

# **REPORT TO COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## ***Committee Report***

**Public/Private\***

**Date of Meeting:** 11 October 2007

**Title:** Annual Equality Report

**Report of:** Head of Policy & Performance Services

**Report reference:** PPP77/07

### **Summary:**

The report presents the first Annual Equality Report to update the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress so far in delivering the Council's equality and diversity agenda.

### **Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:**

- What resources do the committee feel are required to successfully implement the Equality Action plan?
- Do members need further training in Equality (and especially disability) Awareness Training?

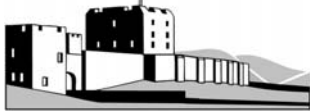
### **Recommendations:**

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Note the progress that has been made so far
- Note the priorities for action, as set out in paragraph 4 of the Annual Report, that will assist the Council to achieve its target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan
- Refer the Annual Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation and to Full Council for information.

**Contact Officer:** Carolyn Curr

**Ext:** 7017



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: PROMOTING CARLISLE / LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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**Date of Meeting:** 24 September 2007

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**Public**

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<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Recorded in Forward Plan:</b>
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### Inside Policy Framework

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**Title:** Annual Equality Report

**Report of:** Head of Policy & Performance Services

**Report reference:** PPP75/07

#### Summary:

The report presents the first Annual Equality Report to update the Executive Committee on progress so far in delivering the Council's equality and diversity agenda.

#### Recommendations:

The Executive is requested to:

- Note the progress that has been made so far
- Note the priorities for action, as set out in paragraph 4 of the Annual Report, that will assist the Council to achieve its target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan
- Refer the Annual Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation and to Full Council for information.

**Contact Officer:** Carolyn Curr

**Ext:** 7017

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

Carlisle City Council is committed to providing excellent public services to all those it serves. It recognises the increasing diversity of the area and is striving to ensure all groups within its local communities are able to access good quality services without discrimination, and to have opportunity to influence their design and delivery. The Council has made significant progress in developing its policies and processes in order to meet its obligations under equality and diversity legislation and to achieve this goal including:

- An Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Race Equality Scheme, currently under review
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Communications and Accessibility Policy and,
- Corporate Equality Action Plan which incorporates actions in support of the Race, Disability Gender Schemes

The Corporate Equality Action Plan incorporates actions in support of implementing all of the above and particularly the Race, Disability and Gender Schemes, and Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The plan is monitored by the Corporate Equality Group and by Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Annual Report outlines in some detail (paragraph 4) the Councils' priorities for action in order for us to continue to progress the equality and diversity agenda and to meet Level 2 of the Equality Standard including:

- Equality impact assessment of our policies and functions
- Service monitoring
- Service planning
- Community Cohesion

The policies and processes that we have put in place will begin to translate into improved equality and diversity outcomes for our local communities and our employees. The monitoring and reporting systems that we have developed will enable us to measure this difference that we are making, essential if we are to meet our diversity targets as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

### **2.1 Consultation to date:**

- Corporate Equality Group
- Senior Management Team and Service Heads

### **2.2 Consultation proposed:**

- Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Through a Cumbria wide service level agreement, quality impact assessments will be consulted on with AWAZ, a voluntary organisation representing ethnic minority groups in the County, and with the Cumbria Disability Network to ensure that those groups effected by our policies and functions have an input into any future developments. This will also increase the Council's capacity for consultation with "harder to reach" groups.

- The Council will also continue to support partnership working in this area, such as the Carlisle Diversity Partnership as described in the Annual Report, in order to enhance consultation and involvement of local communities.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive is requested to:

- Note the progress that has been made so far in delivering the equality and diversity agenda
- Note the priorities for action, as set out in paragraph 4, that will assist the Council to achieve its target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan
- Refer the Annual Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation and to Full Council for information.

### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To communicate the progress the Council has made so far in fulfilling its statutory duties in respect of equality and diversity legislation.

