

Draft EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME

2008 – 2011

Amended November 2009



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CONTENTS

FORWORD

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Warwick District Council**
 - 2.1 Warwick District – population profile
 - 2.2 Role and structure
 - 2.3 Vision, Mission, Objectives and Values
 - 2.4 Equality and Diversity – priority and target
- 3. Our progress so far**
 - 3.1 Key areas of progress
 - 3.2 From vision to reality
- 4. Leading Equality and Diversity**
- 5. Equality Standard for Local Government**
- 6. Background to Scheme**
 - 6.1 What the law says
 - 6.2 Who is the Scheme for
 - 6.3 The Contents of the Scheme
- 7. The Scheme**
 - 7.1 Consultation, Involvement and Participation
 - 7.2 Assessment
 - 7.3 Gathering information
 - 7.4 Putting information into use
 - 7.5 Publishing the results
 - 7.6 Developing our capacity
 - 7.7 Our priorities and action plan
- 8. Acknowledgments**
- 9. Bibliography**

FOREWARD

The Equality and Diversity Scheme illustrates the work that Warwick District Council is doing to promote equality, combat discrimination and improve services among the diverse community that make up the District's population.

The Council is pleased to present our new Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008-2011, which brings together our responsibilities around the six strands of equality: race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. By 'equality' we mean treating people fairly. By 'diversity' we mean valuing people's differences.

This document brings together and strengthens the work we have done over the last three years. We have made a lot of progress towards improving how we include equality and diversity in the processes within the Council and the work we do with members of the public.

We will review the Scheme as a result of our consultation and the valuable comments we receive from our staff and external stakeholders. The Scheme gives more detail about the arrangements and processes we have in place which help us to meet our general and specific duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006.

In summary the Scheme sets out:

- how we will promote equality and diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination in the work we do as an employer;
- the actions we plan to take from 2008-2011 to improve our equality and diversity performance and outcomes; and
- how we meet our legal responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, The Equality Act 2006 and the Employment Regulations for Age, Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation.

We see the Scheme as a vital means of consulting with those who live, work and study in Warwick District, and therefore we would welcome any views and comments you have on what we plan to do.

Chris Elliott
Chief Executive
Warwick District Council

Cllr Michael Doody
Leader
Warwick District Council

1. INTRODUCTION

Since developing our first Equality and Diversity Plan there have been a number of changes that affect the equality and diversity work we do. A new law for disability equality came into force in 2006 and for gender equality in 2007. This was followed by European directives on religion and belief and sexual orientation which placed even greater duties on public services to promote equality. Current proposals to create one Single Equality Bill will simplify the legislative framework but also make our duties and responsibilities easier to understand.

The Council publicised its first Equality and Diversity Plan in 2003 and revised in 2004. This document replaces the Equality and Diversity Plan now to be known as the Council's 'Equality and Diversity Scheme' to provide a single approach for building equality for race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Our new 'Equality and Diversity Scheme 2008 – 2011' builds on the original following the learning from our success so far.

Our approach to equality and diversity is to focus on the people who need public services by looking at their whole identity. We recognise that currently some people do not experience fair access to services or a fair quality of life. This can have an adverse impact on the opportunities available to them as they progress through their lives. People can experience discrimination, harassment and other barriers to participation as a result of different aspects of their identity such as race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Many of the actions we can take to tackle discrimination and harassment and promote equality are equally applicable to all equality groups. We have produced a single Equality and Diversity Scheme which covers race, disability, gender (equality between men, women and people who are transgender), age, religion or belief and sexual orientation as we believe that this helps us tackle experiences of multiple discrimination more effectively.

We recognise, however, that although the three equality duties for race, disability and gender are very similar in spirit there are important differences between them. These differences reflect the specific experience of inequality and discrimination of each particular equality group. We will strive to ensure these differences are reflected in the actions the Council takes by ensuring the equality impact assessment process consider the needs of all six equality areas. This document is our combined Equality and Diversity Scheme.

2. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

2.1 Warwick District

Warwick District has a population of approximately 125,000. It is economically and socially diverse with rural areas served by market towns, as well as larger urban centres. The District is generally prosperous with wage levels about the national average. There are however, areas within the District that suffer from considerable economic and social deprivation. The 2001 Census indicates a number of population trends that impact on equality and diversity, for example:

- There has been a 9.4% increase in the District's population over the last 20 years
- Across the District, the population of older people (75 and 85+) has increased significantly, with the proportion aged 85+ having increased by half
- Across the District, women significantly out-number men in 75+ age groups
- The black and minority ethnic (BME) community account for 7.1% of the total Warwick District population – which means that Warwick District has the largest BME population in Warwickshire.

