

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Executive – 14 July 2010

### Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013

#### Report of the Strategy Officer

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Cllr Lewin-Harris)

#### 1. Executive Summary

This report presents the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) 2010-13, providing direction for the Council on how to will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination. The CES sets the councils objectives for proactively closing gaps in inequalities for the Councils service users and employees. The Executive is requested to approve the Corporate Equality Scheme, for adoption by Full Council.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Legislation requires public bodies to produce a Race Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme. Rather than produce three separate schemes the CES brings these requirements into one comprehensive document.
- 2.2 The proposed CES 2010-2013 is a revision of the CES 2007-2010. Legislation requires the Council to refresh its equality objectives every three years.
- 2.3 The CES 2010-2013 describes our achievements to date, the requirements of the Equality legislation and our Equality and Diversity aims for the future.
- 2.4 The purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) is to:
  - Demonstrate the need to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the needs of service users and employees
  - Pull together the Council's commitments to equality
  - Provide direction for the Council and Service Managers and Employees through clear equality objectives
  - Provide the basis for meaningful actions (to be embedded within individual Service Plans) to ensure delivery of Council services in

an equitable way

- Set out how the Council will meet its statutory public duties.
- 2.5** New legislation, namely the Equality Act 2010, pulls together all current equality legislation and places statutory public duties on Local Authorities to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of

- Disability
- Gender
- Ethnicity or national origin
- Sexuality
- Age
- Religion
- Transgender status

The CES also sets out how the authority will also consider issues specific to those living in rural and deprived areas, carers and any other group of people that may face disadvantage due to their individual circumstances

- 2.6** The Somerset Chief Executives Group has agreed that all Local Authorities within Somerset should reach 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government by 2011. The achievement of the CES objectives will ensure that the Council achieves this target.
- 2.7** The Borough Council now takes the approach that Equalities and Diversity should be mainstreamed within all service areas and should not be the sole responsibility of one officer.
- 2.8** The draft Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013 reflects this approach and the proposed objectives aim to support the mainstreaming of Equalities throughout the Borough Council's services, policies and decision making processes.
- 2.9** Community Scrutiny considered the CES on 18<sup>th</sup> March, feedback was positive, with a few minor alterations to wording. These matters have now been addressed.
- 2.10** The CES has since been through a period of public consultation, feedback was largely positive from both members of the public and partner organisations.

### **3. Corporate Equality Scheme Objectives**

- 3.1** Following Member, manager and service user involvement, the CES has been revised to:

- Put the emphasis back onto individual service areas to understand their service and non service users, and to recognise the diverse needs of our communities.
- Ensure services understand how they may be delivering unequal outcomes and to address these inequalities.
- Recognise inequalities faced by staff and prospective employees and to address these inequalities.
- Replace service based objectives and actions with Corporate Actions to mainstream Equalities throughout all of the Borough Council's services, functions and decision making.
- Reduce the number of objectives and actions to allow for manageable monitoring of progress.
- Align the objectives with the Equality Framework for Local Government and Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Address the further duties placed on the Council by the Equality Act 2010

**3.2** Six objectives have been agreed within the Corporate Equality Scheme. These are detailed in the attached Scheme on pages 10 and 11.

#### **4. Delivering the CES objectives**

**4.1** The objectives will be implemented through Equality Action Plans. Individual Services will produce Equality Action Plans and include these in their Service Plans. The actions within these plans will be identified from the following:

- Objectives within the Corporate Equality Scheme
- Results of equality impact assessments
- Listening to the views expressed by service users, non service users, staff and key stakeholders

**4.2** Corporate Aims Delivery Plans (CAD plans required to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy) will also include Equality Risks and take direction from the CES.

#### **5. Performance Monitoring**

**5.1** Service Plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure that the CES objectives are being delivered.

**5.2** The Corporate Aims Delivery Plans will be monitored to ensure Equality Risks are assessed and that actions work towards achieving the objectives of the Corporate Equality Scheme.

