

Cherwell District Council
Equalities Self Assessment
28/07/10
Version 1

Knowing Your Community

2:1 - Relevant and appropriate information is gathered efficiently using a range of techniques, across the local community, to inform the authorities: corporate policy and strategy, sustainable community strategy, local area agreements and to identify key equality gaps.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council collects and analyses good quality information and demographic data as part of our wider community mapping work. This includes a statistical profile of the districts 'Living in Cherwell', Equalities Mapping and access to equalities profiles compiled by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory.

In addition to statistical profiles the Council has robust data sharing policies and work with partners such as the police, to share community information. This includes community profiles and tension monitoring and also the results of community consultations.

The council undertakes effective community consultation using both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand local priorities.

This information has assisted us when setting key future objectives within our corporate plan and strategies.

Activities:

- Living in Cherwell – demographic profile updated annually
- Member of the Oxfordshire data observatory strategic board – equalities profiles are developed that cover the whole county and different equalities groups
- Corporate consultation programme – a mix of quantitative and qualitative community consultation to measure satisfaction and set budget and service priorities

2:2 - Information and data are disaggregated and analysed corporately and at service/unit level to monitor and assess and set equality objectives. (Links to 2.4, 2.17 and 2.25).

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council has a robust corporate consultation programme that underpins service and financial planning. The results are analysed by population groups to ensure an understanding of the Cherwell community is developed. This includes sub-groups such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic location and urban/rural splits.

All service managers are able to request bespoke analysis of corporate information to support service planning, this includes cross tabulations with different population or geographic groups.

As part of the service planning process every September a series of managers workshops are held to provide an overview of community issues and priorities. This draws on the full range of information available.

Activities:

- Bespoke analysis of the corporate consultation programme available for all Cherwell managers
- Housing – Older Person’s Strategy
- Customer Service Mystery Shopping yearly schedule.
- Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- Annual service planning workshops

2: 3 - Relevant and appropriate information and data (including data relating to the National Indicator Set) is mapped, disaggregated and used with partners, to assess and set equality objectives.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council works alongside its partners to inform and discuss appropriate data which has been collected and analysed. These discussions form part of the Local Strategic Partnership meetings.

Activities:

- Through the process of determining countywide priorities Cherwell District Council along side the Oxfordshire Partnership have been charged with committing to the Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation and Addressing Health Inequalities in Banbury
- Future objectives will include Cherwell District Council Equality Officer and Thames Valley Police CADO (Community and Diversity Officer) joint workings on projects which will help us indentify current data on who lives in Cherwell.
- Regular JATAC meetings occur whereby tension monitoring is discussed with all partners whereby an escalation process would commence if our area level was to increase.

Knowing Your Community

Areas for Improvement:

Areas For Improvement

- The Council does not routinely collect data about sexual orientation. Staff awareness events have been held to promote an understanding of the LGBT community but currently sexual orientation is not collected as part of surveys (NB sexual orientation is monitored as part of the HR and Recruitment procedures).
- Building Control (application of Building Regulations to the built environment) are in the process of introducing ethnicity monitoring within their customer satisfaction surveys to ensure all groups within the community are aware of their legal/statutory responsibilities and helping individuals to achieve those obligations should trends identify a need.

Knowing Your Community

Key Sources of Evidence:

Place Survey	The Place Survey is a statutory exercise which Cherwell District Council completes every two years. This survey captures the local community's views, experiences and perceptions. It is analysed by population sub group and the results are used to inform service and improvement planning.
Living In Cherwell	The Living in Cherwell district profile provides a comprehensive source of data in relation to the Cherwell community. The profile is based on well researched facts, figures and is updated annually. Along with the corporate consultation programme the profile forms the evidence base for the corporate plan and improvement strategy.
TVP – Community Profiles	Thames Valley Police Community and Diversity Officers create Community Profiles on a yearly basis which gives in-depth information into the different communities.
Data Observatory	The District Council is a funding partner of the Oxfordshire Data Observatory. The Observatory produces population profiles at both district and smaller geographic areas. This information is used to inform planning and decision making. The Data Observatory website has pages dedicated to equalities issues covering all equalities strands.
Experian Data	As part of the Oxfordshire Data Observatory partnership the Council has access to the Experian population data including the 'origins' data set. This information is used to help plan services. It provides information about the characteristics of different areas and helps identify preferred methods of communications and engagement. The origins data set helps inform the council about the breadth of different national and ethnic groups in the district.
SCS – Sustainable Community Strategy	The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out our long term strategic objectives for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Cherwell until 2030. The strategy was based on extensive consultation, including with harder to reach groups. As a result the strategy includes a focus on cohesion and equalities issues.
Cherwell District Council Corporate Plan and Corporate Consultation Programme	Equality objectives have been built with Cherwell's Corporate Plan, these have been developed using the corporate consultation programme which comprises of a detailed satisfaction survey (with booster samples for hard to reach groups) and qualitative budget consultation events (quotas are used to recruit participants ensuring a spread of representation from across the district.)
Corporate Equality Action Plan	Cherwell District Council can demonstrate our commitment to improving equalities within our district through the Corporate Equality Action Plan. This process allows us to investigate, highlight and commit to making improvements to the high level areas within our district whereby we feel

