

Date: 10 January 2011  
Contact number: 01395 517542/01395 517541  
E-mail: [hwhitfield@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:hwhitfield@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
[dvernon@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:dvernon@eastdevon.gov.uk)



To: Members of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
(Councillors: Bob Buxton, David Chapman, Trevor Cope, Christine Drew, Vivien Duval Steer, Douglas Hull, John Humphreys, Frances Newth, Tony Reed, Brenda Taylor)

East Devon District Council  
Knowle  
Sidmouth  
Devon  
EX10 8HL

For information:  
Other Members of the Council for information  
Chief Executive  
Corporate Directors

DX 48705 Sidmouth

Tel: 01395 516551  
Fax: 01395 517507

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)

**Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Wednesday 19 January 2011 at 6.30 pm**

The above meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at East Devon District Council Offices, Knowle, Sidmouth, to consider the matters detailed on the agenda below.

**Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting.**

- A period of 15 minutes has been provided to allow members of the public to raise questions.
- In addition, after a report has been introduced by the relevant Portfolio Holder and/or officer, the Chairman of the Committee will ask if any member of the public would like to speak in respect of the matter and/or ask questions.
- All individual contributions will be limited to a period of 3 minutes – where there is an interest group of objectors or supporters, a spokesperson should be appointed to speak on behalf of group.
- The public is advised that the Chairman has the right and discretion to control questions to avoid disruption, repetition and to make best use of the meeting time.

## AGENDA

Page/s

- 1 **Public question time – standard agenda item (15 minutes)**

Members of the public are invited to put questions to the Committee through the Chairman. Each individual questioner exercising the right to speak during this public question time is restricted to speaking for a total of 3 minutes.

Councillors also have the opportunity to ask questions of the Leader and/or Portfolio Holders during this time slot whilst giving priority at this part of the agenda to members of the public.

The Chairman has the right and discretion to control question time to avoid disruption, repetition, and to make best use of the meeting time.
- 2 To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 27 October 2010. 5 - 10
- 3 To receive any apologies for absence.
- 4 To receive any declarations of interests relating to items on the agenda.
- 5 To consider any items, which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances.  
  
(Note: such circumstances need to be clearly identified in the minutes; Councillors please notify the Chief Executive in advance of the meeting if you wish to raise a matter under this item. The Chief Executive will then consult with the Chairman).
- 6 To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded. There are no items that the officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
- 7 **Diversity Peer Challenge Report**

Member are invited to consider the implications of the Diversity Peer Challenge Report and draft action plan and debate the ability of the Council to commit resource to this area of work. 11 – 12

Appendix 1 – Diversity Peer Challenge Report 13 – 26

Appendix 2 – Equalities at EDDC – next steps to 'Achieving' Action Plan 27

Councillor Vivien Duval-Steer, Committee Member and Equalities Member Champion will be present at the meeting to share her knowledge with Members.
- 8 **Quarterly Equalities Action Plans**

Members are invited to consider the progress made in implementing the actions identified by the Equality Impact and Needs Assessments during the first half of 2010/11 (April – September) 28 – 30

Appendix 1 - SPAR.net report 31 - 35

For reference the full Spar.net report can be found at:  
[www.eastdevon.gov.uk/spd\\_item\\_8\\_qtr\\_action\\_plans\\_190111\\_full\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/spd_item_8_qtr_action_plans_190111_full_rpt.pdf)
- 9 **Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan** 36

Members to debate future work of the Committee.

### **Members remember!**

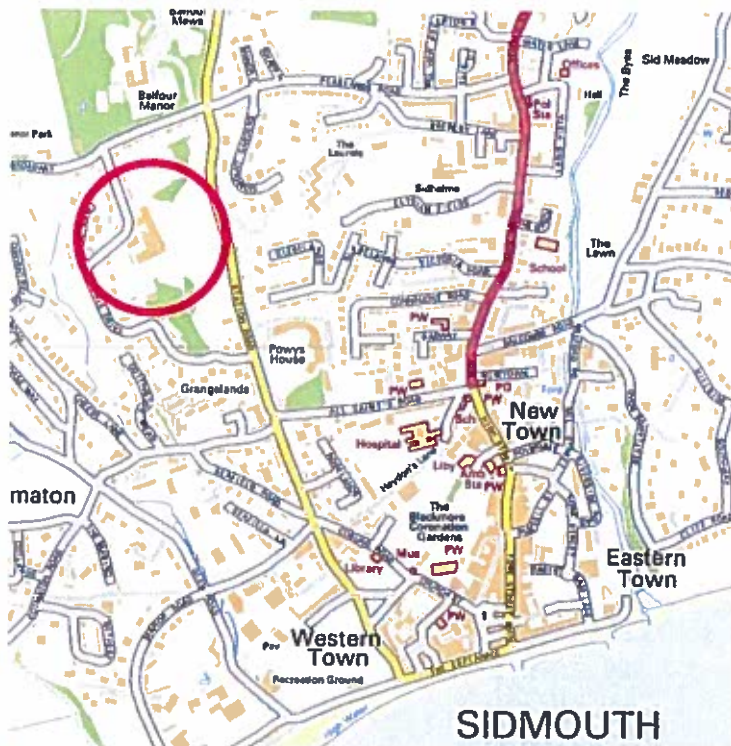
- You must declare the nature of any personal or prejudicial interests in an item whenever it becomes apparent that you have an interest in the business being considered.
- Where you have a personal interest because the business relates to or is likely to affect a body of which you are a member or manager as an EDDC nominee or appointee, then you need only disclose that interest when (and if) you speak on the item. The same rule applies if you have a personal interest in relation to a body exercising functions of a public nature.
- Make sure you say the reason for your interest as this has to be included in the minutes.
- If your interest is prejudicial you must leave the room unless
  - a) you have obtained a dispensation from the Council's Standards Committee or
  - b) where Para 12(2) of the member Code of Conduct applies. [Para 12(2) allows a Member with a prejudicial interest to stay for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business but only to the extent the public are allowed the same rights. If you do remain for these purposes, you must not exercise decision-making functions or seek to improperly influence the decision; you must leave the meeting room once you have made your representation, answered questions or given evidence.]
- The Code states that any member of the Executive Board or other decision-making committee or joint committee or sub-committee attending Overview and Scrutiny committees has a prejudicial interest in any business where that member was a member of the committee at the relevant time and present when the decision was made or other action was taken (whether or not implemented). Members with prejudicial interests should declare them and are allowed to remain in the meeting for the limited purposes set out in the Code para 12(2) – see last paragraph.
- You also need to declare when you are subject to the party whip before the matter is discussed.

