

# Our Approach to Equalities

## 2012-15



### What is this document about?

This document, which we refer to as a strategy, shows what Northampton Borough Council will do to make Northampton a place where people are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. It shows how the councillors and people who work for the Council, together with services we commission and provide with others, will make Northampton a place where everyone can access high quality services that have been designed to meet their needs.

It explains how we will promote equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and foster good relationships between different community groups. It also covers what we will do to support equality of opportunity within our workforce.

### Who is this document for?

**It is for everyone in Northampton** - to show what we will do to make Northampton a fairer place for everyone.

**It is for Northampton Borough Council councillors and employees** – to communicate that the equalities agenda is a priority of the Council and that it is **everyone's business**.

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If you require a summary of this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, audiotape, or some help in understanding it in your language, please contact the Community Engagement and Equalities Officer (contact details above)

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INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE





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## **Foreword**

This strategy sets out what the Council will do over the next three years to make Northampton a place where people get along with each other and treat each other with dignity and respect.

At Northampton Borough Council we recognise that equality and diversity is a fundamental requirement in the delivery of the best services that meet the needs of individuals. We also recognise that it is essential to securing the employment of the best people.

This strategy covers inequality in terms of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and human rights.

In the past we focussed on developing processes to take forward the equalities agenda. This new strategy is also about what we intend to do to improve outcomes to bring about real and lasting change to people's lives.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to develop this strategy. We have talked with a wide range of people to hear their views on what we should be focusing our efforts on. We will continue to use what people have said to develop our priorities for action.

**Cllr David Mackintosh**  
Council Leader

**Cllr Brandon Eldred**  
Portfolio Holder, Community Engagement

**David Kennedy**  
Chief Executive

## Part 1 - Introduction

### The Equalities Journey so far

This strategy has been developed to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

We are moving away from a process-driven framework. Our main aim now is to work in ways that have outcomes which can make a real difference for our residents, customers, councillors and workforce.

We recognise that everyone has a part to play – our councillors, employees, contractors, local organisations and citizens - in making Northampton a place where people get along well with each other, where difference is valued and where everyone treats each other with fairness and respect.

### What do ‘equality’, diversity’ and human rights really mean?

**Equality:** is about creating a fairer society where everyone has the same chance to fulfil their potential, to participate fully in the community and have access to the services they need. Equality of opportunity is about equal access, treatment and outcomes that meet individual needs.

**Diversity:** is about recognising and valuing differences in their broadest sense: understanding people’s differences and similarities to help the individual, the council and society as a whole.

**Human rights:** are basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. Human rights are based on core principles like dignity, fairness, equality and respect. They affect your day-to-day life and protect your freedom to control your own life, to take part in elections and council decision-making, to get fair services from public authorities. They help you to be safe, be treated fairly and with dignity; live the life you choose; and take an active part in your community and wider society.

### Why are equality, diversity and human rights important?

**The moral case:** treating people fairly and well with respect for their diversity and human rights is a fundamental value of civilised societies.

**The business case:** investing in equality, diversity and human rights will result in the council designing and delivering more efficient and effective services that more people can use. It can lead to greater employee productivity, creativity, innovation and flexibility. This means more value for money for the taxpayers in Northampton.

**The legal case:** The law imposes duties on the council and others providing public functions. These seek to reduce bureaucracy, support improvement in services and

accountability to local people. The duties include a 'general' duty to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

Having 'due regard' means showing we think about the three aims of the general duty as part of the process of decision-making by services and the council as a whole. We will publish information as required by new regulations – to help everyone see how we are working to the equality duties.

## **This strategy relates to other important council documents**

### **The Constitution of the Council**

The Constitution sets out the rules and requirements for how the council works. "Our approach to equalities" is recognised by the Constitution of the Council.

### **The Corporate Plan 2012-15**

The Corporate Plan sets out Northampton Borough Council's priorities, recognises this strategy and includes the corporate equality objectives identified in this strategy. It is the central place listing key objectives that each service area is working towards to ensure our corporate priorities are delivered: see [www.northampton.gov.uk/performance](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/performance).

### **Service Plans**

Equalities issues that need addressing at service level are included in departmental service plans. These will be identified through the engagement and involvement of the local community, equality impact assessments and through guidance issued by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). These plans are made on an annual cycle.

### **Consultation Toolkit**

This guides services how to plan and conduct consultation to take account of good practice, including in relation to equalities and diversity: [www.northampton.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/consultation).

## **About the people of Northampton**

Northamptonshire has officially been the second fastest growing county in 2004 – 2009. The mid-year population estimate for Northamptonshire in 2009 was 683,800. Some suggested links to find national and other datasets are included at [www.northampton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/equality).

The largest centre of population in Northamptonshire is Northampton, the county town. In 2009 the Places Database estimated the population of Northampton to be 210,500.

