

Draft: Corporate Equality Scheme 2012/ 2015

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Foreword from the Chief Executive & Council Group Leaders

Oxford City Council is the democratically elected body for Oxford. In partnership with others, we provide a wide range of services for approximately 150,000 residents, 83,000 people who work in Oxford, and around nine million people who visit the city every year.

The Corporate Plan 2011-2015 (Investing in Oxford's Future) is the Council's key strategic document and reaffirms the Council's ambition, developed with our partners, to make Oxford a world - class city for everyone. An integral priority is to work with a wide range of community groups in the city to build strong and active communities and tackle inequality as Oxford has some significant challenges, with areas experiencing high levels of deprivation (the indices of deprivation 2010 place Oxford in the top half of the most deprived authorities in England, with twelve neighbourhoods calculated to be among the 20% most deprived areas in England).

It is the ambition of the Council to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community. We are also committed to improving the diversity of our workforce and to equipping all staff with the knowledge to promote equality and diversity in everything we do. By ensuring the principles of equality and diversity are embedded into the way the Council works, we will be in a strong position to provide fully accessible services, guidance and advice for our service users.

The Council's Corporate Equality Scheme will provide a comprehensive response to the spirit as well as the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination and other prohibited conduct under the Act, advance equalities and foster good relations between communities, including those sharing protected characteristics and those not. The scheme aims to integrate equality and fair treatment into our core priorities and functions.



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1. Summary of the aims of the Oxford City Council Corporate Equality Scheme:

Oxford City Council aims to be a leading authority for promoting equality in local services; an employer of choice for local people and a place where staff can achieve their full potential.

The Corporate Equality Scheme will ensure that equality and diversity continues to feature in this, setting out both our commitment to it and our achievements in one place.

The scheme sets out:

- How we will work towards promoting equality of opportunity and access across the full range of statutory services and the visible community leadership we are responsible for delivering;
- How we will ensure that discrimination is challenged through the extended legislative protection offered by the new Equality Act 2010 in recognising key protected characteristics. This includes the review and publication of our equalities objectives on an annual basis as identified in section 4.2;
- The responsibilities expected of our Elected Members, employees and strategic partners and the actions that we will take as an organisation to ensure we deliver high equalities standards as a public sector service provider.

We strongly believe that our work as partners on the Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP) and as a uniquely positioned key influencer with other service providers will enable Oxford to achieve this programme.

2. Oxford City in context:

Contemporary Oxford is an economic hub with a world-class knowledge economy that underpins the prosperity, not just of the Oxfordshire sub-region, but of the south east of England and beyond. In addition to being a major tourist destination, it is also an important shopping area, and the cultural centre of the region.

In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse with the third highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2009, 19.4% of the population were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with an England average of 11.8%. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are Indian, Pakistani and Chinese. Oxford has also seen a steady growth in European communities and these now account for roughly 6.6% of the population. A notable short-term flow of international migrants, amongst the highest in England and Wales, also has an impact. Diversity is therefore one of our city's strengths and social inclusion and community cohesion are key goals for the city and the Council.

It is not just diverse but also, because it has the highest proportion of students in England and Wales (26%) and the highest turnover of population (25.4%), youthful, mobile and self-renewing, with the 18-24 age group representing 21.7% of the population.

Dynamic urban environments provide great opportunities and also difficult challenges, and Oxford is no exception. The city is a densely packed urban space, covering 17.6 square miles, with very high levels of housing density. There are severe pressures on housing stock, with large concentrations of homes in multiple occupation and significant numbers of homeless and other vulnerable groups. The recession has increased the number of people waiting for social housing from 4,500 to nearly 6,000.

Despite a slight fall in house prices, the ratio of wages to prices remains very high. The challenges appear set to intensify as capital funds for social housing have been cut and housing benefits are being reduced. As a result there are likely to be more people homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Some areas of the city suffer multiple levels of deprivation, low skills, low incomes, and high levels of crime. It is also these areas which have been hit hardest by the rise in unemployment during the recession and where the cuts in public services will be felt most.

Our ambition is to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society.

2.1 The challenges we face as a City Council:

The principal challenge faced by the Council is that, relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation with major inequalities in life chances and in life expectancy within the city. The Indices of Deprivation 2010 place Oxford in the top half of the most deprived Local Authorities in England. Twelve of Oxford's neighbourhoods were calculated to be among the 20% most deprived areas in England (compared to 10 based on 2007 figures), with one in Northfield Brook ward being among the 10% most deprived.

On the overall local authority rankings, the city has become relatively more deprived, moving from the 155th most deprived to the 131st most deprived. Around 23% of Oxford's under-16 year-olds live in low- income households and child poverty is a key concern in eight neighbourhoods which feature among the 10% worst affected in England. In some areas, half of all adults have no qualifications and this is linked to lower incomes, poor health and child poverty. Oxford has over 10,000 working age residents claiming benefits – the highest percentage in the county. In May 2009 there were 3,170 Oxford residents whose primary benefit claim was related to a disability (excluding incapacity benefits).

