



# **HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Equality and Diversity**

### **Summary of Achievements**

**July 2009**

#### **Political / Senior Management Leadership and Commitment**

- Elected Members – in particular, the Leader of the council, the Portfolio Holder for equalities and diversity who is a member of our corporate Equality and Diversity Action Group (EDAG) – the chief executive, corporate directors one of whom chairs EDAG, are very passionate about equality and diversity. They offer support and direction in moving our equality and diversity programme forward.
- Political/senior management support is demonstrated in many ways including via:
  - the allocation of resources to meet equality and diversity (E&D) commitments;
  - providing a scrutiny function ensuring the council fulfils its legal responsibilities and promotes good practice in equality and diversity;
  - membership of the Equality & Diversity Action Group (EDAG);
  - attending equality and diversity training courses;
  - exemplary public statements and actions that strengthen the council's commitment to equality and diversity.

#### **Positive feedback from residents and service users**

- The council received positive feedback from service users at various community engagement events such as our community engagement event that was held on 6 June 2007 at Allum Lane Community Centre; and the disability equality forum that was held on 26 October 2007 at the Civic Offices.
- The corporate complaints, compliments and comments system was re-launched in December 2008. It contains evidence of compliments from various service users and residents.

- The December 2008 Edition of *Herts*here magazine contains evidence of positive feedback from service users – a letter from the Deputy Community Service Leader - Community Mental Health Service Acute Recovery Team on the Isle of Wight regarding the service and assistance provided by Hertsmere’s customer services manager to a man who had been sleeping outside the Civic Offices building; and another letter from “a grateful resident” thanking Hertsmere’s environmental health services for tackling excessive noise in Manor Way. We have also received ‘thank you’ letters in other service areas.
- The findings of our recent residents’ survey are published on our website. The survey report shows over four fifths of residents (84%) report that they are satisfied with their area as a place to live, of which, 33% are very satisfied. Since 1999 there has consistently been significantly more residents stating that they are satisfied than dissatisfied. Just over a third of residents (35%) agree that Hertsmere Borough Council treats all areas of the borough fairly but 18% disagree. This represents a significant net increase of 17 percentage points since 2005. Positively, a significantly lower proportion of respondents feel that they are treated unfairly by the council in comparison to 2005 (11% compared to 16%). The number of residents who agree that all people are treated fairly has increased by 2 percentage points to 41%.

### **High levels of staff satisfaction / good retention levels**

- Staff turnover rate is lower than the national average.
- As of December 2008, voluntary leavers as a percentage of staff in post was 1.09%; the percentage of employees retiring early on the grounds of ill health was 0%; and the percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill health retirements) was 0%.
- Staff survey 2008 – results show high levels of staff satisfaction including in relation to equality and diversity. With regard to whether the council is committed to equal opportunities in principle, 12.6% of respondents ‘Strongly agree’, 57.0% ‘Tend to agree’, 2.0% ‘Tend to disagree’ and 0.7% ‘Strongly disagree’. With regard to whether the council is committed to equal opportunities in practice, 10.6% ‘Strongly agree’, 51.7% ‘Tend to agree’, 4.0% ‘Tend to disagree’ and 0.7% ‘Strongly disagree’.

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

- The council has progressed to Level 2 of the Local Government Equality Standard. In effect, the council has now migrated to the ‘Developing’ level of the new Equality Framework for Local Government. As outlined in the council’s single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2007–2010, the council had set a target to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard by December 2008; but the council reached Level 2 of the Standard by June 2008. Audit Commission inspectors had commented positively on the progress which the council has made in equality and diversity.

## **Comprehensive Equality and Diversity (E&D) Policy**

- The council revised its 'equal opportunities policy' and adopted a comprehensive Equality and Diversity (E&D) Policy.

## **Single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2007–2010 / Corporate Action Plan**

- Introduced first Race Equality Scheme in 2002.
- Published a single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2007–2010 incorporating age, disability, gender including gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.
- The equality and diversity scheme contains information on the actions the council is taking to enable us to achieve our ambition in relation to strengthening equality and diversity in Hertsmere. The aim of the scheme is to build on current good practices with a view to ensuring that equality and diversity issues become an integral part of all our policies, employment and service delivery.
- A gap analysis of the council's equality and diversity programme was carried out in November 2006. This activity generated baseline data in a number of areas, including race, disability, and gender equality.
- We have carried out an analysis of the functions/services of the council and the scope of the functions/services in relation to various equality strands. This information was integrated into the three-year impact assessment programme contained in the equality and diversity scheme 2007–2010.

