

Cabinet – 12 April 2006

Equality and diversity strategy 2005-08

Portfolio: Councillor Zahid Ali, Communities & Partnerships

Service Area: Corporate Support

Wards: All

Forward Plan: No

Summary of report

The Equality and Diversity Strategy looks ahead three years from 2005 to 2008. It sets out for the first time our Council-wide equality commitments; in community leadership, in service delivery and as a major local employer. These commitments are made tangible by a set of strategic objectives and they are complimented by a library of equality schemes relating to race, disability and gender, with further schemes on age, faith and sexual orientation in preparation, which will together form a set of appendices to the strategy.

The strategy is the Council's response to the Equality Standard for Local Government (Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 2 a, under Corporate Health) to produce a corporate Equality and Diversity Strategy and Plan. The strategy briefly highlights the Council's achievements and sets out a baseline for action over the next few years.

Recommendations

Cabinet are requested to approve the attached Equality & Diversity Strategy 2005 – 2008.

Resource and legal considerations

The requirement to prepare and publish an Equality & Diversity Strategy and Plan is a requirement of BVPI 2 a – The Equality Standard for Local Government.

All costs associated with the strategy will be met from within existing budgets. There is a statutory obligation to prepare and publish a Race Equality Scheme arising from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the general duty to promote Disability Equality is being brought in by the government in December 2006. The Equality and Diversity Strategy will provide the overarching framework within which each of the Council's equality schemes will fit.

Citizen impact

The Equality and Diversity Strategy demonstrates to local people and council employees in clear terms the commitment to place equality and diversity at the heart of all that we do. It will bridge the gap between Vision 2008 and the work we undertake to improve our equality best value performance indicators. Equality Impact Assessments will inform service improvements to the benefit of all residents.

Community safety

The Equality & Diversity Strategy will support the Council in its efforts to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good community relations within the borough. This will have a positive impact on community cohesion and the Council's priority to 'ensure all people are safe and secure'.

Environmental impact

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Performance management and risk management issues

There is an effective equalities and diversity infrastructure within the Council which supported by the performance management framework will enable the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Strategy. Achievement of the commitments and strategic objectives will be delivered through the service planning process supported by directorate equality action plans. The Council's performance is monitored externally by a number of equality best value performance indicators by the Audit Commission. The service planning process is risk assessed. It will also provide evidence on the Council's work in strengthening its equality and diversity focus as required by the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework.

Equality implications

Through the Equality and Diversity Strategy and the development of the library of equality schemes the Council is working to comply with statutory obligations and to exemplify best practice.

Consultation

The Equality and Diversity Strategy has been through a three month consultation exercise, in line with the principles of the Walsall Local Compact. Internally, consultation has included employee support networks, employee relations forum and elected members as well as equality champions and directorate equality boards. Externally, consultation has been with organisations that represent all the equality

strands; age, disability, sexuality, gender, race and faith. Changes to the document have been made in line with feedback from the consultation.

Vision 2008

Our commitment for 2008 is that 'we will have maintained and built upon our record as an inclusive place, where all people – our citizens and visitors – are treated fairly, and equally and with respect, where diversity is recognised as one of Walsall's key strengths'. This strategy will help in achieving this commitment.

Background papers

All published.

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Signed:

Executive Director: David Martin

Date: 30 March 2006



Signed:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Zahid Ali

Date: 30 March 2006

Equality & Diversity Strategy

**(Colour Picture Cover Page – with Council logo
& Date)**

Equality & Diversity Team – March 2006

Foreword

We are delighted to launch Walsall Council's first Equality and Diversity Strategy. It represents a major step forward for the council, bringing together into one document our corporate commitment to place equality and diversity at the heart of all that we do, for local people, our own employees, our partners, and the community at large.