To highlight actions and the continued commitment required to further develop capacity in this area in order to progress to Level 2 and higher, of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

To ultimately ensure that the Council delivers excellent services, accessible to everyone within its local communities, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- **Staffing & resources:** The Council has a dedicated equality and diversity budget from 2007/08 to support the work outlined in the Annual Report and Corporate Equality Action Plan. The Corporate Equality Group, and training for employees on impact assessment, is helping to build capacity across the Council and to embed equality and diversity issues into Council business. Further resources may need to be identified as the Equality Action Plan is implemented.
- **Financial:** The Council has a dedicated equality and diversity budget from 2007/08. Further resources may need to be identified as the Equality Action Plan is implemented.
- **Legal:** The Council must meet its statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity legislation, namely the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006.
- **Corporate:** The Councils' policies, plans and schemes form part of its corporate policy framework and are fundamental to achieving the Council's target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan.
- **Risk Management:** The general duties are enforceable by judicial review. Any person or body affected by a failure to comply with the general duties by a public

authority may take action through judicial review proceeding. Failure to comply exposes the Council to financial and reputational risk.

- Equality and disability issues: The Councils' policies, plans and schemes, as outlined in the Annual Report, will enable the Council to fulfil its statutory equality and diversity duties. The purpose of all of this work is to ensure equality issues are considered and taken into account in everything that the Council does.
- Environmental: None
- Crime & disorder: This will be considered as part of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment programme.
- Impact on Customers: The ultimate aim of the Councils' policies, plans and schemes is to ensure that the Council delivers excellent services, accessible to everyone within its local communities, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Equality and Diversity Report, August 2007**

### **1. Introduction**

Carlisle City Council is committed to providing excellent public services to everyone living, working, studying and visiting the area.

The Council recognises the increasing diversity of the area and is committed to ensuring that all groups within its local communities are able to access Council services without discrimination and have opportunities to influence their design and delivery.

The Council has developed a number of policies, schemes and plans which outline how it will meet the general and specific duties which various equality legislation places on the Council. Our policies, schemes and plans assist the council to achieve equality outcomes for local people and to progress through the levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The report outlines the progress that the Council has made against its various equality policies, schemes and plans and will be published on our equality and diversity web page.

Further information and details of legislation are available on our equality and diversity web page. Please visit:

<http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/carlislecc/main.asp?page=1676>

### **2. Policies, plans and schemes**

These include:

- Race Equality Scheme – under review 2007
- Gender Equality Scheme and Improvement Plan – April 2007
- Equality Policy and Corporate Equality Action Plan – March 2007
- Disability Equality Scheme and Improvement Plan – Dec 2006
- Communications and Accessibility Policy, 2007

The three equality schemes were developed in consultation with members of our community, elected Members, employees and community groups e.g. Carlisle Access Group. Actions take time to make a difference. Meaningful measures of the impact on our local communities will be carried out over time. This consultation will be repeated during revision of the schemes and will help us to determine the impact we have made for local people. An audit of what we are doing currently was carried out for the development of our Gender Equality Scheme. When the scheme is reviewed, the audit will be repeated and will highlight what has changed as a result of the scheme.

The Council's Disability Scheme was recently launched, together with information on the achievements of Carlisle Access Group (including their involvement in our Disability Scheme) at the Voices Count Disability Conference, June 2007.

The Council's Corporate Equality Plan, 2007 – 2010 combines the commitments and actions contained within each of the schemes. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that there is real and practical change in the way the Council engages with the community in the design and delivery of services and in the way it recruits, employs and promotes people within the organisation.

### **3. Progress so far**

#### **3.1 Commitment and leadership**

- The Leader of the Council, Cllr Michael Mitchelson is the Council's Member Equality Champion
- The Deputy Chief Executive is the Council's Officer Equality Champion
- Cllr Judy Prest is the Disability Champion
- Cllr Peter Farmer is the Equality and Diversity Portfolio Holder
- The Council now has a specific Equality and Diversity budget
- The Council has a Corporate Equality Group which includes Officer and Member Champions and front line service managers including Revenues and Benefits and Community Services. People, Policy and Performance support the group and Cumbria County Council acts as peer challenge.
- The Corporate Equality Group will monitor progress of the Corporate Equality Action Plan and is currently developing a Community Cohesion policy for the Council in response to present and potential future demographic changes.

