

Fair for All Programme

Annual Report to April 2007



CHALLENGING INEQUALITY
& CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



Foreword

In May 2006 I became Member Champion for Equality. I quickly realised what a huge agenda it is and am finding out about so many different things.

I believe that fairness is so important and this is why I became interested in politics in the first place. I hope my contribution will be beneficial for the people of Devon.

Equality must remain central to our policies and practices. Its importance has been marked this year by two major campaigns – 2007 is the *European Year for Equal Opportunities* and the *Bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery* which the Council has marked by supporting events around the County; more on that in next year's report.

We all need to work together to achieve equality and this report shows how different services and staff across the Council have been delivering on our equality priorities. I would like to thank everyone for their contribution and also those in the voluntary and community sector who provide us those vital community links, support and helpful challenge.

Councillor Brenda Taylor
Member Equality Champion



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Executive Summary

This executive summary highlights activities in the Fair for All programmes during 2006-2007. Further details of the Council's activities and achievements can be found in the full report.

Delivering on our priorities

The Council ran nearly 50 different equality activities and nearly two thirds were delivered within the timescale it set for itself. It started the others later than planned and there were only two activities that they decided not to start and which they can address in other ways. Pages seven and eight list those activities.

Working in partnership

The success of the Council's programme requires them to work in partnership with other agencies and so they have been a key player in a number of important equality partnerships in Devon. They have worked alongside other public sector organisations to promote equality, review their plans, provisions and statutory equality schemes:

The council worked with Devon and Cornwall Police and others on the disability equality scheme consultations to make sure it met the needs of disabled staff and service users.

The council set up the migrant worker task group and involved and worked with the police, health, unions and the voluntary and community sector to produce an information pack to help migrant workers navigate our culture, traditions and service provision in Devon.

The Council have continued to champion the needs and rights of Deaf people through support and involvement in the Devon British Sign Language Charter group. They have also worked with other agencies concerned with Gypsies and travellers, racist incidents, social inclusion and gender issues.

Progress and achievements

The council continues to review all their activities, policies and functions to make sure that what it does is fair for everyone. It sets targets and is also measured against national performance indicators for equality.

The Council is making progress in making buildings accessible. They also supported the introduction of interpretation and translation services.

The Council made a start to help everyone including those groups that they find hard to reach, by listening to the views and needs of young people, older people and minority ethnic people.

Positive Community relations and community wide trust and confidence

Throughout the year the Council has supported events and initiatives that aim to reduce prejudice, hate crime, harassment and discrimination. They also helped set up a faiths forum to promote understanding between different traditions of religion and belief.

Responsive and flexible services

In collaboration with Plymouth City Council, the Council designed a project to prevent homelessness for ethnic minority people. They have ensured that through their own procurement process small business can tender for contracts. The Council also supported social enterprise initiatives to help those who are cut off from mainstream opportunities to participate in work. They have also updated their emergency planning and monitoring to make sure that they have taken account of the needs of all groups in the plans.

The library services have been particularly active in developing services and resources for people with disabilities and sensory impairments, for Gypsies and travellers and other minority ethnic and language groups. One of the special service library staff was nominated for the national customer service awards.

A developed workforce and a positive working environment

All the directorates have contributed to the Fair for All Programme. Across the Council 717 members of staff participated in the equality training programme and two directorates are currently piloting equality competencies that can be included in everyone's annual appraisal.

The Council have consulted on their green travel plans to make sure they did not penalise certain groups unwittingly. They have provided work opportunities for people with learning disabilities and have also made resources and support available to positively encourage disabled people to apply for jobs in the Council. The LGBT staff network continues to thrive.

Resources and structures

The Council has restructured the equality committees to better support integrating equality and diversity in all aspects of their services, policies and functions. The Equality Strategy Group includes critical friends in the voluntary and community sector representing the main equality strands and its role is to steer, prioritise and review the work.

The implementation group was charged with making sure the Council delivers and complies with the equality laws and achieves the targets.

The equality budget is used for consultation, external scrutiny, training, promoting equality through joint events and to buying in special expertise. Individual directorates also contribute to the overall costs through their own budgets.

The Council is currently working towards level 3 of the local government equality standard which helps to benchmark progress.

Next steps

We believe that Devon County Council continues to maintain its position as the leading authority on equality and diversity in local government in the rural South West, and we congratulate all who have done so much to achieve this over the last five years.

We note that nowadays there are other local authorities in the peninsula which are making great stride forward, and are indeed beginning to get very close to Devon's heels: it is important that Devon County Council should maintain its position of leadership and continue to succeed in the race for equality and justice.

The voluntary sector remains committed to effective partnership-working across all the authority's levels and service-areas.

By Angela Clinch and Michael Halls on behalf of the Devon County Council Equality Reference Group:

Equality Reference Group

Michael Halls, Intercom Trust: lesbian gay bisexual and trans community resources

Sonia Francis Mills, Devon Racial Equality Council

Angela Clinch, FairPlay South West

Janet Crocker, Action Group in Later Life

Emma Treby, Living Options Devon



Delivering on our Priorities

Corporate Equality Scheme

Our *Fair for All Programme 2004-7* comprised 47 activities.

29 (62%) were completed or put in place on time. Some work remains 'ongoing'.

16 (34%) were 'off target' (started or in place, but not on time).

2 (4%) did not start.

Activities completed/in place on time:

1. Policy on accessible communication developed.
2. Corporate communications action plan for equality developed.
3. *Devon Charter for British Sign Language* launched.
4. Corporate approach to Equality Impact and Needs Assessment in place.
5. *Consultation Finder* as a database to hold results of consultations in place.
6. System for monitoring community views in place (*Devon Voice* citizen's panel).
7. *Equality Reference Group* in place to act as a challenge and advise resource.
8. Contribute to events and initiatives that celebrate lives, faiths and cultures of people in Devon (ongoing).
9. Work with partners to make discrimination and harassment socially unacceptable (ongoing).
10. A local forum of faiths (*Devon Faiths Forum*) created.
11. Quality of life studies and satisfaction surveys carried out (ongoing).
12. Equality considerations built into the procurement process.
13. Community enterprise supported and encouraged (ongoing).
14. Partners engaged in roundtable discussions and research that lead to action to reduce inequalities (ongoing).
15. Organisations and projects funded by the Council demonstrating they are meeting equality duties (through Procurement questions) (ongoing).
16. Procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment in place.
17. Support for employees affected by incidents of discrimination and harassment in employment and service delivery in place (*Refusal of Service Policy*).
18. A team of *Acceptable Behaviour Advisors* in place, who are able to investigate, report and advise on incidents of discrimination.
19. Job evaluation carried out.
20. Results of employee surveys used to influence changes in the working environment and reduce differences in satisfaction levels among different people (ongoing).
21. Employee networks established and promoted.
22. Online guidance developed (ongoing).
23. Volunteering opportunities with organisations working with minority groups as part of employee development (ongoing).
24. 3-year equality training programme in place.
25. Employment diversity monitoring information reviewed.