Knowing Your Community

Key Sources of Evidence:

	we can make a real difference
JATAC (meeting minutes)	Joint Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating Group – Partners complete district tension monitoring, analyse and discuss accordingly.
Brighter Futures In Banbury Evidence Paper	Oxfordshire Partnership run programme with the objective to ' Breaking the Cycle if Deprivation and Addressing Health Inequalities in Banbury
County wide Data Sharing Policy	

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2: 4 - Clear organisational and partnership equality priorities have been set and are owned and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector. (Links to 2.2)

Summary of Achievement

The Council has a robust strategy and policy framework. The Sustainable Community Strategy (Our District, Our Future) was launched in February 2010 and sets the long term vision for the district. The strategy was based on extensive consultation and has a clear evidence base drawing on social and demographic trends, long term policy direction and local priorities. Cherwell District Council led the development of the strategy and as part of the work the Local Strategic Partnership for Cherwell was fully reviewed and membership broadened to give the voluntary and business sectors greater representation on the partnership.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is underpinned by annual delivery plans (short term priorities set by the Local Strategic Partnership), the county wide Local Area Agreement and a suite of medium term strategies covering issues such as economic development, housing and homelessness, rural development etc.

Cherwell District Council also has a corporate plan which sets out the strategic priorities of the organisation. There is also an improvement strategy which is comprised of a number of projects aimed at priority areas for development or improvement.

Recognising the importance of equalities and diversity during 2009/2010 a new 3 year Corporate Equality Action Plan was created. This action plan brings together our long term equalities objectives for the district across all the equality strands. The plan encompasses issues around deprivation and building strong and cohesive communities, both key priorities included within the Corporate Improvement strategy for 2010/2011.

Activities:

- Cherwell District Council Sustainable Community Strategy includes deprivation, equalities and cohesion objectives.
- The Cherwell Local Strategic Partnership has established a steering group to oversee a multi-agency work programme to tackle deprivation in priority areas in Banbury.
- Council's Corporate Plan has equalities objectives and a cross cutting priority aimed at tackling deprivation (reflecting the strategic significance of the sustainable community strategy).
- 3 year Corporate Equalities Plan which sets out specific equalities objectives underpinned by a refreshed equalities scheme.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2:5 - Equality and cohesion priorities are monitored regularly by partners, the authority's political and senior managerial leadership, and appropriate resources are being allocated. (Links to 2.20)

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council monitors its Corporate Equality Action plan performance on a quarterly basis via the Equality Scorecard as part of the Councils overall quarterly performance report. This report is presented to the Executive Members by the portfolio holder with the responsibility for performance.

This information is reviewed quarterly and forms part of the annual executive performance report.

Activities:

- The Leader of the Council is the Equality and Diversity Portfolio holder.
- 2 years ago Cherwell District Council introduced the opportunity for all staff to have their say on various topics which would constructively help shape the future of the Council. Within this survey is a section on Equalities. The survey takes place every 2 years whereby constructive and realistic objectives are set and fulfilled.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2: 6 - Action is being taken to implement commitments within the equality schemes and monitored regularly by political and senior managerial leadership.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council' Equality Scheme is reviewed yearly. This process is led by the Equalities and Diversity Officer and supported by the internal Equality Steering Group. The Equality Scheme is published on our internet site and the Equality and Access Panel is the primary means by which external consultation takes place in relation to the scheme. These reviews also form part on the yearly Executive reports.

In addition the Equality and Access Panel receives feedback reports in relation to changes to our services which demonstrate our commitment to keep the local community informed. This group is attended by internal and external Partners senior management.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2:7 - Appropriate resources have been allocated and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and improve equality outcomes where shortfalls have been identified. (Links to 2.18)

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council have introduced a 3 year Equality Impact Assessment rolling programme of policies and strategies which have been identified on needing an assessment. This document has been published to all senior members of staff and on Cherwell District Council's website. This document is reviewed quarterly by the Equality Steering Group to ensure new policies are included etc.

All Equality Impact Assessment's are then consulted on with the public via the Equality and Access Consultation Panel.

Actions:

- Job Club – Race & Disability

At present there is no protocol for any translation i.e. anyone coming to Job Club requiring sign language or a translator would not be able to access the job clubs services that day. No protocol in place for the Job Club Co-ordinator to follow.

Corporate Translation Document has been produced outlining procedures and in addition Cherwell District Council website now has an instant 'Translate' facility. Customer Service staff now attend Job Club and would access Language line for translation services. .

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2:8 - Political overview and scrutiny processes review equality impacts and objectives

Summary of Achievement

All of Cherwell District Council's Executive papers require an impact assessment across a range of criteria including finance, risk, legal and equalities. In addition the Executive papers include a section whereby the consultation undertaken as part of the policy development or the required decision is outlined.

Cherwell District Council Leader of the council and Executive members are portfolio holders for the Equalities and Cohesion agenda. This gives direct oversight to our equality and cohesion work programmes.

The annual Equality Executive paper provides the Executive Members with a detailed review of the performance of work programme and has direct input into future work programmes.

