Equality Standard for Local Government

Level 3 Validation - Self Assessment 2008
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Section 1 - Corporate Assessment
SECTION 1 CORPORATE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

South Gloucestershire has many distinct and diverse communities, both of interest and of place. We want to encourage cohesive communities that can remain stable while accommodating cultural, social, economic and environmental change. We embrace the opportunities and challenges of tackling inequalities whilst maintaining South Gloucestershire’s diversity.

The Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government as our delivery framework for delivering equality and diversity and has committed itself to achieving Level 5 by 2010. By working through the Standard, the Council is able to integrate equality and diversity into policymaking, service delivery and employment. The Council has undertaken comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments on all of its policies and functions and uses a process of consultation to ensure it involves and engages local residents in sustaining our performance improvements.

In South Gloucestershire, we currently face three significant challenges in the area of equalities with regard to:

- The provision of suitable accommodation for gypsies and travellers;
- The integration of economic migrants;
- The fact that we are expected to be the fastest growing area for housing provision in the south west. As a result of this, we will realise increased diversity within the local population;

We are aware of the increase in the resident migrant population in South Gloucestershire as a result of specific project work done in relation to Polish migrant workers.

We welcome and embrace these challenges and will be judged by the way we manage and deliver on them.

Whilst much tangible progress has already been made in developing its equality and diversity practices, the Council recognises that there is room for development and improvement and is determined to embed the true values of equality and diversity into all its policies and processes.

Achieving Level 3 of the Standard would register the Council’s commitment and continued progress towards achievement in the area of equality and diversity to all its stakeholders. We have used the framework provided by the Equality Standard to mainstream equality throughout the activities of the Council.

Within this assessment, we have endeavoured to set out an accurate appraisal of our progress to date. We have made real improvements and departments have embraced and demonstrated commitment to the equalities agenda. However, paradoxically, the more involvement there has been, the greater the recognition that there is so much more to do but given the existing commitment, we are determined, on behalf of our residents and staff, we will achieve the vision we have set out.
South Gloucestershire Area Profile

Our residents are fortunate to have a high quality local environment which they greatly value. The district covers 49,700 hectares with a population of 252,000. South Gloucestershire has a rich heritage which must be protected and enhanced. It is an area of diversity and contrast with a variety of communities, characterised by the special relationship between town and country. Attractive landscape combines unspoilt market towns and villages and established urban communities with major new residential areas, industrial and commercial development. The area stretches from the River Severn in the west to the Cotswolds in the east. Its southern boundary borders Bristol, abuts the River Avon and extends almost to Bath. Both the first and second crossing of the River Severn lie within South Gloucestershire and the area is well served by both motorway and rail links.

South Gloucestershire has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country with over 30,000 jobs and 18,000 homes created since 1991. The area has well established manufacturing industries such as aerospace and newer commercial development. Many high technology companies are now based in South Gloucestershire and a high profile science park is being developed in partnership with the South West Regional Development Agency and the Universities of Bristol, Bath and the University of the West of England. The area has also attracted a number of larger employers in recent years such as AXA and the Ministry of Defence.

While the scale and pace of economic growth has brought prosperity and above average health, it has also created major challenges with a substantial increase in traffic, pressure on the transport infrastructure, increasing levels of waste and pressure for more housing and development within the urban area and in the countryside. Heavy dependence on the car has contributed to reduced levels of physical activity and increasing obesity. These challenges are set to continue as the Regional Spatial Strategy proposes over 30,000 more homes by 2026.

With no single town centre in South Gloucestershire, we want to ensure all communities achieve their potential.

We want to provide the appropriate services to our residents in ways that give some choice and control. The dispersed nature of our communities means that service delivery can be costly and complex which places additional pressure on us to strike a balance between competing demands and to be clear about our priorities. The affluence of the area means that funding is often restricted and so great care is taken to ensure that services are appropriate, effective and efficient; managing our scarce resources wisely. This may mean being more innovative and creative in how we deliver our services and find solutions to problems.
Race in South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire has a small but growing number of black and minority ethnic residents. The 2001 census shows the ethnic composition of this unitary authority is as follows:

Total population: 245,641

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White other</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black and other ethnic minority</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composition of the 2.4% Black and other ethnic minority population is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Black African</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Asian</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mixed</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian or British Asian:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black or Black British:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Black</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Chinese                             | 13.1%     |
| Other ethnic group                  | 7.0%      |

Whilst the 2001 Census shows a total of 2.4% Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people are residing in South Gloucestershire, a Housing Needs Survey conducted in 2003 shows 4.2% Black and Minority Ethnic people living in the area. No new survey is planned before the next Census, however, all agencies expect the figure to be significantly higher.

This figure still does not account for the numbers of Gypsy/Travellers within the population as the Census had no category for this group. Local monitoring shows thirty four families are resident on Council pitches, 3 dozen live on private pitches and approximately a dozen reside in Housing. The Traveller Unit comes into contact with approximately 200 families a year including those in transit.
The Council officer with responsibility for the Traveller Unit has direct links with local gypsies and Irish travellers and is recognised by them as a credible advocate to represent their views. Members and staff have been recently been briefed about gypsy and traveller issues, prior to publication of proposed new sites for accommodation as part of the DPD.

The Council has a service level agreement with the Black Development Agency to help the authority to strengthen the voice of the local BME groups. The Race Equality network is still in the early stages of development but will play a key role in the development of services for BME residents in South Gloucestershire.

The Race Equality Scheme is currently under review and out for consultation.

There is a corporate BME workers network that contribute to relevant issues within the authority.

Three Group Support Workers are funded to work with and represent The Asian, Somali and Chinese communities.

The Partnership Against Hate Crime has been established to support those victims of hate crime in South Gloucestershire.

An extract from our ‘Viewpoint’ survey tells us that approaching three in five (57%) of ‘Viewpoint’ panel members believe that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Conversely just 8% disagree. Males are also significantly more likely to agree than females (61% compared to 53%) that their area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together.

To further probe issues of community cohesion all panel members were asked to what extent they agree or disagree that people in their area are victimised because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion. Fewer than one in ten (9%) agree that people in their area are victimised because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion while nearly half (49%) disagree. In 2006 fewer than one in ten respondents (8%) felt that people in their area were victimised in this manner while 56% disagreed.
Gender in South Gloucestershire

In South Gloucestershire, 50.5% of the population are female and 49.5% are male. Women make up 55% of the over 65 population and 68% of the over 75 population. 75% of men are in good health compared to 70% of women.

The working age population in South Gloucestershire is 153,000. Of this 52% are male and 48% female.

On average, men in South Gloucestershire earn 30% more than women £524 compared to £370 (gross weekly pay of full time workers). The hourly rate of pay for men is 22% more than for women, £12.65 compared to £9.82

There are 20,600 economically inactive people in South Gloucestershire, 60% of which are women. 21% of economically inactive women wanted a job compared to 18% of economically inactive men.

Men make up 69% of job seeker allowance claimants in South Gloucestershire. Nearly twice as many women provide 50 or more hours of care a week than men.

There are significant differences in the working patterns of men and women in South Gloucestershire:
- Only 3% of men work part time as an employee compared with 26% of women.
- 60% of men work full time as an employee compared with 32% of women.
- 12% of men are self employed compared to 4% of women.
- 10% of women look after home or family compared to 0.5% of men.

There are significant differences in the occupation patterns of men and women in South Gloucestershire:
- 19% of men are managers and senior officials compared to 11% of women.
- 13% of men work in professional occupations compared to 7% of women.
- 28% of women work in secretarial or administrative occupations compared to 6% of men.
- 20% of men work in skilled trades occupations compared to 2% of women.
- 11% of women work in personal service occupations compared to 1% of men.
- 13% of women work in sales and customer service occupations compared to 4% of men.
- 12% of men work as process, plant and machine operatives compared to 2% of women.

South Gloucestershire Council employs 9545 staff, 76% are women and 24% are male.
- 33% of women work full time compared to 80% of men.
- 67% of women work part time compared to 20% of men.
- 29% of senior management posts are filled by women (excluding schools).
- 40% of women are in the top 5% of the Council’s earners (excluding schools).
The Council funds and supports the annual International Women’s Day.

Our Children’s and Young Peoples service has a range of gender related initiatives e.g. strategies to address issues around teenage mothers, black Caribbean boys and underachieving boys in lower socio-economic groups. Future initiatives include continuing improvement in mathematics and science for girls and literacy for boys.

We have a Gender Equality Scheme in place and this will be subject to review over the next six months.
**Disability in South Gloucestershire**

Information from the 2001 Census shows us that 14.5% (approximately 36,250) of South Gloucestershire residents considered that they were ‘limited in their daily activities’. This compares with 18.2% across England and Wales.

In October 2006 the number of disabled people employed by South Gloucestershire council was reported as 2.55%. This represents a huge increase over the last three years and the percentage is continuing to increase.

The steering group for the Disability Equality Network is now set up. This is a group of disabled people and organisations of and representing disabled people in South Gloucestershire:-

a) To empower, enable and support disabled people living and working in South Gloucestershire and their organisations to achieve greater choice and control over their own lives and to put the views of disabled people forward to all those providing services to and involved in disabled people’s issues.

b) To promote disability equality principles and practice (as stated in the Disability Discrimination Act- 2005 and South Gloucestershire Council’s Disability Equality Scheme), to challenge discrimination against disabled people and to equalise opportunity and treatment for disabled people from the services they receive.

There is also an active Disabled Employees Group for Council employees.

**Age in South Gloucestershire**

Age discrimination can affect both young and older people, particularly when they apply for jobs. The age structure in South Gloucestershire is broadly similar to the national picture. According to the 2001 census, 20.8% of the local population are under 16 years old and 39,188 (or 16% of the population) are aged 16-29. The older population is growing. 14.4% of the local population are aged 65 or over, of whom 8,409 were aged 80 or over in the 2001 census.

The highest proportions of children are found in areas of newer housing, with Dodington and Bradley Stoke Sherbourne wards having the highest proportions of under 16 year olds.

Young adults are similarly concentrated in new housing areas, particularly Bradley Stoke, but also more established urban areas like Patchway, Filton, Yate West and Dodington. The highest concentrations of population aged 65 and over are found in established housing areas for example Alveston, Westerleigh, Downend, Winterbourne and Staple Hill.

There are several organisations that represent older people and we need to continue close working relationships with them. They can provide advice and guidance, as well as assisting with communication and providing multi agency problem solving assistance.
There are a variety of forums, which can allow young people to have a say. In addition to the South Gloucestershire Youth Forum, there are schools councils, some geographic forums and specific initiatives with looked after children, young carers, young mums and disabled young people. There is a consultation post for under 13s which is funded by the Children’s Fund and work undertaken by youth workers and local authority and voluntary sector youth projects.

**Faith in South Gloucestershire**

For many members of the community that we serve, religious belief will constitute their deepest conviction and will inform all aspects of their life. Within South Gloucestershire there are representatives of every world religion. We have communities of every Christian denomination, as well as Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, Baha’i and many others. This imposes a duty upon us to learn to understand what others believe and to value and respect other people’s freedom to express their belief and convictions.

We respect the fact that everyone has the right to practise their religious beliefs and we will do what we can to take account of specific religious needs.

The recently established South Gloucestershire Faith Forum has been set up to promote harmonious relations between people of different faiths and involve them in the civic life of the area. The basis for this group is a commitment to improve the quality of life for local people by working together on agreed projects, demonstrating partnership between different faiths.

**Sexual Orientation in South Gloucestershire**

Sexuality is a sensitive issue and is a subject many people choose to keep a private matter and this should be respected. There is no hard data on the number of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals in the UK. However, the Government is using the figure of 5-7% of the population and Stonewall agree that this is a reasonable estimate. This means that across the area, we have approximately 15,000 residents who identify as being LGB – the largest minority community in South Gloucestershire.

Prejudice against certain forms of sexuality has been institutionalised in our society for centuries but legislation and culture are slowly changing although not at the same speed. There is a responsibility upon individual employees and the organisation to challenge those who use derogatory language around sexuality or display such behaviour both in the community and in the organisation.

The South Gloucestershire Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Forum (SGLGBF) is the main channel that the Council uses for engagement and consultation with the LGB community. Set up almost ten years ago, it is a champion for equal rights for its community members and underpins the need to ensure a safe environment where people can access services without fear of discrimination.

Our Partnership Against Hate Crime (PAHC) work to address issues of homophobic hate crime through its Homophobic Case Review Panel. The Council also commissions work from a VCS organisation *Education and Action Challenging Homophobia* (EACH) and this organisation has provided training for our managers on related issues.
Our future population

The population has grown by over 20% in the past 20 years, to approximately 252,000. The area is expected to continue to grow and by 2011 it is expected that:–

• The number of households will increase by over 7,000 to 111,000
• The number of people over 65 will increase by 24%
• 12,000 people will be 80+
• The number of 15 – 24 year olds will increase by nearly 12,000 to 38,000
• 60% of the Authority’s total population lives in the built up areas immediately adjoining Bristol, namely Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Kingswood, Downend, Staple Hill and Hanham, a further 19% live in the towns of Yate, Chipping Sodbury and Thornbury and the remaining 20% live in the more rural areas of South Gloucestershire.
• Our minority ethnic population is not large (4.2%) and is mostly located in our urban areas.

South Gloucestershire is relatively affluent, but there are some hidden pockets of deprivation at a sub ward level, mainly in urban areas.
South Gloucestershire Council’s Vision and Values

Our future vision is that South Gloucestershire is “A great place to live and work”

South Gloucestershire is a place in which we take great pride, where our communities, organisations and businesses work in partnership within an outstanding natural environment to bring about sustainable success and well being for all.

We want everyone who lives and works in South Gloucestershire to meet their aspirations and enjoy an excellent quality of life. We will achieve this by addressing our seven priorities:

**Investing in children and young people**

*So that South Gloucestershire’s children and young people have the best possible start in life and are involved in shaping their future*

Our priorities are:

**Enjoy and achieve**
- To aim for excellence in all our education provision, in particular to raise standards in early years, at Key Stage 4 and at Post 16.
- To ensure that all children and young people have encouragement and opportunities to learn, play, enjoy and achieve wherever they are.
- To continue to develop and implement capital investment strategies to improve the quality of school, play and youth facilities.

**Economic wellbeing**
- To ensure that all children and young people grow up in strong and secure families and vibrant communities.
- To enhance the curriculum, training and employment opportunities for young people so that they will develop the knowledge, academic, practical and life skills to enable them to achieve rewarding adult lives.

**Be healthy**
- To ensure that all children and young people enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and healthy lifestyles in particular in relation to obesity and sexual health.

**Be safe**
- To ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded, protected from harm and neglect and feel safe and secure at all times.
- To promote multi agency preventative support for those children and young people identified at an early stage-of being at risk of social exclusion including homelessness.

**Positive Contribution**
- To ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations, take increased responsibility for their own futures, be creative and play a full and positive part in their communities.
- To extend the range of and access to positive activities and opportunities for young people.
Being healthier
So that South Gloucestershire’s people lead healthier lives and all communities share the benefits

Our priorities are:

Healthy lifestyles
• To help people to choose a healthy lifestyle by providing an environment, information, support and services that make the healthy choice the easy choice
• To make planning for health needs and healthy lifestyles an integral part of planning our new communities.

Inequalities in health
• To improve health for all, particularly for those individuals and communities with the poorest health.

Threats to health
• To reduce the impact of infectious diseases and other threats to health, including sexually transmitted infections.

Modernising health and community care services
So that South Gloucestershire’s people enjoy high quality health and community care services that focus on their individual needs and enable them to retain their independence

Our priorities are:

Health and Wellbeing
• To improve the integration of mental health services for working age and older people.
• To bring health and care services closer to where people live.
• To provide a wider range of health and social care services to enable people to avoid hospital admission or delayed hospital discharge.

Quality of Life
• To provide services for older and vulnerable people to retain and maximise independence and live at home; together with an ambitious programme of extra care housing development.

Positive Contribution
• To modernise and develop first class services for adults with learning difficulties.

Exercising Choice and Control
• To develop high quality services that provide individuals with greater choice and independence.
Freedom from discrimination & Harassment
• To work with health and social care providers to further improve responses to adult
  protection issues.

Economic Wellbeing
• To invest in additional resources to improve access to work for vulnerable adults.

Personal Dignity and Respect
• To raise quality standards for adults in hospitals and institutional settings and
  develop the knowledge and skills base of the health and social care workforce.

Managing future development
So that we deal positively with the challenges posed by more growth
by planning in an integrated way for high quality homes, local
community facilities and a convenient and safe transport network,
which meets our communities’ needs and aspirations

Our priorities are:

Housing
• To plan to meet the housing needs of existing and future residents and to enable an
  adequate supply of affordable and supported housing.

Sustainable new communities
• To engage stakeholders, local communities and developers in planning and
  delivering well-designed, high quality and sustainable new and existing communities.
• To ensure that new communities have access to a full range of community facilities
  and formal and informal open spaces.

Travel and accessibility
• To deliver improvements to the transport system that tackle congestion, minimise air
  and noise pollution, reduce high carbon travel, enhance travel choice (particularly for
  public transport, cycling and walking).
• To reduce the need to travel by promoting alternative ways of working and creating
  more opportunities for walking and cycling.

Environmental Sustainability
• To deliver new development that is needed in ways which improve and enhance our
  natural and built environment and heritage and which minimises the environmental
  impact.
• To ensure that all new buildings are energy efficient, are capable of being used
  flexibly in their lifetimes and are of high quality design.
Promoting safer and stronger communities
So that all South Gloucestershire’s communities are strong and safe, people are encouraged to participate in the life of the communities to which they belong and differences are respected

Our priorities are:

Feel safe and be safe
• To continue to prevent and tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and the fear of crime effectively.
• To tackle violence effectively, in particular domestic violence and all hate crime incidents.
• To reduce reoffending through targeted joint working.
• To expand current Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services

Promote equality of opportunity and reduce disadvantage
• To reduce inequalities that exist within South Gloucestershire.
• To support vulnerable communities and tackle deprivation.
• To improve opportunities for vulnerable people who face barriers because of where they live or because of personal characteristics, and which prevents them sharing in the greater benefits enjoyed by the wider community.
• Improve housing conditions and standards for vulnerable people.
• To sustain an environment for a thriving voluntary and community sector.

Be cleaner and greener
• To enhance South Gloucestershire’s attractiveness with well-managed and maintained streets and green spaces.

Promote engagement and cohesion
• To increase the involvement of people in the life of their communities and in the decision making processes that affect their quality of life and the services they receive.

Develop community facilities
• To ensure there is sufficient social space, buildings and networks to create vibrant, cohesive communities and enable rich cultural participation and opportunities for interaction.
Valuing the environment
So that South Gloucestershire will be a place where people respect the natural world, cultural and historic environment, take action to protect, enhance and enjoy their environment and live low carbon, sustainable and healthy lifestyles

Our priorities are:

Climate Change
• To cut emissions of greenhouse gases and manage the impacts of climate change.

Resource Use, Pollution and Waste
• To cut consumption of resources, prevent pollution and waste and live within environmental limits.

Natural, Historic and Built Environment
• To conserve and enhance the natural, historic and built environment and promote local access and enjoyment by all.

Meet Needs Locally
• To strengthen local supply chains and promote the use of local goods and services.

Maintaining economic prosperity
So that South Gloucestershire’s local economy is sustainable and balanced and prosperity is shared by all

Our Priorities

Business competitiveness and economic growth.
• To improve productivity and competitiveness and safeguard/increase jobs in key sectors including aerospace, engineering, other manufacturing sectors, defence, environmental technologies, high technology, financial services, creative industries, health services and the rural economy.

Business development
• To increase the number, survival rates and growth rates of starter and small enterprises in South Gloucestershire including social enterprises.

Skills and workforce development
• To raise skill levels and meet the skill and workforce needs of employers.

Employment land and premises
• To meet the employment land and premises requirements of indigenous businesses and key sector businesses, where sustainable and consistent with strategic employment and regeneration objectives.
Sharing the benefits of economic growth
• To ensure that all parts of South Gloucestershire and all groups share the benefits of economic development in particular priority areas, rural areas and disadvantaged groups.

Town and district centres
• To sustain and improve the vibrancy and vitality of town and district centres including Kingswood, Staple Hill, Downend, Yate and Thornbury.
Council Structure

South Gloucestershire Council has agreed a constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Council is composed of 70 councillors elected every four years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their ward. The overriding duty of councilors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them. Councillors have to agree to follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee is responsible for training and advising them on the code of conduct. All councillors meet together as the Council. Meetings of the Council are normally open to the public.

The Council appoints select committees to be responsible for overview and scrutiny, and for being the principal means of holding the Executive to account. Various non-executive committees are appointed by the Council to make decisions on those matters which cannot be the responsibility of the Executive (e.g. development control, licensing and public rights of way).

The Executive is the part of the Council which is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Executive is made up of the Leader of the Council executive councillors appointed by the Council. Together they form the Executive or Cabinet.

Overview and scrutiny is undertaken by 6 ‘select committees’ which support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole.

In order to give local citizens a greater say in council affairs, 5 area forums have been created. These cover groups of wards and bring together local councilors and the local community to discuss issues of interest and concern. The local councilors on each forum form an area committee to take decisions on certain delegated functions.
Implementing the Equality Standard

The Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government. The standard is designed to integrate equality and diversity aims into policy making, service delivery and employment. By working through the standard the Council will also address its obligations under the law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Achievement criteria</th>
<th>By When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Commitment to a Comprehensive Equalities Plan</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation to identify equalities issues relevant to the Council</td>
<td>Achieved October 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Setting equality objectives and Targets, using information identified at level 2 to set objectives, actions and targets and related performance indicators, to maximise the positive impact of our activities and to minimise or remove negative impact.</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish and maintain Information systems and monitoring against targets so we know when we have achieved our objectives and targets set at level 3.</td>
<td>April 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Achieve and review outcomes so that we know the Council’s achievements and what we still have to do. At this level we may need to change the objectives targets and performance indicators set at level 3.</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Position Statement for Level 3

Having assessed ourselves as having achieved level 2 in October 2006, we believe that we are now working at Level 3 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government. The ESLG framework has been fundamental to our understanding and development of Equality and Diversity principles which have been embraced across the authority.

This assessment is, we feel, an honest appraisal of our current position as an authority with regard to the equalities agenda. The gathering of the information contained in this assessment has been co-ordinated by the Corporate Equalities Officer along with the Equality and Diversity Action Team (which is made up of senior representatives from every department within the authority). The gathering of the evidence and supporting statements has been carried out within each department, co-ordinated by their departmental equalities representative and equalities groups.

A major step forward for the authority is the Development of our performance-monitoring tool “PB Views”. This comprehensive system enables all departments to record actions and summaries of their progress towards their targets and objectives, and ensures that a robust methodology for joined-up practice has been well established. The system has proved particularly useful for monitoring our progress on equalities and we have used the ESLG framework to assist us in our development and usage of the PB Views system. The lead equality representative for each department has the responsibility to maintain the system and track their departmental progress. The Corporate Equalities Officer is able to monitor activity and address areas for improvement across the authority. The system also allows for the compilation of detailed reports as necessary. We are proud of this development and believe that it will prove to be an invaluable mechanism for us to effectively monitor our progress towards our equality objectives.

Specific resources have been allocated to equalities work in support of our objectives, but we are of the view that equalities is integral to our work and must be embedded in the day to day work of all departments. Our PB Views system and the organisation of departmental structures which drive the equalities agenda throughout the authority allows us to achieve this vision in practice. For this reason we retain a smaller corporate equalities team than many other authorities. Our equalities team exists to provide advice and guidance across the authority rather than attempt to deliver the equalities agenda in isolation.

Equality and Diversity is viewed as being central to all activities that we undertake and deliver as an authority and not as an “add on”. We appreciate that it is not enough just to espouse our commitment to equalities in our corporate policies and strategies, but that this must be translated into specific and meaningful actions which benefit all our residents and staff, in particular those who fall within minority groups. We believe that our commitment to this proactive approach is demonstrated from the leadership provided by councillors, the Chief Executive and senior management through to our front-line staff.