Please use links to the following pages on the website to find more details of the Corporate Plan 2011-2015, Oxford Profile key facts, a summary of the indicators of deprivation across the city, regeneration profile and access to monthly statistical releases on a variety of social issues:

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CorporatePlan201115.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OCCKeyfacts2010.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/ID2010OxfordSummary.pdf>

http://www.oxford.gov.uk/2_Oxford%20Regeneration%20Profile%202009.pdf

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/ChartoftheMonth.htm>

3. Corporate Equalities Scheme 2008 – 2011

3.1 Achievements and successes - principles into practice

The Council previously set a programme of seven core objectives (see Appendix 1 and narrative around our delivery against the 2008-2011 action plan) which generated 38 equalities indicators around the key themes of Tackling inequalities and supporting communities (13), Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (3), Improving value for money and services performance (15), More housing, better housing for all (2), and Improving the local environment, economy and quality of life (5).

These indicators were supported by the roll out of an Equality Impact Assessment timetable of 185 service level and corporate strategic assessments which together led to the successful achievement of objectives under the respective previous corporate priorities. Some of the key highlights were:

Achievements under Tackling inequalities and supporting communities:

- Undertaking a full accessibility audit of all council owned venues for public use or to facilitate access to area forums and other council sponsored activities. By April 2011 86% of council owned buildings were accessible, with the remainder subject to major refurbishment plans or waiting for financial decisions on these proposed work programmes
- Reducing waiting times for assessments and completed work for a full disabled adaptations programme for socially housed tenants to meet the top quartile under Housemark sector benchmarking. This was reduced from 60.8 weeks in 2007/2008 to an average of 11 weeks for 2009/2010 partly through the appointment of an in-house Occupational Therapist
- Protected the Home Improvement Agency and Disabled Facilities Grants budget at £390k per annum in the 2011/2015 budget and allowed for future rises in inflation
- Undertook a full Equalities Impact Assessment with partners and service users to identify any areas of potential differential impact that might affect the planning process which led to an easier to access online planning portal
- Developed and implemented an action plan to increase levels of participation in leisure activities by under-represented groups, with a 27% increase by those with a disability, 15% for older people, 12% for BME groups and an 8% increase for women and girls.

Achievements under Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour:

- The Domestic & Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator developed a multi-agency training package for approximately 100 front line professionals to enable better understanding of the dynamics of honour based violence

- and/ or forced marriage and to improved identification and appropriate responses to victims. Training is ongoing
- Adopted a multi agency approach to support the Respect Agenda for social housing and were a key partner with the Elmore Team anti-social behaviour project working with 38 individuals and families with mental health problems, drug or alcohol, homelessness or ex offender issues to effect a reduction in the number of ASBO's and ABCs being issued. The team were awarded the Guardian Public Services Award for Complex Needs in November 2010
 - Tenancy services posted regular briefings released by the Thames Valley Police (oxford@tvpcommunitymessaging.org) covering ASB and other crime warnings
 - Developed a Building Resilience Strategy to support the national strategy to tackle violent extremism which was cited as good practice by GOSE.

Achievements under Transforming Oxford City Council by improving value for money and services performance:

- Reviewed and implemented legal changes in over 30 core policies, including all recruitment and retention policies, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and had these approved by full Council in August 2010 (see Appendix 2 for an outline of our legal responsibilities). These have enabled the Council to successfully achieve Stonewall Diversity Champion recognition and a Workplace Equality Index ranking inside the top 378 LGBT friendly employers nationally in 2010, as well as achieving and retaining Two Ticks positive about disabled people accreditation from Jobcentre Plus in 2010 and 2011 as an indicator of best practice in the recruitment and retention of staff with a disability under the DDA.
- Established a timetable of Equality Impact Assessments to support the CEB Forward Plan, and, to ensure that all key reports were impact assessed effectively, developed an Easy Guide toolkit, and a shortened initial screening template to increase the skill and confidence of report writers to undertake critical assessments. We also posted EqIAs on our external website to enable stakeholders to monitor the progress against project commitments.
- Delivered an Annual Workplace Equalities Report that resulted in 17 actions (as set out in the 2012-2015 Action Plan in section 4.2) and internal iTrent equalities “dashboard” reports that supported accurate workforce planning throughout the ongoing Council 2012 restructuring programme
- Achieved Investors in People (IiP) accreditation as an organisation in 2011. The external assessor said:

“In Oxford City Council, the Assessor found an organisation that values its people extremely highly, and which values learning and development similarly highly. The Assessor experienced an organisation made up of people who are proud of their jobs, their teams, their council and their city, and who are

committed to performing at a consistently high level and to delivering outstanding service to the residents, workers and visitors of Oxford.

Further, the Assessor found an organisational infrastructure that supports these endeavours through considered and well-ordered policies and processes designed to support effective people management and skills development in all parts of the council. Continued improvement will be attained essentially through better and more consistent application of these processes and policies throughout all parts of the council.”

Achievements under More housing, better housing for all:

- Built the first new Council homes in over 20 years, completing 58 new Council houses in Rose Hill and Littlemore built to Sustainability Code level 4, and have secured a partner to develop 800 new homes in Barton, of which 40% (up to 360) will be social housing
- Reopened The Old Fire Station in 2011 after a successful application for Places for Change funding in strategic partnership with Crisis Skylight Oxford, who will provide education, training and employment services for single homeless and vulnerably housed people. Crisis Skylight offer a wide range of arts and practical workshops, formal learning, well-being and advice services and a Café which will train people in catering and hospitality skills
- Awarded the role of Regional Single Homelessness Champion, with £120k of additional funding in recognition for the work being carried out by Housing & Communities who have continued to reduce homelessness; with the number of people in temporary housing falling from 1,100 in 2004 to 162 in December 2010
- Launched a Landlord Accreditation Scheme which aims to improve the condition and management of the private rented sector in Oxford. The Council will encourage, acknowledge and actively promote good standards of privately rented accommodation to protect tenants in the sector from poor property standards or value for money.

