equalities Officer supported and attended all these events.
- 7.3 We ran a pilot scheme that was aimed at training up and empowering a number of people from a variety of communities so that they could act as Champions within their communities. The training included; information about council and other agency services and how to further develop those contacts. Part of the training was also about developing confidence in dealing with the public sector. The pilot scheme was a success and has been handed over to OCVA for mainstreaming into other initiatives.

- 7.4 Discussions have taken place with the Equalities Board and the Trade Unions with a view to setting up employee groups to monitor the six equality strands. These voluntary groups will be set by April 2009
- 7.5 In addition, the Council is a member of the District Equalities Group. This group is made up of the equality leads for the County Council and the districts. The Police and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) also attend the group. Appendix 3 shows the terms of reference for this group.
- 7.6 Oxford City Council will be supporting the Oxford Brookes University Diversity month (12th February to 13th March), which has a theme of 'Love and Justice'.
- 7.7 Following consultation on our Disability Equality Scheme, we produced a disability directory in partnership with Oxford Brookes, Oxford University and Oxfordshire County Council. The directory provides information on useful contacts and organisations of benefit to disabled people who are living, working studying or visiting oxford.
- 7.8 In conjunction with the Disability Information Fair on 20 May 2009, the Council will also be running a 'Challenging Images' Photographic Competition in the Town Hall
- 7.9 We have also placed equality adverts in several directories and magazines such as: Equality Britain, Fyne Times and Able Magazine. Appendix 4 is a copy of an article that appeared in the July /August 2008 issue of the Able magazine.

Oxford City Homes

- 8.1 In view of the nature of the landlord and repairs services Oxford City Homes provides to the Council's housing tenants, it has invested significant resources to deal with equality issues.
- 8.2 It has concentrated on completing 33 Equality Impact Assessments.
- 8.3 It has also established an Equalities Topic Panel, which consists of tenants and leaseholders. This panel reviews the progress made and makes recommendations for improvements.
- 8.4 The Equalities Officer in Oxford City Homes is also a member of the Corporate Equalities Board. This ensures that best practice is shared across all service areas.

Corporate Equality Scheme 2008-11 Action Plan

9.1 The table below gives a summary of all of the achievements to date and the further actions proposed and required between January and August 2009 if the Council is to remain on target to meet its adopted aims.

Timetable	Achievement	Progress to Date/Further Action
September 2008	Achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy)	
October 2008	All initial Equality Impact Assessments to be completed and published	See section 6
October 2008	<p>Equalities Board has agreed Terms of Reference and is representative across the Service areas.</p> <p>All the members of this Board are Equality Champions</p>	See section 5
October 2008	The Council is a member of the District Equalities Group (Members are the County Council and the 3 Districts),	See section 7
October 2008 – January 2009	Equalities section included in the Service Transformation Plans	<p>Heads of Service to agree the Service Transformation Plans.</p> <p>All the targets arising from the Service Transformation Plans will be fully integrated into the Councils performance system and reported to the Performance Board.</p>

Version number: 11
Date: 30/01/2009

Timetable	Achievement	Progress to Date/Further Action
		A summary will be sent to all Committees from February 2009
December 2008	<p>A joint Equalities event with Thames Valley Police, 'Embracing Diversity' was run on the 3rd December 2008.</p> <p>Following this event in the morning, the first training programme took place in the afternoon. 15 Police representatives attended the programme.</p> <p>There are other dates organised in January and February 2009.</p> <p>Appendix 5 is a copy of the information on the events</p>	There is a commitment in the Learning and Development Plan 2008/09 for an Equalities Training Programme and this commitment will also be in place for 2009/10
January 2009 to March 2009	A two-day inspection by the Audit Commission.	<p>As the Council has recently had a review by KPMG, most areas for further actions have been addressed</p> <p>Report to be issued to committees in March/April 2009</p>
January 2009 to March 2009	Establishment of employee groups to monitor the six equality strands	<p>Support has been received from the Equality Board and the Trade unions.</p> <p>Expressions of interest for these voluntary groups will sought in January 2009</p>
By March 2009	The development of Age, religion/belief and Sexual	The consultation progress will commence

Version number: 11
Date: 30/01/2009

Timetable	Achievement	Progress to Date/Further Action
	Orientation objectives	in January 2009 The Council has joined Stonewall, who will help us develop best practice
By March 2009	To have achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government	Section 10 of the report gives details of the work to be undertaken by the Head of Human Resources so that the Council can achieve Level 2 by August 2009.
April 2009	To produce an equalities report produced for committees	
By March 2011	To achieve Level 3 (Setting equality objectives and targets) of the Equality Standard for Local Government	The Executive Board recommended that the Council should aim to achieve Level 5 (Achieving and reviewing outcomes) by March 2011

Internal Audit Report

10.1 As the table in 9.1 above shows, the original intention was to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard by March 2009. However, in December 2008, KPMG, the Council's internal auditors undertook an inspection to audit the Council's progress on equalities. Although the formal report has not yet been issued, KPMG has notified the Council that employment delivery is an area of weakness.

