



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

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## PORTFOLIO AREA: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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**Date of Meeting:** 17 March 2008

**Meeting:**

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**Public** Yes

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**Key**

**Decision:** Yes

**Recorded in Forward Plan:** Yes

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**Inside Policy Framework** Yes

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**Title:** CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

**Report of:** Head of Policy and Performance

**Report reference:** PPP 23/08

### Summary:

The report presents the draft review of Carlisle City Council's Disability Equality Scheme first published in December 2006, appendix 1. Extensive consultation has taken place with representatives of those with a disability and the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has informed the review. The Impact Assessment is attached at appendix 2.

### Recommendations:

The Executive Committee is requested to:

1. Receive the draft Disability Equality Scheme.
2. Refer the draft Disability Equality Scheme to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation.

### Reasons for recommendations:

For the Council to adopt the revised Disability Equality Scheme in order to promote Carlisle as a safe and attractive place where people from all communities feel they belong and are included.

**Contact Officer:** Martin Daley

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

Council approved the original Disability Equality Scheme in December 2006. As this was first scheme of its kind, it was always intended to review it after one year rather than the usual three. The review has involved extensive consultation with staff and with several external stakeholder agencies, the results of which have informed the Scheme.

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

The current Disability Scheme forms part of the Council's wider Equality and Diversity Policy and contributes to the Corporate Equality Action Plan and Equality Standard for Local Government. The Corporate Equality Group will monitor the scheme, its contents and associated actions.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

The following stakeholders have been consulted with as part of the review:

Staff

Corporate Equalities Group

Carlisle Access Group

Age Concern

Stroke Club

Muscular Dystrophy Society

Society for the Blind

Deaf Association

Mencap

MIND

Cumbria Disability Network

Cumbria County Council

During consultation, the Deaf Association pointed out that English is the deaf community's second language after British Sign Language. With this in mind, representatives from the organisation proof read and amended the scheme from a 'Plain English' point of view.

The Cumbria Disability Network also assisted with the Equality Impact Assessment through the Service Level Agreement the Council has recently agreed with the Network, AWAZ (Black and Minority Ethnic group) and Gay Cumbria.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – The Disability Scheme, along with other aspects of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and procedures, is produced and implemented within existing resources, mainly within the Policy and Performance team. The Council's

Access Officer will fulfil a liaison role between community groups and the Council as the scheme is implemented and reviewed.

- Equality and disability – The Scheme will help the Council to meet its statutory equality duties under disability legislation and will promote equality for those with a disability. The Scheme has been widely consulted upon and has been subject to equality impact assessment by the Cumbria Disability Network. The findings of the impact assessment have informed the scheme and the associated actions (equality objectives, p.12).
- Financial – The Scheme is produced, implemented, monitored and reviewed within existing resources. The cost of the Service Level Agreement, which includes assistance with equality impact assessment, is met within the existing equality and diversity budget.
- Legal – The Scheme will ensure the Council meets the specific requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and will contribute towards the Equality Standard for Local Government for which the Council has a Level 2 target for March 2008.
- Corporate – The Scheme and associated activity will be monitored and evaluated by the Corporate Equality Group as part of the Corporate Equality Action Plan.
- Risk Management – The Scheme will help the Council to meet its statutory equality duties.
- Environmental – None
- Crime and Disorder – The Scheme will help to raise awareness of issues for those with a disability and may subsequently contribute to reducing the numbers of hate crimes.
- Impact on Customers – Production and implementation of the Scheme directly and indirectly involves those with a disability in determining design, delivery and access to services and facilities, both those provided by the Council and, longer term, other service providers. A number of indicators in the Place Survey (autumn 2008) part of the Government's new Performance Framework will measure how well people get on together and if people feel they belong to their neighbourhood.

