

Equality Standard for Local Government Level 3

Self Assessment

September 2008



Please reply to:

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1st September 2008

Dear Peer Challenge Team

On behalf of Devon County Council, I am pleased to send you our Self Assessment Report and supporting documentary evidence for Level 3 of the Equality Standard.

You have specified in your guidance what supporting information you would like to see alongside the Self Assessment Report. These documents are highlighted in the 'Please See' list with an asterisk. All other information listed is available on request and will be available alongside the key documents in hard copy form in the Interview Rooms.

If you need any further information please contact me.

We look forward to seeing you soon,

Yours sincerely

Jo Hooper
Corporate Equality Officer

Context, challenges and ambition

Devon County Council covers one of the largest administrative areas in the country. With a population of around 750,000, Devon is characterised by its rural setting, with two moors sandwiched between two coastlines and two small cities, Exeter and Plymouth, both situated in the south. The council's administrative area excludes Plymouth city and Torbay. The Boundary Committee are currently reviewing structures and a unitary Devon Council has been proposed; a decision will be made by the Secretary of State in February 2009.

Our biggest challenge as an authority is meeting the health and social care needs of Devon's expanding and ageing population. The county has a higher than average number of people over 50, this continues to rise and with age comes disability. To meet this challenge we have embarked on a major Adult and Community Services *Modernisation Programme*, changing the way many services are delivered to improve flexibility, choice and quality whilst cutting costs. Other key challenges include ensuring the sustainability and social cohesion of local communities through economic regeneration, raising incomes and skills levels and responding to a rapidly growing migrant population¹. **Rural isolation** across a large area creates a challenge in meeting the needs of our diverse communities as well as tackling prejudice.

The **shared vision** for Devon is to be “**a county with safe, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a cherished environment**”. We have track record as a strong community leader and champion for the county. We have been acknowledged as the “leading authority on equality and diversity in local government in the rural south west” by our external stakeholders². We have led the development of the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, ensuring equality is picked up as a cross cutting theme. In a report by Equality South West, “Devon was the only LSP to report that E&D had been secured as a cross cutting theme across the LAA”³.

Our **Strategic Plan** identifies five major priorities which are set out in the Corporate Business Plan and Directorate Business Plans. They focus on improving outcomes for Children and Young People, Adults and our Economy, Environment and Culture and key support services. Services for children are being implemented through greater inter-agency collaboration, joint commissioning and performance management arrangements, and 18 new *Children's Centres* are helping deliver integrated local services and support for families in their areas. Sustainability underpins all our plans and we are determined to address the effects of climate change in Devon through our *Making Devon Greener* programme. **We also want Devon to be a county for everyone and our priorities on challenging inequality and celebrating diversity are set out in our *Fair for All Programme*.**

Our overall **public satisfaction** rating is average for all county councils at 50% and Best Value Survey data shows more people than average think we are making the local area a better place to live (72%) and are efficient and well run (59%). **We have made it easier for the public to contact us** by moving our major public facing services into the *MyDevon* Customer Service Centre which offers extended opening hours and aims to resolve 80% of calls at first point of contact. As a result of the Customer Service Centre Equality Impact and Needs Assessment we now provide a text messaging facility and customer service information in BSL for Deaf people. These arrangements have been recognised by *SOCITM* as the “**best experience from a two tier authority**” and we were recently commended by the *Municipal Journal* and *World Contact Centre Awards* for making it easy for our customers to do business with us. Complaints handling has also been improved and we have been commended by the Ombudsman in his annual letter 07/08 as having “**an accessible complaints procedure**”.

¹ Through the Multi Agency Migrant Worker Task Group (led by Social Inclusion Manager)

² *Fair for All* annual progress report 2007

³ <http://www.equalitysouthwest.org.uk/about-us/promoting-equality-for/gosw-laa-project.html>

Our approach to equality

Our approach to equality has **focussed on community needs through strong partnership working with the voluntary and community sector**. We were amongst the first authorities nationally to set up an external stakeholder group which sits directly on a corporate Equality Strategy Group, offering scrutiny and advice as well as challenge and learning opportunities. This external stakeholder group is known as the Equality Reference Group. The council also asked the Equality Reference Group to conduct external assessments against Levels 1 and 2 of the Equality Standard so that the process was verified by an independent body, even though this was not a requirement at the time.

We acknowledge the view of the Audit Commission in our annual audit letter that “the equality and diversity agenda is moving forward but lacks significant outcomes”. This reflects where we are on our journey, as we would expect clear demonstrable outcomes to be a feature of a ‘level 5 authority’. Whilst we have some **excellent examples of projects that aim to improve outcomes for the most disadvantaged or hard-to-reach communities**, for example our work with the Deaf community and supporting the development of the *Hikmat Centre*, we have not been able to measure or demonstrate the impact on communities yet. We will be refocusing our *Fair for All Programme* to align with the new LAA priorities, **developing a stronger outcome focus for 2008/9**. In creating a more outcome focussed approach, a new ***Vision for Equality and Fairness*** was developed in 2008:

- **People achieve their own potential and a good quality of life.**
- **Everyone can use or access our services, facilities or information.** Different needs are always taken into account.
- **There is public influence over decision making, planning, policy and service delivery.** There is wide and fair representation and a strong understanding of the diverse range of needs in Devon’s communities, their make up and changing nature.
- **Devon is a stronger, safer and inclusive community.** There are good relations between different communities. People are treated with dignity and respect at work, as a customer, and in the community.
- **People have trust and confidence in us** to report incidents or abuse or discrimination.
- **Across all levels, our workforce is supported and reflects the community.** There is fair pay and employment practice, equal opportunities to progress and develop, and access to flexible working and ‘family friendly’ arrangements.

Equality Standard Assessment

The assessment process for Level 3 is providing us an opportunity to reflect and learn about our whole approach. We are also using it to raise the profile of equality further. In May 2008, we arranged a mock assessment with an I&DeA *Dialog* Consultant. The assessment indicated that we are meeting Level 3 criteria and systems are in place to support continuing development and improvements. The assessment also highlighted areas to address to secure longer term improvements. Areas for improvement are monitored through a Level 3 Improvement Plan and listed in this report.

LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE COMMITMENT

There is strong sense of commitment to equality and diversity from members and senior managers.

Our **Organisational Values** reflect a commitment to equality and fairness:

- We are here to **achieve the best for the people of Devon** and **identifying and addressing their needs** is at the heart of everything we do. In working with people we aim **to listen, to be fair, open and honest** and to do what we say we will do.
- One of Devon’s strengths is its diverse people and communities. We will **celebrate and harness this diversity** by **demonstrating respect, understanding and fairness**. We want Devon to be a **county for everyone** and we are **committed to tackling discrimination and exclusion, promoting social justice and good community relations** and **ensuring fair access to our services**.

- We want to be a modern improving local authority providing efficient, cost effective services **in touch with people's needs**. This means grasping opportunities for change and being innovative in finding the best solutions for the present and the future.
- We need to **work in close partnership with local communities** and organisations to achieve our vision for Devon. Effective partnership working means **building trust, developing a common understanding of the needs of our communities, agreeing joint priorities, taking collective action** and pooling our resources where this will **improve services**.

Management have also confirmed their commitment to driving up equality related standards through the introduction of a '**valuing everyone**' competency which will form part of everyone's appraisal.