All policies and functions have been assessed in terms of their impact on equalities and we have involved service users in this. We involved local people, local groups, communities and our partners in developing our services and feel that continuing involvement is crucial to ensuring that the equalities agenda is based on the principles of continuous improvement.
In using the ESLG framework we have worked hard to ensure that, through all departments, we are identifying the needs of our residents and staff and, importantly, are implementing the changes necessary to ensure our continuous improvement. Our approaches and activity in this area have enabled equality to be mainstreamed into the full range of Council services and functions.

South Gloucestershire Council has outlined a clear and ambitious vision for the area in our Corporate Plan. We are acknowledged as a caring and listening authority, which is efficient in its service delivery. We seek to engage all sections of the community and, with our partners, have developed a good understanding of diverse local needs. We have a shared understanding of priorities and focus resources where they will make a real difference for all local people. We embrace the results of consultation exercises and this, together with the results of our Equality Impact Assessments, forms the basis for any necessary changes and informs our continuous improvement in service delivery.

Our Corporate Equality Policy and Corporate Action Plan (based on the ESLG), together with the statutory Equality Schemes addresses both the Council’s legal obligations and locally set challenges to further embed equality of opportunity across all our activities and services. Corporate plans are supported by individual service area equality plans which contribute to the Departmental Equality Action Plans and which are included in our Operational Service plans.

Our aim is to ensure that each person living in the South Gloucestershire Council area and working for the authority, enjoys the best quality of life and that they are valued and enabled to reach their full potential. In ensuring that this is the case it will in turn ensure that the value of the authority is maximised.

Validation for Level 3 would serve as an acknowledgement of the hard work and commitment by the authority to achieving and delivering equality in South Gloucestershire, but we know that this is just an indication of our progression and that there is much more that will need to be done. The ESLG has acted for us as an important catalyst for objective setting and planning and has provided us with the necessary guidelines to achieve our equality related goals.
Leadership and Corporate Commitment

There is a positive commitment by our political leaders and senior management to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded in all Council activities and this is clearly demonstrated in the Council Plan and Vision.

As a major force for influence in South Gloucestershire, we take our role seriously and seek to ensure that all residents benefit from the equality and diversity values that are applied to the provision of all our services.

The Leader of the Council is responsible for the equalities agenda in South Gloucestershire and is supported in this role by the Deputy Leader. The South Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership (SGSP) is chaired by a Cabinet Member. The Corporate Equality Forum is chaired by a member of the SGSP. The Council’s Community Services select committee has a specific role in reviewing and monitoring the Council’s work and performance on equality. The Director of Community Services provides the Corporate lead for the equalities agenda, advising and supporting the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Action Team. Each Departmental Management Team has equalities as a regular item on their agenda. (See Equalities Organisation Chart).

The Equalities and Diversity Action Team was established in 2001 to coordinate work on equalities across Council services. This is a high profile group chaired by the Director of Community Services and includes senior officer representation from across the Council.

The Council’s Equality Policy and Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan published in October 2006 cut across all service areas and strategic documents and inform work in priority areas. It focuses on the equality strands of Race, Gender and Disability.

The Council Plan identifies key outcomes for improvement and these are informed by Government guidance, Equality Impact Assessments and engagement with residents and partners.

Our Sustainable Community Strategy 2008, developed by the South Gloucestershire Partnership sets out our vision for an excellent quality of life and sets out specific objectives to promote equality of opportunity and reduce disadvantage. Our Strategy is supported by plans and policies including the Older People Strategy, Schemes for Race, Disability and Gender and the Traveller and Gypsy Policy.

Equalities and diversity are embedded within the Council’s corporate guidance and toolkit for policy planning and development. Consideration of equalities implications must be demonstrated in all decisions taken by the Cabinet. Projects are developed following a needs analysis to ensure that the needs of local people are built into projects at every stage.
Senior Officers are represented at external equalities groups e.g. Head of Communities is on the steering group of the local Race Equality and Human Rights Service which is being established for this area; The Director of Community Care and Housing, through the long standing Black and Minority Ethnic Communities working group, which is hosted by the Community Care and Housing Department commissioned an event which produced an plan of action to help improve access to public and other services and opportunities for people from BOME communities.

Lead officers for equality also attend seminars and conferences on equalities issues to share and learn about issues for best practice.

The annual planning and performance management cycle translates the Council’s priorities into outcomes and improvement targets that drive continuous improvement and efficient and effective use of resources. Equalities is a key element of this process and each service area identifies equalities objectives within their service plans. The role of service plans in identifying equalities priorities is fundamental to the achievement of equality and the continuous improvement of services. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and the Council has continued to strengthen its planning and performance management arrangements so that we can have the greatest possible impact on local people’s quality of life. Progress against objectives is assessed through a series of measures including:

- Quarterly service reports which are recorded on “PB Views”
- Public satisfaction with services
- The achievement of challenging and smart targets
- Percentage of key Pls and non-key Pls in the top quartile of performance (will in future be key national indicators set)
- External validation of our performance
- Continuous appraisal with partners, i.e. through the Local Area Agreement

As an authority we appreciate that the aims and objectives set out in the Vision and Corporate Plan can only be achieved by working through our partners. We have a strong track record of collaboration; partnership working is central to the way in which we work to improve services. The South Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership is chaired by a Cabinet member and is made up of over 100 agencies and organisations; many of these have either a statutory role or a keen interest in promoting equality.

The Corporate Equality Forum is represented on the SGSP and is chaired by a Member of the SGSP. The Forum was set up in 2001 and is supported by the Council. It discusses a wide range of issues including education, community safety, health, housing, employment practices and service delivery.
The Corporate Equalities Forum was set up to:

- Eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between diverse individuals and communities of interest and the council.
- Establish a common understanding of the experience of disadvantage and exclusion across all interests.
- Review strategic policy and service design and provision in relation to the application of equalities legislation and relevant guidance.
- Provide a way for equalities communities of interest to raise issues of concern and provide advice on such issues.
- Impact directly on the Council’s decision-making process on issues of significance to the communities, the Council and other organisations.
- Monitor and review the Council’s performance on implementation of its Equalities Policy.

We have established a corporate equality website and each Departmental equality website links to this.

Part of the Council’s leadership role has been about enabling structures to evolve. This incremental approach has helped to ensure that equalities is embedded across South Gloucestershire. We have established a multi-agency Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum. We have also led on the establishment of a Disability Equality Network and are supporting the emerging Faith Forum. The Council recognises that specific issues faced by different people need to be addressed in different ways that are appropriate to their needs.

South Gloucestershire Council also organises events aimed at promoting equality and has recently been working with voluntary sector partners to plan events for an “Engage Festival”, which brought together people of all cultures and ages, enabling them to experience and learn about each other’s heritage, helping to break down barriers and build relationships within our communities through the shared enjoyment of music, food and dance. The event was attended by over 3,800 people and was deemed a great success.

South Gloucestershire Council recently funded an event to raise awareness of hate crime and how it can affect people with learning disabilities. This was attended by 80 delegates from a range of organisations (e.g. civic leaders, police and voluntary and community sector groups) with an interest in this area.

The authority expects to have achieved Fairtrade status by September 2009.
As demonstrated in this diagram, every member of staff has responsibilities for delivering equalities actions.

The Select Committee of Community Services is involved in the production of equalities policies, fulfils scrutiny functions and makes recommendations to the Cabinet.
The Chief Executive Officer and Executive Member with responsibility for Community Services have overall responsibility for equalities, and fulfil leadership functions both internally and externally.

The Director of Community Services who is the Corporate Champion for Equality and Diversity supports the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Member. This post holder provides internal and external leadership, chairs the Equality and Diversity Action Team, raises equality issues at the Chief Officers Management Team and attends the Corporate Equalities Forum.

The Director of Community Services is supported by the Head of Communities, who is charged with overseeing the engagement of community groups, supporting groups so they can be fully involved in the Corporate Equalities Forum and monitoring the partnership working arrangements with Black Development Agency. This post holder is also the Vice Chair of the Partnership Against Hate Crime and chairs case review panels, which are the operational level delivery vehicle for that partnership.

These corporate leaders are in turn supported by the Equality and Diversity Action Team (EDAT), which is chaired by the Director of Community Services. EDAT is made up of senior departmental equality and diversity representatives, a senior member of the Audit team, the Corporate Equalities Officers and other Officers of the Council as deemed appropriate by the Group. This group meets at least every three months to provide strategic direction, guidance and performance management to Members, departments and partners on equality and diversity issues, as well as discuss and act on equality and diversity issues within the authority and partnerships. EDAT is therefore the mechanism for driving, monitoring and evaluating progress; promoting best practice across the authority and partnerships; and provide general advice and guidance to Members and staff on equality and diversity matters.

The members of EDAT feedback to the departmental working groups, which are placed within each Directorate. These departmental working groups are tasked with ensuring that the corporate equality commitments are translated into action and therefore devise and deliver equality outcomes for service users. These working groups also provide two-way communication equality issues between customer facing staff and corporate centre through EDAT.

EDAT is supported by two Equality and Diversity Officers. One of these officers has an internal focus and has responsibility for co-ordinating the day-to-day running of Equality Schemes. This Equality and Diversity Officer is committed to producing an annual report on equality schemes, and therefore providing updates on progress which assist the EDAT and the Select Committee of Community Services with their monitoring functions. This report is available for council and public scrutiny on the Council website. This Officer also represents the authority on the New Unitary Authority Benchmarking Group, which is comprised of representatives from neighbouring unitary authorities who benchmark their progress against each other and share information. The other Equality and Diversity Officer has an external facing role, which entails assisting community groups to have a voice within the Council.

To promote the development of policies and practices that are meaningful to people from all equalities groups, EDAT calls upon advisors with the relevant expertise.
The Corporate Equality Forum is made up of representatives from the voluntary and community sector as well as partner agencies. This group, which is attended by the Chief Executive, the leader of the Council and Members from all political parties, and chaired by voluntary and community sector representatives exists to monitor the Council’s progress in relation to equalities and contribute to the development of major council policies via consultation.

The Council has a service level agreement with the Black Development Agency to help the Council continue to strengthen the voice of local BME people by helping BME community groups come together into a network. They will bring together existing BME voluntary and community groups, assist new groups to emerge, and link with faith groups and leisure groups to engage individuals who do not wish to become involved in BME groups, thus providing a forum of diverse views that can advise the Council and inform policy development.

The Council officer within the Traveller Unit has direct links with local Gypsies and Irish Travellers and is recognised by them as an advocate who is able to represent them, and the EDAT is one way in which their views influence Council policy.

The three Group Development Workers, supported by the Community Services team, also advise EDAT on issues relating to their communities.

The Disability Equality Group contribute a different specialist perspective and as consultees are in a position to advice the Council on how race equality issues affect Disabled people.

**Key Outcomes**

- Equality practices are embedded in the day-to-day work of service areas across the Council
- The Council fulfils its community leadership role in promoting equalities agenda with partners and local communities
- Services are supported to meet the equalities improvement targets set out in the Council Plan.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

As an authority we place community involvement at the heart of all activities, in order that the services we deliver are appropriate for all residents.

We ensure that:

- All residents are kept informed about the work of the Council and its partners, and more specifically about particular issues which will impact upon them
- All residents are actively involved in the planning and development of the services that impact upon them
- All residents have the capability to influence, shape and contribute to the services they receive and to the future development of their area

Our activity in this area is guided by our Corporate Communications strategy and our Community Engagement Strategy

In developing our Vision, which underpins both the Community Engagement Strategy and the Council Plan, comprehensive consultation was carried out with local residents.

A wide range of mechanisms are used to consult and engage with local people, including the Council’s citizens panel ‘Viewpoint’ which was established in 1999 to enable local people to put forward their views about Council services. Additional Safer and Stronger Communities funding has been allocated recently to give a better statistical base for the views of BME residents. The Panel also provides opportunities for residents to influence decision-making and is used to provide a sounding board for testing new policies. A variety of consultation methods are used including focus groups, mystery shopping exercises and questionnaires. The Council has undertaken a three yearly BVPI general survey and since 2007 has undertaken annual resident surveys based on similar questions. The surveys provide comparative data over time on a range of issues including satisfaction with Council services. The new 2008 Place Survey for the National Indicator Set proposes to use these questions.

Additionally, focus groups and mystery shopping exercises were undertaken in our Revenue and Benefit services in April 2007. Tailored consultation and engagement also takes place at individual service level to seek views on service specific issues and how their needs can be addressed.

As part of the development of the Access to Services strategy we have used a basic customer segmentation approach to profile our customers. We intend that this project ‘understanding who are customers are’ will profile how different customers want to contact the council and also enable us to see their different levels of satisfaction. This will help us to refine our identification of minority or excluded groups of customers and help us to effectively target future consultations to ensure that they are fully inclusive and accessible.

The focus groups and face-to-face interviews in December 2007 built on both this customer profiling work and the Revenue and Benefits customer research from April 2007. Face to face interviews / focus groups were undertaken with separate customer segments including people with disabilities, people from BME groups, people living in rural areas and older people.
A significant new development is the roll-out of iNovem an e-consultation system to help join up consultations, make it easier for people to receive feedback about the consultation and better promote consultations which meet peoples’ areas of interest.

We are currently producing guidance around the occasions where we should be paying people or giving expenses for their involvement in consultation/engagement. This will also give guidance on the amounts which should be paid and will ensure consistency across the council. This should help us encourage more people to be involved and to better target hard-to-reach groups.

We have produced a consultation toolkit and customer service toolkit for staff. This will increase consistency around ‘how we do it’ and give guidance to those who are new to customer services and consultation. The customer service toolkit (Think Customer) includes guidance around translation, interpretation etc.

We have started “You said” and produced posters to show people how we have made changes as a result of their comments / suggestions.

A ‘consultation audit’ was carried out during 2007 to evaluate the involvement of minority groups in past consultations carried out across the Council to establish how they were targeted and what methods were used. This research will be used to help to target future public consultations to ensure they do not exclude minority groups.

More specifically we have engaged in consultation around the development of our Race, Disability and Gender equality schemes and feedback is used to strengthen and improve our responses. The three main vehicles used are the Race Equality Network, The Disability Equality Network and the Corporate Equality Forum (this is composed of representatives of all minority groups).

Additionally we consult with:

- Local Strategic Partnership and associated themed partnership boards
- Town and Parish Councils
- 20 local Safer and Stronger groups
- Special Forum and Topic groups

Consultation is a vital and key element in our Equality Impact Assessment process and the results form targets and objectives, which are fed into service action plans.

The Council will continue to ensure that equality is mainstreamed within the culture of the organisation through regular on-going engagement with local groups and individuals. There is a particular emphasis on including those individuals who would not necessarily take part in more traditional methods of engagement or who may be prevented from doing so because of their specific circumstances.
To enable the Council to ensure we gain the views of all groups, we take steps to enhance engagement by arranging events in venues which individuals find safe and accessible. It takes advice from local community groups on appropriate venues and locations. In addition, it recognises the importance of cultural sensitivity and avoids arranging meetings and events festivals or holy days. Language requirements are also taken into consideration and interpreters used, where necessary. Support is available to assist people to get involved. Printed material is available in audio and a range of font sizes and east read versions for people with learning disabilities. Support is also in place to assist people to attend meetings such as the provision of British Sign Language Interpreters and hearing induction loops.

The five Select Committees contribute to the development of policy and undertake reviews. These reviews form part of the Select Committee annual work programme and equalities is embedded within the scrutiny approach. Service users are also involved in providing evidence and shaping the outcomes of the reviews.

Engagement continues on the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement include equalities representation.

The Community Select Committee has the lead role in scrutinising equalities issues such as race equality and engagement with hard-to-reach groups. The Community Select Committee are currently involved in the work of reviewing our strategy and plans around our Race Equality Scheme.

The other four Select Committees also review equalities within their own themed areas. The Select Committees monitor the implementation of recommendations and actions are mainstreamed into the Council’s planning framework.

The Council has a strong track record of working with local communities on a range of environment related projects. Officers work in partnership with conservation and community groups on a number of local environmental projects.

We use our internal minority staff to seek their views on race and disability issues.

We listen to the views of specific minority groups and act upon the needs identified for example:

- The employment of a Somali community development worker to work exclusively with the Somali community in the Priority Neighbourhood (PN) of Kingswood
- We have commissioned specific services, with targeted outcomes for Asian and Chinese communities in South Gloucestershire

A launch event was organised for older people to demonstrate commitment to service improvement for BME and faith groups to inform future service delivery.

We plan to run further specific promotions designed to raise awareness of diverse communities e.g. Asian Month in 2008 and International Women’s Day 2008
Key Outcomes

- Council information and promotional material is representative of South Gloucester’s different minority and underserved communities and promotes positive images
- Consultation and engagement is directly targeted at the needs of individuals and communities
- Local people feel well informed, are actively involved in the development of services and feel that they can influence the services they receive and what happens in their area.
- Greater community cohesion and equality
- Improvement in the capacity of our partners in Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector
- A reduction in the numbers of communities in the hard to reach or hear category with no contact mechanism
Service Delivery and Customer Care

South Gloucestershire Council is committed to providing the best possible services for everyone living and working in South Gloucestershire and strives to improve the services it provides to all customers, ensuring that these meet their needs. All employees receive training in Corporate Values and Equalities.

An Equality Impact Assessment process has been used across the Council, which is based on the principles of continuous improvement, to ensure effective and appropriate delivery of services to local residents. The first phase of our Equality Impact Assessment process ensured that all functions across the Council were identified in order to make sure that our approaches were thorough and comprehensive. Our process covers screening for Race, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Age and Religion or Belief. As part of our process, evidence has been gathered and used across the Council in order to determine the impact of our actions and to inform decisions about the appropriateness of services.

The results of our Equality Impact Assessment process have informed action planning and service plans across all departments.

Information gathered has been used to identify where improvements to services and policies need to be made. The Council Plan identifies key improvement targets for the three year period to 2010, including targets which impact directly or indirectly on equalities issues. These feed into service plans and the Council has adapted the service plan template so that areas for improvement will be mainstreamed into all Council service plans by July 2007. Employee achievement and development plans will then identify how individuals will contribute toward achieving these objectives.

Improvements in services, which have been secured, include:

- In 07/08 Beacon Status for Healthy Schools was achieved and for School Improvement through integrated working around investing in children and achieving excellence. This year we are in the running for Beacon status for Looked After Children.
- The Youth Offending team has been assessed as the best in the country.
- The Breakthrough Project has been given a National Award.
- The youth service has improved participation of young people and young people organised an international Peacefest last year aimed to encourage diversity and racial and religious tolerance.
- NEET (Not in Education, employment or Training) is the lowest figure among statistical neighbours.
- Increased participation in EET (top quartile) especially among vulnerable groups including LAC, LDD, teenage mothers.
- Improved GCSE and A level results for BME young people and Looked After Children (LAC). (06/07 statistics).
- Improved access to childcare (above national trends).
- Apprenticeship completion above West of England average.
- The Partnership Against Hate Crime has been established and recognised as an innovative local approach to this area of work and has made a significant contribution to perception of community safety.
• A new customer care toolkit “Think Customer” (containing comprehensive advice on equality issues), has been developed and introduced to assist staff the provision of a first class service to the public
• Grant funding to specific organisations to ensure that appropriate services are delivered - for example, grant funding to organisations representing members of the community of Asian and Chinese origin in relation to services for carers.
• 3 community coaches are specialising in inclusion focusing on disability, mental health and community cohesion.
• A number of specialist day care places have been funded for BOME users and carers.
• Our ICT service provides Mobile Working solutions (taking our services out to our customers). There may be many reasons why a customer cannot visit Council premises – mobility, visual impairment, childcare problems etc. Examples of mobile working include benefit assessments, building service checks, domestic violence risk assessments.
• Disabled adaptation grants have risen from 144 in 2000/1 to 232 in 2006/7. 300+ are projected for 07/8.
• Where services are being purchased from independent providers, our contracts require them to comply with all equalities legislation and to have Equalities Policies that are compatible with the Council’s own policies. The Council produced corporate guidance on “Equalities in Procurement” in 2006 and the Commissioning & Contracts section have used this when tendering for new services (e.g. Direct Payments Support), when preparing the draft Service Specifications for Day and Supported Living Services, Domiciliary Care and Care Home services and to revise our Service Level Agreements with funded voluntary organisations.
• A number of frontline services have Chartermark accreditation

As a result of our achievements, many service improvements have been identified and are planned for the future.

We recognise that residents are not all the same and as part of the “Think Customer” programme our Customer Relations Team are developing an Access to Services strategy. This is being influenced by consultation with customers in order to understand what their individual drivers of satisfaction are, what services standards they expect and how they want to access council services. To make this process more effective we have consulted with diverse segments of customers to better understand how these groups differ and therefore how we can tailor our services to their needs.

While we have made progress in attracting disabled people to work for the Council, there is more to do to ensure accessibility of goods and services. Accessibility audits have been completed on council buildings and work on access plans has started. An access audit for our One Stop Shops is planned for later in the year. The reception area of our main Council office in Thornbury has been refurbished (with input from with disability groups) and accessibility has been improved.
South Gloucestershire has recently seen the arrival of significant numbers of migrant workers. The Council has gathered information specifically around the Polish migrant worker community, who form the bulk of the newly arrived immigrants. We are developing a partner approach to mapping the new communities in South Gloucestershire. Consideration is being given to a pragmatic approach to language translations in South Gloucestershire. We have formed a project team to examine current requirements in this area. We are investigating the possibility of training local translators.

Our “Think Customer” toolkit provides staff with guidance on how to arrange translations and interpretation.

Copies of publications and important information will be available in other languages and alternative formats on request. The Council ensures that BME Groups are aware of this service and monitors patterns of use of translated material. The Council can provide information on audiotape, in Braille and large print, in addition to specific languages. Information can be provided in easy read format at the moment for people with learning disabilities and poor literacy skills.

The Council has a corporate translation contract and ensures that resources are available to enable interpreters to be utilised for those members of BME communities who have difficulty understanding English. Language line is also used which provides direct telephone access to interpreters.

The Shaw Trust have assessed the accessibility of the South Gloucestershire Council website and their recommendations are currently being implemented.

South Gloucestershire is committed to the provision of high quality services to all its residents and uses comprehensive community consultation to inform its delivery and continuous improvement.

**Key Outcomes**

- Residents from minority or underserved communities are aware of the key services and support networks available to them
- There is easy access to major services
- Residents from minority or underserved communities feel safe and free from harassment, and can report incidents in the knowledge that issues will be handled sensitively and effectively
Employment and Training

Training is viewed as a key method of influencing the culture of our organisation. We are very aware of our responsibility, as a major employer, to promote equality in the workplace. In order to achieve this, our workforce needs to understand the principles of equality and diversity and welcome the organisational benefits that accrue from adopting these principles.

The Council recognises the benefits of a more diverse and integrated workforce and the importance of responsive and flexible service delivery in combating social exclusion and building stronger communities.

The Council is currently developing a Workforce Plan, which will be launched in March 2008. The plan aims to ensure that the Council has the right people with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours deployed appropriately throughout its structure. In particular, the Plan takes into account the Council’s stated aim of having a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

We have made great progress in achieving equality within the work place and have comprehensive policies for equal opportunities, bullying and harassment, flexible working, work life balance as well as a home working policy. Impact assessments have been carried out on all policies relating to employees to identify and address any equalities issues.

The Council is currently undertaking an equal pay audit to address any potential issues. Phase 1 has already been completed and the results shared with the Trade Unions. Work is continuing on phase 2 and an Equal Pay Policy is being produced.

Focus groups have been held with employees to inform the Equalities Strategy. In addition, the biennial Employee Survey of all employees asks a range of questions relating to equalities and had identified a range of issues, which are being addressed. The Council is committed to on-going consultation and engagement with employees and further consultation on equalities is planned.

In August 2006 a Disabled Employees Group was formed, to examine employment issues and discuss proposals for improvement. This group is now well established and meets on a regular basis. The group is currently involved with the design of new and modification of existing Council buildings as well as providing peer support. We have also developed a Black Workers Group, which originated in our Community Care Department but is now council wide.