26. Space for quiet contemplation and prayer established at County Hall.
27. Equality issues incorporated into workforce plans, strategies, policies and reviews, ensuring compliance with legislation and relevant codes of practice (ongoing).
28. Appropriate adjustments made to support employees with disabilities (ongoing).
29. Compliance with new Age Discrimination legislation.

Activities which were 'off target' (started or in place, but not on time):

1. Service level access improvements: completing Equality Impact and Needs Assessments and making all public buildings fully accessible in line with the Disability Discrimination Act.
2. Support for, and development of, local interpreting and translation services.
3. Development of a corporate strategy for engaging with minority groups.
4. Supporting community development initiatives that build community networks and facilitate connections with service providers.
5. Increasing democratic participation amongst all sections of the community and promoting active citizenship.
6. Development of a contingency plan to identify and respond to triggers which may increase community tensions.
7. Development of a corporate policy on religion and belief.
8. Increasing confidence in reporting of incidents of discrimination and harassment and satisfaction in the way incidents resulting in further action are handled.
9. Review of community based support, casework and advocacy.
10. Intelligence from casework, complaints and customer feedback is used to inform policy and practice.
11. Taking a positive approach to contracting with individuals, organisations and companies working with and run by minority groups.
12. Working with contractors in public, private and voluntary sectors to help them improve their equality performance.
13. Service level guidance on diversity monitoring produced.
14. Integrating equality objectives and targets into community and service plans, strategies, policies and review monitored.
15. Profile of service users has widened, having regard to the need and relative to the local population.
16. Equality issues are addressed within the corporate competency and appraisal framework and that support is available to managers.

Activities that did not start

1. Becoming a *Dyslexic Wise* employer: it was later viewed that good practice should be embedded in communications and other standards rather than pursue another award.
2. Carrying out 'mystery shopper' exercises with equality target groups: no funding was identified to get this project off the ground. However, the Council welcomes comments, whether complaints or compliments, through its Customer Feedback process.

Working in Partnership

The Council has a long tradition of working in partnership and in particular has led on, or been a key player with the following partnership forums/projects:

Devon Equality Partnership

Set up in October 2005 and chaired by the Council's Corporate Equality Officer, the Devon Equality Partnership is a network of equality officers from different public sector organisations across Devon. It meets once a quarter, has developed a forward plan and drafted a *Joint Declaration on Equality*. It has reviewed some key areas of legislation or research including the Traveller and Gypsy Housing Needs Assessment, Disability Equality Duty and Gender Equality Duty. Other areas of focus have been: Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreements, Living Options Deaf Project and the Devon Charter for British Sign Language, Participation/consultation, Women's development programmes, Theatre based training, Community Council for Devon, Faithnet South West, Migrant Workers, Devon Racial Equality Council local community based translation/interpreting service.

Migrant Worker Task Group

Inspired by Cornwall's approach and concerned that Devon needed to be on top of the issues relating to migrant workers, the *Migrant Workers Multi-Agency Task Group* was established in January 2007. Initiated by the Corporate Equality Officer and funded by Devon County Council Equality and Community Safety budgets, Community Council of Devon were asked to co-ordinate the group and early work including the development of a *Welcome Pack*, produce a report on the opportunities and challenges resulting from a migrant workforce in the area, develop a *Fact and Myth Buster Guide* and further action plan.

A detailed piece of work is also being developed to improve understanding of the profile and needs of migrant workers in Devon and supporting grassroots projects to build capacity from within these new communities. Key players on the task group include – Council for Voluntary Service, Riverford Farm, National Farmers Union, Gangmasters Licensing Authority, Health and Safety Executive, Fire and Rescue, Exeter Community Initiatives, Police, Primary Care Trust, Business Link, TUC, Torbay Council as well as Devon County Council and the Community Council of Devon. The *Welcome Pack* is near completion and will be tested first with a group of Polish people and a longer term action plan has been written and costed. Devon County Council has also committed £40,000 to support the work. Devon County Council has also set up its own network of officers for addressing support and information for and about migrant workers.

In addition, a road safety initiative to create and deliver a programme of awareness of the issues regarding drink driving among migrant workers in Devon from Poland and other eastern European countries is being led by the Road Safety Team. The project is in response to some serious and fatal collisions involving drivers from abroad. Information from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary indicates that the numbers of excess alcohol convictions in this group is significant. The Team have collaborated with the Police to produce a leaflet translated in Polish, which gives basic information about motoring law and enforcement in Great Britain.

Devon BSL Charter Group

Having launched the *Devon Charter for British Sign Language* the Charter group continue to champion the needs and rights of Deaf people and plan the annual *Sign Vision* event – an event which aims to bring Deaf people together with service providers, celebrate British Sign Language and develop solutions and ideas for improvements. The group also submitted a bid to the Big Lottery *Reaching Communities* fund to implement the Charter across Devon, in particular to help develop the infrastructure for BSL training and interpreting. Unfortunately its bid was unsuccessful but the group will continue to try and secure funding to help develop a better infrastructure for Deaf people.

Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group

Initiated and led by Devon and Cornwall Police diversity unit, Devon County Council were involved in the steering group which, during 2006 and 2007 consulted with disabled people across Devon in order to develop disability equality schemes.

An initial event was held on 29th June 2006 to explore how public sector agencies could work together to develop disability equality schemes, with the involvement of people with disabilities. The event was attended by 45 people from public sector, voluntary sector and disabled community (contacts made through Access Cornwall and Living Options). As an outcome it was agreed a smaller *Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group* (DESSG) would develop a consultation process. The DESSG included members from the Police, Devon County Council, Primary Care Trust, Torbay Council, Living Options Devon and Access Cornwall.

The group carried out the following *Disability Equality Scheme – Involving You* consultations:

- A detailed questionnaire which was distributed to 7,000 people through the *Devon Link* magazine between October and December, and placed on the shared internet consultation system *Consultation Finder*. Up to 950 questionnaires were returned and 300 people have given their names and addresses asking to be involved in future.
- An advert was placed in *Devon Link* magazine. Those who received an audio version of the magazine were given the opportunity to get involved through a phone survey.
- The results of the questionnaire were entered on to the shared database by Torbay Council. Analysis of the results was co-ordinated by Torbay Council. Devon County Council and Devon and Cornwall Police offered assistance where needed.
- Four day-long consultation events were run across Devon. The group used existing forum meetings run by Living Options Devon at Barnstaple (North and Mid Devon forums), Kingsbridge (West), Honiton (Exeter and East) and Kingsteignton (South).
- 77 disabled people attended the events in total. Particular care was taken to ensure that everyone could participate. This included speech-to-text typists (live subtitles), good font-size on projected images, one-to-one support where required, loop system.
- Other public agencies (not already involved in the DESSG) were invited to attend the forums; an advertisement was circulated to members of the *Devon Equality Partnership*. A charging structure was put in place so that others could purchase the data. Agencies committing time and resources to supporting the activities were exempt from the additional fees.

