

Internal Audit Plan

2009/10



Equalities Standard – Level 4

Council Wide

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"Delivering dynamic excellent services to our customers which provide assurance that the Council's resources and risks are properly managed."



Internal Audit Services



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

1. Assessment Score

- 1.1 This report is based on the findings of an internal assessment undertaken by members of the Council's Internal Audit Services section. The Internal Auditors have assessed compliance with the objectives set in the IDeA Equalities Standard for Local Government Level 4.
- 1.2 **The Auditors have concluded that the Council has met the objectives of Level 4 and would therefore achieve this level of the standard if they were externally assessed.** It was clear that Equalities is at the core of service delivery across the Council and good progress has been achieved over the last 12 months to implement the recommendations made by the level 3 Inspectors and to further develop Equalities within the Council. Officers were very positive about their contribution to ensuring Equalities is clearly embedded within the core Council priorities. There were, however, some areas where it was felt that further improvement could be achieved to continue to meet this level of the standard and to maintain a continuous equality improvement process.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 South Gloucestershire Council successfully robustly achieved Level 3 of the Standard in May 2008. The Council set an objective to meet Level 4 of the Equalities Standard by January 2010. A report was submitted to Internal Audit Services by the Equalities Officers on 1st September 2009 providing evidence as to why the Council has now achieved level 4 of the Standard.
- 2.2 This report has four purposes. The first is to provide a structured assessment against the objectives set by the IDeA for Level 4 of the Equalities Standard and to provide any associated findings arising from this assessment. The second is to provide qualitative comments; this will include highlighting where particular good practice is noted with example case studies as well as recommendations for improvement areas against each of the elements of the Standard. The third is to review progress against the recommendations made by the External Inspectors at Level 3 and consider whether any incomplete recommendations will impact on the achievement of Level 4. The fourth and final purpose of this report is to give consideration to future improvement in equality process and practice. This will focus briefly on the new Equalities Framework. Each of the Departmental Equalities Working Groups were asked to provide their opinion on what steps need to be taken to achieve the "Excellent" level of the framework. Their collective thoughts and/or ideas are gathered at the conclusion of this report to aid future debate and consideration of next steps.

3. Context

3.1 South Gloucestershire: The Area

3.1.1 The census of 2001 recorded a population of 245641, but the area has been one of the fastest growing in the country; since 1991 there have been over 30,000 new jobs and 18,00 new homes. By 2011 it is expected that the number of households will increase by over 7,000 to 111,000 with the number of over 65s increasing by 24%. The number of 15- 24 year olds will also increase to 38,000. The 2001 census recorded 14% of the population as having a limiting life long illness. The ethnic composition in 2001 was 96% white British, with the 2.4% black and minority ethnic population being, in descending order of numbers: Asian, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Chinese, and Black Caribbean.

3.1.2 Since the census Somali refugee people have arrived in the area and, in common with many parts of the country Eastern European, particularly Polish people have arrived in significant numbers, to join a longer established Polish community. **(Source of Information - Level 3 Inspection report).**

3.2 South Gloucestershire Council

3.2.1 South Gloucestershire Council has adopted the Cabinet and Executive Style of leadership (which is made up of the Leader and the Cabinet). South Gloucestershire Council is made up of 70 elected Councillors, elected every four years. Since the last election (3rd May 2007), the political balance is as follows:

- 34 Conservative Councillors
- 27 Liberal Democrat Councillors
- 9 Labour Councillors

3.2.2 The Councils' management structure consists of a Chief Executive, five Directors plus the Head of Safer South Gloucestershire. There are five departments through which the Council delivers management of all corporate and service delivery functions

- Chief Executives and Corporate Resources
- Children and Young People
- Community Care and Housing
- Community Services
- Planning Transportation and Strategic Environment

3.2.3 Overview and scrutiny is undertaken by six 'select committees' and there are three area forums

3.3 External Reports and Accreditation

- 3.3.1 In the Corporate Assessment 2008, the Council achieved four stars and was considered to be performing well.
- 3.3.2 The Council has recently achieved the Customer Service Excellent (CSE) accreditation.
- 3.3.3 The Council has also recently achieved an award for "Best practice community involvement in a development plan by a local authority or government agency". This was awarded by the Royal Town Planning Institute in the South West for their innovative consultation and development work on the Council's Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

The South Gloucestershire Council approach to equalities

3.4 Policy and structure

- 3.4.1 The overarching SGC Sustainable Community Strategy is based on 7 priorities:
- Investing in children and young people
 - Being healthier
 - Modernising health and community care services
 - Managing future development
 - Promoting safer and stronger communities
 - Valuing the environment
 - Maintaining economic prosperity
- 3.4.2 Although, equalities does not have a direct mention in the overarching priorities it is embedded into the priorities themselves. For example, this includes a focus on reducing economic inequality "to ensure all children and young people grow up in strong and secure families and vibrant communities. Promoting safer and strong communities includes promoting equality of opportunity and reducing disadvantage.
- 3.4.3 The Council Plan 2008-2011 sets out how the Council will deliver the priorities. It has set out 7 core values:
- Excellence for our customers and communities
 - Strong Community Leadership
 - Valuing our Staff
 - Engaging with our partners
 - Equality of opportunity for all
 - Protecting the Environment for future generations

- Using our resources to deliver value for money
- 3.4.4 The South Gloucestershire compact is a partnership between South Gloucestershire Council, other public agencies and the voluntary and community sector. Voluntary and community organisations and public sector agencies in South Gloucestershire share the same fundamental aim, which is "to serve and represent the interests and promote the well being of local people and communities"
- 3.4.5 The Council has up to date statutory equality schemes for race, gender and disability, it is combining them into a single scheme by the end of 2010.
- 3.4.6 The Council has an Equalities and Diversity Policy which shows how the Council will translate its leadership and statutory responsibilities into objectives and actions in respect of equalities.
- 3.4.7 South Gloucestershire's Equality Strategy (2006-2010) incorporates the Race, Gender and Disability equality schemes (although there are separately documented equality schemes available for each category), and refers to the six 'equality strands' of age, disability, gender (and transgender), race, religion and faith, and sexual orientation. It identifies key outcomes for employees, customers and residents, and sets out the Council's approach to implementing the Equality Standard for Local Government, and sets out its broad corporate priorities across the six strands for the next three years.
- 3.4.8 The Community Services Department is responsible for progressing Equalities strategically. There are three part-time equalities officers, who report to the Director of Community Services. The Executive Member for Communities has a strong leading role in progressing the Equalities agenda and is committed to improvement. There is a strong Equality and Diversity Action Team EDAT; there are also departmental Equality Working Groups. EDAT is chaired by the Director of Community Services who is the senior lead officer for equalities within the authority.
- 3.4.9 EDAT and the three officers support equality management across the organisation through:
- Providing the corporate lead on developing the resources, providing advice and assistance, in order to ensure the implementation of the equality standard
 - Developing the Equality Strategy
 - Developing and monitoring equality targets corporately and across the authority
 - Carrying out community support and consultations with a range of stakeholders and elected Members
 - Developing and delivering training for Equalities on a range of topics.
 - Equalities progress is monitored and measured, by the team, through service improvement reports and through National performance indicators.

- 3.4.10 The level 3 Inspectors reported “**E & D is embedded into all areas; policies are reviewed and EIAs are carried out and cascaded down. It is structured and robust; it doesn’t feel like an add on. There is practical engagement across the range of services, which has allowed the Council to refocus service delivery where necessary.**”

3.5 Equality Improvement and the Standard

- 3.5.1 There was a real sense that Equalities is at the core of service delivery for Departments. Representatives on Equalities working groups were very knowledgeable about the initiatives and associated outcomes for their service area. The Council has developed a robust and well-managed approach to equality improvement. Full Equality Impact Assessment work has been undertaken in many key areas of the Council, e.g. Gypsy and Traveller DPD, Safeguarding for Adults and Children and Learning Difficulties for Adults and Children.
- 3.5.2 Services respond well to addressing issues and are proactive in developing guidance and training where a need is identified. Elected members are well informed and provide a strong lead in progressing Equalities. A number of focus group meetings were conducted with members of the EDAT and each of the Departments representatives, staff were knowledgeable about equalities initiatives and all expressed a real commitment to making it work in their area of expertise.
- 3.5.3 **Equality impact assessment**
- The Authority has a well-established set of processes for choosing what to impact assess and for completing assessments. The Inspectors at level 3 were particularly in praise of the system used and believed it to be a robust process.
- 3.5.4 All Departments have successfully completed initial screenings of their main processes and strategies. The screening schedules are available on the public internet site and the screening forms are available for viewing on the intranet only. Some service areas have conducted the necessary work to contribute to a full Equality Impact Assessment and a number have completed the necessary EIA forms to reflect this.
- 3.5.5 This review considered whether sufficient evidence has been supplied to indicate that full EIAs have been robustly completed. A broad brush approach has been taken to the review of the content of the Full EIAs to ascertain whether the content is reasonable and compliant with the objectives of Level 4. An external Inspector with particular expertise in areas of Equalities may probe further into the content of these EIAs than has been undertaken on this occasion.
- 3.5.6 **Monitoring**

There is now a clear corporate monitoring structure for Equalities and specific monitoring guidance “Customer Insight”. There is now consistency across the Council in the areas that are monitored and the questions asked.