**People's characteristics protected by equalities law:** the population can be broken down into groups or characteristics to help understand the people we serve. These are

sometimes called “protected characteristics”. They are set out in the Equality Act 2010. They are age, gender, gender assignment, race/ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, faith and belief, pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding) and marital status (including civil partnership). All of us have at least some of these characteristics.

## ★ Age

**Nationally:** By 2034, 23% of the UK population is projected to be aged 65 and over compared to 18% under 16. By 2034 the number aged 85 and over is projected to be 5% of the total UK population.

**Northamptonshire:** Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates for 2009 show a relatively young population. There is a slightly higher percentage of children in Northamptonshire compared with the national average (19.8% against 18.7%.); the working age population in Northamptonshire is the same as the national average (61.9%) but higher at 64.4% in Northampton.

**Northampton:** population in 2009 (based on 2001 Census updated by details of births etc):

- 51,500 people aged 0 – 19 years
- 95,100 people aged 20 – 49 years
- 35,300 people aged 50 – 64 years; and
- 28,700 people aged 65 and over.

There were 141,400 working age people in Northampton in 2009 according to the Places Database with a 2008/9 employment rate of 76.8%.

Large developments, for example, in the eastern district of Northampton have tended to attract people of particular ages to live in the town. This has an impact on the age profile of the town with a high number of people of a similar age likely to reach retirement at about the same time and likely to develop age-related disabilities at about the same time. This has a potential impact on services and help people need.

**Northampton Borough Council workforce:** monitoring shows as at 31 March 2011:

Age Band	
20 and under	1.23%
21 – 30	14.39%
31 – 40	20.9%
41 – 50	29.6%
51 – 60	25.7%
61 - 64	6.66%
65 and over	1.39%

## ★ Gender

**Northamptonshire:** Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates for 2009 put the population very similar to the national average of 49.6% males and 50.4% females.

**Northampton:** population in 2009 according to the Places Database:

- 50.5% female
- 49.4% male.

**Northampton Borough Council workforce:** monitoring shows at 31 March 2011:

- 51.3% male
- 43.5% female.

**Northampton Borough Council councillors:** monitoring shows in June 2011:

- 73.3% male
- 24.4% female.

## ★ Gender Assignment (Transgender)

There is no local data about the number of Transgendered people living in Northampton.

There are about 25 transgendered people per 100,000 people aged 16 years and older in the UK population according to the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES).

For every one of those who can be counted, there are up to 40 others who experience a degree of gender variance. Some of these people will transition in the future

GIRES 2009 report funded by the Home Office ([www.gires.org.uk/prevalence.php](http://www.gires.org.uk/prevalence.php)) estimated that, in 2007, the prevalence of people who had sought medical care for gender variance was 20 per 100,000, ie 10,000 people nationally, of whom 6,000 had undergone transition. 80% were assigned as boys at birth (now trans women) and 20% as girls (now trans men). GIRES anticipates, based on more recent data from individual gender identity clinics, that the gender balance may eventually become more equal.

## ★ Race/Ethnicity

**Northamptonshire:** The Office for National Statistics 2007 mid-year estimates suggested

- the population of Northamptonshire was then around 684,900
- 7.8% of the county population were from ethnic minorities (53,200 people.)
- Northampton had the largest ethnic minority population in the county (12.1%)
- The largest non-white ethnic group were Asian (3.3% of the county's population)
- 88% of the county's population were White British and 2.9% were classed as White Other.

The total Gypsy and Traveller population in Northamptonshire is unknown and estimates vary greatly. This situation is due to a variety of reasons, including a lack of data capture for this group.



**Northampton:** In 2001 the Census found the population to be as shown in the table below.

Ethnic Population Census 2001		Northants	Northampton
White		95.10%	91.60%
Mixed		1.20%	1.70%
Asian or Asian British		2.00%	3.30%
Black or Black British		1.20%	2.40%
Chinese or other ethnic group		0.50%	1.00%

The percentage for ethnic minority population is believed to have increased since then. By 2006 the Mid Year Population Estimated figures put the White population at around 88% (with White British population at around 84%).

**Northampton Borough Council workforce:** monitoring shows the following as at 31 March 2011:

Ethnicity	Percentage
Bangladeshi	0.24%
Black African	1.2%
Black Caribbean	1.1%
Chinese	0.16%
Declined to state	0.3%
Did not answer	12.4%
Indian	0.57%
Other Asian	0.16%
Other Ethnic Group	0.24%
Other Mixed	0.24%
Other White Background	1.89%
White British	77.3%
White Irish	0.24%
White and Asian	0.48%
White and Black Caribbean	0.33%

**Northampton Borough Councillors:** monitoring shows that in June 2011 at least 53% declared as British, Irish or Scottish and around 4% declared as Asian.

