

# COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITY POLICY

## Intro from Chief Exec / Cllr Steadman

We know that in order to provide the leadership necessary to realise this Comprehensive Equality Policy (CEP), and Corporate Equality Plan (CEP), the Council must demonstrate our value of 'valuing everyone equally and respect diversity' in all our activities. This is in terms of the Council's strategic leadership and responsibility for commissioning and providing services and as an employer.

This CEP describes in detail what the above value means in practice. It sets a high standard of what we expect when embedding equality and diversity throughout all of our services and employment opportunities. This policy contains the Council's aspirations for an inclusive environment. It also describes real actions that underpin the Council's commitment to value everyone equally and respect diversity.

The action plan attached to the policy recognises that achieving the policy will be carried out over a realistic yet challenging period of time. We are seeking to deliver as much as possible within current resources and explain how and when specific issues or tasks can be resolved.

Managers and councillors are committed to delivering the actions contained within the action plan attached to this document. Monitoring this policy is the responsibility of both managers and elected members of the Council and equally we are seeking feedback from our residents, visitors and staff.

If you have any comments to make about this policy please contact the Equality and Diversity Team on 01934 634832. Your comments will help us ensure that this policy remains relevant to the people of North Somerset.

Signed - **Councillor Bob Steadman – Executive Member for People and Property**  
**Graham Turner – Chief Executive Officer**

This document is available in a wide range of different formats and languages other than English. Please call the equality and diversity team on 01934 634832 or email [david.williams@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:david.williams@n-somerset.gov.uk) if you require any assistance.

### **What is equality?**

**Equality** is the principle of equal treatment for all people irrespective of their gender, colour or national origins, disability, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, age, health, social background or any other recognised area of discrimination.

### **What is diversity?**

**Diversity** is the acceptance that we are all different but we are all equal. Diversity focuses on valuing and celebrating the strengths in people's differences.

## **Consulting on the Comprehensive Equality Policy and Action Plan**

During the Spring of 2005 there was a major research project involving a wide range of organisations across the authority which has guided the development of the policy.

Further consultations on the draft took place at the wider community engagement event in January 2006. Each directorate has consulted on the draft through relevant partnerships and with staff throughout the Council including the Trades Unions.

## **Introduction**

**This policy is effective initially from March 2006 to March 2008. It will be reviewed along with the accompanying action plan on an annual basis. Formal monitoring of this policy will take place annually led by the Corporate Champion for Equality and Diversity. This policy replaces the Council's existing equality and diversity policy (agreed March 2004).**

**This policy sets out how the council will deliver 'valuing everyone equally and respecting diversity'.**

This Comprehensive Equality Policy has been put together to show how the council will put into practice a number of responsibilities including, the:

- current and expected legislation relating to gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and impending legislation on age
- requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government (a local authority framework for demonstrating equality and diversity achievement in both employment and service delivery)
- actions needed to fulfil our equal opportunities commitment and corporate values
- commitments made in previous equality and diversity policy (which this document updates and replaces)

## **Our Commitment**

We are working to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and lawfully. For the services we directly provide or commission, we aim to ensure that no one regardless of their race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion or belief or is treated in an unlawful or discriminatory manner. In our community leadership role, we also strive to ensure that our partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors also subscribe to these values.

## **North Somerset Council Aims and Values**

Following consultation with staff, local partners and customers the Council has set six aims, (these are fully explained in our Corporate Plan 2005 - 08):

- ◆ promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all
- ◆ enhancing health and well-being
- ◆ protecting and improving the environment
- ◆ building safer communities
- ◆ increasing prosperity
- ◆ ensuring continuous improvement

This policy contributes towards the achievement of all six council aims, in particular ensuring continuous improvement. The Council has developed a framework of values and beliefs that reflect the way it seeks to work, they explain what kind of an organisation we want to be and what the people of North Somerset can expect from us. These values underpin all that we do and are the shared aspirations of both Councillors and staff.

- ◆ Put people first
- ◆ Respond to local opinion
- ◆ Encourage a culture of achievement
- ◆ Work with and involve others

- ◆ Value everyone equally and respect diversity
- ◆ Provide a better quality of life for current and future generations
- ◆ Deliver value for money

North Somerset is dedicated to becoming an excellent Council which improves the quality of life for all. This overall vision is supported by the above values which include '**valuing everyone equally and respecting diversity**'. Within this we believe that equality for all is important for the whole community, improving lives and bringing social benefit not only to local residents but also to those who visit the area for work and leisure.

## Our equality principles

This Comprehensive Equality Policy (and action plan) sets out how we will demonstrate this value and deliver the commitments in our Equal Opportunities Commitment. The following is a list of overriding principles that will be taken into consideration during all aspects of Council work. We will:

- a) Consider and discuss the requirements of the whole community when designing services, by taking account of and understanding the diversity of needs, backgrounds and cultures that exist in North Somerset.
- b) Take our responsibilities within current equality legislation into account when creating and amending existing policies, practices and plans.
- c) Promote a culture of respect where people are valued as individuals where the contributions of individuals is recognised.
- d) Investigate and try to put right any unfairness or discrimination.
- e) Ensure the community in North Somerset is actively supported and consulted to enable real involvement in service development and decision making.
- f) Respond to opportunities of working with local partners including the voluntary and private sectors and assist in developing good practice on issues of diversity and equality.
- g) Ensure fair employment, recruitment and equal pay for all staff.
- h) Expect all employees to act professionally and to treat colleagues and service users with dignity and respect. In return employees can expect to be treated in the same way.

## Consideration of corporate Issues

In developing this policy the council has taken account of the organisation's Policy Development Framework which sets out key corporate issues that all policies must consider. A brief statement setting how each issue was considered is set out below.

- **Sustainable communities:** which ensure the social, environmental and economic needs of communities are met. This policy contributes to the creation of a sustainable community as it works toward the creation of "active, inclusive and safe" communities in North Somerset. The principles and actions planned will help embed tolerance and respect for all members of the community. It will also facilitate engagement of people from different cultures, backgrounds and belief both with regard to our services and the way in which the council plans/designs its services.
- **Community safety:** In the development of this policy the council has assessed how it contributes toward the creation of safer communities within North Somerset. The Safer Community Strategy (2005-08) lists a series of priorities that the council

and its partners are focusing on, to create a safer North Somerset. This policy contributes to two of these priorities – “reducing drug misuse” and “reducing anti-social behaviour” The specific actions are set out in the action plan.

- **Children and Young People:** This policy contributes to priorities set out in the Single Plan for Children and Young People. These are – “Enjoying and achieving” and “Making a positive contribution”.
- **Human rights:** The council has considered human rights implications in the creation of this policy and does not believe it infringes on people’s human rights, as set out in the Human Rights Act (1998)

## **Links to other policies**

### **Race Equality Scheme 2005 - 2007**

The Council is aware from the national context, e.g. the Stephen Lawrence enquiry, that there are risks of institutional racism i.e. that Black and Minority Ethnic people may suffer discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion, both in employment and when accessing services. Race equality must be a way of ensuring that everyone gets an equal opportunity to do well, in work, in the way they live and in the way they utilise Council services, regardless of their colour, race, nationality or ethnicity.