- 3.5.7 There has been good progress in monitoring the race, disability and gender equality strands and pilots have been arranged for the collection of equalities data for the newer equalities strands.
- 3.5.8 Officers have been proactive in tackling the work that needs to be undertaken to embed the newer strands. Despite, targets not having been set, training has already developed by some Departments to equip front line staff to ask the new equalities questions of service users and customers and awareness training has been introduced in key service areas, e.g. training for Environmental Health officers on religion and belief issues which may arise from visiting food establishments.
- 3.5.9 Importantly, Equalities Officers have engaged with key stakeholders to review the use of the newer equalities strands to collect their views and ensure that they are only used in service areas that are appropriate and where meaningful outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.5.10 The Council continues to use PBViews to monitor at a strategic level and the Level 3 Inspectors were particularly in praise of this system as a monitoring tool.
- 3.5.11 **Consultation and Engagement**
The Council uses the Corporate Equalities Forum to externally validate the monitoring that it is undertaken. The Council is currently developing innovative approaches to engagement with key stakeholders and partners through the Consultation and Engagement Network.
- 3.5.12 The Council has an online consultation system which has been widened to allow access from partners.
The Council undertakes a Viewpoint survey which is used for consultation purposes it is a statistically representative panel of around 1,600 residents who are randomly selected from the electoral roll to broadly represent the population of South Gloucestershire.

3.6 Audit Approach to the Assessment

- 3.6.1 The formal assessment consists of three interrelated parts:
- Critical examination of the Council’s equality self-assessment report (submitted by the Equalities Officers) and examination of documents sourced from Officers or from the Councils intranet/internet.
 - Interviews with Elected Members, Council staff and external stakeholders to test the self assessment report, corporately and by department

- Further examination of documentary evidence to confirm consistency of findings provided by Officer representatives.

3.6.2 Conclusions about the level reached are arrived at through qualitative examination of findings from the three parts of the assessment.

3.6.3 **Achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government**

To achieve Level 4 of the Standard the Council will have to demonstrate that:

- It has achieved progress across the authority against the targets that it set
at Level 3 for race, gender and disability
- By March 2009, it has achieved progress across the authority against targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief
- It has developed information and monitoring systems that allow it to assess progress in achieving targets
- It is measuring progress against targets and effectively using its information and monitoring systems
- Monitoring reports are being produced at specified intervals and circulated to designated consultation and scrutiny groups
- It is using the self-assessment process to review and revise targets, monitoring and consultation systems.
- Self-assessment includes involvement of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups and seeks external validation through community involvement, peer review or expert opinion
- It has continued to carry out equality impact assessments for new policies and where gaps are identified through self-assessment
- It has initiated a new round of action planning and target setting
- Monitoring systems are providing useful information about progress towards specific targets

3.6.4 Information systems cannot simply be bolted onto the process of target setting.

Equally, monitoring the effect of changes in service delivery should not be an after thought. Target setting and action planning should have monitoring built in. Effective monitoring checks the progress made towards achieving specific targets and is not a generalised process of information collection.

3.6.5 The process should begin with a community and employee profile or audit,

which will establish a baseline for future monitoring. A monitoring programme is set up alongside realistic target setting and workable action plans for achieving those targets. Monitoring change against the baseline data should include an analysis of the results to provide evidence that can be used in future planning.

3.6.6 **Formal assessment at Level 4**

A numerical rating system has been adopted for this internal assessment to enable Officers to obtain a view of how we would perform against each objective if the Council were externally assessed. This scoring system is identical to the system used by the Level 3 Inspectors to enable consistency in process and improve clarity of result. Scores are 4,3,2,1 with 4 being highest and 1 being lowest – a score of 0 would indicate a serious weakness or other lack of evidence. The scores summarise a **qualitative** judgement of the Council's performance in relation to that element. To achieve Level 4, a Council should get an average score of 3 with no elements scored a 1 or 0.

3.6.7 The quantitative part of the assessment assigns a Council-wide score to each of the Level 3 elements.

- Good performance = 4
- Strengths outweigh weaknesses = 3
- Weaknesses outweigh strengths = 2
- Poor = 1
- No evidence for performance = 0

3.6.8 The assessors conclude that the Council has met this criterion, see section 1 Assessment score. The scores assigned have taken into account the contents of the self-assessment report, documentary evidence and results of interviews with managers, other staff and stakeholders.

3.6.9 **Review of Recommendations made by External Inspectors at Level 3**

The external Level 3 Inspectors made a large number of recommendations. These recommendations did not affect the achievement of Level 3 status; however, they did observe that they would expect the recommendations to be implemented to ensure a continuing process of improvement in equalities approaches. For this reason, the Auditors have undertaken a comprehensive review of all of the recommendations made and evidence has been sought for each one to provide confirmation that they have been implemented.

3.6.10 In total there were 31 recommendations and an additional 11 consolidating recommendations (which repeated some of the 31 recommendations). **The Internal Auditors were pleased to find that 19 had been implemented and all of the consolidating recommendations had been implemented.** 5 had been implemented in part (i.e. they had been for the most part implemented but there may be one or two significant areas of the recommendation which need to be addressed to be complete). Only 7 had

not been implemented, these related to checking hearing loops (2 recommendations), undertaking an exercise to review the effectiveness of external scrutiny, ensuring gender is a clear focus of the LSP, setting targets of the newer equalities strands and reviewing progress of initiatives to improve performance of women in achieving positions in the top 5% salary earnings.

4. Assessment Findings and Recommendations

4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.1 Corporate Assessment of adequacy of departmental information and monitoring systems

The Council can demonstrate:

It has a robust structure for equalities monitoring.

Equalities is embedded at the very highest levels of the organisation within the overarching priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Council plan.

Departments have embraced the requirements of the standard and have been proactive in ensuring that Equalities is part of what they do.

Each Department had Equalities Action plans and could provide examples of Equalities issues being considered and changes implemented.

All Departments have completed schedules of initial EIA screenings which are available on the public website.

All Departments have made good progress in undertaking full equality impact assessments.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) PBViews is the monitoring system used to capture evidence of performance for Equalities. The quality of commentary in some Departments could be reviewed as it was found to be quite general. It would be difficult to effectively use the commentary for detailed regular reporting of Equalities progress.

Score	4
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.2 Set up system for review of service and employment monitoring reports by designated consultation and scrutiny groups.

The Council can demonstrate:

There was a real sense that Equalities is at the core of service delivery for Departments.

Representatives on Equalities working groups were very knowledgeable about the initiatives and associated outcomes for their service area.

The Corporate Equalities Forum receives regular reports on key Equalities initiatives from across the Council.

There are regular employment monitoring reports on Workforce Development delivered to the Corporate Co-ordination Select Committee.

All reports to Committees and Cabinet are required to include an element on consideration of Equalities issues; this is set out in the template report.

Areas for review and improvement/ Recommendations:

- a) In order to improve the sharing of detailed quality outcomes across the Council and with key stakeholders, the use of an annual report and other mechanisms could be developed.
- b) The Workforce Development report has been enhanced and improved. However, the depth of Employment Equalities monitoring information reported has been significantly affected. A second specific Equalities in Employment monitoring report is in the process of being produced and will be presented to EDAT for their review.

Score	3
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.3 Review targets against monitoring information and produce reports for corporate management team.

The Council can demonstrate:

A clear corporate reporting structure exists for reporting on Equalities issues. A report has been produced for COMT by the Equalities Officers to provide an update on the progress of Equalities.

Cabinet and the Chief Officers Management Team have recently received

reports on the progress of Equalities across the Council.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) Ensure there continues to be regular reporting at the highest levels of the organisation to demonstrate effective monitoring and scrutiny of equalities performance and outcomes, as well as progress against the standard

Score	3
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.4 Prepare reports on progress against policy objectives for council executive/cabinet, scrutiny bodies and audit.

The Council can demonstrate:

Executive Members receive regular briefings on Equalities issues. The Executive Member for Communities (who is the lead on Equalities) is very knowledgeable of initiatives occurring across the Council on Equalities.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

None

Score	4
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.5 Take on board responses from designated consultation and scrutiny groups for revising policy objectives and targets.

The Council can demonstrate:

The Corporate Equalities forum receives key policy documentation for their review and comments, for example the Single Equalities Scheme.

Viewpoint is used for consultation purposes it is a statistically representative panel of around 1,600 residents who are randomly selected from the electoral roll to broadly represent the population of South Gloucestershire.

Equality Impact Assessments are one of the principal methods for taking on board responses from designated stakeholders. There are examples for Full

Equality Impact Assessments available across the Council.

Areas for review and improvement Recommendations:

- a) Not all Departments have completed the full EIA schedule forms. The process for conducting Full EIAs needs to be reviewed to ensure the Council has the most effective methodology for capturing the information.
- b) Give consideration to developing a forward work plan for the Forum. Give careful consideration to how the group can be informed of the work of the Council on Equalities without overburdening them with too much information.

Score	3
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.6 Self-assess progress against the targets that it set at level 3 for race, gender and disability.

The Council can demonstrate:

Many of the targets set at level 3 for disability have been achieved and good progress has been made, e.g. Strong Disability Confident team continues to support disabled people into employment within the Council and externally within South Gloucestershire.

Many of the Departmental targets for the existing equalities streams were to ensure that these areas of equalities monitoring are mainstreamed into service planning and Departmental Equality Action plans. Evidence was found of this from focus group meetings and action plans provided.

Whilst drawing up the Single Equality Scheme a gap analysis was conducted from the race and gender schemes.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

Progress has been made on the race, gender and disability schemes. The Single Equality Scheme sets out the work to be undertaken moving forward, however, the self assessment audit trail could be enhanced by reporting back on specific progress made to date on the three schemes. This could be included in the annual equalities report.

Score	3
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.7 Self-assess progress against the targets that it set at Level 3 for sexual orientation, religion or belief and age by March 2009.

The Council can demonstrate:

Progress has been made on the three new equalities strands. Pilot areas have been set up across the Council to commence gathering monitoring information.