Action

- Executive Members requested for Cherwell District Council to be accredited under the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- There is a dedicated Member cohesion champion who focuses on cohesion and equalities work. The champion is briefed monthly by the lead officer and he also chairs the community cohesion group (a group made up of representatives of the local community).
- The Performance Scrutiny Working group meets on a quarterly basis to scrutinise performance. Equalities issues are included within these reports and in addition the group has looked equalities performance.
e.g. legal and equalities paragraphs in 'Implications' section in a report on Planning for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people presented to Executive on 3 August 2009

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2:9 - The authority communicates effectively about its equality and cohesion priorities, how it is responding to its communities' needs and promoting good relations

Summary of Achievement

The Council has a dedicated web page for its equalities work and also communities with key stakeholders in a number of ways. These include the quarterly performance reports, consultation and community engagement events, targeted reports and articles in the resident's newsletter.

The Corporate Strategy and Performance Team work with key stakeholders across all sectors to publicise the work of the Council and a network of community engagement groups and forums has been established to ensure a wide as possible consultation and communication takes place.

Our Corporate Equalities Plan includes objectives and action to improve consultation and communication with members of the local community. Our Equality and Access panel helps us refine all our policies and strategies to meet the needs of the local community which enables us to build strong relations across the community.

The Council announces all public meetings on its website and all consultation opportunities are publicised on the council's consultation portal.

Activities:

- Disability Forum
- Voluntary Sector Forum
- Banbury Community Cohesion Group
- Cherwell Faith Forum
- Internal 'Knowing your Community' awareness events which help build levels of understanding about the diversity of Cherwell within the Council and partner agencies.
- Recognising that the rural communities may not have access to the internet, or the PC's we have provided Link point kiosks into those communities at a point where the communities go. These allow uses to access any non-restricted websites

- Current Kiosk locations are:

Deddington Library, Deddington
Hook Norton
Cropredy Stores, Cropredy
Heyford Wharf
Ambrosden

Further programmes of rural PC installations are planned for community halls. Each Link point office has self service PC's that any visitor can use.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2:10 - The authority ensures that contractors, commissioned services and grant receivers regularly review their services and access to them to ensure they continue to be appropriate and accessible. (Links to 2.19)

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council take into account within its tender evaluation and contracting processes a potential contractor's approach to equalities in terms of its employment practices and service delivery, which are monitored and managed during the life of each contract. This is outlined in the Council's procurement strategy and documentation.

The Council check a contractor's compliance with equality and diversity issues in two ways:

- Prior to Contract Award - by asking equalities questions either prior to or during the tender process. If following evaluation the response does not satisfy the Council's criteria, the firm may not be short listed or awarded a contract.
- After Contract Award - by including contract conditions on equality in all Council contracts and by monitoring a contractor's performance and compliance with those conditions.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2: 11 - Work is being undertaken to promote equality of opportunity in terms of the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life, including as elected representatives.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council work with local schools, colleges and sixth forms to engage with the districts younger generation. We have done this by working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to create an Oxfordshire Youth Parliament.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

2: 12 - The quality of community relations and harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified

Summary of Achievement

The Cherwell District is a low risk area and has good working community relationships. Cherwell District Council receive tension monitoring reports for the district from the Thames Valley Police Community & Diversity Officer.

Regular JATAC (Joint Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating) meetings occur whereby tension monitoring is monitored and an escalation process is in place if our area level was to increase.

The Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership has refreshed its local Information Sharing Protocol that has been developed so the Community Safety Partnerships can use its Information Sharing Procedures for the purposes of confidential data exchange.

Cherwell District Council are Partners on new initiatives and steering groups such as MANTA Oxfordshire, Challenging Hate Crime programme and HALT (Homophobic Awareness Liaison Team). Both of these Steering groups produce reported figures of hate crimes within our district on a quarterly basis.

Action

- The Cherwell district as the highest reported hate crime figures next to Oxford City within the Oxfordshire area. As a result of this Cherwell will be the launch site for the new Mantra Hate Crime Reporting programme whereby Cherwell District Council will act as a third party reporting centre which will facilitate hate crime reporting from an incident and witness perspective. Cherwell District Council will work closely via an escalation process with its partners to report, facilitate and take appropriate action to enable to district to tackle and reduce hate crime incidents.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

Areas for Improvement:

Areas For Improvement

- There is an opportunity to widen the consultation as part of the annual review of the Equalities scheme.
- There is an opportunity for further Member engagement in the Equality Impact Assessment Process where issues can be escalated via the Equality Steering Group.
- Local promotion within the community for becoming an elected Executive Member for Cherwell District Council
- To obtain accurate hate crime figures via the success of the Mantra programme to ensure we have a clear understanding of what actions need to be taken in the future to reduce hate crime for the district.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

Key Source of Evidence

Corporate Equality Action Plan	Cherwell District Council can demonstrate our commitment to improving equalities within our district through the Corporate Equality Action Plan. This process allows us to investigate, highlight and commit to making improvements to the high level areas within our district whereby we feel we can make a real difference
Corporate Improvement Plan	
Equality Impact Assessment Programme	This is a three year rolling Equality Impact assessment programme which outlines timescales as to when which policies or strategies need to be reviewed
Equality Impact Assessments	Evidence of all completed Equality Impact Assessments throughout Cherwell District Council.
Equality Scorecard	The Equality Scorecard has been build into Cherwell District Council's performance management system allowing us to review or work programme progression which forms part of the overall Performance Management Framework.
Equality Executive Reports	Annual Equality Performance Report which gets reviewed by Executive members for future work programmes to be agreed.
Cherwell District Council Service Plans	Departmental Service Plans created by staff and managers to plan objectives on a yearly basis
LSP – Local Strategic Partnership Management	
Portfolio Holder – Leader of the Council	
Equality Scheme	Cherwell District Council has a Single Equality Scheme comprising the Corporate Action Plan and Equality Impact Assessment Plan. This document sets our standards and aspirations in relation to our future work programme.

Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisation Commitment

Key Source of Evidence

Equality and Access Panel	Consultation Panel whereby all our Impact Assessments and Service Changes are reviewed by the public. Suggestions are researched and feedback reported via minutes.
Equality Good Practice Register	Available on Cherwell District Council website
Cherwell Link	Cherwell Link has included various equality articles
Banbury Community Cohesion Group	Voluntary group of Community Associations funded through the Community Cohesion government grant.
Corporate Procurement & Action Plan 2010/2011	
Oxfordshire Youth Parliament	
IAG	
MANTRA	Mantra Strategic Action Plan. Meeting minutes and agendas
HALT	HALT Strategic Action Plan. Partners Agreement, Meeting minutes and agendas.
Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership	

Community Engagement and Satisfaction

2:13 - Community engagement structures are working efficiently and effectively

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council is a lead member of the Cherwell the Local Strategic Partnership. The newly developed sustainable community strategy for the district sets out a clear ambition for the partners taking a lead role in community leadership. The ambition 'resourceful and receptive community leadership' sets out an ambitious programme for community engagement.

As such the LSP has set out a clear structure and process for community engagement and Cherwell District Council has played a lead role in hosting and delivering several community engagement events.

In addition to partnership working Cherwell District Council has a strong and effective Community Consultation and Engagement Strategy which includes our equalities work programme for improved consultation with members of the local community. Regular consultations take place and feedback is monitored.

Cherwell District Council (in conjunction with the Access Officer) not only ensures the accessibility of its consultation events but also safe egress (means of escape in case of fire). For those whose require assistance it also makes special arrangements from travel arrangements to translators and signers, specialist catering and community reimbursement where appropriate.

Activities

- An annual LSP reference group – a conference style event open to all community stakeholders to help shape the priorities of the local strategic partnership
- A family of community engagement forums that are supported by Cherwell District Council and its LSP partners. The aim of these is to provide clear and accessible community engagement opportunities. An LSP board member attends each event, they include: the faith forum, the disability forum, voluntary sector and countryside forums, the Parish Liaison events, seniors forum.
- In addition the Council holds a series of consultation activities including an annual budget consultation – where local residents are actively recruited and those who have previously participated are invited to return.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The consultation portal provides a one stop shop for all council consultation and engagement events from public workshops to surveys.• The Access Officer for Cherwell District Council sits on both the 'Cherwell Disability Forum Steering Group' and 'The Equality & Diversity Steering Group.'
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Community Engagement and Satisfaction

2.15 - Involvement and consultation influences and informs equality priorities and feedback is given to those consulted.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council involves established local community bodies which are well aligned to all stake holders.

All feedback from consultation are communicated and used to set policy priorities throughout Cherwell District Council.

Activities:

- Members of several services contribute to and consult with the Banbury Asian forum
- Cherwell District Council 's Housing services have developed a protocol for working directly with residents of all Regional Social Landlords in the district, allowing them direct influence on priorities. The group will also develop and monitor the housing services equality plan and area housing plan.

Community Engagement and Satisfaction

2. 16 - Partners work together to balance diverse, but sometimes conflicting interests, in the locality

Summary of Achievement

Within the Local Strategic Partnership Partners work together to develop the new Sustainable Community Strategy this prioritises the aspirations for Cherwell until 2030. This required the gathering of evidence and residents views and reconciliation of conflicting views to determine collective priorities.

The Community Cohesion working group have a shared funding allocation from Cherwell District Council. The group use this funding to promote knowledge and understanding about their own cultural communities.

Cherwell District Council hosts the JATAC on a regular basis. This partnership meeting combines expertise in all different fields from different organisations which helps to build a whole picture of the community in relation to community tension monitoring.

Activities:

- Work in relation to the Horton Hospital demonstrates the conflicts between cost, public demand and deliverability.
- The Brighter Futures in Banbury project works to tackle deprivation in specific wards in Banbury using a number of diverse approaches and projects.

Community Engagement and Satisfaction

Areas for Improvement:

Areas For Improvement

- Feedback any complaints made on the grounds of discrimination.
- Housing services are reviewing grants given to community groups to improve distribution of funding to groups.