**5.3** Performance reports will be submitted to Members and the Corporate Management Team on a six monthly basis.

## **6. Public Consultation**

- 6.1** Consultation was carried out through the Limehouse website, and through direct contact with partners, representative equality groups and other key stakeholders. The consultation was carried out at no cost to the Council.
- 6.2** The CES was received very favourably by the Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group with high regard for the Councils approach and commitment to fair and accessible services and encouraging communities to participate.
- 6.3** All respondents agreed with the 6 objectives.
- 6.4** Several comments were made that were specific to services and functions and will be made available to those Managers with responsibility for these areas.

## **7. Finance Comments**

- 7.1** Service areas will be directly responsible for identifying and addressing inequalities, unfair outcomes and promoting diversity. The resource implications of Equality Action Plans should be considered by service areas as part of their budget setting process.
- 7.2** The Strategy Unit will provide staff time to support services in the implementation of the scheme and to monitor progress against the objectives.
- 7.3** Resources are made available from the Voluntary Sector Budget (Strategy Unit) to commission services from the Forum for Equalities and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS) and Compass Disability to provide opportunities for community engagement.
- 7.4** Resources will be allocated from the corporate training budget to provide Equalities and Diversity training for staff, managers and members.
- 7.5** A Peer Assessment is required to prove the Councils achievement of reaching the 'Achieving' level of the Equalities Framework for Local Government. The budget implication of this currently stands at £5000.
- 7.6** There is a further option to enlist a consultant to carry out a mock assessment which would not enable us to hold the recognised award but would give the Council direction on further work to be done to reach this level. The budget implication of this is around £3500 (based on figures supplied by a partner authority carrying out a mock assessment).

7.7 The final option would be to remove the target as a performance indicator and objective of the CES.

## **8. Thematic Working**

8.1 The Corporate Equality Scheme supports thematic working as the approach mainstreams Equalities into projects as well as specific service areas. Equality Impact Assessments can be carried out as part of a project which may cut across services and/or partnerships.

## **9. Legal Comments**

9.1 Completing Equality Impact Assessment and working toward the achievement of the CES objectives will ensure the Council is complying with its statutory public duties and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

## **10. Links to Corporate Aims**

10.1 The CES supports all Corporate Aims, especially Deprivation where inequalities in life chances are faced by many people within our most deprived areas. The objectives within the CES will give direction to Corporate Aims Delivery Plans to ensure that actions carried out to reduce inequalities.

## **11. Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

11.1 Achievement of the objectives within the CES will help to identify the inequalities faced by our service users in life chances, security and crime levels. By continuing work with partners and understanding and engaging with our communities the Council can help to reduce incidents of Crime and Anti-Social behaviour.

## **12. Equalities Impact**

12.1 See Appendix A

12.2 No negative implications for any group. Achievement of the objectives should ensure positive outcomes for all members of our community.

## **13. Risk Management**

13.1 Potential risk to reputation of the authority if found to be discriminatory and not complying with public duties, the objectives within the scheme will help to ensure the Council is complying with its public duties and equalities legislation.

- 13.2 The reputation of the Council will be enhanced by the Council becoming accredited to 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government
- 13.3 Risk that Service Managers do not refer to the CES and Equality Impact Assessments during service planning.

#### **14. Partnership Implications**

- 14.1 There will be opportunity and need to work closely with our Partners within South West One, the Voluntary Sector and other partner organisations. Achievement of the objectives will be supported by Somerset Equality Officers Group.
- 14.2 All opportunities will be taken to carry out community engagement in partnership with NHS, Avon and Somerset Police and Devon Fire Rescue Service and our neighbouring Local Authorities.

#### **15. Recommendations**

- 15.1 That the Executive approve the Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 – 2013 for adoption.
- 15.2 That the Executive consider the budget implications for the peer assessment against the Equality Framework for Local Government.