### **Suggestions for questioning during an Overview and Scrutiny meeting**

Below are some prompts which may help you to form your own questions to ask at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting. Your questioning technique is crucial in creating an atmosphere conducive to open answers. Avoid excessive interrogation and treat those being questioned with courtesy and respect; however don't be afraid to ask supplementary questions if you feel that you haven't been given a clear answer.

- **IS IT REQUIRED?** (do we have this, does it make sense to tackle it, do we really need it).
- **IS IT SYSTEMS THINKING?** (is it evidence based and designed around the customer demands)
- **IS THE INTENTION CLEAR?** (what are we actually trying to achieve)
- **ANY REAL OUTCOMES?** (are we actually, and measurably, achieving things for our customers).
- **WHAT IS THE COST?** (both time and money)
- **DOES IT COMPLY?** (have we checked that it meets our obligations, the law, any formal guidance, and any Council policy or resolutions).
- **OTHERS DO WHAT?** (how do other organisations tackle this, best practice)
- **EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT?** (how do we know we're doing things well, in a timely fashion, and at "best value")
- **WHAT IS THE RISK?** (any areas of risk for the Council)
- **ANYONE LOSE OUT?** (are there sections of the community who might be disadvantaged by this approach, or be less able to take advantage, than others)
- **DOES IT LINK?** (have we linked this to other, similar, pieces of work within or outside the Council)

## Getting to the Meeting – for the benefit of visitors



The entrance to the Council Offices is located on Station Road, Sidmouth. **Parking** is limited during normal working hours but normally easily available for evening meetings.

The following **bus service** stops outside the Council Offices on Station Road:  
**From Exmouth, Budleigh, Otterton and Newton Poppleford – 157**

The following buses all terminate at the Triangle in Sidmouth. From the Triangle, walk up Station Road until you reach the Council Offices (approximately ½ mile).  
**From Exeter – 52A, 52B**  
**From Honiton – 52B**  
**From Seaton – 52A**  
**From Ottery St Mary – 379, 387**

Please check your local timetable for times.

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. 100023748 2010

The Committee Suite has a separate entrance to the main building, located at the end of the visitor and Councillor car park. The rooms are at ground level and easily accessible; there is also a toilet for disabled users.

**For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546**

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on Wednesday 27 October 2010**

**Present:**

Councillors:

John Humphreys (Chairman)  
Frances Newth (Vice Chairman)

Bob Buxton  
Trevor Cope  
Douglas Hull  
Vivien Duval Steer  
Brenda Taylor

**Officers:**

Ed Freeman – Interim Development Manager  
John Golding – Head of Housing and Social Inclusion  
Denise Lyon – Corporate Director  
Hannah Whitfield – Assistant Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present**

Councillors:

Ray Bloxham  
David Cox  
Paul Diviani  
Jill Elson  
Steve Hall  
Stuart Hughes  
Andrew Moulding  
Pauline Stott

**Apologies:**

**Committee Members**

Councillors:  
David Chapman  
Tony Reed

**Non-Committee Members**

Councillors:  
Ray Franklin  
Peter Halse

Simon Davey – Head of Finance

The meeting started at 6.30pm and ended at 7.19pm.

**\*19 Public question time**

There were no questions from the public.

**\*20 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2010 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

**\*21 Quarterly Monitoring of Performance – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11**

Denise Lyon Corporate Director presented the performance information for the second quarter of 2010/11. The report allowed Members to monitor overall performance against Key Strategic Objectives and Performance Measures for that period, and identify any areas where improvement may be necessary. Pleasingly the report contained a large amount of 'green', indicating that a majority of Key Strategic Objectives and Service Projects were on track or completed. There were no issues highlighted to the Committee.

Members were advised that Honiton Community Centre was on hold pending further negotiations and of an announcement, following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. The Review confirmed approval for funding improvements to the M5 Junction 29, east of Exeter, which would provide access to new housing and employment areas.