## ★ Disability

Disability refers to both physical and mental disabilities.

Barriers in society prevent disabled people participating and restrict their opportunities. When we understand people's needs, we can reduce and remove barriers. This helps people to participate in society to their full potential.

**Nationally:** the Labour Force Survey (2009) says there are 6.7 million disabled people of working age in Great Britain. This is about 18% of the working age population.

Figures reflect that disability is very common:

- 1 in 5 adults in the UK has a disability; 1 in 20 children in the UK has a disability
- 1 in 5 people will be affected by mental health issues at some time in their life.
- 1 in 4 men/1 in 5 women aged 45 can expect to have a stroke if they live to be 85 years old.
- 1 in 10 people in Britain are dyslexic; 4% severely so
- 1 in 100 people have some form of autistic spectrum disorder
- 7 out of 10 people aged over 70 have some kind of hearing loss.

**Work and disability:**

- 23% of disabled people have no qualifications compared to 9% of non-disabled people.
- Disabled graduates are more likely to be out of work than non-disabled individuals with no formal qualifications (Monitoring Poverty & Social Exclusion 2006, New Policy Institute). Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has.
- Only 20% of people with a mental health condition are in employment (Labour Force Survey, March 2009).

**Northamptonshire:** The 2009 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlights that the county has

- a higher number of people who have a learning disability compared to neighbouring counties.
- a higher number of people with a physical disability and who are permanently unable to work.
- more men than women with a physical disability.
- 1 in 5 people with a learning disability are likely to be employed
- around 50% of people with a physical disability are likely to be in employment.

In May 2010, the number of people aged between 16-89 claiming Disability Living Allowance in Northamptonshire was 29,450 based on claimant figures (approximately 4% of the population).

There is a lack of robust data at a national and local level regarding the numbers and characteristics of disabled children. Northamptonshire County Council and NHS Northamptonshire's Aiming High for Disabled Children Joint Strategy April 2009- March 2011

- estimated that 3.5% of 0 to 19 years olds in the county had a disability which includes those that are in the mild' range
- highlighted that 2.4% of 0 to 19 year olds in the county could be expected to have a disability in the moderate' to severe' range.

**Northampton Borough Council workforce:** disability monitoring shows at 31 March 2011

- 4.2% declared themselves to have a disability
- 78.9% declared having no disability
- 16.7% either did not answer or chose to 'decline to state' whether or not they had a disability.

**Northampton Borough Council councillors:** monitoring shows that more than 7% of our councillors declared themselves to have a disability in June 2011.

**Carers:** The 2009 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment estimated that there were 60,000 carers in Northamptonshire including 17,500 young carers carrying out caring tasks. It was also estimated that 10,900 people over the age of 65 are providing unpaid care.

## ★ Sexual Orientation

A wide range of research suggests that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people constitute 5–7% of the adult population. This estimate is based on the findings of a number of different and disparate sources. Using a slightly different definition, a number of surveys point to an LGB population estimate of around 2.0–2.5% based on general population samples when the question asked focuses on the identity dimension of sexual orientation. In Northampton this puts LGB population between 4,210 (2%) and 14,735 (7%).

The percentage of Transgendered people identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual is the same as within the general population.

**Northampton Borough Council workforce:** sexuality monitoring shows as at 31 March 2011:

- LGB 1.23% (being Bisexual 0.4%, Gay 0.32%, Lesbian 0.49%)
- Heterosexual 75.5%
- Declined to State 5.9% and Did not answer 17.2%

## ★ Faith and belief (including no religion or belief)

There is a wealth of diversity in the religions and beliefs followed by local people, which include Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh faiths.

We have no recent estimation of religion figures for the Borough so our estimates are based on calculating religion using percentages from the Office for National Statistics regarding religion by ethnicity and the estimated ethnicity figures from the Office for National Statistics in 2008.

Christian	71.7%
No religion	18%
Not stated	7.8%
Muslim	1.2%
Hindu	1.2%
Sikh	0.4%
Buddhist	0.3%
Other:	0.3%
Jewish:	0.1%

**Northampton Borough Council workforce:** monitoring shows as at 31 March 2011:

Christian	48.3%
No religion	16.3%
Not stated	30.8%
Muslim (Islam)	0.3%
Hindu	0.3%
Buddhist	0.3%
Jehovah's witness	0.08%
Jewish	0.16%
Other religion	0.17%
Atheist	0.15%

**Northampton Borough Councillors:** monitoring shows in June 2011:

Christian	31%
No religion	15.5%
Not stated	42%
Humanist:	2.2%

## **What is our approach to equality, diversity and human rights?**

Where we are now and where we want to be

We want equality and diversity to be integral parts of everyone's work, to help our customers and our workforce. From 2011-12 we are introducing a new question to our employee opinion survey to find out the extent to which staff across all service areas and all levels of role agree that equality and diversity is everybody's business.