10.2 Although it will not now be possible to attain Level 2 by March 2009 as had been intended, an action plan has been agreed with the Head of Human Resources that aims to ensure the level be reached by August 2009 instead. Details of the actions proposed in relation to the criteria used by KPMG in its inspection are included in the table below.

Criteria	Action
<p>Adopt a Local Government Workforce Strategy</p> <p>Engage in employment equality assessment of the local labour market</p>	<p>Currently the payroll and the HR's staff records systems are not integrated. Proposal for new HR system including Payroll to be identified in January 2009 with an implementation date of August 2009. All Equality data will then be updated on the new system.</p> <p>Currently all the equality performance indicators are under intervention.</p>
<p>Make all employment procedures consistent with current legislation and Employment Codes of Practice</p> <p>Adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants</p> <p>Produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit</p> <p>Review personnel information system for monitoring suitability including supporting the council's statutory monitoring duties</p>	<p>A robust Policy Review is currently underway. The work is overseen by a Policy Review Group, which includes the Council's Access Officer to provide advice on disability issues.</p> <p>There are 41 Policies and Procedures to be reviewed and updated by March 2009, with a further 14 by the summer of 2009</p> <p>There are currently three Policies under review: Discipline, Grievance, Performance and Improvement.</p> <p>It has also been agreed the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure will be examined and updated by the summer of 2009.</p> <p>All the relevant monitoring reports will be published on the internet and intranet by the end of January 2009, thereby ensuring that the Council complies with its statutory duty</p>
<p>Develop a programme of equality training to support the Corporate Equality Scheme and departmental service objectives</p> <p>Ensure that the training programme is consistent with the training arrangements in the Council's statutory</p>	<p>Following the equalities event with Thames Valley Police, "Embracing Diversity", which was run on the morning of 3rd December 2008, the first training programme took place in the afternoon.</p> <p>Other dates have been scheduled for January and February 2009.</p>

Version number: 11
Date: 30/01/2009

Criteria	Action
equality schemes	The induction process is currently being reviewed and updated.
Develop and adopt fair employment and equal pay policy (part of Single Status) Engage in an equal pay review	Single Status programme place with an implementation date of 1 st April 2009. Following the adoption of the Single Status agreement, an Equal Pay Policy will be agreed - to be achieved by the summer of 2009 Two monthly reports will be sent to the Performance Board so that progress can be monitored.

Comments from Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

- 11.1 There was discussion about the size of and representation on the Equalities Steering Group, in the particular the number of Councillor representatives involved. It was suggested that the matter of further involvement of Members with the Group should be referred to party groups for consideration.
- 11.2 The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication notified the Committee that since the report was drafted, Equality Impact Assessments had been completed. It had been a difficult to identify hard, measurable actions from the assessments but this had now been achieved with targets set on the back of impact appearing in Service Transformation Plans.
- 11.3 The Committee commented that historically the Council seemed to have fallen short of delivering an employment practice that met the Council's equalities aspirations. The Head of Human Resources informed the Committee that improved data collection procedures were being developed with the aim of ensuring that a robust and transparent recruitment process would be provided. In addition, other projects, such as the development of training to meet community needs would address skills gaps that might prevent an individual from having an equal opportunity to achieve successful employment.
- 11.4 The Committee noted the latest stage of the equalities programme.

Recommendations

12.1 City Executive Board is asked to note:

Following the approval of the Corporate Equality scheme in August 2008, acknowledge the improvement that has been made to date

Note the comments from the Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee and in particular the referral to party groups on the member representation of the Equalities Board

Note the action plan to achieve Level 2 by August 2009

Name and contact details of author: Melanie Faulkner-Barrett

Background papers: none

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Equality Board Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 – A completed Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – District Equality Group Terms of Reference

Appendix 4 – Able magazine Article

Appendix 5 – Equality Training Programme in December 2008.

Version number: 11

Version number: 11

Date: 30/01/2009

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference - Equalities Board

Aims of the Board:

- To oversee the implementation of the Equalities Policy Framework and make recommendations for continuous improvement.
- To support the Council's equality agenda to be an 'Excellent council' by March 2011.