In 2004, we organised, with our partners in the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, a major conference on equality and diversity, held at the Grace Centre in Leamore. Since then, we have worked hard – within the Council, and with our partners – to address the key concerns and priorities for action identified at that event. We have established a new Equality & Diversity Team within the council; we have continued to work closely with the community in the STAR programme; we have committed ourselves to establish a shopmobility scheme for Walsall town centre; we have established firm foundations for a truly effective translation and interpretation service; we have set up a new equalities partnership.

This new strategy demonstrates that we see those steps as the start – as evidence that we are serious about bringing about positive change, and proof that we know that more needs to be done. This strategy looks ahead three years from 2005 to 2008; within it, we have set out key council-wide commitments, in community leadership, in service delivery, and as a major local employer. These commitments are made tangible by a set of strategic objectives, and they are complemented by a library of equality schemes relating to race, disability and gender, with further schemes on age, faith and sexual orientation in preparation. Our key council wide actions likewise are complemented by directorate action plans.

This strategy demonstrates that there is a lot going on, corporately, and at a directorate and service level. Having this equality and diversity strategy means that this activity is focussed, and coordinated. Working with our partners through the new Equalities Partnership and in the Borough Strategic Partnership means that our actions are coordinated with those of our partners, maximising the benefit to local communities. But this is a big agenda, and we acknowledge that there is a lot that we need to do to meet the differing needs of our communities. We know that, to succeed, we need to work *with* local people and with local organisations, to demonstrate that we are working *for* local communities, for a fairer society and for the common good.

Cllr Tom Ansell
Leader of the Council

Cllr Zahid Ali
Cabinet Portfolio Holder

Annie Shepperd
Chief Executive

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Equality and Diversity Strategy 2005 - 2008

Contents

Foreword

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Our vision of Walsall in 2008
- 3 Our values
- 4 Commitments
- 5 Making things happen
- 6 Working within a national context
- 7 Working with others
- 8 Links to other Plans and Strategies
- 9 A profile of Walsall - Key Facts

Appendices

1. Our framework for action
2. Race Equality Scheme 2005 – 8 – see Intranet/Website
3. Draft Disability Equality Scheme – see Intranet/Website
4. Draft Gender Equality – draft copy ready by March 2006

* (Sexual Orientation, Multi-Faith Strategies – will be added later in 2006
Age Strategy will be added by end of 2006)

1. Introduction

This Equality and Diversity Strategy looks ahead three years from 2005 to 2008. It sets out for the first time our Council-wide equality commitments. These are underpinned by a series of strategic objectives set out in appendix 1 which show what specific corporate action we will be taking to support the achievement of these commitments.

In addition, these commitments and strategic objectives are also reflected, and expanded upon, in the Council's:

- Race Equality Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- and in forthcoming schemes relating to sexual orientation, age, and religious belief,

