

Appendix A

Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy

**Draft for cabinet
11 March 2008**

2008-2010



CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

Statement	3
Introduction	4
What is Equality?	4
What is Diversity?	4
Aims of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy	4
The case for Equality and Diversity	5
The moral case	5
The legal case	5
The business case	5
The strategic context	5
The profile of Cheltenham	6
Race and ethnicity	6
Gender	7
Disability	7
Age	7
Sexual Orientation	8
Religion and Belief	8
Equality and Diversity: Progress So Far	9
Our Equality and Diversity Commitments	10
Putting policy into practice	11
Equal and fair employment practices	11
Equal access to services	11
Promoting equality and diversity across the borough and with our partners and suppliers	12
Involving communities and consulting with others	12
Our Equality and Diversity Structures	12
Monitoring the CEDP and Equality Self-Assessment	13
Our Corporate Equality Action Plan 2008 - 2010	15
Appendix A	19
Appendix B, Service areas for Equality Impact Assessments	21

Statement

Cheltenham Borough Council is committed to ensuring that the following principles are adhered to throughout our organisation, in the way we engage with our staff, our partners and members of the public

- that we will promote equality of access to all services, facilities and opportunities irrespective of gender, age, religion/belief, ethnic origins, disability or sexual orientation.
- that we will promote equality of opportunity in employment irrespective of gender, age, religion/belief, ethnic origins, disability or sexual orientation.
- that we will promote equality of treatment irrespective of gender, age, religion/belief, ethnic origins, disability or sexual orientation.
- that we will appoint and promote our employees based on competency, experience and merit irrespective of gender, age, religion/belief, ethnic origins, disability or sexual orientation.

Equality of numbers is not the goal of this approach but may be one of the outcomes of this policy. What is important to this organisation is that we deal with everyone in an equal, consistent and transparent manner that does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, religion/belief, ethnic origins, disability or sexual orientation.

As community leaders, we will set the example that all in Cheltenham can follow. Where possible we will seek to influence our partners to follow our example and will highlight areas where we believe that discriminatory practices may occur.

We have prepared this Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy (CEDP) to underpin these aspirations and instill confidence in the way this Council engages with both its employees and the wider community.

We would welcome your views on our proposals set out in this document.

For further information, contact

Richard Gibson
Corporate Policy Manager
Cheltenham Borough Council
Tel: 01242 235354
Email: richard.gibson@cheltenham.gov.uk

Introduction

What is Equality?

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that individuals' needs are sometimes best met in different ways.

Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, namely the key areas of race, gender, disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. People must not be unfairly discriminated against because of any of these factors and we must all contribute to creating a positive working environment where discriminatory practices and discrimination no longer happen.

What is Diversity?

Diversity is based on the concept of recognition of differences: recognising that everyone is different, and respecting and encouraging those differences for business benefit. People with different backgrounds and attitudes bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and a diverse organisation can draw upon the widest range of experiences so it can listen to, and meet, the needs of its employees, customers and the community it serves.

Aims of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy (CEDP) is the overarching equalities and diversity strategy for Cheltenham Borough Council and is intended to be the focus for promoting equality issues across the Council to ensure the elimination of discrimination and disadvantage.

The policy sets out the framework for our existing statutory equality schemes; the Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes, and also makes provision for the other equality strands like age, sexual orientation and faith. The plan also reflects the requirements set out in a broad range of legislation, both national and international.

The aim of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy (CEDP) is to act as a framework whereby: *Cheltenham Borough Council is an organisation where:*

- *Our customers who access our services, job seekers and employees are treated fairly and without discrimination.*
- *Individuals are respected and their contributions are valued.*

Cheltenham is a place where:

- *People are proud to live, work and visit; and*
- *Cultural diversity is welcomed.*

Underpinning this aim are four objectives:

- We will ensure equal and fair employment practices;
- We will promote equal access to services;
- We will promote equality and diversity with our partners and suppliers;
- We will involve communities and consult with others.

The council has prepared draft equality and diversity statements covering the six equality strands:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals
- Age
- Religious or other beliefs

The council is proposing to consult with representative groups over the next few months to ensure that each of the statements addresses specific needs within that community.

The case for Equality and Diversity

The moral case

Cheltenham Borough Council is both a provider of a wide range of services and a major employer. We have both a legal and moral responsibility to be fair and just in all that we do and to demonstrate good practice to the wider community. Each member of our community is entitled to expect fair and equal treatment in all dealings with the council.