This Race Equality Scheme is a statement of how the Council’s is fulfilling its statutory duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The Council’s Race Equality Scheme is a strategy supported by a 3 year action plan. It clearly sets out how the Council is responding to Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976, which placed a general duty on public authorities to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and
- Promote good relationships between people of different racial groups

The Race Equality Scheme has been reviewed with assistance from Somerset Race Equality Council and areas identified for further work in 2006 have been incorporated in the Corporate Equality Action Plan. Some of the key areas for action include:

- Follow up action planning following the Impact Assessments across all Directorates
- Improving consistency of recording of Ethnic monitoring of service users
- Reviewing the Corporate Equality training programme linking with Directorate needs
- Reviewing the Hate Crime incident monitoring system
- Research and analysis of demographic changes in BME population

This Comprehensive Equality Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council’s Race Equality Scheme 2005 – 2007.

### **Example of Policy in Practice - Summer Festival**

North Somerset Community Safety and Drug Action Team organised a multicultural fiesta to promote Community Safety through building bridges between the varying cultures living in North Somerset. The ethnic community was involved in the planning and organisation of the event which included a musical programme of Japanese, Thai, Russian and Filipino entertainment.

Mrs. Lily Bell a spokesperson from the Other Woman's Network said:

"We were very pleased to be part of this event. It is wonderful to be able to give back something to our adopted Country. We were so happy to see how much everyone appreciated our local dances and food. The day was fantastic and I felt very proud to work with North Somerset Council to achieve this day. "

### **Disability Equality Scheme**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 became law on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2005. As part of this legislation all public bodies will be placed under a positive duty to promote disability equality. This duty will require the public sector to actively promote equality for disabled people. For the Council this will mean a shift of emphasis away from providing reasonable adjustments towards positively tackling any form of institutionalised discrimination that occurs. The general duty requires public authorities to:

- Eliminate harassment against disabled people
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and others
- Need to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities even where that involves treating Disabled people more favourably than others

In line with the requirements of the new legislation, North Somerset Council is aiming to have a Disability Equality Scheme in place by December 2006. Once produced this Comprehensive Equality Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Disability Equality Scheme.

### **Community Strategy**

The North Somerset Community Strategy (2004) provides a shared vision and strategic framework to enable local people, communities and organisations to work together to address local issues that will improve quality of life for all living, working and visiting the area. The work is overseen by the North Somerset Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) which brings together representatives from a range of interests including the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

All work carried out to implement the community strategy is underpinned by the core values adopted by the North Somerset Partnership. These shared values include:

Accessibility – a commitment to 'consider and respond to the needs of our diverse communities across North Somerset to ensure services and projects are available to all who want to access them'.

Equality – a commitment ‘to equal citizenship’ by the NSP who will endeavour to deliver programmes that respond to the diverse needs of local people. We will act to reduce unfair differences in outcomes or the provision of services wherever they occur’.

Further, The Communities and People theme of the Community Strategy describes the range of issues the North Somerset Partnership must address to enable equality of opportunity. It also identifies that the forming Community and People theme partnership is responsible for supporting and monitoring equality issues across all activity to implement the strategy.

### **Customer Charter**

Following on from the council's communications review, the customer charter was put together in early 2004 by the People First working group. The old charter was refreshed and updated to reflect the key corporate value of 'putting people first' and take account of the different channels of access to services. The standards set in the charter were based on existing local standards and also reflected the position adopted by local authorities nationally.

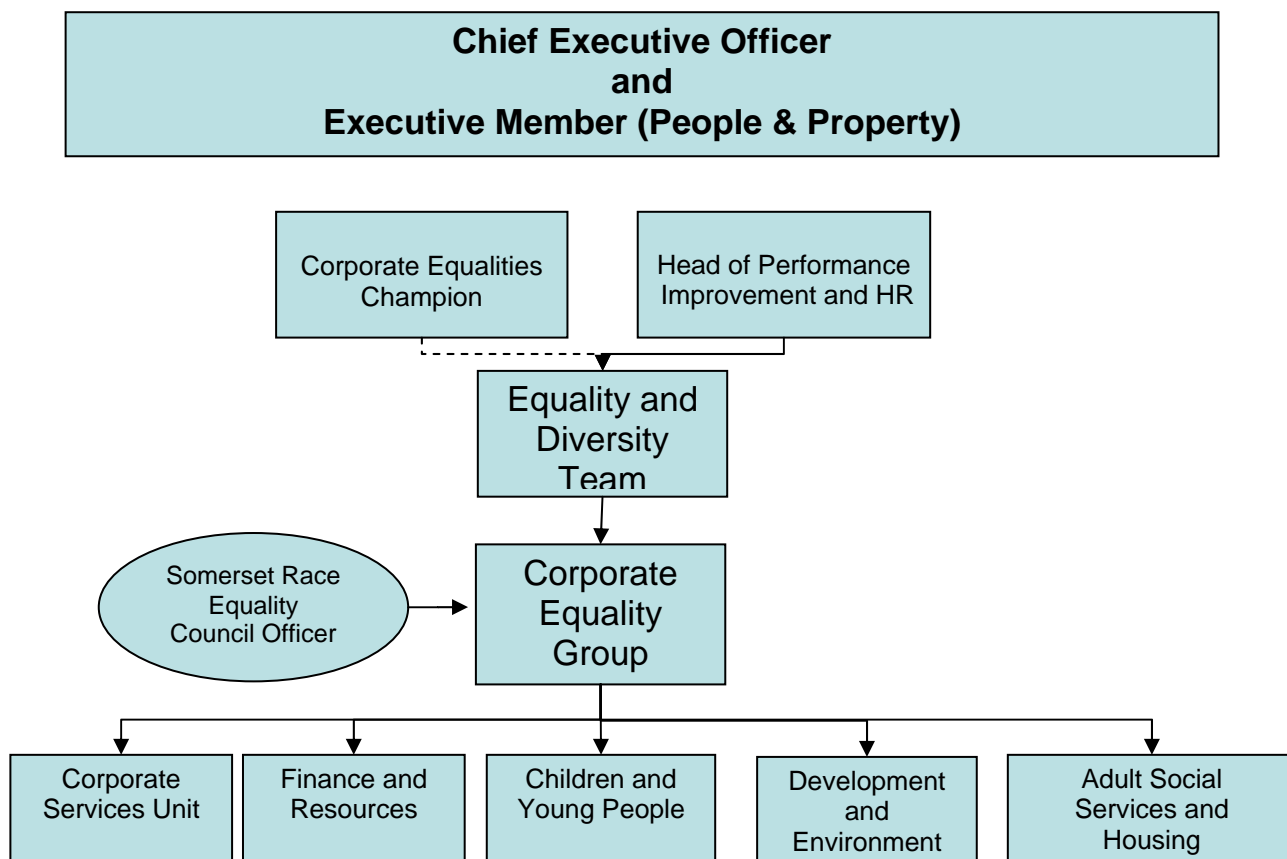
The charter was launched on 1 January 2005 following an extensive consultation period and final sign-off by the Corporate Management Team. The People First group carried out a communications exercise before the charter was launched and awareness raising is still ongoing with the People First customer care training which is compulsory for all staff.