Objectives

- Ensure the Equalities Action Plan for 2009-11 is implemented.
- Ensure that all the Transformation Service Plans cover all the equality strands and 'links' are made.
- Ensure that monthly, quarterly and yearly monitoring reports are produced and reviewed so that progress can be actively demonstrated.

Roles of Elected Members

- Champion the equalities agenda
- Ensure that equalities agenda has a high profile and that it is supported politically and properly resourced.
- Ensure adequate resources are available.
- Disseminate information about equalities.
- To be a link with local communities.

Personal responsibilities

- Champion the equalities agenda
- Actively promote, support and develop the actions/recommendations from the Equalities Board
- Ensure that a representative from the Service Area attends the Equalities Board
- Advise and support Business Managers on equalities issues as required.

Frequency of meetings

- The group will meet initially monthly to develop the Corporate Equalities Policy and Action Plan. This will be reviewed once the implementation process is underway.
- The group will operate under Council policies & procedures in relation to confidentiality and data protection

Appendix 1

Board members

Name	Service Area / role
Peter McQuitty	Policy, Performance and Communications - Chair
Melanie Faulkner-Barrett	Policy, Performance and Communications – Equalities Advisor (HR)
Pamela Roberts	Policy, Performance and Communications – Corporate Equalities Advisor
Danny Woodhouse	Policy, Performance and Communications – Performance Management
Jennifer Watson	Community Housing and Community Development
Neil Bacon	Environmental Development
Nico Grigoropoulos	City Development
Lynne Hooper	City Development – Access Officer
Val Johnson	Partnership Manager - MKOB
Hagan Lewisman	City Leisure
Jarlath Brine	Oxford City Homes
Kate Stratford (position vacant from December 2008)	City Works
Stuart Fitzsimmons Ian Thompson	City Works - Parks
Daniel Rawstone	Legal and Democratic Services - legal
Simon Howick	Human Resources
Phil Adlard	Customer Services
Laura Thompson	Unison
George Chesterfield	Unite
Councillor Susanna Pressell	Member representation



Form to be used for the Initial Impact Assessment

Service Area: Policy, Performance and Communication	Section:	Key person responsible for the assessment: Danny Woodhouse	Date of Assessment: January 2009
Is this assessment in the Corporate Equality Impact assessment Timetable for 2008-11?		Yes	No
Name of the Policy to be assessed: Corporate Plan			
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy	The Corporate Plan sets out the six strategic priorities, which are agreed by the Council. These have been developed to ensure that the Council is clear about the direction in which it proposes to move, and the changes that it proposes to make, over the next 3 years.		
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy, please explain	The six strategic priorities are underpinned by corporate objectives that are in the relevant Transformation Service Plans		

14/15

<p>4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy? The Corporate Plan has clear outcomes under the six strategic priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Housing , better housing for all • Stronger and more inclusive communities • 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 	
<p>5. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</p>	
<p>6. Who are the key people in relation to the policy?</p>	<p>All service areas</p>
<p>7. Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy?</p>	<p>All Service areas</p>
<p>8 Could the policy have a differential impact on racial groups?</p>	<p>The 3 year impact assessment timetable details all the strategies, policies and procedures that will undergo an equality impact assessment. All these impact assessments underpin the Corporate Plan</p>
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>	<p>Y N</p>
<p>9. Could the policy have a differential impact due to gender?</p>	<p>The 3 year impact assessment timetable details all the strategies, policies and procedures that will undergo an equality impact assessment. All these impact assessments underpin the Corporate Plan</p>
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>	<p>Y N</p>

13.16

<p>10. Could the policy have a differential impact due disability</p> <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The 3 year impact assessment timetable details all the strategies, policies and procedures that will undergo an equality impact assessment. All these impact assessments underpin the Corporate Plan</p>
<p>11. Could the policy have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation?</p> <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The 3 year impact assessment timetable details all the strategies, policies and procedures that will undergo an equality impact assessment. All these impact assessments underpin the Corporate Plan</p>
<p>12. Could the policy have a differential impact on people due to their age</p> <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The 3 year impact assessment timetable details all the strategies, policies and procedures that will undergo an equality impact assessment. All these impact assessments underpin the Corporate Plan</p>
<p>13. Could the policy have a differential impact on people due to their religious belief?</p> <p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>N</p>	<p>The 3 year impact assessment timetable details all the strategies, policies and procedures that will undergo an equality impact assessment. All these impact assessments underpin the Corporate Plan.</p>
<p>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</p>			