Members' attention was drawn to Performance Indicator L97 – Number of computer hours made unavailable (downtime) each month, which was identified as 'red' due to a failure of the Council's anti-virus systems; impact on staff resulting from this had been minimal. Members disliked the way this indicator was reported and the Head of ICT had been tasked with presenting this indicator in a more meaningful way.

A Member asked for a report on employment provision in the east of the District to be presented to a future Committee meeting.

- RESOLVED:**
1. that the report on monitoring performance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter for 2010/11 be noted;
  2. that the Economic Development Manager present a report on employment provision in the east of the District to a future Committee meeting.

**\*22 Housing Service – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11**

Members considered the Housing Service Performance Measures report for the second quarter presented by the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion, John Golding. To help Members compare quarters more easily, measure results from the first quarter were provided alongside results of the second quarter.

John Golding highlighted the Housing Measures Graphs, which showed measures had deteriorated in September, impacting the whole quarter. Investigation into these 'peaks' had taken place, and steps taken to address issues raised, such as working with contractors to reduce the time taken to relet a property. There was acknowledgement that occasionally a property required extensive refurbishment. He explained that other variations in figures had included a property twice refused and an issue with a standing order. It was commented that this information was presented in a very useful way to Members and clearly highlighted questionable variations.

Members noted that the new tenancy 'sign up' process had resulted in significant improvements in rent payment. The number of homeless cases and number of people in temporary accommodation continued to decrease following the implementation of homeless prevention measures.

The Communities Portfolio Holder, echoed by the Committee, congratulated the Housing Team for their continued hard work regarding arrangements for repairs to housing stock, following the collapse of Connaught PLC.

**\*22 Housing Service – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11 continued...**

The Chairman thanked the Head of Housing and Social Inclusion and his team for their continued work on improving the housing service.

**RESOLVED:** that the report on Housing Service - Performance Measures for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2010/11 be noted.

**\*23 Benefits Service – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11**

Members considered the Benefits Service Performance Measures report presented by Corporate Director, Denise Lyon in the Head of Finance's absence. She praised the Benefits Team on their remarkable progress since they started the review and redesign of the Service. She was also pleased to report that following the Systems Thinking review there had been a change of culture within the Team, which continued to look for ways to improve and respond to monitored performance measures – this had not been a 'one-off' project.

Members noted that the top preventable demand of "Can you tell me how long it will take to process my claim" had now virtually disappeared because the Team was processing claims so much quicker.

The Chairman congratulated and thanked the Head of Finance and the Benefits Team for their continued work on improving the Benefits Service.

**RESOLVED:** that the report on Benefits Service - Performance Measures for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2010/11 be noted.

**\*24 Development Management – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11**

Members considered the Development Management Service Performance Measures report and Interim Development Manager, Ed Freeman, answered queries and questions relating to the report.

Members heard that the average end to end time for applications over the last four quarters remained steady, at just over 50 days, showing how consistent and predictable the Service had become since the Systems Thinking review. The number of variations in the graphs presented to the Committee was reducing each quarter. There had been a significant increase in the end to end times for minor applications from 55.6 days in the first quarter to 65.8 days in the second. This was primarily due to the number of amended plans that were sought to improve the quality of developments in the district; agents were often slow in submitting amended plans. A number of long running legal agreements being resolved had also extended the end to end times on minor applications. Other applications remained consistent with a small rise to 48.6 days in the second quarter, again due to delays on receiving amended plans. A number of actions had been taken to resolve those areas of concern, such as Agents asked to submit amended plans within 14 days and introduction of a standard Memo to legal services on the Section 106 legal agreements to provide clearer instructions to avoid unnecessary delays. Further actions were planned to monitor these areas.

\*24 **Development Management – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11 continued...**

Pre application enquiries for the second quarter had dropped from 175 in the previous quarter to 127. This appeared to be as a result of the introduction of charging for pre-application advice in February 2010, as well as the current economic climate. In order to justify the fee for pre-application enquiries Officers were reported to be spending time preparing a more detailed reply, carrying out a number of site visits and undertaking a greater level of consultation. To address this, a customer satisfaction survey of customers using the pre-application service would be carried out to determine whether they were satisfied with the detail and time taken to give the response. Permitted Development Enquiries had increased marginally from the previous quarter.

Results of the Value and Preventable Demand Survey showed a reduction in the number of preventable demands received. A majority of incoming demand was dealt with as one stop; this was area in which Teams were performing particularly well. The Service still received a wide variety of calls for other services, such as Building Control and Environmental Health; further education of CSC staff may help reduce this.

The Planning Enforcement Team had received a similar number of complaints in the second quarter increasing marginally from 140 to 148. Members heard that there had been a dramatic increase in the number of investigations completed, rising by 40%. The number of investigations completed was now approximately equal to those received. This reflected the concerted efforts of the new Planning Enforcement Officer and the rest of the Enforcement Team to clear the backlog of the investigations, which had built up because of staff shortages. Prior to the systems thinking review there had been in the region of 700 cases in the system, this had now reduced to 487 cases.

There had been a considerable reduction in the number of visitors to the reception desk for planning; felt largely due to the current economic climate and promotion of improvements to the planning on-line services. This trend had freed up more officer time to concentrate on main work streams.

Members' attention was drawn to Appeals Measures, which indicated a sharp increase in appeals allowed, however these figures were deceptive as the number of appeals had previously reduced dramatically; and therefore only a small number of appeals allowed significantly altered the percentages. Members asked to be provided with the total number of decisions for the quarter in order to help monitor performance.