In terms of governance arrangements, we have a **Member Champion for Equality** (Councillor Brenda Taylor, who is an Executive Member) and an **Officer Champion for Equality** (Director of Personnel and Performance, Heather Barnes who sits on the Corporate Management Board). The **Corporate Equality Officer** (Jo Hooper) develops and oversees the corporate programme of work and manages our overall response to the equality agenda. The Corporate Equality Officer is based in Organisational Development, a new department with the purpose of leading on strategy, performance and transformation. There is an **Equality and Customer Services Champion in each Directorate**. Each champion has a link to their Directorate Management Team/Board.

The Corporate Equality Officer, Member Champion for Equality, Officer Champion for Equality, Directorate Equality and Customer Service Champions, **Equality Reference Group** (external stakeholders) and **Trade Union Equality Representative** form the **Equality Strategy Group** which:

- Steers and prioritises the work of the council in relation to equality and diversity.
- Scrutinises the council's performance on equality, as community leader, employer and service provider.
- Offers advice and guidance to help ensure the council complies with legislative requirements.
- Recommends, approves and assists with the development of policies, strategies, projects, plans and guidance to be adopted or recommended for adoption by Corporate Management Board / Executive / Council.
- Helps to identify risks, needs and impacts on people and communities.
- Maintains a link with communities, employees and councillors.
- Invites officers (e.g. heads of services) to meetings to scrutinise specific areas of work or gaps.

The group scrutinise performance data which includes employment diversity data, discriminatory incidents, progress with DDA public building adjustments and data in respect of national and local equality related performance indicators. Our **Equality Policy** and **Fair for All Programme** is first approved by Equality Strategy Group (following consultation) and then approved by Corporate Management Board and Executive. The Policy and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee have overall responsibility for reviewing our work on equality but the Committee has delegated performance and monitoring issues to the Equality Strategy Group. Committee Reports provided to Members contain a section on Equality Impact and Needs Assessment and no papers should be submitted to Executive unless the equality implications have been considered, where relevant.

The Council has started running **Performance Clinics** which include a cross section of senior officers, Members, officers and external stakeholders. The *Carers' Clinic* reviewed council policies to ensure that we provide effective support and flexible working opportunities to those members of staff who have caring responsibilities.

There is a dedicated Corporate Equality **Budget** of c£80,000 in addition to direct and indirect staff costs, equality training budget and the DDA building improvements budget. Translation/interpreting and other equality related costs (including staff time) are picked up by services, directorate projects and/or a directorate equality budget. In addition, each directorate has *Hear by Right* (Young People's Champions and Domestic Violence Champions at senior management level.

We also **demonstrate leadership on equality with partners**. The Equality Strategy and Scrutiny

Group of the Devon Strategic Partnership is supported by our Social Inclusion Manager and Chaired by our Chief Executive. The Corporate Equality Officer established and co-ordinates the Devon Equality Partnership (a network of equality officers from public sector organisations across Devon) and has led the Devon British Sign Language Charter Group. We initiated and lead the Migrant Worker Multi Agency Task Group and in May 2008 we led media campaigns with the Muslim community and partners in response to the attempted 'Islamic terrorist' bombing in Exeter city centre⁴, to minimise community tensions.

Please see:

- Equality Structures*
- Minutes of Equality Strategy Group*
- Customer Service and Equality Champions Terms of Reference
- Notes from the Carers' Performance Clinic
- Information about Members briefing in October and Senior Managers Event in November
- Equality related budget report

Areas for improvement:

- Run an equality session at a Senior Managers Event in November 2008 to review and refresh leadership within directorates and service areas. This will ensure that commitment continues beyond attainment of Level 3.
- Equality performance reports added to Corporate Management Board Forward Plan and Policy and Resources Scrutiny Work Programme so that they are reviewed on a systematic basis.
- Refresh Member engagement through a briefing at a Full Council meeting in October 2008.
- Review of governance arrangements including Equality Strategy Group membership and terms of reference to ensure it is fully effective, demonstrates leadership and links between management teams, Member committees and communities are robust.

Equality policy, scheme and action planning

The Council has a comprehensive **Equality Policy**. Our strategy (scheme and action plan) is our **Fair for All Programme**. This has been in place since 2004 addressing age, sexual orientation and religion/belief as well as race, gender and disability. The programme and policy were both refreshed in 2008 setting out a new three year programme. The Equality Strategy Group has met quarterly to **review progress against targets and objectives**. Once a year the group will revise and agree priorities, targets and objectives for the forthcoming year before going to Corporate Management Board (Directors) for approval. **Annual Reports** are published each year to demonstrate progress.

The policy and scheme are available on our website: www.devon.gov.uk/diversity. Hard copies are sent to stakeholders, a summary and large print/plain text version is readily available and we respond to requests for other formats as they arise.

Objectives set out in the 2008-11 programme include corporate/cross-organisational as well as **service level actions**. All directorates are required to embed *Fair for All* objectives at service level during the business planning process.

We have separate *Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Programmes of Review* which show the 3 year cycle for **assessing impacts of policy and service provision**⁵. We are implementing a central tracking database to monitor progress with assessments.

We use the **feedback** from consultation and participation activities (which may be carried out by

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http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/democracymunities/decision_making/cma/cma_document.htm?cmadoc=minutes_exc_20080527.html

⁵ These are not included within the main body of the *Fair for All Programme*
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ourselves or other agencies) as well as comments received in general, including those made on the *Reporting Incidents of Discrimination Form*. The feedback we have received, as well as research and information from local, regional and national sources have been used to develop an **Evidence Base**. New objectives for our *Fair for All Programme* (in *Our Programme of Activities*) were based directly upon the *Fair for All Evidence Base*.

The **Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy** were approved in June 2008. The *Fair for All Programme* will be reviewed for its ability to deliver LAA/SCS equality priorities that are relevant to the council. Therefore, objectives will be linked to a **new National/Local Indicator** where relevant; previously objectives have been linked to *Best Value Performance Indicators*. An 'equality proofing' for the LAA/SCS was carried out involving external stakeholders. We are now conducting Equality Impact and Needs Assessments on each of the **38 LAA priorities** as part of the development of individual delivery plans.

Please see:

- Equality Policy* www.devon.gov.uk/policies_eq
- Fair for All Programme* www.devon.gov.uk/fairforall2008.pdf and its Evidence Base (under community engagement)
- Compliance with Statutory Duties report
- Annual Reports: www.devon.gov.uk/measure_eq.htm
- LAA Evidence Base (see Community Strategy section)
- Programme of work for DDA non-compliant properties

Areas for improvement:

- Review actions within the *Fair for All Programme* to produce annual outcome-focussed plan aligned to LAA targets; agreeing key priorities for each year with Equality Strategy Group and Corporate Management Board.
- Use the *SPAR.net*⁶ system for reporting on progress with the *Fair for All Programme*.
- Implement and promote corporate guidance on service planning which includes a statement about importance of equality targets, consultation and equality impact assessment.

Procurement

We have a Corporate Procurement function and directorate based Procurement Teams/Officers. The *Equality Standard in Procurement* specifies what we expect from contractors and what questions should be asked in the tendering process. Our *Corporate Procurement Strategy* is seen as best practice nationally by the Audit Commission.

