

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEETING - 7 FEBRUARY 2007

REPORT OF THE EQUALITIES COORDINATORS

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To ask the Executive to formally adopt as Council Policy the “Corporate Equality Scheme” document as circulated.

2. Report Summary

2.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) sets out how the Council will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination.

2.2 Legislation requires public bodies to produce a Race Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and (from April 2007) a Gender Equality Scheme. Rather than produce three separate schemes the CES brings these requirements into one comprehensive document.

2.3 The purpose of the CES is firstly to demonstrate the need to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the needs of service users and employees. Secondly, to pull together the Council’s commitments under the various equality strands. Thirdly, it provides the basis for a meaningful Equality & Diversity Action Plan to ensure delivery of Council services in an equitable way. The CES has been developed from the results of over forty Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) carried out between September and December 2006.

2.4 It also provides an update on the progress TDBC is making towards its equality agenda. The work undertaken to produce the CES also mirrors the actions needed to reach Level 2 of the Local Government Equality Standard (target date March 2007).

2.5 Consultation on the Corporate Equality Scheme took place between 19 December 2006 and 24 January 2007.

2.6 The Community Leadership Review Panel have scrutinised the document at the 6 February meeting and verbal feedback on their views will be given at this meeting.

3. Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the Executive adopt this document as the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme.

Contact Officers: Harry Connery, Equalities Coordinator
h.connery@tauntondeane.gov.uk
(01823) 356553

Val Dale, Equalities Coordinator
v.dale@tauntondeane.gov.uk
(01823 356553)

Corporate Equality Scheme
AND
Corporate Equality Action Plan
2007-2010

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Equal
Opportunities



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Corporate Equality Scheme and Corporate Equality Action Plan 2007-2010

Foreword by Chief Executive and Deputy Leader of the Council

Purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme

Our communities

Vision, Business Principles and Core Values

Corporate commitment to equality

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Appendices

- A - General and Specific Duties for Race, Disability and Gender
- B - Schedule of Impact Assessments
- C - Best Value Performance Indicators
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Foreword

Taunton Deane Borough Council is committed to the promotion of equality and diversity throughout its functions for four key reasons:

Firstly, because 'equality' translates to 'quality'. If we conduct all our activities in a fair and equal way, we will improve the overall quality of our services

Secondly, that it is morally right to adopt an approach that supports the elimination of discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for all

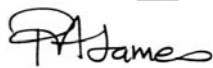
Thirdly, because there is now extensive 'equality' legislation that places a range of requirements on employers and service providers to meet these legal duties

And finally TDBC, as an organisation, benefits from the diverse culture, knowledge and experience brought by our staff and service users.

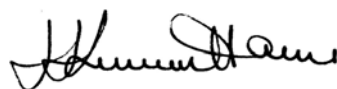
If we are to continue to make improvements we must set clear targets across the equality strands - actions that are systematically monitored for progress. The measurements of delivering a successful Corporate Equality Scheme will be:

- ❖ No significant disparity in service user satisfaction
- ❖ No significant disparity in public confidence
- ❖ No significant disparity in service outcomes
- ❖ No significant disparity in employee satisfaction and perception
- ❖ More representative workforce

We look forward to responding to the challenges ahead.



Penny James
Chief Executive and
Champion of Equality



Joanna Lewin-Harris
Deputy Leader and
Portfolio holder for Equality



Corporate Equality Scheme

Introduction

Taunton Deane Borough Council defines equality and diversity as acknowledging, respecting and valuing people's differences. Only by recognising and eliminating barriers that restricts access to public services can we achieve this. The purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme (the Scheme) is firstly to demonstrate the need to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the needs of its service users and employees. Existing and forthcoming equality legislation is welcome as it helps to provide a sense of directional focus for this work. The Scheme develops the framework within which the Council's commitments to the various equality strands will be gathered under one comprehensive document. Crucially, it provides the basis on which to develop a meaningful Equality and Diversity Action Plan to ensure delivery of Council services in an equitable way. The Corporate Equality Scheme will set out how the Council will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination.

Legislation

The scheme must first consider the existing requirements placed upon it by equality legislation. Appendix A sets out what these duties are.

Race

The Council's legal duties in terms of employment and as a public body are embodied in the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2001. The Council produced its second Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008, which incorporates how it will meet both the general and specific duties and can be found on its internet site.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 structures how employers and service providers must take account of the requirements of people with disabilities. The Disability Act 2005 places a duty on public bodies to eliminate discrimination and promote equality between people with disabilities and those without.

Gender

Gender legislation includes the Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and, most recently, the Equality Act 2006, which imposes a duty on public bodies to eliminate discrimination and promote equality between men and women.

Other

Other recent equality legislation includes The Human Rights Act 1998, Gender Recognition Act 2004, Civil Partnership Act, 2005 and Article 13 (EC Treaty) Employment and Race Directives 2003 which sets out that employees must not be treated differently due to their sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age.

Our Communities

Taunton Deane is a predominantly rural area with a population of around 104,000 people, with more than half living in Taunton itself. Only one other urban settlement, Wellington, has more than 10,000 inhabitants. The majority of the land area of the Borough is agricultural and sparsely populated, characterised by many small villages and hamlets. The Health Profile for Taunton Deane in 2006 indicates a prospering district with pockets of deprivation.