2.2 Role and structure

The Council has a number of roles, which include:

- (1) leading the community
- (2) representing the community
- (3) providing a range of services, like housing, leisure etc
- (4) providing democratic rights and overseeing local, national and European elections.

The Council's Services are divided into three Directorates. These are led by a Strategic Directors who report to the Chief Executive. However, increasingly much of our work cuts across the group boundaries; with Strategic Directors having cross-Council responsibilities for other more corporate work (see appendix 1 – for the Structure of the Council)

2.3 The Council's vision, mission, objectives and values

2.3.1 **The Council's vision is:**

“Warwick District is a great place to live, work and visit.”

2.3.2 The Council's mission is

“ Building upon Excellence, to become World Class by 2012”

2.3.3 Our objectives

Leadership

To increase the percentage of residents who are satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live by 8% to 94% by 2011.

To increase the percentage of residents either very or fairly satisfied with the Council overall by 8% to 80% by 2011.

To maintain a rating of 3 out of 4 in the Audit Commission's annual Use of Resources Assessment.

Housing

To reduce rent arrears from 3.2% in 2007 to 2.35% in 2011.

To provide 400 new affordable homes by 2011.

To reduce the % of rent loss through properties being empty from 0.78% in 2007 to 0.58% in 2011.

Culture

To increase the number of under 18's participating in targeted sports activities run by WDC by 1% year on year.

To increase the number of over 50's participating in targeted sports activities run by WDC by 1% year on year.

To maintain the number of public cultural events, currently 17 annually, specifically promoting inclusion and community cohesion organised by or in partnership with WDC.

Environment

To achieve the target of 99% of land at an acceptable standard of cleanliness (litter and detritus), up from 95% in 2007.

To increase the % of household waste diverted from landfill (recycled & composted) by 14% to 45% in 2011.

To achieve improved satisfaction of local business with Local Authority regulatory services (baseline and targets to be developed).

To reduce CO2 production from operations under direct control of WDC (excluding waste collection and council housing) by 19%.

Development

For Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth to be ahead of average regional town centre performance by at least 1%.

To create 100 new jobs annually as a result of projects enabled/implemented.

To increase the % of all planning applications received which are consistent with design guidance and which are approved without requiring significant amendment at the request of WDC, from 68% in 2007 to 78% in 2011.

Communities

To increase the success of first intervention in reducing anti-social behaviour for all individuals other than local authority tenants, members of their household or visitors to their property from 72.4% in 2007 to 77% in 2011.

To increase the number of Town and Parishes with a local plan of their area from 1 in 2007 to 6 in 2011.

To increase the number of services achieving the Warwickshire Award for involvement from 0 in 2007 to 3 silver in 2011.

Customers

To improve citizen perception of improvement in key services to 7.5% by 2011.

Overall, the extent to which customers find WDC services easy to access and use to be 80% by 2011.

To increase the number of multi-agency one stop shops from 1 in 2007 to 5 in 2011.

2.3.4 Our Values

Our values set out the way we aim to conduct ourselves in the work we do. They are a statement of the kind of behaviours our customers can expect from us when they deal with the Council and they underline the kind of organisation we would like to be seen as. Members of staff should be expected to act in accordance with such values but also should be expected to be treated likewise by the Council as an employer and by the community.

- **Honesty and Integrity** - we can be relied upon and will be truthful
- **Open and transparent** - we will be accountable and understandable
- **Fair and equitable** - will value all our citizens and our work will be without bias or prejudice
- **Community focussed** - we will put the needs and aspirations of our local communities to the fore and we will work flexibly and collaboratively as one Council and with others in response
- **Environmentally sensitive** - we will ensure our long term impacts are minimised and are sustainable for the future.

2.4 Equality and Diversity – objective and target

The Equality Framework for Local Government is a performance management and implementation tool for delivering on equality and diversity. It is a tool designed to help Councils assess the progress they are making in relation to their commitment to equality and diversity.

The Council has agreed the following Equality and Diversity target :

' to become an 'Achieving' authority within the Equality Framework for Local Government by December 2010'

This supports the Council's key Strategy Objectives "improve the efficiency of service delivery to the council's customers".