We are using the **Equalities Framework for Local Government** to help us embed good equality and diversity practice. The Framework is a tool that helps us to measure the progress we are making towards embedding and integrating excellent equality and diversity practice. It is about what we do and how that makes a difference for the people we serve and the workforce.

There are 3 levels of the Framework:

- Level 1 – Developing
- Level 2 – Achieving
- Level 3 - Excellent.

The Council is at the 'Achieving' level of the Framework and was awarded the **Equality Mark Certificate** in September 2009. Our aim is to become 'Excellent' before the end of 2013.

In order to achieve the 'Excellent' level, we need to ensure we can evidence best practice across the five themes of the **Equality Framework**, listed below:

Theme 1 – Knowing your community and equality mapping  
Theme 2 – Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment  
Theme 3 – Community engagement and satisfaction  
Theme 4 – Responsive services and customer care  
Theme 5 – Modern and diverse workforce

We have met some requirements of the 'Excellent' level. However, there are some that we have not yet achieved. We will include actions to address these in our **Equalities Action Plan**.

## **Examples of where we have been improving:**

- **The Council has implemented action for equal pay outcomes.**
- **The Council has achieved the Investor In People standard** including being assessed on how we are doing on equality and diversity.
- **Several service areas have achieved the Customer Service Excellence Standard.**  
In 2010 a Customer Service Excellence Standard award inspector praised our Customer Services staff for their equality champions' work. It has helped them respond to people's needs and informed the re-design of our One Stop Shop to make services more accessible.
- **Our Housing Solutions Service has been accredited by the Albert Kennedy Trust for its work with customers from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.** The Trust supports young people aged 16 to 25 years old who are homeless or living in a hostile environment
- **We have responded to feedback from disabled people to improve how we publish Agendas and Minutes of council meetings.** They are now published in both pdf and rich text format, helping people who use screen-reader software and with various disabilities to help themselves to the information; and helping all internet users to find documents more easily.
- **The Council uses equality impact assessments for all major new changes in policy and ways of working. There is more involvement of equality stakeholders at an early stage.**
- **We have strengthened our budget-planning processes to use and publish equality impact assessments on proposed options.** We have ensured councillors and managers are aware of the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance for financial decision-makers.
- **We use a free best practice management tool known as "EFFECT"** (Equality Framework Evidence Collection Tool). This helps staff across the council plan and monitor their progress on equalities.

- **Some staff have become equality champions**, helping to build skill and knowledge around the council to help meet our equalities responsibilities in how we work.
- **We have increased our use of social networking media** eg Facebook, to reach more young people, LGBT people, people with disabilities and others..
- **We have developed the DisabledGo (online) access guide to Northampton**, talking to disabled people, carers and others. It provides details of around 500 places open to the public in Northampton to help disabled people and their carers plan visits and take part in community life and visits to the council – and to help promote accessible local businesses.

### **Areas where we need to improve include:**

- **How we prevent and deal with hate crime including bullying.** A “hate crime” is any incident perceived by the victim or any other person to have happened because of hate or prejudice and which happens to be a criminal offence eg verbal abuse, assault, graffiti, damage to property, bullying, malicious phone calls and texts.
- **We need to monitor our workforce strategy** to make sure it is helping to maximise the potential of all staff and that staff feel supported and free from bullying at work.
- **We need to improve how we help and support vulnerable people** in aspects of their housing and well-being.
- **We need to improve satisfaction about how we communicate and consult with people.** More people need to feel communication is accessible, consultation is meaningful and that they can influence decisions.
- **We need to improve our approach to equality impact assessments (EIAs)**, particularly publishing them and involving people from outside the council in their development. We need to ensure that their quality and integration to service development continues to improve.
- **Partnership working and grants funding:** We need to ensure that organisations we work with, or fund, are able to identify how communities are changing and the impact this may have on equality priorities.

## **Part 2 – What are our equality, diversity and human rights priorities?**

### **What the people we serve think our equality priorities should be**

We consulted people between July 2011 and January 2012 about equalities. We also took into account the results of consultations and research by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, issues of concern to people raised at Forum meetings, and service and corporate planning information, to help identify corporate equality objectives.

Hate crime including bullying was an issue of concern identified from a number of different sources. These included the Community Safety Partnership Priorities Consultation in 2011, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Panel's work on hate crime in response to public requests, and Forums' work such as Northampton Youth Forum's "Stamp out Hate Crime" campaign. National evidence has also been published about the need for more to be done by Councils to help people with hate crime. The council has public sector equality duties which require it to have due regard to issues related to hate crime such as discrimination, harassment and fostering good relations. The council has other legal duties in relation to crime and disorder which are also relevant to hate crime.