Achievements under Improve the local environment, economy and quality of life:

- Delivered free recycling and other refuse collection services for c 2,400 residents currently in receipt of benefits and maintain and annually review an assisted collection service for over 1000 residents
- Ensured that the Shopmobility service continues to meet the needs of people with disabilities by extending opening hours to provide seven days a week coverage
- Implemented an Oxford Living Wage in 2009 of £7.19 per hour to protect our lowest paid staff, and to encourage other local businesses to do the same, from the effect of Oxford being the second most unaffordable city outside London

- Ran the first ever “Youth Job Fair” in Oxfordshire in August 2011. Aimed principally at younger job seekers from 16-25, over 350 attendees had the opportunity to talk directly to employers offering live job vacancies or apprenticeship places, or a series of further education skills and training advisors. An HR Apprentice and six A level/National Diploma students from Oxford & Cherwell Valley College were mentored to project manage the event and to effectively market it to the community. Jobcentre Plus has since reported a reduction of 100 jobseekers in the 18-25 year age group and this has led to the establishment of a monthly Work Club with partners. The Work Club is now registered on the National Work Clubs Network.

3.2 Achievements and successes 2008 - 2011: external validation

In 2009 the Audit Commission reported the following:

“The Council has achieved real improvements for vulnerable communities over the last five years, with a range of physical, economic and social projects. Leadership is effective in promoting equalities and diversity externally. It provides long term financial support to voluntary groups to build capacity and there are positive examples of engagement with the local community which work well. The Council promotes community cohesion and gives commitment and support to events in the City which help the understanding and engagement of differing sectors of the community.”

“Social integration works well across the city and the percentage of people who think that people from a different background get on well is high. However, there are key longstanding challenges in the parts of the city that have high levels of deprivation, low social mobility and educational attainment. The leadership of the Council are clear that multiple deprivation in specific locations is its greatest challenge.”

“The new corporate plan 2008 to 2011 incorporates specific themes that focus on vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities. Good baseline knowledge about the community is used to influence strategic planning and service delivery.”

4. Corporate Equalities Scheme 2012 - 2015

4.1 Our aim and vision for 2012 - 2015:

The Corporate Plan 2011-2015 (“Investing in Oxford’s Future”) lays out the Council’s ambition to make Oxford a world - class city for everyone. The five themes are a vibrant and sustainable economy, meeting housing need, strong and active communities, a cleaner greener Oxford, and an efficient and effective council.

The Corporate Equality Scheme 2011 - 2015 is a key driver in supporting the achievement of the Council’s objectives, with a renewed focus on delivering tangible outcomes.

The approach we will take will align with the Equalities Framework for Local Government (more details of which can be found in our January 2012 Peer Review submission document and self assessment towards the “Achieving” level) which builds on the principles of equalities leadership and community involvement that are central features of modern local government.

This framework will enable the Council to deliver 10 new equality objectives which aim to improve services to better meet the diverse needs of our customers, and to simultaneously deliver our internal workforce equalities actions in a simpler and more defined outcome-focussed approach.

This new scheme will develop our ongoing commitment and efforts to promote equality and diversity good practice across all areas of our work, and it sets out an action plan which will be regularly reviewed to reflect evolving challenges and priorities. It will be a live document and stakeholders will be consulted for feedback to develop and improve the scheme.

The Council recognises that resources are limited and subject to many competing pressures but some specific resources, proportionate to the Council’s size and overall budget, will be targeted annually on progressing the implementation of the Corporate Equality Scheme and reaching the ‘Achieving’ and then “Excellent” levels of the Framework. The Council has already ring-fenced key service resources as part of its medium term budget in line with its commitment to protecting the most vulnerable communities.

Progress against all our Equalities objectives will be tracked against an action plan which will be reported to Corporate Management Team and elected members on a regular basis.

4.2 The Equalities Action Plan 2011-2012 (reviewed annually)

| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 1 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Vibrant and sustainable economy - To drive forwards the spatial and economic regeneration of the City, building upon its special character and vitality | Usage and access to planning services/ application outcomes: to involve the Council's Access officers in the determination of all major planning applications | To enable all community groups to have fair access to the planning process and to ensure that major developments are accessible to people with a disability and meet the needs of diverse communities | Michael Crofton-Briggs (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |
| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 2 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
| Meeting housing need - To provide high quality Property Services that meet the needs of our stakeholders in the way that they want and in the best corporate interests of the Council | To increase the delivery of affordable housing, the re-provision and regeneration of community centre facilities, and the relocation of the Emmaus shop Targeting super output areas of deprivation in the bottom quartile nationally | 50% + affordable housing from 109 new units in Northway & Cowley Barton project (with Grosvenor) to deliver 40% affordable housing of up to 360 social housing units from 800 new units. Developing effective consultation and partnerships with third party providers Green Square and Hab Oakus | Steve Sprason (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |

| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 3 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Meeting housing need - To lead in the coordination and delivery of social, physical and economic regeneration in the City, with a particular focus on reducing inequalities and breaking the cycle of deprivation (concentrating on the wards with the worst ratings in the indices of deprivation) | Reduce homelessness: to undertake a fundamental service review of the homelessness service and to test the CRE Code of Practice | Prevention and reduction of homelessness in all its forms, and to ensure equality of access to housing and housing services by BME groups | Graham Stratford (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |
| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 4 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
| Meeting housing need - To protect and sustainably transform the environment for all people living, working or visiting the City | Protecting the current levels of the Disabled Facilities Grant and HIA services | Thorough analysis of the recipients of the DFG and HIA and establish mitigating actions to address or explain any gaps to enable applicants to remain in their home for as long as possible, through the carrying out of essential repairs, adaptations and improvements. Identify issues where an applicant's medical condition has deteriorated during the process and given rise to a further shortfall in provision that might result in unmet need. | John Copley (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |

| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objectives 5 & 6 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
|--|--|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Meeting housing need - To provide the best level of service to our tenants and the diverse communities we serve, and to provide value for money services that improve the environment, quality of life, health and wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the City | Usage and access to the housing repairs service | Highlight/ monitor equalities issues via the complaints processes already in place to determine any future mitigating actions. Expectation that satisfaction surveys/ responses continues to run at extremely high levels, consistently well above 90%. The Council will continue to invest to ensure that "Decent Homes" (and any subsequent standards) are maintained. Continue to offer online access and a free phone number for all tenants. | Graham Bourton (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |
| Cleaner greener Oxford | Usage and access to waste and recycling services | To continue to review the assisted collections service in order to maintain a universal and free service wherever possible and to minimise the impact of any charging to notional or zero levels for those in receipt of benefits | Graham Bourton (Head of Service) | Date of review Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |

| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 7 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Strong and active communities - To provide world class parks, open spaces and leisure opportunities to improve the quality of life of everyone living in, visiting or working in Oxford | Usage and access to leisure services | Improving links to the Leisure Facilities Strategy through increased participation and access of targeted groups to build on the 98,000 per annum increases in visits to leisure centres. Provide leisure facilities of private sector quality at public sector prices and maintain and improve on current satisfaction levels at 97% Continue to seek a year-on-year uplift of up to 5% in participation by key users from BME, disabled and age groups (e.g. over 50 and U17 junior free swimming) NI8 corporate measure | Ian Brooke (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report CorVu reports |
| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 8 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
| An efficient and effective council - To provide corporate co-ordination and challenge in relation to policy, culture and communications and driving forward cultural partnerships and regeneration within the city, building upon and enhancing the special character and vitality of the city's communities | Communication accessibility | Improving and remodeling cross- group initiatives to establish and manage an educational/ cultural events programme embracing different aspects of different communities in Oxford Encourage and facilitate participation in cultural activities and organisations for diverse community groups | Peter McQuitty (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |

| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 9 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| An efficient and effective council - To drive and deliver a world class customer first culture throughout the Council and with our partners to the community with an ethos of accessibility (always, everything and everywhere), quality (right first time) and value for money services | Usage and access to Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit | Using Mosaic and other data sets to revalidate previous pilot data to target community groups and the take up of benefits and to improve the understanding of local communities' needs. Ensure under represented groups are taking up entitlements to benefits | Helen Bishop (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report |

| Corporate Priority | Equalities Objective 10 | Expected Outcome | Lead | Date of review |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|---|
| An efficient and effective council - To lead and support the Council in the management of its' people and playing a leading role in promoting and progressing equalities and diversity issues – both across the workforce and in service provision | Developing the diversity of the workforce | Employer of choice, with a strong commitment to equal pay and striving to achieve liP silver by 2015 Workforce more representative of local communities Ongoing review of action plans from the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 | Simon Howick (Head of Service) | Quarterly updates and an annual case study report Annual Workplace Equalities Report |
| An efficient and effective council | Staff Survey (December 2011) | Assess employee satisfaction and to link with the liP action plan | Melanie Magee | December 2013 |
| An efficient and effective council | Equalities Framework for Local Government Peer Review | To reach "Achieving" level accreditation following an external review | Simon Howick | January 2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | liP Gold - Continue liP journey and draw out / focus on diversity themes | Improve the diversity of the workforce | P & E/OD Board | 2012/2013 |
| An efficient and effective council | Using iTrent to maximise input of equalities data and to use this to inform strategic workforce planning. Transfer and update all training data into the I Trent system to properly establish training records for all staff | Ensure accurate data held to help determine our baseline, produce reports, inform actions as part of workforce planning, ensure equality of opportunity and access to development for the benefit of employees and customers | P & E/OD Team | 2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | Implement new e-recruitment software to reduce administration and increase resources to be able to focus on advertising & selection | To release more time to focus on increasing diversity of applicants / new hires e.g. targeted campaigns, widen pool of candidates via more informed short listing and selection methods | P & E | 2012 |

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| An efficient and effective council | Scope and develop a series of Action Learning Sets to follow up Equipping Managers for Change – to ensure diversity forms a part of the programme | To share best practice in dealing with diversity issues, highlight the benefits of a diverse organisation and how this can improve the delivery of service to customers | P & E | 2011/2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | Equipping Managers for Change - Run a condensed version of the Equipping Mangers For Change programme for both existing and new managers | To provide training that amongst other things, considers diversity issues in people management, recruitment and selection, and to positively inform how an understanding of diversity can be beneficial in informing how services can be delivered | P & E/OD Team | 2011/2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | Corporate training plan available on the staff intranet that will enable all service areas to link in with training being corporately provided and to ensure access to all employees | To provide an appropriately resourced corporate training programme and promote equality of access to it across all service areas and grades | P & E/OD Team | July 2011 |
| An efficient and effective council | Re launch “Exit” interviews to ensure all leavers are encouraged to give feedback about working for the Council and their experience | To gain useful feedback for managers, service areas on diversity (and other) issues and consider any action which might be appropriate | P & E Team | September 2011 |
| An efficient and effective council | Apprenticeships and community projects - Extend the number of apprenticeships across the organisation (in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Pledge) visible community coaching and interview workshops, reaching into schools and colleges (to focus on targeting key areas of deprivation within Oxford), as well as monitoring the career development opportunities | To increase the diversity of the workforce, enable succession planning and career development and provide community leadership in promoting opportunity for others not working for the Council. Seek to support employability skills for job seekers in the City and to maximise initiatives to benefit the community as a whole. Establishing and launching an Oxford Work Club to support jobseekers in Oxford City in partnership with Job Centre Plus and other community partners, and initiatives to support | P & E Team | 2011/2012 Monthly Work Clubs |