Although 5 years old, the 2001 Census still supplies the most accurate profile of Taunton Deane residents and provides useful information along with other sources. For example:

- The gender split for the borough is 49,204 male and 53,095 female
- there were 18,573 people in Taunton Deane living with a limiting long term illness which equates to 18.2% of the population (Health Profile for Taunton Deane, 2006)
- minority ethnic groups in Taunton Deane made up around 1.6% of the population. However, with changing patterns of movement in society, recent estimates indicate that this figure is now closer to 2.3%.
- 77,682 Taunton Deane residents gave Christianity as their faith/religion. Other faith/religions were Buddhist (168), Hindu (136), Jewish (69), Muslim (293), Sikh (33) and Other (398)
- There were 11 homophobic offences in Taunton and two in Wellington during 2005/06. Whilst homophobic incidents in the area are rare, when they do occur it is most likely to be in town centres in the evening, with victims being males in their early 20's.
- Taunton Deane has an older age profile than the South West or Britain as a whole with a population average age of 40.7 years (national average 38.6 years)

The Council recognises the potential for isolation, prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage among people of different ethnic and social backgrounds in Taunton Deane. It will be important to monitor take up of our services to ensure that we are able to engage with our different communities appropriately.

Vision, Business Principles and Core Values

Vision

To be a high performing Council, working in partnership to create a good quality of life for all Taunton Deane residents.

Business Principles

We have established four essential principles which support our Vision and help make it happen:

Excellent services – ensuring the delivery of accessible high quality services that provide good value for money.

Customer driven – putting the needs of individual customers at the heart of all that we do.

Local focus – making a positive difference to quality of life in communities across Taunton Deane.

A dynamic organisation – innovative, forward looking and focused on results.

Core Values

We have developed a set of Core Values with our staff and Councillors. These reflect our fundamental beliefs as an organisation and will guide how we deal with our staff, customers and partners. Our Core Values are:

Integrity – we will be honest, do what is right and stick to it

Fairness – we will consistently treat everyone equally, respecting their individual needs and abilities.

Respect – we will always show respect for everyone.

Trust – we will show trust and confidence in our staff and Members.

Corporate commitment to equality

Taunton Deane Borough Council values diversity and believes that all people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We aim to promote equality of opportunity in our role as a service provider, policy maker, employer, purchaser of goods and services and elected leader in the local community.

In promoting equality of opportunity, we will oppose all forms of discrimination, whether on grounds of disability, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, marital status, religion, national origin or any other condition or requirement which may place a person or group at a disadvantage.

The Corporate Equality Scheme acknowledges that whilst the Council has made good progress in addressing equality and diversity issues, we still need to increase our efforts to ensure that discrimination, direct or indirect, is removed and that we are seen to operate in a fair and equitable manner for both staff and service users.

To help us achieve our aims the Council is committed to achieving the Equality Standard for Local Government. This is a 'kite mark' of quality and good practice and is awarded once an organisation achieves Level 5 of the Equality Standard. It is an externally verified award and can only be achieved by continual improvement, working through the different levels. TDBC is currently at Level 2 and working towards achieving Level 5 by 2009.

Links to other corporate documents...

Corporate Strategy 2006-2009

The Corporate Strategy outlines what kind of organisation we want to be and the key aims that will help us achieve our objectives to improve quality of life and make a positive difference in our communities. The Vision, Business Principles and Core Values are set out on page 6 of this Scheme and incorporate our commitment to fairness and respect.

Equality Policy

TDBC has a comprehensive Equality Policy, which is reviewed annually (last update June 2006). It makes clear our commitment as an employer, service provider, purchaser of goods and services and elected leader in the community. In addition it sets out the support measures we have put in place to deliver our promise, along with the key legislation and those who have responsibility for implementing and assisting with all aspects of the policy.

Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008

This Race Equality Scheme follows on from the 2002-2005 scheme, which set the foundation for the Council's work in eliminating racial discrimination and promoting equality between people of different races. It outlines our legal duties and the issues we need to take into account as a service provider and employer. The scheme is backed by an action plan with measurable outcomes and target dates. Progress in delivering the RES is monitored on a quarterly basis as part of the Council's Performance Indicator BVPI2B (see appendix C)

Community Strategy

The key local organisations and agencies in Taunton Deane have come together to produce the Sustainable Community Strategy for the District – meshing together their individual strategies and plans to create an overall Vision and set of quality of life priorities for the District.

The whole strategy is underpinned by its commitment to equality, diversity and social cohesion. It is a strategy for all in/of Taunton Deane and is focused on meeting the needs of the diverse communities of the District.

Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy 2005-2008 provides clear indicators of the way in which it mainstreams equality and diversity within its directional focus. The importance of Equality Impact Assessments are acknowledged as a tool in its work to gather the views of the 'hard to reach' groups overlooked by conventional consultation. It recognises the difficult issues inherent in addressing the needs of the homeless, the gypsy and traveller communities and providing affordable housing.

Workforce Plan

TDBC's service delivery, like other organisations, is provided through the people it employs. Often we are guilty of not considering our most important asset in our business planning and this plan provides a framework to address this.

By making people management integral to our strategic thinking we can ensure that we have a workforce that can deliver our changing service needs. We will do this by using a workforce plan to make sure we have "the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time"

Communication Strategy

Communications underpins all that we do. It is vitally important that good communications are in place across the whole organisation. This strategy is about enabling the delivery of excellent, customer focused services which meet the corporate priorities and the diverse needs of our local community. It includes the use of different communication methods to meet the needs of all and to improve two-way communications between Members, staff, our community and stakeholders.