Workforce monitoring and transparency is a key requirement of the public sector equality duties. The council's employee opinion and Stonewall Workplace Index returns, along with other evidence available within the council about training needs, appraisals, grievances, recruitment etc, help to provide a picture of changing needs of the workforce. A key purpose of the equality duties is to ensure the workforce are treated fairly.

Helping people in vulnerable situations – whether due to disability, domestic violence, hate crime, homelessness, mental health or other need – is an important responsibility of the Council and one which it recognises the need to do more about.

### **Our corporate equality objectives**

The first corporate equalities objectives for the purposes of meeting the public sector equality duties must be published by April 2012. We will review them each year to help show people how we are doing.

In this strategy, for clarity they are published together at Appendix 1 – and in future years updates on progress against them will be included too.

The equality objectives will also be published in the Corporate Plan, an integral part of the key priority objectives that services must build into their work and their service plans.

At service level further equality-related objectives may also be identified - for example, to help the service area progress in meeting the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government and also to help ensure services take account of the impacts their policies and practices have on people they serve.

## **Part 3 – What are we doing to ensure equality, diversity and human rights are considered in everything we do?**

### **Identifying which of our functions and policies are relevant to equality**

Each year services have to update their plans for the coming year. Services follow corporate guidance to make sure they consider equalities and accessibility aspects of what they do and need to improve.

We need to identify everything we do that is relevant to the duty to promote equality. From 2011 the Council's services have been asked to assess the relevance of what they do overall in relation to the equalities duties. This is to help them make prioritised plans for action – such as what equality impact assessments and equalities engagement they need to do about specific parts of their work.

### **Assessing how services and plans impact on people**

We need to be sure that what we do meets the needs of our communities. We need to be confident that the policies we develop do not disadvantage a particular group of people. And we need to ensure that all of our services, in terms of their design and delivery, are fair and accessible to everyone and that there is equality of outcome for all.

We have developed a process that enables us to check everything that we do for its impact on equality and diversity. We have called this process an equality impact assessment or EIA. Our EIA process considers all equality groups ('protected characteristics') and human rights.

An EIA will be carried out on:

- new functions, policies, procedures and services as they are developed;
- significantly altered functions, policies, procedures and services; and
- over time, on existing functions and policies.

We have taken account of what people have told us to improve the design of our form. It helps staff completing EIAs to make sure they consider the right questions. We hope it is also easier now for people outside the council to be able to understand and follow the process, seeing what services are doing, how and why things may be changing.

Members of the public may be involved in developing the EIAs. This may be by giving their views to help develop proposals that go on to be used in consultation and decision-making.

Council services often monitor the impact of what they do on people by using feedback and monitoring to provide information about the types of people using the people and to identify groups who may be finding it harder to access their services. This information is also taken into account in developing the EIA as part of working out how to improve services and treat people fairly.



Services publish completed EIAs on our website at consultation stages, as part of taking reports to Cabinet for decisions and when EIAs have been finalised.

Suggested templates for EIAs and related information can be found at:  
[www.northampton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/equality).

## **Consulting and talking with people**

The Council's Consultation Toolkit includes guidance on equality issues and the need to ensure a wide enough range of people is included in consultations: see  
[www.northampton.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/consultation).

The Council has a number of forums, including for equalities groups. These help the council stay informed about the impacts ways it is working are having on people in different equality groups so that it can look to make changes as appropriate. The Council's Young Voices group and tenant participation mechanisms help it to keep informed and involve people it serves in considering ways it is working and improving them.

Services regularly seek feedback and consider what people have told them, including on equalities.

## **Employment monitoring**

We collect, and since July 2011 have published on our website, information about the profile of our workforce in terms of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation on an annual basis. The Council is committed to using the data collected to check whether any equality group is being disadvantaged by any of the Council's employment policies or procedures – and to addressing issues identified. The recruitment portal [www.everyroadleadstous.co.uk](http://www.everyroadleadstous.co.uk) is one way we are trying to encourage a wider range of people to apply to work at the Council. You can find a copy of our annual report among the downloads at [www.northampton.gov.uk/equality](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/equality).

## **Staff Development and Competency**

**Investor In People standard:** The Council achieved this accreditation in 2010. In relation to equality of opportunity the assessor's report says

“The organisation and managers within it do recognise the different needs of different people and were able to demonstrate this by the variety of learning and development methods open to staff ranging from formal courses, open learning, CBT, in house training, on the job training and coaching. Staff interviewed do believe that the organisation is committed to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to the learning and development that they need to enable them to carry out their job effectively [...] The culture in the Council is one of treating everyone equally. Policies and procedures are in place in relation to equality and diversity and people are treated as individuals, where differences exist they are respected.”