- A voting process was used at all four events. The group wrote the questions and the answers to choose from. Police 'IML' electronic voting equipment was used at the events (similar to ITV's 'who wants to be a millionaire'). The voting process helped determine priorities for action. Results were available immediately and shared with the audience.
- After the voting process, people broke off into four workshop groups to discuss in depth each of the following subjects, using the results of the voting to explore priorities further: Communication, Access, Training and awareness, Involvement and evaluation. Notes were taken of the discussions. Each workshop had a facilitator and note-taker.
- A second round of workshops gave those people representing public sector organisation the opportunity to consult on draft or existing disability equality schemes/equality schemes. Notes were taken of the discussions. The facilitator was an independent person.
- Similar events were also run at Plymouth and Exeter Deaf clubs with the help of Living Options Devon Deaf Project. 30 people were involved. Torbay Council also held consultation events in Torbay – 50 people were involved including people with learning disabilities.

Other groups/networks which the Council has involvement with:

- Common Ground Social Inclusion Partnership
- Exeter Racist Incident Action Group
- South West Equality Network
- Traveller and Gypsy Steering Group
- Gender Issues Group
- Prejudice Crime Task Group

Progress and achievements

Our performance against targets and best value performance indicators are available in the Council's Performance Plan (published June each year).

The achievements listed below do not capture all activities across the Council but provide a general overview.

Accessible Services and Information

Disability Access Improvements to Buildings and Facilities

In 2007, 65.56% of the Council's public buildings were reported as accessible to the public in line with the Disability Discrimination Act.

A major property services review is being carried out by location. The *Barnstaple Area Review* has resulted in a 'traffic lighting' of property in the Barnstaple area. A wider review to encompass the whole of Devon (starting with Exeter) will start Spring 2008. Buildings ranked as 'red' are those with the greater/more expensive backlog of maintenance and/or work required to comply with the DDA.

Completing Equality Impact and Needs Assessments (EINA)

Our *Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Programmes of Review* detail, by Directorate, which assessments will be carried out in years one, two and three. 2006/7 is 'year two'. Completed assessments are published on the website. These are available on the website: www.devon.gov.uk/equality_impact_needs_assess.

Support for and development of local translation and interpretation services

We are represented on the *Interpreter Services (British Sign Language) Group*, co-ordinated by Living Options Devon. In partnership with Health we have been developing a service level agreement in order to help build the capacity of a sign language interpreting agency in the area, a recommendation of the report *An Investigation into Sign Language Interpreting in Devon* by David Jackson.

Devon British Sign Language (BSL) Charter – bringing people together at Sign Vision

For the second year running we hosted and supported the successful *Sign Vision* conference on 1st July 2006. This event brought together organisations and Deaf people and had a focus on the Charter and how to meet the commitments. A report capturing the last three years of *Sign Vision* will be produced later in 2007.

Deaf people invited to Customer Service Centre

Devon County Council is a member of the *Devon BSL Charter Group* which, in association with key partners, has recently developed the *Devon Charter for British Sign Language*. The Charter contains a series of pledges aimed at improving the lives of Deaf people in Devon and providing a framework for organisations on how to ensure Deaf people access services fully and have their language needs met.

It is with this Charter in mind that the Customer Service Centre held a *Deaf Awareness Day* to increase awareness amongst the Deaf community about accessing our services and amongst staff about the needs of this community. In meeting commitments under Pledge 1 of the BSL Charter the Council now has a designated SMS Text number for contacting the Council (0777 3333 231) which is advertised widely along with a BSL video on 'how to contact the Council' on the website.

For more information on the Charter – www.devon.gov.uk/bslcharter

Young people's needs being considered

In addition UK Youth Parliament representative visited the Customer Service Centre with the leader of the Council to discuss how the Council could improve communication with young people.

Influence Over Decision Making

Participation strategy

Whilst a broader participation strategy will be developed which will incorporate best practice for engaging with minority and 'hard to reach' groups. Discussion workshops have already been held with partners in voluntary and public sectors through the *Devon Equality Partnership* and *Common Ground Social Inclusion Network* about suitable approaches for engaging with people. The points from these workshops will be used to help develop a participation strategy. In addition, where we have engaged with minority and disadvantaged communities we will learn from the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches we have taken.

Hear by Right action plans have been established across all directorates, committing each area to actively involving young people.

Examples of other community engagement/consultation activities during 2006/7:

- Sign Vision (Deaf people)
- Young People's Scrutiny Forum
- Devon Senior Council developments
- Disability Equality Scheme – Involving You (see information above).

- *Traveller and Gypsy Housing Needs Assessment*, which involved consultation with Travellers and Gypsies across Devon and has put forward recommendations on the numbers of pitches needed to sustain the travelling community and improvements in service provision.
- Trading Standards (in partnership with Exeter City Council Environmental Health) concluded their *Black and Minority Ethnic Communities Consultation Project* and the report was published in October 2006.
- Consultation on the *Sustainable Community Strategy* was targeted towards organisations representing equality issues and 'hard to reach' groups, an equality impact and needs assessment on the evidence-base was completed.

UK Youth Parliament in Devon

Twenty eight young people aged 11-18 who want to give a voice to youth issues in Devon put themselves forward in this year's *Bigger Voices...Better World!* elections.

Twelve young people were eventually elected - three Members of UK Youth Parliament, three Deputies to support them and six Members of the Young Peoples Shadow Executive, a body which is involved with Devon County Council's top decision-makers.

The *Bigger Voices...Better World!* elections 2007 were held in schools, colleges and youth centres and closed on Wednesday 24th January.

The UKYP has been active in Devon for six years and is a voice for young people on local, regional and national issues with 400 Members (MYPs). It splits Devon into three areas - Mid and East Devon, the South Hams Teignbridge and Exeter, and North and West Devon and Torridge.

The Devon Link Age Plus Pilot

Devon County Council is one of eight local authorities to pilot a new national Government initiative to tackle social exclusion of people aged over 50. The pilots are modelled on the principles identified in the Social Exclusion Unit's report *A Sure Start to Later Life*.

Building on the experience and success of *CARE direct* – Devon's telephone advisory service for older people – Devon County Council will receive £900,000 from the Department for Work and Pensions to develop the pilot with other local public, private and voluntary sector agencies. A local manager from the Department for Work and Pensions has been seconded to Devon County Council to assist with the pilot. Work has started, and the pilot will be completed by July 2008.