**16. Contact:** Lisa Redston  
Strategy Officer  
[l.redston@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:l.redston@tauntondeane.gov.uk)  
01823 356568

## Appendix A - Impact Assessment form and action table

What are you completing this impact assessment for? E.g. policy, service area	<b>Corporate Equality Strategy 2010-2013</b>
<b>Section One – Aims and objectives of the policy /service</b>	
<p>To state the Councils commitment to Equalities and Diversity and how the Council will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination</p> <p>To set the Councils objectives over 3 years for closing gaps in equalities for service users, non service users and employees</p>	
<b>Section two – Groups that the policy or service is targeted at</b>	
All service and non-service users, staff, Members, key stakeholders, partners.	
<b>Section three – Groups that the policy or service is delivered by</b>	
All members of TDBC staff and Members	
<b>Section four – Evidence and Data used for assessment</b>	
<p>See page 6 and 7 of the CES 2010-2013.</p> <p>The CES aims to encourage services and project managers to understand their service and non-services users and communities and the inequalities they may face.</p> <p>Individual service areas/projects will use data from National, Local and partner sources. Service user data, equality monitoring data for their service users, feedback and consultation comments to help to identify inequalities within their services, or inequalities in outcomes of strategies and plans and projects. This data will be used to inform Equality Action Plans and project plans.</p>	
<b>Section Five - Conclusions drawn about the impact of service/policy/function on different groups highlighting negative impact or unequal outcomes</b>	

There are many benefits to working towards the objectives of the Scheme both to the public, especially our most vulnerable communities, and the Council, and little negative impact on any specific equality group has been identified

The Scheme is inclusive of all equality groups that are protected by legislation and a wider range of individuals that may suffer disadvantage.

There is a potential risk to all equality groups if the Council does not take guidance from the document and if that progress towards reducing inequalities for our service users is not monitored and implemented.

There is a potential risk to all equality groups due the lack of a dedicated budget for effective engagement with diverse groups with diverse needs and budget to provide additional services for vulnerable people, such as translation.

However if Service Managers and project leads plan effectively and consider equalities issues there are mid long term financial benefits. If services are delivered in an accessible way, there will be less demand on officers and resources due to less repeat contact, less enforcement etc. Also if the Council works effectively with the Private and Third sector to support vulnerable people there will be reduced demand on our services, potentially freeing resources.

These resources could the be used to carry out proactive engagement and make improvements to our services where we are discriminating against any particular group or individual to ultimately improve the lives of disadvantaged people.

**Section six – Actions to be taken**

Ensure that the objectives of the Scheme are being achieved through regular monitoring of Service plans, CAD plans and Equality impact assessments.

Signed: Person/Manager completed by		Signed: Group Manager/Director	
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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 way anticipating and removing barriers that might impede the needs and interests of our diverse communities, we will improve the overall quality of our service.

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 equality legislation places a range of requirements on employers and service providers to meet their legal duties.

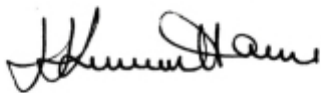
And finally TDBC, as an organisation, benefits from the diverse culture, knowledge and experience brought by our staff and service users.

This Corporate Equality Scheme presents our approach to ensuring equal life chances for all and sets out clear equality objectives for the next 3 years.

We look forward to the challenges ahead.



**Penny James**  
Chief Executive and  
Champion of Equality



**Cllr Joanna Lewin-Harris**  
Deputy Leader and  
Portfolio holder for Equality



## Purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme

Taunton Deane Borough Council remains committed to promoting equality, recognising and valuing diversity, and respecting the principles of human rights.

We believe that everyone in our local communities has the right to be safe and protected from harm, to be treated fairly and with dignity, to live the life of choice, and to take an active part in the community. This means that everyone should have equal access to our services and the right to be treated fairly by those services.

The purpose of the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) is to

- demonstrate the need to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the needs of our service users and employees
- gather the Council's commitments under one comprehensive document
- provide the basis on which each service can develop meaningful Equality and Diversity Action Plans
- set out how the Council will meet its statutory public duties to promote equality and to eliminate all forms of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of
  - disability
  - gender
  - ethnicity or national origin
  - sexuality
  - age
  - religion
  - transgender status

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

- No significant disparity in accessibility to services
- 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

## Vision, Business Principles and Core Values

The councils' Vision, Business Principles and Core Values incorporate our commitment to fairness and respect. The Corporate Equality Scheme 2010-2013 helps to develop these by establishing a framework within which we can embed equality and promote diversity within our services.