## Carlisle City Council Equality Impact Assessment

Please use this form to record your findings, proposed actions, equality objectives and targets. Further guidance and support from the Policy and Performance Team are available. **Throughout, policy is used to mean policy, practice, service and / or function.**

### Step 1 – About the policy you are assessing

Policy:	Service area:	Lead for impact assessment:	Other members of assessment team (if applicable):
<b>Disability Scheme</b>	<b>Policy &amp; Performance</b>	<b>Martin Daley</b>	

### Step 2 – Defining the policy you are assessing and identifying the equality issues

Question
What are the main aims and objectives or purpose of the policy that you are assessing? Should be defined within the policy.
Answer
<p>As outlined in the scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting customers first</li> <li>• Valuing staff</li> <li>• Achieving equality</li> <li>• Identify a common sense of vision and belonging for all of Carlisle’s communities</li> <li>• Value and appreciate the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances</li> <li>• Ensure that everyone living, working, studying and visiting Carlisle has similar access to services and opportunities</li> <li>• Develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and experience</li> </ul>

Question
Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy? State where this is more than one person, team, department, or body and include any outside organisations who deliver under procurement arrangements.
Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All services delivery areas across the authority</li> <li>• Other partnership agencies such as Cumbria County Council</li> <li>• Contractors</li> </ul>

Question
Who is affected by the policy or by how it is delivered? Name all stakeholders e.g. external / internal customers, groups and communities? Include the potential beneficiaries of the policy
Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All external disabled people within the district (residents, students and visitors)</li> <li>• All disabled staff</li> <li>• Members</li> </ul>

Question
What [measurable] outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? E.g. what do you want to be providing, how well, what changes or improvements What should the benefits be for customers, groups or communities?
Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled people having access to services and facilities</li> <li>• Disabled people leading healthier lifestyles</li> <li>• Disabled people having a greater sense of inclusion</li> </ul> <p>There will be feedback on effectiveness to the Corporate Equalities Group through bodies like the Access Group, mentally disabled and learning groups, and the Disability Network.</p>

Question
What existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function are there? E.g. Best Value Inspections, service reviews, research into the effects of the policy. What did they tell you?
Answer
This Impact Assessment is part of the first review of the scheme that was written in December 2006.

**Step 3 – Identifying potential equality issues and factors**

Question
What do you already know about the impact, or potential impact, of the policy on equality or needs of local communities / groups? E.g. from research, feedback, consultation, performance monitoring
Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals and groups believe the Council are serious about addressing inequality issues concerning the disabled community due to the work of the authority's officers</li> <li>• The regular feedback from disabled groups and individuals is the request for disability awareness by all members of society</li> </ul>

Question
Is there any evidence of differential impact, or trends of higher / lower take up under the policy for any particular groups? E.g. who uses the service, who doesn't and why not? Do we have quantitative / qualitative data?
Evidence
<p>There is little hard evidence at this stage. Internal performance reports suggest there is a low take up in recruitment.</p> <p>The Access Group have been asked to monitor the Council's Equality Plan from a disability point of view. Issues will be fed back into the Corporate Equality Group through the Access Officer and Policy &amp; Performance Officer.</p>

Gaps in knowledge

Effectiveness of scheme and action plan. The Access Officer can help in monitoring this effectiveness through her work with the Access Group.

Question

Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? E.g. is the population changing, what might that mean for the policy? Have there been any legislative changes? Statistical data available on the intranet [seek assistance from policy & performance team if required].

Answer

No significant changes since the scheme was produced in 2006, although there is evidence of an increased aging population in Carlisle and throughout Cumbria.

The other factors that will change the demographic over the next few years are the continued stream of migrant workers to the city and the increased student population.

Question

Is there an indication that the policy creates particular problems or difficulties for any groups of customers or communities i.e. differential impact and /or adverse impact?

Evidence

- The policy needs to be available in different forms e.g. Braille, large print, audio
- It should also be written in plain English

Gaps in knowledge and who to consult with. Service level agreement may assist [more details from policy & performance team]

There is an opportunity to have groups such as the Deaf Association and the Disability Network to proof read the revised scheme to ensure its suitability.