3. Our progress so far

3.1 Key area of progress

We have come a long way since the publication of our first Equality and Diversity Plan and significant progress has been made in three areas:

- strengthening our arrangements for governing and delivering our equality and diversity activity;
- improving our approach as an employer; and
- taking steps to reflect equality and diversity better in our work with the voluntary and community sector

3.2 From vision to reality

We have strengthened our arrangements for governing and delivering our equality and diversity activities which benefits our approach to all equality groups. We have:

- Made Equality and Diversity an integral part of the Council's performance management framework;
- Established an effective quarterly performance monitoring mechanism to review the Council's progress on the Equality Framework for Local Government. This includes the following target

“ to become an ‘Achieving’ authority within the Equality Framework for Local Government by December 2010”

- Undertaken an equal pay review to ensure any pay gaps are addressed;
- Adopted a Corporate approach to carrying out a comprehensive programme for undertaking equality impact assessment on all the Council's policies, functions and procedures by Services Areas;
- Adopted a Corporate approach for collecting, collating and using equality service user data to help inform Service Area Planning;
- Used a Corporate mechanism for carrying out consultation with stakeholder groups and communities; and
- Developing a Corporate mechanism for audit and scrutiny on the Council's equality and diversity activity.

4. Leading equality and diversity work

4.1 Areas of responsibility

The effective delivery of equality and diversity is everybody's business, but specific responsibility rests with elected members, senior officers and line managers.

Elected members will:

- Provide leadership; an effective scrutiny role and promote equality and diversity on the corporate agenda
- Ensure that adequate resources are available to discharge the Council's legal responsibilities in terms of supporting equality of opportunity

Corporate Management Team Officers will:

- Model the standards of behaviour and conduct they expect from their managers and staff
- Provide direction and endorse equalities strategy, policy and practice
- Encourage the integration of equalities into all aspects of Service Areas work
- Actively promote equality issues/action within Service Areas
- Provide for one of their members to be an equalities champion

Managers will:

- Demonstrate commitment to equality by promoting it within their everyday roles – for themselves and for their staff
- Identify appropriate training needs and provide training opportunities
- Monitor the effectiveness of equalities policies and programmes in their areas
- Encourage the provision of appropriate information, instruction and supervision

All staff will:

- Be encouraged to demonstrate commitment to equality in the performance of their duties and in their professional relationships with service users and colleagues
- Support managers in the development and implementation of equality
- Undertake appropriate training on equalities to meet their duties

Staff and elected members will be assisted in discharging their responsibilities by specialist staff including the Corporate HR Service; the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group and Lead Officer for equalities.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its policies and decisions reflect the principles contained within this Equality and Diversity Scheme. The Executive and Culture and Social Policy Committee should monitor and check that the principles are being applied whenever they scrutinise any aspect of a service.

In order to discharge this responsibility, the Council has established a Members' Equality and Diversity Group. This Group will lead on the development of the Equality and Diversity Scheme and report to Executive and the Culture and Social Policy Committee. The Group has the following remit:

- To provide a member lead on developing equality and diversity policy, and championing the equalities agenda
- To ensure that issues of equality, diversity and social inclusion are given proper significance and weight on the Council's political and service agenda
- To work with the officers of the Corporate Equality & Diversity Group on the development of the Equality and Diversity Scheme, and the identification of resource requirements
- To monitor progress on equality and diversity policies, referring matters to Culture and Social Policy Committee as appropriate

4.2 Clients / Contractors

In addition, the Council expects that any clients or contractors carrying our work on behalf of the Council will comply with the principles set out in its Equality and Diversity Policy. The Council's contract compliance is currently under review but it is clear that equality will be found in the Council's new Procurement Code of Practice when it is launched later in the year.

5. The Equality Framework for Local Government

5.1 The Equality Framework was developed by IDeA and launched in April 2009, it replaces the Equality Standard for Local Government. It is a tool designed to help Councils assess the progress they are making in relation to their commitment to delivering positive equality and diversity outcomes to their customers, staff and communities.

5.2 The Framework builds on and recognises the work that councils have already undertaken under the old Standard, but contains many new features. At its heart it aspires to be simpler, smarter and proportional and relevant.