During 2005-7 Devon Procurement Services ran a series of breakfast seminars and training sessions for local businesses on 'how to do business with the council' and took part in events with Devon Business Link and local Chambers of Commerce, targeting local small businesses. More recently Devon Procurement Services joined with the SW Regional Development Agency initiative in targeting 'minority' businesses (Black and minority ethnic people and women) by presenting jointly with the National Health Service.

Please see:

- Equality Standard in Procurement*
- Corporate Procurement Strategy
- Sample of the Training Services Preferred Suppliers tendering process*
- Standard tender template and questions
- Strategic Procurement Action Network Meeting – minutes 13 May 2008
- Procurement training/information for staff on the intranet

Areas for improvement:

- Specific actions contained within the Procurement Strategy including T3/4 "We will continue our

⁶ Performance Management system which includes the Performance Indicators
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rolling programme of engagement with local business (small and medium enterprises) and with Black and minority ethnic owned businesses, tailoring training sessions to the preferences indicated in the survey responses.” And T3/5 “A Strategic Procurement Action Network sub-group will work together to review current performance and carry out a gap analysis against Level 3 requirements in order to draw up a performance improvement plan.”

- Integrate equality considerations in to the *Maintaining Sustainable Procurement* strategy.
- Integrate Equality Impact and Needs Assessment requirements with Sustainable Impact Assessment.
- Conduct an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment of the Corporate Procurement Service.
- Appropriate contract monitoring guidance and training in place.

Equality Impact Assessment process

Our Equality Impact and Needs Assessment (EINA) process covers all six strands – race, gender, disability, age, religion/belief, sexual orientation as well as human rights and other socio-economic factors. The *EINA Toolkit* and form were revised in 2008 with the input of an I&DeA *Dialog* consultant. It is intended the new process will encourage better service reviews and recording of actions/decisions that feed in to service planning. Directorates have *EINA Facilitators* who are trained in Equality Impact and Needs Assessment and able to advise others in completing their assessments. This approach is particularly strong in our Environment, Economy and Culture directorate. We also run corporate training workshops on EINA.

Our corporate project methodology (*The Devon Way*) includes a requirement for EINAs to be an integral part of project planning and resourcing, and key issues to be highlighted in business cases submitted to corporate management board for approval.

Please see:

- Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Programmes of Review*: www.devon.gov.uk/equality_impact_needs_assess.htm. These programmes are updated regularly to show progress. All completed EINAs are published here.
- Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Toolkit: www.devon.gov.uk/equality_impact_and_needs_assessment.htm
- *Devon Way* Intermediate Project Standards and Business Case Template

Areas for improvement:

- Improve Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Facilitation across the whole Council; ideally one facilitator in each service or function and hold regular workshops with EINA Facilitators to heighten awareness and improve the quality of EINAs.
- Improve access to data to inform EINA (also see equality data and monitoring below).
- Apply same ‘gate-keeping’ principles adopted by Executive/Committees (ensuring papers contain EINA statement) to Corporate Management Board.
- More involvement of Equality Strategy Group/Equality Reference Group to scrutinise EINAs and thus provide quality assurance, by adding a programme of EINA reviews to the Equality Strategy Group Forward Plan.

Equality data and monitoring (service user)

Diversity Monitoring is carried out in some parts of the Council – largely within the social care directorates where assessment regimes are well established, as well as employment. A new set of guidelines is being implemented through a cross-council group. This will bring about better understanding/awareness of diversity monitoring within service provision, a more co-ordinated approach to monitoring/analysis and reporting, and identify any gaps in service monitoring activity. Monitoring requirements have been included in the *Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Toolkit*.

A *Corporate Feedback Policy* is ensuring that customer satisfaction data, complaints and feedback drives service improvement. We have a corporate online customer feedback system and gather data to monitor age, gender, ethnicity and disability. The new system demands that complaint outcomes

are recorded and reported, thus strengthening the system's value as an important service improvement tool. Following a business process re-engineering activity, complaints no longer have to be made in writing. People who might find written English difficult can now complain by phone, in person or through a representative. Complaints from members and MPs are no longer prioritised over other complaints.

The Strategic Intelligence Team have developed data on each of the 29 market towns/Exeter which includes profiles on deprivation, ethnicity, population change, economic activity and skills, disability and long term illness and age.

Please see:

- Customer Diversity Monitoring Policy and Guidance*
- Customer Feedback Policy: www.devon.gov.uk/compliments_and_complaints.htm
- Community Profiling: www.devon.gov.uk/devontownprofiles.htm

Area for improvement:

- Using information about community and customer profiles to better inform decision making and service assessments. Raising awareness of diversity/equality data with the assistance of the Strategic Intelligence function and *Strategic Intelligence Week* in November.
- Merging Corporate Complaints and Discriminatory Incident Reporting systems to encourage more Incident reporting.
- Consistent service user monitoring by ensuring the new service user monitoring policy is piloted and implemented effectively.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Strategy

Our **Equality Reference Group** advises and supports our work on equality and diversity, providing ideas and scrutiny. It symbolises the **partnership between Devon County Council and the local community in its commitment to equality**, and includes members from various local voluntary/community organisations pressing for equality. Although acknowledged and supported by the council, the Equality Reference Group members are independent of the county council and are paid for their involvement through Service Level Agreements. The Equality Reference Group brings 'community intelligence' to the Equality Strategy Group meetings and is involved in setting equality objectives and targets as well as influencing decisions. Members are representatives from:

- Action group in later life/Senior Council (Older People)
- Devon Racial Equality Council (Racial Equality)
- Intercom Trust (Lesbian, Gay, Bi- and Trans- people)
- Living Options Devon (People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities)
- Fair Play South West⁷ (Gender Equality)
- Young person's representative - member of staff from the council's Apprenticeship Scheme.

Consultation has been built into our Equality Impact and Needs Assessment process: The *EINA Toolkit* states the requirement to consult with communities where a high impact/concern has been identified. Situations where **services have engaged with community stakeholders** include the development of the *MyDevon* Customer Service Centre, Trading Standards and Environmental Health's⁸ joint review (in Exeter with Black and Minority Ethnic residents), development of the *Devon Senior Council*, and *Hikmat Social Contact Centre* for Muslim and Chinese Elders.

The council has **supported and engaged with groups** such as the *Excellence Not Excuses* (Black and Minority Ethnic) forum, staff LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans) network, *Living Options Devon Disability Forums* and *Gender Issues Group* in a range of activities including the development of the *Evidence Base*. Three annual *Sign Vision* events have been held with Deaf people, in line with

⁷ Changing to Devon Fawcett Society

⁸ Exeter City Council

Pledge 5 of the *Devon BSL Charter* and during 2006 the *Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group* carried out extensive consultations with disabled people across Devon. We have provided grants to *Ujima*, an Exeter based project which builds capacity of BME community groups, to provide a route for community engagement. We also facilitated the establishment of a *Devon Faiths Forum* to increase interfaith dialogue and provide a route to engage with a range of faiths/beliefs across Devon. We are working with the Digital UK Team, putting them in touch with the voluntary/community sector and identifying vulnerable and 'hard to reach' groups that may need help coping with the **switch to Digital TV in 2009**.

Community feedback has been collated into one Evidence Base⁹ which can now be used to develop corporate, directorate and service level objectives and identify potential impacts.

Consultation Finder gives members of the public an opportunity to register areas of interest, provide views and see the results of consultations.