The standards set in the charter are monitored by the People First group on a quarterly basis and the results are fed back to the relevant parties through performance monitoring reports. The standard includes sections on:

- Courtesy and consideration
- Access
- Efficiency
- Communication
- Helping us to help you

The standard ensures that Council services are accessible for all sections of the community. Please refer to appendix 1 for a copy of the customer charter.

## How will we put this Comprehensive Equality Policy into practice?



The Chief Executive Officer and Executive Member with responsibility for People & Property have overall responsibility for this policy, supported by the Corporate Champion for Equality and Diversity (service delivery) and the Head of Performance Improvement and Human Resources (employment).

Formal evaluation of the Policy will take place annually led by the Corporate Champion for Equality through the Corporate Equality Group. The Council's Corporate Equality Group is made up of around 20 senior officers from across each directorate to provide strategic direction to the equalities agenda in North Somerset. The Equality and Diversity Manager will review this Comprehensive Equality Policy annually along with the Council's Race Equality Scheme, updating on progress which will be available for council and public scrutiny.

In 2005 directorate equality groups were set up to ensure that any discussions at the Corporate Equality Group are cascaded down to service and team managers. Directorate equality groups are also in place to ensure that the equality commitments and objectives made in Directorate, Service and Team Plans are seen through to action.

Every member of staff has responsibilities in delivering the actions within this Comprehensive Equalities Policy. Opportunities to raise awareness of those responsibilities will be taken up wherever possible, this will include at corporate induction, mandatory equality and diversity training for all staff, communication of activities through existing methods of communication such as Vibes the staff magazine.



Progression through the various levels of the equality standard will be monitored and evaluated by the Corporate Equality Group and through quarterly monitoring reports that are presented to the Finance and Performance Policy and Scrutiny Panel. Assessment of the Council's progress will be led by the Equality and Diversity Champion.

There is a service level agreement between the Council, PCT and the Police with Somerset Race Equality Council (SREC). This led to the appointment of a SREC Equality Officer as a means where by each agency receives help and advice in fulfilling their obligations under the Race Relations legislation.

Externally the effectiveness of this scheme will be considered by a range of organisations including the Audit Commission through our annual Performance Plan audit and Comprehensive Performance Assessment and our key partners and stakeholders in the community.

## **Staff Training**

We operate firmly within the principles of the Investors in People framework and believe that as an organisation we will only develop by developing our people. Investors in People accreditation has been secured for the Council and an annual staff survey is conducted to seek the views of staff on the support they receive. The staff survey provides invaluable management information as the views of staff can be interrogated by way of age, gender and other factors to inform future planning.

We provide a corporate programme of over 115 different courses to support staff in obtaining the knowledge skill and experiences to do their job to the best of their ability. In support of the corporate training programme managers provide a wide range of vocational development for their staff which ranges from on the job training and project work to support and guidance with continuous professional development. Where appropriate this development will include training on working with diverse groups.

As an organisation we look to continuously improve in the area of staff development and have recently introduced a minimum of entitlement to development time to encourage people to take more responsibility for their own development and make use of all development opportunities that exist in the workplace.

All staff are also soon to receive a development guide outlining all the practices and procedures in place to support their development and to ensure they know what they should expect from the Council as an Investor in People.

Acknowledging the significant responsibilities for staff development that rest with line managers we have developed an in house competency framework which will soon be launched with a 360 degree appraisal exercise for the Corporate Management Team. The framework outlines the core competencies expected of managers and includes the management of diversity, within the council and a framework of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

### **Example of Policy in Practice - Raising awareness of equality and diversity in North Somerset**

Since 2004 approximately 400 councillors, managers and staff have participated in a corporate training programme designed to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues. The training includes practical sessions designed to challenge inappropriate language and behaviour in the workplace and to explore the development of prejudice and discrimination and its implications for the delivery of council services and the working environment. Comments from delegates have included:

*'Scenarios & examples that illustrated issues of equality & diversity and use of language. Really got me thinking about equality issues. A very interesting and stimulating days course.'*

*'I gained an understanding of and acceptance of peoples' differences and my reaction to those.'*

### **Equal access to services**

North Somerset Council understands that its efforts to challenge and end institutional discrimination depend upon its ability to ensure that all sections of local communities are equally well-informed about Council services, are equally able access those services.

We will work to ensure that all customers have equally satisfactory access to Council information and services and the services we provide can meet their particular needs empathetically and fairly.

In order to assess equality of access to services Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on all council services on a rolling three year period. Assessments will be completed at an appropriate level during the development of directorate, service and team plans. Managers responsible for the development of these plans will also be responsible for completion of equality impact assessments.

Any actions that arise from the assessments should be included as directorate, service or team objectives where adequate resources should be assigned to ensure their completion. Monitoring of these objectives will be completed alongside the regular monitoring of directorate, service and team plans.

### **Example of Policy in Practice - Big Lottery Project – A Black and Minority Ethnic Forum for North Somerset**

The Big Lottery project which is run by Somerset Racial Equality Council was awarded £140,000 in 2005 to contact and work with isolated individuals of the black and minority ethnic groups in North Somerset. The project, supported by the council will seek to create a black and ethnic minority forum in North Somerset that will work to address the needs of communities in the area also to empower individuals by connecting them to the relevant support agencies to enable them to address any issues they may have.

## What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An Impact Assessment is a systematic evaluation of a policy, service or function from an equalities and diversity perspective. It requires a review of available information to determine whether there is evidence of a difference in service provision or a negative impact with regard to one or more groups of staff or members of the local community. Actions are prioritised which in turn are addressed through individual service plans.

Impact Assessment is a business tool for ensuring that policies and services achieve their intended outcome and that equality and diversity is integral to all that the Council does.

There are three stages to an Impact Assessment; prioritisation, screening and full impact assessment.

**Stage One: Prioritisation** – To comply with the Race Relations Amendment Act the Council has to carry out an impact assessment on all of its policies and services over a three year period.

Service managers in each directorate have established a list of their policies and services. This list was then ranked in order of importance and given a priority rating of 1-3, with priority one items being assessed in year one, priority two items being assessed in year 2 and so on.

The priority level of an item was determined by considering a range of questions including:

- ◆ Is the policy or service a statutory duty?
- ◆ Is the policy or service a Corporate Priority?
- ◆ Is the policy or service in reference to employment or recruitment?
- ◆ Is the policy or service clearly directed at an external customer group?
- ◆ Is the policy or service specifically directed at a minority group?
- ◆ Is the policy or service known to have any differential impact on minority groups?

**Stage Two: Screening** - All policies and services must be screened to establish if there are any differences in service delivery or negative impact on any groups of the community.

This stage of impact assessment should reflect on any current policy or service issues to form an initial view, it may be appropriate to hold a 'discussion group' with colleagues who deliver the service.

The screening of a policy or service should be based on consultation with the people who are likely to be affected by the policy and by reviewing any management information that is available about a service. Without relevant information an informed screening cannot take place so services must make arrangements to gather appropriate information from the users (and maybe non-users) of the service.