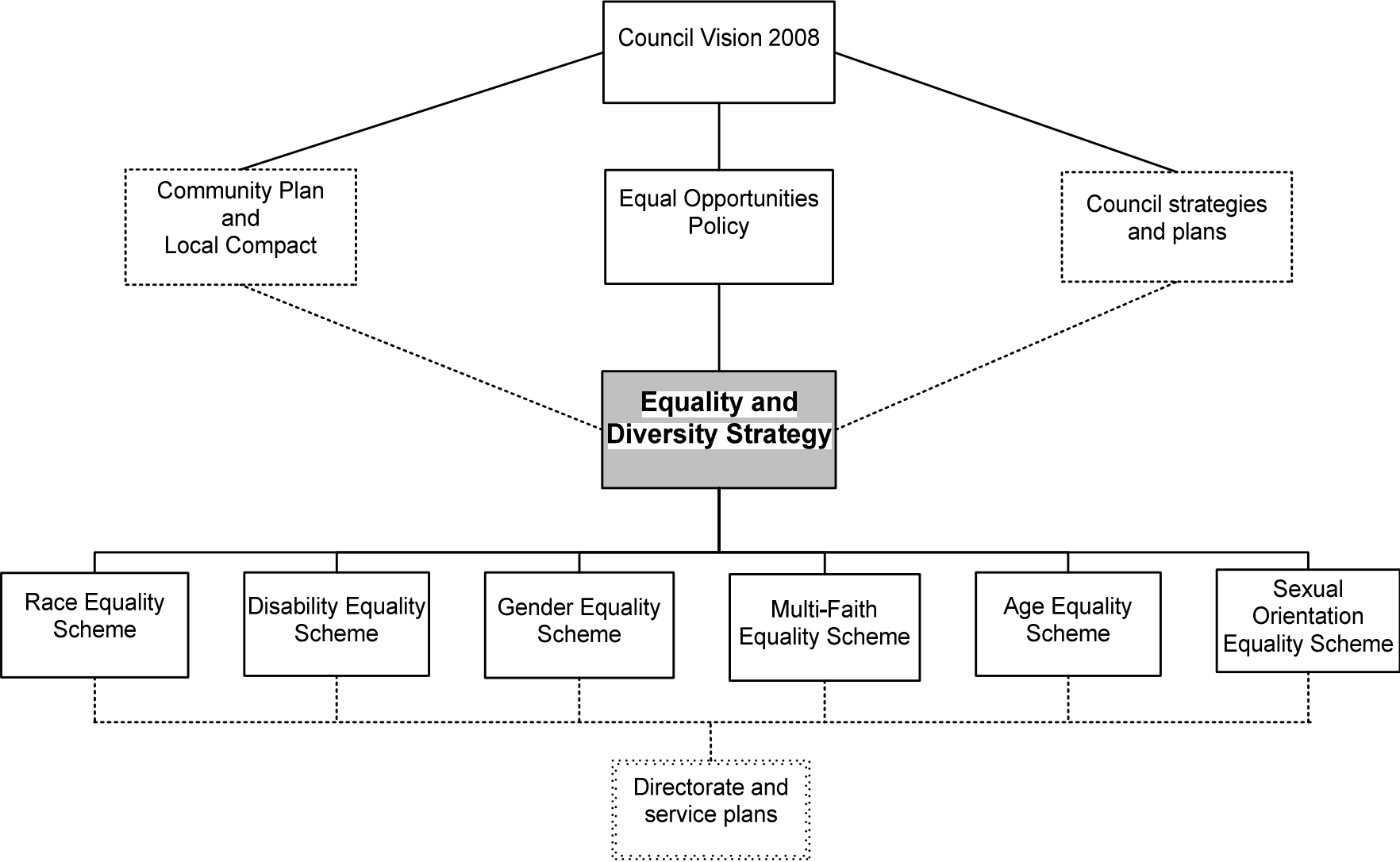
which together form a set of appendices to this Equality and Diversity Strategy. This structure is set out in the diagram overleaf.

Each of these documents has a three year focus to support the achievement of the Council's vision for 2008. The Equality and Diversity Strategy and each of the equality schemes will be reviewed every three years, but with an annual report as a means to monitor and report back on progress to Councillors, employees and residents.

Council directorates will support the achievement of the commitments and strategic objectives through progressing actions within their own strategies and action plans. Actions will be incorporated into directorate service plans and equality action plans and driven by the Council's performance management framework. The directorates are:-

- Regeneration
- Corporate Services
- Neighbourhoods
- Children & Young People
- Social Care and Inclusion

Diagram of Equality Strategies & Schemes



2. Our vision of Walsall in 2008

In 2004 and following detailed consultation, we developed a vision for the sort of place Walsall could become by 2008. This vision, which is set out below, describes the type of community we are aiming to build here in the borough.

In 2008 Walsall will have an established reputation as an ambitious, “can-do” place where a civic, economic and cultural renaissance has been made possible by determined and responsible civic leadership, closely engaged with partner organisations and local residents. In 2008, Walsall people will be proud of their heritage, proud of what their borough has become and excited about future opportunities. The borough will have maintained and built upon its record as an inclusive place, where all people – our citizens and visitors – are treated fairly, and equally, and with respect, and where cultural diversity is recognised as one of Walsall’s key strengths.