We have run job-shadowing opportunities through our Disability Confident programme for people with visual impairment, mental illness and through the coach apprentice scheme for an individual out of care and the criminal justice system.

The Council recently was recognised as Positive about Disabled People and awarded the two ticks symbol by the Employment Service in July 2005. This shows that we have demonstrated our commitment to employing people with disabilities.
Positive action has recently been taken to address any imbalances by:
• Implementing initiatives to significantly increase the number of disabled people in employment and support the retention of disabled council employees.
• Checking the response rates to advertisements to see whether fewer people from a particular group are applying

We feel that it is particularly important for Members to demonstrate their own commitment, as leaders, to improving their knowledge of the equalities agenda. Equality Training is provided to all new Members and has been made available to existing Members. We are currently developing a comprehensive programme of equality and diversity training and development for Members. The Standards Committee recommended that all Members undertake mandatory equality training and this is to be endorsed by Cabinet.

Briefing workshops have recently been provided for Members on Gypsies and Travellers with specific reference to the DPD and RRA implications. These briefings were very well received and we believe will contribute positively to the community cohesion agenda. This was a cross-departmental initiative.

There is a rolling programme of equality training for staff. All managers received specific equality training with regard to the duties under the RRA within the past 3 years and were responsible for cascading this to all staff.

Specific workshops have been provided for managers on the following topics:

• Equality Action planning
• The Equality Impact Assessment process
• The Equality Standard for Local Government

Managers also take advantage the equality training provided by the “Lift” project in the areas of EIA’s and specific equality strands. Use is made of ad-hoc training opportunities provided by outside bodies such as Equalities South West and this has included training around race issues.

Appropriate members of staff attend conferences on a range of topics including BME issues and Gypsies and travellers.

The corporate induction training makes specific reference to the RES (as well as the DES and GES) the authority’s commitment to Equality is stressed and they are signposted to the corporate Equality and Diversity policy and action plan.

All departments have an individual responsibility for providing Equality training for all new recruits and for refresher training for existing staff (this is an annual process within most departments). Use is made of specific training provided by the Partnership against Hate Crime. Training has also been provided by SARI with specific reference to schools.

The Council has recently financed a workshop for middle managers run by the Education and Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) organisation on sexual orientation.
An Equality and Diversity Toolkit has been developed internally and is available to all staff via the intranet.

Procurement training with specific reference to integrating equalities has been attended by the appropriate staff.

At Personal Development and Performance Reviews (PDPRs), equality objectives are discussed with staff where appropriate and one of the staff competencies is related to equality. Equality Training is also reviewed.

**Key Outcomes**

- The Council has a diverse and integrated workforce that reflects the diversity of the community it serves
- The Council has the right people with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours
- Council employees are aware of the needs of residents from minority or underserved communities, and are proactive in ensuring appropriate support is in place
- Council employees are able to respond flexibly to meet the needs of diverse communities
- Members have a comprehensive appreciation of equality issues
Strengths and Areas for Further Improvement

Strengths

We feel that we have, across the board, made significant steps forward in the area of our corporate awareness and engagement with equality issues over the past 18 months. We have reviewed at all aspects of our equalities work, internally and externally, and have put mechanisms in place to ensure that we deliver effectively in this area.

We have revised and strengthened the way in which we consult and engage with minority groups. We intend to ensure that such engagement is less bureaucratic, more interesting and relevant for the groups involved.

A recent example of good practice is the cross departmental work undertaken in respect of the planning process for gypsy and traveller sites. A series of member briefings were put together (with representation from all departments) to ensure that councillors are aware of the equality issues involved and of the need to promote community cohesion. These briefings were both well received and well attended and have equipped Members to address public concerns in an effective and well informed way.

The new administration has committed itself to strengthening the knowledge and appreciation of equalities among Members and cabinet are set to endorse a proposal to ensure that equality training is mandatory for all new and existing Members.

We have worked hard to put in place a systematic program for completion and review of Equality Impact Assessments within all departments as we see this as a key element in achieving progress on equality. Our initial efforts lead to some confusion and disenchantment with the process and we have sought to simplify and demystify the process without losing any of the necessary information (new forms and guidance has been issued and will be supported by a further rolling programme of training).

We have introduced a performance monitoring system “PB Views” which allows us to track and monitor our progress against equality targets and objectives.

A new customer care toolkit, “Think Customer” has been developed and introduced to assist staff in their dealings with the public. The toolkit provides excellent advice and information on all aspects of equality.
Areas for Further Improvement

Whilst we feel that our involvement with the equalities agenda is very strong in particular in our external facing department (e.g. CYP and Community Care and housing and Community Services), we recognise that there is a need to provide further support to those departments who house many of our “backroom functions” to enable them to make the link between services that they deliver and how this can impact on minority groups. Good progress has already been made in this area. There is now a clear enthusiasm and commitment from our lead equality representatives within those departments to engage fully in the equalities agenda, with staff training and awareness raising identified as a priority.

The introduction of the new equality strands of sexual orientation and faith has provided us, as an authority, with an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-assess the information that we currently monitor. An audit is being undertaken to establish exactly what information is gathered across the authority and how this is being used. Our Equality and Diversity Action team will look the results, decide what is appropriate for each service and make recommendations for a corporate approach to monitoring. This is a work in progress.

We are conscious that we do more work on some equality strands than others and we intend to review the balance of allocation of resources to check appropriateness.

We recognise that our involvement and consultation with minority groups has undergone a major revision over the last year and that this is still a work in progress. We are clear that it is a vital element for us in ensuring that our policy delivery meets the needs of minority groups and are determined to ensure that this is both comprehensive and effective.

Summary

As an authority we now feel that we have a good appreciation and awareness of our strengths and areas for improvement. We feel that we are now well positioned to build positively on the good work already achieved in determining the needs of our diverse communities.

Our leadership both politically and internally is committed to the realisation of our vision and in particular with regard to the equalities agenda. We are determined to ensure continuous improvement and feel that we have both the staff and structures in place to achieve this.
Section 2 - Service Assessments

Community Care and Housing

Community Services

Chief Executive & Corporate Resources

Planning, Transport and the Strategic Environment

Children and Young People
SECTION 2 SERVICE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Council Services are delivered through 5 departments:-

1. Community Care and Housing
2. Community Services
3. Chief Executive & Corporate Resources
4. Planning, Transport and the Strategic Environment
5. Children and Young People

In this Service Assessment each department is broken down into individual service areas and each service area is assessed and considered within the four elements of the Equalities Standard:-

• Leadership and Corporate Commitment
• Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny
• Service Delivery and Customer Care
• Employment and Training

In addition, we have also provided an indication of our intended future actions for each service area.
Community Care and Housing
2.0 Community Care & Housing

Community Care and Housing services are provided to vulnerable adults – those aged 18 and above.

The aim is “to enable community care and housing services which promote independence, ensure people are able to make choices about when, where and from whom they receive their support and improve quality.”

The provision of services includes:
- Operational Services
  - Older people – (65 and over)
  - Mental Health
  - Learning Difficulties
  - Physical and Sensory Impairment
  - Alcohol and Drug related problems
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Carers
- Strategic Housing Services
- Strategic Support Services and Business Management and Budget Strategy

A strong commitment and concern for equalities is embedded within the leadership team of the department with a strong emphasis on the visible demonstration of equalities as being central to all that we do. A standing equalities group of staff representatives (called ‘Diversity Matters’), and chaired by the department’s Director, meets regularly acting as a sounding board for the direction of travel on the department on equalities issues. This is complemented by an equalities management group drawn from the senior management team of the department. Both groups combined to produce a key departmental document for all staff – the Equalities Framework - which sets out in concise terms the department’s approach to equalities and its wider relationship to the work of the council.
2.1 Adult Operational Services

The service covers a range of functions. Amongst these is to support older and vulnerable people and their carers to live at home by promoting independence. This will also include younger people with disabilities (18-64 years) including mental illness and learning difficulties and their carers by undertaking assessments of need, arranging care and providing appropriate services.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

Leadership within Adult Care has developed through in service and external training courses together with conferences and seminars. A focus on the service delivery for people who experience inequality is seen as been an essential element of the training. In addition, members of these groups have supported the development of the key policy documents and strategies including the Council’s Strategy for Older People and the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

We work hard and successfully to secure the active involvement of service users and carers and representative organisations to influence the design, delivery and evaluation of our services.

Consultation, Community Development & Scrutiny

• Adult Care leads the older People’s Programme Group, Learning Disability Partnership Board, the Health and Wellbeing Strategic Partnership, the Carers Network and the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership. These strategic groups, with a broad representation, support the development of our services across health and social care with both statutory and non statutory agencies. Key to the operation of these groups is the inclusion of the service user voice, including the voice of minority groups

• The promotion of Direct Payments for service users with mental health needs by staff, carers and voluntary groups and the development of mental health workers to focus on vocational services and promote social inclusion.

• Supporting Primary Care Trust in appointing Community Development Workers to focus on service users with mental health needs from BME groups in South Gloucestershire.

Some of the main events recently include:

• A launch event for older people to demonstrate commitment to service improvement for BME and faith groups to inform future service delivery.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- Provision of information in a range of formats e.g. posters in different languages with the assistance of BME and faith communities have been useful in spreading awareness about services.
- Staff from the older persons social work teams link with local BME groups and have secured a growth in referrals to the service.
- A self assessment processes for service users has been developed.
- A number of specialist day care places have been funded for BOME users and carers.
- There has been a focus on employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities that have enabled more people with disabilities to obtain paid work over the past year.
- Older peoples services has introduced residential and day care services training to support staff in delivering culturally sensitive services.
- Direct Payments and individualised budgets have improved the personalisation of services within social care.
- A positive promotion of risk for adult social care and community-based services has been developed to ensure there is a consistent approach to the assessment and management of risk. This will mean better support for disabled and older adults that will help them pursue the lifestyles of their choice without being inappropriately restricted by risk-adverse attitudes amongst services.
- Grant funding to specific organisations to ensure that appropriate services are delivered - for example, grant funding to organisations representing members of the community of Asian and Chinese origin in relation to services for carers.

Employment & Training

- The promotion of outcome based care planning for all service users to ensure staff are aware of meeting individual needs including the needs of older people from BME communities.
- Employees have received Equalities and Diversity training on an ongoing basis.

Future Work

- Continue to support the current strategy of personalisation and outcome based care planning to ensure inclusion and equality.
- Continue to develop better needs assessment so that services can be delivered appropriately.
- Continue to increase the number of people with disabilities into education and paid employment.
2.1.1 Care Management, Hospital Social Work and Occupational Therapy

Our Care Management and OT Service assess older people, disabled people, people with sensory impairment and their carers within the community, hospital and care home setting. We aim to promote and maximise people’s independence and commission and provide services to meet people’s need. We provide and commission specialist equipment, adaptations and care services in order to enhance independence, prevent hospital admission and facilitate safe timely hospital discharge.

We work in active partnerships with health and the voluntary sectors to ensure that people’s well-being is promoted and maintained.

We review new service provision after four weeks and subsequently undertake annual reviews to ensure that services are of high quality and continue to meet assessed need.

We actively engage with users and carers to ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Equality objectives and targets are to come into existence for sexual orientation, age, and religion & belief.
- Service users may have single or combination of equality needs for targeting. The workforce also reflects these needs and differences. Matching takes place if appropriate.
- Equality targets are delivered by contractors through the contract management process.
- Ethnicity Guidelines are available to staff to provide information and increase awareness and understanding of working with people from black and minority ethnic groups.
- Partnership working and Equalities e.g. Senior Officers Group monitors partnership with PCT for OT & Intermediate Care.
- National equality targets have been adopted.
- All reports document equalities impact.
- National and local research used to demonstrate and cater for demographic change.
- Access to service inclusive of needs of carers and linked to carers strategy and services.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- Strategy for all community staff and other stakeholder groups to participate in the development of equality objectives e.g. Day Service Review.
- Consultation activities are accessible (e.g. appropriate language translation, interpretation, and building and facilities used in consultation).
- Support is offered to people who have sensory impairment, hearing and visual loss.
- Information is provided in Braille, large print and specific languages and easy to read formats.
- All newly constructed or altered Council facilities are DDA compliant.
- Outcomes of consultations are publicly available, as well as how, where and when action on targets started.
- Reports published within CCD&HSG and PCT all include equalities feedback e.g. SOG report and Hearing Impairment Review. Consultation via service user and carer representations is encouraged, e.g. user representatives on Advisory Group for Care & Repair, and Hearing Impairment Service Review.
- Community, staff and stakeholder groups are involved with scrutiny procedures.

Customer Care & Service Delivery

- Service user and carer participation and carer choice is promoted.
- Service Plans specifically address equality (e.g. barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustments in the provision of services).
- Plans are translated into targets for Direct Payments and individual budgets.
- Supporting People services are available to promote independence.
- Feedback questionnaires are developed to be sent to service users post assessment.
- Contracts with agencies delivering services on our behalf include robust equality requirements.
- Independent Providers provide evidence of Equality Policies as part of accreditation.
Employment and Training

- Employment targets are in operation for recruitment, retention, training and promotion.
- Fair selection interviewing training is mandatory.
- The Service Plan reflects equality targets.
- The Disability Confident Team provides support, advice and training for disabled staff and Managers to make necessary adjustments and adaptations in working the environment.
- The Access to Work Scheme provides support to disabled employees during employment – joint funding with the department.
- Race Equality and Cultural Awareness are promoted within the department – part of Induction and Probationary Procedures.
- Staff training and development is ongoing. Induction and Probationary periods are part of Team Building Days and Team Meetings.
- The Equalities Training Steering Group guides the commissioning of Diversity & Equalities training.
- Ongoing training is delivered to highlight equalities issues around race, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation.
- Staff BOME support group is well established.
- Workers are encouraged to attend meetings during working hours.
- Parental, family or adoptive leave, flexible working arrangements, maternity leave, childcare facilities and career breaks are offered.
- Staff receive training in visual and hearing impairment.
- Some staff can use BSL and Makaton; others have use of interpreters.

Future Actions

- The Disability Confident Agenda will be an ongoing part of Team and Management Meetings.
- All Team and Management Meetings will address equality issues.
- The use of Direct Payments in all service user groups and partner agencies will be promoted e.g. Health.
2.1.2 Mental Health Services

The Mental Health Service provides social care services to Adults and Older People with Mental Health needs and their carers. This is achieved by:-

• Working in partnership with health and voluntary organisations;
• Enabling carers to access support through providing assessments and services within their own rights;
• Promoting social inclusion and choice for people with mental health needs;
• Working in a person centred way in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations to support and empower the person to meet their needs identified outcomes;
• Ensuring good quality services are provided to meet the identified needs and outcomes;
• Protection for vulnerable adults from abuse.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• **Delivering race equality in mental health care**: An action plan for reform inside and outside services improving mental health services for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.
• **Joint Community mental health services review (CSCI)** addressing diversity through training in cultural competence and diversity issues.
• **Ethnicity Guidelines** - guidelines for staff have been developed to provide information and increase awareness and understanding on working with people from black and minority ethnic groups.
• **Health and Well-being Strategic Partnership**: Attended by representatives from the Council, PCT, local health trusts and members of the public.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• **Day Service Review** - was carried out in response to the need to modernise day services for people living in South Gloucestershire. Service users, service providers and professionals within the voluntary and independent sector were fully involved and consulted with as part of the process.
• **Mental Health Local Implementation Team** representatives from voluntary organisations and service users and carer’s organisations information from the Mental Health. The Commissioning Group also feeds into this group.
• **Older People’s Mental Health Project Team** chaired jointly by Head of Strategic Support Services and Director of Mental Health for the PCT. This project is improving services for Older People with Mental Health needs through consultation with the community.
• **Adults of Working Age Integration Project Team** to improve services within the community for service users and their carers
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- **Vocational Services** - provided from both voluntary sector organisations and from Avon and Wiltshire Partnership Mental Health Trust.
- **Community Support workers for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities** - network of workers across South Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset.
- **Gateway Nurses** – managing systems and referrals pathways for services users accessing Primary Care.
- **Supporting People** – service available to support people with mental health needs to increase skills to live independently.
- **Feedback questionnaires** - sent to each service user at end of assessment for feedback on delivery of service.

Employment and Training

- **Disability Confident Team** - provides support, advice and training to enable disabled council staff to make the necessary adjustments and adaptations in their working environment.
- **Disability Equality at work** – all Community Care and Housing staff, staff in independent/voluntary sector agencies. PCT/AWPT staff.
- **Race Equality and Cultural Awareness** – all employees are expected to complete training on an ongoing basis.
- **Introduction to Mental Health** – Community Care and Housing, Health, Police, Independent/voluntary sector and all public sector staff.

Future Actions

- We continue to work within a Social Model of Recovery that seeks to maximise adults of working age potential, we apply an outcomes based approach which has a view that care needs change over time and so it is not necessarily the case that someone who once needed residential or nursing care will need it for their entire life.
- Increasing the use of Direct Payments and Indirect payments to service users and their carers by engaging health staff in Direct payments training.
2.1.3 Joint Learning Difficulties Service

As a Service, we provide information, advice, support and treatment to adults with learning difficulties and their family carers about health matters and social care. We do this by:

• promoting the rights, independence, choice and inclusion of people with learning difficulties;
• Supporting carers to fulfil their family and caring roles effectively;
• Working in partnership and in a person centred way with the person, their carers, other professionals and agencies to support and empower the person to meet their needs and aspirations;
• Promoting and working towards the objectives of Valuing People;
• Ensuring good quality services are provided;
• Protecting vulnerable adults from abuse.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• National audit of people with learning difficulties from minority ethnic communities - completion of the ‘Framework for Action’ provided information on how to make support for people with learning difficulties and their carers better.
• Learning Difficulties Service Improvement Programme – commitment and investment to improve and develop services for people with learning difficulties and ensure equality of opportunities.
• The Learning Difficulties Partnership Board (LDPB) – The Executive Member for Community Care and Housing chairs the LDPB. Other members include senior Council Officers.
• Ethnicity Guidelines - guidelines for staff have been developed to provide information and increase awareness and understanding on working with people from black and ethnic minorities.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• Day Service Review - was carried out in response to the need to modernise day services for people living in South Gloucestershire. Service users, service providers and professionals within the voluntary and independent sector were fully involved and consulted with as part of the process.
• Learning questionnaire - questionnaire sent out to all service users to find out what learning opportunities people with learning difficulties want and what learning opportunities would help people to move into employment and independent living.
• Sports and leisure programme – provides a range of community based activities for people with learning difficulties with the aim of supporting people to become independent in the activity.
• Health Trainers – a project working with a number of partner organisations the Health project is about employing people with learning difficulties as Health Trainers. They will work to reduce the health inequalities experienced by people with learning difficulties.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- **Women Only Short Breaks** - need identified through a service survey which asked people with learning difficulties and carers from BOME communities whether their cultural and faith needs were being met.

- **People with additional and complex needs** – task group set up to ensure actions identified from BILD Quality review which looked at what choice people with additional and complex needs had were being met.

- **Health Inequalities** – by recognising and addressing the inequalities in health care for people with learning difficulties the service has written a response to the Death by Indifference action plan.

- **Hospital Liaison Nurse** - works to make sure that hospital staff provide better services for people with learning difficulties and that admission to hospital is a positive experience for people with learning difficulties and their carers.

- **Accessible information** - a commitment that all information is produced in an accessible and appropriate format.

Employment and Training

- **Disability Confident Team** - provides support, advice and training to enable disabled council staff to make the necessary adjustments and adaptations in their working environment.

- **Person Centred Planning (PCP) training** – Support was provided to enable people with learning difficulties and carers to complete an accredited University course to learn how to become PCP facilitators. PCP training co-ordinators is a person with learning difficulties.

- **Leadership Course** – partnership work with advocacy service and University of the West of England to develop an accredited Citizenship and Leadership course which three people with learning difficulties successfully completed.

- **Training the Trainers** – developing a course to enable people with learning difficulties to become qualified trainers.

- **Equality and Diversity training** – all employees are expected to complete training on an ongoing basis.

Future Actions

- **Personalisation** – develop the opportunities for more people to access individualised budgets and self directed support to ensure inclusion and equality.

- **Travel Training/Travel buddies** - support and enable more people with learning difficulties to travel independently by developing a travel training/travel buddy scheme.

- **Social Enterprise** – work with partner organisations to increase employment opportunities for people disadvantaged in the employment market through the development of a social firm.

- **Recruitment and selection** – develop more opportunities for people with learning difficulties to be part of the recruitment and selection of their staff.
2.2 Strategic Housing Services

We offer a comprehensive housing options and advice service focused around homelessness prevention; both in-house and through Shelter and we are committed to tackling the causes of homelessness. Where it is not possible to keep households in their own home we work with them to find the best housing solution available.

We also provide accommodation through the Housing Register, temporary accommodation for homeless households and accommodation through arrangements with private sector landlords for households to access directly.

Our Private Sector Housing Team ensures that standards in private housing, including private rented homes, are adequate and provides advice, information, grants, loans and enforcement services to achieve this. We are particularly active in helping disabled people to live independently by adapting their homes.

We also work with a number of housing association partners to develop new affordable housing to address unmet needs.

We also provide accommodation and care to 250 people in 8 registered care homes.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

Our Homelessness Strategy action plan incorporates a range of smart actions aimed at identifying housing need and making provision for that need. Our Homelessness Monitoring Group is responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan and ensuring its continuous development. Membership of the group consists of senior staff from different departments within the council and from the voluntary sector.

We are completing a Strategic Housing Marketing Assessment with our sub regional partners, which will map the housing need across the sub region including the backlog and future housing need of special groups.

We have engaged with partners to identify gaps in provision for special groups, e.g. development of plans with the Youth Housing Partnership and strong links with mental health services and learning difficulties resulting in the appointment to new Liaison Officer Posts for both groups.

We have developed access to targeted support for intervention and tenancy sustainment and we have incorporated the Floating Support Co-ordinator within the Housing Needs Team.

There is strong corporate commitment for our strategic housing service including a clear commitment to ensuring that new developments deliver affordable housing without the need for public subsidy.
Consultation, Community Development & Scrutiny

We consult service users about our strategy development, service provision and any major policy changes we implement. We obtain customer feedback through service user questionnaires covering both the service available through our Housing Needs team and the temporary accommodation we use.

We participate in a range of forums through which the views of service users are represented. This includes the Youth Housing Forum, the Mental Health and Housing Sub Group and the Where People Want to Live Group (dealing with service users with learning difficulties).

We have set up an Accessibility sub group as part of the implementation team for our new rehousing policy and a service user reference group to influence our Housing Strategy and Supporting People Strategy.

We achieve a 95% overall satisfaction rate from DFG clients. The customer satisfaction form contains a question on ethnicity.

To assist us, we have developed strong partnership arrangements. A range of our partners are listed below,

- Shelter and North Bristol Debt Advice Agency (dealing with financial inclusion).
- SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents).
- Survive (Refuge accommodation and support services for victims of domestic violence).
- Safer South Gloucestershire.
- A range of Youth services.
- CAB.
- RSLs and Landlords.
- All teams in Community Care.
- All SP funded services.
- MARAC panel (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). This panel considers high risk domestic violence cases within the district.
- Race Hate Crime Panel.
- Anti Social Behaviour Panel.
**Customer Care & Service Delivery**

Our homelessness application form is designed to ensure that applications are considered consistently. Guidance notes and a full set of procedures are available for staff to follow when taking housing and homelessness applications, making investigations and accepting duties.

Translation and interpretation services are available for households as necessary for all interviews and any letters sent.

Disabled adaptation grants have risen from 144 in 2000/1 to 232 in 2006/7. 300+ projected for 07/8.

The Care and Repair service is funded by the Council to assist vulnerable clients for DFG’s (Disabled Facility Grants) and home repair assistance grants.

Home repair assistance is targeted at vulnerable clients (those in receipt of means tested and disability benefits).

A handy van scheme is being set up which will provide a service to carry out small scale repairs for vulnerable people across South Gloucestershire. This will be publicised first in the Council’s priority neighbourhoods (priority neighbourhoods are categorised by multiple deprivation indices).

Free loft and cavity wall insulation and draught proofing are provided to anyone in South Gloucestershire over 70 years old.