**Stage Three: Full Impact Assessment** - If the initial screening of a policy demonstrates that there are differences in service delivery or a negative effect impact on a specific group a full impact assessment must take place, this will include consultation with minority groups. As a result of a full impact assessment an action plan to eliminate negative impact will need to be put in place.

## **Council Gateways Project**

The Gateways project is about providing improved local access to council services in locations which are conveniently located and physically accessible for our communities.

***We want to provide our customers with equality of access to our services in appropriate locations that are conducive to meeting their individual needs.***

The experience all customers can expect at Gateways will be consistent, and the following qualities will be present

- the highest standards of customer care
- consistent branding of the gateway service
- an environment where all customers feel welcome and at ease which at the same time presents a positive, professional image of the council and its services.

We will be establishing appropriate gateway locations and will focus on:

- ensuring that the members of staff in our gateways have the right personal skills and knowledge to provide an excellent 'first stop shop' service to all our customers.
- ensuring that members of staff have the right tools/information in order to provide up to date, complete and understandable information to all customers.
- ensuring that the services provided at each gateway location are appropriate to the local community and that we don't fall into the trap of adopting a 'one size fits all approach'.

In order to make the best use of the space available at our gateways buildings, many of the services will be accessed online, either by customers themselves using public access terminals, or supported by a trained member of staff. Our website is being improved including specialist web pages to assist customers with disabilities. The website will also be updated to ensure compliance with level AA accessibility guidelines, which will assist ease of use for all our customers.

Customer areas will be developed in line with the Council's response to the Disability Discrimination Act. 'Greeting and meeting' areas, information displays and the technology used will be designed to offer ease of use for all our customers.

Gateways will provide customers with the ability to self serve or to be supported by approachable customer focused staff.

This is an inclusive initiative and the project will embrace every opportunity to recognise, welcome and serve the diversity within our communities.

### **Access to Buildings**

The Council has a commitment to ensure the buildings or places it offers its services from are physically accessible to everyone. In particular it has a programme of works to meet the needs of disabled people in accordance with the requirements and importantly the wider spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act and the KPI BV156.

This work complements other work across the Council to ensure services and information, however they are presented, are accessible for all customers.

The **Council's Access Strategy for Disabled People** sets out the decision-making framework for physical access for disabled people across a number of subject areas. It includes a clear objective for providing accessible buildings. This will be achieved by:

**“Ensuring continuous and suitably ambitious performance improvement on key measures assessing physical access, e.g. 90% of all public Council buildings accessible to disabled people by end of 2007/8 (BV156).”**

(Paragraph 3.4)

A key principle of the Strategy is that the Council will:

“... will seek to ensure that in the choice of buildings and land it occupies, it will promote the needs of disabled people at all times, and at the point where its services are delivered, that everyone has an equal standard of access.”

(Paragraph 4.1)

The Strategy includes physical standards for all Council buildings which focus on usability. By following a common standard relevant to service provision the aim is that buildings will be easy to access and welcoming to all. This includes responding to faith and gender needs.

£1.3 million pounds was spent in 2004/05 on improving access to the Council's buildings and it is expected that a further £0.7 million pounds will have been spent over 2005/06. The programme as a whole and specifically next financial year's schemes for 2006/07, are the subject of a consultation process with the Council's physical access consultation group, the North Somerset Disability Access Group. The consultation process involves the Group commenting on schemes and also visiting them during construction to provide feedback.

It is recognised that service improvement is a continuous process and through the North Somerset Disability Access Group it is expected feedback can be obtained from a significant group to provide a regular check on progress with this area of work.

## **Access to Consultation**

North Somerset Council understands that both customers and employees have important parts to play in delivering the Council's goals. We also recognise that the people who are affected by the development of and changes to policies and services are vitally important in helping us to shape those policies and services.

We constantly undertake consultation and public involvement on many aspects of our policies and services. In line with our commitment to ensuring fairness and promoting good community relations we strive to ensure that all sections of the community are informed about and involved in these processes, and involvement and consultation is accessible to everyone.

We further recognise that on occasions it will be necessary to undertake and target specific communities including groups covered by this policy which ensures that their views are heard and taken into account compliments our statutory obligations.

The Council uses and a number of methods and structures to consult and involve the community we serve. These include:

- Formal consultation bodies for example Health and Social Care Joint Planning Groups

- Citizen's Panel
- Market Research
- Focus groups
- On-line surveys of young people
- North Somerset Life, which we aim to deliver to every home in the district

To consult and involve staff there is an annual staff survey, and a variety of structures to consult and involve Trade Unions. In 2005 a forum for disabled staff was established and work is being undertaken to develop a multi-cultural staff forum.

The Council's corporate consultation officer in 2005 undertook specific consultation with equality and diversity communities, one outcome of this exercise was that the council's corporate consultation policy (which will be developed by the end of 2006) will include specific guidance on ensuring all consultation is fully accessible and that all sections of the community are included.

#### **Example of Policy in Practice - Establishing the needs of the diverse communities in North Somerset**

Around 30 heads of community and voluntary organisations took part in a consultation exercise to inform the development of this Comprehensive Equalities Policy. The consultation was carried out by one-to-one interviews; the purpose was to give an insight into the experiences of diverse communities when contacting the council. Questions included in the research included 'what barriers are faced by your client group when accessing the council?', 'How do you think the council should consult with your client group in the future?'

The results from this consultation have been integrated into this policy.

#### **Access to Information**

We understand that we need to communicate with the whole community, this may involve targeting messages to specific groups of people who may be most affected by the issue or the area that we are looking at. Access to information is also important in the context of the day-to-day services that we provide and influences our arrangements with partner organisations. The Council has made developing its Customer Access Programme a major commitment to improving information and access to services. The Council recognises that part of the success in providing accessible information is a recognition that others are often better placed to understand the needs of client groups and that the role of the Council is often to ensure that our choice of medium, style and format of communication maximises the opportunities for specific groups to engage with the council.

Examples of actions we will take:

- When addressing race issues we will endeavour to ensure that language is not a barrier. We will make arrangements for information to be available in a range of requested languages.
- We recognise that not everyone wants to access information in the printed form. We will make use of a variety of media including local radio, public meetings and focus groups to encourage a wider participation in council communications.
- The council is conscious of the access needs of disabled people. We will on request make sure that all council publications are available in a wide variety of formats including audio tape, Braille and large print.

- When using non-council methods of communication we will always try and consider the most appropriate publication or channel for our target audience. For example using diversity press for race and disability issues.

## Equal access to employment

### Example of Policy in Practice - Meet the Council

Conferences for 'job ready' disabled people were held in 2005 to inform disabled people of the potential employment opportunities within the Council and to explain the Council's positive approach in encouraging more disabled people to join our workforce. These conferences were hosted by the Chief Executive Officer. Feedback from the events was extremely positive. One of the people who attended the seminar stated *'I'm glad I came because I did not know much about the council and it was interesting to hear what they had to say about employment opportunities. It's good to know they are trying to employ more disabled people, especially someone like me who has recently left college and is looking for a job'*.