Equality Progress as at 31 December 2006

Taunton Deane has a leading role in promoting equal opportunity and valuing diversity. It is working hard to support and develop its practices within service areas. For example, a Translation Policy has been introduced which provides guidance to all service areas when dealing with requests for documents and information in different languages and formats. The website is now compliant with government guidelines on accessibility. However, we recognise that there are gaps and areas where we need to increase our efforts to move forward. Nevertheless, there has been notable progress that demonstrates the Council and the communities we serve are benefiting from changes to and improvements in our equality practices.

Corporate Services

- ✓ positive measures have been introduced to encourage applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with disabilities who are currently under represented in our workforce. For example, vacancies are more widely advertised and the selection process has been reviewed to ensure it is accessible and specific requirements can be met.
- ✓ a good practice guide developed by Customer Services for front line staff who interact daily with service users. This sets out standards of service users can expect from TDBC regardless of background or specific needs.
- ✓ the Benefits Service employs two Visiting Officers to visit housebound claimants to allow them to claim, report changes and query their award.
- ✓ Democratic Services have introduced several measures to improve access for Councillors and the public. For example, provision of an Induction Loop system in Committee rooms, improved access to meeting rooms for those with mobility needs and specialist IT equipment for a Councillor with no sight.

Development

- ✓ Building Control Service has been very active in supporting DDA requirements, improving accessibility and creating safe environments for young and older people.
- ✓ Development Control has built up good links with gypsy and traveller communities.
- ✓ Heritage and Landscape team working with youth and elderly groups have carried out risk assessments that have led to improved access to all local nature reserves and some public rights of way.
- ✓ the Forward Planning Unit is engaging proactively with various groups throughout Taunton Deane as part of its consultation process to secure greater representation and involvement of residents. These groups include Somerset Access and Inclusion Network (SAIN), the Standing Conference of Women's Organisations, the Somerset Multi Cultural Forum Taunton and Wellington Pensioners Forum and youth groups.

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- ✓ An Access and Disability Audit of Taunton Town Centre was carried out during the summer of 2006 to make sure the needs of residents and visitors are taken into account in development plans.

Environment & Leisure

- ✓ Premises Inspection Officers have access to a range of leaflets produced by central government in many languages and are proactive in translating correspondence where it is known that the recipient does not speak English.
- ✓ Officers visiting premises also make suggestions to improve access for people with disabilities. For example, taxi firms are encouraged to use vehicles that allow disabled access. There are now 62 taxis that are wheelchair accessible and a disability advocate helps test the accessibility of new vehicles.
- ✓ Waste Services have successfully promoted their services to migrant workers and to gypsies and travelers who have enthusiastically participated in kerbside recycling. They have also increased the number of clinical/assisted collections for older people and those with disabilities as necessary.
- ✓ Leisure development grants have enabled greater access for those with disabilities and improved facilities for all age groups using halls and community centres.
- ✓ Sports services are ensuring new facilities are DDA compliant and older facilities adapted to meet the requirements of the DDA where possible. Design also takes account of the needs of different genders and age groups.

Housing

- ✓ Housing is seeking, through working groups as set out in its Action Plan, to produce both an Older Persons' Housing Strategy and a BME Strategy and to engage more directly with the client groups involved.
- ✓ Housing Officers are involved with a multicultural group within Taunton Deane and are seeking to forge links with individual ethnic representatives.
- ✓ a start has been made on a Younger Persons' Housing Strategy and links are being formed with Connexions which will also benefit the further development of the Homeless Strategy Action Plan and addressing the needs of teenage mothers.
- ✓ a countywide group of officers has been convened to address the needs of gypsies and travellers.
- ✓ Housing teams works closely with other agencies such as Age Concern, Neighbourhood Care, Care Direct and the Police and Fire Service to ensure that initiatives like Safe and Secure, Community Handyman and Home Aids Services are successful and meet the needs of vulnerable residents.
- ✓ a defined policy for dealing with racial harassment and Tenancy Agreements specifically outlaw harassment on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality and faith.
- ✓ crime prevention audits are carried out in all sheltered accommodation to help these tenants feel more secure.

Policy & Performance

- ✓ a joint Procurement Strategy developed with Somerset County Council which recognises that a strong equality element is good practice and will ensure that our suppliers and contractors comply with equality legislation.
- ✓ Equality and Access statements are now included on all key Corporate documents, including complaints leaflets.
- ✓ major consultation exercises, such as the Customer Satisfaction Survey, compare the demographic profile of respondents with the Borough to ensure equal representation.
- ✓ several projects supported under Community Planning, eg youth diversionary activities and an apprenticeship scheme for young people. Community Safety initiatives are targeting vulnerable residents to make their homes safer.
- ✓ supporting the work of the Voluntary Community Sector for Age Concern activities and community transport projects like the Slinky bus service.
- ✓ officers contribute to the Partnership Against Racial Harassment, which provides support to victims of race hate crime.
- ✓ a package of loop systems have been purchased and other changes made to signage and layout to improve accessibility in the reception area and meeting rooms

How did we involve service users in developing the Corporate Equality Scheme?

The Disability Act 2005 that placed a duty on public authorities to set up a Disability Equality Scheme expects that people with disabilities will contribute to setting up of the scheme and are encouraged to take part in public life. However, whilst this requirement is not mentioned as part of the gender and race equality schemes, TDBC recognises that this is good practice and aims to take this forward across the equality strands. We will utilise a variety of sources to ensure that voices within diverse groups are heard.