An in house Senior O.T. is employed in the Private Sector Housing Team to provide advice on adaptation in existing homes and new build developments.

A fast track system has been implemented to deal with adaptations costing £1,000 or less.

A Rehousing policy that gives priority to victims of racial harassment

2 Housing Liaison Officers are in post and their aim is to enable people with learning difficulties and mental health needs to access suitable housing with support where necessary.

An ‘Open Doors’ booklet and DVD was produced to provide information about housing and support options for people with learning difficulties.

All accommodation used for housing asylum seekers has been inspected prior to occupation and brought up to standard. Re-inspections are now being planned.

An O.T. is to be appointed (paid for by Private Sector Housing) to work with our LSVT housing society (Merlin) to advise on their kitchen and bathroom renewal programme to ensure that new installations are made adaptable to meet the needs of disabled clients rather than retro adopting. This could save over £1 million and provide a fast track service for adaptations in Merlin properties.
A key issue in the provision of accommodation is to ensure that a range of accommodation types and locations is available. We offer a range of schemes, which have been developed through the needs identified in the homelessness action plan. This has enabled us to recruit a range of landlords including specialist landlords to meet those needs. For example, we have developed a scheme with specialist support for tenants with a diagnosed mental illness.

Support for households placed into temporary accommodation is available via the Floating Support Co-ordinator where it does not already exist, or where it needs to be supplemented.

We ensure that wheelchair accessible homes are built on all suitable sites being developed for affordable housing. Where private homes are being developed we ensure 33.3% of them are affordable for people in housing need and try to ensure that they meet the Lifetime Homes standard.

Targets have been set in strategies and plans e.g. Enabling Strategy that sets out progress with developing supported housing for vulnerable people and contains targets to develop 7% of affordable housing schemes to full wheelchair accessible standard.

We develop new supported housing where needs have been identified and the support service can be funded through Supporting People or other sources. This includes an ambitious programme to ensure there are 15 Extra Care Housing schemes for older people by 2016.

The care homes team developed an equalities information manual to consolidate current information in a concise and systematic way. The aim is to provide a knowledge base and resource bank for staff involved in the delivery of social care to a diverse population.

In our Residential Care Homes we:

- Provide care services that are culturally sensitive, tailored to service users/carers
- Include ethnic paintings and prints in the care homes to promote a cultural environment
- Ensure care is delivered by staff trained in ‘culturally competent care’
- Advertise for staff in areas with a high BME population
- Use interpreters to enable communication with service users whose first language is not English.
**Employment and Training**

All staff receive a wide range of training in equalities and diversity to develop their knowledge and experience.

In addition to homelessness law and housing law relating to security of tenure and property rights, our Housing Needs team has received training in other related areas of legislation and expertise, such as Welfare Benefits and debt advice (including mortgage arrears), family law, and Community Care and Children Act duties.

A further programme of training is also arranged as necessary covering a number of areas including,

- Disability confident (awareness of disability issues).
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness.
- Introduction to mental health.
- Introduction to learning difficulties.
- Racial awareness training.
- Domestic violence awareness.
- Hate crime awareness.
- Customer care

This training enables staff to consider cases holistically and make referrals to appropriate agencies and signpost clients appropriately.
Future Work

Our priority is to find a housing solution for households that approach the Council for assistance and therefore to reduce homelessness in the district.

We will do this by:

- Providing a safety net through a good assessment service and procurement of high quality accommodation.
- Presenting a clear, fair and transparent policy for the allocation of properties.
- Ensuring that homeless households are housed within a reasonable timescale through our policy.
- Monitoring and evaluating the Home Choice Project (implementation of Choice Based Letting).
- Developing a dedicated website with accessible information for this project. This website will contain local information including details of places of worship, libraries and community facilities.
- Monitoring nominations and future bids to ensure fair access.
- Continuing to monitor the voids performance of RSL partners.
- Exploring further private sector housing options to develop a private sector procurement strategy.
- Development of a Strategic Housing Marketing Assessment
- Our Homelessness Strategy
- Development and monitoring of the Homelessness Strategy action plan.
- Monitoring through specific forums
- Monitoring Accessibility
- Continuing to develop new affordable homes
2.3  Strategic Support Services and Budget Management & Business Services

The Strategic Support Service is made up of 4 sections, these being Planning and Partnerships, Contracts and Commissioning, Performance Management and Information Systems and Human Resources.

The Business Management and Budget Strategy service provides the financial planning and management service to the Department.

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

The Director of Community Care and Housing, through the long standing Black and Minority Ethnic Communities working group, which is hosted by the Community Care and Housing Department, commissioned an event which produced a plan of action to help improve access to public and other services and opportunities for people from BOME communities in South Gloucestershire.

The CC&HD department has commissioned both Dhek Bhal, the Chinese Women’s Centre and Terrance Higgins Trust to undertaken a detailed needs analysis from within the communities they service to help better inform service planning and delivery. The output from these research projects will be shared with the Council early in the next financial year.

Members of groups who represent people who may have experienced inequality are on key groups and planning forums, including joint forums for redesigning services for older adults with mental health needs, people living with a learning difficulty and older people. The Council has made provision to consult explicitly with the BOME forum on proposals for the council budget to get a sense of the impact on budget changes on people who may have experienced inequality.

The Planning and Partnerships service oversees the liaison work with the Black and Other Minority Ethnic (BOME) Liaison Group.

The Planning and Partnerships service oversee the Physical & Sensory Impairment Board and the Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing sub-group.

As part of the establishment of the Health and Well-being Strategic Partnership, planning structures are being reviewed, with planning for Older People and People with Learning Difficulties having been revised to ensure better engagement and opportunity for involvement.

The Department is represented at senior management level on the Council’s Equality and Diversity Action Team.

The Heads of Service for these divisions and their immediate reports are all members of the Equalities Management Group and therefore oversee the ongoing equalities work in the 2 support divisions.
Consultation, Community Development & Scrutiny

Work of the Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing Sub Group of the PSIPG audited the accessibility of services provided by this department and the first contacts with the other departments via One Stop Shops and Contact centres has raised the profile of their access needs with the managers of those services resulting in greater awareness and plans for improvement. One immediate outcome was the introduction of text messaging – particularly useful for profoundly deaf people.

Disabled and older people have been very involved in developing the specification and support options for promoting and improving access to Direct Payments.

The Community Care and Housing Department have been working to ensure engagement of people who may have experienced inequality on the Council’s Culture strategy.

As part of the engagement process for ‘Valuing experience’ the South Gloucestershire strategy for people over 50 a variety of means of engagement where used specifically to ensure that those who do engage through more traditional methods get their voice heard, for instance by using photography and poetry as a means of engaging.

Through LAA stretch target pump priming we are able to fund specific services to people from Asian and Chinese communities in a range of schemes initiated and developed by members of those communities.

Access to the complaints procedure has been consulted upon at an open Carers meeting facilitated by the PRTCC (Nov 07); BOME Liaison Group, (Jan 07); and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sub Group, (Sept 07).

Monitoring surveys of the complaints process are carried out.

Consultation activities are accessible e.g. appropriate language, translation, interpretation, and buildings and facilities used.

Consultation is also carried out with the staff group ‘Diversity Matters’, the trades unions and the Black and Minority Ethnic Employee Network, and the Disabled Employees Group.

Staff feedback is collected bi-annually via the staff survey and this is analysed by its equalities profile in order to draw out any particular issues that there may be.
Customer Care and Service Delivery

Where services are being purchased from independent providers, our contracts require them to comply with all equalities legislation and to have Equalities Policies that are compatible with the Council’s own policies. The Council produced corporate guidance on “Equalities in Procurement” in 2006 and the Commissioning & Contracts section have used this when tendering for new services (e.g. Direct Payments Support), when preparing the draft Service Specifications for Day and Supported Living Services, Domiciliary Care and Care Home services and to revise our Service Level Agreements with funded voluntary organisations.

Our Departmental Contact Centre provides a single point of access for our Care Management and OT referrals, via telephone, fax and mail. All staff have undergone equalities awareness training, and calls are monitored to ensure that quality is maintained. As the first point of contact they have an important role in collecting as much information as possible. This has been important in our high level of equalities recording which has benefits in service monitoring and planning.

It is important that our Complaints procedure is accessible to all. We provide complaints advocacy and translation/interpreting services to ensure that service users and their carers can access the complaints process. Our monitoring of complaints and outcomes includes analysis by ethnicity, disability, age and gender and we consult on changes to procedures with the BOME liaison group. We will be reviewing our accessible complaints leaflet from April 2008.

We have worked in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council PCT and Bristol PCT to develop a network of Community Development Workers for people with mental health needs from BME communities.

This year, for the first time, disabled people were involved in the commissioning of a support service. This involved working on the specification, tender evaluations and participation in the final interviews.

Disabled people, older people and carers participated in the selection process for a member of the Community Care and Housing Department Senior Management Team.

Age Concern were commissioned to undertake a survey of all home care users, to assure quality and equality values are considered as part of the survey.

There is a specialist Advocacy Service for complainants with Learning Difficulties (Your Say), there are also Complaints Procedure Advocacy services for complainants who require support to make a complaint including some with skills in Learning Difficulties.

The communications team maintain the public website and intranet for the Community Care and Housing Department. They work with staff, service users, voluntary groups and other organisations to develop or maintain leaflets and information sheets for Community Care and Housing Services. They work towards making all our information easy to understand. Often there is a need to change information so that it is accessible, for example, for people with learning difficulties or sensory impairments, or those who speak other languages. This includes newsletters, information sheets and care plans. The translation and interpreting service is organised through the Communications team.
Supporting People in South Gloucestershire is a multi-agency partnership approach to support vulnerable people to make a difference to their lives so that they can live independently in their own home. Services are commissioned from private, voluntary and charitable organisations and consist of housing related support at supported housing schemes (e.g. supported housing for young people, domestic violence refuges) and ‘floating support’ provided in a person’s own home.

“Protection of vulnerable adults” is a multi-agency policy/procedures that sets out an agreement reached by agencies to work together to prevent adult abuse in South Gloucestershire. It also ensures that those who are placed outside the county for whom the council or a partner agency maintain responsibility are also protected. The policy and procedures set in place a multi-agency framework for making decisions with the vulnerable adult and taking action where there are concerns that the adult is being, has been or is at risk of being abused or exploited. The Policy makes clear that the policies and procedures respect an adult’s right to live free from abuse in accordance with the principles of respect, dignity, autonomy, privacy, beliefs and equality. Services will be provided in a manner which does not discriminate on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation.

The Budget Management and Business Services division of the Department has an overall aim is to provide a comprehensive range of financial services as appropriate to stakeholders, as follows:

- Financial and Statutory Accounting Services.
- Management Accounting Services.
- Assessments and Welfare Benefits Advice.
- Payments Services.
- Income Collection Services.
- Receiverships Services.
- Financial Systems Training.
- Financial Information and Advice.
- Liaison with other Public, Voluntary and Charitable Bodies
- Ad hoc Projects and Working Groups.
Employment and Training

As part of the Departmental Human Resources Strategy and Workforce Plan, the make up of the workforce is analysed on a yearly basis and strategies developed to address under representation, in order to work towards a balanced workforce.

All Council Human Resource policies are adhered to – including the Recruitment and Selection Policy and all managers receive training in this policy and there is an equalities element to this.

Equality and Diversity training is offered to all employees on an ongoing basis, this includes council and other provider’s employees. As such there is a comprehensive Equalities Training Strategy and joint planning groups have been involved in the design and commissioning of this training.

All training incorporates equalities and is based upon person centred services.

Older and disabled people have participated as trainers for Community Care and Housing department on the issue of self directed care and Direct Payments.

The Department has implemented the corporate Disability Confident initiative and as such there has been an increase in disabled employees in the department from 15 in March 2005, to 31 in December 2007 for the combined Community Care and Housing Department, and have in addition supported a number of individuals on voluntary work placements to help build an individuals level of confidence to enter the workplace.

Specifically we have a Trainee Social Worker scheme, whereby we support 3 candidates per annum to undertake the Social Work Degree. Since 2005 one of these places annually has been designated a ‘positive action’ place in order to increase the BoME make up of the Social Worker workforce.

There are induction standards for the care professions that include the value base around Equality and Diversity. This forms part of the induction and is in the induction workbooks.

An assessment of knowledge and practice of equality is prompted in the departmental probation/induction report.

An assessment of knowledge and practice of equality is prompted in the PDPR forms.

The introduction of 360 degree feedback for senior managers includes an evaluation of equalities practice.

Recruitment training is available for all managers (and refreshed periodically) and includes equalities issues.

There is a Core Qualification Framework for all posts in the department that set out the core development needed for each posts and the further supported training. All posts show that equality and diversity knowledge/training is core.
There are standards for Access to Learning – to ensure that all employees have equal access to learning and development and that their individual needs are met.

The Essential Skills programme is aimed at identifying and assisting those employees who need support with basic skills such as literacy and maths etc. Part of a South West pilot project and now ongoing roll out via the induction process.

**Future Work**

Develop our strategies to increase the focus on people from BOME and other groups, as set out in the Community Care and Housing Strategic Framework.

Prepare a report for the Local Strategic Partnership which introduces an action plan which evolved from the BOME planning event

Work with organisations which represent people who may have experienced discrimination on the second tranche of stretch target funding.

To ensure that the new Complaints Procedure is accessible and that people are given choices as to how to make a complaint.
Community Services
3.0 Community Services

Community Services provide services directly to the residents of South Gloucestershire.

The aim of the Department is to:-

Work with people and communities to enhance quality of life.

The services provided include;

- **Communities**
  - Community Engagement
  - Voluntary and Community Sector Support
  - Community Learning
  - Corporate Equalities
  - Economic Development
  - Libraries and Arts

- **Community Sport and Active Lifestyles**

- **Street Care**
  - Highways Maintenance
  - Grounds Maintenance
  - Cleansing
  - Transport

- **Environmental Services**
  - Waste Collection & Disposal
  - Environmental Health

The Department leads equalities for the whole of the council and co-ordinates the council wide initiatives and monitors implementation.

The Department facilitates and leads work to build stronger and safer communities in South Gloucestershire with responsibility for the strengthening communities theme of the council’s corporate plan and the safer and stronger theme of the local area agreement (a partnership to improve local services and access to them).

A commitment to the equalities agenda is embedded into the Departments planning and performance management framework.

The department has an Equalities Working Group made up of representatives from across the department. The group have developed the department’s action plan, designed to help the team reach level 3, co-ordinate the equalities agenda, agree departmental actions and monitor progress. This includes achieve respective levels of the Local Government Equalities Standard. The equalities group meet regularly to monitor performance against the targets set and report to the management team.

Each section in turn has their own action plans which teams use to monitor against delivery targets.
3.1 Communities

The Communities Division has few statutory functions and so people choose to work with its various teams. There is a strong commitment to engagement and partnership working to make communities stronger. Individuals and groups are supported to improve their quality of life through learning and working together.

3.1.1 Voluntary & Community Sector Support

The purpose of this service area is to engage with the diverse voluntary & community sector and support the development, implementation and management of priorities, based on social justice and mutual respect.

3.1.2 Communities Division – New Communities Team

The aim of the New Communities team is to secure community provision for major new housing and to contribute towards the creation of sustainable communities in South Gloucestershire.

3.1.3 Community Engagement and Support

The Community Engagement and Support team aims to improve opportunities for individuals and communities who face economic, social or environmental disadvantages and who may not enjoy the benefits enjoyed by others in South Gloucestershire.

The team has three key sections:
- Priority Neighbourhoods
- Community Learning
- Financial inclusion and advice

3.1.4 Community Engagement – Rural and Parishes

Rural and Parishes encourages the development of sustainable communities by working in partnership with Town and Parish councils involves local people in influencing the decisions that affect their lives. It develops local solutions to local problems. It also pay particular attention to tackling the disadvantage experienced by the rural communities of South Gloucestershire by working in partnership with key organisations, including Town and Parish councils, to protect current services and develop new ones.
3.1.5 Economic Development

One of the main economic development objectives of the Council is to ensure that the benefits of economic development are shared by all groups in South Gloucestershire. In seeking to achieve this objective the Council is helped by the fact that the South Gloucestershire labour market is very tight as reflected in the high employment rate (87%). In essence there are jobs available in a wide range of occupations and sectors. People from disadvantaged groups are given support by the Council, JCP and the other agencies active in South Gloucestershire to help them compete for these jobs.

Working in partnership with JobCentre Plus and the voluntary sector the Council has focused largely on supporting disabled people into training and employment – there are over 8,000 disabled persons of working age on welfare benefits, far more than the number of unemployed people on JSA (1,200). The Council’s Disability Confident programme offers work experience placements, work tasters, one to one support and guidance, job search support, etc. with a view to supporting disabled people into employment with the Council or elsewhere in South Gloucestershire.

Equalities groups are consulted on economic development objectives and priorities as set out in the South Gloucestershire Community Strategy and the South Gloucestershire Economic Strategy. Equalities groups (WECIL and Age Concern) are represented on the South Gloucestershire Economy and Skills Partnership.
Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• Service Plans contain comprehensive equalities targets. Equalities is embraced as an integral part of service development and delivery.
• Equalities action plans have been produced, is implemented and monitored. This includes list of actions to support the work of equalities communities. e.g. Work with SG Chinese Association to recruit their worker, in partnership with SG CVS, training and up-skilling members of the management committee.
• COMPACT contains the Equalities and Diversity Code of Practice. To promote and ensure its implementation across the VCS. Development of monitoring processes.
• Service Level Agreements/Commissioning Contracts contain Baseline Standards for equality and diversity. The organisations are provide 1-1 support and training opportunities to achieve these standards and improve their service delivery.
• Six monthly monitoring of all commissions is conducted which includes equality. The monitoring process enable the partners to embrace equalities into their service delivery.
• The Council’s Grants programmes detail Policy requirements relating to equality.
• Annual Equality Impact assessments are conducted and the results of this inform the setting of equality action plans and targets.
• Annual Service User reports are produced which contain equalities monitoring and analysis. This helps to improve services and encourages active involvement.
• Equalities objectives are included in Community Engagement and Support Service Statement.
• Commissioning of services with relevant outcomes and targets to support: Asian Communities in South Gloucestershire, and Chinese Communities in South Gloucestershire.
• The Priority Neighbourhoods Policy (passed by cabinet in October 2006) targets vulnerable and excluded groups in order to narrow the gap of any inequalities and raise the quality of life in need of additional support.
• Equality targets are built into action plans that are created for Priority Neighbourhoods e.g. Health, Transport, Environment.
• Addressing the advice needs of vulnerable and excluded groups has been identified in the annual work programme of the Welfare Advice Partnership.
• Encouragement of town and Parish councils to gain Quality Parish Status, which includes having an equalities policy.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• COMPACT contains a Consultation Code of practice relating to equalities. This is communicated and promoted widely across all the partners. A COMPACT post card and a summary booklet was produced to ensure that Compact remains on the agenda.
• An access statement is used in all publications to enable diverse communities to engage with the Council. This helps to break down barriers and improves relationships.
• A subscription to language line is in place.
• Translation requirements for reports are identified and implemented e.g. A recent partnership project with Bristol City Council was launched to identify Polish community within S. Glos and Bristol. Excellent links were made with Polish Society and members of the Polish community. The project gave us indication of some of the issues facing the polish community. The Polish society was successful in receiving funds through the council’s annual small grants programme to provide some outreach support to polish community in S. Glos.
• Service/Action plans are produced as a result of consultation which include equality target groups. Having regular links with the community through regular meetings, 1-1 discussions etc. informs the development of these plans.
• The New Communities coordinator organises community engagement events on major housing developments to compliment statutory planning consultation. Events are held in accessible venues, ensuring community organisations who work with and support diverse groups in the community are included and take part in the formal planning process for shaping proposals for major housing developments.
• “Planning For Real” consultation method is used; Action Plans are publicly available.
• Gender, Ethnicity, Disability charts are used to map who has been consulted.
• Strengthening Communities Strategy is used to foster awareness of equality issues for vulnerable and excluded groups in Priority Neighbourhoods.
• Community learning opportunities are promoted to vulnerable and excluded groups, working closely with their representative groups and organisations.
• Comprehensive equalities information is included in the guidance booklet published by SGC “Parish Planning Guidance” and is used by Town and Parish Councils who are undertaking the Parish Planning process.
• Responses to Development Control consultations on planning applications for new housing include coordinated input on public open space, libraries, public art and community development, and includes equalities considerations wherever possible.
• The needs of vulnerable and excluded groups are identified and opportunities for them to learn and progress are offered within the area of education.
• Resources are allocated for specific projects e.g. SGAP, Chinese Association, Somali worker.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- Development of Diverse VCS. This is actively supported and promoted. Resources are specifically targeted to achieve equality targets.
- Service Plans address equalities and contain objectives and targets linked to customer care and service delivery.
- An Equalities Toolkit has been produced. An introductory guide to develop ways of working to ensure that your services are accessible to all members of your community. Working with communities and other professionals, a need was highlighted to develop a Toolkit that could enable community members to create effective change in their groups/organisations. There was also an indication that the Toolkit could be used as a ‘hands on’ learning tool. The Toolkit is therefore divided into sections that can be used alone or as an overall Equalities training programme. It is also to enable individuals to work through an issue with step by step practical guidance and supportive material provided.
- Capacity Building – Training programmes for the VCS. Annual training programme is produced and delivered in partnership with SG CVS.
- Capacity Building - Targeted training is offered for minority groups e.g. Chinese project training programme.
- SLA/Commissioning contracts contain Baseline Standards for equality.
- Commissioning services draft report is produced and consulted upon.
- Participation in partnerships/networks:
  - Sure start stakeholders group- To oversee the development of Sure Start centres.
  - Independent Advice Group (IAG) Police- Meets regularly to share knowledge, provide guidance and training to support policing.
  - Race Equality Network- Supportive forum of BME community groups who meet regularly to ensure a collective response to inform policy development and challenge any issues.
  - Funders Forum SW- Forum to raise funders issues and strategies to overcome some of these. Also to share information, share experiences and knowledge.
  - LA VCS Network- Raise issues facing the LA with regards to Local VCS
  - Policy Development Group
  - Faith Forum- A collection of faith community members for mutual support and information share.
  - Workforce Development group- Diverse range of learning providers and representatives from VCS to ensure effective and relevant programme of delivery.
- Structured responsibility for the delivery of action plans is built into the planning process through the appointment of “theme leads” for each action plan. Additionally through PB Views.
- Action plans are widely publicised.
- The Community Engagement Officers give training, support, guidance and advice to enable communities to tackle inequalities.
- Advice services are accessible and target the needs of vulnerable groups including disabled people, older people and people living in Priority Neighbourhoods. Services are reviewed at Welfare Advice Partnership meetings
- Opportunities are identified to ensure new community facilities will be fully accessible to all members of the community. e.g. we secured a “changing place” (changing facilities and shower for disabled adults) in the specification for the community building at Harry Stoke; e.g. we secured lift and disabled WCs in specification for the community building at North Field.
• Resources are allocated for specific projects e.g. SGAP, Chinese Association, Somali worker.
• The Ethnic Minority Advisory Service (EMAS) action plan includes new PCT Community Development Workers focusing on helping BME groups identify and alleviate mental health issues.
• Compact group – The group leads on programme of work to promote and champion the Compact, ensure its principles are followed, keep the compact under review and challenge where Compact principles are breached.
• Compact Summary Booklet, registration and monitoring of issues forms and Action taken forms are all published. Organisations are encouraged to use the process to highlight any Compact issues.
• Compact monitoring and implementation – group meets regularly to review the work of the group. Notes of the meetings are produced and made available for information.
• Compact quarterly updates are produced and published to inform everyone of how the work is developing.

Employment and Training

• Annual PDPRs cover equalities issues.
• Regular 1-1’s are in place and cover performance and development on equalities.
• Employment of a Somali community development worker to work exclusively with the Somali community in the Priority Neighbourhood (PN) of Kingswood.
• Management training has been delivered for the South Gloucestershire Chinese Association in 2007
• Professional equalities support and advice is given to Community Development Workers and management teams.
• Disabled member of staff recruited as Financial Inclusion Officer.
• All staff are trained in equality and diversity.