We achieved advanced level **Hear By Right standard** which recognises our commitment to involving children and young people in decision making. Our **Link Age Plus programme** has helped people aged 50 plus participate in setting priorities planning and service delivery. As part of this we have set up local *Senior Councils* across Devon to give an independent voice to older people in influencing local services like health and social care.

Please see:

- Involving All People – Equality Consultation Strategy*
- Customer Service Centre Equality Impact and Needs Assessment*
- Evidence Base* www.devon.gov.uk/fair_for_all_programme_2007_evidence_base.pdf
- Equality and Diversity Internet pages* www.devon.gov.uk/diversity
- A Question of Fairness report into the health and social care needs of Muslim Elders* www.devon.gov.uk/a_question_of_fairness.pdf
- Creating Links – setting up the Devon Faiths Forum www.devon.gov.uk/creating_links_conference_report_devon_faith_forums_2006.pdf
- Consultation Finder www.consultationfinder.com/devon/default.aspx?From=www.devon.gov.uk
- Sign Vision Conferences Report and the Devon BSL Charter: www.devon.gov.uk/bslcharter
- Digital TV work
- *Diverse Devon* Data will be provided (hard copy packs are under development)
- Reports by the Devon Strategic Partnership www.devonsp.org.uk/otherdocs.html including the Gender Conference, women's group mapping and 'a county for everyone'.

Areas for improvement:

Although we have many excellent examples of consultation and citizen engagement, we still have scope for improving the way we co-ordinate our approach across the authority and with partners. We are currently carrying out a review of our communications and consultation functions, together with a review of community engagement activities which are carried out across the authority. The aim is to ensure that the council has a **robust community engagement strategy** which sets out how local people have opportunities to influence and help to shape council policy and services. The strategy will take into account our plans to work at a local level, engaging at the level of the 28 market towns, together with localised work in the city of Exeter, through *Community Boards*¹⁰. We will deepen engagement with our communities and focus on the achievement of critical social outcomes including equality and environmental sustainability. We aim to improve our reputation, deepen levels of trust and increasingly involve people as co-producers of services. We are also reviewing provision of staff networks and how to represent staff networks, faith/belief communities and other disabilities through the Equality Reference Group.

Service level and employment objectives and targets available for consultation and scrutiny.

The Equality Reference Group can scrutinise any service during Equality Strategy Group meetings.

⁹ To be updated every three years in line with equality scheme cycles

¹⁰ http://www.devon.gov.uk/devon_concept_report_col2.pdf pages 7-9

All plans are published both internally and externally. Scrutiny and Executive meetings give opportunity for public and political scrutiny. These meetings are also web-cast. Service plans are published by directorates on their web-pages.

Areas for improvement:

Develop a more robust system for scrutinising and publicising service level objectives. For example by involving the Equality Reference Group and linking this to the Equality Impact and Needs Assessment process.

Language provision

We have worked with two agencies to improve interpreting provision in the area: *Deafinite* Interpreters (for British Sign Language) and *Multilingua*. *Multilingua* received a grant for exam costs and we have set up a contract with *Deafinite* which includes a higher hourly rate in order to build capacity and increase the number of interpreters in the area.

We are promoting the use of *plain English* and *Easy Read* to improve access to information and help those with communication difficulties: We have created an online *PE kit* with plain English guidance and purchased a *Photosymbols* package. Translation and interpreting information is available on the staff Intranet and we have a contract with *Language Line* telephone interpreting service. All public documents require an 'alternative formats' statement and we either respond to requests for translation or provide information 'readily available' when necessary (such as the *Welcome Pack* for Migrant Workers).

We have carried out extensive consultation with our Deaf community (users of British Sign Language) through Deaf clubs and *Sign Vision* events, to break down barriers to communication. We have also set up *Sign Practice Sessions* in which staff members of the Deaf Awareness Group practise signing with students from the nearby Royal Academy of Deaf Education.

Please see:

- Sign Vision Conferences Report* and Devon BSL Charter: www.devon.gov.uk/bslcharter
- Translation and Interpreting information on the intranet page
- Translation and Interpreting Policy
- Plain English and Easy Read – Intranet resource, the *PE kit*
- 'How to contact the Council' for BSL users www.devon.gov.uk/bsl-feedbackpolicy.htm (also available on DVD in every library)
- Welcome Pack for Migrant Workers (first pack available in Polish) www.devonsp.org.uk/migrantworkers/index.html

Areas of improvement:

- Ensure Translation and Interpreting arrangements are fully implemented and understood by staff.

Community Strategy

The Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group of the Devon Strategic Partnership is similar to our 'internal' Equality Reference Group – though with a Faith Representative, but at present no Young Person's Representative. It is supported by the council's Social Inclusion Manager and it is Chaired by our Chief Executive. The council's Corporate Equality Officer also sits on the group as a link to the Devon Equality Partnership (a network of equality officers from public services across Devon, chaired and set up by the Corporate Equality Officer). The group scrutinises the work of the Devon Strategic Partnership. It has been heavily involved in 'equality proofing' the new Local Area Agreement priorities and Sustainable Community Strategy. A *Joint Declaration for Equality* has been developed by the Devon Equality Partnership and the Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group, for adoption by the Devon Strategic Partnership.

Please see:

- LAA* www.devonsp.org.uk/sustainablecommunitystrategy/outcomes/draftlaa08-11.html
- Community Strategy* www.devonsp.org.uk/sustainablecommunitystrategy/index.html

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- Community Strategy Priority Outcomes and Proofing
- LAA Briefing Note (explains commitment to equality)
- Joint Declaration for Equality (Devon Strategic Partnership)

Areas for improvement:

- Review external stakeholder structures for 'internal' DCC (Equality Reference Group) and 'external' Devon Strategic Partnership (Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group) and explore the potential for a Devon Equality and Human Rights Hub that can act as an external stakeholder coalition for individual public services and the Devon Strategic Partnership (monitoring the Local Area Agreement and Community Strategy). This approach will enable targeted reporting on equality issues and outcomes and address cross-cutting issues.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Equality targets have been set for recruitment, staff retention and workforce profiles for race, gender and disability.

The employment diversity monitoring report is produced every 6 months and reviewed by Equality Strategy Group. The report is published on the internet. In light of the data a number of projects have been put in place to improve workforce diversity:

- Work placements for people with learning disabilities (*Axcess* clients).
- Placements for clients of PLUS and St Loyes Foundation (supported employment service and college for people with disabilities).
- An information leaflet in the recruitment pack signposting people with disabilities to PLUS for support in applying for the job.
- *Disability Equality Pilot Study* which looked at the experiences of disabled people through the recruitment process, resulting in a number of recommendations.
- *Graduate Business Partnership* and *Apprenticeship Scheme* to increase the number of young people into the organisation.
- BME project which seeks to investigate different ways to increase the representation of Black and Minority Ethnic employees – looking at data collection, recruitment pack, positive action programmes and retention issues.
- Exploring work experience placements for students at the nearby Royal Academy for Deaf Education.

Workforce Strategy, Recruitment and Selection, Learning and Development and HR Policy are reviewing impact assessments completed to date. They are grouping them by service area and policy cluster. They will be looking to identify gaps, review potential impacts again and develop improvement plans for each service area. The disability project provided specific expertise and support (including financial resource) for managers short-listing and interviewing applicants with a disability.