5.3 The Framework provides three levels of achievement, 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent'. It also uses a wider definition of equality **'an equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be'** (Equalities Review 2007). The Framework is more aspirational than the former legal definitions of equality.

5.4 The Council has committed to becoming an 'achieving' authority within the Framework by December 2010. The Framework will measure the positive outcomes achieved for our customers, staff and communities. and place these within the context of the wider drive for delivering outcome focused services.. External validation of our progress will be based on our corporate self-assessment against the 'achieving' standards.

5.5 This Scheme and Action Plan is the Council's approach to implementing the equality legislative duties and demonstrates our desire to achieve beyond the minimum expected of us.

6. **Background to the Scheme**

6.1 What the law says

As a public authority, we have general duties to promote equal opportunities relating to race, disability and gender and to remove discrimination. Our responsibilities are set out in the:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) 2000;
- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005;
- Sex Discrimination Act (SDA)1975;
- Equality Act (EA) 2006; and
- Equal Pay Act 1970.

We must also meet our employment duties for age, religion and belief as set out in the following legislation:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006;
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003;
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

We aim to apply the highest standards from each of the duties to all six equalities groups.

The core general duties are similar for race, disability and gender and are to:

- promote equality of opportunity; and
- eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination.

However, there are important areas where there are different legislative requirements which set a higher standard, these are:

- promote good relations between people of different racial groups under the RRAA 2000;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people under the DDA 2005;

- encourage participation by disabled people in public life under DDA 2005; and
- take positive steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably under DDA 2005. This means we have to take steps which go beyond treating disabled people and non disabled alike.

There are some areas where different legislation is more specific or sets a higher standard. These are to:

- involve disabled people in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme under DDA 2005;
- ensure the Disability Equality Scheme includes a statement of the way in which disabled people have been involved in its development under the DDA 2005;
- to consult stakeholders (in other words employees, service users and other including trade unions) and take account of relevant information in order to determine its gender equality objectives under the EA 2006;
- set out our gender equality objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gaps under the EA 2006;
- ensure public access to information and services which we provide under the RRAA 2000;
- train our staff in connection with the general and specific duties under RRAA 2000
- fulfil our employment duties under the RRAA 2000 and specifically to:
 - monitor, by reference to the racial groups to which they belong, the numbers of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion;
 - monitor the numbers of staff from each racial group who receive training, benefit or suffer detriment as a result of our performance assessment procedures, who are involved in grievance procedures, or who are the subject of disciplinary procedures, and who leave the employment of the Council; and
 - publish annually the results of our employment monitoring set out above.

Each statutory responsibilities and supporting functions is relevant to the general duties of the RRAA 2000, DDA 2005 and EA 2006. All these duties apply to the Council as a whole. All of these duties are currently subject to change as a result of the proposed Single Equality Bill, should the Bill become an Act it will provide a single legal framework for equalities which is less complicated and more transparent.

6.2 Who is the Scheme for

Our Equality and Diversity Scheme sets out what we are currently doing and planning to do over the next three years to meet our general and specific duties and achieve our aims for our equality and diversity work. We want our Scheme to influence and inform the work of the Council, setting a standard for the work of each Service Area.

The Scheme enables all of our stakeholders including the people who use our services – to hold us account for delivery of the activities we set out in our action plan.

‘We welcome and encourage any comments you may have about our Scheme. These will help us to review and improve year on year’.

6.3 The contents of the Scheme

We have specific duties which provide a framework to guide us in meeting our general duties in the most appropriate way. We are required to:

- publish an equality and diversity scheme demonstrating how we intend to fulfil our general and specific duties;
- ensure the equality scheme includes a statement of our arrangements for:
 - actively consulting, involving and encouraging the participation of representatives of people from the 6 equality strands in developing the Scheme;
 - assessing the likely impact of our existing and proposed policies on the promotion of equality;
 - gathering information in relation to employment and the delivery of our services to monitor for any adverse impact or unmet need on the promotion of equality;
 - putting this information to use, in particular, in reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan and in preparing subsequent equality schemes;
 - publishing the results of our assessments and consultation annually and reviewing the Scheme at least every three years;
 - building capacity; and
 - the steps we will take towards fulfilling the general duty (the action plan).

7. The Scheme

7.1 Consultation, involvement and participation

We are committed to involving the public in our work so that we can reflect the experiences of people who use our services. We promote a user-focused approach to our services and will establish five core principles for user focus. They also describe the expectations that we have of ourselves. They are:

- fairness;
- diversity;
- consent;
- engagement; and
- value for money.