Departments have already commenced identifying training needs arising from pilot areas and have developed or commenced developing guidance/training courses where appropriate, for example, awareness training on religion and belief for Environmental Health officers when visiting food establishments to enable them to show respect for the practices and customs of other faiths and beliefs.

All Council employees were requested to supply monitoring information on the new equalities strands in the recent staff survey.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) These pilots are still at early stages and there may not be sufficient monitoring data available for the current year to enable analysis and inform tangible outcomes, this will follow in subsequent years.
- b) Ensure targets will be set on the completion of the pilots in 2010.

Score	3
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4.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

4.1.8 New targets and action plans have been developed through involvement of stakeholders.

The Council can demonstrate:

The Corporate Equalities Forum performs a vital role acting as a “critical friend” and representing the wider community.

The Equality Impact Assessment Process drives consultation on new targets and objectives, e.g. Libraries undertook a full consultation exercise as part of their refurbishment full EIA they conducted this with library user committees. The Full EIA identified the need to ensure that the service is meeting the needs of target groups through working with the client groups and data

monitoring.

Many Departments could provide evidence of where key stakeholders in a project have been involved and extensively consulted with.

Appointment of an Equalities Community Engagement Officer to specifically develop links with individuals from difficult to reach areas and community groups in South Gloucestershire.

Departmental Level action plans have proved to be variable in content. Some of the targets set were found to not be very challenging, e.g. use new EIA process by April 2010, some of the objectives were not SMART and were more awareness raising than specific actions. Responsible officers and target dates could have been clearer.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

Departments should critically review their action plans to ensure that their objectives are focussed and actions SMART. Consideration should be given to introducing an audit trail to evidence action taken and provide cross referencing to other strategic plans and documents.

Score	3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.1 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in deciding what kind of information will be collected and the reasons for it.

The Council can demonstrate:

See 4.1.8 above.

Also, a recent example of involving designated stakeholder groups was the comprehensive consultation exercise that was undertaken concerning the corporate equalities categories which include sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender identity.

As part of this Equalities Standard Level 4 assessment, the Corporate Equalities Forum were asked about how they found the process of consultation and how it could be improved, they were generally very positive and felt that there was an ongoing dialogue of consultation rather than one off pieces of information and felt that the process was a two way information sharing activity.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) Full Equality Impact Assessments are not published on the Council's

internet site (although the Gypsy and Traveller full EIA is included as an appendix to the DPD on the internet).

- b) It is clear that there is regular consultation with the Corporate Equalities Forum on a range of Equalities issues. However, it is not evident from the minutes how effective the external scrutiny is in informing processes and initiatives. EDAT should give consideration to undertaking an exercise to review the effectiveness of external scrutiny (this was raised as an issue at the Level 3 inspection).
- c) As part of the assessment process, the CEF were asked to consider how they find the process of consultation and engagement with the Council. As a result of this exercise areas were identified for further review and each member of the group was provided with a feedback document detailing the areas. The CEF could now devise their own development programme to address any issues relating to community cohesion and communication. (The feedback document provided to the CEF is available for review separately from this report).

Score	3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.2 Circulate monitoring reports to those groups.

The Council can demonstrate:

The Corporate Equalities forum, receive reports on different initiatives on a regular basis.

Appropriate new policies and procedures are subject to consultation. Recent examples of this process in operation are the Council's Single Equalities Scheme, the Children and Young People's Plan, the Older Persons Charter and the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

Give consideration to developing a forward work plan for the Forum. Give careful consideration to how the group can be informed of the work of the Council on Equalities without overburdening them with too much information.

Score	3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.3 Ensure that the participation strategy demonstrably engages designated groups in review process.

The Council can demonstrate:

There is a comprehensive consultation toolkit for the authority, it includes elements on equalities monitoring.

A Partnership consultation group (Consultation and Engagement Network) has been established (members include the Council Departments, Fire, Police, PCT Voluntary sector and Community groups). The group picks up on both Council and Partnership strategy requirements and will co-ordinate consultation with the public.

Appointment of an Equalities Community Engagement Officer to specifically develop links with individuals from difficult to reach monitoring and community groups in South Gloucestershire.

Following a new bill of parliament 'Operation Black Vote has been created to start planning inclusion of under represented groups in the democratic process e.g. School Governors.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Council is currently developing a participation/consultation strategy. The Safer and Stronger Community Strategy is out to consultation, this includes an element on participation and consultation. This strategy will demonstrate a particular strength as it will engage with all of the Council's key partners.
- b) The Consultation and Engagement network is newly created and is currently at the position of reviewing monitoring data and information available, it is intended that eventually it will co-ordinate engagement with the public.

Score	2/3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.4 Review by designated groups of progress against targets.

The Council can demonstrate:

The Community Services Select Committee has the lead role in scrutinising equalities issues.

Cabinet oversees scrutiny of equalities action plans and executive briefing receives informal updates on Equalities progress.

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. The Select Committees monitor the implementation of recommendations and actions are mainstreamed into the Council's planning framework. Service users are also involved in providing evidence and shaping the outcomes of the reviews.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) In order to improve the sharing of detailed quality outcomes across the Council and with key stakeholders, the use of an annual report and other mechanisms could be developed.
- b) Ensure there continues to be regular reporting at the highest levels of the organisation to demonstrate effective monitoring and scrutiny of equalities performance and outcomes, not just progress against the standard

Score	3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.5 Feed back response on monitoring reports to corporate and departmental teams, to directorate, council committees, employee representatives and members and to community partners.

The Council can demonstrate:

The Council reports to Human Resources and Trade Unions Group (HRTU) on Employment Equalities monitoring performance.

Departments report progress via PBViews and EDAT.

Progress is regularly reviewed by departmental equality groups. Guidance is provided by the corporate equalities team.

Unions are advised of progress on equalities targets.

The Equalities officers have presented to JCC on current Equalities issues.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) It is clear that there is regular consultation with the Corporate Equalities Forum on a range of Equalities issues. However, it is not evident from the minutes how effective the external scrutiny

is in informing processes and initiatives. EDAT should give consideration to undertaking an exercise to review the effectiveness of external scrutiny (this was raised as an issue at the Level 3 inspection).

- b) Internal Equalities staff groups have recently been resourced to enable them to meet more regularly and consistently, all Departments should benefit from the opportunity to engage with these groups.
- c) PBViews is the monitoring system used to capture evidence of performance for Equalities. The quality of commentary in some Departments could be reviewed as it was found to be quite general. It would be difficult to effectively use the commentary for detailed regular reporting of Equalities progress.
- d) The Workforce Development report has been enhanced and improved. However, the depth of Employment Equalities monitoring information reported has been significantly affected. A second specific Equalities in Employment monitoring report is in the process of being produced and will be presented to EDAT for their review. This second report should include qualitative analysis of data. EDAT could review the content of both reports and clarify responsibilities for monitoring and review, in order that the Council can demonstrate clear compliance with the equality duties and the forthcoming Equalities Bill.

Score	2/3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.6 Require contractors to supply monitoring reports on service delivery and take up.

The Council can demonstrate:

Clear plans are in place for compliance practice. Contractors are required to complete Core Contract monitoring Questionnaires or Non Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires. There are guides available to assist procurement officers with reviewing these questionnaires (Guide for Reviewing Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires and Guide for Reviewing Non Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires).

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

None

Score	3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.7 Show that consultation and scrutiny are integral to self-assessment process.

The Council can demonstrate:

There is a continuous process of self assessment via Select, EDAT and CEF. At detailed level this is undertaken by Departmental Equalities Groups. The structure in place allows for a good level of consultation and scrutiny in self assessing our progress on Equalities.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

Need to ensure that the high level of self assessment and internal scrutiny is consistent across all areas of the Council, certain service areas are better at building equalities in and reporting back.

Score	3
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4.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

4.2.8 New targets and action plans have been developed through involvement with stakeholder.

The Council can demonstrate:

All new targets and actions plans are subject to consultation via CEF, EWG's EDAT and ad hoc consultation with equality groups.

The EIA process and related consultation is central to the development of new equality targets and plans. Some examples of working with stakeholders include: Working in partnership with Southern Brooks Community Partnership to plan International Women's Day (March 2010); Partnership working with CVS South Gloucestershire in the appointment of their new Engagement Officer, and the coordination of work between their officer and the council's. Revision of Service Level Agreements in to incorporate direction on cross community engagement events and intergenerational work.

PT&SE have recently been awarded 'Best practice community involvement in a development plan by a local authority or government agency' by Royal

Town Planning Institute South West and South West Planning Aid, for its work on the Gypsy and Traveller DPD. The awards recognise best practice in community involvement and organisations that have gone out of their way to engage local people and groups in the planning process in meaningful and innovative ways. In particular, they were praised for, displaying an impressive sensitivity and foresight in dealing with the community aspects and the potential risks associated with this difficult issue.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

The internal stakeholder groups are still developing but there is a commitment to ensuring they do participate.

Build in more consultation with internal staff groups (where applicable).

Score	3/4
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.1 All departmental and service level units are using information systems to monitor service outcomes.

The Council can demonstrate:

Equalities monitoring is used across the council with regard to customers, partners, contractors and employment issues. This monitoring information is reviewed internally and externally and is used to inform the planning process. Equalities monitoring forms are available for all departments to use.

The questions that are asked and the categories used are consistent across the Council, except CC&H who have separate statutory questions proscribed CQC. The categories and questions asked have been examined by the CSE Inspectors.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

None

Score	4
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.2 Service delivery monitoring reports are produced at specific and regular

intervals.

The Council can demonstrate:

A key consultation exercise has been conducted with regard to the council's equalities monitoring activity. This was undertaken by the Equalities Officer, they spoke with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the questions on the extended monitoring streams were being asked within the most appropriate services.