Devon County Council is the only authority in the South West chosen by the Government to pilot the initiative, which alongside the other seven pilots elsewhere, will help set the agenda for public services for people aged 50 plus for the future.

Over the next two years, partners – including older people themselves, Age Concern and the Upstream Healthy Living Centre – will test new ways of helping people aged over 50, particularly vulnerable people who are isolated or excluded. And they will help bring 'older people's' issues to the forefront of local policy making.

The Government initiative is targeted at the over 50s rather than people of pension age because of known difficulties for this group; e.g. in relation to employment, healthy living services and lifelong learning opportunities.

Devon's plans include establishing a *Devon Senior Council* to improve the way the County Council engages with older people. This will be an independent body made up of local older people, who will work with the Council and others to improve their strategies, building on the successful work of AGILE, the current Devon Older People's Advisory Group.

Devon's funds will also be used to further develop Devon County Council's *CARE direct* services, which is helping thousands of older people each year to access information and services. The improved service will be part of the Council's new *MyDevon* customer service centre and will provide a wider range of help and advice for people aged over 50, available over the internet as well as by telephone.

The pilot will also test ways of reaching more isolated and vulnerable people.

Community development initiatives

During 2006/7 we supported the following community development projects:

- *Ujima* – a project which provides direct support to ethnic minority community groups and networks in Exeter.
- Support for Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association which provides opportunities for Devon's Chinese community to meet, including support for Chinese New Year celebrations. Funding room hire for the *Chinese Sunday Group* to meet at St Sidwell's Centre in Exeter.

Positive Community Relations & Community-wide Trust and Confidence

Events and initiatives that we have supported during 2006/7 include:

- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Exeter Respect
- North Devon Respect
- Devon Abolition 200 (commemorating the bi-centenary of the abolition of slavery)
- Refugee Support Week

All these events have an anti-discriminatory message.

Prejudice/Hate crime work

A strategy and action plan has been developed by the *Prejudice Crime Task Group* which has actions relating to the development of a more co-ordinated approach to monitoring community tensions, community reporting of incidents and the development of a Devon wide monitoring group.

Creation of a local forum of faiths

We have been supporting the development of *Devon Faiths Forum* which was formally constituted on 12th June 2007. The Forum has a number of members from many different faith and belief based organisations, it has become involved in the *Exeter Respect Festival* and the development of a DVD resource for Schools. A website for the forum is under development.

A 'spin off' faiths forum for Exeter has also been set up.

Equality policy review

A revised equality policy has been developed and will be launched later in 2007/8. The new equality policy contains a new section on religion and belief as well as the five other 'equality strands' – race, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation.

Reporting of incidents of discrimination and harassment

During 2006 we launched our own revised process for reporting incidents of discrimination which is available on our website under a new page: www.devon.gov.uk/reportincidents. We have an *Acceptable Behaviour Policy* and *Refusal of Service Policy* (if an employee is affected by the actions of a customer) and also have in place a number of designated *Acceptable Behaviour Advisors* who are able to respond to employee concerns. The development of better community based reporting mechanisms is being addressed through the *Prejudice Crime Task Group*.

A total of 46 incidents were reported to the Council during 2006/7. These reports relate to incidents in schools, Council services, employment and Council property (such as racist graffiti on council property). We had set a 'target' to receive 74 incident reports on the basis that under-reporting is commonplace and estimated that only half the number of incidents that occur get reported formally. Although it is not our desire for 74 incidents to occur, the 'target' in this case is what we believe to be a 'benchmark' indicating whether all incidents are reported with confidence.

We are pleased to say that all incidents that were formally reported were responded to and we continue to encourage reporting of any discriminatory incident, even if this is done so anonymously, so that we can address issues either directly (through mediation or sanctions for example) or indirectly through, for example, training and awareness raising.

Community feedback and advocacy support

A project within the Adult and Community Services Directorate has led to the development and imminent implementation of a strategy to deliver advocacy support for people.

The *Equality Reference Group* provides on-going dialogue between the Council and local voluntary/community sector organisations who work with people in the community. Reference Group members alert the Council to community concerns and complaints which have led to the scrutiny of policy and practice.

Responsive and Flexible Services

Devon Inclusion Housing Project

The Supporting People Team, along with Plymouth and other local partners have successfully applied for funding from the government's *Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund* aimed at homelessness related issues. The project aims are to develop the private rented sector as a realistic housing option for the ethnic minority population in order to offer more choice, prevent homelessness and provide a route out of temporary accommodation. It also aims to prevent homelessness by ensuring housing services are culturally sensitive; improve signposting and referrals between statutory and voluntary sectors. The project will also deliver education and training with a view to raising awareness of the specific needs of the ethnic minority population, promoting an inclusive culture and ensuring that all agencies are more aware of one another's roles. Grant for 2006/07 = £143,550 and grant for 2007/08 = £156,282.

Services delivered by other organisations

Equality questions have been built into the tendering questions of the procurement process to ensure that organisations can demonstrate they are meeting equality duties when applying for contracts with the Council. We have given considerations to not disadvantage certain communities by balancing the need to have robust procurement procedures with not making the tendering process disadvantage smaller organisations – recognising that smaller organisations may be run by ethnic minority people or women. To help organisations comply and improve their equality performance, we have been developing guidance for our equality standards in procurement.

Social Enterprise

The Council's *Regeneration Programme* supports the development of community and social enterprise as a means of improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of individuals and communities across the County, with a focus on the most disadvantaged. The Authority recognises that community enterprises are often well placed within their local communities to deliver services that are more responsive to local needs and more able to engage 'harder to reach' groups than statutory providers. The County Council works directly with a number of community enterprises around the county, including to assist with the County Council's own service delivery. For example, with regards to support for adults with learning difficulties, the Authority engages the services of

Community Resources (Devon) CIC, a community enterprise based in north Devon, which is able to provide worthwhile activities and work experience in the area. The Authority also runs a designated service which helps to support existing and emerging community enterprises to develop and manage sustainable community buildings to help address local needs and provide valuable and affordable services and support networks within their local community. These facilities are of particular value to those lacking confidence or mobility to access centralised services, including older people, lone parents, people with disabilities, low income families, migrants workers etc. The Authority also indirectly supports community enterprise through supporting a number of area-based programmes in the County which are helping to foster a spirit of community enterprise, such as the *South West Forest Project*, and the *Blackdown Hills Leader Plus Scheme*, and through partnership working with organisations that are able to give specialist support to community enterprises, including Community Enterprise Unit and Wessex Reinvestment Trust.

Emergency Planning

The *Emergency Planning Welfare Plan and Handbook* has been updated to include a more robust emphasis on Equality and Diversity issues.

Customer Diversity Monitoring – for assessing the impact of services

Guidance on diversity monitoring has been drafted and will be finalised during 2007/8. Whilst monitoring is carried out particularly in social care services, this guidance aims to bring a consistent approach in place across the Council.