<b>Question</b>
Do any equality or diversity objectives already exist? If so, what are they and what is current performance?
<b>Answer</b>
The following Best Value Performance Indicators relate to disability:  BV2a – Level of Equality Standard for Local Government. Current performance – Level 1; Target – Level 2 (2008); Level 3 (2009) BV11c - % of top 5% of earners that are disabled. Current performance – 0.00%; Target – 3.30% BV16a – Staff with disabilities. Current performance – 3.01%; Target – 3.30% BV16b - % of Economically Active People who have a disability. Current performance – 14.59%; Target – N/AP BV156 - % of authority buildings open to the public suitable for and accessible to disabled people. Current performance – 82.35%; Target 82.00%  As well as these indicators, actions are identified in the Disability Improvement Plan which forms part of the Equalities Action Plan:   "Disability Equality Scheme - Action Plan"

<b>Question</b>		
Based on your answers above, how relevant is the policy to each equality category. If unsure, then assume relevance and proceed to data gathering / consultation. If certain there is no relevance, please say why and authorise. There is no need to continue		
<b>Category</b>	<b>H M L relevance</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Age	H	Age issues are directly linked with disability
Disability	H	
Ethnicity (race)	L	
Gender (sex)	L	
Religion or belief	L	
Sexual orientation	L	
None of above Signed: service head		

**Step 4 – Collecting information and data and consulting on how the policy impacts on groups / communities**

This is where we are building up a picture, considering peoples' experiences and feelings. Please think about:

- what information or data you will need
- consider quantitative and qualitative data
- make sure, where possible, there is information that allows all perspectives to be considered
- identify any gaps in the information / data and what it can tell you

When and how was it collected?	Source	What does it tell you - consider all six equality strands	Gaps in information – to inform future data gathering / consultation
<b>Customer feedback / compliments / complaints</b>		No record of customer feedback	

<p><b>Previous consultation / community involvement</b></p>	<p>Focus Group involving various disabled groups</p> <p>8/01/07</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good work in Carlisle in recent years to raise awareness of disability</li> <li>- There has been an active Access Group and the City Council has responded positively leading to improved access to Council and other public services (Tullie House, for example, has a well developed programme covering building access and staff training)</li> <li>- Disability is a matter of individuality, indeed, people are often caught up in their own needs, but the policies and programmes have to consider the needs of people with disabilities in general covering a wide spectrum of needs and circumstances</li> <li>- More thought should be given to consulting with the groups representing different disabilities about their needs</li> <li>- There are attitudinal barriers to the full involvement in society by people with a disability</li> <li>- People with experience of original pilot project for the Council's Diversity and Equality scheme felt that it did not get the right level of support across all departments</li> <li>- Generally the concept of disability in Cumbria, including Carlisle has been seen too negatively, as a burden for compliance instead of an opportunity or a resource</li> <li>- The Council is considered to be poor at collecting information around the issues of diversity and equality</li> <li>- Better promotion of the Disability Equality Scheme and of the needs of people with disabilities throughout the Council and the community</li> <li>- An impact assessment on accessibility of all the council's buildings to be incorporated into any review of the future use of buildings</li> <li>- Feedback and evaluation of the recruitment adverts and the different methods available to access employment opportunities to ensure they are accessible to people with all disabilities including a learning disability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sports provision for children with disabilities needs to be prepared carefully. Their carers often have a great deal of pressure and short sessions or gaps in-between sessions can be problematic resulting in take up being unnecessarily low</li> <li>- There is need for a corporate communication strategy for providing information about disability and the nature of specific disabilities and generally increasing public awareness, including information for people with disabilities in a range of methods, formats and languages</li> <li>- The Council should be an exemplar employer, for example, offering mentoring and giving people work experience and generally exploring ways of offering opportunities to people with disabilities</li> <li>- Corporate disability awareness training should be enhanced and provided on a regular basis</li> <li>- Ensuring consistency of approach and performance across all departments and services provided by the Council</li> <li>- There is a need to strengthen communication links with other departments and other agencies</li> <li>- Need to review authority's induction/training programmes to include disability issues</li> </ul>
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<b>Performance information including PIs</b>	Internal departments	See Step 3 – Question on objectives and performance	The authority is below its targets in four out of six disability related BVPIs.
<b>Take up and usage data</b>	Access Group	The group have had a chance to see the current Disability Scheme and Action Plan. They generally feel they are both good documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a need to feedback to those consulted</li> <li>- The group have been asked to monitor activity outlined in the Equalities Action Plan and feedback views to Policy &amp; Performance Team through the Access Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Comparative information - local / other</b>	Audit Commission	Most of the disability related PIs are not compared. Of the ones that are, the authority is performing poorly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BV11c – top earners is among the worst performing</li> <li>- BV16a – number of staff is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile</li> </ul>
<b>Census, national or regional statistics</b>	Dept of Work and Pensions 2005	Population claiming disability allowance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carlisle - 5.2%</li> <li>- Cumbria - 5.4%</li> <li>- North West – 6.4%</li> <li>- England – 4.6%</li> </ul>	