13.17

14. Could the negative impact identified in 8-13 create the potential for the policy to discriminate against certain groups?	Y	N							
15. Can this negative impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or any other reason	Y	N	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	Y	N	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="383 963 462 1075">If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA</td> <td data-bbox="383 1075 462 1187">Y</td> <td data-bbox="383 1187 462 1478">N</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" data-bbox="462 963 574 1478">Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by</td> </tr> </table>	If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA	Y	N	Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by		
If Yes, is there enough evidence to proceed to a full EIA	Y	N							
Date on which Partial or Full impact assessment to be completed by									
17. Are there implications for the Service Plans?	YES	NO	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="574 963 686 1075">18. Date the Service Plan will be updated</td> <td data-bbox="574 1075 686 1187"></td> <td data-bbox="574 1187 686 1478">19. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in Policy, Performance and Communication</td> </tr> </table>	18. Date the Service Plan will be updated		19. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in Policy, Performance and Communication			
18. Date the Service Plan will be updated		19. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in Policy, Performance and Communication							
20. Date reported to Equalities Board:		21. Date to Scrutiny and EB	22. Date published						

15.18

Signed (completing officer) M Faulkner-Barrett Signed (Lead Officer) D Woodhouse

Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:

Appendix 3

Terms of Reference – District Equalities Group

Aims of the Group

- To support the progress against National Indicator 140, 'Fair Treatment by Local Services'.
- To reduce duplication of effort and provide a more consistent approach to providing accessible services for everyone in the county.
- To identify better ways of working together to ensure that Oxfordshire's service users are treated fairly

Outcomes

- To provide evidence to ensure that Oxfordshire's Service Users are treated fairly
- To Identify areas of opportunities for supporting each other/working together and work in partnership with other agencies.
- To identify corporate issues that are key to the partnership members to ensure equality of access to their services (e.g. how they consult with minority groups).

Personal responsibilities

- Champion the equalities agenda
- Actively promote, support and develop the actions/recommendations from the Equalities Group
- Ensure that the nominated representative attends the meetings.
- Ensure that the named substitute is fully briefed and is able to represent the views of the partnership
- Advise and support the partners on equalities issues as required.

Meetings

- The Group will agree a chair and produce notes to monitor the group's progress.
- The group will initially meet monthly to monitor progress against NI140 and the Action Plan. This will be reviewed once the monitoring process is underway.
- The group will operate under Council policies & procedures in relation to confidentiality and data protection

Membership

- South Oxfordshire District Council – Cheryl Reeves
- West Oxfordshire District Council – Paul Assinder
- Oxfordshire County Council – Richard Heaton
- Oxford City Council – Melanie Faulkner-Barrett
- Cherwell District Council – Vickie Zielinski
- Vale of White Horse – Katherine Doherty
- Primary Care Trust – Mary Hardwick
- Police – Vince Gillio and Sarah Longman

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Andrew Skeates is a Scanning and Indexing Officer with Oxford City Council's Benefits Business Team, and has worked with them for about eight years. He has used a wheelchair since he was 11, though at the time he didn't realise the huge



Andrew Skeates

impact it would have on his life. "My Mum said it was only wheels and it was the person that counted, but I have come across prejudice," Andrew admits. "People's perceptions of disabled people don't help. We want to be treated just the same as everyone else."

The council's wheelchair-friendly buildings have eliminated a lot of Andrew's problems, with work carried out to enable him to lead a more independent life within the office. For instance, automatic doors have been fitted and his needs are considered in any office moves.

Andrew adds: "All in all, working for the Council has been very rewarding and enjoyable. Some people think that disabled people are always taking and not giving, so it is great to be able to put back something and lead an independent life. I go home at the end of the day with a sense of achievement, looking forward to my next day at work."

For more information on vacancies in Oxford City Council, visit www.oxford.gov.uk.

The Garnett Foundation presents

Embracing Diversity

The Oxfordshire BCU Diversity Group,
in partnership with Oxford City Council
and The Garnett Foundation, invites
you to *The Challenge* at the
Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford,
on Wednesday 3 December 2008.
Registration 9.30am
Event starts 10am and ends with
lunch at 12.30pm

Find out who the diversity advisors are in Oxfordshire, what the Diversity Group consists of and what support is available to staff. To confirm your attendance please email kate.mccall-mccowan@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk by Wednesday 19 November.