Consultations

During the period March to May 2006, a consultation took place entitled *Talking Tomorrows Taunton Deane* (TTTD), which aimed to guide and integrate the preparation of important community and planning strategies. A number of communities and stakeholders became involved in participation processes, including individuals and members of disability groups. Hosted by SAIN participants contributed to the debate at a meeting on the 16 May 2006. These views have been used to feed and inform the development of the CES.

In addition, *Your Council, Your Views*, a consultation on 2007/08 Budget, Priorities, and Perception took place between the 8 May and 9 June 2006. Questionnaires were distributed amongst targeted user groups, including those with disabilities and key community points across the Deane. The results of this consultation have also contributed to the priorities in the Scheme. For example, a key issue identified was that the Council must significantly improve levels of engagement and communication with our customers to increase their levels of trust. The setting up of Equality Forums will go some way towards helping to build relationships with our service users.

Surveys

An Access & Mobility Audit was carried out specifically focusing on the town center to identify barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement such as the conditions of pavements and drop kerbs. Initial findings have highlighted issues such as cracked paving, raised iron works, street furniture where the pavement is narrow and concerns around pedestrian crossing points. A final draft report of the audit findings is due to be published by January 07. A preliminary discussion on the initial findings of the report took place with members of SAIN during December 2006

Equality Forums

The Council is setting up Equality Forums for Disability, Race and Gender, which provides an opportunity for two-way ongoing dialogue between Council Officers and people who live and work in Taunton Deane. The intention is to involve residents in discussion about initiatives or proposed new policy at the beginning

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of any process, not just at the consultation stage. It will also provide a vehicle through which members can raise issues around equality of service.

The Disability Forum will meet a minimum of twice yearly and will be facilitated by Somerset Access and Inclusion Network (SAIN). Members of SAIN have contributed to the development of the CES through raising issues they felt were important at various consultation events held throughout the year.

A Gender Forum and a Race/Ethnicity Forum are also being set up and from 2007 members will meet twice yearly with TDBC officers to exchange views and information.

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Implementation and Monitoring

The Council has established a framework to ensure that equality is integrated in all that we do. The Chief Executive acts as equalities 'champion', working with senior management to ensure that active steps are taken across all services to implement the Equality policy. Most importantly, all employees have a role in implementing and supporting all aspects of equality and diversity.

At elected member level, specific responsibility for overseeing the Equality policy rests with the Community Leadership Review Panel and the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Community Leadership. However, all Councillors have a responsibility to support the policy's commitments and detailed objectives.

Implementation

The Corporate Equality Scheme will be implemented through its detailed Action Plan. The actions have been identified from the results of recent equality impact assessments (see appendix B), various consultations and through listening to the views expressed by service users. These actions will be mainstreamed by way of incorporation into Head of Service operational plans.

Monitoring

There will be a multi-faceted approach to monitoring the Scheme.

Corporate Equality Group

A multi-departmental Corporate Equalities Group (GEG) operates to ensure that our equality commitments are delivered and will monitor progress of the Scheme. The CEG's role also includes keeping under regular review the improvement programme arising from the Equalities Best Value Review; regular review of the Council's statutory Race Equality Scheme; monitoring performance and delivery of the Council's equality commitments, reporting annually to the Community Leadership Panel and quarterly to CMT; and developing practical ways of ensuring that the Council's equality commitments are reflected in, and promoted through all its activities.

Equality Champions

A network of Equality Champions has been set up involving staff and members. Their role is to pro-actively encourage a culture of fairness and treating each other with dignity and respect. This includes a willingness to challenge policy, practices and behaviours within the organisation that hinder equality. They also help identify opportunities to effectively promote equality and diversity as part of the Council's service delivery. This network will feed and inform whether the Scheme is achieving its objectives.

Monitoring of data

A key outcome of equality impact assessments will be to set up annual monitoring of key data across service areas, broken down between equality strands, to ensure there is no adverse impact on any specific groups. Ongoing monitoring will provide information that will allow a year on year comparison on the progress being made across all service areas. The data monitoring includes both staff and service users.

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

The monitoring of Performance Indicators is an important aspect of the Council's performance management framework. There are a number of performance indicators that relate to equality issues (see appendix C). The Review Board scrutinises progress against performance indicator targets and raise any concerns over poor performance. We will continue to use the BVPIs as a crucial gauge in measuring the success of the CES.

Equality Progress Reports

An annual equality progress report will be produced which will provide a comprehensive assessment of the initiatives undertaken and our achievements as a result of a continuing aim to improve delivery and promotion of equality and diversity as outlined in the CES and supporting documents. It will also detail work in progress during the year ahead.

CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME 2007-2010 ACTION PLAN

Part 1 – General Equality & Diversity Issues

Objective 1: To continually improve engagement with our local communities				
Actions	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcomes
1a. To set up Equality Forums, initially for Race/Ethnicity, Disability and Gender to provide a platform for issues to be raised	March 2007	Strategy and Partnerships	Equality Coordinators	Two-way ongoing dialogue established between Council Officers and people who live and work in Taunton Deane
1b. Review procedure for including traditional 'hard to reach' groups in consultation process, whose views are underrepresented	June 2007	Communications and Information	Information & Research Officer	Full representative responses from across Taunton Deane
Objective 2: To ensure equitable access to all service areas				
2a. Review and improve equality and diversity data collection across all service areas, as appropriate	March 2007	All service areas	Heads of Service/Managers	Data monitoring systems set up
2b. Carry out annual monitoring review of services to ensure equal access	November 2007, then annually	All service areas	Heads of Service/Managers	Annual Report on Progress with potential issues identified where further action needed
2c. Include an Access Statement on all key documents and communications	March 07	All service areas	Heads of Service/ Graphics Team Leader/ Communications and Information Manager	Publications and information will be provided in alternative formats and languages on request

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2d. TDBC's web site to be regularly reviewed to ensure accessibility	Begun 2006 - ongoing	Customer Services /Communication and Information	Service Information Coordinator/ Communication and Information Manager/ Web Content and Marketing Manager	Continual improvements to the web site assisting users with specific needs
Objective 3: To promote equality in our role as a service provider and policy maker				
3a. Review information materials, documents, etc to ensure all service users are reflected in the images used in publications	Sept 2007	All service areas	Heads of Service/ Graphics Team Leader/ Communications and Information Manager	Images in publications will reflect the diversity of people in the Borough
3b. Review Tenants Welcome Pack and include statement/information on how Housing Options will interact with/protect tenants under the different equality strands	March 2007	Housing	Housing Estate Manager	New Tenants will be informed about their rights and responsibilities with regard to diversity.
3c. Promote and encourage confidence in the Complaints procedure	April 2007	Communications and Information	Communications and Information Manager	Enhanced trust in the systems for service users
3d. Create network of Equality Champions amongst Staff and Councillors	Started 2006 ongoing	Corporate Equality Group	Equality Coordinator	Network of people within TDBC prepared to promote equality and identify/challenge bad practice
3e. Introduce an evidence based self assessment procedure to ensure we achieve	March 2007	Corporate Equality Group	Chair of Corporate Equality Group	A robust evidence based system of self assessment for the different levels of

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the Local Government Equality Standard				the Equality Standard in place
Objective 4: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as elected leaders in the local community				
4a. Equality considerations to be built into all scrutiny topics	Started 2006 – ongoing	Scrutiny and Performance	Scrutiny Officer	Councillors will identify where equality issues are relevant in Scrutiny discussions and challenge where appropriate
4b. Task and Finish Reviews to consider equality impact when looking at scrutiny topics	Started 2006 – ongoing	Scrutiny and Performance	Scrutiny Officer	A 'quality assurance check' to ensure equality issues properly considered during reviews
4c. Survey Councillors on all aspects of Scrutiny, including assessment on success around equalities	April 2008	Scrutiny & Performance	Scrutiny Officer	Effectiveness of equalities performance as part of Scrutiny will be assessed
Objective 5: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as purchaser of goods and services				
5a. Assess the joint SCC/TDBC Procurement Strategy making sure it incorporates equality best practice and is effective	June 2008	Scrutiny and Performance	Scrutiny and Performance Manager	Effective and robust strategy reflecting current best practice
5b. Monitor implementation of the strategy	Annual, year end review	Scrutiny and Performance	Scrutiny and Performance Manager/Lead contract officers	Contractors and major suppliers monitored for compliance
Objective 6: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as employer				
6a. Continuation of annual workforce monitoring to identify the profile of the Council's	Annual, from March 2006	Human Resources	Human Resource Manager	Positive actions put in place where data analysis highlights areas in which

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employees				the workforce is not representative of the local population
6b. Develop an Equality and Diversity Training Programme, including mandatory training, for Councillors and staff	April 2007	Strategy and Partnerships/ Human Resources	Equality Coordinators/ Employee Development Manager	Councillors and staff fully aware of E&D issues as it relates to their individual role within the organisation
6c. Ensure equal access to training and support through the roll out of employees PRED appraisal scheme	Ongoing	All service areas	All Heads and all Managers	Staff will have an equal opportunity to receive training relevant to their professional needs and personal development.

Part 2 – Disability

Objective 7: To improve accessibility for Councillors and voters				
Action	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcomes
7a. Continue to improve facilities in Polling Stations, eg low level polling booths, promote availability of postal votes	May 2007	Democratic Services	Democratic Services Manager	Improved access for Voters
7b. Ensure availability of suitable specialist equipment for Councillors	May 2007	Democratic Services	Democratic Services Manager	Councillors with specialist requirements assisted to participate fully in Council business
Objective 8: To see if service users with disabilities find TDBC services accessible				
8a. Assess whether users of the Benefits Service, who have	September 2007	Benefits Service	Benefits Manager/Customer	Customer Satisfaction Survey will provide

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disabilities, share the Council's view that services are accessible			Access Project Manager	evidence for further action needed
8b. Continue ongoing engagement with disability groups in inform preparation of planning documents	Ongoing	Forward Planning	Senior Policy Officer	Good working relationships established with SAIN members
8c. Engage with service partners (eg SCC as transport authority) on access and mobility issues that disadvantage communities	From 2007 and ongoing	Forward Planning	Senior Policy Officer	Coordinated approach to planning and meeting responsibilities relating to equality legislation
8d. Identify a list of 'approved' sites for council meetings that meet the needs of people with disabilities	Started 2006 – ongoing	Property Services	Corporate Property Manager	Meeting venues will be DDA compliant and allow greater involvement for people with disabilities
Objective 9: To keep service users with specific needs informed about TDBC services				
9a. Provide key information in different formats on request, eg Braille, large print, audio version	Ongoing	All service areas	Heads of Service/ Managers	Accessibility needs do not exclude or isolate Taunton Deane service users
9b. Ensure all web hosted documents are compatible with software designed to help the blind / partially sighted	Ongoing	Customer Services	Service Information Coordinator/Web Content and Marketing Manager	Continual improvements to the web site assisting users with specific needs
9c. Integrate Browsaloud into website to enable deaf/hard of hearing users to download software.	March 2007	Customer Services	Service Information Coordinator	Enhanced facility for deaf/hard of hearing users to access TDBC services via the website.
9d. Publicise availability of accessible venues and portable equipment	Started 2006 – ongoing	Building Control/ Strategy and Partnerships	Facilities Manager/Equality Coordinator	Staff and service users able to make full use of equipment and facilities to