<b>Access audits / discoveries</b>	Carlisle Ward Profiles	The deprived wards of Carlisle have the highest number of disability allowance claimants. Upperby has the highest number of all with 8.8%	
<b>User profile</b>		Monitored through involvement with Access Group and Disability Network	
<b>Monitoring / scrutiny arrangements / outcomes</b>		The effectiveness of the scheme and action plan will be monitored by the Corporate Equalities Group	



<b>Policy:</b>		
<b>Findings – from screening / data / consultation</b>	<b>Which groups are affected and how</b>	<b>Whose needs are not being met and how?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People parking on pavements in the residential areas of the city causes problems for blind people and the aged</li> <li>- Pavements should be cleared of potential hazards, such as re-cycling bags</li> <li>- The scheme does not refer to volunteers within the Council</li> <li>- Communication – internally and externally – could do with improving</li> <li>- The ‘sign language’ referred to in the Action Plan should be broadened to cover all Disability Issues</li> <li>- There is a need to review all documents/policies to cover access issues</li> <li>- There doesn’t appear to be any background as to what has been achieved to date</li> <li>- There is a lack of understanding of mental disability</li> <li>- There is a need to de-stigmatise mental health</li> <li>- There are too many untrained staff in places such as leisure facilities (disabled users have to be chaperoned)</li> <li>- There is a need to raise awareness about learning issues as there is a lack of understanding in society</li> <li>- There is a need to train people in Learning and mental issues which are unseen disabilities</li> <li>- The needs of people with learning difficulties are different to physiological problems</li> <li>- It is possible to get better after mental illness but those with learning disabilities do not get better</li> <li>- Multi agency and partnership work should be developed to improve services</li> </ul>	<p>Society for the Blind 25/09/07</p> <p>Muscular Dystrophy Society 1/10/07</p> <p>MIND 1/01/08 (Mentally Handicapped Organisation)</p> <p>Mencap 10/01/08</p>	

## Objectives

Please give your proposed objectives/ targets in this table:

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how? To be integrated within service planning</b>
Review Corporate Communication & Accessibility Policy	<p>An Impact Assessment is being carried out on the policy.</p> <p>Policy &amp; Performance Officer to meet with Communications Manager ensure disability issues are included by July 2008.</p>

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how?</b>
Review disability awareness training	<p>Human Resources to incorporate more disability awareness training for officers and members into the annual programme. All staff will have access to training either through a revised induction programme or the City First programme that will be introduced in 2008/09.</p> <p>The re-introduction of holding disability training delivered by deaf, physical and visual groups will also be scoped during 2008.</p> <p>Policy and Performance Officer to meet with Training Manager by April 2008 to discuss this and consider the feasibility of extending training to partners such as Carlisle Leisure Limited.</p> <p>Training to be reviewed by July 2008.</p>