## **Employment**

- The council employs a diverse workforce in relation to various equality strands. The number of employees from equality groups that had previously been under-represented within the council's workforce has increased. For example, the percentage of employees who declare that they are disabled within the meaning of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act has increased from 2.67% in March 2008 to 4.5% in March 2009. The percentage of employees from ethnic minorities has increased from 7.22% in March 2008 to 13.5% in March 2009. Although the percentage of employees from ethnic minorities may seem low (13.5%) it is higher than the national average (7.9%), the population of ethnic minority people in Hertsmere (7.5%) and the county average of 6.3% (non-white). The total number of women employed by the council as of March 2009 was 183, (50.83%).
- Recruitment and selection monitoring and recruitment and selection equality impact assessment led to the council adopting the Two Ticks (Disability) Symbol, encouraging the use of Access to Work Scheme, and revising/updating its Recruitment And Selection Policy And Procedure to improve access to employment for all job applicants.
- Adopted the Social Model of Disability.
- Promoted dignity at work via procedures and action to prevent and tackle harassment and bullying at work, including through informal and formal resolution strategies.

- Provision of a confidential (telephone and face-to-face) counselling service (Care First) for all staff – available 24 hours a day, everyday of the week.
- We have made a range of reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. During a recent one-to-one meeting between disabled employees and an external consultant that was arranged to actively involve disabled staff in developing the disability equality component of our single equality scheme, disabled staff members reported that they were satisfied with the reasonable adjustments made for them.
- We have also implemented reasonable adjustments for disabled employees on an individual basis via working with Work Solutions.
- We have a range of family friendly schemes for employees, e.g. home working, enhanced maternity/paternity leave provisions, childcare voucher scheme, flexi and flexible working arrangements, career break scheme – up to two years, etc.
- Updated our *INBUCON* job evaluation scheme and provided training for all employees who participate in job evaluation/equal pay, etc.
- Carried out a comprehensive equal pay audit.

### **Service Delivery and Customer Care**

- E&D considerations have been integrated into service plans.
- Services have been reviewed in line with E&D issues.
- Policies and procedures have been introduced or revised following equality impact assessments; e.g. the Performance Management Strategy, Recruitment And Selection Policy and Recruitment And Selection Operational Manual, Homelessness Strategy, Housing Strategy, etc.

### **Customer Services**

- We re-launched the Comments, Complaints & Compliments (3Cs) system in December 2008 to be electronic. We give customers the opportunity to tell us if there is anything we can do to make the service more accessible, and the customer can choose to complete the equalities monitoring form included on the system.
- We have also published our Comments, Complaints & Compliments (3Cs) guide. The guide aims to assist customers in the following areas:
  1. Help customers to log one of the 3 Cs on the internet
  2. Respond to 3 C's received from our new e-forms system
  3. Log 3 C's on behalf of customers via the intranet
  4. Report on complaints received (only available to Managers)
- We provide information in different languages and formats on request.
- Monitoring of access to services led to the production of a leaflet in 30 different languages, and to the introduction of multi-language line, Sign Language cards at all Receptions, facilities for Type Talk, hearing loops, interpretation and large print.
- We continue to use Language Line to assist us with translation services. We have used a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter provided through the County Council Communication Support Unit to assist a Customer in registering an objection regarding a planning application.

Our Infrastructure Manager has also assisted Customer Services with a customer who was deaf and provided BSL interpretation.

- Equalities monitoring of access to services led to registration on Direct Enquiries national database (re: access for disabled people).
- Low-level terminal with adapted mouse in Civic Offices Reception area for wheelchair users / people who need to sit down to use the system.

### **Corporate Communications**

- Our website has been re-vamped with language translations, and an improved accessibility section placed on the home page. We now have 20 languages on offer this way.
- The framework and templates used for creating content on the council's website have been built to conform to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative.
- Our corporate style guide has a section on making information accessible - it is published on our intranet under this link [http://192.128.100.240/hbc\\_docs/Departments/Corp\\_Comms/index\\_files/indexCCcorporateidentity.htm](http://192.128.100.240/hbc_docs/Departments/Corp_Comms/index_files/indexCCcorporateidentity.htm)
- Our corporate publications are required to include visuals which represent our communities, including people with disabilities

### **Street Scene Services**

- Hertsmere provides assisted bin collections – for customers who physically cannot present bins/boxes for collections; and clinical waste collection - for customers who require collection of medical waste. This includes disabled and elderly customers.
- Assisted Bulky collections - When asked to collect bulky items from properties i.e. chairs, tables, etc, we do make exceptions where elderly or disabled people are unable to present items on the boundary.