The legal case

There is a wide range of regulatory frameworks to promote equality and anti-discrimination in public sector services including EU directives and national legislation which is enforceable by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Individuals can take action under these statutory provisions through tribunals, and the European Court for Human Rights (see appendix 1).

The public sector has additional statutory duties to actively promote equality and become a proactive agent of change through producing equality schemes covering the three areas of:

- Race equality;
- Disability equality;
- Gender equality.

The council also recognises that it has specific responsibilities set out in recent equal opportunities regulations and follows the codes of practice which define good practice in the areas of:

- Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals;
- Age;
- Religious or other beliefs.

The business case

There is evidence that flexibility, loyalty and retention of employees have all been linked to equality of opportunity. Employee satisfaction improves motivation and productivity whereas discrimination de-motivates, resulting in lower performance.

A diverse workforce that represents a cross-section of society will bring a balance of experience and skills. As well as importing creativity, greater perspective and new ideas into the business.

Generating a reputation for fairness and equality, and recruiting and appointing solely on merit will attract talented recruits and retain experienced employees.

A more diverse workforce better reflects the changing demographics of the customer base, This provides an opportunity to better understand customer's interests and needs.

There is an opportunity to recruit from a wider pool of talent, to ensure that the needs of residents are met.

In this context, the Council aims to recruit and retain a diverse workforce who can provide the appropriate cultural mix of services to create environments that value difference and promote excellence.

The strategic context

Cheltenham Borough Council's purpose is to provide leadership to the community and to serve those who live, work or visit Cheltenham and ensure that the borough provides the best possible quality of life for all members of the community. Equal Opportunities is a fundamental part of our corporate values in terms of us as an employer and service provider.

The council has developed an overarching message designed to inspire employees and members to contribute effectively towards ensuring that Cheltenham borough remains successful, to set the ethos and culture of the council and to focus all officers and members efforts on a common goal. Our overarching message is simply:

“Working together to create a great future for Cheltenham”

Working together

The Authority needs to work as one council and not as a set of separate services, and effectively in partnership in taking forward our plans.

Create

The Authority believes that there is a great deal of underused creative potential and capacity for innovation with the council, this must be unlocked.

Cheltenham

It is about the Borough first and foremost, and about making the maximum positive impact on the lives of people who live in, work in and visit Cheltenham.

The council has a longer term ambition to develop our equalities and community cohesion work to ensure that our communities are attractive to people of different ethnic and social backgrounds. The outcome from this work will be to have achieved level 3 of the equality standard by 2010.

This commitment reflects the aspirations of ‘Our future, our choice’, Cheltenham’s sustainable community strategy which has a specific principle to ensure that Cheltenham is a place where everyone across the borough has similar life opportunities regardless of where they live or their background or circumstances. To take this forward all organisations on Cheltenham Strategic Partnership are committed to encourage staff diversity, implement comprehensive equality policies and equality schemes as part of a wider commitment to equal opportunities.

The profile of Cheltenham

The people who live, work, study in or visit Cheltenham have diverse backgrounds and circumstances. They are of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds, disabled and non-disabled, from all faiths/beliefs, and all sexual orientations. They live in a range of different types of households and have access to widely differing levels of income. Although our borough has a wealthy image, this sometimes obscures the fact that we have areas of poverty and deprivation.

These diverse communities are a great asset to Cheltenham. However, some communities experience disadvantage and discrimination that has a negative effect on their quality of life. Although, this can affect all communities, most often it affects women, Black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, young and old people, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people.

Race and ethnicity

Cheltenham’s ethnic profile from the 2001 census showed that 96.7% of our population was of white origin and that 3.3% were from black and other minority ethnic groups. Of the white population, 1.1% were of Irish origin.

Our largest ethnic minority group at the time was of Indian origin and numbered 1,100 and this group had been successfully present in Cheltenham for 50 years. We know that this ethnic profile has changed since the last census. For instance, between 2003 and 2007, an estimated 4,000 ‘migrant workers’ who became resident in Cheltenham between 2003 and 2007. More than half of these migrant workers are aged between 18 and 34 years, and men outnumber women by 3 to 2.

Most migrant workers come from Eastern Europe, with more than 60% of all migrant workers having their origin in Poland.

So in the space of four years, our ethnic profile has significantly changed. This diversity within Cheltenham brings advantages including increasing skills and availability of labour within our local economy, together with sharing different cultures but it also brings pressures including demands on the housing stock.