Equality targets have been set for workforce profiles for sexual orientation, religion and belief and age, according to available data.

We are able to monitor and collect data relating to age. We do not currently monitor sexual orientation or religion/belief – though data for these two categories is collected in the *Staff Survey*. We will be consulting with Trades Unions and LGBT staff network to explore the collection of this data in the future.

The council's people management strategy addresses equality issues.

Impact assessments against aspects of the Workforce Strategy are now being reviewed and rationalised in order to determine further priority areas for improvement. Each directorate has a workforce plan in place. The corporate team works with directorates to improve plans and progress actions - for example, assisting to develop career progression schemes. Targets are included in the Combined Business Services Plan and Workforce Development Annual Plan.

As previously mentioned, we have initiatives in place such as the *National Graduate Development Programme*, *Apprenticeship Scheme*, work-placements with St Loyes (disability), *Business*

Partnership Scheme.

The Central Placement Unit regularly monitors redeployment activity and reports to Committee. We have a corporate project to develop a strategy for vacancy management, skills retention and redeployment opportunities from May 2008.

There is widespread understanding of equality and diversity amongst employees.

Equality policies, HR policies, plans and other relevant information is readily available to staff through the Internet and Intranet. Regular briefings are included in *INsider* (corporate staff newsletters) and directorate newsletters. Equality is mentioned as part of corporate welcome day. The Induction checklist covers *Acceptable Behaviour*, corporate equality and other relevant policies as mandatory reading for all new members of staff. These are further strengthened by the corporate Code of Conduct and underpinned by the *Organisational Values*.

Training on equality issues is wide-ranging and delivered corporately or initiated by local circumstances.

The Council runs a comprehensive equality training programme and also provides an e-learning package. This is backed up by guidance such as our popular *Guide to the World's Major Religions*. Our training programme was launched in 2005 and has been revised for 2008. The new programme covers the following:

Introduction to Equality	To introduce issues of equality to new staff. Covers age and gender equality.
Equality Impact and Needs Assessment	One-day workshop on assessing the impact of decision making, service provision i.e. policy on different groups.
Disability Awareness	To consider attitudes and perceptions around disability; to improve communication and develop confidence in the use of appropriate language and provision of support; to consider access issues and to develop awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act.
Sexual Orientation and Transgender	To provide an understanding of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities in the south west; to encourage learners to become aware of sexual orientation diversity in society .
Race, Culture & Belief: Diversity in Devon	To provide an understanding of race, culture and belief diversity in Devon.
Managing Equality & Diversity	To support managers in managing issues within equality and diversity.
Employment and equality	Specifically designed for HR practitioners.

Directorates receive quarterly reports detailing take up of learning and development activity, future course bookings and non-attendance. These reports are monitored by directorate management teams and action taken where appropriate. We are also able to arrange bespoke training for services or teams who find it either difficult to attend the corporate programme or need something specific.

Equality issues are embedded in the recruitment and selection training and there is a corporate accreditation process for appointing officers. An e-learning package of equality awareness modules is used during the induction process.

An equal pay review has been carried out and a plan developed for equal pay adjustment.

Job Evaluation is in place across the Council. A pay modelling exercise took place in 2003, the results of which helped to inform the council's decision regarding its approach and relevant scheme to adopt.

All assessment panels are monitored through SW Employers, who ensure that assessment panels use consistent methodology. Similarly, Hay Panel methodology and approach are audited by Hay

Consultants. Career progression schemes and market supplements are being investigated and developed for professional roles.

Job Evaluation outcomes have been received by staff and the appeals process is underway. This is due for completion in December 2008. A further pay modelling exercise is planned for early 2009, as a comparator to that completed prior to the assessment process. This will enable the council to check that the process has resolved issues such as unequal pay for men/women, part time/full time, professional/unskilled.

Equality objectives and targets are built into management appraisal mechanisms.

Valuing Everyone is an organisational value which has been developed as a universal competency to be reviewed during the appraisal process with all staff. This will enable managers to discuss the equality performance and learning needs with their staff. The framework is being piloted within the Personnel & Performance directorate and parts of Environment, Economy and Culture and Children and Young People's Services. Management competencies have also been developed (with equality standards) and are being piloted within Personnel and Performance. Full implementation of corporate competency-based appraisal is planned during 2008.

“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.”

Employment and Training supplementary information

Other achievements:

- Use of the *Employers Forum on Age Toolkit* to develop and adopt an Employment Age Strategy and Policy.
- LGBT staff network set up and supported with its own budget.
- Prayer and Contemplation Room set up for staff use at County Hall.
- We are members of *Stonewall Diversity Champions* and previously within the 'top 100' of the *Corporate Equality Index*.
- Acceptable Behaviour policy and helpline with trained *Acceptable Behaviour Advisors* in place.
- Darren Westlake gave a presentation at the Personnel and Performance directorate 'team day' recounting his experience in two Olympic games with partial sight and working for the *MyDevon* Customer Service Centre, inspiring others to think about similar opportunities within their working area and how to treat people with a disability.
- Recent Tender process for preferred supplier of equality training is an example of how service managers are successfully mainstreaming equality considerations into their business processes.

Please see:

- Corporate Workforce Plan 2007-8*
- Personnel and Performance Management Plan 2006-9*
- Combined Business Service Plan 2008-9 (provided under evidence for Finance, IT and Trading*)
- Workforce Development Business Plan 2008-9*
- Equality and Diversity Intranet pages*
- Equality and Diversity Training information*
- Employment diversity monitoring report* www.devon.gov.uk/equalitymonitoring.pdf
- Competency Framework* including report to Corporate Management Board
- Learning and development team targets*
- Job evaluation scheme booklet*
- Job evaluation collective agreement*
- Job evaluation impact assessment and gender pay comparison*
- Staff survey extracts*
- Sample EINAS*: Piloting a competency based appraisal; Piloting a management competency framework; Flexitime policy; Psychometric testing; Recruitment advertising; Inspirational leadership programme 2005
- Induction checklist and Introduction to Equality course information for new starters
- Sample Job description and Application Form

- Equality e-learning modules
- Recruitment and Selection Standards
- Disability Pilot Study
- Graduate Business Partner Scheme
- Age Strategy
- Carers in Devon – the Working Carers Initiative – action plan
- Devon’s labour market – report on gender, disability, ethnicity and age
- Member development strategy
- List of supporting officers for equality
- INsider and other staff newsletters such as Stellar

Employment and Training Areas for improvement:

- Make equality a compulsory element of new Member Induction and explore other methods of Member development including Peer Coaching with community stakeholders and involvement in projects or conferences.
- Better target setting across all equality strands to inform planning at corporate and directorate level.
- Establish a feedback mechanism with Trade Unions to learn from bullying, harassment and discrimination cases and feedback into management processes.
- Introduce monitoring on grounds of sexual orientation and religion/belief (subject to LGB staff, external stakeholder and Trade Union support).
- Publish Transgender guidance.
- Roll out Competency Framework across the authority to ensure equality considerations are taken into account within the appraisal process.
- Explore methods of making equality training mandatory for all new starters, possibly achieved through web-based, team quiz or workbook approaches.
- Develop a programme to review the learning and development needs of Directorate Equality and Customer Service Champions.
- Review take-up of equality training across staff groups.
- Undertake Equality Impact and Needs Assessment of the pay regrading following the current Job Evaluation exercise and identify pay gaps.
- Plan further equal pay audit upon completion of the current job evaluation exercise with ongoing commitment to carrying out reviews on a regular basis built in to the HR business plan.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER CARE