Supporting Young Deaf People

The Teaching Advisory Service for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children in Devon has been making progress towards achieving *Pledge 3* of the *Devon British Sign Language (BSL) Charter* which has an education/young people's focus.

The Service has been:

- Responding to issues of isolation by developing Video Conferencing at Clyst Vale and Eggbuckland Secondary Schools so Deaf children from different schools can Sign to each other, and by providing opportunities for Deaf children to meet one another and Deaf role models – with three *Together Days* held in the last academic year:
 - Dance and drama day
 - Circus day
 - Music day
- Working more closely with the Royal Academy for Deaf Education.
- Lobbying parliament to recognise British Sign Language as part of the Curriculum (as a language alongside French, German etc and not as a 'special needs issue') through an electronic petition and letter to a local MP, following a unanimous vote for its inclusion at *Sign Vision 2*. Some schools have already started offering BSL as an additional language and have got involved in *Learn to Sign Week*.

- Holding regular meetings of the *Working Together Group* to discuss how to achieve Pledge 3.
- Ensuring the service is up to date with latest publications and developments in 'bilingual education' (English alongside BSL) in order to develop a bilingual education policy.
- Ensuring children and families are supported from the point of diagnosis onwards, encouraging age appropriate language development, through Deaf Inclusion Workers.
- Offering newly diagnosed children and their families weekly access to Deaf role models by employing two Inclusion Workers who are Deaf and providing weekly access where required. This in turn meets the Pledge commitment to 'increasing the number of Deaf staff employed'.
- Raising awareness of BSL and Deaf culture in the school community through:
 - *Deaf Awareness Week* - with packs sent to every school in Devon with suggested activities and Sign handouts.
 - Deaf Inclusion Workers touring schools and teaching basic BSL awareness to groups of children.
 - *Introduction to BSL* courses run across Devon to schools and nurseries especially if a Deaf child attends, and three BSL Level 1 courses established.
- Offering Deaf children the option of learning BSL alongside English by piloting Deaf students' access to BSL tuition and qualifications. So far three students have received funding for Level 2 BSL (South Devon) and BSL Level 1 (Clyst Vale). Plans also to offer this at Bideford College and other secondary schools with a significant number of Deaf students.
- Developing the skills of staff who work with Deaf children so that they can communicate in BSL up to a minimum of N/SVQ level 2 or equivalent:
 - BSL Level 2 training for Advisory Teachers
 - BSL Level 1 course in Bideford
 - *Curriculum Sign Course* at Clyst Vale Community College for Teaching Assistants.
 - *Introduction to BSL* courses are available on request for nurseries and Foundation education providers.

A focus on Library Resources

- Large print books are available in every library – currently 70,000 individual items, consisting of 26,000 different titles.
- Spoken word tapes are stocked in every library and most now have spoken word CDs, with 31,000 individual items, consisting of 16,000 different titles. We also pay for over 770 talking/listening book subscriptions.
- There are a few Braille books in stock, but we can get hold of Braille material on request, and there are some Braille catalogues.
- Details about various library services, materials and collections for people with specific needs can be viewed on line at www.devon.gov.uk/peoplewithspecificneeds.htm - there are lots of details here, including information about assistive aids, the Makaton collection, adapted computers, reminiscence material etc.
- All library public access computers are equipped with Supernova software to magnify the screen and read information aloud, and most libraries have a scanner, with Cicero software which can read text from the scanner. Each computer also has Widgit software which turns text into symbols. Some libraries also have a special computer with a large screen, an adapted keyboard

and a large 'tracker ball' mouse which can be used with hands or feet, on adjustable tables which allow room for wheelchairs, and with special chairs and a lap tray. Other facilities include hearing loops, magnifiers, book rests and hand-held whiteboards and marker pens.

- We have 3,000 language courses in over 70 languages, including English as a foreign language.
- We have introductory guides to joining and using library services and using library computers in 28 languages.
- With the help of the Traveller Education Service, *Bookstart* (which promotes quality reading time with parents/carers and children) has continued to ensure that Traveller's children receive Bookstart packs. The service is now working with groups that help lone parents, teenage mothers, people from minority ethnic communities and refugee families.
- Devon libraries participated in the *Big Gay Read 2006* – a campaign to discover the nation's favourite gay/lesbian novel.
- A collection of books, DVDs and other materials for Deaf and hard of hearing people was launched in *Deaf Awareness Week* (May 2006). The collection includes books and videos on Sign Language, and a guide to famous Deaf people in history. Honiton Library has an active Deaf Group called *Sound Out* who meet monthly and use their collection.
- Most libraries have a few books in languages other than English, and Exeter Central Library has some Chinese titles as well as the Farsi collection.
- The main source of books in other languages is our 'pool stock' at Headquarters, which contains books in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Polish, and is currently being expanded to include Eastern European languages such as Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, and Albanian. Libraries exchange their foreign language stock with that held in the pool, and if any library has a need for extra books in a given language, these are supplied from the pool. There are only about 500 books in the pool collection at present, but this is increasing to meet a demand which has recently started to arise.
- We also stock junior books in other languages including growing collections in Farsi, Arabic, Polish etc.
- We subscribe to a company that produces picture books with a Braille overlay so that young people with a visual impairment can share books with sighted siblings/parents.
- In partnership with WRVS *Books on Wheels* we deliver books to the doors of people who can't get out of their home because of an illness, injury or disability. Nearly 800 people currently use this service.
- We have 2 Special Services Librarians who work with people who have particular needs. Geoff Green won Devon County Council's *Customer Service Award* last year and was shortlisted for the National Award.

For more information www.devon.gov.uk/libraries

A Developed Workforce and Positive Working Environment

Training and development

The second year of a three-year comprehensive *Justice Through Equality Training Programme* has been delivered to a total of 717 people.

Core programme:

Why Equality Matters (a motivational workshop for up to 80 people)	Introduction to Equality (part of Induction Programme)
Equality Impact and Needs Assessment	Race Awareness
Recognising Incidents of Discrimination	Disability Awareness
Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour	Sexual Orientation Awareness
Supporting Equality Champions	Age Awareness
Train the Trainer (integrating equality into training)	Religion/Belief Awareness
Equipping Managers to Train their Staff on Equality	Gender Awareness

As part of the introduction of a competence framework into the corporate appraisal process, one of the core organisational competencies is *Valuing Everyone* - behaving in an acceptable way in all our work, clearly promoting and displaying an anti-discriminatory approach by demonstrating respect, understanding and fairness to all. The framework is being piloted during 2007 in two directorates.