Community Engagement & Satisfaction

Key Source of Evidence

Corporate Equality Action Plan	Cherwell District Council can demonstrate our commitment to improving equalities within our district through the Corporate Equality Action Plan. This process allows us to investigate, highlight and commit to making improvements to the high level areas within our district whereby we feel we can make a real difference
Corporate Improvement Plan	
Equality Impact Assessment Programme	This is a three year rolling Equality Impact assessment programme which outlines timescales as to when which policies or strategies need to be reviewed
Equality Impact Assessments	Evidence of all completed Equality Impact Assessments throughout Cherwell District Council.
Equality Scorecard	The Equality Scorecard has been build into Cherwell District Council's performance management system allowing us to review or work programme progression which forms part of the overall Performance Management Framework.
Equality Executive Reports	Annual Equality Performance Report which gets reviewed by Executive members for future work programmes to be agreed.
Cherwell District Council Service Plans	Departmental Service Plans created by staff and managers to plan objectives on a yearly basis
Banbury Community Cohesion Group	Voluntary group of Community Associations funded through the Community Cohesion government grant.
Fair & Aware 'Moving Forward' Corporate Training.	Module 5 is based in 1-1 Equality Impact Assessment training to ensure a complete gap analysis is completed.

Community Engagement & Satisfaction

Key Source of Evidence

Corporate Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2010/2011	Including Equality Impact Assessment for strategy.
CMT (Corporate Management Team)	PMF Minutes of meetings.
Equality Good Practice Register	Available via Cherwell District Council's Equality Officer and intranet site.
Corporate Translation Policy	Available via Cherwell District Council's Equality Officer and intranet/Internet sites.
Executive Reports	Available from Democratic Services.

Responsive Service and Customer Care

2.17 - A set of equality outcomes/objectives/goals have been produced at service/unit level to meet the needs of identified equality target groups, and those who are most vulnerable. (links to 2.2 and 2.4)

Summary of Achievement

During 2009/2010 a new 3 year Corporate Equality Action Plan was created. This action plan brings together our long term equalities objectives for the district across all the equality strands. The plan encompasses issues around deprivation and building strong and cohesive communities, both key priorities included within the Corporate Improvement Plan for 2010/2011.

These strategic objectives are then filtered through down into our specific service yearly operational service plans.

Activities:

- Job Centre Plus operating a sign on facility from Bicester Link point 5 days a week.
- Outreach work in Customer Services so far:
 - Frank Cook Court – Elderly
 - Hook Norton Day Centre – Elderly & Carers
 - BHYP – under 25 mainly 17-19
 - Bicester & Banbury Job Clubs – working age
 - Bicester Food Bank, soon to be Kidlington as well – All
 - Kaboodle Mens club – men only
 - Widows Club – all
 - Bretch Hill estate Day – Brighter Future
 - Neets Week – under 25s
 - Banbury Show – all
 - Parish Liaison – councillors
 - Kidlington Parish Council
 - OCVC open day – students
- Home alone – those that live on their own that meet
 - Oxeye – partially sighted
 - Salvation Army
 - Travellers site at Mollington
 - Taking the health bus out.
- Cherwell District Council's Housing services also do outreach work:-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home visits to applicants who can't otherwise access housing services• We're providing preventative help (e.g. training courses) to Asian landlords who are struggling to meet their legal obligations - as we found higher numbers of Asian landlords were having legal action taken against them.• Housing services have explored effective ways to reach rural residents and other isolated people e.g. health bus – to give advice on homelessness prevention / access to social housing / grants and assistance• Housing strategy team have opted in to use of the Oxfordshire supported housing need toolkit which will enable us to better predict the need for supported housing in the district and work with Planning to enable more effective delivery of housing for disabled and vulnerable people• Visiting older people's groups to promote the Home Improvement Agency• Attending Polish community group to promote services to enforce standards in private rented properties• Housing needs team visit groups for people with mental health problems and other support needs to discuss how to access suitable housing• Role of the Access Officer regarding disabled/ inclusive access to council buildings. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) placed a duty on employers and service providers to ensure reasonable access to services and employment including the need to make 'reasonable adjustments' to physical features of premises to overcome barriers to access. The Audit Commission introduced BVPI 156 which required Councils to report the accessibility of their buildings through the compilation of access audits as defined by the now outdated approved document Part M (1991) to the Building Regulations. Although BVPI 156 has been withdrawn/deleted by CLG. Cherwell District Council have decided to continue with BVPI 156 as a local indicator within the Access Officer continuing bi-annual access audits of council premises (measured against the current approved document Part M (2004) to the Building Regulations). The findings of the audit being
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	<p>reported to the Directorate Team in order for managers to consider any indentified barriers to their service, including identification of reasonable adjustments. This is considered by the most effective way to continue measuring the accessibility and inclusiveness of all the council premises in the absence of a National Indicator. The Access Audits are held by the Access Officer.</p>
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Responsive Services and Customer Care

2. 18 - Appropriate resources have been allocated and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and improve equality outcomes where shortfalls have been indentified. (links to 2.6)

Summary of Achievement

The process for all EIA objectives are fed into the Service Heads Service plans and are monitored, updated and reported on regularly.

An Equality Scorecard is also created on a quarterly basis which reports on the Equalities overall performance.

Activities:

- Cherwell District Council's Housing services has developed an equality action plan from the Equality Impact Assessment objectives. Community groups were consulted on its development, it is published on the website and will be monitored by the social housing residents' group

Responsive Services and Customer Care

2. 19 - Mechanisms are in place to ensure that service equality objectives are delivered by contractors and providers through contract management, and those they are monitored properly. (links to 2.10)

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council will take into account within its tender evaluation and contracting processes, a potential contractor's approach to equalities in terms of its employment practices and service delivery, which will also be monitored and managed during the life of each contract.