In response to a question, the Interim Development Manager advised that income from pre application charges to date had been disappointing and nearly £50k down on projected income. Concern was voiced at the increased officer time spent on each enquiry following the introduction of pre-application charges and the affects this was having on end to end times. Members asked for a breakdown of cost for providing the Service to be brought to the next meeting. The Chairman of Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that his Committee had recommended that the Council charge for pre-application advice on major applications only.

The Chairman thanked the Interim Development Manager and his team for their continued work to improve the Development Management Service.



**\*24 Development Management – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11 continued...**

- RESOLVED:**
1. that the report on Development Management – Performance Measures for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11 be noted;
  2. that a breakdown of costings for the pre-application enquiry service be brought to the next Committee meeting;
  3. that the total number of decisions made during the quarter be provided alongside the number of appeals.

**\*25 StreetScene – Performance Measures Report – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11**

Members considered the StreetScene – Performance Measures report and Corporate Director, Denise Lyon, answered queries and questions. The report provided Members with a brief update on the performance measures and improvements noted since the introduction of the area-working test in area East – StreetScene Operations and the check process in the West.

Members were asked to note that end to end figures for 2009 presented, taken from the Lagan system, were not entirely reliable due to staff not prioritising closing cases down; this was an area for future focus. However, end to end times for the redesigned test areas had improved.

Members spoke highly of the Service and the speed that reported issues were resolved. The Chairman reported that the roll out of the final phase of the new recycling and refuse collection service, covering the Exmouth area, had been excellent and praised the Teams involved.

Denise Lyon advised that focus was on streamlining the process of transferring information received by CSC to StreetScene workers.

The Chairman thanked Denise Lyon and the StreetScene Manager, Andrew Hancock and his team for their work in achieving improvements. .

The high standard of the reports and quality and usefulness of information presented to the Committee was appreciated.

- RESOLVED:**
1. that the early results of 'check' in StreetScene Operations West be noted;
  2. that the improvements in performance resulting from the area working test and mobile working test in StreetScene East be noted and developments in these areas continue to be pursued;
  3. that improvement in end to end time to resolve customer demand for street cleansing be noted;
  4. that the report on StreetScene – Performance Measures Report for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2010/11 be noted

**\*26 Systems Thinking progress in other areas**

Denise Lyon, Corporate Director updated Members on Systems Thinking in other areas of the Council. These included:

- Housing Repairs – Housing Needs Manager, Dennis Boobier was leading the review and were currently in the demand analysis stage;
- Rentals – Head of Housing and Social Inclusion, John Golding was leading the review. This area performed well, with excellent levels of rent collection. Discussions were needed regarding how far to take the redesign of the service;
- Environmental Health were visiting another Council, in November, to see how they had carried out Systems Thinking in the service;
- Human Resources and ICT have both been through check phase and started to introduce measures.

The importance of reducing large rent arrears was acknowledged due to its impact on the Council's revenue account.

The need to restructure the Council with a focus on delivery of services was mentioned. It was suggested that having an Environmental Health desk in Exmouth due to the number of food outlets, similar to the successful Housing desk in Exmouth, would help to reduce the amount of Officer travelling time.

**RESOLVED:** that the Systems Thinking progress in other areas update be noted.

**\*27 Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan**

Members considered the Service Delivery Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan for 2010/11.

Corporate Director, Denise Lyon reported that Diversity Peer Challenge Report was now available and Quarterly Equalities Action Plans would be produced from the recommendations made. Equalities Member Champion, Councillor Vivien Duval Steer advised that she had asked the Diversity Peer Challenge Report to be circulated to all Members.

Chairman of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that there would be one Annual Report for all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

- RESOLVED:**
1. that the Diversity Peer Challenge Report be presented at the next Committee meeting;
  2. that the Quarterly Monitoring of Service Plans and Performance Indicators and Service Performance Measures reports for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter be moved to 9 March 2011 meeting.

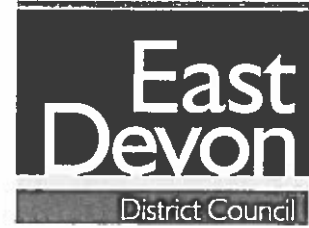
Chairman ..... Date.....

## Agenda Item 7

**Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**19 January 2011**

**DL**



## Diversity Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan

### Summary

The Council's Diversity Peer Challenge report is attached for debate together with the Council's draft high level action plan to respond to the Peer Challenge.

### Recommendation

Members consider the implications of the Diversity Peer Challenge report and draft action plan and debate the ability of the Council to commit resource to this area of work.

#### a) Reasons for Recommendation

Members to consider the implications of the Diversity Peer Challenge report and progress in achieving objectives set out in the Equalities Action Plan.

#### b) Alternative Options

Members can decide not to consider either of these issues.

#### c) Risk Considerations

The Legal comment outlines the requirements of the Equality Act due to come into force this year.

#### d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

This work is certainly within the Council's policy framework. However, given the diminishing senior officer capacity due to a severely reduced budget forecast for the next few years, members will have to decide which work is highest priority.

#### e) Date for Review of Decision

The draft high level action plan in Appendix 2 will be built into the detailed service action plan (see next item) which will be on future agendas. Members can decide whether they wish to see it quarterly or every six months.