Gender

Cheltenham has a population of 111,656, with 57,035 (51.1%) females and 54,621 (48.9%) males. (Office of National Statistics mid-2005 population estimates. Approximately 69,700 residents are of working age. (16 to 64 for males and 16 to 59 for females) and of these people 33,200 (47.6%) are female and 36,600 (52.4%) are male.

Approximately 20% of the working age population are economically inactive (which means people who are neither in employment nor unemployed including those who are retired) and of these 70% are female 30% are male.

Full time workers in Cheltenham earn an average gross weekly earning of £470.70 a week. The average figure for full time female workers is £ 404.80 and for male workers this figure is 27% higher at £514.30 per week indicating a significant gender pay gap.

Disability

An assessment of the prevalence of disability in Cheltenham in 2004, showed that around 17,000 (15.6%) people in Cheltenham had mild, significant or severe disability need. Mental illness accounted for the highest proportion of disabilities with 12.15% (13,339) people affected. In terms of people of working age (16 to 64 years), there were 6,518 (9.1%) people with a disability.

The indicators on mental health, health status and limiting long term illness, which are based on the 2001 census, all point to a greater prevalence of disability in our regeneration areas, with Oakley and Hesters Way areas in particular having pronounced numbers of people with poor health and numbers claiming disability benefits.

Census results showed that in 2001 approximately only 40% of disabled people in Gloucestershire that are of working age were economically active. With 60% of disabled people of working age being economically inactive, there is a real link between disability and low incomes which needs to be broken by a concerted effort by all employers to improve recruitment processes and make changes to employment conditions to encourage more disabled employees.

Age

While Cheltenham's population has been increasing over the years, it is an ageing population. By 2026 over 65s will make up 21% of the Borough's population compared to 17.1% in 2006. Whilst some of the impact of this change in population structure will be mitigated by rising incomes and advances in medicine so that older people remain active for longer, there is still likely to be significant demands placed on health, social care and housing services with a corresponding financial consequences. Falling birth rates when coupled with high house prices in Cheltenham could also lead to a reduction in the numbers of young people living and working in Cheltenham.

At the 2001 census, Cheltenham had the following age structure:

	Cheltenham	%	England	%
0-15	20,207	18.4	9,901,581	20.2
16-24	13,990	12.7	5,361,556	10.9
25-59	51,688	47.0	23,675,864	48.2
60+	24,128	21.9	10,199,830	20.8
	110,013	100.0	49,138,831	100.0

Sexual Orientation

Although there are no accurate statistics for the numbers of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents, national estimates suggest that 5-7% of the population are gay, lesbian or transgender. The 2001 census recorded 182 people living in same sex couples in Cheltenham.

Religion and Belief

Cheltenham also has a vibrant range of faith/belief communities which play a critical role in the social and spiritual life of the borough. These communities also maintain a wide range of places of worship including St. Marys, which is the parish church of Cheltenham and dates mainly from the 13th and 14th centuries, a Synagogue, two Mosques, a Hindu temple and countless other buildings that are an intrinsic part of Cheltenham's physical fabric.

From the 2001 census, the largest faith group was Christian at 72.3%. This was slightly higher than the national figure of 71.7%, but lower than the county figure of 75.9%. 72.3% equates to 79,581 people.

The Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist communities accounted for 0.7% (775), 0.5% (536) and 0.3% (296), of the working age population, respectively. Sikh and Jewish communities accounted for 0.1% (116) and 0.1% (133), respectively. All other religions accounted for 0.3% (371). There were 20,051 (18.2%) of people who declared that they had no religion.

Equality and Diversity: Progress So Far

As at the date of adoption of this policy, the council is currently at level 1 of the Equality Standard and is working to achieve level 3 by March 2010. Organisationally, the council progresses its equalities work through the equalities forum which enables the council to take a balanced approach across the six equality strands.

The council agreed its Comprehensive Equalities Policy and Race Equality Scheme in December 2003 and has made steady progress since then. Key areas of progress to date include;

Strategic Framework

- Community cohesion and equalities are identified as key issues in both the sustainable community strategy and the council's business plan.
- Our Race Equality Scheme was agreed by cabinet in December 2003.
- Our Disability Equality Scheme was agreed by cabinet in December 2006.
- Our Gender Equality Scheme was agreed by cabinet in September 2007.

Consultation and community engagement

- A consultation strategy that tackles equality issues was agreed in May 2004.
- The council employs a development worker to engage with black and other minority ethnic communities.

Service delivery and customer care

- A programme of equality impact assessments has been being rolled out across the organisation, supported by specific training for third tier and supervisors.