				enhance access for people with disabilities.
Objective 10: To improve disability access across Taunton Deane				
10a. Review findings of Taunton Town Centre Access and Mobility Audit	April 2007	Forward Planning	Senior Policy Officer	Preparation and implementation of future actions
10b. Increase the number of disability car parking spaces in Taunton Deane car parks	Started 2006 – ongoing during 2007	Building Control	Senior Building Control Surveyor	More car parking facilities for people with disabilities
10c. Complete DDA Risk Assessment	July 2007	Corporate Equality Group	Chair of Corporate Equality Group	Any additional actions to meet DDA requirements highlighted.
Objective 11: To advance knowledge and understanding of disability issues in Taunton Deane				
11a. Staff training to take into consideration disability issues when delivering services	From March 07 – ongoing	Human Resources	Employee Development Manager	Increased understanding of the disability issues and needs of service users
Objective 12: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as employer				
12a. Develop a Disability Leave Policy which acknowledges leave specifically related to a disability	December 2007	Human Resources	Human Resource Manager	Difference between sick leave and disability leave taken acknowledged.

Part 3 – Gender

Objective 13: To advance knowledge and understanding of gender related issues in Taunton Deane				
Action	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcome
13a. Staff training to take into consideration gender differences	From March 07 – ongoing	Human Resources	Employee Development	Increased understanding of the gender issues and

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when delivering services			Manager	needs of service users
Objective 14: To build meaningful relationships with gender groups in Taunton Deane				
14a. Work to engage women's/men's organisations on the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF)	Started 2006 – ongoing	Forward Planning	Senior Policy Officer	Gender issues of service users taken into account within the LDF
Objective 15: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as employer				
15a. Explore ways in which to encourage more female representation at Senior and Service Unit Manager level to redress under-representation	December 2007	Human Resources	Human Resource Manager	More female representation at SUM and Headship level of the organisation
15b. Conduct an Equal Pay Audit	June 2008	Human Resources	Human Resource Manager	No disparity in pay due to gender
15c. Develop a Carers Leave policy which takes account of carer responsibilities	December 2007	Human Resources	Human Resource Manager	Introduction of a more flexible approach to staff with carer responsibilities

Part 4 – Race and Ethnicity

Objective 16: To encourage more diversity in member representation				
Action	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcome
16a. Renew guide for potential member candidates and include positive promotion to encourage black and minority ethnic candidates	May 2007	Democratic Services	Democratic Services Manager	TDBC make clear that representation from black and minority ethnic population is welcomed and encouraged through positive action.

Objective 17: To advance knowledge and understanding of different cultures in Taunton Deane				
17a. Staff training to take into consideration cultural differences when delivering services	From March 07 – ongoing	Human Resources	Employee Development Manager	Increased understanding of the issues and needs of people from difference cultures
17b. Investigate practicalities of collecting data on ethnic origins of business owners	July 2007	Environmental Health – Premises Inspections	Chief Environmental Officer	Improved knowledge of ethnic diversity of business owners in the borough to inform service development
17c. Commission research on migrant workers in Taunton Deane and present findings to CEG and LSP	April 2007	Strategy and Partnerships	Equality Coordinator	Clearer understanding of migrant worker population living and working in the Borough
Objective 18: To keep service users informed where English is not the first language				
18a. Provide translations of key information in different languages on request and as appropriate	Started 2005 – ongoing	All service areas	Heads of Service/ Managers/ Communications and Information Manager	Language barriers do not exclude or isolate Taunton Deane service users
18b. Ensure consultation material is accessible to non-English speakers in the borough	Ongoing	Forward Planning/ Policy and Performance	Senior Policy Officer/ Community Planning Officer	Speakers of ‘other’ languages able to provide their views during consultations
18c. Examine the practicalities of providing Health & Safety training to businesses in ‘other’ languages, jointly with other authorities	March 2008	Environmental Health	Chief Environmental Health Officer	Co-ordinated initiative on health and safety issues with migrant workers

18d. Assess whether specific provision is required for non-English speaking enquirers of business support/enterprise	November 2007	Economic Development and Regeneration	Economic Development and Regeneration Manager	Assessment will identify whether individual business or resident enquirers need specific provision in other languages
Objective 19: Encourage involvement of residents to help improve services				
19a. Review and promote Tenant and Residents Involvement Forum and Tenant and Residents Associations to minority ethnic groups	July 2007	Housing	Tenant and Resident Involvement Manager	Positive action to encourage more involvement of minority ethnic residents
Objective 20: To ensure the accommodation needs of different ethnic groups are considered				
20a. Undertake survey of housing needs, with particular reference to black and ethnic minorities, including gypsies and travellers	Started 2006	Housing	Housing Strategy Manager	Results will feed into Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy
20b. Produce a black and minority ethnic Housing Strategy	From January 07 Ongoing	Housing	Housing Strategy Manager	Clear objectives on meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic people, including gypsies and travellers