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| | available between service areas. Directorate teams will be encouraged to discuss exchange training and staff swaps, mentoring and internship opportunities where students can bring a clear related discipline to add value to the respective service areas. | the community using internal and external resources | | |
| An efficient and effective council | Focus on disability - Continue to emphasise the importance that staff self declare any disabilities under DDA (reinforced by the Equality Act 2010) in order that the Council can take all reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure full access to work, training, development and promotion opportunities as well as performance management. The Access Officer will conduct an analysis of the current spend on adaptations and make recommendations for future funding provision | To ensure we are supporting employees appropriately and making adjustments to enable those with disabilities to work effectively. To ensure our statistics are correct so as we can focus our efforts appropriately. | P & E Team | 2011/2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | New induction - Finalise the new induction process with a focus on equalities and diversity enable this via e-learning so those joining understand our commitment before joining | To promote our diversity values with new starters from post recruitment, and to ensure that our inclusive culture is embedded at the outset | P & E Team | 2011/2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | Communicating Diversity - Audit and update all staff intranet and external website equalities pages | To promote our diversity values and embed a culture of inclusivity | P & E Team | September 2011 |

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|------------------------------------|---|--|------------|-----------|
| | where required, including adding a guide to assist applicants with making more effective applications using the Council's standard application form. Develop new "Diversity Matters" internal monthly publication and continue to achieve Two Ticks and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index national accreditation | To prepare for and undertake annual external reviews in order to achieve Jobcentre Plus Two Ticks and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index re-accreditation as part of our commitment to disability and LGBT protected characteristics | | |
| An efficient and effective council | Workforce planning - Launch a simpler Workforce Planning matrix to assist with the Council's business planning process and to help managers identify current and future workforce issues that have diversity as a fundamental part | To encourage managers to consider diversity issues in workforce planning to ensure opportunities exist for all, and that we strive to achieve a workforce that reflects our customer base | P & E Team | 2011 |
| An efficient and effective council | Living Wage - Review uplifting the mechanism and rate | To increase our minimum wage in the interests of improving income for individuals working for the Council directly or via contractors | P & E Team | 2011/2012 |
| An efficient and effective council | Employer of choice: Promote the Council as a potential employer and encourage applications from under-represented groups (e.g. women in senior roles, BME applicants, etc) | To increase the diversity of the workforce through targeted recruitment promotion via a greater range of automatic e-mails to community groups | P & E Team | Immediate |
| An efficient and effective council | "What its like to work here" self assessment. Testing the experiences of protected characteristic groups | To build our reputation as an employer of choice regarding diversity. Ensure any issues that arise are addressed | P&E Team | 2012 |

5.1 Driving outcomes: who will deliver what?

Everyone has a part to play in the successful delivery of our objectives.

The Council is ultimately responsible for delivering the General and Specific Duties set out in the Equality Scheme, and a comprehensive equalities report on progress is produced yearly for the City Executive Board and Corporate Management Team. The Equalities Action Plan will be updated and reviewed by Corporate Management Team on a regular basis.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for making sure that we carry out the actions in this scheme. However, actions have been allocated to the relevant Directors across the council and they are responsible for carrying these out and reporting on progress. In addition, we have identified responsible officers for each point in the action plan.

The Council will be accountable through publishing the CES 2012-2015 and making it available on our website following external consultation. It will be subject to an annual progress review, with the annual report being published on the council's website.

The Council's Equalities & Diversity Business Partner will ensure that progress reports are made at key milestones, presented to CMT and that the scheme is continually updated. These reports will be made available to the City Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee, Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee and other strategic partners where appropriate. It is therefore expected that:

Elected Members will:

- Be familiar with and promote the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy Statement and Corporate Equality Scheme;
- Ensure that adequate resources are available for the Council to meet its local priorities and statutory legal responsibilities concerning equality; and
- Monitor achievements against the Action Plan as Scrutiny Committee Members and to make recommendations to Council where necessary or appropriate

The Chief Executive and Directors will:

- Provide strategic direction and endorse corporate policies and plans in relation to equalities; influencing the integration of equalities into all the services provided by the Council through wider community leadership;
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to meet our commitment to equalities as an integral part of service planning; and
- Ensure that all reports to policy committees and executive boards carefully consider equal opportunity issues in the widest sense and

recommend actions to address any potential adverse impacts on local communities

Service Heads and Managers will:

- Demonstrate commitment to equalities by role modelling, promoting, implementing and monitoring the Councils behavioural standards and Employee Charter in day-to-day management and workforce planning;
- Identify appropriate training needs and provide training opportunities ensuring that all employees have equal access to training within the budget available and have equal opportunities for career development; and
- Consider equal opportunity issues in the widest sense and recommend actions to address any potential adverse impacts on local communities, ensure contractors, strategic partners and others working on behalf of the Council are committed to meeting the Councils' equality standards