Employment and training

- A programme of equalities training has been rolled out including induction training, dealing with racist incidents and disability awareness.

Our Equality and Diversity Commitments

Cheltenham Borough Council is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and services. The Council wants to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued whether they are customers, service users employees, or job-seekers.

The aim of the Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy (CEDP) is to act as a framework whereby: *Cheltenham Borough Council is an organisation where:*

- *Our customers who access our services, job seekers and employees are treated fairly and without discrimination.*
- *Individuals are respected and their contributions are valued.*

Cheltenham is a place where:

- *People are proud to live, work and visit; and*
- *Cultural diversity is welcomed.*

Underpinning this aim are four objectives:

Equal and fair employment practices

We will ensure fair and equal opportunity in all areas of employment, including recruitment and selection, competency framework, appraisals, learning and development and the career development of all its employees.

Equal access to services

We will ensure that customers, service users and the wider community of Cheltenham have equal access to its services and are not discriminated against in any aspect of its service delivery.

Promoting equality and diversity across the borough and with our partners and suppliers

We will seek specify the same high standards to services that are delivered in partnership or by a third party as it does to the services that are delivered directly by the Council – including with regard to equality. We will seek to use our role as a community leader to promote equality and respect diversity.

Involving communities and consulting with others

We will develop a community engagement strategy that will provide a framework for the consultation and the involvement of communities in the planning of services and decision-making.

Putting policy into practice

Equal and fair employment practices

Our commitment

We will ensure fair and equal opportunity in all areas of employment, including recruitment and selection, competency framework, appraisals, learning and development and the career development of all its employees.

Outcomes

We will be able to recruit and retain the best possible workforce through appointing, supporting promoting our employees on competency, experience and merit alone. We will also recognise and value the differences in the people it employs which will help us to better serve the different people living in our community.

Actions

We will:

- Create an organisation culture that encourages an understanding and appreciation of the needs of others and deals effectively with oppressive behaviour, bullying or harassment;
- Promote recruitment and selection procedures which ensure fairness and equality for prospective employees;
- Implement single status to deliver the council's commitment to equal pay;
- Ensure that all our employment policies and procedures promote fairness and equality;
- Work to help make the council more representative of the community it serves – to include monitoring our workforce to identify any potential areas for discrimination across the six strands;
- Provide equality and diversity training for our employees so that they are able to help implement the objectives of this policy;
- Demonstrate our commitment to fair and equal opportunity in all areas of employment by moving towards the positive about disability double-tick standard; and
- Help employees achieve a better work life balance to reduce stress, build morale and ensure equality of employment opportunities.

Equal access to services

Our commitment

We will ensure that customers, service users and the wider community of Cheltenham have equal access to its services and are not discriminated against in any aspect of its service delivery.

Outcomes

We will be able to respond effectively to all of our residents, and ensure that we provide them with excellent services that meet their needs and ambitions.

Actions

We will:

- Get to know our customers better through exploring how best to implement effective monitoring of who uses our services to ensure we are delivering our services fairly, equally and appropriately to all groups and to help mainstream equalities within our practices;
- Support this with an improved process to monitor customer comments, compliments and complaints to check for equality impacts;
- Get to know our customers better through effective analysis of the changing demographics of Cheltenham and use our community engagement framework to improve how we deliver services at the neighbourhood level;
- Use our equality impact assessment process for all service areas (including contracted services and partnership arrangements) to help us deliver better services for all our service users including setting equality objectives and targets;

- Improve physical access to our buildings and facilities;
- Ensure representative groups are involved in the planning and design of services, processes and projects; and
- Improve accessibility to our services and how we communicate with our community.

Promoting equality and diversity across the borough and with our partners and suppliers

Our commitment

We will apply the same high standards to services that are delivered in partnership or by a third party as it does to the services that are delivered directly by the Council – including with regard to equality. We will seek to use our role as a community leader to promote equality and respect diversity across the borough.

Outcomes

We will be able to use our spending power to encourage our suppliers to adopt equality policies in terms of their own employment and service delivery processes and follow good practice by having a procurement strategy that gives a clear commitment to equality of opportunity.

Actions

We will:

- Use our resources and influence to promote equality and diversity throughout the borough working in partnership with others to achieve this;
- Seek to ensure that the equality objectives and targets are incorporated in partnership and contractual arrangements and that these are monitored through contract management;
- Promote a rigorous approach with partners to tackling and reducing hate crime;
- Ensure that people of all backgrounds, faiths and circumstances have similar life opportunities, and can live and work confidently alongside each other; and
- Ensure that our elected members are aware of their role in promoting equality.