---

## **1 Main Body of the Report**

1.1 In September 2010, the Council invited a peer team to assess our progress in embedding equalities work and principles in both the strategy and the services of the Council.

1.2 The resulting peer report and draft action plan is included in this report as Appendix 1 and 2.

1.3 The purpose of including these is for members to debate the Council's progress and ongoing commitment to the equalities agenda. They are also on this agenda to help put into context the detailed action plan included in the next item which will be monitored in the future by this committee. The peer report is also going to the Communities Committee for consideration in January 2011.

---

### **Legal Implications**

The new Equality Act 2010 duties will include the requirement (amongst other things) for public bodies to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Actions will assist the Council in complying with the legislation when in force. The Government is currently consulting on the implementation date – latest estimate is April 2011.

### **Financial Implications**

It is assumed that the recommendation can be met within existing budgets, where this is not the case then a specific request for a budget needs to be reported to the Executive Board.

### **Consultation on Reports to the Executive**

None

### **Background Papers**

- Included as appendices

---

Denise Lyon  
Deputy Chief Executive

Service Delivery O&S Committee  
19 January 2011

Item 7 Appendix 1

Chief Executive  
East Devon District Council  
Council Offices  
Knowle  
Sidmouth  
Devon  
EX10 8HL

19<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Dear Chief Executive

**Diversity Peer Challenge**

Please find enclosed the final report from the peer team. I know how disappointed you must be that we were unable to award the Achieving level for diversity. However, the peer team were impressed with how far the council had progressed on equalities and diversity issues and we found much that was very good. We are confident that the council will reach the Achieving level in the not too distant future. The report sets out the major areas where we feel improvement is still needed.

Our Regional Associate for the South West has offered to fund some support to help East Devon address the gaps identified in the report. This will be around 3-5 days. Paul Clarke, the LGID Diversity Challenge lead is based in East Devon and he has offered to work with the EDDC alongside some experienced diversity colleagues from other councils in the South West region. They would then be able to "re-assess" the council against the Achieving level of the EFLG at no additional cost.

Yours sincerely

**Gill Elliott**  
**Improvement Adviser**  
**Local Government Improvement and Development**

Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1M 5LG T 020 7664 3000 F 020 7664 3030 E [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)  
[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

Local Government Improvement and Development is the registered name of the Improvement and Development Agency

Registered in England No. 3675577. Registered office Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ. Limited liability by guarantee





Diversity Peer Challenge  
8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010

East Devon District Council

Report



## 1. Background

This report is a summary of the findings of a Diversity Peer Challenge organised by the Local Government Improvement and Development and carried out by its trained peers. The report satisfies the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government for an external assessment at the Achieving level. The Peer Challenge is designed to validate a council's own self-assessment at the Achieving Level by considering documentary evidence and by carrying out a series of interviews and focus groups with employees and other stakeholders.

The basis for the Peer Challenge is a benchmark against five areas of performance. They are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

The Peer Challenge is not an inspection, rather it offers an external assessment of a council's own judgement of itself against the Equality Framework benchmark, by critical friends who have experience of delivering an equality/diversity agenda in their own councils.

Peers were:

Cllr Julie Young, Colchester Borough Council
Angie Sarchet, Buckinghamshire County Council
Chris Badger, Hertfordshire County Council
Louise Sboui, Huntingdonshire District Council
Gill Elliott , Local Government Improvement and Development

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the council and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

### 1. Executive summary and recommendations

Following this Diversity Peer Challenge, we have reached the following conclusion:

The peer challenge of East Devon District Council was unable to fully validate the council's self assessment against the criteria for 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework. Our main conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

- EDDC has recently emerged from two years of addressing the "Unitary" issue within Devon County. This has clearly taken up considerable management and political energies and meant that earlier impetus around equalities and diversity was not always sustained. Appointment of a part time diversity officer over the last twelve months has strengthened the focus of the authority on equalities and diversity, particularly around issues such as community engagement; data mapping and preparation for external assessment at the Achieving level of the EFLG and it is

hoped that this momentum will continue in the future despite the recent ending of this fixed term post.

- Through our interviews we found some good examples of services taking the initiative and engaging innovatively with different communities, and tailoring services to meet needs of those deemed marginalised or vulnerable. However, a more coherent corporate approach is needed. Specifically, this will help services share intelligence to develop better understanding of customers and target interventions appropriately.
- Stronger corporate leadership will be required to coordinate activity on clearer shared priorities and maintain momentum, given the departure of the equalities and diversity officer who had provided a focus to this activity.
- The Council's workforce broadly reflects the demographic profile of the Community, although there is a lack of women in senior posts. The Council has invested in training for staff on Equalities and Diversity, and shows notable practice on raising awareness of domestic violence. More systematic and rigorous monitoring of the workforce profile will help them understand inadvertent impacts on different groups of new policies or workforce changes.
- The Council has developed a systematic approach to impact assessments, and there is evidence of these leading to changes. Procurement practice is developing. Customer care has clearly improved through the use of 'Systems' thinking, and this has led to a more sophisticated understanding of customers' needs, and how best to meet those needs.
- The Council has taken steps to improve community engagement recently, with notable practice around Section 106 work and engagement in regeneration projects. The Council should do more to communicate when it has taken onboard feedback, and coordinate consultation activity even more strongly across the Council and with partners.
- There is evidence of the Council using community data to inform strategies and action, with agreed protocols for sharing data. More effective sharing of intelligence and data across services, and with partners, would help the Council meet its aspirations for a more sophisticated understanding of its customers' needs. From April 2011 new specific equality duties will require councils to publish equalities data relating to services and workforce that is transparent and gives a full picture of equality in these areas.
- To help the council improve and reach the Achieving level we have made a number of recommendations. These are:
  1. Develop the Corporate Equality Group (CEG) into a more strategic group, focusing on providing strategic coherence and coordination across the Council, with an internal and external focus.