In 2008 Walsall will be a learning borough that promotes the value of learning and achievement, in our schools and colleges, in the home, community and at work. Learning will be recognised as a fundamental basis of a flourishing local economy but also as a route to personal fulfilment and achievement. Walsall will be seen as a place for creativity and innovation – to help attract investment, support employers, and to create wealth.

In 2008 Walsall will have a reputation as a clean, green and safe borough. There will be high standards of maintenance of public areas and a sense of responsibility among local people to care for and protect both their neighbours and their local environment. This reputation will be highlighted by well-maintained and attractive civic gateways at principal entry points to the borough – to emphasise the established perception of Walsall as a welcoming and a caring place. By 2008, real improvement will be evident in the health of our citizens, and the needs of people who care for others will be acknowledged and their work valued.

In 2008 local people will see themselves as residents of the borough as a whole. Local districts and their centres will still have their strong sense of identity - strengthened by local neighbourhood partnerships and better, local access to services. Walsall town centre will be an exciting and vibrant place for culture and business – acting as the economic powerhouse of the borough.

In 2008 Walsall Council will be recognised by residents as a listening organisation, which effectively represents, but also tackles, the concerns of local people. It will be a modern organisation at the leading edge of good practice with a national reputation for excellence. Walsall will be a council which puts citizens first and which strives to provide the highest standards of customer service. The council will provide strong and responsive civic leadership, supporting local communities with the resources and tools to provide local solutions to local problems. Walsall will enjoy high levels of civic involvement in neighbourhood partnerships and in a capable, vibrant voluntary sector.

By 2008 Walsall will have played a full role in transforming the Black Country into a highly successful sub-regional economy. Walsall will be working in close partnership with other local authorities to enhance the international reputation and competitiveness of the Birmingham city region, confident that the Black Country and Walsall will benefit greatly from this work.

3. Our values

Following extensive consultation with employees and councillors, core values have been identified to support the council's vision of building a better borough. The five values of **respect, integrity, equality, listening and excellence** have been chosen as a means of signalling to everyone, the beliefs, behaviours and principles that are required of the council in order to deliver its vision and the best quality of life for local people. This set of shared and agreed values sets out what the council stands for and how it will behave.

In a sentence, Walsall Council will **respect** its staff and citizens, act with **integrity**, value **equality** and diversity, **listen** to what people say, do what we say, and strive for and deliver **excellence**.

The five values for excellence are:

Respect

- We will respect equally every individual - our citizens, stakeholders and staff – and their differences and diversity
- We will have mutual respect for the professionalism of individuals, teams and partners – communication will be valued and criticism will be constructive
- In respecting everyone, we will behave with civility, courtesy, decency, dignity, understanding, consideration and tolerance

Integrity

- We will be honest, open and consistent in all our dealings with our stakeholders, so that we may earn and maintain their trust
- We will keep our promises, be accountable and take responsibility for our actions
- We will demonstrate decisive, responsive, impartial and fair leadership

Equality

- We will, through our policies, statements and actions, include, promote and celebrate the great diversity of individuals and cultures across the borough
- We will gear our resources to ensure that our citizens and staff will see and feel real fairness and equality for all
- We will make council services accessible, and tailored to the needs of all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle or disability

Listening

- We will listen to and consult residents, community organisations, voluntary groups and staff – caring about and acting upon their views and concerns

- We will learn from any comments or complaints that local people may have and ensure they are responded to effectively
- We will consult citizens on major changes and involve them in the things that matter in their community, working with them to deliver the vision at local levels

Excellence

- We will strive to become an excellent council - forward-facing, outward-looking and constantly seeking to develop and improve our services in ways most meaningful to citizens
- We will learn, develop and work effectively and efficiently, acting as one council to deliver our one vision for the benefit of all Walsall citizens
- We will empower, trust and value all staff by providing the support, training, communication and opportunities to develop the ownership, responsibility and confidence to make decisions, solve problems and fulfil our potential to achieve continuous improvement for the benefit of local people.