Future Actions

• Development of an Investment Strategy and Community Cohesion Strategy.
• Over 23,000 new homes are planned for South Gloucestershire over the next 2 decades and if equalities considerations are to be fully addressed in planning sustainable new communities for the future it is important that the Local Development Framework (LDF) takes full account of equalities considerations. The New Communities coordinator is working with Spatial Planning colleagues in PTSE on the LDF providing input to the topic papers on Community Facilities, Housing and Open Space. Comments submitted to date included signposting Planning staff to consult equalities experts.
3.2 Libraries and Arts

There are 14 library service points in South Gloucestershire providing:-
• Loans of books and audio visual material
• Promotion of reading
• Provision and promotion of the use of IT
• Access to information resources
• Life Long Learning in community
The Arts section provides opportunities to involve local people in arts activities and creative expression.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

The Libraries & Arts Service is a key promoter within the community of the values of cultural awareness, diversity and an inclusive approach to the delivery of services. Equality and diversity is imbedded in the partnership working approach of both libraries and arts and is a central tenet of any external partnerships. Recent projects have included a festival in celebration of Black History Month, development of a Somali art club, Pride not Prejudice events in celebration of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Month, 200th anniversary celebrations for the abolition of the British involvement in the slave trade, and participation in the Engage multicultural community festival. The provision of materials (books, DVDs music) enable people to gain greater knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

• There is a procedure in place for regular reviews of EIAs.
• Annual Library Service planning procedure in place, including procedure for consulting with service users on individual library plans and service-wide plan.
• Annual service planning meeting between Library, Arts & Information Manager and Arts Development Officer on Arts Development annual service plan.
• Equality and Diversity objectives are imbedded in the partnership working approach of both libraries and arts and is a central tenet of any external partnerships.
• Though both libraries and arts offer universal services they review all policies to ensure no inadvertent discrimination, and recognise that additional or targeted provision is frequently required in order to overcome issues of potential exclusion / participation by equalities priority groups.
Consultation & Community Development

Our projects have helped raise the awareness of the service amongst BME groups, increased Library & Arts staff awareness of their particular needs, and helped foster a much closer and more effective working relationship with these groups. Partnership working and the targeted involvement of priority groups [e.g. South Gloucestershire LGB Forum, and the Low Vision Group] has guided the development of services and ensured that an awareness of the particular needs of priority groups is central to the development of core services. It has also opened the service to much closer scrutiny and accountability by priority groups, with the positive outcome of a minor shift in the cultural mindset of some staff.

- Publications are assessable to facilitate consultation within the Compact principles
- There is increased participation of equalities groups in Community Services consultation & decision making processes.
- Events take account of minority group issues
- Minority groups are represented on groups/consultations
- Raised awareness of ProfilePoint as a mapping tool to assist staff in identifying areas of disadvantage.
- Raised awareness of consultation mechanisms available to staff within the council.
- Equality issues are included in consultation exercises.
- Service provision is adapted to meet customer aspirations following analysis of feedback.
- Access to training opportunities for the 3rd sector and unemployed people in minority groups has been improved.
- Available services are promoted to minority groups and non service users.

Service Delivery & Customer Care

Major internal and external work has been carried out on all libraries to comply with DDA requirements and to make libraries more accessible, inclusive and welcoming to all strands of the community. Disabled parking bays, ramps, automatic doors and disabled toilets have been installed wherever possible, and internal modifications made as necessary. Services to housebound users, to elderly peoples’ homes [EPHs], to blind and partially sighted people, to travellers, looked-after children and to asylum seekers have all been reviewed. Library promotional literature reflects racial and linguistic diversity, and leaflets have been designed to highlight targeted provision e.g. Libraries – Meeting the needs of disabled people, developed in consultation with the relevant client group.

- Appropriate and alternative methods of access to services is provided.
- Customer care standards and procedures for specific inclusion projects have been developed.
- Charter Mark demonstrates best practice in customer services.
- Services are planned and delivered to avoid negative impact on service users.
Employment & Training

Disabilities & Equalities training has been delivered to all staff and is a core element of the training that all new staff undertake. This is complemented by a regular programme of customer care training, and the corporate recruitment & selection course, which is compulsory for anyone involved with recruitment. The Library Service works with the Disability Employment Co-ordinator in facilitating extended work experience placements in libraries for disabled people wishing to broaden their experience of the working environment. Libraries work with Resource & Activity Centres in providing placements for people with learning difficulties wishing to enhance their life skills. Libraries provide free online access to the Council’s Vacancy Bulletin and they promote direct access to the Learning & Skills Council i-point website, which facilitates CV building, job hunting, job profiles, skills matching and access to careers advice for adults.

- Workforce reflects corporate guidelines
- Job shadowing opportunities are offered within the Community Services Department for potential applicants.
- Equalities training has been delivered across the workforce.
- All staff are aware of, and follow, policies and procedures to protect individual staff e.g. bullying; whistle-blowing.
- Equalities training is included within each section's training plan.
- Equality training is included in the induction process.
- Feedback from bi-annual staff surveys is reviewed and actions are included in service plans: PDPRs & 1:1s.

Future Actions

- Develop community profiles to identify low take up of services by identified equalities groups and to focus work on these areas.
- To respond to changing needs of ethnic profile within South Gloucestershire e.g. needs of Polish community.
- Complete DDA programme of work within libraries (e.g. parking bays at Downend Library and lift in Yate Library.
- Involve identified equalities groups in development, delivery and management of services, to be piloted as part of the Big Lottery Fund Community engagement project at Yate Library.
- Promotion of accessibility software in libraries.
- Promotion of learning opportunities in libraries by identified groups.
- Continuation of specific promotions which raise awareness of diverse communities e.g. Asian Month in 2008, International Women’s Day 2008.
- Raise awareness of service language guides to the community.
- Investigate best practice in development of website to ensure accessibility and promotion of services.
- Arts service to monitor involvement in projects by equality groups.
- To support sections who wish to art to reach diverse communities.
3.3 Community Sport and Active Lifestyles

Our main goal is to increase the number of physically active people in South Gloucestershire. The key to this is ensuring an accessible infrastructure of facilities and opportunities for all the communities of South Gloucestershire.

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

- Equality action plans are in place, are updated annually and contain meaningful equality targets which are linked to impact assessments. For example, plans for:
  - Race equality
  - Senior Citizens
  - Mental Health
  - School Sport (disability)
  - Disability
  - IFI
  - Carers Project
  - IFI presentation to Leisure Trust
- All community partners are asked to demonstrate their equality statement or plan through the grant system.
- Targets for ‘hard-to-reach’ groups are embedded in PB Views.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- Community Sport & Active lifestyles staff are all involved in the development of the section’s values, one of which is Equality and inclusion which supports
  - Helping the disadvantaged to overcome barriers to activities and facilities
  - Treating everyone as an individual
  - Ensuring our staff and the community groups we support always consider equality of access
- Consultation takes place through a series of forums such as South Gloucestershire Union of Disability Sport (SUDS) and South West Inclusive Sports Hub (SWISH). We also invite representatives from various groups to attend planning meetings as evidenced by meeting minutes.
- Presentations are held for various groups.
- Sports Plan and annual report are published and available in a variety of formats on request.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

The section is committed to good customer service ensuring:
- prompt, polite and an effective response to customer requests
- regular staff training to ensure motivated and well trained staff
- Staff who take ownership of customer and partner enquiries
- Staff who understand the role of colleagues including their movements and work programmes
- Staff who understand and fulfil the council customer service standards

• We have a list of external funding bodies showing how we have brought in resources to work with socially excluded groups.
• Our service plan makes direct reference to equality and equality targets.
• Impact assessments contain individual areas of responsibility for each equality group.
• Action plans are SMART including clear timescales.

Employment and Training

Community Sport & Active Lifestyles seek to develop a wide range of skills and opportunities for people across South Gloucestershire.

• We have run job-shadowing opportunities through Disability Confident for people with visual impairment, mental illness and through the coach apprentice scheme for an individual out of care and the criminal justice system.
• We have supported the corporate parenting programme by running long-term work placements for looked after children.
• Disability Confident training was rolled out to all community sport staff with 4 conducting 'serving disabled customers' and 6 conducting 'Respect' training through the Institute of Sport and Recreation management (ISRM)
• Giving broad access to the coach apprenticeship scheme (over 18’s) and the assistant coach apprenticeship scheme (over 16 but under 18)
Future Actions

The section is committed to continuous improvement and have list of actions which will impact on equality issues.

• Develop and widen the Breakthrough Partnership. A programme offering mentoring to socially excluded children and young people delivering around 2500 support sessions each year. This project recently won a national Positive Practice Award.

• South West Inclusive Sports Hub (SWISH). A service user led group for adults with learning difficulties that devise and then run a series of sport and leisure activities.

• South Gloucestershire Union of Disability Sport (SUDS). A pan-disability consultation and best practice forum. This group runs multi activity clubs for over 60 disabled children each week. It also provides a website communicating local opportunities, and a directory that is issued to all key partners

• All section team meetings include equality as a standing agenda item.

• Inclusive Fitness Initiative has been rolled out to all 5 leisure centres with training for staff and discounted rates for targeted groups.

• Inclusion coaches - 3 community coaches are specialising in inclusion focusing on disability, mental health and community cohesion.

• Two groups we wish to work with more next year are ‘Looked After’ Children and adult mental health (linking with Avon and Wilshire and Mental Health Trust).

• Over 2007/8 we also wish to work on our monitoring and evidence process with a number of providers to clearly prove the impact of our service in reducing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.

• In November 2007, the Engage cultural festival including dance was held to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, including work to promote a number of multi cultural dance pieces.
3.4 Environmental Services

The Waste Management Client Unit (WMCU) manages the 25 year PFI contract with SITA South Gloucestershire Limited on behalf of the Council. SITA is responsible for all operational issues relating to waste management in South Gloucestershire, including collection and disposal of household waste, recycling, home composting and operation of the Council’s SORT IT!* Centres (CA sites). The Unit is also responsible for aftercare management of Harnhill closed landfill site and in partnership with SITA, development of various educational and waste awareness raising schemes.

The Unit is also involved in the development and implementation of a long term waste planning and disposal strategy in partnership with the West of England Authorities (Bristol, Bath & and North East Somerset and North Somerset) and joint procurement.

The following functions are also delivered: Animal Health, Environmental Protection, Food Safety and Standards, Health & Safety at Work, Health Improvement, Licensing, Pest Control, Consumer Advice, Fair Trading, Product Safety, Weights & Measures.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Waste Management Service Plan is in place (April 2007 – March 2008).
- Waste Management Service Statement is in place.
- Equality Impact Assessments are conducted and inform planning activities.
- Equality and Diversity Impact Self-Assessment for Race Equality has been conducted.
- A Waste Minimisation Road Map has been produced.
- SITA operates a comprehensive Diversity Policy.
- Action Plans include equalities work and are monitored.
- Service statements are in operation for all services and show equality targets.
- Training sessions, videos, leaflets etc. are made available in community languages.
- Performance management board review equality performance.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- Translations into community languages of documents, information and reports.
- Consultation is conducted to review services and this includes all communities e.g. bulky waste and SORT IT Centres.
- 5 year review consultation (bulky waste) and Publicity, education and community involvement.
- An Equalities Statement is used West of England Partnership “Issues and Options” consultation paper.
- Consultation activity uses a variety of methods in order to include the views of all sections of the community, such as: Comment card pro formas and Comment cards analysis.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- Point of Store Collections for the elderly and disabled are available.
- Leaflet/Letter translations are available.
- Language Line Service is used.
- Special collections for incontinence pads and non-infectious medical dressings.
- 5 Year Review Consultation document (SORT IT!* Centre Assistants).
- Flexibility of policy for equality issues, e.g. mental health and blindness
- Adaptations to wheeled bins for blind or visually impaired people.
- Special access arrangements are in place for disabled people to access Stoke Gifford SORT IT!* Centre, i.e. barrier lifted.
- Facilities inspection sheet includes provision to record details of where issues of unequal access are observed.
- Dedicated parking areas are provided for disabled drivers at Mangotsfield SORT IT!* centre.
- Signage at SORT IT!* Centres has been reviewed and adapted.
- Staff instruction for SORT IT* Centres “Meeters and Greeters” to look out for and assist those in difficulty.
- Equality objectives and targets are based on completed Equality Impact Assessments.
- Individual service Equality Action Plans have been developed and contain equality objectives and targets.
- The Charter Mark Award has been achieved.
- Service statements specifically address equality.

Employment and Training

- Equality is covered in the PFI contract with SITA.
- Equalities is a standard item on WMCU team meeting agendas.
- All SITA staff are required to undertake equalities training. A CD-ROM from SITA regarding equality training for SITA staff is available.
- SITA operate a comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy.
- Team meeting agendas include equalities.
- Liaison meetings with contractors cover equalities issues.
- Staff training sessions specifically cover equalities.
Future Actions

• Waste and recycling services for minority communities at significant religious festivals e.g. Ramadan.
• Pictorial information at SORT IT Centres!* to assist non English speaking or disabled people.
• Travellers Services – a review of the impact of the waste collection service on the travelling community.
• Following introduction of new services, a New Service Charter is planned.
• There is a dropped kerb to assist disabled people at Mangotsfield SORT IT!* Centre. SITA will consider provision of further dropped kerbs at the remaining sites of Yate, Thornbury and Stoke Gifford along with special marked parking bays for disabled residents.
• The Council is shortly to embark on two new projects involving the SORT IT!* Centres. The first project will deal with reviewing and evaluating options for the control of trade abuse and cross border use at CA sites with the view to implementing new control measures by April 2008. This first project will help to inform a second project which will look at wider issues such as improving customer service, meeting and greeting arrangements, times of opening for the public, signage, websites and site operations which have a positive impact on the efficiency of the service and the public. Equalities issues will be addressed as part of this process.
3.5 Street Care

Street Care’s main purpose is;

- To provide a clean, green and safe environment for the people of South Gloucestershire.

Street Care is a diverse group of some 350 employees, in all parts of South Gloucestershire for all residents providing a range of services in and around people’s homes such as: grounds maintenance, street cleansing, road/street lighting maintenance and road gritting. It also runs the Council’s transport fleet and carries out major building and civil engineering construction projects.

The Section has taken a positive approach to the implementation of the new equalities agenda and is an active participant in the corporate equality agenda through representation on Corporate Equalities focus at Group Management Team Meetings, which helps to take forward and disseminate information, through team briefings to front line staff. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken initially across all service areas and key equality priorities are being incorporated into the Sections Business Plan & Unit Service Plans.

The Section has made a significant commitment to carrying out equalities and diversity training for employees and specifically tailored the programme for some services that required more individual service-focused approach. The equalities agenda is supported further by the Investors in People standard.

As a front line customer-facing group, Street Care interfaces with all residents of South Gloucestershire on many different levels. For example, through Street Cleansing Services by removing racist graffiti, helping to reduce the fear of crime.

Street Care Services include:

**Highways**
Management and maintenance of the highway network and infrastructure including Street Lighting.

**Street Scene**
Management of public open space and highway land to ensure cleanliness, environmental sustainability and public safety.

**Emergency Planning**
Provide the lead for emergency planning, support and advice function to Council Departments, emergency services and associated organisations.

**Transport**
Providing fleet management and maintenance facilities to the Council, supporting all services that rely on the provision of transport.
Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Equality Impact Assessments have been completed for all functions.
- A comprehensive Action Plan has been produced as a result of Equality Impact Assessment outcomes.
- The departmental Business Plan (which covers contractors) includes actions for equality and an equality statement.
- All contractors used by the Section are employed in-line with the Council’s guidelines, thus adhering to equality best practice and addresses the requirements of the ‘Equality Duties’.
- All sub-contractors complete an equalities questionnaire which assesses the standard of their equalities practice, and follow-up is carried out as appropriate.
- All Section’s Service Statements refer to the Team Action Plan which includes equalities.
- Equalities is a standard agenda item for all meetings held within the section.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- There is a Department team which has responsibility for engagement/consultation who provide evidence for relevant actions.
- Action Plans are available via the Section’s website.
- Service Plans and Business Plan are designed and developed as a result of comprehensive community consultation.

Customer Care & Service Delivery

- Service Plans incorporate targets and objectives set out in Equality Action Plans.
- The departmental Business Plan contains a strong commitment to Equality.
- All meetings with teams include equalities as a standard item.

Employment and Training

- Equality Training Plans and Training Records are in place.
- Corporate evidence of employment provides equalities data.
- Corporate guidance/protocols on equalities are followed by the Section.

Future Actions

- Training for staff to refresh and update on legal issues and their wider responsibilities within the equalities agenda.
- Further community engagement activity with all groups.
- Further work with the corporate centre to improve representation in the workforce.
- Questionnaires to the community to ensure services provided meet customer needs.
3.6 Finance & Support Services

The section provides financial, administrative, marketing and consultation support to the rest of the Department. In addition, it provides a helpdesk service for all street care services for residents & other stakeholders. The section is committed to improving the quality of services for all sectors of the community and equalities is at the heart of everything we do.

We regularly assess and review our services on an ongoing basis as a part of team meetings, one to ones and staff performance reviews and hold annual equalities update training events for the whole team.

The services we provide include –
- The provision of marketing, consultation, financial and administrative services to all sections of Community Services giving information and advice to the public.
- The provision of a Street Care Help Desk
- Implementation of Corporate finance, ICT, publicity and legal initiatives
- Providing information and support to SMT/Directorate and Executives
- Administration of the small grants process
- Management of capital projects for leisure centre and libraries
- Working in partnership with South Gloucestershire Leisure Trust with regard to property matters

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Equality Impact assessments are conducted and are reviewed annually. The outcomes of this process inform planning activity.
- Service Plan includes equality targets.
- Corporate PQQs which include equality targets are adhered to when negotiating contracts.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- All publications meet corporate accessibility guidelines.
- Equalities issues are included in all consultation exercises.
- Events are held in accessible venues and assistance is available on request.
- Staff are aware of and use a range of consultation mechanisms and we advise staff on appropriate methods to reach and engage hard to reach communities.
- When surveys are undertaken, an analysis of minority data is compared against census information.
- Staff are trained to access data and produce reports for disadvantaged groups and individuals.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- All services have equality content on the website that is fully accessible.
- A range of methods of access are available for our services, including the Help Desk.
- A range of publicity methods and activities are used to target minority groups.
- Corporate guidance for procurement is followed.
- Charter Mark and IIP have been retained for the section.

Employment and Training

- All relevant staff are trained in equality, employment law and best practices.

Future Actions

- We will improve our measurement and analysis of responses to consultation from hard to reach groups through the introduction of a corporate policy and standard questions.
- The development of our online consultation tool (I-novem) will also enable us to improve our measurements and analysis of responses from hard to reach groups.
- We will widen the means to access the Street Care Helpdesk with the introduction of a text messaging service.
- Helpdesk staff will be trained in the use of Language Line, an interpreting service, to improve the ability of staff to communicate with non-English speakers.
- We will continue to improve physical access to community new and refurbished community facilities through the work of the Capital Projects Officer.
- We will support the improvement of employment opportunities for disabled and young people through the Disability Confident and Corporate Parenting initiatives.
4.0 Chief Executive & Corporate Resources

The CE&CR department is wide ranging and pivotal to the structure of South Gloucestershire Council. It delivers the central support services and customer facing ethos of the organisation. It includes five diverse divisions covering a wide range of corporate responsibilities. The divisions are:

1. Corporate Finance and Property Services
2. Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD)
3. Customer and Revenue Services
4. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
5. Legal and Democratic Services

The department also works closely with Safer South Gloucestershire, the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership which exists to help improve the safety and well being of individuals and communities throughout South Gloucestershire.

The department facilitates and helps SGC to realise its full potential with its various departments, partner organisations and responsibilities around delivery of services to the public and its work in supporting elected members. In supporting the service departments it also has a corporate leadership role in facilitating the future direction of the authority, leading on the Council’s Improvement Programme ‘Fit For Our Future’, and helping to match resources to expectations and services.

• The department has reviewed its equalities procedures and now has a well established Departmental Equalities Working Group representing the five divisions of CE&CR and Safer South Gloucestershire.
• The working group developed a Departmental Equalities Action Plan to drive forward service improvements. The working group meets on a regular basis to monitor progress against the action plan.
• 2 departmental away days were held on 18 April 2007 and 10 May 2007 to develop the departmental equalities action plan and to gain a wider understanding of the Equalities Standard. The away days involved the equalities lead officers from each division and other divisional representatives.
• Each division within CE&CR has a Divisional Equalities Action Plan and a process established for monitoring progress against their plan. The Departmental Equalities Action Plan feeds into each of the 6 divisional equalities action plans, to ensure that equalities and diversity action are embedded into work practices across all divisions within the department.
• Equalities and diversity objectives have been fed into each Divisional Operational Service Plan through the Departmental Equalities Working Group
• A departmental ‘Equality and Diversity’ intranet site was launched in 2006, which provides up-to-date information accessible to all SGC staff relating to equalities, accessibility, diversity and minority interests which fall within the Department’s service delivery and employment responsibilities.
• An equalities notice board at Nibley Court Offices displays up-to-date and relevant equalities and diversity information to staff in the department
• Equalities and Diversity training is available to staff via an online presentation available on the intranet. This forms part of the departmental staff induction process. The training was cascaded to all existing departmental staff through team briefings.
‘Disability Confident’ training is being delivered to all staff within the department by the Disability Confident Team to increase awareness of disability issues and the support available to disabled employees. Disability Confident training is an essential part of meeting the Council’s Disability Equality Scheme commitments which form part of our statutory obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. Over 300 members of staff have attended the training course and a further 150 will be attending the training between November 07 and March 08.

**Future Actions**

- Carry out a review of the departmental induction process and develop an effective departmental induction programme, ensuring that equalities and diversity awareness is incorporated.
- To set equalities targets and monitor equalities action plans through PBViews (SGC’s performance management system).
- Review the current online equalities presentation to incorporate changes following the introduction of the Disability, Age and Gender Equality Schemes and the revision of the Race Equality Scheme. Incorporate the revised presentation into the departmental induction process and provide refresher training to all existing staff.
- Review use of electronic notice board at Nibley Court offices to provided information and to raise awareness of equalities and diversity.
- Work towards achieving Equalities Standard Level 4.
# 4.1 Human Resources & Organisational Development

The aims of the division are to:

- Drive Organisational Development;
- Enhance the Talents of our Workforce;
- Make Continuous Improvement a Reality;
- Help the Council achieve Excellence.

## Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Systems and timetables are in place for ensuring Impact Assessments are undertaken.
- Impact Assessments lead to the development and implementation of objectives, targets and action plans.
- Equality targets are built into Business Plans.
- Equality objectives and targets will come into existence for sexual orientation, age, religion & belief.
- Equality targets are delivered by contractors through the contract management process.
- Strategies have been developed to address disproportionate impact on some groups (of services delivered).
- Targets have been set based on specific race, gender and disability equality objectives.
- Targets are critically evaluated to ensure equality objectives are translated into meaningful targets.
- Guidelines are established for the way in which equality monitoring is conducted.
- Partnerships are aware of the Corporate Equality Plan.
- Equality action planning is linked to BVPIs.
- National equality targets have been adopted.

## Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- A Strategy is in place for all community, staff and other stakeholder groups to participate in the development of equality objectives.
- Equalities groups are consulted on key strategic policies and strategies such as the community strategy via the Corporate Equalities Forum and directly for all high level strategic consultations such as the community strategy.
- Other stakeholders are also consulted such as Senior Managers Network, parish and town councils and voluntary and community groups.
- Accessible buildings are used for consultations, particularly those that contain loop systems.
- The Local Area Agreement (LAA) seeks to address equalities and disadvantage by building in specific indicators and targets.
- Consultation activities are accessible (e.g. appropriate language, translation, interpretation, and buildings & facilities used in consultation).
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- Equality objectives and targets are based on completed Impact Assessments.
- Equality Impact Assessment reports.
- All publications can be made available in alternative formats.
- Equality objectives and targets will come into existence for sexual orientation, age, religion & belief.
- Appropriate resources for the achievement of targets.
- Service plans specifically address equality (e.g. barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustments in the provision of services)
- Structures of responsibility for progressing action plans.
- Action plans are properly timetabled and appropriate monitoring systems exist.
- Equal employment and equal service delivery targets are established and monitored.
- Divisions are consistent with Equality Schemes.
- Contracts with agencies delivering services on our behalf include equality requirements.