#### **3.2 Training**

- All employees have been trained in Dignity and Respect
- Equality and Diversity Training has been provided to two thirds of employees and will continue to be rolled out to all remaining employees during 2007-08. Equal opportunities information is provided to all new staff during induction training
- A small group of [employee] Equality Champions have been trained in Equality Impact Assessment. Further training has been arranged for September / October 2007 to reflect our impact assessment timetable so we can progress this as a matter of priority

- Deaf Awareness Training has been provided for Customer Contact Centre employees
- Senior Management and Service Heads have received Equality and Diversity Training that focused on their role
- Equality and Diversity Training has been arranged for Members within the Member Learning and Development Programme. A series of visits, briefings and workshops will begin in the autumn

### **3.3 Service delivery**

We have prioritised our functions, policies and practices according to the six strands of the equality standard<sup>1</sup>. This has informed our three-year impact assessment timetable (appendix 2).

An initial briefing has been given to Senior Management and Service Heads. Officers who will carry out impact assessment have been identified for training.

### **3.4 Service monitoring**

The Policy and Performance team are working with a number of service areas to gather information on the people who use our services.

Analysis of those who have and use Tullie Cards is underway. We have compared the demographic of Tullie House cardholders to that of the Carlisle district to find out who is not accessing our services.

We have analysed the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey in great detail including mapping the differences between the wards in the district and comparing satisfaction with income levels, age, gender and socio-economic groupings.

Work has begun on gathering Housing and Council Tax Benefits data about who uses these services and from Carlisle Leisure Ltd about the service users of the swimming pool and Sands Centre. This will then be analysed in order to give us a broader picture of our service users.

Users will then be compared to the demographic of Carlisle to see who is not using our services and what the Council could do to encourage access by these groups.

## **4. Future plans**

### **4.1 Equality Standard for Local Government**

The Equality Standard is a best practice framework for local authorities that aims to mainstream equality into Council policy and practice. The Council is currently at Level 1 of the Standard and aims to achieve Level 2 by March 2008 as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Disability, race, gender, sexuality, age, religion



Our policies, plans and schemes will assist us to progress to Level 2 and beyond; there are 5 levels of the Standard in total.

## **4.2 Equality impact assessment**

The Corporate Equality Action Plan encompasses the actions of the Race, Gender and Disability Schemes and will be monitored by the Corporate Equality Action Group. Progress will be reported to the Executive and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Specifically, the Council should focus on those actions necessary to reach our target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard by March 2008 as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan. These actions include:

- ✓ Impact assessment training
- ✓ Impact assessment of our functions, policies and practices, as set out in the timetable

An equality impact assessment can be described as equality risk assessment, a means of systematically and thoroughly assessing, and consulting on, the effects that a function, policy or practice is likely to have on community groups.

We shall be able to measure the difference our actions have made through the impact assessment process which involves gathering information including statistics, and consultation. Consultation with our local communities will inform us what they think of a policy or service and how we could improve either to better meet the needs of various groups. Equality impact assessments must be on a three-year cycle. This ongoing monitoring and assessment will allow us to check if the changes we make as a result of impact assessments have made a difference to our community.

We have agreed to set up Service Level Agreements with AWAZ (Black, minority ethnic group), Gay Cumbria and the Disability Network to assist us with our equality impact assessment consultation.

## **4.3 Service monitoring**

Service monitoring will allow us to gather data to use to improve access to services. We shall be able to define and monitor our customer profile to determine who is using, and who is not using our services including community groups, e.g. older, younger, male, female, disabled, etc. Service monitoring could show that actions we have taken are improving access to services.

We have produced a vast range of information products to assist in understanding more about our local communities. The products use partner information, other national statistics and City Council data. These include:

- Ward Profiles
- Carlisle District Profile
- Socio-economic mapping
- Acorn profiles and maps
- Service analysis such as Tullie House card holders

Consultation including:

- Annual Cumbria Attitudes Survey and Quality of Life Survey undertaken by Cumbria County Council
- Best Value User Satisfaction Survey conducted every 3 years and tracker survey conducted annually, and recent
- Access to Services Survey<sup>2</sup>

Will all be used to assess what impact our actions are having on our local communities.

A number of statutory performance indicators also help us to monitor progress in this area including:

- staff with a disability
- staff from ethnic minorities
- % top earners that are women
- % top earners from ethnic minorities
- Level of Equality Standard
- duty to promote race equality

Other measures could include:

- young people staying in Carlisle
- young people working for the City Council
- people declaring their sexuality
- groups using our services
- visits from groups and number of visitors returning
- number of web site hits

We could also consider quality of life indicators included in the Cumbria Local Area Agreement. The Audit Commission has developed a number of community involvement / cohesion indicators which we shall consider when developing our policy.