2. Use the CEG to coordinate how data and intelligence on communities is shared between services, so the Council's understanding of its customers can become more sophisticated.
3. Communicate more clearly and frequently when the Council has listened to communities and taken action accordingly.
4. Ensure plans to develop more systematic workforce monitoring are implemented, so the authority can monitor the impact of strategic decisions, transformation and policy on different groups within the workforce.
5. Ensure plans to develop procurement practice are taken forward, with meaningful engagement with suppliers.
6. Ensure decisions about future cuts in service and transformation are made with a full understanding of their impact on communities, and the different equality strands. Summaries of this analysis should be made public.
7. Develop further ways to improve Member's understanding and leadership of equalities and diversity, making appropriate links to customer service.
8. Continue to develop the external Equality Forum, and develop ways of engaging with a wider range of diverse groups across all relevant equality strands.

**2. The Council made the following observations upon the impact the peer challenge has had: -**

It has proven useful to have an external view of our work on equalities and diversity, and the conclusions provide a useful external insight into other people's perceptions. The self assessment exercise itself was helpful in demonstrating the wide range of equality and diversity activity we have been involved in, and sometimes overlook as just 'the day job'.

Equally it is useful to have an external view as a benchmark against what others are doing. Undoubtedly after all of the work there was some deflation at the result and findings of the review, and we will now need to try to pick up the momentum and motivation again and tackle the recommendations.

**3. Detailed findings**

**3.1 Knowing your communities and equality mapping**

**Strengths:**

- There is evidence that EDDC is collecting relevant and appropriate information using a range of techniques and that this data is being used to identify equality gaps and inform service provision. The Council has used data collected on domestic

violence statistics in the area to establish a women's refuge and a sanctuary scheme. Neighbourhood Assessments are a good example of how data gathering direct from service users and residents. Suggestions get fed back to the services for improvements. EDDC have recently started a further Benefits Take-up Campaign following a review of data held by the county council on its MOSAIC database.

- The Housing Department in particular uses a wide range of data gathering mechanisms to understand its customers. These include customer satisfaction surveys, tenant profiling, STATUS surveys, mystery shoppers; tenant profiling, complaints. It also monitors against the council's Customer Charter.
- Members are beginning to understand the role that new technology and social networking such as Facebook and Twitter can play as an engagement mechanism. E.g. Local Development Framework consultation.
- "Open Door" in Exmouth is a valuable resource. Although not funded by the council, members are very aware of its role as a good source of local intelligence.
- EDDC is working with parish councils to establish the needs of villages and hamlets.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

- There needs to be more co-ordination and sharing of equalities information, data and intelligence across the organisation to avoid duplication of effort. EDDC could also make better use of partnership data to improve its knowledge and intelligence/profile of East Devon.
- Members have considerable knowledge of their community, but this not being captured and shared by EDDC. In particular opposition members feel that their point of view is not listened to by officers.
- EDDC need to use customer insight data to understand whether particular segments will be more or less impacted upon by budget cuts. This needs to include budget cuts planed by partners, the wider economic environment and national government policy.
- EDDC is working on creating a corporate approach to understanding customer needs – asking frontline staff about information they hold on customers; what they do with it and how it is used. When this is complete it will be promoted as good practice.

### **3.2 Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**

#### **Strengths:**

- Members clearly understand the demographic and economic issues in their areas and the equalities implications for the local population. Some members have struggled with the concepts of equal opportunities in the past but they are beginning

to appreciate that equalities and diversity is not "just about race or political correctness."

- The Chief Executive has a clear vision for East Devon and he is keen for members and officers to appreciate the need for greater sophistication in service delivery. The council has traditionally had a strategy of being a low council tax council providing a good service to everyone.
- The Equalities Champion gives impetus to the council's equalities work which keeps the agenda in sharp focus. She sees her role as keeping the subject alive and she is passionate about this. The Equalities Champion is also a member of CEG and the external equalities forum.
- There are a broad range of objectives in the integrated equality scheme and good mechanisms for members to monitor performance on equalities priorities. Results from Systems Thinking are fed back to portfolio holders and members. Other members also have an opportunity to comment. EqIA progress reports go to service performance/ scrutiny committee. Members were aware of the performance framework regarding EqIAs.
- The external diversity forum is seen as a positive step forward. The work done by the temporary diversity officer in setting this up is recognized. The Corporate Director was also praised for his commitment to the forum. However it should be noted that the forum is relatively new and not all community groups were aware of its existence.
- The Council has not shied away from its responsibilities towards the provision of travellers sites and has taken positive action to iron out community tensions. The approach from the Members was positive on this issue.
- EDDC is working to attract more young people to become involved as Members. Democracy days and speed dating events have taken place. There is a Youth Parliament and a Youth Champion.
- EDDC makes good use of its positive links with the local press for publicising initiatives and projects.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

- The understanding and views of the Members the peer team spoke to about equality and diversity varied. e.g. some expressed complete resistance to the need for monitoring.
- Equalities training for Members is offered but take-up has been quite low -only twelve out of fifty nine members have attended. However a recent coach trip attracted 30% attendance by members visiting the Open Door Project and Salcombe House which provides services for people with learning disabilities. More learning opportunities like this for members might prove more effective than traditional equalities training courses.