Online guidance published in 2006/7:

- Guide to Equality Law
- Setting Targets and Objectives for Equality

Equality and the Environment

We are developing *Green Travel Plans* for County Hall and some of our other bases. By reducing car trips for the daily commute and business travel to County Hall, Devon County Council can actively contribute to reducing congestion and carbon emissions. In doing so we need to get that balance right and to help us do that we have invited County Hall staff to come along to one of our workshops to contribute any thoughts they have. We have asked to hear from people who for them, the green option is not an easy option - they might have child care or other caring commitments, or a disability which limits their travel options for example.

Equal Pay

The Council has implemented its job evaluation scheme in order to equalise pay between men and women. As with all job evaluation processes there is a period of difficult transition whilst notices of pay changes are issued. Appeals are in the process of being dealt with.

Disability Equality Pilot Study

The Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. Due to concerns over the low proportion of disabled applicants being recruited to positions within the Council a pilot project was set up to review recruitment processes in relation to the appointment of disabled candidates and involve Personnel Advisors in the process. Funding was provided by the Organisation Improvement Unit. A Report will be produced during 2007.

Supporting lesbian, gay and bisexual staff

The LGBT staff network has been successful. During 2006/7 members of the network were invited to comment on the revised equality policy.

We scored 65% in Stonewall's *Corporate Equality Index 2006*. Our score is up by 4% but our placing in the top 100 has decreased from 66 to 88 due to increasing numbers of organisations participating.

Supporting ethnic minority staff

A BME staff network was established but has ended due to low participation. We are currently looking at alternative provision through the *Excellence not Excuses Forum*.

Work Experience takes off at Devon County Council for people with learning disabilities through Axxess Employment Service

As part of Devon County Council's ongoing *Recruitment and Retention Strategy*, a number of corporate work experience placements have been identified for people with learning disabilities. The work experience placements have been offered to clients of Axxess Employment Service who provide training, development and job support for people with learning disabilities and their employers. A number of placements have already commenced, two of which have been based in County Hall's despatch team. Matthew Hole, who was one of the Council's first placements, has now returned for a second week to Despatch.

Matthew said "I'm enjoying the work experience a lot. It's getting me out in the world and giving me confidence. I'm doing the franking, going on internal rounds and helping Roy in the office."

Roy, his line manager said "It is only his second full day here but I can see potential. Matthew has a learning ability and has increased in confidence considerably. Within a few days I will be able to send him out around the building doing deliveries on his own. I'm proud of him".

Devon County Council encourages diversity and equal opportunities for employment. We are a *Two Ticks* employer, meaning that we have committed to take action regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. Furthermore, this is encouraged by the Government, who is actively working to enable people with learning disabilities to participate in all forms of employment, wherever possible in paid work, and to make a valued contribution to the world of work. Currently there are a low proportion of people with a learning disability in employment with

the Council. We would like this number to increase and the one approach to address this is to offer those with learning disabilities some work experience within the Council in order to develop their skills and offer an insight in to the type of opportunities available.

We are also working closely with PLUSS, Ottervale Training and WTCS Ltd to find placements for clients with disabilities and those returning to work from a long period off.

Other initiatives across the Directorates

Finance IT and Trading

The directorate invited a representative from the UK Youth Parliament, together with the three modern apprentices and national management trainee to facilitate part of a meeting for directorate senior managers. Resulting actions are being taken forward in 2007/08.

The directorate has made a commitment to place at least two Modern Apprentices each year.

A 'Journey to Equality' audit was completed in Finance IT and Trading, and Personnel and Performance, as a comparator to May 2004 audit, to assist in evaluating directorate progress. The results showed an increase from Stage 3 (Starting) to Stage 4 (Developing).

Chief Executives

Some Councillors have granted funding to improve access to buildings such as village halls and to inclusive community cultural events.

Environment, Economy and Culture

Phil Nicholls, Project Engineer East and Alan Stone (Urban Design) gathered at the City Centre with John Harvey, the City Centre Manager, two members of the Exeter City Council Planning Department along with a Guide Dog trainer and several partially sighted people to experience the problems that they encounter when venturing out alone on the city streets. They were donned with various blindfolds and goggles, a pair of which represented what sight would be like if you experienced tunnel vision. It helped the staff recognise where problems can occur such as tactile tiles not lining up on opposite kerbs, being able to reach the operating button and the tactile cone on the control post and the reliability of audio signals. It is showed how important it is to keep dialogue going with members of the public so that their needs can be incorporate in future schemes.

Our Road Safety Team have been raising awareness of drink driving among people from eastern European countries who may be unaware of our drink-driving laws.

A presentation has been given on the characteristics and needs of the gypsy and travelling communities to 40 staff from the Area Engineer's team in North Devon. The presentation covered lifestyles of the various travelling types, the law as it applies to racial groups of Romanichel and

Pavee gypsies, the health, safety and welfare aspects of travelling, the need to refer local highway issues to the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer, and the social isolation resulting from prejudice.

During *Deaf Awareness Week* (7th – 11th May) the directorate held a social gathering for staff trained in British Sign Language. Further work has taken place to set up a network of staff who want to practice BSL and meet to discuss Deaf issues on a regular basis. Pauline Young, a member of staff in the directorate has a range of display material on deaf/Deaf awareness which is exhibited from time to time.

Scheduled bus times are now available across Devon by text messaging, the unique code for each bus stop in Devon can be texted to 84268. This will result in a reply giving the times of the next three scheduled buses past the stop. This can help Deaf people as well as people concerned about safety such as women travelling late at night.

Making bookings by SMS text is a developing concept across the services supported by the Rural and Community Transport Team so *Ring & Ride* schemes, car schemes, community buses and *Shopmobility* are included in this.

Staff awareness and development initiatives include weekly bulletins with awareness raising questions and information about events and initiatives and BSL/Deaf Awareness training.

Resources and Structures

During 2006 we restructured our equality groups so there were 2 main groups where equality and diversity issues are discussed:

- **Equality Implementation Group**
- **Equality Strategy Group**

Equality Strategy Group

Members:

Chair: Member Champion for Equality

Support officer (and link to Equality Implementation Group): Corporate Equality Officer

Executive Member for Communities

Officer Champion for Equality

Equality Reference Group members

Trade union (employees) equality representative

Role:

- To steer and prioritise the work of the Council in relation to equality and diversity.
- To scrutinise the Council's performance on equality, as community leader, employer and service provider.
- To offer advice and guidance to help ensure the Council complies with legislative requirements.
- To recommend, approve and assist with the development of policies, strategies, projects, plans and guidance to be adopted or recommended for adoption by Corporate Management Board / Executive / Council.
- To identify risks, needs and impacts on people and communities.
- To maintain a link with communities, employees and councillors.
- To invite officers (e.g. Directorate Equality Co-ordinators) to meetings to scrutinise specific areas of work or gaps.