Each service area has its own service plan which will reflect who their customers are and how provide a mechanism for them to demonstrate how they are performing. All Departments report regularly on their service plans.

Services will also ask the monitoring questions as part of customer satisfaction surveys and as part of one off consultations.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

None

Score	4
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.3 Service delivery monitoring reports are circulated to all designated consultation and scrutiny groups.

The Council can demonstrate:

A key consultation exercise has been conducted with regard to the council's equalities monitoring activity. This was undertaken by the Equalities Officers, they spoke with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the questions on the extended monitoring streams were being asked within the most appropriate services.

Service plans are reviewed and signed off by the Head of Service.

Complaints are reported on an annual basis to Cabinet this will include a whole section on equalities and responses from complainants.

Key plans and documents such as the Children and Young People's plan (which includes Equalities issues) is reported on to Select and scrutiny groups on a regular basis.

Procurement and contracted services are regularly reviewed with regard to the Equal Access to Services Plan.

A comprehensive review has been conducted with regard to equalities in procurement.

The Compact document sets out equality criteria for partners

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

It was clear that Equalities is at the core of service delivery across Departments, equalities issues feature as a standard item on committee template reports and Departments regularly report back on key strategies which often contain equalities issues at their core. However, this approach to reporting is more adhoc and varies in consistency across Departments.

There is not currently a co-ordinated report for Equalities on service delivery outcomes. Reports presented currently largely focus on high level progress against the requirements of the Equalities Standard. It is planned that an overall service delivery outcomes report for Equalities will be produced and circulated at the end of March 2010.

Score	3
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.4 Monitoring procedures are applied across contracts and partnerships.

The Council can demonstrate:

A comprehensive review has been conducted with regard to equalities in procurement and procurement approaches have been fully revamped to include equalities PQQs and Post-Contract Monitoring systems.

Guidance has also been produced for contractors on developing and implementing equalities policies and equalities in procurement guidance is available for all contracting officers.

Briefing papers have been produced detailing how and at what frequency service providers equalities processes are monitored.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

None

Score	4
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.5 Service Managers are fully involved in the self-assessment process to review and revise targets, monitoring and consultation systems

The Council can demonstrate:

Service Managers are involved on a regular basis via the departmental equality working groups and are accountable for the achievement of equality targets.

Focus has been placed more on the groups that Equalities affects, e.g. customers and other stakeholders rather than service managers. However, there has also been a comprehensive training exercise on the new equalities strands for service areas, helping staff to feel confident in asking survey questions to customers and service users.

The Council has moved a step beyond involving service managers in setting targets; it makes use of wider stakeholders in target setting.

It was clear that Equalities is at the core of service delivery across Departments, equalities issues feature as a standard item on committee template reports and Departments regularly report back on key strategies which often contain equalities issues at their core. However, this approach to reporting is more adhoc and varies in consistency across Departments.

Departments report progress via PBViews and EDAT.

The Council makes use of an online system for consultations called INovem, this system has recently been widened to make it accessible to community/partner organisations.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

PBViews is the monitoring system used to capture evidence of performance for Equalities. The quality of commentary in some Departments could be reviewed as it was found to be quite general. It would be difficult to effectively use the commentary for detailed regular reporting of Equalities progress.

Score	3
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.6 At service level there is demonstrable progress against targets set in action plans for race, gender and disability.

The Council can demonstrate:

Many of the targets set at level 3 for disability have been achieved and good progress has been made, e.g. Strong Disability Confident team continues to support disabled people into employment within the Council and externally

within South Gloucestershire.

Many of the Departmental targets for the existing equalities streams were to ensure that these areas of equalities monitoring are mainstreamed into service planning and Departmental Equality Action plans. Evidence was found of this from focus group meetings and action plans provided.

Whilst drawing up the Single Equality Scheme a gap analysis was conducted from the race and gender schemes.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

Progress has been made on the race, gender and disability schemes. The Single Equality Scheme sets out the work to be undertaken moving forward, however, the self assessment audit trail could be enhanced by reporting back on specific progress made to date on the three schemes. This could be included in the annual equalities report.

Score	3
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.7 By March 2009, there is demonstrable progress against targets set in action plans for sexual orientation, religion, belief and age.

The Council can demonstrate:

Progress has been made on the three new equalities strands. Pilot areas have been set up across the Council to commence gathering monitoring information.

Departments have already commenced identifying training needs arising from pilot areas and have developed or commenced developing guidance/training courses where appropriate, for example, awareness training on religion and belief for Environmental Health officers when visiting food establishments to enable them to show respect for the practices and customs of other faiths and beliefs.

All Council employees were requested to supply monitoring information on the new equalities strands in the recent staff survey.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) These pilots are still at early stages and there may not be sufficient monitoring data available for the current year to enable analysis and inform tangible outcomes, this will follow in subsequent years.
- b) Ensure targets will be set on the completion of the pilots in

2010.

Score	3
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.8 Report progress on employment targets to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups.

The Council can demonstrate:

A six monthly report is produced to monitor progress against the HR and Workforce Development Strategy; it is reported to JCC and Corporate Co-ordination Select Committee.

A separate Employment monitoring report is being developed which does include all Equalities data, this is not currently being circulated.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

The Workforce Development report has been enhanced and improved. However, the depth of Employment Equalities monitoring information reported has been significantly affected. A second specific Equalities in Employment monitoring report is in the process of being produced and will be presented to EDAT for their review and consideration of which groups should monitor it on a regular basis.

Score	2/3
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.9 Use monitoring to assess achievements against targets set in action plans and feed back results into policy review, targeting and revised action plans.

The Council can demonstrate:

The Corporate Equalities Forum performs a vital role acting as a “critical friend” and representing the wider community.

Departmental Level Equalities action plans have proved to be variable in content. Some of the targets set were found to not be very challenging, e.g.

use new EIA process by April 2010, some of the objectives were not SMART and were more awareness raising than specific actions. Responsible officers and target dates could have been clearer.

The Equality Impact Assessment is a key process for reviewing process and policies and action plans arising from these assessments will inform service changes. There are many examples of full EIAs being undertaken, e.g. Libraries undertook a full consultation exercise as part of their refurbishment full EIA they conducted this with library user committees. The Full EIA identified the need to ensure that the service is meeting the needs of target groups through working with the client groups and data monitoring.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

Departments should critically review their action plans to ensure that their objectives are focussed and actions SMART. Consideration should be given to introducing an audit trail to evidence action taken and provide cross referencing to other strategic plans and documents.

Score	3
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4.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

4.3.10 Establish interdepartmental scrutiny process.

The Council can demonstrate:

EDAT is not a scrutiny body, however, it does provide a forum to enable Departments to collectively review Equalities issues and discuss Equalities strategically for the Council. This enables practice and process to become consistent across Departments.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

There was a real sense that Equalities is at the core of service delivery for Departments. Representatives on Equalities working groups were very knowledgeable about the initiatives and associated outcomes for their service area. In order to improve the sharing of detailed quality outcomes across the Council and with key stakeholders, the use of an annual report and other mechanisms could be developed.

Score	3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.1 Use existing or adapted personnel information systems to provide equality data relating to human resource targets (recruitment, promotion, training, grievances, disciplinary action, appraisal, dismissal, and other reasons for leaving, retention and equal pay).

The Council can demonstrate:

There are comprehensive Human Resource (HR) systems in place to capture key HR equality data.

An Equal Pay Review was conducted in May 2008 and conducted that there was no inequality in pay.

A Council wide staff survey has recently been conducted, this asked individuals to declare their age, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation and/or disability. This information will provide the Council with the most comprehensive data to date for existing staff on all of the equalities strands.

The Employee information system, Myview also provides the opportunity for existing staff to record their age, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation and/or disability.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Council has an impressive track record of making equalities training open to all, however, consideration could be given to undertaking a comprehensive review of equalities training, this would consider the overall effectiveness of training delivered, whether there are any gaps in provision and whether there needs to be any consideration to adapting guidance/training to different learning styles.

Score	3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.2 Produce monitoring reports at regular and specified intervals and circulate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups.

The Council can demonstrate:

A six monthly report is produced to monitor progress against the HR and Workforce Development Strategy.

A separate Employment monitoring report is being developed which does

include all Equalities data.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Workforce Development report has been enhanced and improved. However, the depth of Employment Equalities monitoring information reported has been significantly affected. A second specific Equalities in Employment monitoring report is in the process of being produced and will be presented to EDAT for their review and consideration of which groups should monitor it on a regular basis.

Score	2/3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.3 Use equality data to monitor use of all personnel procedures.

The Council can demonstrate:

See 4.4.1 and 4.4.2

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Equalities Monitoring Report should include qualitative analysis to complement the presentation of the data provided.
- b) Some of the newer Equalities streams do not currently have sufficient amounts of data to enable meaningful analysis. Consider how this issue can be addressed in the interim.

Score	2/3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.4 Use equality data to monitor the number of staff leaving employment and their reasons for leaving.

The Council can demonstrate:

There is an exit interview process which is voluntary.

The workforce development strategy report to Corporate Co-ordination Select Committee includes analysis of turnover and refers to an aging profile. Equality data shows that proportionally a higher percentage of staff

less than 29 years of age leave the employ of the Council when compared with older categories.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) There is no analysis of other Equalities categories as a reason for leaving in the workforce development strategy report. Consider including this information in the Equalities monitoring report.

Score	2/3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.5 Use monitoring reports to assess whether authority employment profiles more closely fit the profile of local labour market.

The Council can demonstrate:

Targets for disability, age, gender, and ethnicity are based on census information and the monitoring data is captured on PB Views.