Activities:

The 'Sustainable Community Strategy' Consultancy Services contract included equality objective's such as being able to reach 'hard to reach groups' For each invitation to quote processed via the Corporate Procurement team there is a pass/fail equal opportunities section where the potential contractor needs to list evidence of putting equal opportunities & diversity into practice. The interested party also needs to confirm that they actively sign up to the whole raft of equalities legislation.

For every tender if it is a restricted process the same will apply as with the invitation to quote process above. For every open tender the process will be as above.

As well as this, where relevant the tender evaluation - as opposed to the pre-qualification listed above - will involve evidence of equal opportunities in action - such as the Pay Progression Consultancy invitation to quote under way at present.

Once a contract is awarded contractors should be asked to provide updated equal opportunity policies at the annual review meeting if the contract is due to run for two or more years.

Service areas are also being encouraged to provide ongoing evidence of equal opportunities in practice and that their workforce reflects the community in which they work.

For the public toilet cleaning contract, let in partnership with three other local authorities, at least one company expressing

an interest via the pre-qualification questionnaire was failed on their response to the equal opportunity questionnaire - this company was a national company that failed to provide evidence of how they put their policy into practice.

The fire & intruder alarm maintenance tender has also failed one company on their response to the equal opportunities questionnaire - this was in spite of all companies being invited to a Selling to the Council workshop which explained the reasoning behind the pre-qualification and tender process. The company who was failed declined to attend the half an hour workshop and has received feedback as to why they failed.

Housing services development protocol makes equality requirements of affordable housing providers when providing new affordable housing, including having a clear understanding of their potential residents including breakdown by age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender and faith

- Proposals for new housing should be assessed for impact on equality considerations
- Require contractors to demonstrate commitment to equality through the tendering process, and monitor their performance
- Provide housing for all groups where a need is identified including provision for wheelchair standard housing and supported housing for various client groups

The management protocol also makes equality requirements, including reference to the Audit Commission standards

Responsive Services and Customer Care

2.20 - Equality and cohesion objectives are monitored regularly by portfolio holders and departmental management teams (DMTs). (Links to 2.7,2.22,and 2.23)

Summary of Achievement

All service plans are monitored using Cherwell District Council's Performance Management Framework and the Corporate Management Team.

All Portfolio holders meet regularly with their Heads of Service whereby performance is discussed.

Cherwell District Council have a Strategic Risk Register which is reviewed regularly.

Responsive Services and Customer Care

2. 21 - The identified needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups are addressed and services are designed to ensure that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect.

Summary of Achievement

Throughout all our services to the local community we ensure that we are able to design and adapt our services to ensure that our customers are treated with dignity and respect.

Activities:

- **Disabled Facility Grant** - The number of DFGs completed has gone up from 105 (2007/8) to 140 (2008/9). The number of Home Improvement Agency cases has increased from 250 (2007/08) to 694 (2008/09). The DFG budget for 2009/10 was increased to £950,000 - £375,000 from GOSE plus £575,000 from the Council, resourcing our priorities.
- **Tackling Domestic Violence** - A new scheme in 2009/10 assisting up to 30 families per year, independent domestic violence advisor service to support high risk cases, extended PACT outreach service (jointly commissioned with an RSL partner) (approx 40 families per year) which includes development of the freedom programme which this year has sought to reach hard to reach groups including people with mental health problems, Muslim women in Banbury
- **Housing Services for Older people**
One of the first district councils to produce a housing strategy specifically for older people, addressing the issues raised by an ageing population. Older people were involved from the start of the project and continue to take responsibility for monitoring the outcomes
- **Miller Road** self build project addresses the needs of young people who are NEET in a practical and responsive way (young people had identified the construction industry as a popular area in which to gain work skills

Responsive Services and Customer Care

2. 22 - Human rights issues are considered and addressed when delivering services to customers and clients. (links to 2.7 and 2.20)

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council is an accessible district council which is aware of its community make up and ensures that all its resources and services are accessed and available in a fair way.

Actions

- **Corporate Translation Policy Procedure**
- **Car parks - improving access for people with disabilities** Blue badge holders are able to park in any council space for free. In response to feedback from the Equalities Panel we renewed all information boards in council car parks to ensure disabled users are aware of this benefit.
- **Face to Face Mystery Shopping** - Face to face mystery shopping at our LinkPoint offices and the "shoppers" included people with hidden disabilities.
- **Re-Development of Customer Services** - Complete re-development of our three former cash offices into one stop shops has allowed us to put in place: All service access on ground floor, no step, Wheelchair access, Seated waiting areas, Hearing loop at all service points, Signage alerting customers to our zero tolerance of abuse, Language Line is available and used for face to face visitors and telephone callers, Leaflets are available in large print, Braille, audio tape and alternative languages. We identified that a lot of the callers at our town centre offices were Polish nationals. As a result of this we arranged for several posters and leaflets to be printed and displayed in Polish
- **Customer Service Officer – Specialist** – Customer Service Officers who are non office based with the role of visiting the public at local level to ensure everyone within the district has access to our services.

Responsive Services and Customer Care

2. 23 – Access to and appropriateness of services is monitored regularly by portfolio holders and DMT's. (Links to 2.7 and 2.20)

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council has a robust performance management framework which includes a suite of performance measures monitored on a monthly basis. In the corporate score card there is a focus on customer measures and the corporate plan has several equalities targets. There is also a corporate improvement plan and the corporate equalities plan which further embed equalities into the performance management framework.