### **Legal and Democratic Services, including Estates**

#### **Maintenance**

- 100% of our facilities and building are now compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Our Land Charges Section have made arrangements for personal search agents to access information at ground floor reception (Civic Offices).

### **Planning & Building Control**

- We have on occasions granted planning permission for extensions to houses which exceed our normal guidelines when the proposal is specifically for a disabled person.
- We have granted planning permissions to enable people of diverse groups to practice their faith; e.g. approval for Eruv for the Jewish community in Elstree and Borehamwood to enable them to do certain activities on the Sabbath which would not normally be permitted under their faith; approval for a Goshala (Gaushala) – a large agricultural building for the Hindu community at Bhaktivedanta Manor in Letchmore Heath – a major Krishna Temple which has become renowned as a

place of pilgrimage and is the largest Hindu place of pilgrimage outside India; and permission for a new modern Roman Catholic Church in Potters Bar.

- In assessing planning applications we have regard in particular to Policy D23 in the Local Plan. This deals with access for disabled people. All proposals for new buildings and facilities that will be accessible to the public, including shops, must comply with minimum access requirements to allow people with disabilities satisfactory access. Proposals for a change of use or proposals that include alterations to a principal entrance, including new shop fronts, should also demonstrate adequate access arrangements for disabled people.

### **Housing & Environmental Health**

- We administered a scheme called *Be Warm Be Wise*. This is a scheme targeted at older households in the borough whose main income is the State Pension. The scheme involved the free installation of cavity wall insulation and loft insulation in privately owned accommodation by Working Herts, a local organisation.
- We carry out our statutory duties diligently regarding grants for adaptations for disabled people and have a very strong record of application turn-round times. We also deal with housing register applications from disabled people and work with registered social landlords to develop new affordable housing for disabled people.
- We provide discretionary financial support to the local Home Improvement Agency (HIA) which assists disabled people with both technical and welfare support in the adaptation process. The HIA has recently achieved Charter Mark for its services.
- In all residential developments, involving the provision of 10 or more new dwellings, the council seeks to secure a proportion of all dwellings to be constructed to Lifetime Homes standards so that a proportion of all new homes provided in the borough will be accessible (both externally and internally) to people who use wheelchairs. In each instance the site location and topography will be taken into consideration.
- Developed a new Housing Strategy 2009-2014.
- Our new Housing Strategy was approved by Full Council on 21 January 2009. Of the strategy's five sections, there is a special section on housing for people with special needs. We have consulted extensively on the housing needs of vulnerable people in the borough. The relevant section of the action plan contains actions for the following:
  - \* Gypsies and Travellers
  - \* Older People
  - \* People with learning disabilities
  - \* People with mental health issues
  - \* Young people
  - \* People with low levels of literacy
  - \* Young families
  - \* People with physical disabilities
  - \* People with both physical disabilities and learning disabilities