Involving communities and consulting with others

Our commitment

We will provide a framework for the consultation and the involvement of communities in the planning of services and decision-making.

Outcomes

We will be better able to provide services that are responsive to the needs of our customers.

Actions

We will:

- Ensure that we have an effective process for engaging with communities of interest and communities of place;
- Ensure that service areas consult with representative groups on their service delivery plans;
- Build capacity within representative community groups; and
- Make contact and foster relationships with individuals and organisations that represent Cheltenham's diverse BoME communities.

Our Equality and Diversity Structures

A new approach

The Council aims to “mainstream” diversity; this means that we want to move away from diversity being viewed as an add-on with many separate structures being used to drive diversity. The Council is incorporating equality arrangements into existing structures in order to successfully drive the diversity agenda forward.

Our framework

This new approach requires both elected members and officers to take responsibility and demonstrate corporate commitment to this agenda. The top-level commitment to equality and diversity sits with the Chief Executive and the Board of Directors (BoD). Each directorate's Group Management Team (GMT) has responsibility for ensuring that diversity is a key part of the service planning, monitoring and review process, and that the commitments set out in each equality scheme and the CEP are progressed.

In terms of elected members, both Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny have a key role to play in ensuring that all key council decisions reflect equality and diversity considerations. In particular, the council's Overview and Scrutiny committees will have a responsibility for raising any issues of concern with officers and other elected members and referring matters to either cabinet or the equalities forum. Other committees such as Staff and Support Services Committee, Standards Committee and Audit Committee will all have a role to play as well.

The Equalities Forum, which brings together elected members and officers, coordinates the Council's approach to diversity and is responsible for a range of functions including setting the policy framework for diversity across the Council. The forum's key roles are to:

- Oversee the development of key corporate equality and diversity policies including the CEDP;
- Monitor the implementation of corporate equality and diversity policies;
- Assess and prioritise requests for additional resources to support our equality and diversity work;
- Assess how well our equality and diversity commitments are integrated within service delivery, employment, procurement and consultation work streams;
- Assess the extent and range of training programmes available to staff on equality and diversity themes;
- To consider the activity undertaken by the council to publicise its commitment to all forms of equality and diversity;
- Championing the equalities cause throughout the council's work and identifying other champions
- Oversee the production of equality impact assessments across the council
- To report every six months to the board of directors on progress against equality and diversity targets.

In our diversity framework, every individual working with the Council, whether an officer, elected member or a partnership body is responsible for progressing our commitment to diversity and implementing our positive duty to promote race, gender and disability equality. This responsibility must be mainstreamed through team meetings, appraisals and performance management frameworks. Managers are responsible for ensuring that team meetings include diversity considerations, and that the Council's commitment to diversity is a central aspect of how services are delivered and how people are managed. Each officer should ensure that they demonstrate through their work the appropriate attitudes and behaviours, which are needed to progress our commitment to diversity.

Monitoring the CEDP and Equality Self-Assessment

Monitoring progress

The council recognises that monitoring is essential to form a picture of what is happening in terms of employment and service delivery and to evaluate how successful the policy is, in practice, in achieving its aims and objectives.

The Equalities Forum will review the CEDP on an annual basis and make any recommendations to members.

The Staff and Support Services committee is the committee of council that has the responsibility for the welfare of the council's staff. It will take on the responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and recommending to Cabinet any changes that are needed.

The council's Overview and Scrutiny committees have a wide ranging role in scrutinising both the service delivery of this council but also the activities of outside bodies. They will have a responsibility for raising any issues of concern with the Equalities forum and referring the matter to the Staff and Support Services committee or cabinet as appropriate.

The council has adopted an electronic performance management system called ESP that will enable all the actions to be included as part of the corporate performance management process. We will also work with service managers to ensure that the commitments in the action plan are included in their divisional models for 2008-09 and beyond.

At the level of individual services, equality impact assessments and the action plans that are developed to take forward their recommendations are a key tool for monitoring and reporting on progress in promoting equality. These will be overseen by the Equalities Forum. A list of service areas is attached as appendix 2 which prioritises service according to their equality relevance.

Monitoring take up of each of our services, and how satisfied they are, is key to enabling us to identify and reduce any inappropriate over- or under-representation of particular groups amongst users of our services and any differences in satisfaction levels amongst particular groups of service users.