The HR Strategy 2005 - 8 supports the CEP as part of the Council's commitment to improving the areas of **Resourcing, Recruitment, Retention and Diversity** which concentrates on engaging with minority groups within the North Somerset Community.

In order to meet diversity targets, not only do we need to ensure up to date equality and diversity practices, but we also need to actively target minority groups by the implementation of a strategy to identify and reach out to these groups at the same time as promoting North Somerset Council as an Employer of Choice.

We are aware of the wider cultural and communications barriers that can potentially exist. In order to overcome these barriers and instil confidence in prospective candidates, we must concentrate not only on a diverse recruitment strategy, but also on the ability of the council to retain and develop minority groups within the organisation.

The success of attracting and engaging with minority groups is intrinsically bound with service delivery issues. In this respect, advertising and marketing material will only succeed in attracting target groups if they are convinced that the services provided by the Council are fair to their communities.

Additionally it is important to keep in mind that different approaches will be required for different minority groups.

Essentially, our aim is to increase the number of minority groups employed within the Council in line with the commitment to attract, recruit and retain a workforce which reflects the diverse nature of North Somerset.

One example of the positive action we have taken to encourage greater diversity in the workplace is by displaying the 'Two Ticks' positive about disabled people symbol on all our literature. Awarded by Job Centre Plus in May 2004, the scheme requires the council to commit to five actions – including guaranteeing an interview to any disabled person who meets the essential criteria of any post advertised. The result of this outward visible commitment has been an increase in the number of disabled people applying for jobs with the council.

We have set specific targets to meet these aims and by achieving them we will benefit from access to the best applicant pool in the area, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or disability. This in turn enables us to build stronger, more creative teams, leading to increased retention rates, improved employee satisfaction levels and ultimately, improved service delivery throughout the organisation.

Before we engage with our target groups, we need to ensure that NSC can offer these groups a “safe and accessible environment” in which to work. In order to do this, we need to review and promote equality and diversity within the Council.

## **Working with partners**

The public sector in general and local government in particular is increasingly involved in joint working with partner organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Council's responsibilities for community leadership and for the provision of quality services which are responsive to individual and community needs underline the importance of working with partner organisations and contractors.

One of the ways that the Council exercises this duty is by working with and supporting the North Somerset Partnership Board (LSP) and its associated delivery partnerships. These partnerships are working together to implement the North Somerset Community Strategy by addressing key issues under the following themes:

- Communities and People
- Community Safety
- Culture, Leisure and Recreation
- Economy and Employment
- Health and Well-being
- Housing
- Learning and Skills
- Transport

Through its work with the North Somerset Partnership and where the council enters into partnerships with others we will:

Encourage partners to create appropriate equality and diversity policies

- Work together with our partners to ensure that the delivery of actions and priorities support the overall principles in this policy
- Require compliance with equality legislation and good practice
- Assist partners to become organisations which understand and oppose all forms of institutional discrimination



### **Example of Policy in Practice - Encouraging compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

North Somerset Council held two seminars for local employers to explain the changes in legislation that have come about as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act and how it impacts on small businesses and their obligations. They in turn hoped to identify employers with whom they could work to find employment opportunities for their 'ready4work' project (LPSA 7).

The target audience was local small businesses throughout North Somerset. Both events were a success and well attended, and everyone said they found it very useful.

### **Equality criteria for procurement contracts**

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities. An important part of this commitment to equality and diversity is encouraging, and where possible requiring, companies and other organisations which bid for Council services to practice equal opportunities.

The Council has incorporated equality and diversity issues in the contracting process to ensure that:

- its Equality and Diversity Policy is reflected in service design, delivery and review
- the Equality and Diversity Policy is reflected appropriately in the process and procedure associated with tendering and procurement generally
- community needs are reflected in service design, delivery and review
- contractors fulfil their own equal opportunities obligations as employers in respect of race and other equality and diversity issues when carrying out work for the Council

The Council's Equalities and Diversity team will assist in the assessment of contractors' compliance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

As the Council is legally responsible for meeting the duty of the Race Relations Act 1976 (and subsequent amendments) the Council will not award a contract to any contractor who breaches a race or any other equality standard observed by the Council.

### **Example of Policy in Practice - Tackling Homophobia in North Somerset**

In 2005 the Council began working with EACH (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia) to try and encourage people in North Somerset to report and seek support if they had been the victim of a homophobic incident. EACH provide a freephone helpline and support service to young people and adults in the area. The Council is also one of a handful of authorities to provide specific advice and guidance to schools in respect of addressing and recording homophobic incidents.

## Section Two - Action plan to be built through internal consultation and to include directorate specific actions ....

This section sets out the specific actions that will enable the Council to demonstrate that it is 'valuing everyone equally and respecting diversity'

### Putting this policy into practice

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Indicative Resources Required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
Implementation of Policy Development Framework and Strategy Support Tool Kit to ensure Equality & Diversity is addressed in all Council Strategies and Policies	Policy Development Officer and all managers across the Council	March 2006	Officer Time	Strategy objectives and policies and procedures address Equality and Diversity issues improving service access and delivery to all sections of our community <b>Principles (a) (b)</b>
Annual review of achievements against Race Equality Scheme 2005-07	Equality and Diversity Manager with assistance from Somerset Racial Equality Council.	Report to be published in March 2007	Officer Time	All actions due for completion in reporting year to be achieved. Overall outcome to ensure equality of service provision and employment opportunities to all racial groups in North Somerset. <b>Principle (b)</b>
Produce a Disability Equality Scheme to illustrate how the council will respond to its general and specific duties under the Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005.	Equality and Diversity Manager and Adult Care Planning Manager	To be published by December 2006	Officer Time Financial resources required to hold consultation event	Scheme produced through consultation with disabled people. Overall outcome to ensure equality of service and employment opportunities to disabled people in North Somerset. <b>Principles (a) (b)</b>

<b>Detailed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Indicative Resources Required</b> (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	<b>Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement</b>
Self-assessment and audit of the council's achievement against Level 2 of the Equality Standard for local government	Corporate Champion for Equality and Diversity with assistance from Corporate Equality Group	March 2006	Officer Time	Council achievement of Level 2 of the equality standard for local government, improving the council's ability to consider equality implications across all areas of work.  <i>Principles (b) (a) (d)</i>
Self-assessment and audit of the council's achievement against Level 3 of the Equality Standard for local government	Corporate Champion for Equality and Diversity with assistance from Corporate Equality Group	March 2007	Officer Time	Council achievement of Level 3 of the equality standard for local government. Assessing Equality and diversity priorities embedded in service planning resulting in real improvements to service delivery to the diverse communities of North Somerset. <i>Principles (a) (b) (d)</i>
<b>Development Control</b>  Adopt "Good Practice Guide on Diversity and Equality in Planning" published by the ODPM, January 2005.	Development Control Officer			Guidance implemented and best practice applied to the service.  Self Assessment against guidance. <i>Principle (a)</i>