🌿 Adult and Community Services Directorate

Achievements:

- *Care Direct*, our telephone advice service for older people and vulnerable adults, helped people claim more than £4.1 million in extra benefits in 2006/07.
- Dedicated *Disability Information Service* established as part of *MyDevon* Customer Service Centre.
- An increase in *Direct Payments* has helped more than twice the number of vulnerable adults to live independently by arranging their own care – from 398 to 849 people in 2006/07. The number of service users receiving a direct payment for housing support rose by 50%. We invested a further £2.5 million in extra care housing for elderly and disabled people.
- People with learning disabilities are being supported through ‘green’ employment opportunities such as a beach and park litter picking service in Torrington. *The Boatshed* in Totnes gives people with complex learning disabilities the chance to get involved with local conservation projects.
- To support carers, we created the *Take a Break* service including a *Flexible Break* scheme for respite care. Our *Carers’ Network* now has over 4,000 members.
- We led on a multi-agency asylum seeker forum in Exeter when the council held a contract with the Home Office to accommodate asylum seekers and refugees. An independent *Refugee Support Group* was created as a result.

- Consultations with the Muslim community led to the report *A Question of Fairness – an Inquiry into the Social and Health Care Needs of Muslim Elders in Exeter* and the development of the *Hikmat* Social Contact Centre for Muslim, and now Chinese, Elders in Exeter.
- *Social Care for Adults Explained* is now translated into 10 community languages (Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Pushtu, Turkish, Urdu).
- Factsheets in large print and easy read. The *Direct Payments 'Guide to Employing a Personal Assistant'* is available on audio tape for visually impaired clients.
- *Devon Link* works closely with Living Options Devon, and employs a team of disabled correspondents who contribute to each issue of the magazine. Each of the four correspondents covers an area of Devon from which they report local news stories and issues relevant to disabled people. They also provide leads and other articles and occasionally write larger features. Recent issues covered in the magazine:
 - Benefits advice for disabled people.
 - Employment issues and advice for disabled people.
 - Flexible breaks grants for carers.
 - Assistive technology information.
- *LinkAge Plus* - 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.
- Peter Fletcher Associates – engaged to develop the *Senior Council* for Devon - held a series of meetings with staff at the *Hikmat Centre* to build confidence in the *Link Age Plus* programme and to provide information about the *Senior Council* for Devon. Developing a work-plan for the two groups regularly using the centre - Asian elders and Chinese elders – to inform them about the *Senior Council* and to facilitate their involvement in the *Senior Council* group where they live (this is mainly Exeter but also includes Cullompton and Exmouth). For Gypsies and Travellers, the *Senior Council* was discussed at the *Travellers Forum* in June and later in the month the Gypsy and Traveller community development worker at Devon Racial Equality Council organised a meeting for 12 people from communities in Exeter, Teignbridge and Mid Devon to talk about the *Senior Council* and how these communities can be represented on the council.
- The Supporting People Team, with Plymouth City Council and others, has obtained funding from the Government's *Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund* in order to address homelessness issues for this group.

All actions in the Adult and Community Services Equality Action Plan and *Freedom from Discrimination* section of the Adult and Community Services Business Plan have lead managers identified, supported by the Customer Services and Equality Champion and Policy Manager. Training resources are in place to achieve the target of a further 10% of staff to receive equality awareness training in 2007/8. There is an EINA Facilitator in each division. There is a Directorate equality budget of £2,359 for training, consultations and Equality Impact and Needs Assessments. All publicly accessible buildings are assessed as DDA compliant. Workforce and service user monitoring is a CSCI requirement and is in place. Contracting and procurement processes include a process for ensuring that equality policies are in place and implementation is evidenced.

Please see:

- Adult and Community Services Directorate Equality Action Plan*
- Adult and Community Services Directorate Business Plan 2008-9 – Section 5 'Freedom from Discrimination'*
- Quarterly Senior Management Group Performance and Finance Report*
- Tender and contract equality criteria including process checklist*
- Sample EINAs*: Fair Access to Care Services; Devon Home Improvement Agency; Supporting ICT Project; Electronic Social Care Records Project.
- Senior Council for Devon Background information and other promotional material.

Areas for improvement:

- Contract monitoring.

Children and Young People's Services

Achievements:

- Traveller and Gypsy education service has worked extensively supporting the Traveller and Gypsy community in Devon, often providing vital outreach and making links to other agencies such as health care professionals.
- Devon Music Service has worked with *Music and the Deaf*, a national organisation, to enhance its service provision to hearing impaired children and organised a presentation at the *Removing Barriers* conference by hearing impaired children from Countess Wear School.
- Devon has historically had low numbers of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). In recent years there has been a significant increase, particularly from Eastern Europe and mainly Poland. To prepare schools and others better, a project approach was taken to develop the capacity of schools to welcome the families and work with them: training, training materials, a website, group work with the children and young people themselves (who can be isolated through small numbers across a big area) and support for families, largely through increasing the awareness of schools. This has been evaluated by those concerned as very effective. The numbers in each year group remain low and so statistics can be distorted but achievement of EAL supported pupils at Key Stage 2 is higher than nationally and even than all children in Devon except in science.
- In partnership with the English as an Additional Language Service, a number of events have been held which have allowed Polish children in Devon to explore and display Polish song and dance. The English as an Additional Language Service has also responded to the changing demographic of users by hiring a Polish Inclusion Worker to support Polish families and reduce feelings of isolation. Links have been made between Polish children and their peers in Devon schools with children in Poland, and video conferences have been organised between Polish learners and families and others in order to allow children the opportunity to use their primary language. Meetings between isolated Polish children and other Polish speakers have been organised. Feedback has highlighted that these approaches have raised pupil self-esteem, confidence and feelings of inclusion. In addition, peer work has raised awareness for all pupils about Poland, its people and culture.
- Using *Pledge 3 of the British Sign Language Charter for Devon* as its framework, the Advisory Teacher Service has organised opportunities for Deaf children to meet one another and role models who are Deaf through three events: a *Dance and Drama Day*, a *Circus Day*, and a *Music Day*. In addition, children newly diagnosed as Deaf have been provided with weekly access to Inclusion Workers who are also Deaf. They have taken pro-active steps on raising awareness of British Sign Language and Deaf culture in the school community. Steps taken to this goal include holding a *Deaf Awareness Week*, with packs sent to every school with suggested activities and British Sign Language handouts, Deaf Inclusion Workers touring schools and teaching awareness, and offering Deaf children the option of learning British Sign Language alongside English by piloting Deaf student access to British Sign Language tuition and qualifications at the Hearing Support Centre in Clyst Vale Community College.
- Devon County Council has taken domestic violence and abuse seriously for over six years with the effective (nationally acclaimed) Devon-wide multi-agency partnership called ADVA (against domestic violence and abuse) and investing over £500,000 annually. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board has membership from ADVA and there is close working on a variety of initiatives.
- An effective initiative has been the development of young people themselves as *Cultural Champions*. This is in its early stages, with 13 young people in a pilot, representing eight nationalities, but evaluation shows a positive impact on the self-esteem of the young people concerned and on the understanding and appreciation of those who learn with them.
- Reducing bullying is a priority in the Children and Young People Plan and young people will be part of the planning and evaluation. Good strategies are already in place, particularly through the roll-out of SEAL, the effectiveness of schools' anti-bullying policies (including peer mentors) and partnership work to support e-safety. The directorate is recruiting an additional Equality and Diversity Officer who will have a focus on work with young people.
- *Children's Centre* development is judged as good and improving. The very thorough Childcare Sufficiency Assessment identifies the basis for future development, particularly for the hard to

reach. For children with special needs there is provision and our next step is to match it to specialist support and tailor it consistently to the needs of the child.