- Procurement processes still need to be embedded. The training is being provided for staff on procurement includes equalities and diversity implications and requirements. The Council has some good plans for procurement with questionnaires for suppliers.
- Financial commitment to equalities and diversity is under scrutiny due to budget cuts. E.g. there is no commitment to the equalities officer post beyond the end of the temporary contract. However HR stated that equalities would be an area of responsibility for a director under the new shared services.
- EDDC should consider how it can raise its profile and that of the area across a range of issues affecting the area. E.g. the profile of EDDC in campaigns against closures of job centres and rural post offices is perceived to be low. We understand that EDDC has been active in these campaigns but this was not the perception of the community groups peers spoke to.
- Membership of the LSP appears to have dwindled and become "EDDC dominated". Comments made to peers included:
  - "EDDC does not understand partnership working. They do their own thing and ignore partners in the County council and other organisations. This culture has existed for a long time".
  - " Meetings are very formal and there is no clear strategy. Meetings jump from one topic to another. Partners feel that it's almost like a scrutiny committee."
  - "Too dis-jointed - no maturity of partnership working. Council needs to be more collaborative"
  - "The districts direction of travel is the right one but there is still a lot to do – it's about letting down the barriers"
- Peers found little shared understanding amongst the partners they spoke to about their role in delivery of the Sustainable Community Plan. There needs to be a clearer shared strategy and vision for diversity and equality with objectives and targets. Communication needs to be improved with partners. E.g. Partners were unaware that the free swimming is offered in council leisure centres on the second Sunday of each month.
- There is a perception of a poor relationship between EDDC and some community groups. Work needs to be done to improve this with better self awareness by EDDC.
- The equality officer has refocused the work of the Corporate Equalities Group and the group has made good progress on EqlAs. The group also highlighted its influence over the use of language and accessible logos which appear on all documents. However the group's remit is still too narrow It needs to have a wider community focus on diversity priorities for East Devon. CEG members were committed and energetic but this energy needs to be harnessed more effectively.

### 3.3 Community engagement and satisfaction

### **Strengths:**

- EDDC is committed to improving consultation and engagement with the community. Representatives from the voluntary and community sector felt that EDDC now listened more than it used to. The external diversity forum was seen as a constructive development for getting feedback from community groups e.g. Community transport has been included in planning discussions about new housing developments
- The council has identified young people as a significant minority. Consultation has been carried out with young people to ascertain what their needs are. The Switch Project gives opportunities for young people to volunteer. Members were enthusiastic about consultation with young people that helped to shape the provision of play facilities.
- The Tenant Participation Team has been pro-active in getting a more representative tenant's forum. A community development worker in housing department concentrates on youth issues.
- The Housing Department tries hard to engage with its tenants eg via road shows, coffee mornings, e-mail groups. New tenants are involved in choosing colours of walls and types of kitchen doors in their homes during the preparation of voids properties. Housing staff use community walkabouts to identify tenant issues. The Housing department uses community centres as out-reach hubs for its staff to provide advice about housing services. Work by officers in the community was well received particularly the housing officer working out of Exmouth Town Hall

### **Areas for consideration:**

- The external diversity forum is at an early stage. Representation could be widened and it needs to have some links with the corporate equality group. There is concern that the loss of the equality officer might result in the forum being less effective.

## **3.4 Responsive services and customer care**

### **Strengths:**

- Service plans are developed involving a cross section of staff and sometimes users. E.g. tenants have been involved in the planning days to develop service plans for housing.
- The Silver Surfers Project is helping the elderly to cope with the requirement to use IT for choice based letting. Silver surfers training with ICT targeted at older people has been delivered by four members of IT staff in a partnership between housing and IT. Two hundred residents were involved during 2009/10.
- The revenues and benefits team highlighted examples of good practice including work around 'deprivation' that is, a focus on early intervention and understanding

customer needs; the benefit take up campaign which involves targeting those who fall into arrears with Council tax. A variety of payment options are available including on-line 24/7, by phone and free at the post office. Home visits and help to complete applications over the telephone are offered. Benefit surgeries around the district are advertised and promoted amongst stakeholders

- The countryside service highlighted work with schools focusing on an environmental education programme. Good links are established between the countryside team and the Otter Hays Trust (charity working with learning disability clients). Rangers are trained to work with this group. Given the difficult topography of East Devon the Council are working on increasing access projects such as the Ax-Estuary wetlands where they are involving a disability group to ensure work done will meet their needs.
- Countryside opportunities are widely promoted by corporate publications. Volunteering in countryside and the arts is strong and the profile of volunteers and users has changed from what was predominately older people to across the age range from sixteen to ninety-two. The Arts Service has good links with local schools and the national curriculum
- Other examples of responsive services include: problems of understanding about refuse and recycling issues from a Bengali resident was resolved by a home visit with no need for translation; health walks have been established and promote health and wellbeing benefits; the council are constructing two bungalows suitable for those with physical disabilities.
- EqIAs have led to positive outcomes including the issue of a multi faith calendar to environmental health officers, tenant profiling has led to equality training for tenants and a change in procedure over sickness reporting for female members of staff who prefer to speak to another female member of staff.
- The Council is fully aware of the of the obstacles people face due to the lack of public transport which is particularly relevant to young people who need to travel to school and college and the barriers that young people encounter to accessing after school activities as a result of this.
- As a result of representation from groups and individuals and after reviewing county council data ,EDDC took the decision to enable carers to travel free on public transport. At the time this initiative went beyond the stance taken by other district councils in Devon.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