- Since September 2008 we have introduced a Tenancy Liaison Officer for tenants of the private rented sector who require assistance in managing their tenancies. This can include people with mild learning disabilities, mental health issues, and young people.
- The Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013.
  - The Homelessness Strategy was approved by Full Council in July 2008. It has an action plan which relates to the following groups:
    - \* Young families
    - \* Young People
    - \* Victims of domestic violence
    - \* People with mild learning disabilities or mental health issues.
  - Since the Homelessness Strategy has been adopted we have seen the following successes:-
    - ~ William Sutton Homes, our biggest housing association, have been persuaded by us to introduce "introductory" or "trial" tenancies for young people aged 16 and 17. This is a considerable help to young people in helping them to access affordable housing and set up their own home.
    - ~ Progress made in terms of working with Irish Centre Housing to develop a supported scheme for young males in Borehamwood and supported housing units for young families in South Mimms.
    - ~ The Homelessness Managers have given presentations to young people at local schools on homelessness and how to avoid it. The Borehamwood and Elstree Times featured an article on this initiative. We have carried out Equality Impact Assessments for both the housing and homelessness strategy.
- Choice-Based Lettings
  - We now have a new system of allocating social rented properties, and our Housing Options Manager has worked to produce policies and procedures to make the system accessible to people with special needs such as people with learning disabilities, older people, and people with physical disabilities. Our Housing Options Team have been trained to advise people on their housing options and are developing specialisms in different client groups - for example, one officer is a specialist in assisting people with physical disabilities, and another is developing a specialism in domestic violence.
- Affordable Housing Development
  - We have facilitated some very impressive new affordable housing schemes which are accessible for people with physical disabilities. A prime example of this is the Girtin Road development.
- Regional Centre Of Excellence
  - We were the Regional Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness for the East of England for 2007-2009. Between June 2007 and September 2008 we carried out research, organised a regional youth homelessness conference and two youth homelessness seminars. Since September 2008 we have done the following:
    - \* Researched, written and published a compendium of good practice on preventing and tackling youth homelessness in the East of England. This was very widely distributed.

- \* Contributed funding to a youth homelessness education project run by Herts Young Homeless Group in local schools.
- Promotion of cultural and gender diversity through our Environmental Health function. Examples of achievements in this area include the following:
  - In addition to the corporate training on equalities issues staff from the unit, mainly from the team that inspect restaurants, have received specialised training on race/cultural issues that may impact on their work; for example, a faith and food forum.
  - Our Environmental Health Unit has hosted a successful food business forum aimed at the Chinese community and will host similar events in future.
  - Specialised food safety training has and continues to be offered either on a Hertsmere BC level or in partnership with other local councils targeting specific groups including Bengali, Turkish and Chinese communities.
  - We train over 100 people a year on basic food hygiene and these courses can be delivered in a range of different languages.
  - The unit also operates the Borehamwood and Elstree Scheme for Safety Equipment (BESSE) scheme where we sell on a subsidised basis home safety equipment such as stair gates, fire guards, etc, to low income households. The client base for this is mainly young (sometimes very young) white single females.

### **Sports, Leisure and Community Services**

- The council has been providing a wider range of services for diverse groups in connection with its equality and diversity programme.
- New youth Netball Team in Borehamwood - Hertsmere Hotshots. Strong evidence demonstrated limited opportunities for teenage girls to participate in sport. Via the Herts Youth Games and through the council's Community Grant Scheme we established a new club that now attracts 40 members on a weekly basis.
- Operated a multi-sports programme at Radlett Recreation Ground that focused on catering for the needs of the local Jewish Community. This involved consultation through local youth clubs to run appropriate activities that did not clash with religious festival dates; e.g. activities operated on Sunday mornings
- An extensive range of activities that meet the needs of young teenage girls through the *Be There! Do It!* Programme. This has included trampoline, beauty workshops and dance programmes.
- Developed 50+ (Fifty Plus) programme – allowing staff to provide additional support to elderly residents with a range of disabilities to allow them to attend activities.
- We have provided specialist support to allow children with individual needs to attend activities. We also use our own staff to work on a one-to-one basis for children with behavioural issues.

## **Public Access To Services And Service Information**

- The council seeks to ensure that all its services are fully accessible to all parts of the community in a way that ensures equality of opportunity. The council is also committed to effective communication with the public and provides a wide range of information about the services it provides and how to submit comments, compliments and complaints about them. The main access points for information on council services and employment include the following:
  - The council's website [www.hertsmere.gov.uk](http://www.hertsmere.gov.uk)
  - The intranet.
  - Customer Services Call Centre.
  - Hertsmere Together; e.g. Hertsmere Together away day events.
  - Various community engagement events organised by services across the council, as well as voluntary sector forum events for local voluntary groups.
  - Presentations to local community groups; e.g. various presentations during the development of the Community Strategy.
  - Pro forma distributed to relevant stakeholders inviting suggestions for actions.
  - Tri-annual Residents' survey; e.g. the survey of 1,500 residents.
  - 'Shaping the future of Hertsmere' survey – survey of all residents on general quality of life issues in Hertsmere.
  - Hertsmere's publications including *Hertsmere News* e.g. article in *Hertsmere News* inviting comments – distributed to every property in Hertsmere; *Hertshere* – staff magazine; and publications by some services e.g. *Hertsmere's Parks & Amenities*.
  - Meetings/Partnership working with community groups; e.g. discussions with disabled people and stakeholders at Elstree, Borehamwood and Radlett Mencap's Annual General Meeting (AGM); interviews with members of the public at William Sutton Housing Association's AGM; etc.