- The gender gap has narrowed at Key Stage 1 in writing at level 3, and in Key Stage 2 in English at level 4+.
- Achievement of *Children in Care* project has had a significant effect on improving outcomes and there is now an integrated plan across the five *Every Child Matters Outcomes* including transition to adult services for care leavers.
- Leading the partners of the Children's Trust in ensuring the voice of children and young people is heard in a variety of ways. Approaches are deemed to be 'outstanding'. The Children and Young People's Plan was informed by this and priority areas, such as reducing bullying, entirely as a result of this.
- We have analysed the performance of potentially vulnerable groups such as those pupils eligible for free school meals, and those on the Special Educational Needs Register, and we do not see significant underachievement of BME groups across the county as a whole.

Equality and Diversity Officer appointed (taking up post in October). Directorate Champion, Debbie Pritchard.

Please see:

- Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011*
- CYPs Equality Action Plan 2008-2011*
- CYPs Business Plan 2008-2009*
- Early Years and Childcare Services Business Plan*
- Devon Music Service Business Plan*
- EAL Service Business Plan*
- Gypsy and Traveller Families Education Service Business Plan*
- Anti-Bullying Delivery Plan 2008-11*
- Sample EINAs*: Early Years Personal Education Plan; Making the most of parent consultation evenings; Primary School Food Policy; School Road Safety Policy.
- Standard Tender questionnaire*
- Correspondence relating to DDA compliance
- Fostering promotional material (available in hard copy)
- Workforce Strategy
- Information about English as an Additional Language Service and Traveller Education Service www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/supporting-children.htm
- List of supporting officers

Areas for improvement:

- Narrowing the gap between the achievement of the whole population and the progress made by the lowest attaining 20% and the achievement of vulnerable groups is an LAA and Children and Young People Plan priority.
- Implementation of *Reducing Bullying* plan.
- Diversity monitoring of the workforce.

Environment, Economy and Culture

Achievements

- The Transport Coordination Service developed a *Devon Access Wallet* to enable people with communications difficulties to access public transport, and worked to reduce barriers through initiatives such as independent travel training for people with learning disabilities and the *Northern Devon Access Project* which aims to improve access in Devon priority areas of rural Torridge and Ilfracombe.
- Consultation with Muslims at Exeter Mosque over road safety concerns led to the installation of a zebra crossing.

- In collaboration with the Police, a road safety initiative was launched to raise awareness of drink driving among migrant workers following concerns over a high level of incidents, this includes a leaflet being produced and translated into Polish, which gives basic information about motoring law and enforcement in Great Britain.
- Texting is popular with Deaf people and young people, therefore text services are now available for bus times and bookings for *Ring & Ride* schemes, *Car Schemes*, *Community Buses* and *Shopmobility*.
- At Kingsbridge Library, poet Barbara Butcher talked about the history of the island of Barbados and the appalling conditions in which the slaves were transported and in which they lived and worked.
- Devon Records Office commemorated the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade with an exhibition of documents that relate to this once hugely profitable trade. We supported (£3,500) the research and publication of *Devon and the Slave Trade* by local history writer Todd Gray which won the award for "Outstanding contribution to Black heritage in 2007 in the South West" by the Black History Foundation. DRO has also produced information for LGBT History Month.
- The directorate held a social gathering for staff trained in British Sign Language. The directorate's Deaf Awareness Officer helped coordinate the event and put on a large display of materials. Stemming from this meeting the *Deaf Awareness Group* was formed and staff from other directorates invited to join. Members have agreed to meet regularly so they can practise their sign language together with students from the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education. In turn, the students build their confidence by teaching others their signing skills and coming into contact with council staff. The Group is also raising money for a *Hearing Dog* this year; a range of fundraising activities are being carried out alongside awareness raising of British Sign Language and deafness.
- The directorate developed its own *Equality Impact Needs Assessment Tracking Database* – a tracking system for checking EINAs are carried out, and storing completed EINAs. This approach is now being shared with the other directorates.
- The Library Service has an extensive collection of books in large print, audio, other languages and other communication aids for their computers.
- The Library Service participated in the *Big Gay Read 2006*.
- The Library Service and Traveller Education Service have worked together to ensure that Traveller's children receive *Bookstart* packs. The service is now working with other communities including ethnic minorities, refugees and teenage mothers.

The directorate's equality budget is £10K. Bids can be made to the budget for resources needed as a result of an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment. Staff with designated roles are Debbie Fox - Equality Champion and Natasha Cole - Equality Rep as well as EINA Facilitators.

Please see:

- EEC Directorate Business Plan*
- Evidence of DDA Building Improvements*
- DDA Building Improvements (available as hard copy)
- Service equality action plans* - Business Management, Culture Group, Economy, Highways Management, Libraries, Planning and Transportation, Waste, Engineering and Transport
- Accessibility Planning within the Local Transport Plan*
- Staff Resources – list of supporting officers
- Equality Clauses in Highway Maintenance Contracts* and Conditions of Contracts – Z clauses*
- Equality Progress Report to DMB November 2007*
- Equality Progress Report to DMB July 2008*
- Sample EINAs*: Library Modernisation; Provisional Devon LTP & Accessibility Strategy; Town Planning and Transport Infrastructure Strategies.
- Libraries consultation*
- Best practice and achievements*
- Report – Improving Devon's Library Service*
- Bus Information Strategy information*

Further hard copy leaflets and information will be provided.

Areas for improvement:

- Monitoring of contracts
- Improved quality of Equality Impact and Needs Assessments
- Service user monitoring and access to customer profiles.

 **Chief Executive's Directorate**

The Directorate Management Team is responsible for progress against the relevant equality plans. 'Equality' is a standing item on the management team agenda and each member of the management team is aware of their responsibilities for leading on equality improvements within their business/service area. The directorate has a lead person for equality who regularly attends management team meetings as well as liaising with individual section heads, respective equality link officers (each service has a designated person to lead on equality) and directorate staff regarding equality matters. The directorate also has Champions in place at Directorate Management Team level to lead on *Hear by Right*, Domestic Violence and Job Evaluation. The directorate also has designated Equality Impact Needs Assessment trained officers who can be called upon to facilitate the completion of directorate EINAs. Budgets for social inclusion and community safety/domestic violence.