We recognise that our role can significantly impact on the services available to black and minority people, disabled people, men, women and individuals who are transgender, people of different ages, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

7.1.1 Consultation

The Council is involved in a wide range of partnerships with different stakeholders, including the Warwick Partnership, the District's Local Strategic Partnership. These partnerships provide an opportunity to undertake shared consultation activity, especially with other statutory and voluntary sector organisations. It is essential that the results of these consultations are shared with partner agencies, so that the relevant organisation can work from a common information database.

7.1.2 Involvement

The Council will continue to work with the specific community groups described below to establish how they would like to be involved and participate in the Council's equality activity. The groups are:

Young People – A countywide Youth Council and five area councils have been set up. These promote the participation of young people in the work of the Council. The Youth Councils can be a vehicle for service providers to establish the views of young people on a variety of issues.

Older People – A countywide forum and nine local forums are held regularly which enable the Council to work in partnership with older people to plan and develop new or changing services. These have similar aims to the Councils for younger people.

Disabled People – The Warwickshire Disability Forum has been established to bring together representatives from the County, District/Borough Councils, local disability organisations and health agencies to promote the social model of disability, and to work towards the removal of barriers to the full participation of disabled people in the economic, social and political life of the community. In addition a Warwick District Disability Forum is being launched later in 2008 – which will include representation by disabled people from across the District.

Black and Minority Ethnic People – A District wide Forum has been established which meets on a quarterly basis. This arrangement enables the Council and its partners to consult black and minority ethnic communities on all policies, plans and decision-making processes.

The Council will continue to consult and communicate with staff on equality and diversity issues through the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group and on-going training.

7.1.3 Participation

The Council endeavours to identify and make contact with those individuals or groups who may feel excluded, or who do not have the opportunity to participate in the consultation process. In addition to encourage and build capacity of people from the 6 equality strands in participating in the Equality Impact Assessment process.

7.2 Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) are the process by which the Council determines whether there are any discriminatory effects or outcomes or any unmet needs in its services and practices.

7.2.1 Methodology

We have taken a comprehensive approach in assessing our policy and practices. Specifically, EIAs consider:

- if the current or proposed policy or activity will have a negative impact on people from equalities groups; and
- whether we have missed an unmet need or an opportunity to achieve a more positive impact for people from equalities groups.

Training, advice and guidance notes are provided for all relevant managers on how to conduct effective impact assessments. Service Area Managers are responsible for checking that appropriate assessments have been taken place, and that the resulting actions plans are properly implemented.

The assessment involves four stages:

Stage 1: Screening which involves listing all policies and practices and prioritising for initial assessments;

Stage 2: Initial assessments to determine if there is a enough evidence for a policy or practice to progress to a more in-depth assessment stage – partial or full impact assessments;

Stage 3: Partial assessment – is when there is not enough evidence to carry out a full impact assessment, but there are concerns of adverse impact or unmet need; and

Stage 4: Full assessment is required where there is clear evidence of adverse impact or unmet need and if also introducing a new policy or practice.

7.2.2 Progress and future action

The Council has carried out EIAs in all its Service Areas and will continue to do so over the next 3 years. This is in order to collect data to determine whether its services are accessed equally by all who require them, and whether in the light of the information available, they need to be modified or reviewed.

Where gaps or imbalances are found, action plans will be developed by Services Areas to rectify any discriminatory outcomes or unmet need. Services Areas will publish a summary of the results of the EIAs together with their action plans on an annual basis. This will be in the Service Area Plan, which lists any activity in Service Areas for the forthcoming year.

The Council considers EIAs to be at the core of this Scheme. They will not be a 'one-off' response to the Equality Standard, but a continuing part of the Council's work.

7.3 Gathering information

Evidence gathering and analysis of how well we are performing is a core part of the Council's business. We gather and interpret evidence on a regular basis to make judgements about performance. The Council believes that gathering and using evidence is intrinsic to understanding and improving performance.

7.3.1 Systems in place for gathering information

We have systems in place for:

- monitoring and reviewing our performance on equality;
- gathering and using information about us as an employer;
- assessing the performance of services on an equality basis; and
- undertaking EIAs.