## Equal access to services

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Ensuring equality issues are constantly addressed in committee reports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide officers with additional support on how to complete the equality implications on committee reports.</li> <li>◆ Encourage Members to challenge reports where the equality implications of a decision have not been adequately expressed</li> </ul>	Equality and Diversity Manager  Corporate Champion for Equality and Diversity	April 2006  December 2006	Officer time  Officer and member time	Committee reports to include a more detailed consideration of equality implications. Consideration of equality implications to form a part of the key decisions made by councillors. <b>Principles (a) (b)</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Review consistency of collection of Ethnic monitoring data across all Council services and with partner agencies</li> <li>◆ Complete the Council's 3 year schedule of impact assessments on gender, disability and race, through a review of all existing policies and procedures to ensure that they do not discriminate against any groups.</li> <li>◆ Extend the Council's equality impact assessment guidance to include age, religion and sexual orientation</li> </ul>	Corporate Equality Goup  Service Managers  Equality and Diversity Manager	September 2006  March 2007  March 2007	Officer time Resources required to make improvements identified by equality impact assessments to be identified in directorate, team and service plans.	Improved information regarding needs of our community.  All initial impact assessments completed. Actions taken on areas for improvement identified, generating improvements across all service areas.  Revised guidance distributed to Service Managers and included in the Performance Management Framework.  <b>Principles (a) (d)</b>

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Equality priorities</b> ♦ Review equality priorities in line with the revision of the Council's Race Equality Scheme 2005-2007	Equality and Diversity Manager	March 2007	Officer Time	Timetable of impact assessments for 2007 – 2010. <i>Principle (d)</i>
<b>The Council is developing a Customer Access Programme</b> by means of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch of new council website and services, meeting AA accessibility rating and providing link to accessible site for people with learning disabilities</li> <li>Development of a corporate contact centre, dealing with cross-service enquiries, and with additional support arrangements for customers with specific needs</li> <li>Developing a gateway project</li> </ul> (see also section – Equal access to information)	Marketing & Communications Manager / Web Team Manager  Head of Performance improvement & HR / Contact Centre Project Manager  Assistant Director for Development & Environment / Gateways Project Manager	April 2006  September 2006  December 2005 and ongoing	Resources identified through Customer Access Programme  Development resources identified in Customer Access Programme. Delivery through reallocation of existing resources	Improved speed and quality of services - user feedback results - national ranking of site useability/content  - customer feedback results  <i>Principle (a)</i>
<b>Carry out a Housing Needs Assessment</b> to identify the housing and housing related support needs of the BME Communities in North Somerset to inform planning and housing policy and development.	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager	Phase 1. March 2006  Phase 2. March 2007		Phase 1. Carry out a BME housing Needs Scoping study, which will map existing groups and desk top data which will advise Phase 2. BME Housing Needs Assessment planned for 2006-7 <i>Principles (a) (b)</i>

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<p><b>A Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment</b> will be conducted as a sub-regional study in partnership with the other local authorities in the West of England region (Bath &amp; North East Somerset, South Gloucester, and Bristol City Council) to Assess the Needs of the Gypsy and Travellers community to inform planning &amp; Housing policy</p>	Housing Strategy & Policy Manager Housing Services Team Leader	<p>Phase 1 March 2006</p> <p>Phase 2 October 2006</p>		<p>Phase 1. A Caravan Count to be carried out on 19 January 2006 together with a desktop analysis of existing data from a range of sources and would inform the Regional Spatial Strategy.</p> <p>Phase2. Will be a sub-regional in-depth, comprehensive assessment of housing need, achieved in partnership with Gypsy &amp; Traveller communities, their representative organisations and other local and central government service providers and organisations. The anticipated completion date is October 2006.</p> <p><b>Principles (a) (b)</b></p>
<p><b>Tackling Health Inequalities</b> Health and Wellbeing strategic partnership under the Strategic Partnership developing multi-agency action plan. Conference held in September 2005 Action Plan being developed. Follow up event planned</p>	Director of Adult Social Services & Housing	<p>March 2006</p> <p>September 2006</p>	Bids made through Choosing Health Initiative	<p>Improved health and access to services and narrowing of the differences in health across local communities.</p> <p><b>Principles (a) (b) (d)</b></p>

<b>Detailed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Resources required</b> (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	<b>Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement</b>
<b>Monitoring of Vulnerable Groups of Young People, including BME groups</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce MIS to enable more effective monitoring of progress and support to individual pupils and pupils cohorts</li> <li>Revise Service Level Agreements with commissioned services to ensure that support and resource is appropriately targeted</li> </ul>	Head of personalised learning	March 2006		Performance at Key Stages for BME groups compared to averages for the Authority as a whole. Demonstration of progress against expected levels using Fischer Family Trust model  <i>Principles (a) (b) (h)</i>
<b>Review of Race Equality Policies within Schools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise Race Equality policies and Hate Incident reporting arrangements</li> </ul>	Head of personalised learning	March 2007	Additional support through SREC	Improvements In schools perceptions of race equality arrangements through the Annual Audit Commission Survey of Schools  <i>Principles (b) (c)</i>
<b>Unaccompanied asylum seekers</b> Develop guidance in assessment and training for child care staff.	Child Care Social worker	February 2006 and ongoing		Ensure all child care staff have tools to assess newly arrived unaccompanied asylum seekers in line with the Joint Chief Inspectors Report regarding safeguarding. <i>Principles (a) (b) (c)</i>
<b>Implementation of Access Strategy for Disabled People</b>	Access Officer for Disabled People	January 2006		Aims and objectives being met with buildings made accessible and regular advice offered on access issues throughout Council <i>Principle (d)</i>

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Access to Council services and buildings</b> provided in accordance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service delivery requirements</li> <li>• DDA and BV156</li> <li>• Access Strategy for Disabled People</li> </ul>	Property and Asset Management Service Manager/ Access Officer for Disabled People	At each financial year end (April 2006)		Programme met and account taken of changing service requirements  <i>Principle (d)</i>
<b>Environmental and Consumer Protection Group – user surveys</b> Undertake service user surveys, to include collection of data that can be used to map the community being served, address current shortfalls in information held and further reform and refine impact assessments.	Group Manager Environment and Consumer Services	March 2006		Improved mapping of community Groups with collected data being used to inform planning and decision process.  <i>Principles (a) (b)</i>
<b>Drug treatment plan</b>  Specific contact with referral agencies and providers of drug rehabilitation services to ensure drug users have equality of access to high quality drug rehabilitation and treatment services.  Regular monitoring and reporting of take up to ensure members of minority groups are able to access and receive high quality services.	Responsible Authorities Group	31 March 2006	Active support of Social Services and the Probation Service	Disproportionate engagement of minority groups in drug treatment and rehabilitation services addressed.  On going monitoring to ensure that the situation continues to improve.  <i>Principles (a) (b) (d)</i>



<b>Detailed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Resources required</b> (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	<b>Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement</b>
Develop and implement the sub-regional LTP2, which includes priorities in relation to accessibility, including better public transport services, improving access to information and improved access to health, employment and education facilities	Transport Planning Manager	On going	None identified	<p>Improved prioritised public transport services for people from socially and economically excluded communities.</p> <p>Improved access to public transport information.</p> <p><b>Principles a) e) f)</b></p>