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how?</b>
Develop communication cycle with disabled groups	<p>Disabled groups will raise issues with the Access Officer, who will inform Policy &amp; Performance Team. These issues will then be fed into the Corporate Equalities Group for discussion and action. Invitations will also be extended to members of the Access Group to attend the Corporate Equality Group meetings. If these invitations are not taken up, the communication process will be reversed to give feedback to the groups. This will commence immediately.</p> <p>Communication will also take place through the Service Level Agreement with the Cumbria Disability Network</p>

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how?</b>
Work with partners and other agencies to improve facilities for disabled people and staff knowledge of disabled needs	<p>Possibilities may include Council staff communication with partnership agencies to improve their services. For example, the Sports and Recreation Team may be able to work with Carlisle Leisure Limited colleagues to improve services in leisure facilities across the city.</p> <p>Another possibility may be to invite partner agencies to Council training sessions.</p> <p>The feasibility of this approach will be discussed between the Policy and Performance Officer and the Training Manager by April 2008. If it is possible, this approach will be built into the training programme with reviews on effectiveness taking place in March 2009.</p>

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how?</b>
Assess disability issues through Service Monitoring	See the Service Monitoring element of the Corporate Equality Action Plan

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how?</b>
Assess disability issues through Complaints Monitoring	<p>Policy and Performance Team to review complaints process to incorporate identify disabled complainants or disabled-related complaints.</p> <p>Review by June 2008.</p>

<b>Equality objective / target – What?</b>	<b>Who, when, how?</b>
Review Recruitment Policy & Procedures Policy	<p>An Impact Assessment has been carried out on the policy.</p> <p>Policy &amp; Performance Officer to meet with Personnel Manager to ensure disability issues are included by July 2008.</p>

**Carlisle City Council**

# **Disability Equality Scheme**

**Revised**

**February**

**2008**

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## 1. Introduction

The report, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*<sup>1</sup>, showed that a range of public services failed to give disabled people the same opportunities and choice as non-disabled people.

As a result the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit set an aim that by 2025, disabled people should have the same opportunities and choices as everyone else, should be respected as equal members of society, and should be able to involve as equals in every aspect of family and community life.

This change will not happen without real action for change in the way the Council provide its services, in the way it appoints people and in the way it seeks to be in touch with everyone in the community.

Carlisle City Council will work hard to make the changes that are necessary – it has promised, in its Corporate Plan that it will do all it can:

*“To ensure Carlisle is a safe and attractive place where people feel they belong and are included.”*

The purpose of this Disability Equality Scheme is to ensure that the Council promotes disability equality.

As an organisation, the Council accepts the need to remove organisational, environmental and attitude, which blocks full access and participation. It needs to accept that discrimination of disabled people results not from their impairments or conditions, but as a result of how the Council may operate – the “social model of disability”.

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, January 2005

## 2. Background

Carlisle City Council will work hard to make sure that a high quality of life for all in both its city and countryside communities.

This commitment is reflected in three of the Council's seven core values:<sup>2</sup>

- Putting the needs of all residents first
- Developing staff so the Council becomes an 'employer of choice', delivering quality services that residents expect
- Recognise the increasing diversity of the area and ensure that services are provided to all without discrimination

In real life this means that the Council will make sure that the lots of needs and circumstances of residents and employees are met and that its services are provided to all without discrimination. The Council accepts that to have any equality means sorting out discrimination and social exclusion, stopping poor attitudes, opening up access to services and jobs and making sure that everyone receives high quality service.

The Council accepts its role in developing good community relations and accepts the need to:

- Identify a common sense of vision and belonging for all of Carlisle's communities;
- Value and appreciate the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances;
- Ensure that everyone living, working, studying and visiting Carlisle has similar access to services and opportunities; and
- Develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and experience.