7.3.2 Employment

We have good systems for gathering and interpreting information relation to the recruitment, retention, and development of our employees by ethnicity, disability, age and sex. However we will need to ask people how they feel about being asked to record sexuality and religion or belief.

We use the following categories to monitor ethnicity:

- White
- British
- Irish
- Any other White background
- Black
- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background
- Mixed
- White and black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background
- Asian
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian back
- Chinese
- Other ethnic group
- Any other ethnic group

7.3.3 Service Delivery

The Council is confident that the services it provides are of a high quality, but recognises that like many organisations, things can and do go wrong. Therefore it is important that we seek the views of service users to ensure where things go wrong we have an opportunity to improve performance. T

A Manager's guide has been produced to assist Service Areas in gathering service users information on an equality basis. The guide provides comprehensive advice and guidance on how to gather service users data and provides a range of templates and checklists to support the process.

7.4 Putting information to use

The monitoring and management of our equality work is embedded into our existing performance management and business planning process. The Council's Executive, Culture and Social Policy Committee and the Members Equality and Diversity Group have a specific role in scrutinising and evaluating the effective delivery of our Equality and Diversity Scheme by ensuring:

- the work is not lost through mainstreaming;
- council-wide issues can be identified and tackled;
- outcomes are achieved; and
- consistency of approach is maintained.

This Scheme sets out our corporate equality action plan for the next three years, including the specific actions we take for race, disability, gender, age religion or belief and sexual orientation. The plan indicates the impact of equality groups, strategic actions, who is responsible for actions and the timescale for delivery and the expected outcomes.

7.4.1 Monitoring the Corporate Equality and Diversity Scheme

The Impact Assessment process will assess the extent of existing monitoring within each of Service Areas on its relevant functions and policies. It is essential that the Council is able to assess not only whether the actions set out in this Equality and Diversity Scheme are being properly implemented, but also whether these actions are improving access to, and the quality of services to different groups of people.

As part of the corporate planning process, the Council has established targets and performance indicators relating to the general duty to promote race equality, as well gender and disability through the commitment to the Equality Standard. These have been developed and integrated into service plans. A number of equality performance measures will be used as part of new national indicator set and external inspections and auditing processes.

Information on the overall progress that the Council is making with the Equality and Diversity Scheme will be collected regularly and published in an Annual Progress Report at the end of each financial year.

7.4.2 Monitoring Council services and the workplace for complaints, racist incidents and incidents of victimisation/harassment

The Council welcomes complaints as well as compliments and comments, as it knows that complaints offer an opportunity to identify areas for improvement and can help enhance service provision. Every complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The Council has a Corporate Complaints procedure and each Service Area has an Officer to deal with complaints. It is their role to ensure that the Complaints Procedure is well known and implemented and that a system for recording complaints is in place.

During the life of this Scheme, the Council will review its Complaints Procedure to ensure that complaints involving any form of victimisation, harassment, discriminatory behaviour are thoroughly investigated. Service users and members of the community are actively encouraged to report any such concerns to the appropriate Services Areas Complaints Officer.

Procedures for staff – No form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be tolerated in the workplace. Should any member of staff experience a racist incident at work, or any act of victimisation or harassment due to their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion/belief, this should be reported through the Council's Harassment at Work Policy.

7.4.3 Identifying and recording racist incidents and complaints of discrimination

The Council is committed to ensuring that the recommendations from the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999) and the guidelines contained within the Home Office Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents are fully implemented across the Council.

The Council participates in a number of multi-agency groups that aim to ensure that systems are in place for the prevention of racist incidents and the detection of those that are reported by the community.

The Council is also recording the number of complaints it receives in relation to other equality areas and actively records incidents and actions taken as a result of any complaints.

7.4.4 Monitoring the workforce for equality of opportunity

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and by constantly improving its monitoring systems will be able to demonstrate that its workforce reflects the community it serves. It is vital that the Council fulfils its responsibilities and set a good example to other employers.

The Council has a specific duty under the Equality Legislation to monitor its workforce in a variety of ways. An Equal Opportunities monitoring form is included in recruitment packs so that this data can be collected for analysis, in addition an 'Equality for All' booklet has been produced to accompany requests for job applications.

The Council will in the future develop workforce targets using the Equality Standard criteria for employment and training as the benchmark, and new National Performance Indicator set as the mechanism for focusing organisational attention on equality in employment and service provision.