The council is now embedding the values in the day to day practices of each service area. The values are reflected in recruitment and retention processes and training programmes, including in particular our induction programme for new employees. They are also reflected in our human resource policies, practices and procedures and through all organisational development activities across the organisation.

4. Our commitments

In order to achieve the vision for Walsall we need to tackle some important issues. This section sets out our specific commitments we make to ensure visible, real improvements for the residents of Walsall and employees of the Council, making measurable progress throughout the three years of this strategy.

Our commitments are set out in terms of the three major roles of the Council: community leadership/engagement, service delivery and major employer.

Community leadership

As a Council our commitment is to:

- recognise, understand and respect each others differences and celebrate both differences and similarities
- promote equality across the borough, across all geographical areas and with all partners

Service delivery

As a Council our commitment is to:

- appreciate and aim to meet the needs of our communities, both majority and minority communities and to appreciate local citizens as individuals
- ensure fair treatment of all and the elimination of discrimination
- understand that treating all people the same is not enough. We need to recognise diversity

These Council commitments were made at Walsall Borough's first Diversity Conference in April 2004.

Employer

As a Council our commitment is to:

- achieve a workforce that is representative of the communities it serves
- ensure employees are treated fairly at work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment

Key objectives in support of these Council-wide commitments are set out in Appendix 1, Our Framework for Action. Other actions are set out in our equality schemes.

5. Making things happen

The Council has invested considerably in developing an effective equalities and diversity infrastructure which supported by the Council's performance management framework will enable us to deliver our Equality and Diversity Strategy.

Cabinet portfolio and Scrutiny and performance panel

The Communities & Partnership portfolio holder is the Cabinet member with lead responsibility for equality and diversity. Cabinet and ultimately Council set the overall policy framework. Scrutiny has an important role to scrutinise decisions made by cabinet and council officers, and the performance of the Council towards achieving targets and policy objectives.

Equalities champions

Each directorate has an equalities champion who is a senior officer who reports directly to an Executive Director. The champions attend the Corporate Equalities Group (CEG) on a monthly basis. It is CEG which provides the strategic framework and guidance on equalities within the Council. Equality Champions are:-

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| • Regeneration: | Clinton Simmons | simonsc@walsall.gov.uk |
| • Neighbourhoods: | Judith Sunley | sunleyj@walsall.gov.uk |
| • Corporate Services: | Vicky Crowshaw | crowshawv@walsall.gov.uk |
| • Children & Young People: | Pauline Pilkington | pilkingtonp@walsall.gov.uk |
| • Social Care & Inclusion: | Sue Byard | byards@walsall.gov.uk |

Equality boards

Each directorate also has an equalities board which is chaired by the champion and has representatives from each service. It is this group that is responsible for the directorate equalities action plan and ensuring actions and targets are mainstreamed within service plans. Internal scrutiny is provided by officers who monitor and review equality action plans and progress against the equality standard on a quarterly and annual basis

Equality and diversity team

This core team provides advice, guidance and training to directorates in new policies and procedures as well as sharing best practice. The team works closely with equality champions and equality boards as well as with many community groups.

Performance management framework

The above structures are supported by a robust and comprehensive performance management framework which monitors the progress of our Best Value Performance Indicators and the performance of our service planning processes. The individual performance management process (IPM) translates Council priorities into individual targets.