The **Equality Reference Group** advises and supports Devon County Council's work on equality and diversity, providing ideas and scrutiny. It symbolises the partnership of Devon County Council with the local community in its commitment to equality and includes members from various local organisations pressing for equality. Although acknowledged and supported by the council, the Equality Reference Group members are independent of the council they include: Devon Racial Equality Council, Intercom Trust, Living Options Devon, Agile and Fair Play South West.

Equality Implementation Group

Members:

Corporate Equality Officer, Directorate Equality Co-ordinators and Customer Services rep.

Role:

- To offer advice and guidance to help ensure the Council complies with legislative requirements.
- To monitor directorate and service level compliance with the equality programme including reviewing action plans and monitoring and performance data; flagging concerns as appropriate with the Equality Strategy Group or Corporate Management Board.
- To ensure a consistent approach across the Council is adopted.
- To deal with pragmatic, operational matters.
- To resolve problems, providing constructive challenge to each-other and mitigating risks.
- To assist the Corporate Equality Officer in monitoring the overall work programme, identifying new areas of work and project proposals, identifying organisational risks and impacts.
- To steer the work of directorate equality groups, service areas and specific projects/activities.
- With the Equality Strategy Group, to develop and put forward policies, projects, strategies, plans and guidance to be adopted or recommended for adoption by Corporate Management Board / Executive / Council.
- With the Equality Strategy Group, to assist the Corporate Equality Officer in producing an annual report.

Budget 2006-7

The Council has a dedicated 'Corporate Equality Budget' which is used for:

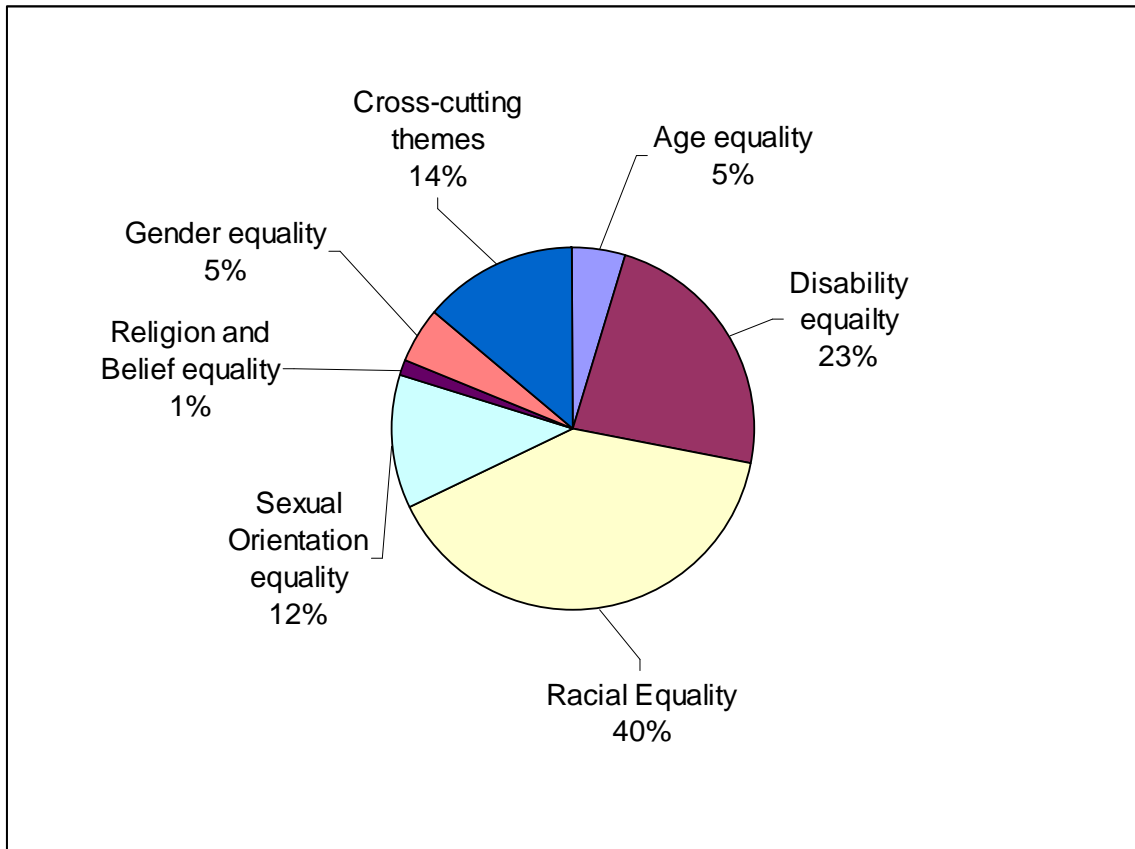
- Consultancy and external scrutiny
- Community development activities (with minority and disadvantaged communities)
- Community participation/consultation, research (with minority and disadvantaged communities)
- Community events and activities (challenging inequality and celebrating diversity themes)
- Capacity building (voluntary/community sector with equality interests)
- Staff training and awareness raising of equality and diversity
- Guidance, campaigns and communications
- Subscriptions and other aspects such as funding meetings

In addition, funding for equality based initiatives may be provided from budgets within directorates and services, there is also a separate Social Inclusion budget.