#### **4.4 Service planning**

In order to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard, we should include equality objectives, targets and actions in our service plans. Service planning guidance will be updated to reflect this requirement.

#### **4.5 Community cohesion**

The Corporate Equality Group recently requested a briefing paper on the topic of Community Cohesion with a view to producing a cohesion policy for the Council. Given the rapid change of demographics in Carlisle, it is essential to recognise this in terms of positive policy development. A recent report from the Commission on Integration & Cohesion<sup>3</sup> emphasises a shift in focus for

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<sup>2</sup> Results currently being analysed by CN Research, August 2007

<sup>3</sup> [www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk](http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk)

communities towards developing a shared sense of place, rights and responsibilities and a recognition that all local people bring value to their communities.

The report also outlines a number of factors that can provoke community tensions – rapid influx of people from other backgrounds into areas which have not experienced this previously, loss of traditional industries, deprivation, etc, all of which are present in Carlisle.

Cohesion is at the heart of what makes a strong and safe community. It is not merely about new arrivals and long term residents getting on together. Tensions can exist between rich and poor, urban and rural communities, different faiths, old and young.

The County Council and Cumbria Constabulary are working on a Cumbria wide strategy to address cohesion; a working group is to meet in October 2007. The City's representative on the group, will be the Deputy Chief Executive. The Corporate Equality Group resolved that, initially at least, it was sensible to harmonise with this Countywide development. Equality Impact Assessment will also serve to embed 'cohesion proofing' into the corporate structure. The Communications and Accessibility Policy will be assessed to identify any areas relevant to cohesion.

## **5. Access to information and publications**

The Council has developed a Communications and Accessibility Policy. Under the Freedom of Information Act, information can be held in a variety of ways and the public has a legal right to access this information.

The policy sets out how the Council should present information so that services are accessible for all and covers:

- Publications and correspondence, addressing relevancy to the audience, language issues, readability and alternative formats
- Alternative formats, including the standard statement offering a publication in other formats and languages
- Plain English, 'something that the intended audience can read, understand and act upon the first time they read it;' key pointers on how to write using Plain English
- Clear print and accessibility guidance, how to use design so that information can be read by the majority of people, including dos and don'ts on typeface, use of colour and contrast, layout and spacing, and paper used
- Providing information and documents in other formats, translations and interpreting services, audio, talking newspaper, useful contacts for people with sight and hearing impairments. The Policy and Performance Team

developed a County wide translation database on behalf of the Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership and monitor translation requests<sup>4</sup>

Customer Service Advisors use the “Language Line” translation service when necessary.

The Communications Section produce various publications such as Carlisle Focus, Council Tax Summary, A-Z of Council Services, all of which are written and designed to be jargon free and presented so they are accessible. They are offered in alternative formats on request. The languages offered have changed to reflect more accurately Carlisle's population. They are Bengali, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Turkish and Cantonese.

To promote inclusivity and access to technology, a self-service PC with access to the Council's web site is available in the Customer Contact Centre.

- A Browse Aloud facility is now provided on our web site. This enables customers to download a piece of software, which reads web site content out loud
- Policies, schemes and plans have been launched at management briefing and via our employee magazine

## **5.1 Future Plans**

The Council's web site content will be reviewed and rewritten in plain English as part of the web site review in order to make it more accessible for everyone.

## **6. Physical access to the Civic Centre**

The Council's performance under Best Value Performance Indicator 156<sup>5</sup> is 82%. The Civic Centre regularly undergoes accessibility audits by our Accessibility Officer; recommendations form part of any future works.

The Customer Contact Centre has:

- ✓ induction loops on public reception desks and access points
- ✓ access for wheelchair users
- ✓ payments counter and reception desk at different levels
- ✓ a ticket machine with buttons at different heights
- ✓ a queuing system that is audible as well as visual

All reinstatement works following the flood complied with Building Regulations which deal with accessibility issues. Doors are wide enough for wheelchair access and where possible, the force of door closures is less than 30newtons.