## **Policies, Procedures, and Strategies**

- Our corporate policy, procedure, and strategy framework/template includes equalities and diversity. This enables us to integrate equality and diversity including the outcomes of equality impact assessments into our policies, procedures, and strategies.
- The council has a range of policies, procedures, and strategies that support the implementation of equality and diversity in employment and service delivery. The council's policies and strategies are outlined in the Strategies and Policies Register.

## **Procurement.**

- The council's revised procurement strategy requires any major procurement exercise to consider equality of opportunity when assessing bids. This is a requisite of our standard application form for contracts.
- As set out in the council's Equality and Diversity Policy contractors, agencies, and consultants are required to abide by the council's equality

and diversity policy in connection with the work they carry out for the council.

## **Involvement & Community Engagement**

- Adopted a new community engagement strategy to strengthen community engagement and partnership in Hertsmere.
- Activated multi-agency working with various stakeholders, promoted community safety and produced guidelines on issues such as domestic violence.
- Carried out local consultation and community engagement with hard to reach groups on shaping public service delivery.
- We actively involved disabled people, disability organisations, and people of different racial groups, genders, age groups, etc, in carrying out an access audit and a needs assessment with regard to developing our equality and diversity scheme – resulting in the development of new services and changes to existing services.
- Consultation - we have entered a new partnership with a different service provider – Opinion Research Services (ORS) – to undertake our consultations. We have done this with 10 other agencies including the police, NHS, and local authorities. We are known as the Hertfordshire Public Engagement Partnership.
- Part of the work ORS has done for us is to review our existing residents' panel to ensure that it is representative of our community. This has involved retiring some members and recruiting new people to ensure it reflects our community more accurately including various equality groups.
- We involved service users (through discussions and meetings) in carrying out a needs assessment, as well as in reviewing and developing new services examples of which are set out below:
  - The *Hertsmere Play Strategy* was developed through the active involvement of Noah's Ark Children's Disability Group. As a result of this our Play Ranger Scheme runs activities that are inclusive to children with both learning and physical disabilities. Key partner agencies including Mencap and Noah's Ark will continue to be involved in this process.
  - *Hertsmere Inclusive Theatre* was established and continues to be supported by the council. This is an inclusive drama group for children and young people from mainstream and with special / specific needs
  - *Holiday Play Programmes* run in conjunction with Social Services and additional specialist support is provided to allow children with individual needs to attend activities. We also use our own staff to work on a one-to-one basis for children with behavioural issues.

- *'Be There! Do It!'* programme provides a wide range of activities for young people. Children requiring additional support needs are supported through partner agencies providing specialist care workers.
- *Fifty Plus* - Staff provide additional support to elderly residents with a range of disabilities to allow them to attend activities.
- We involved disabled people in planning and delivering services resulting in grants given to disability groups, some examples of which include:
  - Penniwells Riding Centre for the Disabled - £1,500 (provides riding sessions to adults and children with disabilities).
  - Hertsmere Inclusive Theatre Project - £2,000 (gives all children and teenagers the opportunity to participate in dance, drama and music in an inclusive environment. Inclusive means that children with special needs/circumstances learn and perform alongside children from mainstream schools).
  - Noah's Ark - £1,000 (holiday play scheme for children with special needs aged 3-16 years).
  - Community Choir - £500 (inclusive and diverse, inter-faith music group welcoming people regardless of learning and physical difficulties).
- We involved various stakeholders through our community engagement events; e.g.
  - our community engagement event that was held at Allum Lane Community Centre with 58 attendees with diverse backgrounds – race, gender, religion, age, and disability. Hertsmere Community Partnership, a Development Trust, was commissioned to organise the event which was aimed at involving local people from 'hard to reach communities' and their representatives to engage in the equality and diversity process and influence how services are planned and delivered.
  - Disabled service users and disability organisations dealing with diverse impairments attended the event; including representatives from Viewpoint (the learning disability magazine published by MENCAP), Guideposts Trust (provides direct services for people with dementia, with or recovering from mental ill health and those with learning disabilities), a number of residents with diverse impairments from a local multi-purpose day centre, etc.
  - Involving people of different race, age, gender, and diverse impairments through influencing partner organisations to involve diverse stakeholders in planning, delivering and reviewing services. For example, our assessment framework for prioritising the council's grant aid includes an assessment of

whether a service provider works with people with specific needs. Applications for grant aid from the council are prioritised using a number of different criteria including ascertaining if people who primarily benefit from the services the organisation provides include various groups; e.g Young people (under 18s), Older people (60+), People with physical disabilities, People with learning disabilities, People on low income, Unemployed people, Full time students, General public (adults), etc.