Employment and Training

- Employment targets for recruitment and staff retention.
- Targets for recruitment, staff training and development, staff retention and promotion.
- Workforce profiles for race, gender and disability and age, and will exist for sexual orientation and religion & belief.
- The equal pay review will result in an appropriate action plan.
- Equality is covered by the staff handbook.
- Guidance and training is in place for those with responsibility in the areas of recruitment.
- Staff and members are aware of all equality objectives targets and plans.
- Managers are aware of equality issues in relation to contractors and partners.
- Staff and managers are aware of the Equality Standard, its implications and their responsibilities.
- Equality is part of management appraisal systems.
- Appropriate training is in place on action plans to support the scrutiny process.
- A programme is in place to ensure that all HR&OD staff attend a Disability Confident workshop
- Positive Action provisions of equality legislation are used where appropriate.
- Parental, family or adoptive leave, flexible working arrangements, maternity leave, childcare facilities and career breaks are offered.
Future Actions

- All HR functions related to Employee relations are reviewed and refreshed on a rolling basis – either as the result of changes in legislation or the light of experience.
- Work has just started on producing the first of a series of video presentations explaining how services operate. These will be broadcast in one-stop shops and also available to watch on our website. The aim is to make information available to people in a visual form as an alternative to printed material.
- The corporate communications strategy, approved as an executive decision, includes the following references to equalities (agreed with the corporate equalities team):
  - All our communications will be clear, accurate, accessible and timely
  - Ensure all communication is designed to be appropriate to the target audience to help get the message across
  - Appendix 1: We will meet these standards in all our communications, whatever the format or channel.
    > be honest, open and accurate;
    > be clear, easily understood, timely and up to date;
    > meet relevant legislation, codes of practice and the council’s own protocols and guidelines;
    > support and reflect the council’s Guiding Principles;
    > adhere to our accepted corporate style and be easily and instantly identifiable as originating from South Gloucestershire Council;
    > provide access to services and information via a variety of channels to meet the needs of stakeholders;
    > be cost-effective;
    > be accessible to all members of the community, including information being available on request in different formats and languages;
    > target communication at specific audiences where appropriate to help get the relevant message across;
    > be monitored and reviewed regularly.
- More BSL content will be added to the website as it becomes available.
- A communications tool kit is currently being developed, which will include advice for officers on a range of equalities issues, including presenting information in different formats, translation services, targeting hard to reach groups.
4.2 Finance & Property

**Finance:** This part of the Division leads on the four key corporate financial processes:-
1. Financial Planning
2. The Budget and Capital Programme
3. Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring for the Council as a whole
4. Final Accounts

Specific Teams are responsible for the delivery of strategic and corporate Accounting and Budgeting, Risk Management and Insurance, Financial IT Systems, Payroll and Exchequer Services, and Procurement and VFM/Efficiency. Financial IT systems, Risk Management and Insurance, and Payroll and Exchequer Services are provided to Schools, the Leisure Trust and to the Registered Social Landlord now responsible for the Council's former Housing Stock.

**Property:** The Property wing of the Division comprises Teams responsible for the provision of current and future Corporate Accommodation and Facilities Management, Asset Management/ Records, Architectural Design, Property Care and Valuation services across the Council. These Teams fulfil the strategic property function for the Council and provide a range of comprehensive property services and advice to the client departments including schools. Property also advise Voluntary and Community Groups.

**Leadership & Corporate Commitment**

- Equality Impact Assessments have been produced for
  - Corporate Finance;
  - Managing the Corporate Estate;
  - Disposal of Land and Buildings.
- A Finance and Property Equalities Action Plan is in place.
- Finance and Property Service Plan.
- DDA Audit and Capital Programme.
- Asset Management Plan.
- CECR Equalities Working Group Membership.
- Agenda/Minutes of DMT/Section Heads Meeting.
- Contract Clauses.
- Adherence to Corporate Equalities Policy and Practice within Corporate HR Framework.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- Lead on Budget consultation use corporate publications standards including use of large type/Braille/community language options etc. e.g. Council Tax Leaflet and Final Accounts book. Budget consultation includes Corporate Equalities Forum and equalities issues of specific proposals would be considered by Service Department’s consultees.
- CECR intranet includes Equalities pages.
- F&P use corporate HR procedures for recruitment, induction, training etc
- All reports to Council/Cabinet/Select Committees etc. generated by Finance and Property include paragraph on Equalities Impact e.g. Revenue Budget Monitor, Capital Programme Monitor, Council Tax Base, Asset Management Plan

Customer Care & Service Delivery

- No outward facing services provided directly to general public. Main contacts are Council Departments, Town/Parish Councils, Money Market brokers, Insurers, External Auditors, Government Departments and Agencies, contractors, HMRC, Other LA’s, Members. Some limited contact with public and other stakeholders and Partners during annual public Budget consultation cycle.
- Several staff in the Division have volunteered to provide interpreting services and are included in Council database.

Employment and Training

- Corporate HR policies and practice are followed.
- Equalities training is provided through Induction process.
- Disability Confident training is cascaded throughout Division.

Future Actions

- Annual review of Finance and Property EIAs.
- Integration of EIA components within Finance and Property element of standard Service Plan template when next updated (due Spring 2008) to tie in with new Council Plan 2008/11.
- Complete Divisional Management Team review of outcome of Staff Survey 2007 and develop Action Plan incorporating any Equalities issues which maybe identified.
4.3 Safer South Gloucestershire

Safer South Gloucestershire is a statutory partnership of the Police, Local Authority, Primary Care Trust, Fire & Rescue Service and Police Authority who, under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002 are required to work together as the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and drugs and alcohol misuse in their area.

Safer South Gloucestershire is a member of the South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Hate Crime (PAHC), which is a strategic multi-agency organisation that aims to increase the reporting of hate crime and to ensure that individuals who experience hate crime receive the support they need. The PAHC also holds Case Review Panels that discuss specific individual cases and tracks progress, ensuring that the victim(s) receive the service and support relevant to their need.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• EIAs of services have been carried out.
• The Safer South Gloucestershire Divisional Service Plan contains commitments to equality and diversity.
• Initial drug and alcohol service triage consultations include recording of information around ethnicity and any other information the service user wishes to provide.
• Equalities form a standing agenda item for Full Team and Team Leaders meetings
• The Partnership Against Hate Crime Strategy supports delivery against the BVPIs.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• Consultations on the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement include equalities representation from Bristol Black Development Agency.
• Funding has been provided to ensure wider consultation through the council’s Viewpoint Survey with minority groups in priority areas, the results of this survey will be available in January.
• PAHC developed its first Strategy and Action Plan, consulting widely with minority groups and partners.
• Work with Southern Brooks Community Development Project and other agencies to target racial incidents in Bradley Stoke.

Customer Care & Service Delivery

• Initial triage consultations include questions on race, age, religion/belief and any other issue the service users wishes to disclose.
• Commissioning of services includes equalities requirements.
• National Treatment Agency tool has been used to audit equalities by the DAT and their service providers.
• The Drug Treatment Co-ordinator has worked with the Travellers Unit and now attends on-site meetings to promote access to services.
• A recent event held at BAWA provided information on hate crime in the form of a play by people with Learning Difficulties for their peers. More than 70 people attended and the event ended with a lively question and answer session.
• Safer South Gloucestershire has provided funding for EACH, both in terms of service provision and to run a Conference on issues around homophobic hate crime.
• Funding has been provided so that SARI can provide extra support in schools in South Gloucestershire
• The Anti-social Behaviour Team worked closely with a resident of Cadbury Heath when he was the subject of racist anti-social behaviour. As a result, the gentleman was put forward for a regional and national award ‘Taking a Stand’.
• As part of the above work, funding was provided through SARI to target harden his premises
• Many of the requests for funding under the Safer Shops Scheme came from minority ethnic shopkeepers and almost all were given at least £1000 towards improving security at their premises
• Funding has been provided to the Bristol Chinese Women’s Association to deliver a service in South Gloucestershire and to link to the Anti-social Behaviour Team in terms of reporting incidents on behalf of their service users
• Domestic Violence services in South Gloucestershire are provided by Survive. Safer South Gloucestershire provides funding for their Freedom Project that provides support to survivors. Survive regularly work with survivors from minority groups and same sex couples.

Employment and Training

• Safer South Gloucestershire’s Induction Package includes equalities and diversity.
• All members of staff undertake a minimum of 1 day’s training on equalities.
• The Supervision Meeting Template includes a section on equalities and provides an opportunity for staff to raise issues.
• Equalities are also discussed at PDPR.
• The Workforce Development Programme for staff working in the field of drugs and alcohol includes four statutory themes, one of which is equalities and diversity.
• The Partnership Against Hate Crime Development Officer has worked with Children & Young People’s Department and is delivering a pilot scheme consisting of 5 lessons, designed around the Citizenship Curriculum, that will raise awareness of respect for others
• Pilot scheme of five lessons designed around the Citizenship curriculum being delivered to raise awareness of respect for others.
• Safer South Gloucestershire staff booked to attend Disability Aware training provided by South Gloucestershire Council.
Future Actions

- Safer South Gloucestershire will be carrying out a Workforce Development Programme based on Skills for Justice National Occupational Standards that also include equalities as a core component.
- The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator is exploring with Bristol City Council the possibility of providing a Perpetrators Programme.
- Further work with the Travellers Unit and other minority groups to ensure services are widely publicised and understood.
4.4 Customer & Revenue Services

The Customer and Revenue Services Division is based over four sites and has over 150 officers involved in serving our customers across the region. It is responsible for running the three One Stop Shops, 2 Contact Centres, Council Tax and business rates collection as well administering housing benefits and welfare fraud investigation and Ombudsman complaints.

The Division has contact with each of the 106,000 homes and 6,000 commercial properties in the area as well as the 21,000 live benefit claimants, along with investigating fraud, taking criminal prosecutions and court proceedings in appropriate circumstances. It operates a cashiering service, two contact centres taking over 250,000 calls a year, a Document Management Team processing over 100,000 items of work a year and a Controls Team which reconciles the money and ensures our systems work effectively.

Each year approximately £200 million is collected and £45 million is paid out in welfare benefit. The division operates with no backlogs of work and has some of the highest performance figures in the country. The division is accredited under Investors in People and Charter Mark, which demonstrates a commitment to addressing equalities issues and delivering services of the highest quality to our customers.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Equalities and diversity objectives are included in the Customer and Revenue Services Operational Service Plan.
- A well established Customer and Revenue Services Equalities and Diversity Working Group develops and monitors the implementation of an Equalities & Diversity Action Plan for the division. The group meets on a regular basis to monitor progress against the equalities targets set.
- Systems and timetables are in place for ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for divisional policies and processes where appropriate. This process is monitored by the Departmental and Divisional Equalities Working Groups and actions agreed at meetings. All EIAs are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- An Equalities notice board has been established in Nibley Court offices to keep staff updated about any equalities and diversity related matters. The information is kept up-to-date and relevant. 2 officers are responsible for monitoring and updating content on the board.
- The division has led on raising the profile of equalities and diversity within the department. As part of the National Customer Services Week the Customer Relations Team raised awareness of equalities through staff roadshows and promotional material, including handing out ‘Think Equalities’ bugs to staff. All roadshows were held in accessible locations across the local authority area.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- Corporate consultation is co-ordinated within the division by the Customer Relations Team.
- A ‘consultation audit’ was carried out during 2007 to evaluate the involvement of minority groups in past consultations carried out across the Council to establish how they were targeted and what methods were used. This research will be used to help target future public consultations to ensure they do not exclude minority groups.
- The Customer Relations Team are currently carrying out a customer profiling project: ‘Understanding who are customers are’. This will help us to identify minority or excluded groups of customers and help us to effectively target future consultations to ensure that they are fully inclusive and accessible.

Customer Care & Service Delivery

- The division achieved the Charter Mark standard for excellent customer service in October 2007.
- An action plan has been developed to address any non or partial compliances with the Charter Mark standard.
- The Division is leading the ‘Think Customer’ programme, which is one of the 6 key priorities of the Council’s Improvement Programme ‘Fit for our Future’. The Think Customer Programme aims to increase customer satisfaction and improve customer services across the Council, ensuring that services are consistent, accessible and inclusive. One of the major achievements so far has been the development and launch of the Think Customer! Toolkit for staff across the Council.
- A corporate customer toolkit has been developed by the Customer Relations team, which contains advice on how to use hearing loops and translation services. The Toolkit is available to all SGC staff via the Intranet.
- The Customer Services website contains a link to the corporate equalities pages, emphasising the link between the provision of high quality customer service and need for the provision of inclusive and accessible services.
- Customer satisfaction surveys have been amended to gather equality and diversity information to enable future equalities monitoring and evaluation of access to our services. Satisfaction surveys are currently sent to a sample of customer who use the contact centres.
- Uptake and entitlement of Housing Benefit by customers from overseas is recorded and monitored.
- Three Community Benefits Officers have been recruited to assist in the benefits assessment process to provide a contact point between the customer and the benefit assessors. This helps to establish the needs of the customer and whether they require access to further services to address needs, such as disability or language barriers. They refer customers to Welfare Officers to assess their need for further assistance if appropriate.
- Benefits Application Forms contain equalities monitoring questions, including sex, age, ethnicity and status, which includes options for same sex partners and Civil Partnerships.
- Benefits Liaison Officers liaise on a daily basis with Housing Officers in the Gypsy and Travellers Unit regarding Travellers Benefit claims.
- The Corporate Contact Centre has started to offer a text messaging service for customers, providing an alternative form of contact.
Employment and Training

• All staff within the Division have attended the Disability Confident Training course.
• All staff have received training on equalities and diversity through the online equalities training course.

Future Actions

• Service improvements to address the partial or non compliances of the Charter Mark standard within Revenue Services, including developing alternative ways of highlighting to customers with disabilities or to customers who have difficulty in reading or understanding English that we can supply written information in alternative formats.
• Develop customer satisfaction surveys for all services and identify any need for service improvements.
• Monitor and evaluate equalities monitoring information collated.
• Complete the review of the customer feedback and complaints procedure to ensure process is accessible.
• Carry out an equalities access audit of the One Stop Shop service.
• Development of an ‘Access to Services Strategy’ to address barriers to accessing our services – customer profiling project is underway. Consultation to be carried out with customer focus groups, including BME people, disabled people, older people and people living in rural areas.
4.5 Legal & Democratic Services

Legal
We provide direct legal advice to Service Departments (including general legal advice Court work, public inquiries, contracts and conveyancing). We also have responsibility for propriety and ensuring the Council acts lawfully. We also act as legal advisors to the Executive and no executive committees, statutory committees & Boards, and strategic partnership meetings.

Cabinet Office
We facilitate the Council's decision-making process by the development of the Council's Constitution and advice on its operation and interpretation, support and advice to the Cabinet & Executive Councillors, forward planning and co-ordination of Executive decision making and of Executive business across all parts of the Council's structures. We also lead on the Registration Service.

Democratic Services
We provide a comprehensive corporate and impartial service to support and develop the Council's decision making. We also seek to support Members by offering general advice. The Schools Admissions Appeals Service is administered and run here dealing with over 800 appeals per annum.
We have re-organised the service to provide dedicated advice to the separate elements of the democratic structure. We also lead the work of Elections and Electoral Registration.

Travellers
The unit was set up to ensure a co-ordinated and cost effective approach to Traveller issues within the authority. This includes:
- managing the Council owned authorised sites, direct management of unauthorised encampments on Council land and acting as first point of contact for all Council services on other encampments
- providing information, advice and a liaison service to Members, agencies, Travellers, the public and other directorates
- Corporate policy development and the co-ordination and assessment of services

Registration Service
Responsible for the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships. We also conduct marriage and civil partnership ceremonies, citizenship ceremonies and non-statutory celebratory services.
Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- The service has an Equalities and Diversity Targets Action Plan, which outlines all current and future projects relating to equalities and diversity issues. Progress is monitored on a regular basis through the Equalities Working Group.
- Officers represent Legal and Democratic Services (‘LADS’) on the departmental Equalities Working Group to ensure that departmental equalities issues and actions are considered by the division. They feedback to LADS Management Team to enable information to be cascaded to staff.
- They also feedback to the Departmental Improvement Group (DIG) to ensure that we are fulfilling our responsibilities.
- The Divisional Service Plan has a specific section on Equalities.
- All formal decision making reports e.g. Cabinet Reports and Scrutiny Reports, contain a mandatory section on Equalities, to ensure that equalities issues have been considered and addressed where possible. We ensure that these requirements are met and that no report goes forward unless all sections are completed.
- Divisional web site has direct link to Equalities Policy.
- Supporting people funding is awarded to Travellers Unit to ensure proper support to Traveller families.
- Travellers unit heavily involved in South West. Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- Each report to Council/Cabinet/Executive Member dealing with the disposal of Council land has a report on the suitability of the land for Traveller use.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- Partners and external stakeholders are made aware of equalities issues through the whole of the contracting process, PQQ, ITT and contracts include reference to compliance with Equalities, Guidance on Equalities.
- Equality promotion provisions are embedded into the partnership framework (constitution) of the Local Strategic Partnership and the 5 Strategic Partnerships beneath the LSP.
- Gained the agreement of all partner members of the LSP and strategic partnerships to abide by the councillors’ code of conduct.
- Consultation on the Community Strategy is undertaken through the Select Committees.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

Democratic Services
- Loop system/microphone used in meeting rooms.
- All meeting papers are offered in large print, Braille, audio tape or different languages.
- Customers are surveyed on facilities within Kingswood Council Chamber.
- Maximising opportunities for voting, postal and polling stations.
- Encouraged turnout at elections and postal voting through a multi staged publicity campaign.
- Full polling station review, with particular attention to disabled access.

Registration Service
- Monthly ‘sense of occasion’ citizenship ceremonies, with full ceremonial and civic dignitary presence to affirm the importance of citizenship and participation in civic society and to give a warm welcome to new citizens, in the presence of their guests. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council give priority to attending these occasions and we have occasional special guests e.g. the High Sheriff at the last ceremony.
- Equalities item on all monthly staff meeting agendas.
- Enhanced ‘sense of occasion’ civil partnership ceremonies at the Register Office for the standard statutory fee and enhanced ceremonies with options for use at external approved premises.
- Awareness of Gay issues / routine discussion by staff to take into account in service delivery.
- Availability of Language Line for translation.

Legal Services
- Client Questionnaire asks client if they were satisfied with the way they were treated.
- Briefing Note available on Web site for all fee earners to send to Litigants in person providing details of information about the Court process.

Legal & Democratic Services
- Development of a questionnaire for Councillors in general and Chairs and Spokespersons of committees, to establish if they are satisfied with the service they receive.
Employment and Training

Legal Services
- Staff are provided with a Lexcel Office manual on Legal Services policies and procedures, which contains guidance on the Council’s corporate equalities policies.
- Standards Committee are monitoring progress of Equalities and receive reports from the Equalities Officer.
- Standards Committee resolved to recommend to the Council that the Council’s constitution be amended to require mandatory Equalities training for all Councillors every two years.
- Induction programme includes reference to the Council’s Equalities Policies.
- Equalities is a standard item on team meeting agenda.
- We have 2 members of staff who are self certified as disabled. Reasonable adjustments are made.
- All staff have undergone Equalities training. All staff have undergone Disabilities Confident Training.
- Standards Committee has oversight of the whistleblowing procedure.

Future Actions
- Training is to be provided to Members on the Gypsy and Travellers report, which covers equalities and race relations issues, in order to ensure that Members are aware of equalities issues with regard to gypsy and travellers when they give formal consideration to such matters.
- A review of the standard contracting terms currently being undertaken, this will specifically include a review of the standard terms used in respect of equalities to establish if they are fit for purpose or need amending.
4.6 ICT

Information and Communications Technology covers:-

- **Information Strategy and Standards**
  Vision, analysis, co-ordination and compliance across the whole Council.

- **Applications**
  Maintaining and operating a wide range of systems on behalf of all departments.
  Development, support and implementation of information and communication technology solutions within the Council.

- **Networks**
  Providing data communications between users in widespread locations.

- **Network Services**
  Providing data storage, common office applications, e-mail, intranet, and internet services.

- **PC Support**
  Supporting agreed PC hardware and software, plus printers and other electronic devices.

- **Telephony**
  Providing corporate contracts for fixed and mobile telephony, local support, centralised billing, and specialised systems for telephone contact centres.

- **E-Government**
  Using the power of the electronic working to deliver information and access to services, and to meet specified central government objectives.

- **Geographical Information Systems**
  Providing a corporate resource to plan, co-ordinate and support the holding and use of geographically based data, plus the systems to use and display it.

- **Business Change**
  Providing specialised skills to analyse and redesign business processes and support the introduction of improved working methods. The team also act as a project management resource, and oversee ICT project management.

**Business Support Services – covers**

- **South Gloucestershire Records** provides a records management service for the Council this includes records storage, deeds storage, archives and a loan service for the retrieval of deposited records and deeds. Also to provide an archive service in partnership with Gloucestershire Record Office.

- **Design and Print** provide a quality, cost effective photocopying/printing and design service for all departments within the Council and associated outside organisations offering production of publications, cartography, exhibitions, illustrations, logo’s, colour copying, high volume printing and copying, offset printing, printing of plans and finishing etc.

- **South Gloucestershire Mail** deals with all the incoming mail to the main Council buildings sorting and delivering post internally to departments and ensuring all outgoing mail from the building is sorted ready for collection by the Royal Mail. A mail messenger service is provided which delivers post internally from various buildings.

- **Finance Section** provides financial planning, advice, accountancy and financial support to Business Support Services, Chief Executive, Personnel Services, Legal and Democratic Services and Information Management and E-Government.
• **Corporate Support** maintains the Councils scheme of flexible working hours. The Thornbury office deals with the ordering of PC’s, keyboards, printers and computer accessories etc. for all other council departments.

**Leadership & Corporate Commitment**

• The division has an Equalities and Diversity Action Plan, which outlines all current and future projects relating to equalities and diversity issues. Progress is monitored on a regular basis through the Equalities Working Group.
• Equality forms a key priority within all service plans which are aligned to the Corporate Plan with impact assessments completed.
• The Division is represented on the department Equalities Working Group to ensure that departmental equalities issues and actions are considered by the division.
• Equalities issues are a standing item on the agenda of the ICT and BSS Management Team meetings. Matters arising are communicated to employees via team briefings.
• Corporate policies relating to equalities are also promoted on the ICT and BSS Intranet pages.
• The implementation and development of ICT projects - equality and diversity issues are taken into account within Prime

**Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny**

• The division works closely with other divisions in the council to access information available to them regarding population issues and BME take up of services.
• The Design service ensure that the councils publications guidelines are used so that all publications to the public comply with our equalities policy.
• Support is also provided for the Libraries Service computer network. This provides free Internet facilities for the public as part of the Council’s approach to ‘digital inclusion’.

**Customer Care & Service Delivery**

• Service delivery and customer care is central to the services we provide. Whether it is internal customers or impacts on the wider community.
• We will review the findings in the recent staff survey “what makes you tick” for equalities issues and develop appropriate actions.
• We will use comments from the regular user satisfaction surveys to update action plans.
• ICT and BSS are committed to the provision of equality and diversity training. Training forms part of the Learning & Development Plan (skills Matrices), which are incorporated into the service plans. The division has also achieved Investors in People status, which requires a commitment to a training plan that delivers training on equality to staff at all levels.
• ICT & BSS will work closely with Revenues & Customer Services as part of the Think Customer! Project.
• The ICT Strategy contributes to the development of services, access channels and technical infrastructure that is accessible to all customers (citizens and businesses).
• ICT will work with the Smarter Working project to enhance the technical infrastructure to support flexible and remote access to the Council network and systems (i.e. home, remote and mobile working). This provides customers with more choice of how, when and where they access Council Services.
• We also provide Mobile Working solutions (taking our services out to our customers). There may be many reasons why a customer cannot visit Council premises – mobility, visual impairment, childcare problems etc. Examples of mobile working include benefit assessments, building service checks, domestic violence risk assessments.