In addition to these processes all portfolio holders meet regularly with their Heads of Service whereby discussions take place surrounding the performance of services. These discussions include issues around the quality of access and information about the service and ways to improve the service in line with community expectations.

There is also a Member challenge process as part of service planning where councillors are able to consider each service plan to ensure that actions planned are appropriate, relevant and cost effective. The service plans include equalities actions.

Each Executive report which is written within the council has equality risk assessments which are signed prior to the paper going through Executive.

Activities:

- Housing services have developed monthly performance monitoring which includes adding value to partnership working with vulnerable communities. This will feed upwards to DMT and the portfolio holder

Responsive Services and Customer Care

Areas for Improvement:

Areas For Improvement

- Contract monitoring and management is a key focus for the Council's 2010/11 Corporate Procurement Strategy and the emphasis on ensuring best practice forms part of this - with equal opportunities - being part of the overall drive for improved contract management
- Housing services is developing its own equality scorecard
- Strategic housing team is piloting parish profiles to gain deeper understanding of housing need in rural areas, leading to better prioritisation of work to support communities in achieving affordable housing

Responsive Services and Customer Care

Key Source of Evidence

Corporate Equality Action Plan	Cherwell District Council can demonstrate our commitment to improving equalities within our district through the Corporate Equality Action Plan. This process allows us to investigate, highlight and commit to making improvements to the high level areas within our district whereby we feel we can make a real difference
Corporate Improvement Plan	
Equality Impact Assessment Programme	This is a three year rolling Equality Impact assessment programme which outlines timescales as to when which policies or strategies need to be reviewed
Equality Impact Assessments	Evidence of all completed Equality Impact Assessments throughout Cherwell District Council.
Equality Scorecard	The Equality Scorecard has been build into Cherwell District Council's performance management system allowing us to review or work programme progression which forms part of the overall Performance Management Framework.
Equality Executive Reports	Annual Equality Performance Report which gets reviewed by Executive members for future work programmes to be agreed.
Cherwell District Council Service Plans	Departmental Service Plans created by staff and managers to plan objectives on a yearly basis
Banbury Community Cohesion Group	Voluntary group of Community Associations funded through the Community Cohesion government grant.

Responsive Services and Customer Care

Key Source of Evidence

Fair & Aware 'Moving Forward' Corporate Training.	Module 5 is based in 1-1 Equality Impact Assessment training to ensure a complete gap analysis is completed.
Corporate Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2010/2011	Including Equality Impact Assessment for strategy.
CMT (Corporate Management Team)	PMF Minutes of meetings.
Equality Good Practice Register	Available via Cherwell District Council's Equality Officer and intranet site.
Corporate Translation Policy	Available via Cherwell District Council's Equality Officer and intranet/Internet sites.
Executive Reports	Available from Democratic Services.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2.24 - The equality aspects of the workforce strategy are implemented and monitored.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council have a robust Human Resources processes which are regularly reviewed and Equality Impact Assessed to ensure compliance.

Our Workforce Strategy encompasses our various policies which include:

- Part Time Working
- Flexi Time
- Redundancy and Redeployment
- Future Workforce Planning

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2.25- Employment objectives have been set based on internal monitoring, staff consultation and the assessment of the local labour market and barriers. (Links to 2.2)

Summary of Achievement

Employment objectives have been set within the People and Development Workforce Strategy. Monitoring of staff figures are completed quarterly which informs employment equality objectives and have been linked into the Corporate Equality Action Plan and the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Cherwell District Council opens itself to a range of techniques for attracting the local community to its workforce and also ensuring there is balance as to when it comes to looking after its existing staff.

These consist of strategies and schemes such as:

- **Apprenticeship Scheme** – This government funded scheme allows young adults from deprived areas of the Community to gain hands experience and training to assist them with their future careers.
- **Recruitment & Employment** - Cherwell District Council have developed a number of new posts to encourage graduates and individuals without a professional qualification to move into professional roles. Career graded posts exist across the council. These roles have stepped progression with clear criteria for development including attainment of professional qualifications and experiential development. There has been a focus on encouraging an increase in numbers of employees in the 16-29 age groups and this has been successful
- **Improved Work Experience Schemes** - Cherwell District Council worked with Cherwell Valley College to provide a work placement for a young adult with downs syndrome. The placement was strongly supported with considerable one to one supervision whilst providing experiential development within 3 departments over 22 weeks

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2.26 - The authority regularly monitors, analyses and publishes employment data to fulfil its statutory duties.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council monitors and analyses its employment data on regular basis using various methods from the recruitment stage through to full employment.

This is captured and analysed using our in house performance management system and reported up using the Quarterly Performance Framework Report and the Equality Scorecard.

Activities

- A review of the HR policies, practices and procedures is being undertaken to enhance the internal monitoring of equalities.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2. 27 - All employment procedures have been impact assessed and action has been taken to mitigate adverse impact and promote equality outcomes.

Summary of Achievement

All HR policies and procedures have been through the Equality Impact Assessment and actions leading from this have been built into the Corporate Equality Action Plan, the employment data monitoring and the Service Heads yearly service plans.