Part 5 – Faith and/or Belief

Objective 21: To advanced the knowledge and understanding of different faiths

Action	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcome
21a. Staff training to consider religious differences when delivering services	March 07 – ongoing	Human Resources	Employee Development Manager	Staff better informed about the diverse faiths of the population in Taunton Deane
Objective 22: To build meaningful relationships with different faith groups in Taunton Deane				
22a. Officers attend and support multi-faith meetings in the borough and the county as appropriate	Started 2006 – ongoing	Policy and Performance	Equality Coordinator	Increased understanding of the issues and needs of people from different religious backgrounds
22b. Ensure all places of worship are contacted regarding future planning related consultation	Started 2006 – ongoing	Forward Planning	Senior Policy Officer	Database of registered contacts established
Objective 23: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as employer				
23a. Review employees rights at work under Employment Equality (Religion and/or Belief) Regulations, 2003 to ensure good practice	December 2007	Human Resources/ Strategy and Partnerships	Human Resource Manager/ Equality Coordinator	Potential actions identified that could enhance employment best practice

Part 6 – Sexual Orientation

Objective 24: To advance knowledge and understanding of sexual orientation issues in Taunton Deane				
Action	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcome
24a. Staff training to take into consideration differences in sexual orientation	From March 07 – ongoing	Human Resources	Employee Development Manager	Increased understanding of the issues and needs of the gay, lesbian and transgender communities

Objective 25: To ensure equal treatment of single sex couples accessing services				
25a. Develop a strategy for tenant succession for single sex partners	June 2007	Housing	Housing Estate Manager	Appropriate strategy in place to ensure equal treatment for single sex partners
Objective 26: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as employer				
26a. To work with employee network B4U to provide support to Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transsexual employees	June 2007	Strategy and Partnerships	Equality Coordinator/ Human Resource Manager	Support network promoted to LGBT staff
26b. Review employees rights at work under Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, 2003 to ensure good practice	December 2007	Human Resources/ Strategy and Partnerships	Human Resource Manager/ Equality Coordinator	Potential actions identified that could enhance employment best practice

Part 7 - Age

Objective 27: To reach all age groups during consultation and community engagement				
Action	Target Date	Service Area	Lead and Support Officers	Outcome
27a. Develop a programme of capacity building aimed at children/youth and elderly residents (particularly around North Taunton and Taunton East)	Started 2006 – ongoing	Development	Senior Policy Officer	Fuller representation of views across Taunton Deane
27b. Strengthen existing and develop new links with groups/communities who	Started 2006 – ongoing	Development and Forward Planning	Development Control Manager	Improve engagement of younger/older people on planning and development

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represent Age ethnic groups				issues that affect them
27c. Investigate level of engagement of young people in community group partnerships	April 07	Community and Social Regeneration	Economic Development and Regeneration Manager	Knowledge of current engagement - leading to identification of key improvements
Objective 28: To ensure the accommodation needs of all age groups are considered				
28a. Undertake survey of housing needs, with particular reference to the elderly and young	Started 2006	Housing	Housing Strategy Manager	Results will feed into Young Persons Housing Strategy and Older Persons Housing Strategy
28b. Produce Young Persons Housing Strategy	From January 07 Ongoing	Housing	Housing Strategy Officer	Clear objectives on meeting the housing needs of young people
28c. Produce Older Persons Strategy	From January 07 Ongoing	Housing	Housing Strategy Officer	Clear objectives on meeting the housing needs of older people
Objective 29: To promote equality of opportunity in our role as employer				
29a. Staff training to take into consideration specific issues relating to 'ageism'	From March 07 – ongoing	Human Resources	Employee Development Manager	Increased understanding of the issues and needs of older and younger employees
29b. Review employees rights at work under Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, 2006 to ensure good practice	December 2007	Human Resources/ Strategy and Partnerships	Human Resource Manager/ Equality Coordinator	Potential actions identified that could enhance employment best practice

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APPENDIX A

Public bodies have a duty to produce a Scheme to meet their duties under Race and Disability. A duty for Gender comes into effect from April 2007.

Disability Equality Scheme	DES
Gender Equality Scheme	GES
Race Equality Scheme	RES

General Duties			
	DES	GES	RES
Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment	√	√	√
Promote equality of opportunity	√	√	√
Promote good relations between...	√		√
Review the scheme every 3 years and assessment of performance in carrying out duties	√		√
Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people	√		
Encourage participation by disabled people in public life	√		
Take steps to take account of a disabled person's disabilities even when this means treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons	√		

Specific Duties			
	DES	GES	RES
Prepare and publish an equality scheme	√	√	√
Assess and consult on likely impact of proposed policies on promotion of equality		√	√
Monitor existing policies for adverse impact on promotion of equality		√	√
Publish results of assessments and consultations		√	√
Ensure public access to information and services provided			√
Involve disabled people in the development of the scheme and include a statement in the scheme on how this has been done	√		
Train staff in connection with its duties			√
Set out methods for Impact Assessments	√	√	
Set out arrangements for gathering information in relation to employees	√	√	
Set out arrangements for putting the information gathered to use in promoting equality	√	√	
Review scheme every 3 years		√	
Monitor and review progress		√	
Develop, publish and regularly review on equal pay policy		√	

Schedule of Equality Impact Assessments

The scheme must have due regard to whether a particular function or service may adversely impact on a particular section of society more than the majority. Weight and relevance of each service area or function must be considered. The importance of the function is likely to increase the impact. Similarly, a service may have a high relevance in one or more equality strands but low in others. An essential element of the Corporate Equality Scheme is to impact assess all of the Councils functions, policies and procedures for all equality strands where they are deemed to have an actual or potential high or medium impact.