There are indicators for - Workforce planning (representative workforce) - success rates of young people groups into employment (excluding schools) and individuals with a disability and black and ethnic minority groups into employment, however, this information is not currently available and the workflow system is being developed to collect it.

There is a key priority to conduct an in depth mapping exercise of the South Gloucestershire Community. There has been a lot of change within communities this would have a major impact both for employment and service delivery.

PT&SE undertake an annual review of census data against equalities profiles.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) Undertake a mapping exercise to compare the South Gloucestershire employee profile to the local labour market for equalities purposes – share the results of the exercise with EDAT, Trade Unions and Internal Scrutiny groups.
- b) Continue to develop capability of workflow to capture information on representative workforce for equalities groups – share available data with EDAT and internal Equalities groups.

Score	2/3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.6 Self-assessment should demonstrate progress against employment targets.

The Council can demonstrate:

For existing categories monitoring procedures are robust and data is captured and commentary is provided on PBViews.

There is an emphasis on Disabilities; this is partly due to Directors endorsing a programme of work to achieve PSA Target 7 – Disabled People into Employment. The Council has been recognised by Jobcentre Plan and awarded the disability symbol (two ticks).

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) Extend monitoring to newer areas such as sexual orientation and religion and belief.
- b) Review performance indicators to consider if action can be taken to improve results where the Council is performing below target, e.g. Percentage of Council employees from ethnic minority communities.

Score	2/3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.7 Reports based on self-assessment sent to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups and seek verification.

The Council can demonstrate:

Directorate Members, Corporate Co-ordination select Committee and Cabinet receive reports on performance against equality targets for employment in the Workforce Development Strategy.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Workforce Development report has been enhanced and improved. However, the depth of Employment Equalities monitoring information reported has been significantly affected. A second specific Equalities in Employment monitoring report is in the process of being produced and will be presented to EDAT for their review and consideration of which groups should monitor it on a regular basis.

Score	2/3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.8 Report on implementation of pay review recommendations.

The Council can demonstrate:

An equal pay audit has been undertaken in May 2008. There are plans to undertake further audits on a rolling three year cycle.

There were no inequalities found between men and women's pay.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) Any recommendations made in the equal pay audit, should be formally cleared and agreement in writing confirmed if it is determined that no further action is necessary.

Score	3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.9 Review targets for employment and pay review and agree action plans with designated stakeholders.

The Council can demonstrate:

There are no specific targets for pay other than to ensure that pay is equal. Employment targets feed into service plans where applicable and into the Single Equality Scheme (which is due to be rolled out in 2010).

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) Give consideration to sharing the equal pay audit with the EDAT staffing sub group and agreeing content of any targets with them.

Score	3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.10 Review training needs against service action plans and revise training plan to deliver appropriate competencies/behaviours.

The Council can demonstrate:

There is a commitment to ensuring that all staff receive equalities training relevant to their role that is regularly refreshed.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Council has an impressive track record of making equalities training open to all, however, consideration could be given to undertaking a comprehensive review of equalities training, this would consider the overall effectiveness of training delivered, whether there are any gaps in provision and whether there needs to be any consideration to adapting guidance/training to different learning styles.
- b) The Council should continue to source equalities in procurement training.

Score	3
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4.4 Employment and Training

4.4.11 Incorporate targets for revised training programme in staff appraisal.

The Council can demonstrate:

All staff are regularly in receipt of a personal appraisal. It is still unclear whether managers and other staff are required to build action on equality and diversity into their individual appraisal where appropriate.

Areas for review and improvement/Recommendations:

- a) The Level 3 Inspectors placed emphasis on ensuring Equalities is captured and considered at the personal level. A review of this area should be undertaken to consider how this can be managed in the most effective way.

Score	2
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Level 3 – Progress against External Inspector’s Recommendations

3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.1 Ensure consistency of Corporate Equality Scheme with statutory Equality schemes

Detail of Recommendation made:

The Gender strand and scheme is a weak leg of the triangle; whilst for example the Local Transport Plan recognizes that women have lower car use there is a lack of concrete actions to address this, apart from further consultation.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

When reviewing the Corporate priorities, it is apparent that Gender is not a specifically identified priority for the Council. Overall the approach to gender has been examined and it has been found that the Council has made progress in strengthening consideration of gender issues and in targeted areas, gender initiatives have been introduced, e.g.

- International Women’s day – Libraries involvement
- Boys into books – targeted promotion to get boys reading more (particularly primary school age)

The Joint Local Transport Plan has been examined and one of the key priorities is to improve accessibility, there is a recognition that many households only have one car which is used by the main breadwinner. A programme has been developed to overall improve accessibility to health, education and employment for all residents.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.2 Develop a system and timetable for reporting the results of impact assessments

Detail of Recommendations made:

- a) *There is some variation in the quality and consistency of impact assessments, a few impact assessments skate over the possibilities*

that diverse groups may find it harder to access the service. (for example, the EIA on the project to review corporate feedback and complaints fails to recognize that some groups may find it harder to complain) or the EIA on the LAA says there are no adverse impacts, whereas it is not probable that the needs of all sections of the community are met by the LAA, when (it is reported) gender is not considered as a variable.

- b) It is evident that the question on monitoring has not been understood by some people and the guidance on this point could be improved.*
- c) Some EIAs use formulas to obviate or defer consideration of potential for adverse impact, “This is a statutory service” (One stop shop, or Cashiers) or (obscurely) that the matter “will be considered with any changes to policy as a result of satisfaction drivers being identified” (Customer satisfaction research or Ombudsman procedure).*
- d) The template is not clear in what it is expecting in the question on monitoring, oriented more to tracking progress than on ensuring that diverse groups have equal access to services or are equally satisfied. The question on consultation does not oblige EIA teams to search out the latest information nor to commission new work if necessary.*
- e) The template also asks if there is adverse impact on the grounds of race or ethnicity. It is unclear if the separate box for “gypsies and travellers” is supposed to suggest that they are not an ethnic group.*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) The new EIA toolkit has been developed which ensures that all EIAs follow a predefined detailed format; this should assist in resolving some of the variability in Impact Assessments. At the Level 3 inspection, old versions of EIAs were being examined. The new Customer Feedback EIA clearly recognises that some groups may be less likely to give feedback or may have barriers to providing feedback.
- b) All Departmental Equalities Working Groups had a clear understanding of what monitoring meant for them. Most Departments have received training and/or guidance from the Equalities Officers on the new Equalities Strands and where relevant pilots have been set up to gather this data. There is a monitoring structure diagram on the intranet and internet and the Customer Insight document (also located on intranet and internet) provides corporate monitoring guidance for service delivery. However, it does not specifically cover monitoring guidance for employment.
- c) There is a new EIA for customer complaints and compliments. The One stop shop has not been reviewed since the previous inspection but will be due for review in the next 6 months. The

Cashiers service is shortly due to close. The customer satisfaction EIA has been updated, the Inspectors were looking at an older version. The new EIA template has been praised by the Inspectors and clarifies many of the issues they raise.

- d) The initial screening form is purely to prioritise and draw out negative and positive impacts so that a determination can be drawn as to whether a full EIA is required. The Full EIA document includes an action planning form and associated guidance relating to how to monitor progress. The Full EIA asks many questions around consultation and obliges the officer undertaking the review to consider whether the latest information is sufficient and whether it is necessary to commission new work.
- e) Each of the main categories of ethnic minorities have their own box with one further cover all box for other ethnic minorities not covered separately. This makes it clear that gypsies and travellers are an ethnic group in their own right.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) The process for conducting Full EIAs needs to be reviewed to ensure the Council has the most effective methodology for capturing the information.
- b) It is recognised that the Customer Insight document is the principle monitoring guidance document for the Council and that for employment monitoring purposes, the same categories are used. However, the guidance does not explicitly include monitoring for employment and this should be amended so that it is an all encompassing guidance document. It has been recognised that reporting of Equalities could be strengthened at a strategic level to include more information regarding outcomes from EIAs rather than reporting progress on achieving the Equalities Standard. These reports should be provided at regular intervals (at least 6 monthly).

Implemented Y/N?

Y

3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.3 All departments and service areas set targets based on equality objectives devised through completed impact assessments and participation of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Many of the objectives are of the “raise awareness” type and relate to outputs and not outcomes.*
- b) *Too many “actions” are really objectives or parts of a “wish list”*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) The CE&CR action plan was the most comprehensive in terms of clearly showing progress, an audit trail of previously implemented actions and clarity regarding timescales and responsible officers.
- b) See (a), there have been pockets of improvement in this area but further work is required to strengthen this.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) Departmental Level Action plans have proved to be variable in content; some of the actions are of the awareness raising variety which, timescales are not clear, using terms such as “ongoing” and responsible officers are not always provided. Departments should critically review their action plans to ensure that their objectives are focussed and actions SMART. All of the action plans would benefit from cross referencing to other strategic plans e.g. the equality and diversity action plan and departmental service plans.

Implemented Y/N?	Y in part
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3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.4 Equality objectives and targets for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief to be set by March 2009

Detail of Recommendation made:

N/A – Agreed with Inspectors that this objective did not need to be implemented.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The position to date is that pilots have been set up in various Departments across the Council to assess these streams with careful consideration to the appropriateness of gathering this data in each area. It is intended that targets will be set at the end of the pilot period in 2010.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Set targets.

Implemented Y/N?