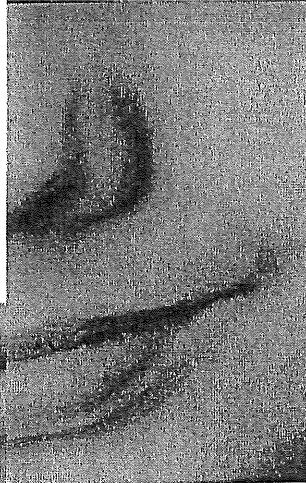
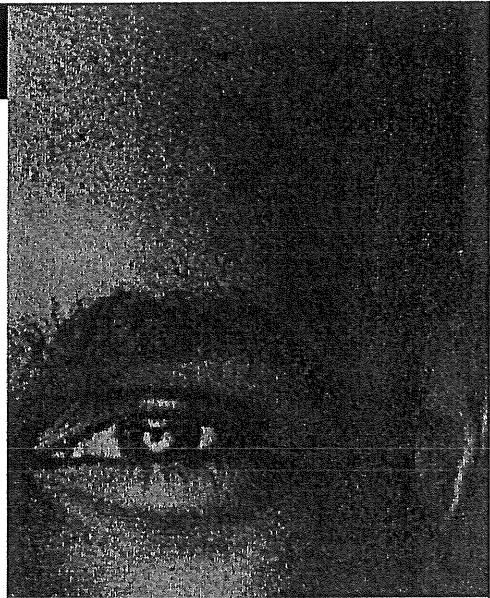


The *Garnett* Foundation presents

Embracing Diversity

An innovative programme of high impact events bringing together people from across Oxford City Council and Thames Valley Police to challenge mindsets leading to a greater understanding of the importance of embracing diversity and social inclusion.

Featuring the
diversity play: *The
Challenge*



Where and when

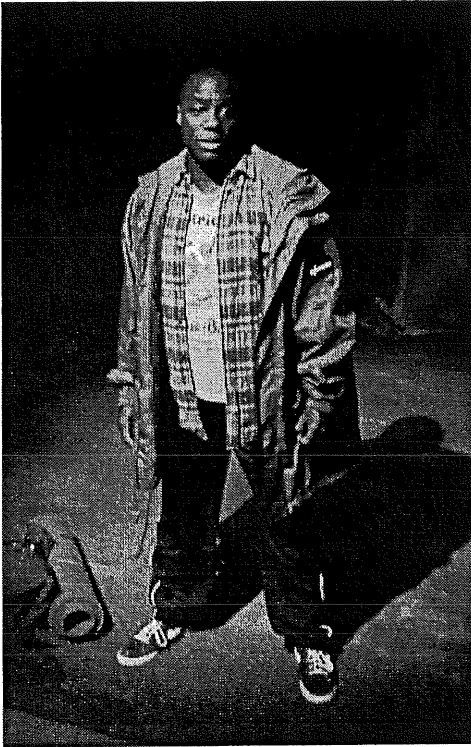
Wednesday, 3rd December 2008 (1:15pm - 5:00pm)
Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford

dramatic impact...
...dramatic *results*

www.oxford.gov.uk



THAMES VALLEY
POLICE



The *Challenge* production was developed as a result of extensive consultation and research. Written as a training tool, it is deliberately designed to be provocative, expressing a number of messages from which you should be able to draw comfort as well as some with which we expect you to disagree. Some of the issues raised include: **racism, bullying, disability, sexual orientation, stereotypes, mental health, religion and class.**

Benefits of attending the event

- Explore the range of opportunities that relate to promoting equality and diversity.
- Tackle issues surrounding discrimination, prejudice and communication
- Understand and challenge personal pre-conceptions and stereotypes
- Build participant's personal confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour
- Promote organisational cultures that attract, develop and retain the best talent from across the community
- Reinforce how a proactive approach to inclusive working practices is vital to motivation and productivity
- Raise awareness of relevant diversity legislation - and help reduce the potential for costly and damaging litigation.

Programme

Registration 1.15pm

1.30pm Introduction and objectives for the day

The Challenge by Lisa Evans

Theatre provides a non-threatening environment for people to explore many often sensitive or controversial issues. This powerful production penetrates people's hearts and minds and has a sustaining effect on behaviour, attitudes and performance. Unlike more traditional learning methods theatre engages all the senses, bringing more memorable and lasting results.

Hot seating

The audience are invited to question actors from the play in character regarding their actions, behaviour and attitudes, to gain a greater insight into their characters.

Suit the words to the action, the action to the words

A look at how to open people's minds on issues surrounding discrimination, prejudice and communication in a safe and non judgemental environment.

Action planning

Participants will be encouraged to reflect on issues throughout the day and commit to a personal action plan.

5.00pm Event ends

Non uniform for emergency services delegates.