- Active involvement of disabled people and disability organisations in carrying out an access audit and a needs assessment – resulting in the development of new services / changes to existing services; for example,
  - Shenley Cemetery – entrance was re-configured and extended; and the footpath network was widened.
  - Bushey Rose Gardens Project – We involved Mencap, Beaumont Residential Home, and Leisure Together which is for people with diverse impairments, and two special needs schools – Falconer Boys and Meadow Wood schools.

### **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- The council's Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit enables us to carry out initial, partial and full assessments.
- We have carried out equality impact assessments (EIAs) of many policies, services and functions, and taken action to deal with the concerns identified.

### **Equalities Monitoring**

- We have established a robust monitoring system for gathering and analysing quantitative / qualitative data, and developed a new monitoring form to ensure consistency and uniformity in the collection of data across all services.
- As reported in the section of this document entitled 'Employment', the council's workforce is representative of the local (Hertsmere) population.

### **Equality and Diversity Training**

- The council provides equality and diversity training and also sponsors officers to attend external equality and diversity training courses. For example, on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009, our Customer Service Operation Manager attended a one-day seminar organised by the East of England Regional Assembly entitled "Meeting the Equality Challenge – Regional Support Programme, Diversity in Customer Care Workshop"
- The council has provided training for councillors, chief officers, managers and staff on equalities and diversity examples of which include the following training courses:
  - Race Relations (Amendment) Act training for councillors, chief officers, managers and staff.
  - Diversity Awareness Training for managers and staff.
  - Diversity Training for managers

- Grievance procedures training including equality and diversity in grievance handling.
- Disciplinary procedures training including equality and diversity in disciplinary handling
- Recruitment and selection training including equality and diversity in recruitment and selection – separate training courses for council officers and elected members.
- Gender Equality briefings
- Disability Awareness training (sensory impairment)
- Who Cares, Wins / customer care training including equality and diversity dimensions.
- Council-wide induction programme for new starters including equality and diversity dimensions
- Departmental Equality and Diversity seminars – dealt with equality and diversity in each department/service area.
- Equality impact assessment training.
- Equality and diversity scoping - training for Directors and Heads of Service
- Equality and diversity action planning – one-to-one action planning with service heads facilitated via external consultancy support.
- Equality and diversity: Political Leadership and Commitment – briefing for Elected Members.
- Equality and diversity leadership training – for Chief Officers & Heads of Service
- Equality and diversity training for play workers
- Equality Standard briefing for chief officers and heads of service

### **Equality and Diversity Action Group (EDAG)**

- Established a corporate **Equality and Diversity Action Group** (EDAG) to mainstream equality across the council.
- The corporate Equality and Diversity Action Group is described as an ‘Action Group’ as it is designed to move the council’s equality and diversity programme from policy to practice through activating and thereby, mainstreaming equality and diversity. The Director of Environment chairs the group. The group’s membership (delegates from across all services) consists of representatives from:
  - Chief Officer (x 2: Director of Resources and Director of Environment)
  - Councillor (x 1: Portfolio Holder for equality/diversity issues)
  - Management (x 6)
  - Staff (x 6)
  - Trade Union (x 1)
  - Equality and diversity consultant (1).

### **Equality and Diversity (E&D) Staff Forum**

- The council has an E&D Staff Forum.
- The Democratic Services Support Officer and Infrastructure Manager are joint co-ordinators of the Staff Forum.
- The Staff Forum runs equality and diversity events.

- The main purpose of the forum is to get staff actively involved in the equality and diversity process. The forum enables the council to identify equality and diversity issues and priorities for staff and also serves as a consultative forum for ensuring that the voices of employees of diverse backgrounds are heard and that their needs are taken into account in employment matters.

### **Publication**

The council publishes information relating to equality and diversity via several sources including on the intranet and the council's website.