Service Area	Completed 2006	To be completed 2007
Corporate Services		
Benefits	√	
Customer Services	√	
Democratic Services	√	
Financial Services	√	
Human Resources - Recruitment	√	
Human Resources – Employee Development	√	
Information Services		√
Land Charges		√
Legal Services		√
Office Services		√
Property Services		√
Revenues	√	
Development		
Building Control	√	
Development Control	√	
Economic Development and Tourism	√	
Forward Planning	√	
Heritage and Landscape	√	
Transport	√	
Environment and Leisure		
Cemeteries and Crematorium	√	
Civil Contingencies		√
DLO Cleansing	√	
DLO Parks	√	
DLO Transport	√	
Environmental Health - Communications	√	
Internal Health & Safety		√
Environmental Health - Internal Referrals	√	

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Service Area	Completed 2006	To be completed 2007
Leisure Development - Grants	√	
Leisure Development - Parks	√	
Parking - On Street/Car Parks	√	
Environmental Health – Policy & Strategy	√	
Environmental Health - Premises Inspections	√	
Environmental Health - Service Requests	√	
Sports Development	√	
Waste Services	√	
Housing		
Asset Management		
Contract and Pricing		√
Right to Buy		√
Leasing		√
IT		√
Manuals & Procedures		√
Housing Supported Services		
Deane Helpline		√
Sheltered Housing		√
Operations		
Housing Management	√	
Tenants Liaison	√	
Void Control	√	
Property Services		
DLO Purchasing and Repairs reporting		√
Strategic Services		
Housing private sector Homeless)	√	
Housing register) Housing Strategy	√	
Housing allocation)		
Housing development)		
Policy & Performance		
Scrutiny and Performance		
Overview and Scrutiny	√	
Performance Monitoring and Management		√
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		√
Corporate Strategy		√
Performance Plan		√
Project Management		√
Procurement Strategy	√	
Communications and Information		
Public Relations	√	
Communications (internal/external)	√	

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Service Area	Completed 2006	To be completed 2007
Marketing	√	
Consultation	√	
Research and Information	√	
Corporate Complaints	√	
Strategy and Partnerships		
Community Planning and Strategy	√	
Local Strategic Partnership		√
Local Area Agreement		√
Community Safety	√	
Crime and Disorder Partnership	√	
Equality & Diversity	√	
Voluntary and Community Sector	√	

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APPENDIX C

Best Value Performance Indicators

BVPI	Indicator	Target	2006-07 Performance Qtr 2
Corporate Health			
BV2a	The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms	Level 2	Level 1 – on target
BV2b	The duty to promote race equality	68%	63%
BV11a	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	24%	20.52%
BV11b	The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities	1.5%	0%
BV11c	The percentage of top 5% of staff who have a disability	2.5%	0%
BV15	The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total work force	0.55%	0%
BV16a/ BV16b	The percentage of local authority workers declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with the percentage of the economically active disabled people in the authority area	2.5% (13.2%)	1.97%
BV17a/ BV17b	The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of economically active minority	1.5% (1.5%)	1.6%
BV156	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	75%	66.1%
Housing			
BV74b/ 74c	Satisfaction of ethnic minority tenants of council housing with the overall serviced provided by their landlord, compared with non-ethnic minority tenants	no current targets	83.3% (b) 87.9% (c)
BV75b/ 75c	Satisfaction of ethnic minority tenants with participation in management and decision making, compared with non-ethnic minority tenants	no current targets	100% (a) 70.7% (b)
BV164	Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in the Code of Practice for Social Landlords: Tackling Racial Harassment?		Yes
Community Safety			
BV174	The percentage of racial incidences recorded by the authority per 100,000 population	2	4.72%
BV175	The percentage of racial incidences that resulted in further action	100%	100%

Glossary of Terms

Best Value... is the review process outlined in the Local Government Act 1999 requiring local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services.

Best Value Performance Indicators... show the Council's overall performance and measures the level of continuing progress against set targets.

Diversity... is the concept of valuing difference with a focus on the individual. It is proactive and respects the unique perspectives and experience that individual people from different backgrounds contribute to society

Equal Opportunities... is mainly driven by legislation, so tends to be reactive, and primarily concerned with 'groups' who are under-represented in society due to discrimination

Equality Standard for Local Government... is a framework that has been developed by the Employers Organisation for Local Government jointly with the CRE, EOC, DRC and LGA to mainstream equality into all areas of service delivery and employment practices

Equality Impact Assessment... is a process that involves assessing and anticipating the consequences of policies and strategies on different groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and that we maximise opportunities to promote equalities.

Glossary of Acronyms

BVPis	Best Value Performance Indicators
CES	Corporate Equality Scheme
CEG	Corporate Equality Group
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DES	Disability Equality Scheme
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
GES	Gender Equality Scheme
LGA	Local Government Association
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
RES	Race Equality Scheme
SAIN	Somerset Access and Inclusion Network
TDBC	Taunton Deane Borough Council
TTTD	Talking Tomorrows Taunton Deane

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