**Managers sessions:** In relation specifically to promoting understanding of equality and diversity, Managers sessions (which involve Directors, all managers and team leaders) regularly receive updates on equalities and are used for development activities to ensure they are aware of the Council's, and their own, responsibilities.

**Employee Development Unit:** This team supports our objectives of promoting equality and diversity and tackling discrimination. A basic level of training is provided through the 'Valuing Diversity' course for all staff. E-learning includes material on safeguarding. Other courses eg on customer service have been reviewed and developed to integrate equalities content to build knowledge and skills of staff, adding value to training at no extra cost. Work continues to improve training available to staff.

**Performance-Related Pay:** The Council has begun to implement performance-related pay. From 2012 this will impact on team leaders' and managers' pay; from 2013 on all employees. Staff at all levels will need to demonstrate achievement of behavioural competencies. The competencies integrate good practice on equalities and diversity into performance. Requirements for managers for example include to treat everyone 'equally and fairly', to have regard to language and behaviour which others might find offensive, to foster good relations, to involve customers in evaluating services and to recognise that valuing diversity can help to develop excellent customer service.

**Councillors** take their learning and development needs seriously. They have opportunities to take part in equality and diversity training and activity – for example through Open Day training sessions for newly-elected councillors, personal development plans for councillors and Councillor Development Training Sessions. Councillors receive email briefings on equality to keep them informed of changes to the law and best-practice guidance, such as that for financial decision-makers. Several councillors take an active role in our Forums for equality stakeholder engagement and have joined their mailing lists and/or Facebook pages.

**Evaluation and improvement:** Training sessions provided by the Employee Development Unit and other staff, for example as part of the Councillor Development Programme, are routinely evaluated as part of commitment to continuing improvement. In the event there are concerns about attitudes or issues mentioned in relation to equalities and diversity, these will be raised with line managers in order that appropriate action can be taken.

Evaluation of staff confidence and ability to address equalities issues has also been carried out through workshops with staff (Spring 2010) and reviewing feedback and answers from participation in managers sessions (January 2011). The feedback has been shared with the Employee Development Unit to help them continue to adjust training and development to meet current needs.

**Equality Framework for Local Government:** Training on this and using the EFECT (Equality Framework Evidence Collection Tool) computer system has been carried out with around 60 staff across the council. The quality of their inputs to the system is monitored by the Community Engagement and Equalities Officer.

## **Ensuring equality and diversity is considered in procurement and commissioning**

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and expects its partners and suppliers to share this commitment. Procurement is one of the tools by which the Council can promote equality of opportunity and service delivery. The role of procurement in this context is to influence and promote good equalities practice in those organisations that supply goods and services to the Council or to the citizens of the Borough. Our tender documents already require prospective suppliers to abide by equal opportunities legislation, and to provide documentary evidence of this.

The **Procurement Strategy** aims to ensure that real long-term benefits from our commissioning and procurement activities are generated for the people of Northampton. The economy in Northamptonshire includes many small and medium-sized businesses and small community organisations. We aim to make doing business with the Council something which is accessible to all these businesses wherever possible, and to people from across our diverse communities. Our approaches to doing this include meeting our obligation to the Government's Local Transparency measures and ensuring contract opportunities are made available to the wider community.

The web site [supplymycouncil.org.uk](http://supplymycouncil.org.uk) will be a mechanism to capture data, our electronic tender solution will enable organisations to register interest in doing business with the council, and our increased use of [www.sourcenorthamptonshire.co.uk](http://www.sourcenorthamptonshire.co.uk) as an advertising portal should support and encourage more local participation in bidding for contract opportunities.

**Commissioning:** The Council has been developing a new Commissioning Framework which will take account of equality and diversity considerations as it is implemented. For example, it will include the need to assess community needs and the impact of outcomes to be achieved. The Council recognises that it retains its responsibility for the service even when it is being provided on the Council's behalf by another organisation. In particular it retains its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination and foster good community relations. To do this it will need to understand the make-up of service users according to their 'protected characteristics', and be able in partnership with the commissioned organisation to address any inequalities revealed by assessment and analysis.

**Safeguarding:** the Council is a member of the Local Safeguarding Board. It will have due regard to its safeguarding duties when commissioning services for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Together these enable the Council to:

- ensure that equality considerations are built into all stages of the procurement process
- do business with suppliers who meet their obligations under equalities legislation
- ensure that, where Council staff are transferred as a result of an outsourcing exercise, TUPE Regulations are complied with, including subsequent monitoring

## **Measuring Performance and Improvement**

We have identified a number of equality and diversity performance indicators which we have embedded into our corporate and service level performance management process. The indicators cover both employment and service delivery.

Our individual appraisals process for staff now includes assessment of staff against behavioural competencies relating to equalities.

## **Reviewing progress against this strategy**

This strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2012, including corporate equality objectives for 2012-15. The strategy now becomes a key governance document of the Council under the Council's Constitution. This document will be reviewed annually with a report submitted to Cabinet for approval and updating of corporate equality objectives.