Y in part

3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.5 Establish corporate guidelines for information gathering and equality monitoring

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *There are no detailed corporate guidelines on monitoring*
- b) *There are some good examples of equality data collection. These examples, however do not yet amount to monitoring against the achievement of objectives nor the meeting or targets*
- c) *Equalities monitoring is not yet routine, for example Highways & Transportation were only giving “consideration of inclusion of ethnicity questionnaire as part of consultation process”*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) There is a monitoring structure diagram on the intranet and internet and the Customer Insight document located on the intranet and internet provides corporate monitoring guidance for service delivery. However, it does not specifically cover monitoring guidance for employment.
- b) Equality data collection in the areas of disability, race and gender have moved into the phase of achievement of objectives. The newer Equalities strands, religion/belief, sexual orientation and age are still at pilot stage therefore achievement of objectives stage has not yet been reached. However, staff are actively reviewing these areas to identify where further work may be needed to support staff.
- c) PT&SE issue monitoring questionnaires from Development control and also survey youths and the elderly e.g. % increase in elderly cycling, young people travelling by bus, diamond travel pass – measuring % who have taken up and establishing why not taken up.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) The guidance does not explicitly include monitoring for employment and this should be amended so that it is an all

encompassing guidance document. It has been recognised that strategically, although the monitoring framework is in place, it could be strengthened, in terms of content of reports and frequency of reporting.

- b) Need to be more transparent in demonstrating that equality objectives have been successfully achieved and provide real examples of initiatives that have arisen as a result of review of performance. This could be addressed by the annual report which is due to be produced in March 2010.
- c) Review monitoring questionnaires for new equalities strands and include (if relevant).

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.6 Seek agreement on equality targets with designated community stakeholders and local partners

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Whilst we acknowledge that the Council engages in consultation with community and equality groups, it is not clear what level of critical challenge or scrutiny, particularly with regard to work on the Equality Standard and impact assessments this provides.*
- b) *There is an under mention of gender equality issues (for example the LSP, apparently doesn't consider this as a variable)*
- c) *The Gender Equality Scheme does not make clear how women and men were consulted*
- d) *The "Customer segmentation" approach should be reviewed or impact assessed to determine whether it provides a sufficient focus on gender equality*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) The Corporate Equalities Forum indicated that they feel listened to and that the process is one of ongoing dialogue rather than one off consultation events.
- b) Gender is not a specifically identified Council priority. The gender stream will be considered with the other equalities streams as part of the consultation exercise for the single equality scheme.

- c) See (b)
- d) At the time of the level 3 assessment the Customer Relations team had proposed 35 segments based around where people live; their age; degree of contact with the council and potential access issues. Based on the advice from the Customer Service Excellence Standard (the old Charter mark) assessors. They determined that 35 segments were really too many to be workable. Therefore focus needed to be placed on the areas they felt made the biggest difference to how a service should be delivered. They now have proposed 24 segments which are based on the same four critical criteria but within these they have included data where it is available around gender. They have recently achieved Customer Service Excellence (CSE) status.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) The Corporate Equalities Forum should have forward work plan and include more structure. CEF members identified that they sometimes found wording of consultations overly professional in tone and too much jargon – need plainer English.
- b) Ensure there is a mechanism for capturing evidence of consultation on equalities streams that may not be represented by existing groups, e.g. religion and belief, gender and age.

Implemented Y/N?

Y

3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.7 Establish mechanisms for ensuring that equality targets are delivered by contractors through contract management

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *The guidance reminds contractors to review documents such as the Council's Equality policy and Race equality scheme; it does not refer to the Disability or Gender Equality schemes.*
- b) *The contract conditions similarly contain clauses, which only refer to race equality.*
- c) *There is reference to breaches of equality law, being potentially grounds for exclusion, but there is no reference to the law on gender here.*
- d) *The Council's monitoring and evaluation process needs to show the effectiveness of the policies that it has set in place, and to show the extent to which equality targets or considerations are being adhered to by suppliers and contractors*
- e) *Clarification of circumstances in which non-compliance with the Council's policy will lead to cessation of trading or contract termination is required*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) The South Gloucestershire Council Equalities in Procurement Guidance now includes many references to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.
- b) The model contract conditions have been updated to reflect all equality schemes.
- c) See Equalities in Procurement Guidance refers to "...breached equality legislation, or equivalent laws".

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?

Y

3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.8 Ensure completion of equality action plans at departmental and service level incorporating performance indicators:

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *The Council has set out to cover all six equality strands (race, gender, disability, age, religion & belief and sexuality). However, the approach to these six strands is not even, when we looked at evidence beyond the corporate ambitions. There is a much stronger emphasis on race and disability. The area of gender (a legal positive duty) is often under mentioned*
- b) *Work on religion/belief through “Faith net” does not include non theistic beliefs*
- c) *The Council should address the inconsistencies that are apparent, particularly at service planning level.*
- d) *There are some outcome oriented objectives and some “actions” that are not actions at all*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) The gender stream will be considered with the other equalities streams as part of the consultation exercise for the Single Equality Scheme.
- b) Changes have been made to the name of the Faith Forum and organisations of non religious beliefs have been invited to attend the meetings.
- c) Each Department has very different services and therefore will have very different service planning approaches.
- d) Recommendations are being made to ensure that the Departmental level equality action plans are made more robust and this will include ensuring clear referencing to service plans. This will then ensure a more consistent approach at service plan level.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) Ensure there is a mechanism for capturing evidence of consultation with equalities streams that may not be represented by existing groups, e.g. religion and belief, gender and age.
- d) Recommendations have been made to improve equality action plans at Departmental level. This includes ensuring clear cross referencing to service plans; this will in turn improve consistency at service planning level.

Implemented Y/N?

Y

3.1 Leadership and Corporate Commitment

3.1.11 Members and senior officers to endorse action plans as appropriate

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *The Council needs to build on the progress so far made with the leadership of equalities*
- b) *Ensure that equal/improved weighting is given to all areas of equality/interest groups/stakeholders (for example, there is a stronger emphasis on Race/BME and Disability issues than on other areas such*
- c) *as Gender/Age/Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender , Religion and Belief*
- d) *Seek and establish ways of raising awareness and training on areas of equalities not so well covered*
- e) *Create opportunities for more training and awareness sessions for all staff*
- f) *Continue work with Members to ensure they understand and are confident with all aspects of the equalities agenda, including work with gypsies and travellers*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- d) Progress has been made and there is a clear strategic structure in place for Equalities.
- b) This can be addressed by the consultation process and subsequent introduction of a Single Equality Scheme
- c) Additional training has been identified as a result of Departments considering the newer equalities strands, e.g. Community Services environmental health officers receiving training on religion and belief to assist them when visiting establishments to be aware of cultural and religious differences which may affect, procedures/opening days/ food served
- d) The Equalities Officer, Daniel Wood, has created an e-learning programme which has 3 levels – Introduction to Equality and Diversity, Exploring Equality and Diversity and Progressing Equality and Diversity.
- e) The e learning goes beyond awareness raising. This programme is due to be rolled out in December 2009.
- f) To date 70 members have received Equalities training in 2008 and 2009. The next set of equalities training will be held in June 2011 which will bring in all the new councillors. Separate sessions have been organised for gypsy and traveller training, these have been attended by all Councillors whose wards were

directly affected or are next door to a proposed site or extension.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) Need to ensure that regular reporting continues to demonstrate a robust reporting framework.
- b) Ensure there is a mechanism for capturing evidence of consultation with equalities streams that may not be represented by existing groups, e.g. religion and belief, gender and age.
- d) Hold a central record on the intranet of all Equalities courses and associated course handouts/guidance materials so that there is awareness of the amount of training and guidance occurring across the authority and it is available as a resource for others to use.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.1 Develop a strategy for all designated community, staff and stakeholder groups to participate in the development of equality objectives, service design and employment practice

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *It needs to publish equality impact assessments on the internet so they can be clearly located*
- b) *Support initiatives that develop improved communication with specific groups, covering all the 'six equality strands'*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) The schedules are published on the internet but not the EIA screening forms.
- b) The CEF is the key corporate mechanism for engaging with communities. CEF members are consulted regularly on wide variety of issues. A recent example of this is the comprehensive consultation exercise concerning the corporate equalities categories which include sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender identity.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

- a) Publish full EIAs and EIA screening forms on the internet.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.2 Make all service level and employment objectives and targets available for consultation and scrutiny

Detail of Recommendation made:

Need to check on effectiveness of external scrutiny and what kind and level of response

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The CEF is the key corporate mechanism for engaging with communities. CEF members are consulted regularly on wide variety of issues.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

There has not been a specific exercise undertaken to check on effectiveness of external scrutiny and what kind and level of response.

Undertake an exercise to review the effectiveness of external scrutiny.

Implemented Y/N?	N
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.3 Make provision of language services appropriate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Hearing loops and other disabled facilities need to be regularly checked for consistent functioning*
- b) *The Council needs to demonstrate; through monitoring and effective evaluation how well its language and support mechanisms are meeting*

the needs of its communities/service users.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The hearing loops at each of the one stop shops are portable and have only been installed for just over 1 year. There are not currently any arrangements in place to check the Kingswood hearing loop (other than standard electrical PAT testing), the Thornbury loop has been checked in the past by a member of staff with a hearing impairment but this has not happened recently and there are no formal arrangements for regular testing.

The support mechanism, browse aloud which reads out the content of the public website to individuals is currently being reviewed. The Communications team are checking whether it is being used. They will be undertaking a consultation exercise with Disability representatives on the CEF (by end of March 2010).

Central government have undertaken a change in policy. They are encouraging Councils to promote use of the English language in written and spoken form and to reduce the number of translation services. A project initiation document is being PID developed with the Customer Relations team for a toolkit for translation and interpreting service.

The complaints process is used to monitor the language and translation services. There have been no complaints to date. Every service area is required to translate documents into another language (if requested).

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Implement arrangements to ensure that hearing loops and other disabled facilities are regularly tested for safe functioning. Ensure there is an audit trail for these checks.