## Equal access to consultation

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>E-Consultation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in an on-line consultation system, to enable easy access to all council consultation activities, and to allow comprehensive communication of results</li> </ul>	Consultation Officer	March 2006	Year 1 resources identified through Customer Access Programme. Year 2 to be identified in MTFF.	% increase in engagement in consultation % increase in involvement in consultation exercises by groups that are traditionally under-represented <i>Principles (a) (e)</i>
<b>Citizens Panel</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Citizens Panel membership to ensure that it is representative of the North Somerset community</li> <li>Review membership of traditionally under-represented groups on the panel</li> <li></li> </ul>	Consultation Officer	March 2007	Officer Time	Citizens panel that closely reflects the North Somerset community, and that has representation from groups currently considered under-represented on the panel. <i>Principles (a) (e)</i>
<b>Consultation strategy and toolkit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of a consultation strategy and toolkit</li> <li>Provide guidance to council officers on consulting with minority groups.</li> </ul>	Consultation Officer	End 2006	Officer Time	More consistent and inclusive approach to consultation across the Council <i>Principles (a) (e)</i>
<b>Corporate Equality Forum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host seminar for partner agencies, community and voluntary groups to consider equality and diversity issues in North Somerset.</li> <li>Consider development of a corporate equality and diversity forum including individuals and groups in the community</li> </ul>	Equality and Diversity Manager	End of 2007	Officer time, resources required to host consultation event	To facilitate a multi-agency approach to providing services to diverse communities in North Somerset Co-ordinated with local Strategic Partnership To enable greater

<b>Detailed Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Resources required</b> (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	<b>Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement</b>
to be a direct channel of communication and information with elected members and senior council officers				participation of diverse groups in the decisions made by the council.  <i>Principles (a) (d) (f)</i>
<b>Access to council meetings</b> ♦ Publication of 'Accessible Meeting Guide'	Access Officer for Disabled People	April 2006	Officer time, the costs associated with producing information in accessible formats to be met by service budgets	To ensure that all members of the community in North Somerset receive information in a format they can understand.  <i>Principles (b) (d)</i>
<b>Involvement of parents of disabled children.</b> • Development of forum and parental involvement in emerging Children's Trust	Change for Children Officer	September 2006	Officer time, costs of publicity, holding meetings.	To ensure parents of disabled children are involved in emerging Trust and changes in policy and services. <i>Principles (e) (f)</i>
<b>Regular consultation with North Somerset Disability Access Group</b> on access works to Council buildings	Access Officer for Disabled People	Continuous with annual review at each financial year end (April 2006)		Programme and individual schemes discussed with Group and response made to comments.  <i>Principles (e) (f)</i>

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<p><b>Community consultation and engagement with BME Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the multi-agency BME consultation event in January 2007 which will help to inform people about services and improve our understanding of the BME community and their concerns.</li> <li>• Organise follow up event(s) to consult with other specific groups.</li> </ul>	Corporate Equality Group	<p>22 January 2007</p> <p>31 March 2007</p>	Officer time and partner agency contributions to fund the event.	<p>Feedback from participants and service users.</p> <p>Improved mapping of BEM (and other) groups and collected data used to inform planning and decision making.</p> <p>Improved council/directorate standing with the contacted groups.</p> <p><i>Principles (g) (f)</i></p>

## Equal Access to information

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Council information in languages other than English</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Develop and agree a translation and interpreting policy.</li> <li>◆ Communicate the Council's translation policy to all staff.</li> </ul> (see also Customer access programme in section – Equal access to services)	Equality and Diversity Manager	March 2007	Officer time, the costs associated with producing information in different languages to be met by service budgets	To ensure that all members of the community in North Somerset receive information in a format and language they can understand.  <i>Principles (a) (b)</i>
<b>Positive promotion of equality and diversity in North Somerset</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Review achievements in 2004/05 communication plan for equality and diversity</li> <li>◆ Develop a programme of news stories to be cascaded through NS Life and other council publications for 2006.</li> </ul>	Equality and Diversity Manager and Marketing and Communications Manager	April 2006	Officer time	Increased awareness of council services across staff and diverse groups in the community  <i>Principle (c)</i>
<b>Making information available in alternative formats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide information in alternative formats on request as set out in the council's Accessible information guide and publications policy</li> </ul>	All Service Managers	N/A		Requests met within customer service charter standards for providing information in alternative formats  <i>Principles (a) (b)</i>

## Equal access to employment

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Encouraging greater diversity in the workplace</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Implement action plan to encourage greater diversity into the workplace e.g. Workforce Development Plan, Modern Apprenticeship Scheme</li> <li>◆ Annual review of diversity data for employment procedures as required by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000</li> <li>◆ Engage in employment equality assessment of the Local Labour Market area.</li> </ul>	Recruitment Officer	March 2006	Officer Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Recruitment Strategy which ensures that all members of the North Somerset Community view the Council as an employer of choice and are well represented within the workforce.</li> <li>◆ Analysis of recruitment data and review of recruitment policy if ratio of applicants to appointments could be viewed as discriminatory</li> <li>◆ Action plan to build a more representative workforce</li> </ul> <p><b>Principles (c) (g) (h)</b></p>
<b>Promoting Employment Opportunities and Access to Services for people with Learning Disabilities</b> <p>Expansion of pilot in partnership with People First. Support workers are employed to provide welcome and facilitation service to new Health and Social Care facilities at Worle Parkway.</p>	Service Manager for Adult Learning Disabilities	December 2005 ongoing	People First is a commissioned service	<p>Improved access to services and paid employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. Aim is to extend scheme across other Directorates</p> <p><b>Principles (c) (g) (h)</b></p>

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Improving access to Community Learning</b> Council will work with partners to target geographic communities with high levels of educational deprivation and the following communities of interest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adults with mental health difficulties and/or those in recovery from drug or alcohol addictions</li> <li>Adults from the black and minority ethnic communities in North Somerset and those for whom English is a second language</li> </ul>	Widening Participation & Partnership Manager	August 2006 – July 2007		Increased numbers of adults (19 – 64) from target communities engaging in learning and improving levels of qualifications  <i>Principles (d) (f) (h)</i>
<b>Equal Pay Review</b> ♦ Engage in workforce profiling and equal pay review	HR Development Manager	March 2006	Officer Time	♦ Workforce development plan with annual action plan to monitor outcomes ♦ Implementation of Single Status Agreement for all staff employed under NJC terms and conditions <i>Principles (g) (h)</i>
<b>Staff Diversity Groups</b> ♦ Establish a multi-cultural staff forum Development of a pilot BME staff forum within Adult Social Services and Housing.	ASSH Equality Steering Group	April 06 ongoing December 2006	Officer time, resources required for administration of groups (venues,	Improved consultation and representation of BME staff within ASSH Plan to extend membership to all Directorates.