Carlisle City Council is working towards writing these commitments into all of its policies, procedures, practices and external relationships. It has adopted the *Equality Standard for Local Government*<sup>3</sup> as a support for improving its work for equalities. The standard helps to make sure that equality should not

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<sup>2</sup> *Corporate Improvement Plan*, Carlisle City Council, 2007-10

<sup>3</sup> I&DeA, Revised October 2007

be forgotten within all its decision-making as an employer, service provider and community leader.

### 3. What has the Council done so far?

Carlisle was the first district council in Cumbria (1990) to appoint an Access Officer to deal with access issues as separate from someone who had the responsibility added on to their existing job. There were fewer than 100 Access Officers in the country at the time.

It also set up, and still supports, The Carlisle Access Group in 1991. This is a network group of disabled people and organisations supporting them and is still busy. The group is used in consultations for many parts of the Council's services but it is still independent. As a result, built up, improved and maintained very good relationships with members of the public and disabled groups.

See Appendix 1 for more detail of achievements.

### 4. Figures

There is a lot of information from rumours and informal stories about the experience of disabled people locally, but **national studies** highlight some of the issues that we need to be aware of:

- The Disability Rights Commission 2005 (DRC) estimates that people with learning difficulties are 58 times more likely to die before the age of 50 than non-disabled people
- The Disability Rights Commission (2003) NOP survey found that 7 out of 10 disabled people with mobility and sensory impairments in Britain say that they have difficulty in accessing goods and services. The reasons most likely to cause problems are steps at the entrance, heavy internal and external doors, use of disabled parking by non-disabled customers, no lifts and inaccessible toilets
- The Disability Rights Commission/Capability Scotland (2004) research highlights that almost 50% of disabled respondents had experienced abuse because of their impairment. The examples given range from serious physical assault, intimidation and verbal abuse

- Nationally, only 50% of disabled people of working age are employed, compared to 81% of non-disabled people. For some impairment groups the rates are even lower – only 21% of people with long term mental health conditions are working
- The Disability Rights Commission estimates that as people are living longer and medical treatments are improving, by the year 2020, 1 in 3 people will be living with a physical, sensory or learning impairment
- Nationally, 50% of people will suffer from some form of mental illness at some point in their lives – 1 in 3 men; 2 in 3 women

#### **4.1 Locally**

- The Cumbria Attitude Survey completed in 2004, showed that in general disabled people were confident that they would be treated fairly from public services, but not from leisure and recreation, local councils and housing services. The views above were repeated during this consultation that took place as part of this review. Various groups stated that staff in leisure and recreation are very rarely trained in the needs of the disabled and users therefore have to be accompanied by other people for support
- The 2001 Census highlights that in Carlisle 19.3% of the population had a long term limiting illness – a higher percentage than England as a whole but lower than the North West. Whilst the percentage varies from ward to ward, eight of Carlisle's 22 wards have percentages of over 20%. According to the Department for Work and Pensions figures for 2005, 5.2% of the population in Carlisle are claiming disability allowance – higher than the percentage for England as a whole but lower than the claimant count for the North West Region.

### **5. Involving Disabled People**

The Council accepts that there is much more to be done for better involvement of disabled people in the ongoing development, implementation and review of the Disability Equality Scheme and its action plan. Carlisle City Council is in discussion with Cumbria County Council, the Carlisle Diversity Partnership, Cumbria Disability Network and the Carlisle Access Group about the most effective mechanisms for doing this.

The Council is ensuring that disabled people have been involved in:

- Identifying the reason in its services that result in less than satisfactory outcomes
- In agreeing priorities for action
- Advising on what to include in the action plan.

Specifically, disabled groups have been involved in the development and review of this scheme through a lot of consultation and helping with the Impact Assessment of the original scheme.

Each Directorate are now undertaking Service Monitoring of disability and equality issues. This monitoring will directly inform Service Plans. Disabled groups people will be involved in the monitoring.