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<sup>4</sup> 16 requests received since 2005; 5 Polish, 4 Turkish, 2 Chinese, 1 Mandarin, 1 Braille, 3 don't know

<sup>5</sup> % of local authority buildings open to the public suitable for and accessible to disabled people

A changing room is provided on the ground floor which incorporates a baby changing table and a rise/fall adult changing table. The renewal of the lifts involved consultation with the Access Officer; advice on colours, design, height of controls, etc, were incorporated, e.g. landing call buttons were lowered.

The Civic Centre as a whole has:

- ✓ ramped access and automatic doors at the main entrance
- ✓ new lifts that have larger buttons and a voice commentary
- ✓ disabled toilets
- ✓ wheelchair access to public toilet (ground, first and sixth floors)

An access audit of Council facilities is currently underway. The new corporate training facility in the Civic Centre opening in the autumn has been designed to fully accommodate the needs of all users.

## **7. Complaints, compliments and comments**

Corporate complaints received about Council services are monitored by age, disability, ethnicity and gender. Attention is paid to identifying whether any relate to racial discrimination or whether a policy is having an adverse impact on racial equality.

During 2005/06, 42% of corporate complainants (10 complaints but 11 complainants) provided equal opportunities information.

- 100% of complainants who provided this information were over 35
- 36% (4) were disabled
- 100% were white British
- 64% were males

From the limited information that we have, the disabled were over represented, as were males. There were no complaints from young people or from ethnic minorities.

None of the complaints related to racial discrimination or demonstrated that a policy was having an adverse impact on racial equality. This information will be used to assist service monitoring in the future.

Since December 1997, the Corporate Complaints policy has adhered to Council policy and guidelines on equality of access. Clear, understandable information and application forms are available immediately in a variety of formats including large print, audiotape and electronic format and including a form that may be downloaded from the Council's web site, and an on-line complaints form.

## **8. Harassment / hate crime reporting**

True Vision reporting packs are provided in our customer contact centre, in the future, links to these will be available through the web site. True Vision is

the new mechanism that has been developed for third party reporting of Hate Crime, particularly homophobic and transphobic crime and incidents, and racist and religious crimes and incidents.

The first third party reporting centre in North Cumbria was launched from Greystone Community Centre, August 2007.

## **9. Employment and equal pay**

A Local Pay Review is underway which will lead to a modern pay and reward framework for the authority. This exercise is being conducted in conjunction with our trade unions and will be concluded by March 2008. It comprises:

- Job Evaluation, on schedule for summer 2007
- Equality Assessment to identify pay gaps will follow Job Evaluation
- Regular Equal Pay Audits will then be conducted to record progress in addressing any identified pay gaps
- Updated People Policies (e.g. flexible working) and Terms and Conditions of Service
- A concluded Single Status Agreement to redress historic anomalies between groups of staff
- A Workforce Development Plan (WDP) that helps secure the workforce needed to achieve our ambitions

A Workforce Development Plan has now been agreed and published. It includes a detailed analysis of our current workforce (age, gender, qualifications, etc) and equality-related actions.

We have published our employment equality statistics on our web site (jobs page) although we plan to extend what we currently monitor.

Our flexible working policy is under review and has been updated to reflect the extended right to request flexible working<sup>6</sup>.

## **10. Procurement and partnerships**

We have revised our Procurement Strategy, Code of Practice and range of guidance notes for officers to assist in the procurement process.

The Code of Practice<sup>7</sup> contains a number of specific references to both European and National Legislation, several of which refer to the Human Rights Act, 1998, equality and inclusion, and whistle blowing policies, when preparing tender documents (p.19-20).

Procurement toolkit guidance notes are available to officers including Gender Guidance, Ethical Procurement, Confidential Reporting, and Equality in Procurement.

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<sup>6</sup> Flexible Working Regulations 2006

<sup>7</sup> Carlisle City Council, Procurement Code of Practice, December 2006, updated July 2007

The Council has produced, and actively operates, a standard Invitation to Tender Template<sup>8</sup> that covers all such issues and includes (para 20.9) a questionnaire to be completed by each relevant organisation that wishes to participate in any of the Council's tendering opportunities. The answers provided form part of the appropriate evaluation procedure. These documents have been operational since March 2007.