Responsibility for equality issues overall is assigned to a named Cabinet Lead Member, currently the portfolio holder for Community Engagement. Other Councillors champion equalities as Co-Chairs of community forums eg Northampton Youth Forum, Northampton Disabled People's Forum, Northampton Diverse Communities Forum.

Equalities is an integral part of our service provision and equalities is everyone's business. During the year, ways we ensure we review and continue to make progress include:

- our Chief Executive and Senior Management team meet regularly with equalities staff to progress business across the organisation including equalities and diversity matters;
- Service plans include equalities as an integral part of business planning;
- EFECT users across the council help to plan and evidence progress of their service areas towards Excellence against the Equality Framework;
- Management and team meetings regularly including equalities as an agenda item.

## Appendix 1 - Corporate Equalities Objectives

### Under the theme “Your Town”:

#### Priority: Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment

**Long term outcome:** A place where visitors and residents from all communities feel safe, secure and protected with low levels of crime

**Equality objective:** Improve the mechanisms available for local people to report incidents of Hate Crime and support individuals to feel confident that the Council will act appropriately on the information provided

**Measures:** annual report on hate crime to be produced considering

- number of reports received by each service area and giving examples of good and bad practice
- training developed and delivered and with what outcomes
- progress against community safety partnership priority objectives for dealing with hate crime
- activities and discussions by Northampton Forums

#### Priority: Provide Value for Money to protect local services

**Long term outcome:** A modern diverse workforce

**Equality objective:** through reviewing the evidence we have, to ensure Council services identify the most efficient and effective ways to deliver services, through a modern diverse workforce, reflective of the community we serve, equipped and maximising their use of the right skills and knowledge to serve the community efficiently well.

**Measures:** annual report on workforce updating on the initial report dated July 2011 and the detailed objectives contained within it.

### Under the theme “You”

#### Priority 8 - Responding to your needs

**Long term outcomes:**

- Appropriate support provided to those in most need
- All services are fair, accessible and responsive to individual needs

**Equality objective:**

Further develop the Gateway Service to support those in most need

**Measures:** regular monitoring of performance of the service in relation to people in terms of their protected characteristics including through customer feedback, service outcomes and relevant external benchmarking.

## **Appendix 2 - Equality Framework: Summary of what we want to achieve**

We want to achieve all these things by 2013. Some we want to achieve much sooner.

### **Equality Framework Theme 1 - Knowing your community and equality mapping**

#### **We will:**

- ensure data is collected for all equality groups and used to improve our services
- undertake specific work to address gaps in data/information about our community and their needs/priorities
- make better use of the data we have collected - to inform Equality Impact Assessments and service planning
- analyse our performance by equality group
- analyse and publish our workforce information on our website annually

### **Equality Framework Theme 2 - Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**

#### **We will:**

- develop and annually review “Our approach to equalities”
- strengthen what is needed to demonstrate consideration of equality implications in policy and decision making and development
- continue to encourage and empower under-represented groups to play an active role in the Council’s decision-making process
- promote the importance of reporting and dealing with all hate incidents (related to age, disability, gender identity, race, religion / belief or sexual orientation) and increase the level of hate incident reporting by councillors and staff, with a view to reducing hate incidents

### **Equality Framework Theme 3 - Community engagement and satisfaction**

#### **We will:**

- ensure that our approach to involvement and participation includes people from all communities
- develop workers groups to inform cultural change, policy and service improvement
- develop communications for managers on equalities issues, to be discussed in their teams
- maintain the equality content of the council’s web pages
- promote the use of appropriate language in all publications and communications
- make sure we use a range of appropriate communication methods and approaches to inform people about our services
- monitor satisfaction with procured services from all sections of the community
- monitor satisfaction with services amongst all users, including vulnerable and marginalised groups

## **Equality Framework Theme 4 - Responsive services and customer care**

### **We will:**

- undertake regular corporate monitoring and reporting of progress against all equality outcomes (service & corporate level)
- improve the quality and consistency of our approach to undertaking Equality Impact Assessments and analysis to reflect and influence decision making
- embed contract monitoring to ensure that our procurement, commissioning and grants-funding activities promote equality

## **Equality Framework Theme 5 - A modern and diverse workforce**

### **We will:**

- use monitoring information to inform the development of employment initiatives to address under-representation
- create a working environment where employees are happy to be open about their sexual orientation, religion or beliefs
- ensure that all staff have received some level of equality and diversity training (refresher training if over 2 years) and that staff working in more people-focussed roles attend further training to help them with management, customer service etc.
- ensure that EIA's are carried out as part of organisational restructures
- participate in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index
- review the Equality and Diversity Learning and Development Plan on a regular basis and produce monitoring information showing numbers of attendees (and their evaluation of each course)
- review and evaluate the new behavioural competencies and appraisal framework from an equality and diversity perspective

## **Appendix 3 - Equalities law**

The law which gives the council duties includes:

### **Equalities**

#### **Equality Act 2010**

The Act simplifies and modernises discrimination law. The government began implementation of the Act in 2010.