Employees will:

- Understand the Equality Scheme, Dignity at Work policy, Behavioural Framework and Employee Charter and general and specific duties placed upon the Council by the Equality Act 2010 to be aware of how, in their work area, they can support the Council in meeting those duties to deliver excellent, fully accessible customer services;
- Demonstrate commitment to equalities by taking active steps to challenge discrimination and disadvantage; discussing and setting equalities objectives as part of the annual performance appraisal process; and
- Undertake appropriate awareness training to keep abreast of equality issues to be capable of dealing with discrimination related complaints in accordance with reporting all hate crime

Strategic partnership groups will:

- Serve as a focus for promoting and leading the awareness of equalities issues across the Council and City of Oxford; and
- Guide service areas in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing equality actions through a proportionate and balanced approach.

The Head of People & Equalities will:

- Have the specific responsibility to coordinate corporate actions to deliver the Corporate Equality Scheme and monitor its implementation; and
- Make recommendations for policy changes in order to meet statutory duties or to secure general improvements in the management of equality issues

5.2 Resourcing the Action Plan

- The Council will mainstream equalities into its day-to-day activities so that all employees take responsibility for equality, therefore reducing the demand for any additional resources;
- The cost of training and consultation will be met from the existing budgets covering those areas. However, the ongoing annual consultation, impact assessment and review of the Council's 2011-2015 Budget may identify some possible changes that will have significant financial or other service implications. When this is the case the relevant scrutiny committee and City Executive Board will be asked to achieve a balance between the benefits that will accrue against the additional cost or possible adverse impact on other service users.

6.1 The future work programme: What's next for Oxford?

We recognise that there is always room for improvement and intend to strive to achieve our core ambition of building a world-class city for everyone and to work towards becoming an "Excellent" authority under the EFLG by 2015. We will endeavour to do this through:

- Continuing to prioritise and protect access to core services for the most vulnerable groups in Oxford and to communicate our high profile successes
- Continuing to value and develop visible local strategic partnerships to ensure the delivery of effective and accessible services to all sectors of the community in a socio political climate of severe financial constraints
- Continuing to invest in and develop the most skilled and diverse workforce possible
- Continuing to apply consistent EqIAs to embed these processes more fully, and to challenge services to get it right to ensure services are genuinely accessible to all communities
- Continue to engage with Oxford's communities to ensure we fully understand what their needs are and can respond appropriately
- Continue to support awareness days and promotional events across the city

6.2 Conclusion: Investing in Oxford's Future:

We have consistently focused on the Council's ambition for Oxford to be a world-class city for everyone, with employees, Elected Members and strategic partners having a pivotal part to play in achieving this objective.

The Councils' equality objectives are directly linked to service outcomes and are designed to really make a difference to people in the city. We are committed to a well resourced Corporate Equalities Scheme, and we are similarly confident that the ten corporate objectives are realistic; with progress challenged and supported by robust law and governance and financial scrutiny processes. We are fully committed to pushing the objectives forward and fulfilling our role as an effective and influential community leader.

Appendix 1: Oxford City Council Corporate Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2008-2011:

“Positive Principles, Positive Outcomes” headlines:

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

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| Actions completed | Lead Service Area * |
|---|---------------------|
| Published an annual workforce monitoring report, expanded the range of information collected to reflect the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and used the results of the report to inform action plans to improve workforce diversity | People & Equalities |
| Analysed the number of employees receiving training by equality groups and reported this to VAP Scrutiny Committee; with ongoing monitoring of equal access to training | People & Equalities |
| Reviewed existing local labour market assessments, workforce profiling and equal pay reviews to help set employment and pay targets and operate an equal pay policy | People & Equalities |
| Equality impact assessed all Human Resources policies | People & Equalities |
| Regained and subsequently retained Two Ticks accreditation in 2010/2011 through implementing a robust series of checks | People & Equalities |
| Monitored requests for reasonable adjustments and developed a central budget for service areas to apply to for funding | People & Equalities |

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

| Actions completed | Lead Service Area |
|---|---------------------|
| Achieved Investors in People across the whole organisation as an endorsement of a comprehensive people management and development focus | People & Equalities |
| Reviewed and extended existing harassment policies to reflect protected characteristics. Staff briefings have been uploaded onto the Equalities & Diversity intranet page | People & Equalities |
| Continued to support staff with a disability through a comprehensive Occupational Health service and protecting the resource of a dedicated Disability Access Officer (with an internal and externally facing role) | People & Equalities |
| Implemented and completed a three year equality and diversity training programme delivered by the Garnett Foundation and will be piloting a new awareness programme from November 2011 to support the Equipping Managers for Change workshops | People & Equalities |

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Work with our diverse communities to meet their needs:

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| Actions completed | Lead Service Area |
|--|---|
| Continued to deliver a waste collection service that includes assisted & clinical waste, bulky items, domestic recycling (including food). Note that free recycling services are in place for approximately 2,400 customers in receipt of benefits and that roughly 1000 residents receive assisted collections. | Direct Services |
| Addressed accessibility of parks spaces through achieving Green Flag status for four parks (Cutteslowe & Sunnymead, Florence, Hinksey and Bury Knowle) | City Leisure |
| Provided extensive customer services accessible to all user groups through investing in a major refurbishment of St Aldate's Chambers, a customer first strategy and one number contact point, improved on line payment access through our website, extended call centre availability, and the provision of interpretation, sign language, and information in different formats on request | Customer Services |
| Produced an annual Oxford Profile of residents, workers and visitors and other key data sets that include indices of social deprivation and charts of the month covering a range of equalities and social inclusion issues (all available on the Council website) | Policy, Performance & Communications |
| Continued to develop the website to enable online transactions and to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines1.0 | Policy, Performance & Communications/ Customer Services |
| Continued to operate an effective adaptations policy for disabled people. The Council has protected the Disabled Facilities Grant and HIA funds in its 2011-2015 budget | Direct Services/ Environmental Development |
| Removed barriers to enable full access to the Choice Based Lettings system | Housing & Communities |
| Continued to support community centres to provide activities for all members of the community. A comprehensive satisfaction and consultation exercise was conducted in the Spring of 2011 to inform future action plans. | Housing & Communities |
| Ensured adequate provision of disabled & parent/ carer car parking spaces in our car parks | Direct Services |
| Continued to provide a multi cultural burial service that is sensitive to the needs of a diverse range of religious/ faith groups | City Leisure |

Ensure equal participation in community life that generates confidence and trust:

| Actions completed | Lead Service Area |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Adopted a new Consultation Strategy and Toolkit | Policy, Performance & Communications |
| Continued to 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 (including the adaptation of key rooms in the Town Hall with hearing loops) | Policy, Performance & Communications |

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

| Actions completed | Lead Service Area |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Targeted key groups to increase the take up of council tax benefits, e.g. older age groups and the Chinese community | Customer Services |
| Successfully ensured equal access for all leisure service users through keeping Bonus Slice Card membership rates unchanged for three years and continuing to offer a significant range of other membership options. 33% of all memberships were concessionary. | City Leisure |
| Continued to prioritise and protect 50 hours per week of free swimming sessions for children and young people under 17 | City Leisure |
| Awarded Regional Single Homeless Champion status (attracting an additional £12ok of funding) to reflect the fact that the numbers in temporary accommodation have fallen from 1,100 in 2004 to 162 in December 2010) | Housing & Communities |
| Continue to support the annual Mela and other multi cultural events across the City through direct commissioning and small grant funding mechanisms for smaller arts and community projects | Policy, Performance & Communications |
| Implement and review the BME Housing Strategy to lead to a fundamental service review in 2011/ 2012 | Housing & Communities |
| Improved the take up of environmental health services through initiatives like the Scores on the Doors food premises rating scheme, supported by training workshops from members of the service | Environmental Development |

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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 people who provide goods and services on our behalf:

| Actions completed | Lead Service Area |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Improved the domestic abuse services in the city to reduce harm and risk to women and prevent homelessness. The Domestic & Sexual Abuse co-ordinator developed a multi-agency training package to covering Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage to help tackle and raise recognition of potential domestic abuse in BME communities. | Housing & Communities |
| Developed a new procurement strategy and led the Oxfordshire Procurement Hub; improving equalities in the supply chain, encouraging tenders from local businesses and rolling out a series of annual “meet the buyer” events for prospective new suppliers and procurement training for staff to evaluate tenders effectively. | Business Improvement |
| Developed links with partners to encourage a healthy lifestyle and to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Participation rates in sport and leisure activities have increased and the City can now boast the second highest activity rate in the county (a 6.9% increase since 2005). There has been a 27% increase by those with a disability, 15% increase for older people, 12% increase for BME groups and an 8% increase for women and girls. 27% of adults now take part in 30 minutes of active recreation three days per week | City Leisure/ Housing & Communities |

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Improving our processes:

| Actions completed | Lead Service Area |
|--|--------------------------|
| The corporate risk register records progress against all equalities targets on a monthly basis. Key updates will be reflected in the annual workplace equalities report. | All service areas |
| The Council has tested its equality progress through continual self-assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government and is preparing for external peer review against the “achieving” level of this standard in January 2012. A previous Audit Commission inspection in 2009 provided a generally positive health check and informed the action plan towards this goal. | People & Equalities/ All |
| Equality Impact Assessment guidance has been developed (including a user friendly toolkit available to all staff). EqlAs are included in all CEB reports and report writers are in close liaison with equalities specialist advisors at all stages from the initial scoping document through to undertaking a full assessment. EqlAs are noted in the CEB forward plan. | People & Equalities |

* All service area titles reflect the 2010/ 2011 restructures to ensure consistency with the 2012/ 2015 action plan

Appendix 2: Equality Act 2010

The Council has an obligation to meet the general and specific duties placed upon public bodies by the Equality Act 2010 and the scheme sets out how the Council intends to meet these obligations.

The scheme intends to develop and implement measures and appropriate actions to prevent discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age (currently [March 2011] legislation protects against discrimination on age grounds only in employment, That is likely to be extended to the provision of goods and services in 2012)
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex (gender)
- Sexual orientation

These grounds are referred to as protected characteristics under the Act. The Equality Act 2010 replaces all previous anti-discrimination legislation with a single Act with significant breadth (see the summary below of the essential legislation that the Act has replaced):

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The Equality Act 2010 has two primary purposes:

1. To harmonise discrimination law such that it now applies consistently to all of the protected characteristics identified above; and
2. To strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

The Act establishes and sets out:

- The characteristics which are protected
- Definitions of direct discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to:

- Discriminate against, harass or victimise a person when providing a service, including the provision of goods or facilities, or when exercising a public function;
- Discriminate against, harass or victimise a person when disposing of (for example, by selling or letting) or managing premises; and
- Discriminate against, harass or victimise a person at work or in employment services.