The Procurement Unit and Legal Services have produced a standard set of Terms and Conditions for the supply of goods and services by external organisations. This is designed to form a legal contract between the parties and incorporates a section on discrimination:

"...The Supplier shall not unlawfully discriminate within the meaning and scope of any law, enactment, order or regulation relating to discrimination (whether in race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation or otherwise) in employment. The Supplier shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the observance of the provisions of this clause by all servants, employees, agents and consultants of the Supplier and all sub-contractors."

The Council's Partnership Policy guidance notes have been updated to take account of equality and diversity considerations.

## **11. Future monitoring**

The Corporate Equality Action Plan incorporates actions in support of the Race, Disability and Gender Schemes, and Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Corporate Equality Group monitors progress of the action plan; progress is reported formally on a six monthly basis to the Executive and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Reporting will be integrated within the corporate performance framework.

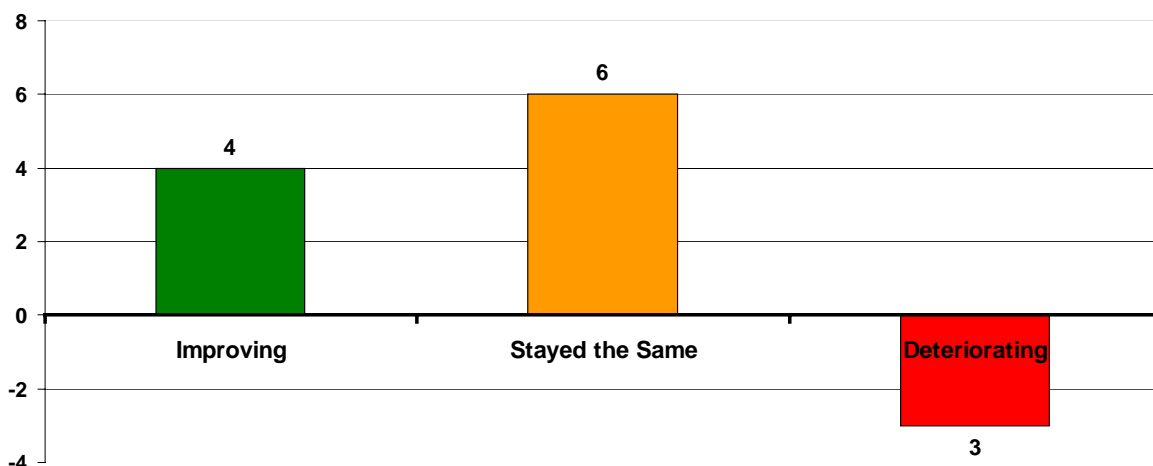
Our equality and diversity performance indicators for 2006/7 when compared to national quartiles show:

- 4 in the top quartile
- 2 in bottom
- 2 in third quartile
- 4 are improving
- 6 have stayed the same
- 3 are deteriorating

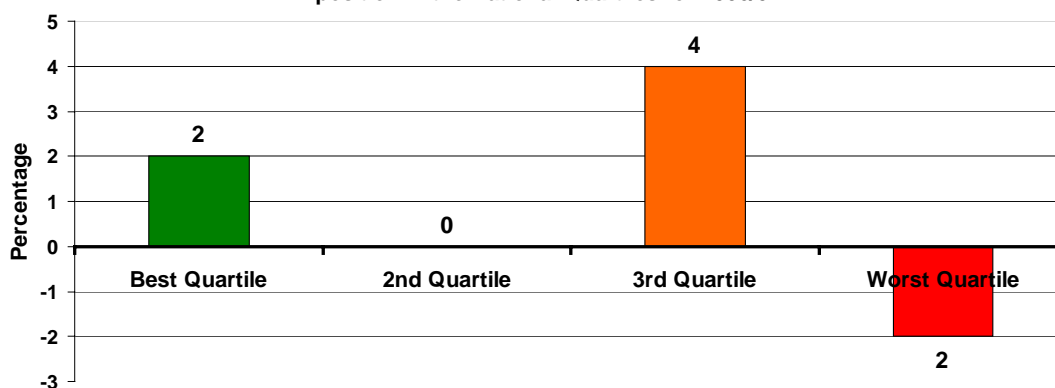
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<sup>8</sup> Carlisle City Council, Invitation to Tender, October 2006