Activities

- A Training programme has been running for 18 months based on best practice in selection interviewing. Attendance has been mandatory for any member of staff sitting on an interview panel. A comprehensive staff list is maintained by HR to ensure panel members have been trained

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2. 28 - The authority has made significant progress on its equal pay review and is working towards reaching agreement with unions.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council has completed a pay and grading review consisting of a job evaluation exercise, followed by a review of the current pay structures, with the implementation date of 1 April 2010 which was met. This supports the Single Status Agreement 1997 and the National Agreement 2004, which encouraged local authorities to undertake such reviews.

The Equal Pay Act and the Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations, also make it especially important to maintain a fair and equitable pay and grading structure. Job evaluation aims to provide a systematic and consistent approach to defining the relative worth of posts within an organization, and is a process whereby jobs are placed in a rank order according to overall demands placed upon the post holder, making it a fair and equitable process.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2. 29 - It delivers a range of learning and development opportunities to support councillors and officers to deliver equality outcomes.

Summary of Achievement

An extensive amount of work and resource has been put into this area over the last 12 months resulting in a new in house corporate training programme for all staff to increase our knowledge with the objective of improving the communities' level of service when accessing our services. The modular approach allows for Cherwell District Council's diverse workforce and how Equality and Diversity may impact upon their daily roles. The five modules within the course are:

- **Equality & Diversity 'The Challenge'** - To outline the primary legislation governing service provision and employee behaviour and to raise the profile of CDC Equality policy and procedure
- **The Work Environment: Is it a Fair Place for Everyone** - To provide employees with the ability to understand their work environment & culture and reflect on how attitudes and behaviours can effect others
- **Equality & the Community** - To provide the student with a clear awareness of the cultural diversity of the population. The dangers of assigning certain attributes to groups and to identify potential ways to manage service provision to a diverse community
- **Managing Equality & Diversity** - To provide managers with the knowledge to critically review their work environment to ensure it is fair and supportive allowing people to perform to their best level and to identify potential areas of organisation risk
- **Completing Equality Impact Assessments** - To provide students with the knowledge and awareness of how to effectively complete Equality Impact Assessment

Member Training is completed on a regular basis.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2.30 Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council has a clear policy and process to manage any incidents which at present no formal complaints have been made.

Activities:

- A question is also included within the anonymous Staff Survey 2008/2010 relating to harassment and bullying within the workplace.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2. 31 - Equality implications inform the setting of objectives in management and individual appraisals.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council has a holistic approach to performance appraisals that includes a direct assessment of the individual's commitment and performance in relation to equalities along side other competencies such as team working and customer focus. Managers are able to set equalities performance objectives for staff where required. There is a corporate equalities training programme that can support staff where development is required.

The Council's policy requires all staff to have a full annual appraisal and a six monthly review. Completed appraisals are collected by the Learning & Development Manager for reviews to quality assure the process. The Learning and Development manager is also a member of the corporate Equalities Steering Group which ensures equalities issues are reflected in all staff development activities.

Activities:

- Annual staff appraisal
- Six monthly review
- Quality Assurance of appraisal process
- Training offered to managers to ensure effective appraisals are undertaken.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

2. 32 - Staff are engaged positively in service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working.

Summary of Achievement

Cherwell District Council's People and Improvement Department use a range of techniques to ensure that the staffs is involved in service transformation and developing new ways of working.

In addition the Council's service and financial planning process requires service heads to undertake staff engagement as part of the development of annual service plans.

Actions

- **Staff consultation group** - Involved in new and amended policy development i.e. Job Evaluation process.
- **Cascade** – An internal fortnightly news and update presentation which is sent to all employees.
- **Service planning Team Days** – Standard procedure for Team members to be involved in developing the yearly service plans alongside their managers
- **Staff Liaison Officer** - This staff supportive role during times of change such as restructures and job evaluation.
- **Anonymous feedback form**
- **Various specific staff consultations** e.g. including travel, improving communications etc.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

Areas for Improvement:

Areas For Improvement

- Area of improvement would be to align our staff force to the Cherwell community
- 2010 figures will be published on Cherwell District Council website.

Modern and Diverse Workforce

Key Source of Evidence

HR Policies	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
HR Equality Impact Assessments	All available via the People and Development Team, Equality Officer, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Performance Management Framework - Employment Data Reports	All available via the People and Development Team,
Staff Survey Results 2008 and 2010	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Staff Survey Team and Corporate Action Plans 2008/2010	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Corporate Equality Action Plan	Cherwell District Council can demonstrate our commitment to improving equalities within our district through the Corporate Equality Action Plan. This process allows us to investigate, highlight and commit to making improvements to the high level areas within our district whereby we feel we can make a real difference
Corporate Improvement Plan	Equalities and cohesion have specific improvement projects for 2010/11. These are monitored through the performance management framework.
Job Evaluation Procedure and Policy	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Fair & Aware 'Moving Forward Training Schedule	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Learning and Development Training Schedule	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Member Training Schedule	All available via the Democratic and Scrutiny team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Appraisal Policy and Selection on completed Appraisals	All available via the People and Development team, Cherwell District Council Intranet site and website.
Service and Financial Planning Guidance	Sets out how staff should be involved in service planning