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the success of the disabled staff forum</li> <li>Establish a lesbian, gay, bi-sexual staff Forum</li> </ul>	Equality and Diversity Manager	October 2006  December 2007	refreshments etc)	Forum meetings held to provide support for diverse groups of staff and to enable greater involvement of staff in the future planning of council services. <b>Principles (c) (g)</b>
<b>Recruitment and retention difficulties within the independent care sector</b> Impact Assessments have identified a significant number of staff who do not have English as a first language e.g. migrant workers. Training to be provided to independent care sector staff	April 2006 ongoing	Training Manager ASSH	Training facilities	Improved link with private sector providers in employment practices Stabilising recruitment and retention Improved care outcomes.  <b>Principle (f)</b>
<b>Providing staff with the information, skills and knowledge to do their jobs well</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of the Management Competency Framework</li> <li>Continued commitment to the Investors in People Standard</li> </ul>	Training & Development Manager          Organisational Development Steering Group	Phase 1 March 2006      Phase 2 March 2007    Jan 2006 August 2007		Senior management team having training and development plans based on 360 degree competence assessment. Competence assessment integrated into all staff appraisals.  Whole Council recognition.  Successful reassessment under new standard.



Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
♦ Implementation and monitoring of minimum entitlement to training and development	Training & Development Manager	July 2006		<p>All staff using development spreadsheet to record development time and costs</p> <p>Quarterly report to CMT by directors.</p> <p><i>Principles (a) (b) (g)</i></p>
<p><b>Develop work to benefit socially and economically excluded communities</b> who experience significant economic inequality in North Somerset through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting the targets set for LPSA7 (increasing employment in disadvantaged areas)</li> <li>Develop and deliver neighbourhood management structures, processes and action plans to address deprivation in Weston-super-Mare South Ward in conjunction with the 4 Estates Forum and the North Somerset Partnership, and share good practice from this work to address deprivation in other areas of North Somerset</li> </ul>	Group Manager for Economic Development and Regeneration	April 2006 – March 2010	Use of SSCF Neighbourhood Element Funds and Cleaner Safer Greener Funds	<p>More people from socially and economically excluded communities in employment and participating in community actions.</p> <p>Improve prioritised public services and public space in the most deprived neighbourhoods to reduce deprivation and economic exclusion.</p> <p><i>Principles (a) (d) (e)</i></p>

## Working in Partnership

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>Reviewing the Community Strategy and the council's Corporate Plan, and developing our Local Area Agreement (LAA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the North Somerset Partnership, develop an inclusive project plan and development process for the review of our Community Strategy and the negotiation of our LAA.</li> </ul>	Strategic Policy & Development Manager / Economic Development & Regeneration Group Manager	April 2007	To be identified through the project plan development process in Jan/Feb 2006.	Community Strategy/LAA integrated and developed in one process. Community Strategy and LAA that reflect community priorities and have the full support of NSP partner organisations.  <i>Principles (a) (c) (e) (f)</i>
<b>Updating the partnership toolkit to explicitly encourage partnerships to consider equality issues</b>	Partnership Development Officer Equality & Diversity Manager	April 06	Officer Time	NSP Delivery Partnerships to develop improvement plans that promote equality of opportunity. <i>Principles (a) &amp; (b)</i>
<b>Working together with other statutory agencies to combat hate crime in North Somerset</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness of Council's hate incident reporting procedures to staff and public.</li> <li>Develop systems for monitoring demographic changes in BME profile e.g. migrant workers</li> </ul>		Throughout 2006	Officer time and commitment from all agencies	Increased number of hate incidents reported to the Council and other statutory agencies  Improving understanding of local communities and service needs

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Council's hate incident reporting procedures</li> <li>Produce stand alone Racial Harassment Policy for North Somerset Housing, in consultation with Somerset Race Equality Council and SARI.</li> <li>Continue to develop multi-agency hate crime reporting panels (RHINS) - Responding to Hate Incidents in North Somerset</li> </ul>	Corporate Equality Champion / CSDAT Co-ordinator Crime / Hate Crime Officer, Avon & Somerset Constabulary / North Somerset Race Equality Officer	December 2006 March 2006		<p>Racial Harassment Policy published and incorporated into Anti Social Behaviour Policy.</p> <p>Comprehensive Policy and Planning across partnerships delivering Improved outcomes for all communities. <b>Principles (d) (f)</b></p>
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity Issues</b> are assessed when appraising potential suppliers to ensure that they meet our minimum standards	Strategic Procurement Manager	September 2005	Officer time	<p>Suppliers adhere to our standards on E&amp;D</p> <p><b>Principle (f)</b></p>
<p><b>Community Strategy – development</b></p> <p>Ensure wide and varied consultation and engagement through a range of activities and fora to develop and implement the North Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy</p>	Economic Development & Regeneration Group Manager	2006		<p>Refreshed strategy to reflect diverse needs and aspirations of the whole community. Local Area Agreement to be informed by community views including those of specific target groups of population, to address inequalities and deprivation</p> <p><b>Principles (a) (c) (e) (f)</b></p>

Detailed Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources required (where additional to those already identified in service plans)	Desired Outcome to Evidence Achievement
<b>A BME Forum for North Somerset</b> Establish a positive relationship with the lottery project.	Somerset Racial Equality Council	2007		A reduction in the isolation felt by some BME individuals in the community. Enhancing capacity and approach to consultation by the identification of BME families or individuals in North Somerset with whom the council and partner agencies can consult with regarding the development of services  <i>Principle (f)</i>
<b>Procurement</b> Equality & Diversity issues are assessed when appraising potential suppliers to ensure that they meet our minimum standards	Strategic Procurement Manager	September 05	Officer Time	Suppliers adhere to our standards on E&D  <i>Principle (f)</i>
<b>Local Compact Statement and Codes of Practice</b> Manage and monitor the implementation of our Local Compact Statement	Strategic Policy & Development Manager / working with Volunteer Agency North Somerset (VANS)	Nov 2006	Officer time and SLA arrangement with VANS	Local Compact impacts upon the working practices of a range of public and voluntary sector organisations. Monitoring procedures will identify adherence to Compact principles. <i>Principles (e) (f)</i>

## **Appendix 1 - Customer Care Charter**

### **Customer Care Charter**

#### **Caring for our customers - our commitment to you**

We want to provide you with the best possible service in a caring and efficient way.

#### **Courtesy and consideration**

We will be welcoming, polite, courteous and helpful.

We will listen in order to understand and respond to your needs.

We will respect your right to privacy, confidentiality and safety.

#### **Access**

We will make sure that signs are easy to follow and that you can find us.

Our opening times will be clearly displayed and will be adhered to.

We will strive to make our services as accessible as possible.

#### **Efficiency**

We will ensure that the most appropriate officer is dealing with your enquiry.

We aim to keep to our appointments, and will let you know if we can't.

We will respond to your written enquiries within 10 working days. If we can't we will write to you and tell you why.

When you contact us by telephone we will answer within 15 seconds.

We will provide an efficient and reliable service.

#### **Communication**

We will use clear language and not jargon.

We will tell you who you are speaking to.

We will strive to make our services as easy to use as possible.

#### **Helping us to help you**

Let us know when we have done something well. Treat us with courtesy and politeness as we are here to help you. Make suggestions if you think there are ways we could improve our services.