### Vision

Taunton Deane will be recognised nationally as a place that is developing sustainability, securing a better life and future for its people, businesses and communities.

### 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.

## Involving our service users

The Disability Act 2005 placed a duty on public authorities to ensure that people with disabilities contribute to the Corporate Equality Scheme and are encouraged to take part in public life. TDBC recognises that this is good practise and aims to ensure everyone has the chance to contribute regardless of their circumstances. During our period of public consultation we used a variety of sources and methods to ensure that voices were heard.

### Consultations

Public consultation took place between April 27th and June 14th 2010.

We carried out internet based consultation, inviting all members of the public, equality groups and key stakeholders (including Unison) to take part and comment on the scheme.

The document was sent to all parish councils and made available in all public buildings, such as Deane House, the Library and our local Community Offices.

We used our regular 'Deane Dispatch' article in the Somerset County Gazette to encourage all members of the public to comment on our services and the objectives of the Corporate Equality Scheme.

We consulted with our staff through the staff survey, performance reviews and feedback, and encouraged staff to comment on the draft Corporate Equality Scheme objectives.

### Equality Forums

Various forums such as The Disability Discussion Group, The Gypsy and Traveller forum and Taunton Polish Association were invited to comment and put forward ideas. The internet based consultation was advertised to all equality forums across Taunton Deane. We offered to attend meetings of forums, groups and associations to explain the Corporate Equality Scheme and offer a chance to comment on the objectives of the Scheme. A list of the groups we asked to participate can be found in Appendix A.

### Continuing consultation, feedback and engagement

Looking into the future the Corporate Equality Scheme aims to ensure that services regularly engage with their service users through a variety of means including:

- Collecting regular feedback from customers through satisfaction surveys which also ask for diversity background
- Tracking complaints by diversity background
- Annual consultation events with Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset (FEDS)
- Targeting consultation and using established forums
- Using shared engagement activities across services and partnerships

The results of these activities will help to shape Equality Action Plans for each service area.

## Our communities

Taunton Deane is a predominantly rural area with a population of around 107,400 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 gender split for the borough is 51900 male and 55500 female (2006 mid year estimates)
- 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 in 2001. However, with changing patterns of movement in society, recent estimates indicate that this figure is 6.3%. 2025 migrant workers registered on the Worker Registration Scheme between May 2004 and December 2009 (Office National Statistics mid year estimates, 2007)
- Spoken languages have changed during the last three years in Taunton Deane. Recent schools data shows that there are now many more children speaking Polish and Portuguese as their first language than Bengali and Chinese (Somerset County Council, Schools data 2009)
- 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). (2001 Census)
- There is no current data available on homophobic offences in Taunton Deane however a recent national survey showed that one in five lesbian and gay people have experienced a homophobic hate crime or incident in the last three years and one in eight during the last year (Stonewall Gay British Crime Survey, 2008)
- 6 Wards within Taunton Deane fall within the top 25% of most deprived wards in the Country. Deprivation in some wards has worsened since 2004 (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2007)
- 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). Projections show that by 2010 38.5% of the residents of Taunton Deane will be over 65 (Office of National Statistics, 2007)
- 31% of Job Seekers allowance claimants in Taunton Deane are between the ages of 18 and 24, this is higher than the national figure of 29.4% (NOMIS March 2010)
- 1283 of JSA claimants are male compared with 436 female claimants (NOMIS March 2010)

## Our communities

- There are 137 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pitches in Taunton Deane (TDBC Caravan Count 2010)
- 1168 people in Taunton Deane are registered as or known to be blind, or severely visually impaired (Somerset County Council Adult Social Care 2008)
- Approximately 8 of every 100 people in Taunton Deane claim Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement or Disability Living Allowance. (NOMIS Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement claimants August 2009)

### Taunton High Street



## 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 are committed to promoting 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, barriers to our services and inequalities in life chances. We will consider disadvantage on the grounds of

- disability
- gender
- ethnicity
- sexuality
- age
- religion
- transgender status

We will also consider any other condition or requirement which may place a person or group at a disadvantage such as geographical location, socio-economic status, those who care for others and breast-feeding mothers.