Employment and Training

• Equality and Diversity Training has been embedded into the Induction Process.
• Policies relating to equalities are promoted on ‘ICT and Business Support Services’ Intranet page. These are drawn to a new starter’s attention as part of their induction process.
• The Division actively supports the Disability Confident programme to reintegrate disabled people into work e.g. Appointment in Kingswood Mail service.
• HROD are used on matters relating to special needs of users, e.g. telephony requirements, voice recognition software. In some cases, telephones and equipment are ordered and installed by ICT following consultation with Access To Work.
• ICT provides solutions to enable employees to achieve work life balance through:
  – Mobile Working - means that an employee does not have to report into the office at the beginning or end of day, and can work whilst ‘on-the-move’.
  – Remote Working - enables employees to connect to the Council’s network, subject to controls, via common technology - providing the opportunity for people to work from home, their nearest out-based building rather than Civic Centre etc.

Future Actions

• To review the Equality impact statements and update action plans accordingly.
• Update action plans in accordance with any new council initiatives.
• The Archive service in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council will be analysing the take up at the Gloucester Record Office of South Gloucestershire Residents and target future campaigns on the service appropriately.
Planning, Transportation and the Strategic Environment
5.0 Planning, Transport and the Strategic Environment

The Department of Planning, Transportation and Strategic Environment is split into sections that include Finance and Customer Services and operational teams with responsibilities for the following areas:

**Planning & Environment:**
- The protection and assertion of the public's right to use the extensive network of public rights of way in South Gloucestershire, including maintenance, enforcement and changes to the definitive map
- Co-ordinating the environmental theme of the Community Strategy
- Promotion of sustainability across the Council
- Develop and implement strategic environment and sustainability projects
- Enable the involvement of the community, voluntary and business sector in work to protect and enhance the environment
- To promote high quality, well designed sustainable development proposals for major development sites in South Gloucestershire, in a timely and efficient manner

**Highways & Transportation:**
- Improving road safety for all road users
- Managing car parking
- Traffic Management
- Maintaining bridges and footpaths
- Maintaining traffic lights
- Supervising construction of roads and footpaths on new developments
- Supporting local bus services
- Providing all Council transport including transport to schools and community care centres
- Concessionary travel for elderly, disabled and other groups
- Blue Badge (disabled parking) scheme
- Supporting the Joint Local Transport Plan team
- Influencing travel behaviour through School Travel Plans, Workplace Travel Plans and the Green Commuter Club
- Maintaining and enforcing of public rights of way
- Management of the Council’s fleet of passenger transport vehicles.

**Development Services:**
- Building Control applications
- Processing planning applications
- Enforcing planning and building regulations
- Planning and enforcement appeals
- Dangerous structures (inc demolitions, out of hours cover, ruinous/dilapidated buildings)
5.1 Highways & Transportation

Highways & Transportation are responsible for:-

• Road safety, traffic management and highway improvements, they inspect and maintain South Gloucestershire’s highway structures and maintain and improve the traffic signals in the area.
• Highways deal with applications for the adoption of roads on new developments and maintain the Highway Record.
• They implement engineering schemes to reduce casualties and encourage cycling, walking and use of public transport.
• Traffic management measures enable us to keep traffic in the region moving efficiently.
• The section is also responsible for the strategic policy, planning and development of the council’s transportation service. This includes developing much of the capital programme for transport and monitoring delivery of the joint local transport plan.
• They manage the council’s integrated passenger transport requirements and assess the transportation impact of new development.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• EIAs have been developed for the previous divisions of Highways and Transportation that have recently been amalgamated.
• Equalities is built into the existing Business Plans and will be included in our next round of plans.
• Contract documentation includes reference to our equalities statement and commitment.
• Partnership with Term Consultant highlighted CEP and required response and knowledge of Partners Equality Statement.
• Where BVPI’s exist they are included, e.g. BVPI 165, also local PI’s are included and reported through PB Views.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• Proposed traffic schemes are advertised on SGC’s web site as well as individual consultation with interest groups and presentation at area fora. Equalities issues are intrinsic to the design process and are adjusted to local needs.
• Schemes put forward at area fora are illustrated with drawings and diagrams, reference is made to use of language-line and other translation services available in line with Corporate recommendations.
• Staff, stakeholders and community focus groups are invited to be involved in the production of schemes. Staff scrutinised schemes prior to delivery to tackle technical issues in accordance with national guidance.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- We adopt the corporate standards and requirements relating to equalities.
- Divisional and team meetings allocate resources as appropriate to deliver achievement of targets.
- Operational Service plans state a commitment to address equality issues.
- A Departmental Equalities working group is in place to ensure consistency and promote Equalities work and representation on this group is from across all divisions.

Employment and Training

- All employees within the section undertook the Disability Confident training.
- Team leaders/sections heads attended a 2 day Equalities Awareness course.
- All new employees are issued with the department’s Induction Guide, which makes reference to Equalities policies.
- At the induction stage all employees are issued with a copy of the Personnel Handbook, which contains information relating to work/life balance policies.
- The Corporate intranet A-Z also holds all such policies and employees are made aware of these during their induction process.
- It is a requirement that staff involved in the interview process have undergone Recruitment & Selection training which includes equalities.
- An Equalities clause is included in all contracts.

Future Actions

- By subscription to an online standards and code of practice archive (TI Indexes) technical staff can keep up to date on new designs and methods of working.
- Consultation will continue with interest groups where they are available on new scheme designs.
- Consideration of inclusion of ethnicity questionnaire as part of consultation process for monitoring/tracking purposes.
5.2 Development Services

The Development Services unit is responsible for discharging the Council’s responsibilities under the Planning Acts in relation to the control of development, principally through the consideration of submitted planning applications and the investigation and enforcement, where appropriate of unauthorised breaches of planning control.

We are also responsible for the provision of a cost effective Building Control service to ensure the health and safety of people in and about buildings within South Gloucestershire. We are also concerned with energy conservation and access to buildings for all.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• EIAs for Development Services have been conducted in accordance with corporate and departmental guidance. (EIA’s have been developed for the previous divisions of Building Control and Development Control that have recently been amalgamated).
• EIAs are used to inform the Development Services Operational Service Planning process. The role of the Service in delivering the Corporate Equalities Policy is acknowledged in the Development Services OSP.
• Race and Equality action plans are built into the OSP and progress on these action plans is measured and reported through PB Views.
• Corporate guidelines which incorporate equalities are followed e.g. Recruitment & Selection, complaints monitoring etc.
• There is an Equalities agenda item on all Development Services SMT meetings.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• Extensive DCLG consultation process is in place for proposed amendments to Building Regulations and/or planning legislation.
• Bi-annual agent’s forum meetings with regular BC and Development Services customers.
• Customer satisfaction surveys in place for Development Services, BC and planning enforcement teams. Includes equalities monitoring questions.
• 07/08 Development Services OSP contains an action to carry out an analysis of planning applications received from and enforcement actions taken in respect of minority groups (particularly travellers).
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- EIAs are used to inform the Development Services Operational Service Planning process. The role of the Service in delivering the Corporate Equalities Policy is acknowledged in the Development Services OSP.
- Race and Equality action plans are built into the OSP and progress against these action plans is measured and reported through PB Views.
- Equalities requirements are included in the corporate procurement process.
- Corporate telephone translation service is available on request (Language Line).
- On-line application submissions and consultations.
- Development Services representatives on the PTSE Equalities group (ensuring consistent approach across the directorate)

Employment and Training

- All employees within the section undertook the Disability Confident training.
- All new employees are issued with the department’s Induction Guide, which covers Equalities policies.
- At the induction stage all employees are issued with a copy of the Personnel Handbook, which contains information relating to the work/life balance policies.
- The Corporate intranet A-Z also holds all such policies and employees are made aware of these during their induction process.
- It is a requirement that staff involved in the interview process have undergone Recruitment & Selection training which includes equality.
- Flexible working arrangements (including home working) is available to and taken up by staff.

Future Actions

- 07/08 Development Services OSP contains an action to carry out an analysis of planning applications received from and enforcement actions taken in respect of minority groups (particularly travellers).
- Continued development of the Agent’s forum meetings with our regular customers.
- Development of in-line applications and consultations.
- Improvements to the PTSE Development Services website.
- 07/08 DS OSP contains an action to ‘obtain information on BME groups from the Corporate Equalities Officer and consult on whether Development Services decisions and consultations are adequately communicated to these groups’
5.3 Finance & Business Support

The service is responsible for:-

• The provision of comprehensive financial services meeting both the Directorate’s specific needs and the wider requirements of the Council, and
• The provision of business support for the Directorate including managing the contact centre and scanning units, plus coordination, advice and reporting services across the Directorate. These activities include a Member decision-making service, H & S, Equalities, complaints monitoring, training and employee development and Investors in People work.

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

• EIAs for F&BS has been conducted in accordance with corporate and departmental guidance.
• EIA outcomes are used to inform both departmental and section service plans e.g. by the inclusion of specific and measurable equalities initiatives.
• Equality targets are built into the F&BS Operational Service plans.
• Corporate guidelines are followed e.g. Recruitment & Selection, complaints monitoring and call logging.

Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

• A member of F&BS acts as the nominated link for Language Line. Staff were informed of this service via an article on our intranet and Equalities website.
• The F&BS service plan recognised the good practice that should be adopted regarding consultation e.g. the service plan itself was distributed for consultation to all heads of service and the Executive Member during its production.
• Performance information relating to F&BS activity is published in PB Views.

Customer Care & Service Delivery

• We work to comply with Corporate guidance and requirements.
• Where resources are required these will be identified in the regular budget monitors.
• The following statements appear in the current F&BS service plan:-
  – Generally – All equalities groups are identified and included in consultation and are actively involved in developing the equality and diversity performance of the organisation.
  – Specifically – undertaking a survey of the accessibility of the Contact Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Users.
Employment and Training

- A range of Equalities training has been undertaken within F&BS.
- All employees within the section undertook the Disability Confident training.
- Team leaders/sections heads attended a 2 day Equalities Awareness course.
- One staff member attended a sexual orientation seminar run by EACH & SGC – feedback was delivered via Equalities website, team meeting & Equalities Working Group.
- Contact Centre staff awareness raised re. Deaf awareness training.
- A member of our section compiled a Workforce Profile report to inform DMT of the department’s performance on a range of personnel and Workforce Performance Indicators and profiles.
  - It is a requirement that staff involved in the interview process have undergone Recruitment & Selection training.
  - At the induction stage all employees are issued with a copy of the Personnel Handbook, which contains information relating to these work/life balance policies. The Corporate intranet A-Z also holds all such policies and employees are made aware of these during their induction process.
  - All new employees are issued with the department’s Induction Guide, which makes reference to Equalities policies.

Future Actions

- The plans for the future development of the PTSE Contact Centre include the introduction of call recording. This will help the section to assess the accessibility of the service to all sections of the community and plan further action to improve that accessibility if required.
- As part of the roll out of Project Odyssey (a Council wide document management initiative) all clients will be consulted upon the equalities-proofing and this will be reflected in the Service Level Agreement drawn up between this section and each customer.
5.4 Planning & Environment

The Planning and Environment Section is responsible for all the spatial and environmental planning activities of the Council including:-

- Regional, Sub-Regional and Local Planning
- Development Briefs and Concept Statements for Major Sites
- Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
- Urban Design, Landscape Design and tree advice
- Environmental Projects
- Museums and Heritage
- Improving the Environmental Performance of the Council

Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- The Planning and Environment Service Plan contains a number of targets related to equalities, and a specific Equalities Action Plan.
- The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West requires an Equalities Impact Assessment of policies in Local Development Documents that have the potential to have unfavourable effects on certain groups. The Council’s Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report outlines how the Council aims to achieve this, and this document was the subject of public consultation during November/December 2007. All Local Development Documents are subject to a sustainability appraisal, and the Equalities Impact Assessment process will form an important component of this.
- EIAs have been conducted in accordance with corporate and departmental guidance.
- EIAs are used to inform Planning processes.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- The Spatial Planning team have recently contacted all previous Local Plan participants (around 840) to ascertain their interest in the forthcoming Core Strategy consultation and other Local Development Framework documents. As part of this process, each participant was requested to answer a number of equalities based questions, to ascertain the cover of consultation and provide a good basis against which the Planning and Environment target of “Develop a system to collate, monitor and analyse the impact of policy / services” can be assessed and developed. The results are currently being recorded, and this process was completed in mid December 2007.

- The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West requires an Equalities Impact Assessment of policies in Local Development Documents which have the potential to have unfavourable effects on certain groups. The Council’s Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report outlines how the Council aim to achieve this and this document has been the subject of public consultation. All Local Development Documents are subject to a sustainability appraisal, and the Equalities Impact Assessment process will form an important component of this.

- The Council has a strong track record of working with local communities on a range of environment related projects. Officers work in partnership with conservation and community groups on a number of local environmental projects, providing professional advice, organising workdays and habitat management works, enhancing community understanding through environmental interpretation and staging events.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

• The Spatial Planning team have recently contacted all previous Local Plan participants (around 840) to ascertain their interest in the forthcoming Core Strategy consultation and other Local Development Framework documents. As part of this process, each participant was requested to answer a number of ‘equalities’ based questions, to ascertain the cover of consultation and provide a good basis against which the Planning and Environment target of “Develop a system to collate, monitor and analyse the impact of policy / services” can be assessed and developed. The results are currently being recorded, and this process will be completed by mid December 2007.
• The Planning and Environment Service Plan suggests that customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out to collate monitor and analyse the impact of the policy/service and clearly explained why we are asking for this information. To achieve this, a questionnaire has been developed in partnership with Community Services to establish diversity of participation and levels of satisfaction with Environmental Projects & Partnerships service. This survey now needs to be conducted.
• The Planning and Environment Section have also continued with customer service questionnaire for environmental grants in line with the Planning and Environment Service Plan.
• Diversity surveys are conducted at certain events held by the Natural and Built Environment Team. The results of these surveys are used for service monitoring and for providing information when applying for external funds.
• The Joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) assesses current provision of public rights of way (PROW) across the area, identifying user perceptions and outlining an action plan for future improvements. It builds on the Council’s duties as Highways Authority, and outlines how the PROW team will improve the provision of PROW throughout the District, a key component of which is increasing the accessibility of PROW to a wide variety of users. (a copy of this is saved in the Customer Care and Service Delivery File).
• Engage Festival 2007 – Celebrating Cultural Freedom: On 17th November 2007 over 3800 people attended the 2007 Engage Festival at Bradley Stoke Community School. The event had the theme of Celebrating Cultural Freedom and aimed to break down barriers and reduce prejudice through learning and understanding. The role of the environment in contributing to our culture was celebrated in the eco-zone with traditional environmentally themed crafts, activities, advice and an opportunity to learn about climate change.
• Energy Efficiency: As part of a programme of climate change communication events a series of presentations took place in 2007 to elderly people’s groups in South Gloucestershire. This included presentations at three Senior Citizens Forums, the Rotary Club and the Probus Club. Particular emphasis was put on promoting home energy efficiency, including promotion of the council’s home insulation grant scheme. Increasing energy saving measures in elderly and vulnerable people’s homes will lead to warmer, better quality homes resulting in better health and reduced the financial burden on health services.
Employment and Training

- The Planning and Environment Equalities representative attended a 1-day Service Managers Equalities Training Course organised by LIFT South West. This course was aimed at outlining relevant Equalities Legislation, demonstrating links between legislation and practical application, and outline methods of best practice.
- A range of Equalities training has been undertaken.
- All new employees are issued with the department’s Induction Guide, which covers Equalities policies.
- At the induction stage all employees are issued with a copy of the Personnel Handbook, which contains information relating to the work/life balance policies.
- The Corporate intranet A-Z also holds all such policies and employees are made aware of these during their induction process.

Future Actions

- The Core Strategy will be the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the ongoing development of the document.
- The Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document will be the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment as part of the ongoing development of the document.
- All other forthcoming Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will be the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment.
- Continue to attempt to Increase community participation in conservation and enhancement projects.
- Continue to carry out Customer satisfaction to collate monitor and analyse the impact of the policy/service and clearly explained why we are asking for this information.
- It is anticipated that the Planning and Environment Service Plan 2008/2009 will contain a specific Equalities Action Plan, with targets related to Equalities.
- Potential for the identification of under represented groups participating in the Local Development Framework process, and action taken to increase participation to ensure a representation of the South Gloucestershire profile.
- The Planning and Environment Section will continue to implement all ‘equalities’ requirements, and will respond positively to emerging guidance and requirements through initiatives such as training as and when appropriate.
- Implementing Statement of Actions 2.1-2.3 and 3.5-4.4 of the Joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Work with the South West Regional Assembly to understand how the Equalities Impact Assessment requirements of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West are being taken on board across the region, with a view to identifying barriers and best practice.
- Continue to enable the involvement of the community, voluntary and business sector in work to protect and enhance the environment
Children and Young People
6.0 Children and Young People

The Department for Children and Young People leads the delivery of South Gloucestershire Council services for the South Gloucestershire Partnership for Children and Young People. Together, with South Gloucestershire partners we will invest in children and young people so that South Gloucestershire children and young people have the best possible start in life and are involved in shaping their future.

The Children and Young People Plan 2006-2009 is the single, overarching strategic plan for all those services in South Gloucestershire which affect the lives of children, young people and their families.

The priorities of all CYP Department services focus on the national Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda outcomes:-

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-Being

and the overarching themes of:-

- Developing better support for parents and carers
- Supporting inclusion and equalities
- E-strategy
- Issues arising from new legislation

Together, with our South Gloucestershire partners we will invest in all South Gloucestershire children and young people so that they have the best possible start in life and are involved in shaping their future.

There are 62,303 children and young people living in South Gloucestershire aged 0-19 years. 60% of the population lives in the areas adjoining Bristol.

South Gloucestershire population is approximately 4.2% BME. Over 54 languages are spoken in South Gloucestershire schools in addition to English. The percentage of BME pupils attending South Gloucestershire schools varies across the three localities. In 2006/07 this was 9% in Severnvale, 5% in Kingswood and 3% in Yate.

Approximately 1200 children and young people have Statements of Special Needs

There are 165 Looked After Children (LAC). Most are teenagers, although the number of very young babies looked after has risen recently.

93% of children aged 10+ for whom a child protection conference has been held have contributed to the conference.
Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken for all new functions and when reviewing existing ones. A timetable for revision and EIAs is available on department’s intranet.
- All functions identified in the CYP Plan are reviewed annually as part of the planning process and equality targets are built into Operational Service Plans. (OSPs)
- Specific gender, disability and race priorities are published in the relevant equality plans for the department.
- Corporate guidelines on contracting are followed.
- Strategies have been developed to address disproportionate impact on specific vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children, children with learning difficulties and disabilities, teenage mothers, black Caribbean boys, gypsy and Traveller children and underachieving boys in lower socioeconomic groups.
- Where evidenced, targets are set and monitored for race, gender and disability in service delivery targets identified in the CYP Plan. National and local targets are monitored through the Council PB Views system.
- Service delivery and targets are monitored and evaluated half yearly. At the end of the year there is a review and planning process that involves all partners involved in the work.
- Council guidelines on equality monitoring are followed and monitored by EDAT.
- Scrutiny involves Senior Officer Group (Partnership), and reports to Council Select Committee and CYP Strategic Partnership Board. The end of year reporting is published on the web and consulted upon with the public and relevant community groups. Next year priorities and targets reflect the local consultation, demographics and nations/regional requirements.
- Equality data for relevant BVPIs is provided.
- National equality targets required by DCSF, DoH are included in key targets and outcomes of the CYP Plan to demonstrate progress.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

The Council Community Strategy is currently out for consultation and the result will directly inform Departmental consultation processes. The Department has well developed consultation mechanisms with all stakeholders. These include:

- All consultations relating to service delivery adhere to the Compact agreement with the voluntary sector.
- Consultation is built in to impact assessment for strategies and plans
- Development of all the major strategies and plans such as CYP Plan, Learning difficulties and disability Plan (LDD Plan), Looked After Children Strategy, Children and Young People Participation Strategy and CYP Workforce Strategy all included wide consultation and involvement of children, young people, families and staff working with children and young people in the Council, schools and Partner agencies. Different methods and support are provided to ensure consultation accessible.
- The participation strategy involves significant participation events run by young people for young people. These are ‘Raise your Voice’ in 2007 and ‘Use your Voice’ being planned for 2008.
- The Ready Steady Change training programme for staff on improving participation of children and young people in services has been piloted and will be rolled out in 2008.
- Currently we are consulting on the parenting support strategy
- We have well developed student councils, a South Gloucestershire Youth Forum and young people annually elected as members of the UK Youth Parliament.
- We have a youth group for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual young people aged 16-25 called ‘Purple Turnips’ which provides a safe environment to meet and reduce their isolation.
- Young People are managing a budget ‘The Big Stash’ to provide resources through a bidding process, for projects designed and run by local young people.
- Disabled young people are actively encouraged and supported to engage fully in consultation processes such as the Big Stash panel and the Youth Forum. They are involved in local planning processes such as the Yate Community Plan.
- The Brimsham Green Bridging Project involves able bodied young people and young people with disabilities developing a youth club together.
- All Looked After Children and children and young people with disabilities are involved in reviewing their care plans.
- We have an independent advocacy service for looked after children involved in child protection processes.
- The bi-annual Every Child Matters survey of South Gloucestershire children, young people and parents/carers undertaken in schools provides valuable evidence of state of wellbeing for all the local school communities. Results are fed into the planning process.
- The annual Childcare Sufficiency Survey which is disseminated across South Gloucestershire feeds into the future planning for child care.
- Choice Advice is a universal service providing information about access to schools which also targets disadvantaged groups across South Gloucestershire.
- All consultations are accessible – for example, we are developing the involvement of children and young people with disabilities in prioritising the action for the LDD action plan and the Short Breaks consultation workshop, funded by the Children’s Fund through KIDS Southwest, a voluntary sector organisation that is working in partnership with the Department.
• A Parents Reference Group has been established for the Disabled Children’s Strategy and LDD Plan. Parents are represented on CYP Plan scrutiny groups via Supportive Parents, Care Forum and CVS.
• The scrutiny procedures for departmental equalities and diversity service delivery involve reporting to staff and management within the Department. To meet the reporting mechanisms of the new departmental structure new engagement mechanisms to support equality, diversity and community cohesion are being set up. These mechanisms are detailed in the Equalities Action Plan.
• The department is involved in the council project to deliver a community engagement strategy that supports the aspirations of our diverse communities.
• Consultation is carried out through a variety of methods to meet with service user needs. In addition all consultations are now also published on the Council website using e-consult.
• A consultation toolkit is being developed for staff to help them to engage with vulnerable groups. This is a corporate project which this department is actively involved in, providing the input on how to engage with children and young people.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

The annual process of reviewing and evaluating progress against targets and planning future priorities and targets is integral to all the work undertaken by the department. All priorities within the CYP Plan are subject to this planning process. A Planning day for all partners involved was set up in January 2008. Successes for 07/08 were celebrated and the emerging priorities for 08/09 identified.