The Equality Act contains provisions relating to:

- Equal pay between men and women
- Pregnancy and maternity pay
- Making it unlawful for an employment contract to prevent an employee disclosing his or her pay
- The power to require private sector employers to publish gender pay gap information
- Information about differences in pay between men and women
- Restricting the circumstances in which potential employees can be asked questions about disability or health as part of the recruitment process.

The Equality Act prohibits other forms of conduct, including:

- Discriminating against or harassing of an ex-employee
- Instructing a third party to discriminate against another or helping someone discriminate against another

Summary of the main provisions of the Equality Act 2010:

- It determines the liability of employers and principals in relation to the conduct of their employees or agents
- It makes terms in contracts, collective agreements or rules of undertakings unenforceable or void if they result in unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- It contains provisions which enable an employer or service provider or other organisation to take positive action to overcome or minimise a disadvantage arising from people possessing particular protected characteristics

It establishes a general duty on public authorities to have due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations, between those sharing protected characteristics and those not.

The Public Sector Duties

The General Equality Duty

a. This is the duty on public bodies (hereafter referred to as the Council) and others carrying out public functions on behalf of a public body. It came into force on 6 April 2011 and aims to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of the Council such that it tackles discrimination and inequality and contributes to making society fairer.

b. Any third parties exercising public functions on behalf of the Council must also comply with the duty. That is because the duty rests with the Council even if it has delegated any functions to others (e.g. Fusion Lifestyle). It must, therefore, ensure that any relevant third party complies in practice and will do so through close contract monitoring.

c. It encourages the Council to engage with the diverse community that it serves to help ensure that policies, procedures and practices are appropriate and accessible to all and meet the needs of different people. The equality duty, therefore, helps the Council to deliver its overall objectives for its services. As such, it requires equality considerations to be reflected, at an early stage, in the design of policies and the delivery of service, including those that are delivered internally, and for these equality issues to be kept under review.

d. The General Duty has three aims. It requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between those sharing protected characteristics and those not;
- Foster good relations between those sharing protected characteristics and those not.

e. Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about the three aims of the general duty as part of the decision making process at all levels. This means that equality issues must influence the decisions that the Council takes both as an employer and a deliverer or commissioner of services.

f. Having 'due regard' to the need to advance equality involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics;
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

g. Fostering good relations involves:

- Tackling prejudice;
- Promoting understanding between people from different groups.

h. Complying with the general duty may involve treating some people better than others, insofar as discrimination law allows, to ensure a level playing field.

i. The general duty also explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs are different from those of non-disabled people.

The Specific Duties:

a. The general duty is underpinned by specific duties which provide a framework to help the Council meet the general duty.

b. The specific duties, announced by the Government in January 2011, require the Council to set specific and measurable equality objectives and to publish information about their equality performance, in respect of service users and employees, such as to enable the public to hold the Council to account for its performance. The evidence of performance must demonstrate how the Council has considered, across all of its functions, the three aims of the general duty.

c. Following the recent consultation the Government has said that the following information must be published no later than 31 January 2012 and, thereafter, at least annually, including:

- The equality profile of its employees to show any significant and long standing inequalities such as the gender pay gap and the proportion and distribution of disabled employees and employees from the ethnic minority communities. Also, where proportionate, similar information on employment matters such as the success rates of job applicants, take-up of training opportunities, grievance and discipline, dismissals, flexible work applications and success rates, length of service and time on pay grade and pay gap information.
- Evidence of equality analysis undertaken. The Council will need to show that it understands how its policies and practices will affect equality for all of the protected groups and do this early enough to influence how things are done.
- Evidence of equality analysis undertaken to establish whether its policies and practices would further, or have furthered, the three aims of the equality duty.

e. Further, the Council must publish, by no later than 6 April 2012, equality objectives that are specific and measurable and that will help it further one or more objectives it thinks it should achieve the aims of the general duties. These must be based on the equality evidence and analysis as identified above and at subsequent intervals of no greater than four years beginning with the date of the last publication

Summary:

The revised Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 will require public bodies to:

- publish equality objectives every four years;
- publish information annually to demonstrate their compliance with the general Equality Duty; in particular publish information relating to their employees (for bodies with 150 or more staff) and others affected by their policies and practices (such as service users).

All information must be published in a way that is accessible to the public.

Note that the Regulations:

- Change the wording from: “*Publish sufficient information to demonstrate its compliance...*” to “*Publish information to demonstrate its compliance*”;
- Remove the requirement to publish evidence of the analysis a public body undertook to establish whether its policies and practices had furthered the aims set out in section 149(1) of the Act, and remove the requirement to publish details of the information it considered when it undertook the analysis;
- Remove the requirement to publish details of the engagement the public authority undertook with persons whom it considered to have an interest in furthering the aims set out in section 149(1) of the Act, and details of the engagement it undertook when developing its equality objectives

Under the requirements of the general duty to have “*due regard*” to the matters set out in the Act, public bodies will need to understand the effect of their policies and practices on equality – this will involve looking at evidence, engaging with people, staff, service users and others and considering the effect of what they do on the whole community. The Council will do this through online consultation, Talkback panels, Neighbourhood Forums and a variety of satisfaction survey opportunities. Information to help public bodies comply with the duties and understand what constitutes good practice will be delivered through guidance, not regulation.