### Legislation

The scheme must consider the existing requirements placed upon it by equality legislation. Appendix B sets out what these duties are. The principal equalities legislation is as follows:

#### 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.

#### Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 identifies 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.



## Corporate commitment to equality

### 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.

### New legislation

The new Equality Act strengthens current legislation and adds further duties on Local Authorities to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all 7 equality strands. These are Race, Age, Disability, Gender, Sexual orientation, Religious Faith or Belief and Transgender. The Single Equality Bill also requires Local Authorities to consider the needs of those with caring status, breast feeding mothers, pregnant school girls and young mothers and those whose socio-economic status may put them at a disadvantage.

### The Equalities Framework for Local Government

To help us achieve our aims the Council is committed to delivering services in line with The Equalities Framework for Local Government. This framework provides a guide for local authorities to ensure they are providing equal outcomes for service users and employees.

The Equalities Framework for Local Government uses a wider definition of equality:

“An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.”

This definition is more aspirational than the formal legal definitions of equality. It is about what we can do to create a fairer society and recognises that:

- Equality is an issue for us all
- We don’t all start from the same place
- To create a fairer society we need to recognise different needs

TDBC is committed to this aspiration and to gaining its first Equalities Framework for Local Government recognition award by April 2011.

## Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 Objectives

The authority aims to mainstream equalities throughout all of its services and functions. It is essential that the consideration of the needs of our service users and communities and appropriate responses are grounded within Services. Services must know and understand the people they serve, they must work with their service users to identify inequalities and to plan and deliver their services to reduce or remove these inequalities wherever possible. Services must also promote diversity through their staff and actions.

The aim of the Corporate Equality Scheme is to steer and support Services to take responsibility for meeting the needs of our communities and ensure the authority is meeting its public duties.

The objectives within the scheme have been based on the guidance provided by the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The EFLG supports our approach to mainstreaming equalities and allows us to streamline monitoring of both the Corporate Equalities Scheme and the EFLG.

<b>Objective 1: Know our communities and improve engagement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collect equality information on service users (e.g. satisfactions surveys, application forms, complaints and feedback etc) to identify inequalities in service provision and life chances for vulnerable and disadvantage groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage with service users and carry out accessible consultation on service delivery to identify inequalities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with Members to share information on issues faced by our communities</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 2: Provide responsive services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Complete the programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Produce, implement and monitor Equality Action Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 3: Work with partners to ensure equal access and fair life chances</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with partners on improving the procurement process to promote and monitor Equality and Diversity within the service providers and suppliers we procure.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with SW1 to embed Equalities policies and procedures and include SW1 services in EIA programme</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve the grant award and commissioning processes to ensure Corporate Equality objectives are met.</li> </ul>

## Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 Objectives

<b>Objective 4: Improve challenge and scrutiny</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit regular performance reports to Members for challenge</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a robust process to ensure EIAs are included in all reports to Scrutiny and Executive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to Members and Managers to encourage Scrutiny and enable Challenge</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 5: Promote equality of opportunity as an employer</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with SouthWest One to develop a programme of equalities and diversity training for all employees</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include equalities considerations as part of the employee performance review process</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the workforce to identify the profile of the Councils employees and use the information to identify and reduce or remove inequalities through implementation and monitoring of the workforce strategy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Workforce Strategy action plan to reduce inequalities for employees</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 6: Promote inclusion in the community and participation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote diversity in Member representation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with community groups in Somerset to promote diversity and encourage participation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Community Cohesion Forum to support inclusion of all groups in the community</li> </ul>

## Implementation and monitoring

### Leadership

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 Scheme. Service Managers will produce Equality Action Plans and implement actions across the services. 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 Scheme rests with the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Community Leadership. However, all Councillors have a responsibility to support the Schemes commitments and detailed objectives.

### Implementation

The Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) will be implemented through Equality Action Plans produced by individual services. The actions within these plans will be identified from the

- objectives within the Corporate Equality Scheme
- results of recent equality impact assessments
- listening to the views expressed by staff through the staff survey and staff reviews
- listening to the views expressed by service users and other key stakeholders

Equality Action Plans will be embedded within Service Plans across the authority.