• Our successes in 07/08 include:-
  • Operational Partnerships – In 07/08 we achieved Beacon Status for Healthy Schools and for School Improvement through integrated working around investing in children and achieving excellence. This year we are in the running for Beacon status for Looked After Children.
  • The Youth Offending team has been assessed as the best in the country.
  • The Breakthrough Project has been given a National Award (This is a sports project involving looked after children with disabilities.)
  • The youth service has improved participation of young people and young people for example, young people organised an international Peacefest last year aimed to encourage diversity and racial and religious tolerance and participated in numerous international conferences.
  • Our NEET (Not in Education, employment or Training) is the lowest figure among statistical neighbours
  • Increased participation in EET (top quartile) especially among vulnerable groups including LAC, LDD, teenage mothers
  • Improved GCSE and A level results for BME young people and Looked After Children (LAC) (06/07 statistics).
  • The ‘Work to Learn’ Scheme, supporting disabled and vulnerable young people such as LAC, NEET, gypsy and Traveller to access employment training and work experience placements.
  • Extending work experience in the Council opportunities for Looked After Children and children with learning difficulties and disabilities.
  • Improved access to childcare (above national trend)
  • Apprenticeship completion above West of England average

Processes which contributed to our successful outcomes are as follows:
  • All new and revised policies and functions where initial screening had identified differential impact undergo screening as an integral part of the annual review and planning cycle.
  • Equalities monitoring is undertaken for age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Where relevant monitoring related to sexual orientation, religion and belief is undertaken, for example, in the reporting of prejudice based incidents. to the local authority.
  • Appropriate resources are provided to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision. Resources are identified in the annual CYP, LDD and BME plans for delivering outcomes.
  • Any particular issues are highlighted through monitoring and evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data, comparison with national targets and prioritised in the implementation plans for the forthcoming year.
  • For structures of responsibility for progressing action plans – see CYP Plan page 50 – Delivering and implementing the plan (CYP 01).
  • As some sections work to the academic year the planning cycle is being phased to meet the Council reporting cycle requirements of April to March.
A new CYP departmental group (including schools) has just been established to provide a co-ordinated strategic lead on equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Equality Action Plans give details of equality employment and service delivery targets. Monitoring for equalities in employment and service delivery is undertaken through reports to Departmental Consultative Committee, Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion Group, Departmental Equality Working Group, and to the Council Equality and Diversity Action Team (EDAT) which reports action to the Council Equality Forum and Council. There is a standing item for equalities and diversity on the weekly Directorate meeting.

Departmental race, disability and gender Equality Action Plans are linked to the relevant Council Equality Schemes.

All contracts with agencies delivering services include equality requirements. All contracts up for renewal and new contracts are scrutinised to ensure consistency in compliance with Council requirements.
Employment and Training

- Council’s Annual Recruitment and Retention Report.
- Council’s Annual Equality in Employment Report.
- CYP Annual Workforce Data Analysis and workplan is based on outcomes of the analysis by race, disability, gender and age.
- Sexual orientation, religion or belief, are currently not monitored for employment and training but work is underway to commence monitoring recruitment processes and the existing workforce in central services and schools during 2008.
- An Equal Pay Audit for HAY has been carried out across the Council by Corporate HR. A draft report is currently being produced, along with a draft Equal Pay Policy.
- Forthcoming action is to conduct an Equal Pay Audit across CYP for Soulbury/JNC graded posts.
- The department adheres to the Council’s HR policies and procedures which have undergone equality impact assessment.
- The ‘Equality Issues’ section in the ‘Code of Conduct for Employees’ is sent to all staff as part of their contract documentation. The diversity section in the ‘Employee Information Booklet’ sent to all staff as part of their contract documentation. The Booklet also refers to the Council’s overall Equalities Policy and is available on the Council’s Intranet Site.
- The Council’s Recruitment and Selection Guide states that anyone involved in recruiting and selecting to be skilled in the procedures and techniques including equalities issues, and to be objective, unbiased and professional. This department ensures that anyone chairing a recruitment panel has been on either the Council’s standard 2-day training course or the 1-day refresher course for experienced recruiters.
- A manager’s guide to the Recruitment and Employment of Disabled People is available for all recruiting managers.
- Equalities Action Plan/Targets including race, gender, disability and age are set annually and progress monitored and evaluated. The key issues identified are addressed in the following year’s priorities in the Department HR operational service plan.
- Workforce Strategy/Implementation Plan.
- Council’s ‘Managing Employee Performance Procedure’ that incorporates short-term sickness, conduct and capability procedures.
- Council’s PDPR Process, including guidance notes and associated documentation.
- EIA training is a priority and will be rolled out to staff in 2008-2009.
- Hate Crime Awareness Training has been developed in collaboration with PAHC, Safer South Gloucestershire, the police, ACTES, SARI and EACH. It is aimed at CYP centrally employed staff, headteachers, school governors responsible for equality and diversity and other council staff who have direct involvement with the public in the community.
• The Council has a Disability Confident project aimed at increasing numbers of disabled employees through improving the awareness of disability issues, work placements, guaranteed interviews and training for staff and managers. A Trainee Social Work Scheme has been in place for some time that incorporates a positive action placement.

• The Department has a partnership with South Gloucestershire Special Schools to co-ordinate and provide work experience placements for young disabled people to assist them in gaining the necessary skills and experience to increase their job opportunities.

• All HR policies form part of the Council’s overall ‘Work Life Balance’ strategy and are available to staff via the Council’s intranet site.
Future Actions

Following the planning day in January, key priorities for the Children and Young People Plan 2008/09 are currently being defined. They will include the following outcomes:

- Reduced high baseline rates of obesity in children
- Reduced high rates of teenage pregnancy
- Making preventative work a reality
- Implementing the Parenting Support strategy
- Safe recruitment
- Effective response to domestic violence
- E-safety across the authority
- Development of rapid response teams for child deaths
- Improved outcomes for the more able and other vulnerable groups in the secondary phase
- Improved provision, participation and achievement for Looked After Children, young people with Learning difficulties and disabilities, young people entitled to free school meals and other vulnerable groups over the 14-19 phase
- Improved achievement at Level 2 and Level 3 at age 19
- Continuing to improve the quality and range of information, advice and guidance for families/carers and young people.
- Continuing to improve the sufficiency, range and quality of childcare provision,
- Improved opportunity in priority neighbourhoods
- Continuing improvement in mathematics and science for girls
- Continuing improvement in literacy for boys
- Continuing improvement in equalities data monitoring, analysis and evaluation to identify and inform key priorities and outcomes
- Following the pilot in 2007, roll out of the ‘Ready, Steady, Change’ programme to services
6.1 Traded and Support Services Division

Traded and Support Services Division follows the CYP Department planning, consultation and policy processes but has distinct authority wide functions in relation to managing the trading with schools and the delivery of council wide cleaning and catering services. For this reason, a separate contribution has been provided.

The activity of Traded and Support Services Division include:-

- Provision of advice, guidance, co-ordination and procurement in the commissioning of support services within schools
- Providing a one-stop-shop approach to trading provision, sourcing and providing services on behalf of schools
- Provision of nutritional catering services within the school environment (ensuring that all services are delivered with equality of opportunity and access for all service users and staff). This is key to delivering the CYP Plan Outcome ‘Be Healthy’
- Provision of nutritional catering and ancillary welfare services to vulnerable clients, contributing to enabling them to live independently, in their own homes, for as long as possible
- Cleaning: Ensuring clean and hygienic premises which contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of children and young people and provide a safe environment in which to learn
- Ensuring that the needs of Children and young People are provided for, through a process of regular consultation with individual clients and school Councils, thus ensuring that services reflect user needs and that young people and parents/carers are engaged in the decision making process.
Leadership & Corporate Commitment

- Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken for all new functions and when reviewing existing ones. Timetable for revision and EIAs available on CYP intranet.
- All functions identified in the CYP Plan are reviewed annually as part of the planning process and equality targets built in to OSPs.
- Specific gender, disability and race priorities are published in the relevant equality plans for the department.
- Corporate guidelines on contracting are followed.
- The Catering Service captures data from each school on pupils with special dietary needs in order to ensure that service delivery embraces equality of access for all users.
- Strategies have been developed to address disproportionate impact on specific vulnerable groups such as Looked After children and children with learning disorders and disabilities.
- The Traded Services Division has a commitment to including Looked After Children (as a vulnerable group) in its annual Work Placement Scheme.
- Where evidenced, targets are set and monitored for race, gender and disability in service delivery targets identified in the CYP Plan. National and local targets are monitored through the Council PB views system.
- Service delivery and targets are monitored half yearly and reviewed at the end of the year through a planning process that involves all partners involved in the work.
- Council guidelines are followed and equality monitoring undertaken through EDAT.
- Scrutiny involves Senior Officer Group (Partnership), and reports to Council Select Committee and CYP Strategic Partnership Board. The end of year reporting is published on the web and consulted upon with the public and relevant community groups. Next year priorities and targets reflect the local consultation, demographics and nations/regional requirements.
- Equality data for BVPIs is provided.
- National equality targets have been adopted and included in progress of CYP Plan.
Consultation, Community Development and Scrutiny

- The Council Community Strategy is currently out for consultation and the result will directly inform Departmental consultation processes.
- Development of all the major strategies and plans such as CYP Plan, Disabled Children’s Strategy, Looked After Children Strategy, children and young people participation strategy and CYP Workforce Strategy all included wide consultation and involvement of children, young people, families and staff working with Cups in the Council and Partner agencies. Different methods and support provided to ensure consultation accessible.
- Currently we are consulting on the CYP strategy to support parents and have produced an accessible summary of the Strategy to support Parents with Learning Difficulties.
- We have well developed student councils, a South Gloucestershire Youth Forum and young people annually elected as members of the UK Parliament.
- Consultation is built in to impact assessment.
- The annual Every Child Matters survey of South Gloucestershire children, young people and parents/carers undertaken in schools provides valuable evidence of state of wellbeing for all the local school communities. Results are fed into the planning process.
- The Department is represented on the project group writing the Council community engagement strategy
- All consultations are accessible – for example, the involvement of children and young people with disabilities in planning the action for the LDD action plan and the Short Breaks consultation workshop, funded by the Children’s Fund through KIDS Southwest, a voluntary sector organisation that is working in partnership with the Department.
- A Parents Reference Group has been established for the Disabled Children’s Strategy and LDD Plan. Parents are represented on CYP Plan scrutiny groups via Supportive Parents, Care Forum and CVS.
- The scrutiny procedures for departmental equalities and diversity service delivery involve reporting to staff and management within the Department. To meet the reporting mechanisms of the new departmental structure new engagement mechanisms to support equality, diversity and community cohesion are being set up. These are described in the Equalities Action Plan.
- The department is involved in the project to deliver a community engagement strategy that supports the aspirations of our diverse communities.
- Consultation is carried out through a variety of methods to meet with service user needs. In addition all consultations are now also published on the Council website. The Catering Service undertakes a consultation exercise with stakeholders at all schools on an annual basis and returns the outcome/results to school.
- The service has excellent results in all consultations with its catering and cleaning workforce, the majority of which do not have access to the council intranet and spread across the council schools and buildings. Involvement is encouraged through easily accessible regular newsletters and regular outreach by supervisors.
- The service had the highest return for the 2007 Council Employee Survey.
Customer Care & Service Delivery

- The annual process of reviewing progress against targets and planning future priorities and targets is integral to all the work undertaken by the department. All priorities within the CYP Plan are subject to this planning process. A Planning day for all involved has been set up for January 2008.
- Equality impact assessment is integrated into the annual planning cycle. All new and revised policies and functions where initial screening had identified differential impact undergo screening. Example EIAs are provided.
- Equalities monitoring is undertaken for age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Where relevant monitoring related to sexual orientation, religion and belief is undertaken. Sample Prejudice based incident report form.
- Appropriate resources are provided to ensure that there is no discrimination in service provision. Resources are identified in the annual CYP, LDD and BME plans. Traded Services is currently resorting a project to identify appropriate user needs and integrate ethnic diets into the school meals catering service. Accordingly, menus have been produced in languages appropriate to user needs.
- Any particular issues are highlighted through monitoring and evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data and comparison with national targets and prioritised in the implementation plans.
- For structures of responsibility for progressing action plans – see CYP Plan page 50 – Delivering and implementing the plan.
- Planning cycle established to meet the Council reporting cycle requirements.
- A new CYP departmental group (including schools) has just been established to provide a co-ordinated strategic lead on equality, diversity and community cohesion. See draft Terms of reference.
- Equality Action Plans give details of employment and service delivery targets. Monitoring for equalities in employment and service delivery is undertaken through reports to Departmental Consultative Committee, Equality Working Group, and to the Council Equality and Diversity Action Team which reports to action to the Council Equality Forum and Council. Service delivery equality issues identified as priorities that occur outside the reporting cycle can be reported at weekly Directorate meeting – sample agenda.
- Departmental race, disability and gender Equality Action Plans are linked to the relevant Council Equality Schemes.
- All contracts with agencies delivering services include equality requirements.
- All contracts up for renewal and new contracts are scrutinised to ensure consistency in compliance with Council requirements.
Employment and Training

- Work and progress are detailed in the Workforce Strategy/Implementation Plan and Equality Action Plans.
- Council’s Annual Recruitment and Retention Report.
- Council’s Annual Equality in Employment Report.
- Sexual orientation, religion or belief, are currently not monitored for employment and training. The Service will be involved in the Council wide collection of data on faith and sexual orientation taking place in 2008.
- The Council’s policies and procedures are equality impact assessed. The ‘Equality Issues’ section in the ‘Code of Conduct for Employees’ is sent to all staff as part of their contract documentation. The diversity section in the ‘Employee Information Booklet’ sent to all staff as part of their contract documentation. Booklet also refers to the Council’s overall Equalities Policy and is available on the Council’s Intranet Site.
- All Chairs of recruitment panels undergo Recruitment and Selection training which is tailored to meet the needs of the potential workforce.
- The Council’s manager’s guide to the Recruitment and Employment of Disabled People is available for all recruiting managers.
- Training plans and records maintained for staff to include Recruitment Selection, Disability Awareness, Equalities and Diversity.
- On site training records maintained and monitored for operational staff.
- Equalities Action Plan/Targets including race, gender and disability are available.
- Accessible Equalities & Diversity Publication produced within traded Services exclusively for catering and cleaning services operational staff.
- Equalities Impact Assessments are undertaken for services, policies and functions.
- The Division complies with the Council HR procedures, strategies and policies.
- All staff are involved in the annual PDPR process which has been amended to support the requirements of the operational catering and cleaning staff.
- EIA training is a priority and will be rolled out to staff in 2008-2009.
- Divisional staff newsletters are used to promote equalities and diversity issues such as the Council Disability Confident Project and to celebrate diversity e.g. Special recipes.
Sample Press Cuttings
Meals for the elderly now top of the form

A MEAL delivery service for elderly and disabled people in South Gloucestershire is literally going back to school to improve the food it serves.

The council-run model schools service is moving away from the traditional model of central food production and into school settings.

Six communities are providing the service in the following five schools: Thornbury, Thornbury, South Gloucestershire, and Almondsbury.

The cuisine was an improvement in the menu, providing a more varied and catered product to clients from their local school canteens. By now every day, it was not only a hit with clients but also with the staff.

Our school meals have been renowned for their quality and now an entire new generation can enjoy them too. "Moving away from a system of central model production means service the needs of all schools and brings benefits to the council itself. We have had no complaints in over a year of provisions."

For the schools, the move has been welcomed, with many stating the quality of food and service has improved. "The children love the meals and the service is excellent. We are very pleased with the improvements," said one teacher.

Youngsters on peace mission

ABOUT 40 young people from around the world are attending a peace conference in Almondsbury.

The conference is sponsored by the Council and aims to promote peace and understanding across cultures. The event is designed to bring together young people from all over the world to discuss peace, human rights, and global issues.

There are talks and workshops on a range of topics, including the role of young people in promoting peace. The event is open to all young people interested in peace and social issues.

Several local organisations and community groups have collaborated to organise the event, which is expected to attract a large number of participants from different parts of the world.

Council gets the message over access

PEOPLE in need in South Gloucestershire can now access council services and information, and we have taken steps to make it easier for them.

The council has launched a new website, aimed at making it easier for people to find the information they need. The website includes a search function that allows users to find the information they need quickly and easily.

The website also includes a range of interactive tools and resources to help people understand their rights and responsibilities.

The council has also launched a new mobile app, which is available for download on both iOS and Android devices. The app includes a range of features, including a directory of council services and information, and it allows users to receive alerts and updates on important issues.

The council is committed to providing accessible services and information to everyone in the community. We hope that these new resources will make it easier for people to find the information they need, and we are always looking for ways to improve our services.
Two-tier disabled spaces would help those unable to walk

Ryan's bright idea for parking solution

A boy from Bradley Stoke who has never walked in his whole life has come up with an innovative idea to improve the disabled parking situation.

Ryan Abrahams, 10, pictured with his mother, Mary, has suggested a system using red and blue disabled parking bays.

New system

"The idea is that there should be an area marked off with red and blue bays for those people who are unable to walk, but who need disabled parking," Ryan said.

Mary Abrahams, Ryan's mum, said: "It is such a simple idea that if it was in place in my area, it would be much easier for Ryan and others who cannot walk.

"I'm finding it very difficult to find spaces when I go out.

"I don't judge other people's disabilities and often I see people who are able to walk taking a space that maybe they don't need as much as someone who cannot walk at all.

"But just the first few or five spaces could be reserved for people who can't walk at all.

"The idea has been given a cautious welcome from South Gloucestershire Council, which administers the scheme in Bradley Stoke.

"Martin Allsopp, the executive member for planning, transportation and the environment, said: "We are considering the idea but it is too early to say whether it will be implemented.

"However, the council is looking at ways to improve disabled parking in the area.

"The system operates throughout the UK.

"We are trying to find solutions to the problem, but it is not easy to find the right balance.

"The key is to find a way to ensure disabled people are not overlooked or disadvantaged.

"We are working with local authorities to find a solution that will work for everyone.

"And why not use something as simple as a red and blue car park, which the council has already introduced in other areas of the country?"
Tales on helping disabled

A new event for people with learning difficulties, disabled young people, carers, funding, staff and providers in South Gloucestershire is being held later this month.

Hosted by South Gloucestershire Learning Difficulties Partnership Board, South Gloucestershire Council and Commissions, the Real Opportunities bright - Future event aims to promote independence, rights, choices and inclusion, highlighting the opportunities and support available to people with learning difficulties, young disabled people and carers.

The conference will be held on January 30 between 10:30am and 4pm at the Awe, Southmead Road, Pilson, and will be opened by Cllr West and speaker Siobhan Baggs. Cllr Mathew Whitehead said: "This is a great opportunity for people with learning difficulties, disabled young people and their families to find out what help and activities are on offer in South Gloucestershire. It is probably a good day with lots of informative and practical information in the evening, with a chance to meet others in the same situation."

Please contact the conference on 01174 683586 for further information.

Bristol Evening Post
16.01.08

Boost for those with learning difficulties

PLANS to improve and upgrade facilities for people with learning difficulties at two centres in South Gloucestershire are set to go ahead.

The council has just been presented with a report to Minister for Social Exclusion, The Gilley Hall, in Newbridge, which includes the Gilley Hall playing centre, the Gilley Hall special needs service and the Gilley Hall special needs centre.

The council said the aim was to pursue a service that was essential to the needs of the individuals and their families, and to ensure that it would be a cost-effective service.

Councillor Matthew White said: "The council's commitment to improving the quality of life for all children in our community with learning difficulties and promoting their needs effectively.

We are looking forward to this opportunity to continue to develop the service and to ensure it meets the needs of all children.

The service will be delivered to children from the age of five to 16 years old.

We are very pleased that this service is being delivered to children and young people with learning difficulties and we will continue to monitor its effectiveness.

Bristol Evening Post
11.10.07

Dropped kerbs are installed

Disability activists will find it easier to get around South Gloucestershire as a series of new dropped kerbs are being installed in key streets.

The weather and road conditions are proving to be challenging for people with mobility issues, and the council is working on plans to install more dropped kerbs in the area.

Cllr Mark Thomas, cabinet member for planning, transportation and the environment, said: "We are continually striving to improve access for these with mobility problems.

"For some people, a short trip to the shops can be difficult and frustrating and it is a real boost for people with mobility problems to use these new dropped kerbs."
An exhibition has opened this week at Yate Heritage Centre into the history of anti-slavery in the South Gloucestershire area to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. Reporter ALEX ROSS went to find out about this fascinating period of history.

Family’s historic role in proud and savage trade

The exhibition, held at a historic Yate house and supported by the local council, explores the lives and experiences of two Yate families involved in the slave trade. The Sturtons and the Ablazines.

The Sturtons

The Sturtons were a wealthy family with connections to the slave trade. They owned a large estate in Jamaica and also had investments in the British East India Company. The exhibition highlights their role in the slave trade and their impact on Yate.

The Ablazines

The Ablazines were another family involved in the slave trade. They owned a large estate in Barbados and were known for their philanthropic efforts. The exhibition explores their relationship with the Yate community and their impact on the town.

People coming to the exhibition will be surprised by the information provided on the slave trade and its impact on Yate. The exhibition also highlights the efforts of the Yate Community Centre and the Yate Heritage Centre to educate the public on this period of history.

Yate Gazette
18.10.07
Play flags up issue of hate offences

A CHATHOLIC group has raised a alarm in front of city leaders, the police and charity groups to highlight the problem of hate crimes against people with learning difficulties.

South Gloucestershire Council backed the event at the RWA Centre in Southend Road to raise awareness of hate crimes and the issues faced by people with learning difficulties.

About 60 delegates from organisations including the police, voluntary organisations, support associations, and community support groups attended.

The event was co-ordinated by the South Gloucestershire Partnership Against Hate Crime, which said, "The police are keen to get people to raise awareness of hate crime.

"The event is an opportunity to meet others involved in the issue and discuss the problem.

"It is part of our work to highlight the issue and to raise awareness among the public."n

Bristol Evening Post
12.01.08

Advice for those with learning difficulties

PEOPLE with learning difficulties in South Gloucestershire are set to benefit from a new service that will help them to access a range of services.

The service, called DVAH, aims to provide a one-stop-shop for people with learning difficulties.

The service is being launched in the coming months and will be based at the South Gloucestershire Centre.

The mayor of South Gloucestershire, Mr. Smith, said, "This is a fantastic opportunity for people who are looking to support their learning difficulties and include a major role in their everyday lives.

"The launch is the result of a major drive to improve services for people with learning difficulties, and we are confident that it will be a major success.

"People with learning difficulties are often isolated and this service will enable them to access a wider range of services and support."n

Bristol Evening Post
24.09.07

Over 50s can air opinions

THE over 50s voice South Gloucestershire's leaflet campaign to encourage people to express their opinions.

The leaflet campaign has been launched in the region and is one of the first to encourage people to express their opinions.

The leaflet is available at most shops and is aimed at raising awareness of the campaign.

The leaflet campaign is run by the South Gloucestershire Council and is being promoted through local media.

"We hope that people will take the time to read the leaflet and express their opinions," said Mr. Smith.

"We want people to be involved in the decision-making process and to have their say on important issues."n

Thornbury Gazette
29.11.07
A YATE school which takes on challenging pupils from other schools and youngsters from the travelling community in South Gloucestershire has been given a shining report by Ofsted inspectors.

David Clegg, who led a team of Ofsted inspectors, said the 167-pupil St Paul's Catholic Primary School was a “determinedly inclusive school” where the children work hard and behave extremely well.

The inspection report praised the school ratings ranging from good to outstanding.

Head teacher Julian Clements was also singled out for high praise for his very strong leadership that guides much of the school’s policy and strong sense of team work.

The head teacher said: “To be in a continually successful school, we always strive to do things as well as we can. All that hard work is recognised in the achievement and experiences our children enjoy.

“We are very pleased that Ofsted has recognised this too.”

Mr Clegg said: “Pupils across the board make good progress.

“The well-planned activities in the reception year ensure that children successfully acquire every skill in literacy and numeracy.

“There are built-on as pupils move into Years 1 and 2 so that by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 they are reaching broadly average standards

“Consistently, good teaching underpins pupils’ good progress and ensures that good level of achievement.

“Lessons are well planned and taught within an atmosphere that is very conducive to learning. Pupils respond to the encouragement and support they are given by both their teachers and teaching assistants.

“The curriculum offers pupils a good range of experiences and opportunities that enrich learning.

“Pupils’ good progress is due to the carefully planned programmes of literacy and numeracy and the range of intervention strategies.

“But Mr Clegg said the school needs to improve its standards in science by bringing them closer to those in English and mathematics.

“His report also said the governors fulfill their role well.

“Chair of governors René and Eugene Campbell said: ‘I am really pleased with the progress since the last report, which I feel is all down to the pupils, staff and management team of the school.’
Sample Press Cuttings