The complaints process is used to monitor the language and translation services, however, there has not been a co-ordinated exercise to review the effectiveness and customer satisfaction with the service provided. Consider building an evaluation element into the project initiation document for the translation and language toolkit.

Implemented Y/N?	N
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.4 Consultation is systematically built into equality impact assessment, self-assessment and the equality planning process

Detail of Recommendation made:

The “Knowing Our Customers” document should be reviewed and if necessary impact assessed to determine whether it pays sufficient attention to gender specific needs

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

This document has been updated and includes more references to gender however the CSE have recommended that segmentation categories are too wide. This document feeds into the Access to Services Strategy which has been impact assessed and will feed into service reviews on channel migration (web self service information).

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.5 Involve designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with scrutiny procedures

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Although the Council has engaged well with a range of groups, there is a perception that some groups (such as gay men and lesbians or non theistic believers may not be as fully involved).*
- b) *It is not clear to what extent the involvement leads to comment and feedback on the policies*
- c) *External stakeholders need to clearly and regularly know about the findings of impact assessments, the contents of action plans, why specific improvement targets have been set and how they will be monitored*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The Council continues its work on engaging with all groups. Attempts to hold meetings of the LGB forum have not proved successful; this has been in part due to the wish for individuals to retain their privacy. Equalities Officers have developed an LGB forum website to encourage engagement, they have also linked up with the Bristol LGB group to share experiences and benefit from

links they may have. The internal LGB staff group has recently moved forward and is regularly meeting on an informal basis. The Equalities Officer is considering linking the internal and external group together via the forum website to enable information sharing.

The Faith Forum amended its name to ensure they cover all faiths and beliefs to the Faith and Belief Forum. The Equalities Officers write to Humanist groups when the Faith and Belief Forum hold events; we have had local representation at local faith and belief forum events from another belief group.

The Corporate Equalities Forum have been consulted on a wide range of topics, this includes budgets for the Council, the Older Peoples Charter, the Gypsy and Traveller Consultation and also information on outcomes and monitoring information on analysing housing need to show what assistance people needed, information about recent assessment of Children and Young Peoples needs and aspirations in South Gloucestershire and information on priority neighbourhoods and community engagement. These are a selection of the key issues affecting the authority at the moment.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.6 Consultation on equality to be linked with the continuing development of community strategies

Detail of Recommendation made:

Gender needs to be a much clearer focus for the LSP

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

This will be addressed by the Single Equality Scheme. The Chair of the CEF is also a Member of the LSP.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

This is beyond the scope of the Council. Work would need to be undertaken in partnership.

Implemented Y/N?	N/A
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3.2 Community Engagement and Accountability

3.2.7 Publicise how, when and where actions on targets will start:

Detail of Recommendation made:

Make sure that all stakeholder groups are kept abreast of actions.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The CEF is the key corporate mechanism for engaging with communities. It is chaired by a member of the LSP which ensures that equalities is integral to strategic council planning.

CEF members are consulted regularly on wide variety of issues.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.1 Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for race, gender and disability based on completed impact assessments

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Many of the objectives are of the “raise awareness” type and also relate to outputs and not outcomes*
- b) *The area of gender is barely included in action plans.*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) Departmental Level action plans have proved to be variable in content. Some of the targets set were found to not be very challenging, e.g. use new EIA process by April 2010, some of

the objectives were not SMART and were more awareness raising than specific actions. Responsible officers and target dates could have been clearer.

- b) Departmental Equality Action plans are linked to Departmental Service plans. Service plans are linked into the Council priorities. Gender is not a specifically identified priority. There were lots of examples identified by Departments of gender related initiatives. Gender is included where applicable.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Departments should critically review their action plans to ensure that their objectives are focussed and actions SMART. Consideration should be given to introducing an audit trail to evidence action taken and provide cross referencing to other strategic plans and documents.

Implemented Y/N?	Y in part
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3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.2 Equality objectives and targets developed within each department/service area for sexual orientation, religion and belief and age by March 2009

Detail of Recommendation made:

N/A – not required for Level 3 Inspection

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

Council is currently at the pilot stage for several monitoring initiatives, targets will not be set until the pilots are complete.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Set targets at the conclusion of the pilot exercise.

Implemented Y/N?	N
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3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.3 Service plans to specifically address the importance of barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustment in the provision of services

Detail of Recommendation made:

Hearing loops and other disabled facilities need to be regularly checked for consistent functioning

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The hearing loops at each of the one stop shops are portable and have only been installed for just over 1 year. There are not currently any arrangements in place to check the Kingswood hearing loop (other than standard electrical PAT testing), the Thornbury loop has been checked in the past by a member of staff with a hearing impairment but this has not happened recently and there are no formal arrangements for regular testing.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Implement arrangements to ensure that hearing loops and other disabled facilities are regularly tested for safe functioning. Ensure there is an audit trail for these checks.

Implemented Y/N?

N

3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.4 Allocation of appropriate resources to achieve targets

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *The Council should ensure that all equality objectives and targets are explicitly and adequately resourced*
- b) *The Council should make clear the process for filling the equality posts and inform the community of this*
- c) *Consideration should be given to the issue of staff groups on other diversity strands, e.g. gender*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) Resources have been made available to fund internal equalities groups. All Departments have provided Equalities representatives. Officers time is made available for working groups and small projects to review action and service plans.

There has also been a considerable investment in time spent on updating and improving associated guidance documents and also in sourcing, providing and delivering all types of training courses across all Departments.

- b) At the time of Inspection at Level 3, there was some uncertainty regarding the main Equalities Officer post, this has subsequently not become an issue and the post is filled.
- c) The Equalities Officers have been very open and supportive of the recent development of an LGB staff group. There have historically not been any expressions of interest in setting up a gender group. Staff are encouraged on the intranet page to approach Equalities Officers if they wish to set up or be involved in an Equalities group.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.6 Set timetable within action plans for creating/adapting information and monitoring systems within service areas

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Production of corporate monitoring guidance*
- b) *Adoption of consistent monitoring practice at service and team level*
- c) *It should extend the remit of the monitoring sub-group to supporting the development of effective target monitoring within service areas as well as employment*
- d) *It should ensure that training for equality monitoring (as opposed to data collection) proceeds quickly*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

A consistent monitoring structure and corporate monitoring guidance, Customer Insight Guidance has been drawn up, this should ensure improved consistency at service and team level.

Service areas have been defined for monitoring purposes. The methodology

for collecting information has been defined and then training was developed and delivered in May 2009.

Representatives from internal Equalities groups now attend EDAT and assist with monitoring of service delivery, they have the opportunity to raise issues and can report to their own groups/

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.7 For agencies delivering services on behalf of the local authority, include within contracts a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly and without unlawful discrimination

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) It is not clear that all organisations tendering for contracts will be required to complete the equality and diversity questionnaire or whether the requirement is limited to contracts above a certain value
- b) The procurement guidance is race focused, for example it refers to contractors being required to inform if they have had cases of race discrimination taken against them and not of gender or other grounds.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

There are now two PQQs, one for contracts below the relevant EU threshold (PQQ below Threshold) and one for above the EU threshold (PQQ Above Threshold). The PQQs contain a set of questions that should be asked for all contracts.

The South Gloucestershire Council Equalities in Procurement Guidance now includes many references to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.3 Service Delivery and Customer Care

3.3.8 Establish monitoring of contracts to secure equal employment and equal service delivery targets

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) There is no clear evidence of how compliance with the Council's equality requirements will be monitored
- b) The Council should develop a system for the equalities monitoring of contracts

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

Clear plans are in place for compliance practice. Contractors are required to complete Core Contract monitoring Questionnaires or Non Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires. There are guides available to assist procurement officers with reviewing these questionnaires (Guide for Reviewing Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires and Guide for Reviewing Non Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires).

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.1 Set employment equality targets for recruitment, staff retention, work force profiles for race, gender and disability

Detail of Recommendation made:

It recognises the imbalance between the high proportion of women that it employs and proportion of women in higher paid Council jobs and intends to increase the number of women in the top 5% salary group

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

Human Resources continues to monitor the performance of number of women in the top 5% salary group;

A training programme called “SpringBoard” is being developed which is specifically designed to provide development opportunities for high achieving women.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

The performance indicator is slightly under target by 0.33%. This is due to leavers within CE&CR and CYP. Small numbers affect percentages.

There are no plans in the short term to roll out the Spring Board training programme. – ***(Management Comment -currently there is no organisational requirement to progress this programme. This position will be reviewed following workforce profiling exercise)***

Implemented Y/N?	N
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.3 Conduct an equal pay review and plan for equal pay adjustment

Detail of Recommendation made:

The Council has done some good research on the implementation of its equal pay scheme should plan to equality impact assess the new pay structures to determine what effect they have had on BME and Disabled staff.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

Equal Pay audit undertaken. The job structures existed prior to the Equal Pay review and are such that a job structure will not disadvantage a disabled person or an ethnic minority.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

None

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.5 Establish a system of guidance and training on relevant equality issues to short-listing panels and interviewers

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *It would be useful to have specific equality guidance covering all potential issues for those involved in short-listing and interviewing*
- b) *The assessors agree, that staff are in receipt of training, but it is less clear whether training on equalities meets the demands and requirements of the Equality Standard, and it is recommended that training plans and content is reviewed to properly assess this*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

There is sufficient coverage in the Recruitment and Selection guidance, at the end of each section there is specific guidance on Equalities considerations.