6. Working within a national context

The Council is committed to making a difference in Walsall through its Vision for 2008 and through the targets set out in its plans and strategies. However, this is not in isolation, the Council as a statutory body works within a national framework which strengthens its ability to eliminate discrimination and promote social justice. The key drivers are set out below:

Legislation

The Council is working to comply with statutory obligations under the various equality Acts and to exemplify best practice. The Council has outlined its actions to meet the duty to promote equality through the various Equality Schemes as well as outlining specific arrangements to meet specific duties as required by the legislation. The Council abides by the following equality legislation:-

- * Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- * Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and recent Regulations
- * Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- * Human Rights Act 1998
- * European regulations relating to discrimination in Employment 2003/4/6 (on Race, Gender, Disability, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation and Age)

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

The Council's performance is monitored externally by a number of BVPIs. These range from specific equality indicators on corporate health, employment and community safety as well as general indicators around satisfaction, complaints and access in services. The details can be found in the various Equality Schemes as well as the Council Performance Plan. The main one in relation to this strategy is BVPI 2 a - Equality Standard for Local Government (which at present covers Race, Disability and Gender)

Annual targets are set and audited so that national comparisons can be made and Walsall's performance can be benchmarked against performance in other Councils (see the Council Performance Plan).

National Government framework

The government is working towards one equalities body to replace the three existing bodies. The body will cover all Equality strands and groups. It is to be hoped that the government and/or the new body will propose one equalities Act to provide parity and cover for all disadvantaged groups in society. At present the government is highlighting the following agendas for local government to follow:-

- Social inclusion
- Community cohesion
- Faith groups
- Tackling poverty and disadvantage
- Pathways to Work

The Council is embedding these agendas in its various Equality Schemes and is working in partnership with other agencies in the locality to improve the quality of life for local residents.

7. Working with others

The success of this strategy will need active contributions from elected members, all managers and employees. Equally importantly will be the contribution and support from our many partners and stakeholders.

Walsall has undergone a transformation in recent times in how it consults and engages with its diverse communities. It has established nine Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

involving local people, who are broadly representative of their area and communities, to help shape the delivery of Council and partner services at a local level.

More effective and new structures are now in place. The Council is a key partner within Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership (WBSP), Safer Walsall Borough Partnership and New Deal for Communities all of which are committed to equality and diversity actions and targets. Through working closely with Youth Opinions Unite (YOU) the voice of young people is being heard.

Within the framework of WBSP the Council has been the lead partner in establishing a borough-wide Equalities Partnership. This Partnership uniquely brings together the Chief Executives of the statutory bodies and key organisations within the borough with representatives of community and voluntary groups. Together this partnership will be taking a leading role on strategic and policy issues to transform the equalities and diversity agenda across the borough.

The Council regularly seeks the views of residents through surveys, focus groups and its Citizens' Panel. Operating within the framework of the Council's Consultation Strategy this ensures that all consultation is fair, consistent and representative.

Enhancing the Council's consultation with community and voluntary groups is a key action for Council officers. The Equality and Diversity Team are developing closer working relationships with the Community Empowerment Network (CEN), Walsall Voluntary Action and key groups such as the Disability Forum and the BME Alliance.

Of particular note, is the work with faith communities. The Council works closely with the Walsall Borough Multi-Faith Forum and this has led to the Standing Together Against Racism (STAR) programme. Representatives from different faiths plan and deliver a range of STAR events to promote and respect diversity.

8. Links to other strategies and plans

Like all other large organisations, the council publishes a wide range of plans and strategies. Some of these, like the Corporate Plan which sets out the council's overall vision, and the Performance Plan, cover the whole range of the council's roles, responsibilities and functions. Others are specific to one theme or service area: some of these are published plans like the council's homelessness strategy, whilst others are service plans, working documents produced by each of our services focussing on the key tasks for the year ahead. Also, and increasingly, the council works with other organisations, and with the community at large; this partnership-based work is reflected in other plans and strategies, such as the Community Plan or the Local Accessibility Action Plan, published and owned by the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, or the Crime, Disorder and Drug Misuse Reduction Strategy, developed and implemented by the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership.

Taken together, all of these plans and strategies provide a comprehensive picture of what the council does, and how the council contributes to life, work, and leisure in the borough. Each of these documents reflect the council's commitment to equality and diversity; taken together, all of these documents will provide a wealth of examples where the council and our partners are addressing issues across the breadth of the equality and diversity agenda. This Equality & Diversity Strategy includes key examples; other complementary tasks, projects and initiatives will be found in these other documents.