7.4.5 Measuring Performance

The Council has a number of performance indicators against which the Council sets targets and measures its achievements. Most of these have been through the national performance indicators, known as 'Best Value Performance Indicators' (BVPI's). These performance indicators over the next year will be replaced by the new national indicator set aligned with the Local Area Agreement and these will be used in the future to track whether the Council is making progress in achieving equality and diversity in Warwick District.

In addition, each Service Area will be required to measure its progress and performance against a series of equality related indicators specific to their service.

This list of performance indicators will be added to over time as improvements are made to the equality monitoring of the Council's major services, and on the basis of future guidance issued by the Audit Commission.

The Council will publish the specific outcomes against equality related performance indicators in the annual Performance Plan. These results will form the basis of consultation and feedback on how the Council is doing and how it might improve its monitoring and results.

7.5 Publishing the results of Equality Impact Assessments

The Council intends to use a variety of ways of letting the public and its employees know what progress is being made.

The Council wants people to understand the reasons for its decisions and what improvements have been made to ensure the integration of equality and diversity into policy and practice. The Council also wants to provide people with information that helps them to question the quality of these decisions and to raise issues that need to be addressed in the future. The methods of communication will include:

- Team and Service Area briefing notes
- Employee and service user newsletters
- Annual Reports, and
- The WDC website and intranet

The Council will maintain a record of all the Impact Assessments undertaken.

7.5.1 Public Access to services and information

The Council recognises there is a risk that some sections of the public will not enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing Council information. For example, people with learning difficulties and people with visual impairments may have difficulties with printed information. People whose first language is not English may have difficulties with information that is only provided in English.

The Council is committed to providing, where possible, equal access to our services and to the information that it provides.

7.5.2 Accessible to all communities

The Council will ensure that its publications and press statements are accessible to all communities. It will aim to provide information in accessible formats, including electronically.

The Council also has membership of 'Language Line' to provide language support in the key frontline customer service areas.

The Council will continue to review its approach to the provision of translation, interpreting and language services. The Council's web-site will continue to undergo improvements to enhance access for everyone.

The prioritisation of functions and policies for Impact Assessment should highlight where improvements can be made to facilitate equal access to information and services.

7.6 Developing our capacity

In order to support this Equality and Diversity Scheme, all staff need appropriate training in equality and diversity issues. The Council will access such training for staff and elected members through its membership of the Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull learning Academy to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their responsibilities and to be able to deliver high quality services that do not discriminate unfairly.

The Council has undertaken the following as part of its commitment to building the organisations capacity around equality and diversity:

7.6.1 Corporate Induction Training

Each new member of staff is required to participate in the Corporate Induction Training Programme. One of the key elements of the training is the Equality and Diversity Awareness Training. The aim of the programme is to create an awareness of equalities issues and to help participants explore how their own contribution can assist in supporting the Council's equalities policies.

7.6.2 The Council's Equality and Diversity Training Programme

The Council's Equality and Diversity Training Programme is delivered through the C, W and S learning Academy

7.7 Our priorities and action plan

This section at Appendix 2 identifies where we want to be in 2011 and what we need to do in order to get there. Our priority objectives are based on:

- what our employees and external stakeholders told us we should focus on;
- an review of our equality and diversity performance and arrangements for delivery via an enhanced scrutiny process;
- the results of monitoring our performance as an employer;
- what we know about the equality and diversity performance of the Council;

- the results of our consultation on our draft single Equality and Diversity Scheme.

Appendix 3 (to be developed) sets out corporate equality action plan for the next three years. The Scheme indicates the strategic actions, the directorate responsible for the action, the timescale for delivery, and the expected outcome.

8. **Acknowledgements**

8.2 The following groups will be involved in helping to shape and prepare the Scheme:

- Members led Equality and Diversity Group
- Corporate Equality and Diversity Group
- Warwick District Council - staff
- Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership
- The Council of Disabled People
- Council for Voluntary Service

9. **Bibliography**

9.1 The following publications were referenced to assist with the development of this strategy:

- Audit Commission – ‘Directions in Diversity’
- The Equality Framework for Local Government
- Warwick District Council – ‘Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes
- Commission for Racial Equality – ‘Guidance on the Duty for Public Authorities to Promote Racial Equality’
- Home Office/CRE/OPDM and Interfaith Network – ‘Guidance on the Community Cohesion’
- Audit Commission – ‘Making Equality and Diversity a reality’