Achievements:

- Our Community Strategy Team co-ordinated the development of Devon's new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and new Local Area Agreement (LAA) on behalf of the Devon Strategic Partnership. As one of the three SCS cross-cutting themes, equality will be embedded in the delivery plans for each of the priorities.
- Our Community Strategy Team have also taken a lead role in:
 - Co-ordinating and supporting the development of Traveller and Gypsy sites and responding to issues; including participating in the development of a Devon-wide protocol for dealing with unauthorised encampments. One of our senior officers also chairs the Traveller and Gypsy Steering Group;
 - Supporting the Safer Devon Partnership in addressing county-wide priorities such as Domestic Abuse, Prejudice and Hate Crime and Youth Crime;
 - Supporting the Migrant Worker Multi-Agency Task Force and delivery of the multi-agency action plan to promote integration and cohesion (see below - a *Welcome Pack* has been launched and a research programme is now under way to develop better intelligence with regards to numbers and need);
 - Supporting the establishment of an e-news/learning service: www.openheartsoopenminds.org.uk which is designed by and for people who want to improve the way they, and their organisations, work with people facing social exclusion;
 - Supporting the development of *Get Heard* which is a project that aims to engage excluded groups in discussion about important issues.
- Our Against Domestic Violence and Abuse Team exceeded the LPSA2 target for Action against Domestic Violence and Abuse and implemented a new DCC Employer Policy. Devon is one of the few counties to run the Home Office Criminal and Community Intervention Model for Domestic Violence and Abuse and Exeter Magistrates is one of the first courts nationally to become a specialist domestic violence court.
- Our Trading Standards Team took part in a consultation with ethnic minority residents in Exeter in conjunction with Exeter City Council's Environmental Health and a number of communication improvements were implemented as a result. Trading Standards also arranged professional development training (including the use of Plain English) for their staff in response to feedback from customers.
- Our Registration Services Team's response to the introduction of Civil Partnerships included consultation with the Intercom Trust (LGBT agency) and LGBT awareness training for Registration staff as well as the development of a Civil Partnerships guide. Positive feedback has been received from couples. Recently a wedding license was revoked by the council after a popular

venue refused a Civil Partnership ceremony.

- Our Registration Services Team have also made a number of access improvements including information in Braille and Large Print, Induction Loops, BSL/Deaf Awareness and the relocation of 4 offices to improve physical access.
- Our Emergency Planning Team attended a meeting of the Devon Equality Partnership and consulted the group on its emergency planning procedures – in particular around issues of communication and the aftermath of a disaster/incident. This led to the development of an action plan. As a result, an equality impact assessment by simulation of a major disaster is being planned.
- Our Corporate Communications Team have been working on a number of initiatives to implement the Department of Health *Easy Read Standard* including development of use of *Total Communications* across the authority.
- Our Corporate Communications Team have also: provided support for *Sign Vision* events and specific consultation work with Exeter Deaf Club; ensured that BSL signing is now included as part of key corporate videos/webcasts including a special DVD for the Deaf community on Contact Arrangements and Feedback; supported the pilot of the first-ever *Young People's Awards* to recognise and encourage achievement; developed *UR Devon* young people's webpages – involving young people in the design and content; developed 50+ and Carers web-pages as part of the *LinkAge* strategy; and re-launched the *Devon In Touch* service to provide a mobile presence for engagement activity and public information campaigns.
- The Internet has been audited for its accessibility and improvements made: Council meetings are now web-cast so that a greater number of people can access them and when *Consultation Finder*, (an internet based database for accessing 'live' and previous consultations) was launched a demographic analysis of all the *Best Value Consultation* data was carried out which highlighted a number of gaps and issues that are currently being addressed as part of a wider review.
- Our Business Transformation and Facilities Management Teams have continued to progress plans to make more of DCC's buildings fully accessible. Council buildings have been surveyed and a £1.2 million budget was allocated for improvement work over a four year period. In 2007 the Council reported 65.56% of its buildings as accessible. Two accredited trainers from Living Options helped to carry out a major audit of County Hall and many of their recommendations have been implemented. A major property services review is also underway.
- Our Corporate Strategic Intelligence team embedded equality considerations in the council's new Information Strategy.
- We also supported the establishment of the *Young People's Scrutiny Panel*, provided support for Youth Parliament and supported the achievement of the *Hear by Right* standard.

Please see:

- Chief Executive's Directorate Business Plan for 2008-09*
- Chief Executive's Directorate Equality Action Plan 2008-09*
- Service level equality action plans* – legal services, corporate communications, registration services, emergency planning
- Registration Services and County Hall Disabled Access work plans*
- Standard Tender Template and Additional Technical Tender questions*
- Domestic Violence Policy*
- CEX Directorate Business Plan 2008-09*
- Devon Registration Services' Service and Business Plan 2008-11* and Civil Partnership Guide
- Safer Devon Partnership Delivery Plan 2008-2011*
- Sample EINAs*: Registration Services; Corporate Communications
- Devon Consortium Wide Gypsy and Traveller Protocol for Unauthorised Encampments*
- Migrant Worker Task Group Ten Point Action Plan*
- Hear by Right Action Sheet*
- Directorate Equality Impact Needs Assessed Trained Officers list
- Strategic Intelligence Strategy
- Trading Standards 2008-09 Service Improvement Plan
- Devon ADVA (against domestic violence and abuse) Partnership - History of consultation to shape

- services and outline Business Plan
- Community Strategy Project Steering Grid 2008-2009

Areas for improvement:

- Diversity Monitoring
- Contracts Monitoring
- BVPI 156 – increasing number of buildings accessibility and DDA compliance
- Staff and Member Awareness and Training

Finance, IT and Trading

(Please note that Procurement aspects are being dealt with under Procurement)

Achievements:

- EINA on budget consultation has resulted in target to engage in specific consultation with young people during the next budget round. This target had been included in the Combined Business Services Plan.
- Biennial *Journey to Equality* survey across Finance IT & Trading/Personnel & Performance directorates (due again May/June 08) has helped to inform actions and priorities – e.g. periodic *Equality Update* to communicate with staff
- All action plans include the designation of responsibility for actions.
- Directorate has designated Equality and Customer Service Champion at Senior Manager level.
- The Director is *Hear by Right* Champion.
- Head of Finance Services is Directorate Domestic Violence Champion.
- *MyDevon* Customer Service Centre consultation with ethnic minority residents, Excellence not Excuses BME forum, and Deaf people as part of an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment led to the inclusion of a dedicated SMS text number, BSL videos on how to contact the Council and the complaints procedure, and considerations around coping with different accents as part of a recruitment/training of staff at the new telephone contact centre. [NB the Customer Service Centre now sits under Personnel and Performance]

Please see:

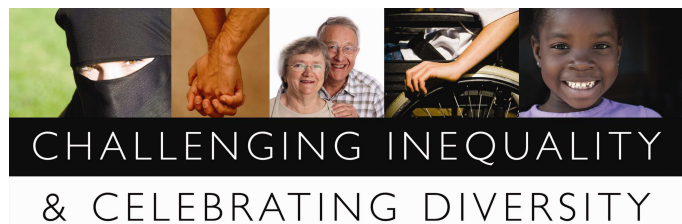
- Combined Business Service Plan 2008-9*
- Financial Reporting 1.2 The council promotes external accountability: use of resources 2008 self assessment and action plan*
- Financial Management 2.1 Medium term finance strategy etc: self assessment and action plan*
- Sample EINAs*:Customer Service Centre; Budget Process 08/09

Areas for improvement:

- Prioritised EINAs carried out at service level which lead to equality based targets.

Personnel and Performance

Please see 'employment and training'.



www.devon.gov.uk/diversity