All our plans address equality and diversity issues. Look on the council web site, or visit one of our local libraries for details. Some examples of the plans that we produce and publish are:

- Children's and Young People's Strategy
- Consultation & Engagement Strategy
- Customer Access Strategy
- Education Development Plan (through Education Walsall)
- Housing Strategy
- BME Housing Strategy
- Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Strategy
- Local Transport Plan
- Procurement Strategy
- Supporting People Strategy
- Unitary Development Plan

9. A profile of Walsall - key facts

The Borough

Walsall has a population according to 2004 mid-year estimates of 252,800, a steady decline from 253,500 (2001 Census) and is located in the Black Country area within the West Midlands. Our metropolitan neighbours are Birmingham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton; our Staffordshire neighbours Cannock Chase; Lichfield and South Staffordshire. We are close to the heart of national road and rail networks, with the M6 bisecting the Borough, the M5 starting at our border with Sandwell, and the M6 Toll road situated immediately to the North. Rail, metro and bus routes feed into national networks on the Birmingham-Wolverhampton and Trent Valley railway lines.

The Borough covers 106 km² and combines urban, suburban and rural communities; reflecting the area's socio-economic history of heavy industry (iron, steel and coal mining) and craft based industry (lock making and leather trades). The 1970s and

1980s saw the decline of the local economy with the loss of traditional sources of employment. Urban Programme, City Challenge, Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), New Deal for Communities (NDC), Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), The Walsall Regeneration Company and other regional development assistance have sought to regenerate the local economy and its communities through restoring previously contaminated brown field sites, building capacity in our local workforce, developing fresh industrial and commercial business opportunities within the Borough and improving the physical infrastructure. Current unemployment levels are 4.4% (February 2006) compared to 3.4% in February 2005.

Levels of deprivation vary significantly. 29 of the Borough's 169 Super Output Areas (SOAs) fall within the 10% of most deprived SOAs in England; with 10 amongst the 5% most deprived. Unemployment in the Blakenall ward is currently 7.3% and in St Matthew's ward it is 8.9% (February 2006). The Borough according to figures from the 2001 Census has a lower percentage of residents in managerial and professional posts (19.8%) than the regional (24.0%) or national (26.3%) averages. Health indices show a clear East/West split, with western parts of the Borough exhibiting poor health status. Particular issues for the Borough are heart disease, cancer and high under 18 pregnancy rates. 39.4% of households have one or more residents with a long-term illness compared with 34.1% nationally.

According to 2004 mid-year estimates, 32.6% of residents are aged under 25, compared to a national average of 31.0%; 20.0% are under 16 (national average 18.2%). 2001 Census figures show that in Walsall there are 13.6% who are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Minority ethnic residents' backgrounds are predominantly Indian (40%), Pakistani (27.1%), Bangladeshi (7.3%) and Mixed and Black Groups (10.3% and 10.2% respectively). The Borough has participated in the Government's dispersal programme for asylum seekers and currently has very small numbers of residents from Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq and from a number of African countries. Around 40 different languages are spoken. The Borough has a lower percentage of residents in managerial and professional posts (20%) than the national (26%) or regional averages (24%).

27.4% of households rent from registered social landlords, including the Walsall Housing Group (whg) and WATMOS; this compares with 19.2% nationally. 4.3% (8.7% nationally) rent from private landlords, whilst 64.7% are owner-occupiers (68.9% nationally). The Borough has above average numbers of properties that are of poor standard.

The Council

The Council has 60 councillors. Currently there are 17 women councillors and 43 male councillors. There are 7 councillors from the BME communities. (Officer Classification as at March 2006.)

Workforce representation – April 2004 to March 2005

The Council had a total workforce of 9,718 as at 31st March 2005. 90.7% of the workforce is white and 9.3% from BME communities. 1.86% of the workforce stated they have a disability. 76% of the workforce are over 36 years old and 77% of the workforce are women.