Graph to show the City Council Equalities Performance Indicators for 2006/07



Graph to show the City Council Equalities Performance Indicators and their position in the National Quartiles for 2006/07



## 12. Partnership Working

### 12.1 Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership

The Partnership has:

- Produced a Migrant Worker Welcome Pack
- Held the countywide conference on 12th march, which informed the County Council's Cumbria Equality Scheme
- Supported the Cumbria Disability Network to hold a countywide conference engaging services and disabled people on key priorities to embed the new disability equality duty
- Agreed the content of the Cumbria Attitudes Survey 2007
- Commissioned Edge Hill University to research the needs of Migrant Workers

The Partnership is currently scoping joint agency protocols and training and accrediting local interpreters.



## **12.2 Carlisle Equality and Diversity Partnership**

Our Community Development Team facilitates the on-going development of the Carlisle Equality & Diversity Partnership. The partnership involves 25 members representing the public and voluntary sectors. The group seeks to raise awareness and encourage greater partnership and co-operative working between voluntary, statutory and community groups to, "Ensure no individual or minority groups is excluded from accessing services for any reason." The group feeds into the Cumbria Equality & Diversity Partnership.

To respond to the recently arrived Eastern European migrant workers into Carlisle, the group organised a series of 'welcome days' in local community centres and the city centre where partner agencies were on hand to give advice and information about their services. Film and press coverage was available.

A Polish Market was also held and feedback on the Council's refuse service has led to the possible translation of refuse and recycling information.

The group has created a leaflet in English and Polish to explain all available Council services. This will supplement a detailed welcome pack developed by Cumbria Multi Cultural Centre.

The group is now working on developing an Equality and Diversity Citizenship model and a Cultural Conferences concept. The Citizenship model would involve developing a variety of creative proactive workshops that educate and raise awareness about such issues as respect, tolerance and community cohesion, while taking into consideration the six strands of equality and diversity.

## **12.3 Cumbria Equality Standard Working Group**

Carlisle City Council is a member of the Cumbria Equality Standard for Local Government Group. Its terms of reference are:

- For all Cumbrian Authorities to reach Level 2 and then Level 3 of the Equality Standard (complying with statutory obligations at Level 3) and share good practice on this
- To develop a joint approach to Self Assessment
- To share information on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) including a timetable of priorities and developing a template councils could use
- Peer Assessment of each other
- Aligning what support there is across the sub region and the region including funding and training
- Working with members to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard

- Joint arrangements on consultation
- Joint policy development

The group is planning to apply for funding to assist with all of the above through ACE<sup>9</sup> to the Centre for Local Policy Studies, Edge Hill University.

#### **12.4 Other support**

The Council also grant aids under the terms of a Service Level Agreement, organisations such as Carlisle Council for Voluntary Service, the Community Law Centre and the Citizens Advice Bureau, that champion human rights and equality issues. These services are in addition to the Council's internal Benefits Advice Service which directly addresses financial deprivation, health inequalities and advocacy for vulnerable clients. All these organisations are members of the Council facilitated Carlisle Advice Forum, which promotes various aspects of equality.

The Council supports groups such as the Carlisle Men's Health Network (film, press release and flyers available). We have supported awareness raising campaigns on issues such as benefits and legal advice and support groups such as the Bangladeshi Community Association, the Chinese Community Association, the Club Italiano di Cumbria, the Asian Women's Group, and Gay Cumbria.

### **13. Conclusion**

The Council has made good progress in developing the infrastructure required to deliver its challenging equality and diversity agenda. There are specific priorities for action outstanding in order for us to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard, and although the Council has made a commitment to these, it should continue to build its corporate capacity in this area to be certain of success. Specific actions include:

- Develop systems for self assessment, scrutiny and audit
- Undertake equality impact assessments
- Involve community groups in service planning
- Develop information and monitoring systems
- Undertake equality action planning for employment, pay and service delivery

Council policies, plans and schemes, as they are implemented, should translate into improved equality and diversity outcomes for local communities and employees. The actions required to achieve Level 2, and the monitoring and reporting systems we have put in place, will assist us in measuring the difference we are achieving for local people and our employees, and whether it is sufficient.

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<sup>9</sup> Achieving Cumbrian Excellence Programme