Members of the Access Group will also be invited to attend the Corporate Equalities Group

## **6. Approach to Impact Assessment**

The purpose of the Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council does not discriminate disabled people, whether planned or not, and importantly to find out where the Council can improve equality of opportunity.

For Carlisle City Council Impact Assessments will check for any changes it needs to make. It can then take the right actions to better improve disability equality and improve access to services.

The Impact Assessment carried out on the Disability Scheme involved:

- Look at the available data
- To check what the effect of the scheme and existing policies, on disabled people
- To check for numbers of disabled people going up or down
- To think about how best to achieve equality of opportunity for disabled people

The Corporate Equality Group on a quarterly basis will carry out a review of the Council's Impact Assessment work.

## **7. Action to meet the responsibilities to encourage disability equality – the Action Plan**

The Council is starting from little information and understanding of the experience of disabled people locally, so many of the new changes need to be focussed on better understanding of the results of our activities and the gaps that exist.

Good practice from other areas tells us that the Council's actions need to be focussed on seven core areas and its action plan is similar to this approach:

- Leadership, staffing and strategy
- Access to buildings and the built environment
- Communications
- Training
- Service delivery
- Employment
- Involving disabled people

## **8. Gathering and using information**

The Council needs information, which it can use to check how well we do with disability equality – specifically it needs to measure progress against the action plan. The Corporate Equalities Group will do this every three months.

**Regulation 2(3)(d)(i)**<sup>4</sup> states that the Council should agree how it will gather information on how its policies affect recruitment, development and retention of disabled employees.

**Regulation 2(3)(d)(iii)** states that the Council must set out its plans for gathering information on how far the services it provides and the actions it carries out to include of the needs of disabled people.

Increasingly, the Council is collecting more information on how many disabled people use its services, and this is being used to set up improvements in the appropriate areas.

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<sup>4</sup> The Disability Discriminations Regulations 2005

As a minimum it will ensure that disabled people are properly shown in any customer surveys and local focus groups. The Council's research will ensure that any discrimination between disabled and non-disabled people are identified. In addition, the information collected will be used to feed the impact assessment and the review of the disability equality scheme.

## **9. Review of the Disability Equality Scheme**

The Disability Equality Scheme must be checked at least every three years – this task will become the responsibility of the Council's Corporate Equality Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive. Regular monitoring of the progress on the action plan will also be the responsibility of this group. How to report any progress to disabled people include the communication links between the Access Group and the Council through the Access Officer, and the Service Level Agreement with the other councils and the Cumbria Disability Network.

Every year, the Council will publish a report to show:

- The actions that the Council has taken to promote disability equality and to meet its aims
- The results of any information gathering
- What the Council has done with the information

Cllr Prest is the Council's champion for Disability issues.

The next review of this Disability Equality Scheme will take place in December 2010.

### Some of the issues the Council have worked on in partnership with Carlisle Access

- Planning
- Building Regulations
- Taxi Licences
- Public Entertainment Licences
- Pavement Café Licences
- Set up Disability Access Grant in 1990 (still continuing) to encourage and support non-profit making organisations to improve access to their premises
- Set up Shopmobility in 1995
- Produce access information for public on:
  - Places to Stay
  - Places to Eat
  - Places to Visit
  - Accessible WC locations
  - Council Buildings and Facilities
- Produced Better Access Design guidance booklet (updated 2007)
- Separate detailed design sheets to supplement this
- Organising Accessible Meetings checklist for City Council
- Library of products and suppliers to respond to requests
- Point of contact for members of the public for questions relating to disability
- Point of contact for design professionals on accessibility of buildings
- Point of contact for other organisations, businesses and individuals in relation to both design issues and disability legislation. Presentations to meetings, seminars and conferences as required.
- Point of contact for staff within the City Council in relation to disability legislation and related BVPIs
- Review of this scheme