More women than men continue to apply for Council jobs. This follows a similar pattern as for previous years and is due, in the main, to the types of jobs on offer, that is, mainly part time caring, cleaning and clerical opportunities, occupations which do not generally attract as many male applicants. The number of applications received from Black and Ethnic Minority candidates was up by 22%. The percentage of Black and Ethnic Minority candidates being appointed has, encouragingly, increased from 18% to 22%. The total number of disabled people applying for jobs with the Council was 69, of these only 9 were short listed and 4 subsequently appointed. These figures are less encouraging than last year, but, the 4 appointments made represent 1% of the total appointments made.

Full details on recruitment activity and workforce monitoring are provide in the Annual Statement of Recruitment Activity 2004/5 and Workforce Monitoring report on the Human Resources Web site. This report includes actions being taken to reduce the imbalances in the workforce.

Appendix 1 – Our framework for action

Promoting Equality and Diversity:

Objective: Community Leadership	Lead	Outcome and performance measure
Implement Walsall Local Compact within the Council	Policy Unit	Improved relationship with community and voluntary groups (BME & Disability groups)
Achieve consistent progress against the Equality Standard for Local Government	Equality and Diversity team	Level 5 achieved by April 2012
Develop new Race Equality Scheme	Equality and Diversity team	Revised in November 2005
Develop Disability and Gender Equality Schemes	Equality and Diversity team	Schemes to be in place by December 2006
Develop age, religion and belief and sexual orientation equality schemes	Equality and Diversity team	Schemes to be in place by December 2007
Support WBSP in co-ordinating and delivering on the community cohesion agenda as set out in Walsall's Community Plan	Equality Champions	Contributions to the 4 pillars of the LAA agreement. Effective joint working. Cultural events promoting community cohesion held in LNP areas during 2006/7.
Support and enhance Walsall's borough-wide Equalities Partnership	Equality and Diversity team	Work with partners to achieve borough equality objectives at a strategic level
Support to the multi-faith forum to promote community cohesion through the Stand Together Against Racism (STAR) programme	Equality and Diversity Team	Events supported and resourced Improved understanding of each other's faith and culture
Continue to carry out the actions from Walsall's first Diversity Conference	Equality and Diversity team	Partners working together to resource gaps identified through the Equalities Partnership

Objective: Service Delivery	Lead	Outcome and performance measure
Carry out Equality Impact Assessments as set out in the equality schemes and publish outcomes on an annual basis	Directorate Champions	Equality impact assessments integrated within policy development, service planning processes and project management
Improve the Complaints system	Policy Unit	Target timescales met. Learning points shared annually across the Council. Equalities monitoring and evaluation carried out.
Ensure consultation about services effectively seeks the views of all communities	Directorate Champions and core consultation group	An excellent Council with an improved rate of customer satisfaction by 2008
Improve equalities monitoring in order to meet the individual and community needs of residents	Equality Champions	Monitoring systems set up and information analysed by equality categories in order to identify gaps and actions to improve customer satisfaction and meet needs
Objective: Employer	Lead	Outcome and performance measure
Increase the representation of under represented groups at all levels within the Council	Human Resources/ Directorate Champions	Directorate targets established to increase levels. Employees who are broadly representative of the local population measured by a number of BVPIs on ethnicity, gender and disability.
Effective handling and managing of harassment and discrimination	Human Resources	Incremental year on year improvement in staff survey results. (BVPI 2b as well as BVPIs 174 and 175)
Raise awareness of equality issues in training courses	Organisational Development	Embed introduction to issues in induction courses, e-learning, other courses and at all levels.

If you require copies of this strategy in community languages and/or in accessible formats then please contact:

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Civic Centre
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Fax: 01922 614210

Minicom: 01922 652010

TextBox: *(number to be provided before final version printed after agreement by EMT & Cabinet)*