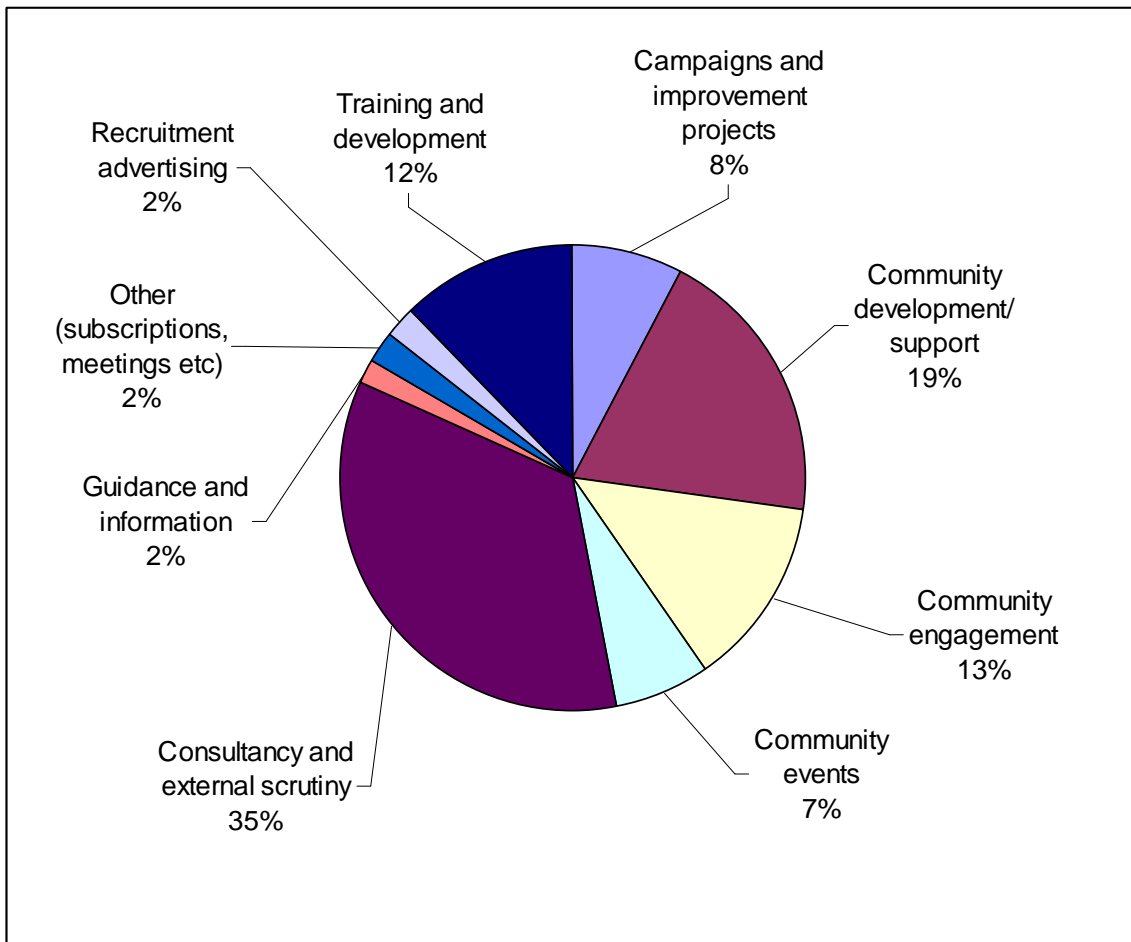
Learning and Development

A £90,000 budget has been allocated to run the 3-year Equality Training Programme from 2004 - 2007. £10,000 of which comes from the Corporate Equality Budget each year. A report of the programme and proposals for the next 3-year programme will be submitted to CMB for consideration in September 07.

Allocation of Equality Budget by 'Equality Strand'



Allocation of Equality Budget by 'Activity'



INCOME

Corporate Equality Budget*	£84,600.00
Community Strategy Budget (Match funding for Ujima)	£2,500.00
Contributions from partner agencies and exhibitors for Sign Vision event	£2,140.00
Corporate Communications	£1,000.00
TOTAL	£90,240.00

*Includes grant for Devon Racial Equality Council from Chief Executives Directorate Budget

EXPENSES

Consultant's fees for the co-ordination of Abolition of Slavery Bicentenary events in Devon and re-printing of the Local Black History guide.	£2,000.00
BSL/English Interpreting at meetings of the Devon BSL Charter Group	£436.90
Interpreting BSL Charter for Devon from English to BSL for DVD and Website	£332.00
Associate of Sign Language Interpreters consultant's fees for advice at BSL Charter Group meetings	£360.00
Living Options Deaf Project consultant/representative's fees for advice and involvement at BSL Charter Group meetings	£3,000.00
Production costs of DVD on the BSL Charter for Devon	£214.00
Catering and venue costs for BSL Interpreting Services meeting	£212.00
Room hire for Chinese Community Sunday meetings at St Sidwells Community Centre	£3,500.00
Grant for Devon and Cornwall Chinese Association	£3,000.00
Grant for Chinese New Year celebrations	£1,000.00
Printing costs for Disability Survey (Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group project)	£2,339.00
Distribution costs for Disability Survey	£146.85
Catering and venue costs for Devon Equality Partnership	£130.00
Printing costs for Creating Links report on setting up the Devon Faiths Forum	£493.00
Development of generic recruitment advert to be used for positive action campaigns	£612.00
Equality Reference Group - Service Level Agreement with Action Group in Later Life	£4,000.00
Equality Reference Group - Service Level Agreement with Living Options Devon	£4,000.00
Equality Reference Group - Service Level Agreement with Fair Play South West	£4,000.00
Equality Reference Group - Service Level Agreement with Intercom Trust	£4,000.00
Equality Reference Group - Service Level Agreement and capacity building grant with Devon Racial Equality Council	£10,300.00
Equality Reference Group member's attendance at Human Rights Conference	£180.50
Printing costs for 2006 annual report	£754.00

Support for Excellence not Excuses (Black and Minority Ethnic consultation) Group (co-ordinator and venue fees)	£1,620.00
Gender Equality Duty training (2 staff members)	£134.00
Printing costs for Guide to the World's Major Religions	£606.00
Support (printing costs of posters of community event at Exeter Synagogue) for Holocaust Memorial Day	£252.00
Capacity building grant for Intercom Trust	£4,000.00
Capacity building grant for Devon Faiths Forum	£1,500.00
Grant for production of Living Options Devon newsletter	£1,500.00
Consultant fees for setting up the Migrant Workers Multi Agency Task Group (Community Council of Devon)	£2,000.00
Funding development of Welcome Pack and report (Migrant Workers)	£1,590.00
Support for printing leaflet - Olive Tree Association	£247.00
Recruitment advertising - Pink Paper	£350.00
Recruitment advertising - Fyne Times	£475.00
Recruitment advertising - Ethnic Britain	£400.00
Grant to support Refugee Support Week events	£1,300.00
Printing Discriminatory Incident Report Forms	£215.00
Grant for North Devon Respect Festival	£1,000.00
Costs for running Sign Vision 2006 (event with Deaf people)	£5,797.41
Membership of Stonewall Diversity Champions	£1,500.00
Grant to support Ujima project (Exeter Community Initiatives)	£5,000.00
Support for DRIVE newsletter (recruiting ethnic minority communities in the voluntary sector)	£200.00
Sign Community subscription	£70.00
Catalyst (Commission for Racial Equality) magazine subscription	£20.00
Runnymede magazine subscription	£32.00
Purchase of 'common ground - traveller and gypsies' guidance	£12.00
Core funding for Equality Learning and Development programme	£10,000.00
TOTAL	£84,830.66

Monitoring Information

Equality Standard (BVPI2a)

The Council is currently at Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and is working towards Level 3.

Our performance against targets and best value performance indicators are available in the **Performance Data** report (published June each year): www.devon.gov.uk/annualreport2007.

Staff monitoring information is available from: www.devon.gov.uk/staff_profile.

Further Information and alternative formats

For further information or to request a different format such as large print, audio or another language please contact:

Corporate Equality Officer,
Devon County Council,
County Hall,
Topsham Road,
Exeter EX24QU.

Telephone: 01392 382260.

SMS Mobile: 0789 610 3530.

Email: equality@devon.gov.uk.



www.devon.gov.uk/diversity

CHALLENGING INEQUALITY
& CELEBRATING DIVERSITY