The Council has been awarded the 2 ticks accreditation by Jobcentre Plus for its positive work in employing disabled individuals.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

The Council would still benefit from an overall analysis of training products delivered across the authority to ensure that all areas are being covered and that the courses supplied fit with the service objectives.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.7 Provide training for managers on the implementation of the standard with contractors and partners

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Not clear what detailed equality in procurement training has actually been carried out*
- b) *The procurement guidelines do not cover areas other than race in any detail; for example there is no reference to the consequences for contractors if they have court judgments against them for sex or disability discrimination and guidelines refer to the Race Relations Amendment Act and not to the other duties to promote gender and disability equality*

- c) *Training for all managers who are involved in contracting and procurement should be carried out as soon as possible*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

Procurement training not yet sourced due to difficulties in sourcing suitable packages from the market place. Still actively seeking the best quality package available and now looking to source bespoke training from one of the larger providers, e.g. PWC. The procurement team are looking for an outcome by January 2010.

The guidance on the intranet is also now more robust which assists procurement officers and Managers.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Procurement training not yet sourced due to difficulties in sourcing suitable packages from the market place. Still actively seeking the best quality package available and now looking to source bespoke training from one of the larger providers, e.g. PWC.

Implemented Y/N?	Y in part
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.8 Appraise competency/behaviours to ensure that managers and staff are capable of implementing the Equality Standard, including the new strands of sexual orientation, religion or belief and age

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *It is unclear whether managers and other staff are required to build action on equality and diversity into their individual work plans where appropriate*
- b) *More detailed guidance should be given to both managers and to non-managerial staff about what kind of equality improvement actions should be included in their Achievement and Development plans*
- c) *Capability and competence on the new equality strands is not yet robustly integrated into the appraisal system*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

HR representatives have challenged this finding. Capability and behavioural competencies are generic; there is an underlying requirement within the

competencies that individuals should respect others but not beyond this. Equalities is not specifically referred to in PDPR training for Managers delivering PDPRs. There is no specific guidance, on the kinds of equality improvement actions which should be included in their Achievement and Development Plans. There is an inference that there is so much guidance that Managers are already sensitised to equality issues.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

This area should be critically reviewed to consider how equalities can be addressed and considered at a personal level.

Implemented Y/N?	N
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.9 Provide training for all staff on the detailed implementation of the Equality Standard, including action plans and updates on legal and other developments

Detail of Recommendation made:

- a) *Review general state of staff training on equalities and equality improvement, to see whether it has gone beyond general equality awareness training to include both awareness of the Equality Standard and of equality improvement processes*
- b) *There is a review of the Chief Executives induction process to incorporate equalities and diversity*
- c) *The on line equalities presentation is to be updated to include the 3 equality schemes*
- d) *There is less evidence of training on the strands of gender in particular, sexual orientation, religion/belief or age, with for example reference to one staff member in Finance and Business Support having attended a sexual orientation seminar.*

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

- a) Equalities training has moved beyond general awareness raising. All Departments could provide good examples of Equalities training.
- b) A new handout has been included in the Corporate Induction on Equalities and the Trainer notes clearly show that Equalities is one of the key areas which is mentioned.

- c) This recommendation is very specific, I was satisfied that all Officers I spoke with were aware of the three equality schemes. The existing Equality Schemes and supporting guidance will soon be superseded by the Single Equality Scheme and associated guidance. In addition, the current Equality & Diversity Training includes the three equality schemes.
- d) The Equality and Diversity training which was provided in October 2009 includes the newer equalities strands of sexual orientation, religion/belief and age. In addition, specific training was delivered in May 2009 on Equalities monitoring this included extensive coverage of the newer strands

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Consideration could be given to holding a central store of training handouts/ details of courses held on the corporate intranet Equalities page. This would cover Equalities training across all Departments and not just corporate led. It would give a good indication of the depth and breadth of Equalities training occurring in the Council and also give Departments opportunity to see if there are any opportunities to join up on similar subjects for more bespoke training.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.12 Provide information and appropriate training on action plans to support scrutiny process.

Detail of Recommendation made:

Provision of regular support and information for both internal and external stakeholder groups needs to be in place so that they can to fulfil a scrutiny role.

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

The Corporate Equalities Forum (CEF) agendas show a good range of topics covered.

The internal stakeholder groups are still developing but there is a commitment to ensuring they do participate.

A staff sub group of the Equality and Diversity Action Team (EDAT) has been formed; they will contribute to the scrutiny role.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

Develop a forward work plan for the CEF.
Make more use of internal stakeholder groups.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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3.4 Employment and Training

3.4.13 Start action on all employment and pay targets

Detail of Recommendation made:

It is unclear how the equality in employment initiatives are being monitored and are progressing

The Council can demonstrate the following progress has been made:

Equality in employment issues are tracked using PBViews;
An annual report is produced of all of the Employee monitoring information.

Possible areas for further review and/or improvement:

The Workforce Development report has been enhanced and improved. However, the depth of Employment Equalities monitoring information reported has been significantly affected. A second specific Equalities in Employment monitoring report is in the process of being produced and will be presented to EDAT for their review and consideration of which groups should monitor it on a regular basis.

Implemented Y/N?	Y in part
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3.5 Consolidating performance at Level 3

In discussing what will be required to move forward to Level 4, we have outlined below a range of actions that should be undertaken to consolidate Level 3 work

a) The gender equality scheme could be strengthened

The gender equality scheme will soon be replaced by the Single Equality Scheme (SES). The SES is currently out to consultation.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- b) **There could be a better defined focus on gender issues across the whole Authority**

There were many examples provided across the authority of Gender initiatives. Gender is not a specifically identified Council priority and therefore receives the same focus of attention as other equality strands.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- c) **There is some work to be done to achieve consistency in the equality impact assessment process. The quality of equality impact assessments was variable leading to equivalent variability in the quality of objectives and targets. Attention should be paid to impact assessment team membership, the quality of data used including that derived from recent consultation and engagement exercises. More attention should be paid to providing summaries of reports for external challenge groups and to publishing impact assessment reports on the Council website.**

The Equalities Officers have been working closely with Departments to provide guidance on EIAs and ensure consistency.

The Inspectors were examining the previous guidance and forms for EIAs. The new EIA process is much clearer and should increase consistency and quality of data. There will always be some variability in the quality of EIAs as the process will only be as good as the input that Officers make to it. This can be partly mitigated by training and guidance from Equalities Officers.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- d) **Many of the equality objectives contained in equality action plans relate to review and information collection. To move beyond level 3, all service areas should be setting SMART outcome targets that aim to improve services being delivered to equality groups.**

There has been some improvement in this area, however, it has been identified in the level 4 action plan that some objectives are still of the awareness raising variety and are not SMART.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- e) **There are no detailed corporate guidelines on monitoring. These need to be produced a quickly as is practical.**

There is now guidance for monitoring of customers – this is called Customer Insight. However, this guidance does not cover monitoring for employment equalities.

There is also an Equalities Monitoring Structure chart located on the internet and intranet.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- f) **There are some good examples of equality data collection. These examples, however do not yet amount to monitoring against the achievement of objectives nor the meeting or targets.**
Equality data collection in the areas of disability, race and gender has moved into the phase of achievement of objectives. The newer Equalities strands, religion/belief, sexual orientation and age are still at pilot stage therefore achievement of objectives stage has not yet been reached; however, staff are actively reviewing these areas to identify where further work may be needed to support staff.

Recommendation

Need to be more transparent in demonstrating that equality objectives have been successfully achieved and provide real examples of initiatives that have arisen as a result of review of performance. This should be addressed by the annual report which is due to be produced in March 2010.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- g) **Each service area should produce plan to show how it is going to integrate equality monitoring into its more general systems for performance managing its service delivery. Support will be required from the EDAT and from the monitoring sub-group. A plan should be produced by each service area should to show how it is going to integrate equality monitoring into its more general systems for performance managing its service delivery.**

Each Department has included Equalities objectives in their service plans. Departments use PBViews to monitor performance, this includes equalities objectives. Each Department has an equalities action plan this links back to their service plans. Not clear how Departments could further integrate Equalities into general systems for performance managing service delivery.

Implemented Y/N?	y
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- h) **The Council should ensure that the widest range of input possible is received from these both internal and external stakeholder groups to improve the opportunity for external challenge for all elements of equality work.**

There is evidence of improvement in this area.

Internal Stakeholder groups have been provided funding to assist them in

functioning more effectively.

External stakeholder groups mainly engage with the Council via the Corporate Equalities Forum.

There is a consultation toolkit available to provide officers with guidance on how and when to consult and a consultation strategy is in the process of being developed.

A partnership consultation group has been developed to co-ordinate consultation with the public.

There are numerous examples of effective consultation on a range of issues and initiatives across the Local Authority.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- i) **The foundations for good equality in procurement practice are to be found in Equalities in Procurement. The Council will need to back these proposals up with clear plans for compliance practice to ensure that the equality requirements and conditions laid down in contracts with organisations that supply goods to the Council are met.**

Clear plans are in place for compliance practice. Contractors are required to complete Core Contract monitoring Questionnaires or Non Core Contract Monitoring Questionnaires. There are guides available to assist procurement officers with reviewing these questionnaires.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- j) **The Council is considering appointing Gypsy and Traveller champions from each political party. We strongly support this proposal.**

Cabinet decided against appointing Gypsy and Traveller Champions.

There has been a lot of work undertaken in this area to provide a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document by January 2011. The Council has recently been awarded Best practice community involvement in a development plan by a local authority or government agency' by Royal Town Planning Institute in the South West for their work on the Gypsy and Traveller DPD.

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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- k) **The customer segmentation model should be kept under review to ensure that it is delivering a view of the service user base that meets the needs of all the quality strands**

The Customer Relations team have reviewed the customer segmentation model and have refined the range of segmentation to take into account advice from the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The Council has recently achieved Customer Service Excellence.

Internal Audit Plan 2009/2010

Assessment of Equalities Standard
– Level 4

Implemented Y/N?	Y
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