### Equality Impact Assessments

We need to understand whether our services and policies are accessible and meeting the needs of everyone. We do this through equality impact assessments.

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a council's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

The EIA focuses on specific groups to try to find out whether or not they are benefiting from a strategy, policy, service, project or function.

These groups stem from the existing legislation that covers discrimination. The groups include:

- disability
- gender
- ethnicity
- sexuality
- age
- religion
- transgender status

We will also consider issues specific to those living in rural and deprived areas, carers and any other group of people that may face disadvantage.

## Implementation and monitoring

The groups are not homogeneous and people within these groups have different and individual needs. Many will be members of several groups. Their experience of of discrimination and inequalities can involve a variety of factors.

We also consider people's basic human rights during the EIA process, considering how the service or policy may reflect on the following aspects of peoples lives:

- Longevity
- Health
- Physical Security
- Standard of Living
- Education
- Productive and valued activities
- Individual, family and social life
- Participation, influence and voice
- Identity, expression and self-respect
- Legal Security

We have carried out EIAs on each service area within the last 3 years, with many EIAs being reviewed annually.

The authority has undergone major restructure within the last 12 months and some of our services are now carried out by SouthWest One a joint venture partnership that delivers several support and customer services previously provided in-house. It will be necessary for service areas to revisit impact assessments with changes to service provision in mind.

Alongside the Corporate Equality Scheme, Equality Impact Assessments will help to inform Equalities Action Plans developed by each service area. A schedule of impact assessments can be found in Appendix C.

### Monitoring

Individual Service plans will be monitored to ensure that Equality Action Plans are included, and implemented.

As we have aligned the objectives of the CES with the objectives of the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG) we will be able to monitor the progress towards achieving both of these at the same time.

Regular equality progress reports will be produced for the Borough Council's Corporate Management Team and Councillors which will provide an update on the initiatives undertaken and progress against the CES objectives, highlighting any areas for improvement.

Our commitment to reach 'Achieving' level of the EFLG is monitored as a performance indicator as part of the councils ongoing performance management process.

## Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

The Corporate Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 recognises that there are still areas in which we need to increase our efforts to move forward, however there has been notable progress over the last 3 years that demonstrates that the communities we serve are benefiting from changes to and improvements on our equality practises. 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 compliant with government guidelines on accessibility and many services are working with members of the community to listen to and act on ways in which we can make our services fair and accessible. We have completed Equality Impact Assessments on a wide range of our services and policies which have helped us to make these changes and improvements.

### Corporate

- Access statements are now included on all our key documents and communications
- Managers and Lead officers have undergone Equality Impact Assessment training
- Managers have undergone training in producing Equality Action Plans
- Equality Impact Assessments are included in all reports to the members of Corporate and Community Scrutiny Committee and the Executive to give Councillors the information they need to make decisions to help reduce inequalities.
- Information to assess inequalities for specific groups is collected as part of the revised complaints and feedback process.
- A package of hearing loop systems have been purchased and other changes made to signage and layout to improve accessibility in the reception area and meeting rooms
- 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. Lowered booths at election stations have been introduced to meet the needs of disabled users
- Several Members have adopted the role of Equality Champions



### Human Resources

- 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

## Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

- The staff survey includes equality monitoring information and equality considerations strongly influence the Workforce strategy and plan
- A good practise guide has been developed for all staff called 'The way we work'. This sets out standards that service users and staff can expect from TDBC regardless of background or specific needs

### Growth and Development Theme

- Development Management (planning) have built up good links and works closely with Gypsy and Traveller communities through a Gypsy and Traveller Forum
- Heritage and Landscape services are working with youth and elderly groups and have carried out risk assessments that have led to improved access to all local nature reserves and some public rights of way
- The Building Control service has built good relationships with a Disability Group helping to promote the service and increase understanding of regulations

### Multi Use Games Area



### Community Services Theme

- Extensive work to promote diversity and reduce inequalities by Leisure Services through close work with equality groups in the design of strategies and leisure facilities.
- Food safety training carried out jointly with Sedgemoor District Council in Bengali and Mandarin (held in Bridgwater but promoted to TDBC businesses)
- 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.
- Leisure development grants have enabled greater access for those with disabilities and improved facilities for all age groups using halls and community centres.



## Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

- Sports services are ensuring new facilities are Disability Discrimination Act (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.
- The number of designated disabled parking spaces has been increased. Blue Badge holders are able to park without charge in all Council car parks.

### Community Handyman Service



### Housing

- Documents have been translated in response to need; the Tenant Pack and handbook have been translated into Polish
- The tenants handbook now makes reference to Equalities and Diversity
- The tenant's forum constitution makes reference to Equalities and Diversity and is responsible for promotion
- 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

### Strategy Unit

- Working with SouthWest One to consider and monitor equalities and diversity throughout the procurement process to ensure suppliers comply with Equality legislation
- Supporting the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector. Current funding includes Taunton Deane Disability Group, The Western Boys Association, Taunton Polish Association and rural 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
- Development of Equality Monitoring forms that can be used by service to collect equalities information during engagement, training and events to assess participation



## Equality progress as at 1 February 2010

- Commissioned an equalities group forum (Forum for Equality and Diversity in Somerset) to carry out engagement work and consultation on our behalf
- The Strategy Unit is engaging proactively with various groups throughout Taunton Deane as part of its consultation process to secure greater representation and involvement of residents. Engagement on the Core Strategy was designed to be fully accessible and promoted among all local Equality Groups, including Compass Disability, the Polish Association and Somerset Gay Health



### Direct Labour Organisation

- Continuing work to support disabled people by the provision of a greenhouse at the Nursery to support skills development
- Provision of English mentors for non-English speaking employees and employee information has been translated
- Carried out a wide range of consultation with disability and community groups to influence the design of parks and delivery of services

## Appendices

### A - Corporate Equality Scheme consultation list

In addition to internal consultation with Councillors and various staff groups the following external organisations were also given the opportunity to provide input to the development of the Corporate Equality Scheme:

- Anglo Chinese Society
- Age UK
- Bangladeshi Association
- Connexions
- Halcon Children's Centre
- Hillside Children's Centre
- Holway Children's Centre
- Mendip District Council
- MENCAP
- NHS Carers' Group
- Somerset Access and Inclusion Network
- Somerset Association for the Blind
- Somerset 2BU
- Somerset Black Development Agency
- Somerset Chinese Association
- Somerset College of Arts & Technology
- Somerset County Federation of Women's Institutes
- Somerset Gay Health
- Somerset Multi-Cultural Forum
- Somerset Race Equality Council
- Somerset Rural Women's Network
- Somerset Sight
- Standing Conference of Women's Organisations
- Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust
- Taunton Bangladeshi Association
- Taunton Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Taunton Deane Sheltered Housing Forum
- Taunton Dyslexia Group
- Taunton Interfaith Group
- Taunton Polish Association
- Taunton Voluntary Action
- Taunton Women's Gypsy Group
- Taunton Women's Refuge
- The Albemarle Centre
- Unison

## Appendices

### B - General and specific duties for Race, Disability and Gender

Public bodies have a duty to produce a Scheme to meet their duties under Race and Disability and Gender.

- 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 community relations	•		•
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			•

## Appendices

Specific Duties			
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		•	

## Appendices

### C - 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 require an impact assessment of 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. EIA Guidance and a proforma have been developed to enable staff to undertake impact assessments.

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
<b>Strategy and Corporate</b>				
Democratic Services	•	•		
Overview and Scrutiny	•	•		
Public Relations	•		•	
Communications (internal/external)	•		•	
Marketing	•			
Community Planning and Strategy/LSP	•	•		
Voluntary and Community Sector	•	•		
Land Charges				•
Legal Services				•
Forward Planning	•			
Local Development Framework				•
Housing Strategy				•

## Appendices

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
<b>Growth and Development</b>				
Building Control	•	•		
Development Control	•		•	
Economic Development and Tourism	•			
Economic Development Strategy				•
Heritage and Landscape	•		•	
Tourist Information Centre	•	•		
Housing Enabling				•
<b>Community and Leisure</b>				
Cemeteries and Crematorium	•	•		
Community Safety	•		•	
Crime and Disorder Partnership	•			
Civil Contingencies – Safe Centres				•
Internal Health and Safety				•
Leisure Development – Com Hall Grants	•	•		
Leisure Development – Green Space Strategy	•	•		
Leisure Development - Allotment Strategy		•		
Leisure Development – Play Pitch Strategy		•		