#### **The Autism Act 2009**

The Act commits the Government to publishing a strategy for improving the lives of adults with autism in England, with associated guidance that local authorities (and others) must comply with. The first such strategy was published in March 2010. It sets out a number of key actions and recommendations for public bodies. These include increasing awareness and understanding of autism, improving access to the services and support people need to live independently within the community, employment and enabling local partners to develop relevant services to meet identified needs and priorities. Find out more at [www.autism.org.uk/autismstrategy](http://www.autism.org.uk/autismstrategy)

#### **Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006**

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.

#### **Equality Act 2006**

Established a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights. In 2011 the government is considering repealing various of its provisions and revising the functions of the Commission leaving it with a key role as an enforcement body in relation to councils.

#### **Gender Recognition Act 2004**

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

### **Human Rights**

#### **Universal Declaration on Human Rights and European Convention on Human Rights**

In 1948 the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. This arose from the experience of the Second World War. It is the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are entitled. The European Convention on Human Rights, also known as the *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, was passed by the Council of Europe in 1950 in response to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It gives people in European states a list of agreed civil and political rights.



## **Human Rights Act 1998**

The *Human Rights Act 1998* gives further legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the *European Convention on Human Rights*. These rights affect everyday life: what you can say and do, your beliefs, your right to a fair trial and other similar basic entitlements. In 2011 the government is considering whether to change this area of law.

## Appendix 4 - Jargon-Buster and Glossary

**Accessible:** designed and / or altered to ensure that people, including disabled people, can use services and facilities

**Alternative format:** media formats which are accessible to disabled people with specific impairments, for example Braille, audio description, subtitles and Easy Read.

**Breastfeeding:** when a woman feeds her baby with breast milk. Breastfeeding is specifically protected for the first 26 weeks after birth by the pregnancy and maternity discrimination provisions in relation to non-work cases

**Different needs:** refers to the different requirements that people with protected characteristics may have which either must or should be met to provide equality, including equality of opportunity and access

**Direct discrimination:** less favourable treatment of a person compared with another person because of a protected characteristic

**Disability:** a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Disadvantage:** a detriment or impediment – something that the individual affected might reasonably consider changes their position for the worse.

**Disaggregate:** breaking down information to understand it in terms of protected characteristics

**Equalities engagement:** the many ways the council can connect with the community about equalities to share about its work and to build understandings of how its serving the community.

**Equality mapping:** using data to build up a picture that helps councils to understand both their local community profiles and main 'equality gaps' often experienced by different communities.

**Equality policy:** statement of an organisation's commitment to the principles of equality of opportunity in the workplace.

**Harassment:** unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment. See below for sexual harassment.

**Hate incident:** any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

**Indirect discrimination:** the use of an apparently neutral practice, provision or criterion which puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with others who do not share that characteristic, and applying the practice, provision or criterion cannot be objectively justified

**LGBT:** an abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

**Monitoring:** monitoring for equality data to check if people with protected characteristics are participating and being treated equally. For example, monitoring the representation of women, or disabled people, in the workforce or at senior levels within organisations.

**Objective:** a specific goal or target

**Outsourcing:** the procuring of services or products from an outside supplier to cut costs.

**Performance Indicators:** are measurable indicators that demonstrate the achievement of an outcome. They enable decision-makers to assess progress towards achievement of intended outcomes, goals, and objectives. They are chosen to relate to particular projects or activities.

**Policy:** a plan of action for dealing with a particular situation, usually written down.

**Procurement:** is the term used in relation to the range of goods and services a public body or authority requires and delivers. It includes sourcing and appointment of a service provider and the subsequent management of the goods and services being provided.

**Protected characteristics:** these are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**Race:** refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

**Regulations:** secondary legislation made under an Act of Parliament setting out requirements which help to implement the Act

**Religion or belief:** a faith or belief (including religious and philosophical beliefs e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect the way you live for it to be included in the equalities definition.

**Safeguarding:** a duty to protect vulnerable people from harm (adults and children)

**Sexual orientation:** whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

**Tender:** to make a formal offer or estimate for a job or contract

**Transgender:** of, relating to, or being a person who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that differs from the one identified for them at birth

**TUPE regulations:** Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, which regulate how the rights of staff are protected when services are taken over

**Victimisation:** subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done a protected act or there is a belief that they have done a protected act i.e. bringing proceedings under the Act; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Act; making an allegation that a person has contravened the Act