We recognise that implementing monitoring systems is not easy; and that in certain situations asking people for personal information will not be appropriate. However, when customers are signing up for services (eg such as planning and housing) and already providing personal information then we should collect equality monitoring information. Where satisfaction surveys are being conducted then monitoring data will also be collected so we can compare take up and satisfaction to see whether all sections of our community are equally satisfied with our services.

Self assessment

The council will use the equality standard for local government to assess its equality and diversity work and continue to develop equality self-assessment and scrutiny as the basis for continuous improvement. We will also ensure that each service area engages with equality self-assessment and scrutiny on its service delivery. In addition each service area will identify good practice on equalities and areas for improvement.

Our Corporate Equality Action Plan 2008 - 2010

Equal and fair employment practices

Ref	What we plan to achieve	How	Resources	Responsible officer
	Create an organisation culture that encourages an understanding and appreciation of the needs of others and deals effectively with oppressive behaviour, bullying or harassment	Through reviewing our organisational culture through a programme board approach Through promoting a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment that will be set out in a new policy	From within existing budgets	Assistant Director Human Resources & Organisation Development
	Promote recruitment and selection procedures which ensure fairness and equality for prospective employees	Through annual monitoring of the recruitment process and reporting of these to SSSC, amend policy and approach where necessary.	From within existing budgets	AD HR and OD
	Implement single status to deliver the council's commitment to equal pay	The council committed itself to establish a fair employment and implementing an equal pay policy in June 2004. Significant progress has been made on this and the likely date for full implementation is during 2008.	From within existing budgets	Chief Executive
	Ensure that all our employment policies and procedures promote fairness and equality	Through a review of policies to ensure that they are current in respect of employment law reflect best practice: for 2008/9 these will be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal Records • Flexible Working • Dignity at Work • Pensions / Redundancy 	From within existing budgets	AD HR and OD
	Work to help make the council more representative of the community it serves – to include monitoring our workforce to identify any potential areas for discrimination across the six strands	Annual Report on the equality assessment of the population to Staff and Support Services Committee to include areas where the council is not representative and recommendations for how these might be addressed; to include data on current employees, recruitment, disciplinary, grievance, access to training and reasons for leaving across the six strands. Consider how best to introduce monitoring systems to record sexual orientation to identify any discrimination in recruitment or employment.	From within existing budgets	AD HR and OD

	Provide equality and diversity training for our employees so that they are able to help implement the objectives of this policy.	Identify training needs through annual appraisal process Ensure that the council has a programme of equality training in its annual programme.	From within existing budgets	AD HR and OD
	Demonstrate our commitment to fair and equal opportunity in all areas of employment by moving towards the positive about disability double-tick standard.	Report on feasibility of positive about disability double-tick standard to Staff and Support Services Committee by September 2008. Implemented by April 2009.	From within existing budgets	AD HR and OD
	Help employees achieve a better work life balance to reduce stress, build morale and ensure equality of employment opportunities.	Through Work Positive initiatives, Flexible Working policy, and continuing to provide a childcare voucher and flexitime schemes.	From within existing budgets	AD HR and OD

Equal access to services

Ref	What we plan to achieve	How	Resources	Responsible officer
	Get to know our customers better through exploring how best to implement effective monitoring of who uses our services to ensure we are delivering our services fairly, equally and appropriately to all groups and to help mainstream equalities within our practices.	In 2008-09 we will explore the feasibility of how best to implement monitoring systems across our customer facing services with the view to implementing systems in 2009-10.	The implementation of monitoring systems will have a resource implication which will be explored as part of the feasibility work	Strategic Director Corporate Services
	Support this with an improved process to monitor customer comments, compliments and complaints to check for equality impacts	Introduce improved collection methods to monitor customer's details Introduce a back office system to effectively collate and coordinate customer comments, compliments and complaints.	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager
	Get to know our customers better through effective analysis of the changing demographics of Cheltenham and use our community engagement framework to improve how we deliver services at the neighbourhood level	Carry out an annual equality assessment of the population and report this to Staff and Support Services Committee. Roll out a multi-agency pilot of neighbourhood management	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager

	Use our equality impact assessment process for all service areas (including contracted services and partnership arrangements) to help us deliver better services for all our service users including setting equality objectives and targets;	Carry out an annual programme of equality impact assessments and report on these to the equalities forum. (see appendix 2 for list of priority service areas). Support this with specific training for service managers.	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager
	Improve physical access to our buildings and facilities	Build in recommendations from access audits into the 20 year maintenance programme and ensure that all priority 1 and 2 recommendations are resolved within three years.	Funding for building improvements are set out in the asset management strategy, but are subject to the annual budget cycle	Head of Property and Asset Management
	Ensure representative groups are involved in the planning and design of services, processes and projects	Through Cheltenham VCA we will engage with representative groups and explore the establishment of an equalities advisory group that will support the service areas in consultation with representative groups.	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager
	Improve accessibility to our services and how we communicate with our community.	We will ensure that we take on board equality considerations when we commission new signage or produce new printed information. We will use the new content management system to ensure our website meets the latest equality considerations. We will ensure that our telephone and loop systems are in place to support customers who are deaf or hard of hearing	From within existing budgets	Head of Service Development/ Comms Team Property Services Manager

Promoting equality and diversity with our partners and our suppliers

Ref	What we plan to achieve	How	Resources	Responsible officer
	Use our resources and influence to promote equality and diversity throughout the borough working in partnership with others to achieve this	Through ensuring that Cheltenham Strategic Partnership and its constituent partners and partnerships all adopt equality impact assessment processes and a common set of standard equality and demographic monitoring and evaluation procedures.	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager

	Seek to ensure that the equality objectives and targets are incorporated in partnership and contractual arrangements and that these are monitored through contract management;	Through continuing to build our understanding of how to mainstream equality considerations into our procurement processes.	From within existing budgets	Head of Service Development
	Promote a rigorous approach with partners to tackling and reducing hate crime	Through supporting the development of the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Hate Crime Group	From within existing budgets	Community Safety and Licensing Manager
	Ensure that people of all backgrounds, faiths and circumstances have similar life opportunities, and can live and work confidently alongside each other	Through the development of a multi-agency integration and cohesion group that will create a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities make to delivering our community vision for Cheltenham. Through our work to build strong and positive relationships with people from black and other minority ethnic groups	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager Community Capacity worker
	Ensure that our elected members are aware of their role in promoting equality.	Through providing a programme of equalities training for elected members.	From within existing budgets	Learning and Development Manager

Involving communities and consulting with others

Ref	What we plan to achieve	How	Resources	Responsible officer
	Ensure that we have an effective process for engaging with communities of interest and communities of place	Develop our community engagement strategy that will set out how we will roll out neighbourhood management to engage with communities of place and integration and cohesion work to engage with communities of interest.	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager
	Ensure that service areas consult with representative groups on their service delivery plans;	Through Cheltenham VCA we will engage with representative groups and explore the establishment of an equalities advisory group that will support the service areas in consultation with representative groups.	From within existing budgets	Corporate Policy Manager
	Build capacity within representative community groups	Work with representative groups to explore how best their organisations and work can be strengthened within the context of the council's financial framework.	From within existing budgets	Community Development Manager
	Make contact and foster relationships with individuals and organisations that represent Cheltenham's diverse BoME communities	Through rolling out a programme of events with BoME communities.	From within existing budgets	Community Capacity worker

Appendix 1

This provides a summary of all the equality and diversity legislation of which public bodies and those working for them must be aware.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)

This gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing the same work as rated under an analytical job evaluation study, or work that is proved to be of equal value.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

People that can benefit from this act are those who have been convicted of a criminal offence, received a sentence of no more than 2.5 years in prison and then not re-offended during the rehabilitation period. Providing they have not re-offended, they become a rehabilitated person and do not have to admit their criminal conviction. Although there are some exceptions to this principle.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is also unlawful to discriminate against someone because they are married.

Race Relations Act 1976

The Act prohibits the discrimination on racial grounds in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services, and contributes to ensuring that buildings are accessible to disabled people.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This Act introduces four new criminal offences: harassment, fear of violence, breach of civil injunction and breach of a restraining order.

Human Rights Act 1998

This Act guarantees individuals a range of political rights and freedoms, without interference by the State. Citizens have a right to:

- Life and freedom
- Freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and from forced labour
- A fair trial
- Privacy
- Freedom of expression
- Marriage and family
- Freedom from discrimination
- Not be deprived of their possessions unless it is in the public interest or subject to law

Equal Treatment and Framework Directive 2000

This Directive lays down a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation in employment and occupation.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003

This regulation protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003

Protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003

These regulations enhance the Race Relations Act by, for example, introducing new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment and changing the way burden of proof applies, as well as removing a number of exceptions from the legislation.

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Provides legal recognition and equal treatment for same sex couples and married couples in employment benefits and pension rights.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition applies when the person has received a full gender recognition certificate from a gender recognition panel.

Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

Introduces a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

These regulations introduce new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, and explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave. They set out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would have otherwise been paid if there had not been pregnancy or maternity leave.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006

Protects against discrimination on the grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Equality Act 2006

In December 2007 this Act establishes a single Commission for equality and Human Rights. It introduces a positive Gender duty on the public sector to eliminate sex discriminations and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The Act also protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in access to goods, facilities and services.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act stops people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.

Work and Families Act 2006

This establishes a balanced package of rights and responsibilities for both employers and employees. From April 2007 it extends maternity and adoption pay from six to nine months, and extends the right for carers of adults to request flexible working. Employed fathers also have the right to additional paternity leave.

Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

These regulations protect against discrimination in the provision of goods and services.

Appendix 2, Service areas for Equality Impact Assessments

Chief Executives

Division	Service area	Equality relevance (on scale of 1 to 3)
Policy & Performance	Community strategy and partnership work	3
Policy & Performance	Corporate governance inc audit, PM, bus planning	1
Policy & Performance	Equalities	3
Policy & Performance	Economic Development	2
Policy & Performance	Consultation and community engagement	3
Policy & Performance	Communications	3
Policy & Performance	Strategic Land Use Planning	2
Policy & Performance	Twinning	1
Policy & Performance	Customer Relations	3

Corporate Services

Division	Service area	Equality relevance (on scale of 1 to 3)
Human Resources	Learning and development	3
Human Resources	Personnel Management	3
Human Resources	Payroll	2
Legal and Democratic Services	Elections & Electoral Registration	2
Legal and Democratic Services	Provision of legal advice and support	1
Legal and Democratic Services	Committee support including scrutiny	1
Legal and Democratic Services	Member support and development	3
Legal and Democratic Services	Civic and mayoral function	1
Financial and Asset Management	Financial accounting	1
Front Line services	Reception Services	3
Front Line services	Procurement	3
Front Line services	Revenues and Benefits	2
Front Line services	Service development	2
Front Line services	Concessionary Transport	2
ICT Services	IT Infrastructure, support and training and business development	1

Social and Community

Division	Service area	Equality relevance (on scale of 1 to 3)
Community Services	Community Development	3
Community Services	SLAs with voluntary sector	2
Community Services	Supporting people	3
Community Services	Housing options / choice based lettings	3
Community Services	CBH client	2
Community Services	Housing Renewal and Housing Standards	2
Community Services	Community Safety and Licensing	2
Community Services	Environmental health	2

Community Services	Health and Safety	1
Entertainments & Tourism	Tourist Information Centre, Promotion / Development	2
Entertainments & Tourism	Entertainments programme	2
Entertainments & Tourism	Town Hall / Pittville Pump Room	2
Health and Well-being	Art Gallery and Museum	2
Health and Well-being	Arts development	2
Health and Well-being	Lifelong Learning	2
Health and Well-being	Leisure@cheltenham	2
Health and Well-being	Sports development	2
Health and Well-being	Healthy communities	2
Health and Well-being	Children and young people	2

Environment

Division	Service area	Equality relevance (on scale of 1 to 3)
Built Environment	Development control and Building Control	2
Built Environment	Urban Design Strategy	2
Built Environment	Conservation	1
Built Environment	Planning enforcement	2
Built Environment	Housing Enabling	2
Built Environment	Home Energy Conservation	2
Built Environment	Property Management	3
Environmental Maintenance	Refuse Collection, recycling	2
Environmental Maintenance	Street Care, Abandoned cars, Public toilets	2
Environmental Maintenance	Civic site	2
Environmental Maintenance	Fleet services	1
Parking Services	Parking management	2
Parking Services	Shopmobility	2
Green Environment	Parks and Gardens	2
Green Environment	Management of sporting & recreational facilities	2
Green Environment	Allotments	2
Green Environment	Cemetery and Crematorium	2

Priority service areas for 2008-09

Policy & Performance	Community strategy and partnership work	3
Policy & Performance	Equalities	3
Policy & Performance	Consultation and community engagement	3
Policy & Performance	Communications	3
Policy & Performance	Customer Relations	3
Human Resources	Learning and development	3
Human Resources	Personnel Management	3
Front Line services	Reception Services	3
Community Services	Community Development	3
Community Services	Supporting people	3
Community Services	Housing options / choice based lettings	3
Built Environment	Property Management	3
Legal and Democratic Services	Member support and development	3
Front Line services	Procurement	3