## Appendices

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
Parking - On Street/Car Parks	•		•	
Environmental Health - Communications	•		Combined	
Environmental Health - Internal Referrals	•		(•)	
Environmental Health – Policy and Strategy	•		(•)	
Environmental Health - Premises Inspections	•		(•)	
Environmental Health - Service Requests	•		(•)	
Sports Development Strategy	•		•	
Housing Supported Services				•
Deane Helpline				•
Housing Estate Management	•	•		
Tenants Liaison	•	•		
Void Control	•		•	
Housing Private Sector	•			
Homeless				•
Housing Allocation				•
Licencing				•
<b>DLO</b>				
DLO reform				•
Cleansing	•	•		

## Appendices

Theme/Service Area	Completed 2006	Completed / Reviewed 2009	To be reviewed 2010	To be completed 2010/11
Parks	•	•		
DLO Transport	•	•		
Repairs and Maintenance		•		
<b>Partnerships/Retained Services</b>				
Housing Benefits	•		•	
Council Tax and Business rates	•		•	
Customer Services	•		•	
Financial Services	•	•		
Human Resources - Recruitment	•		•	
Human Resources – Employee Development	•		•	
Information Services				•
Asset management – Right to Buy	•			•
Asset Management - Leasing				•
Facilities Management				•
Office Services				•
Procurement Process				•
Corporate Complaints	•	•		
Somerset Waste Partnership	•		•	



## Appendices

### D - Links to other corporate documents

#### **TDBC Corporate Strategy 2010-2013**

The Corporate Strategy outlines what kind of organisation we want to be and the key activities that will help us achieve our priorities to improve quality of life and make a positive difference in our communities. The Corporate Strategy establishes the Councils Vision, Business Principles and Core Values which are set out on page 6 of this Scheme and incorporate our commitment to fairness and respect. The Corporate Strategy has been through an Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure that its aims will not discriminate and will help to remove inequalities in our communities.

#### **Equality Policy**

TDBC has a comprehensive Equality Policy, which is reviewed annually (last update June 2009). 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 the policy, along with the key legislation and those who have responsibility for implementing and assisting with all aspects of the policy. The policy can be found on the TDBC website [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk).

#### **Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2017**

Key local organisations and agencies in have come together as the Local Strategic Partnership to produce the Taunton Deane Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This establishes an overall vision and set of quality of life priorities. The strategy is developed through public consultation and is underpinned by its commitment to equality, diversity and social cohesion. By delivering the Corporate Equality Scheme (CES) the Council will assist in achieving the objectives of the SCS.

#### **Somerset Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement**

The Local Area Agreement is an action plan that supports the Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy. It is a formal agreement between central and local public and voluntary sector agencies. Good performance will release government funding to the local area. The CES will ensure that we are performing well and delivering against our shared targets.

#### **Workforce Strategy**

TDBC's service delivery, like other organisations, is provided through the people it employs. The Workforce Strategy provides a framework to consider and address the needs of our employees. The Strategy carefully considers potential inequalities faced by our staff and has been developed with guidance from the Equalities Framework for Local Government.

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".

## Appendices

### E - Glossary of Terms

**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 Framework for Local Government...** is a framework that has been developed by the iDEA to mainstream equality into all areas of service delivery and employment practices whilst taking into account changing demographics, the CAA and the Single Equality Bill.

**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

CES - Corporate Equality Scheme

CMT - Corporate Management Team

DDA - Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

DES - Disability Equality Scheme

EIA - Equality Impact Assessment

LSP - Local Strategic Partnership

EFLG - Equalities Framework for Local Government

GES - Gender Equality Scheme

PRED - Performance Review and Employee Development

RES - Race Equality Scheme

SCS - Sustainable Community Strategy

SW1 - South West One

TDBC - Taunton Deane Borough Council