- EDDC needs to publicise and celebrate its successes more. E.g. The Revenues and Benefits Service employment support process
- EDDC needs to demonstrate more clearly how resident's involvement in systems thinking has made a difference i.e. "You said, We did".

- A recent meeting about the Gypsy and Travellers site identified the need for more education to challenge prejudice amongst residents on this issue.
- EDDC needs to consider how it can improve the understanding of its officers about issues such as “rurality” in order that customers’ needs are taken into account more fully.

### 3.5 A modern and diverse workforce

#### Strengths:

- Employees like working at EDDC. They have seen big improvements in communication between managers and employees. There is better two way communication. Senior managers have been encouraged by the Chief Executive to take a greater role. Happy Health Audits investigating levels and causes of employee stress have led to focus groups to explore how the council can address this issue.
- The Human Resources team recognized from its equal pay review that although equal pay wasn’t an issue, job segregation between men and women was a feature of the workforce. Career job profiles have been established for different types of job to start tackling this issue.
- Street Scene Staff have benefited from numeracy and literacy training offered by EDDC.
- EDDC has a range of flexible working policies including homeworking and partial home working.
- Equality and diversity training is mandatory for all staff. Tenants have also been able to access the training. Various departments also running specific training. E.g. Housing staff also have “Respect” Training. Training is also made available for members, although take-up is low. An identified need resulted in assertiveness training being offered to some female members.
- EDDC's support for employees suffering domestic violence is very positive. Managers have received training on the issue and a network of employee contacts has been set up.

#### Areas for consideration:

- EDDC does not have up to date workforce monitoring data so is unable to set meaningful objectives. Data held on employees has not been updated for the last two years. HR will shortly be asking employees to update the data held on them. Questions on Sexual orientation and religion/belief will be asked for the first time,

although there has been little work done on preparing the workforce for this question.

- HR is currently not using on-line recruitment so it has difficulty gathering data on recruitment and selection. An exercise to gather data from the last year will be undertaken shortly.
- HR has been advertising all its vacancies in Black Britain magazine for the past two years. Whilst positive action is to be encouraged it needs to be based on up to date community and workforce data and to be targeted where it can be most effective, possibly only being used for senior posts where there is the biggest likelihood of relocation.
- HR produces an annual workforce report which includes discipline and grievance cases but the statistics do not appear to be disaggregated against any equality strands.

#### **4. Examples of innovative projects and initiatives**

- Improvements in customer care and "Systems" thinking has delivered a more sophisticated approach to customers and has meant a better understanding of diverse identities of customers. It has meant revisiting how EDDC does business. The starting point is the customer and identifying their needs. Staff in Customer Services have received "sign post" training enabling them to identify when a customer is eligible for other help. Minor errors in planning applications are now discussed with the applicant to avoid the need for re-application and to reduce the time taken to process the application. Benefit assessors now support some clients to complete application forms over the telephone or by a home visit.
- The Council supports the Thelma Hulbert gallery which has continued to extend its service in terms of access and what is provided with the provision of more gallery space, a community cafe and shop including a hearing loop and physical changes to ensure the building is accessible. They have increased visitor numbers and have been recognised for their good work with providing after school activities for those young people. The gallery has displayed art work created by people with a learning disability.

#### **5. Signposting to areas of good practice from Local Government Improvement and Development**

Examples of councils that have developed a comprehensive picture of their areas and what diversity means to them are Nottingham City Council and Cornwall Council. When developing their single equality scheme, Nottingham Council mapped out their area and on a ward by ward basis by thinking about the specific needs of that community's populations ([www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5036](http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5036)). Cornwall Council have developed the 'Big messages for Cornwall' summary diagram ([www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24507](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24507)) based on a wealth of evidence



provided across the council ([www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24160](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=24160)). These examples have enabled decision makers to get a better understanding of the issues in their areas and to work together within the councils and with partners more efficiently and effectively.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) recently published a quick start guide on EqIAs ([www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/PSD/equality\\_impact\\_assessment\\_guide\\_quick-start\\_guide.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/PSD/equality_impact_assessment_guide_quick-start_guide.pdf)) to enable public bodies to integrate EqIAs into their policy making and review.

The EHRC have also published a short guide on taking equality and diversity into account when making financial decisions.

Examples of positive action campaigns relating to getting BAME staff into senior management are available on Local Government Improvement and Development's website ([www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=14797113](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=14797113)). The council may also wish to learn about the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's programme 'Ways into work' that helps disabled people into sustainable employment and training ([www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/social\\_learning\\_disability-ways-into-work.htm](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/social_learning_disability-ways-into-work.htm))

Local Government Improvement and Development are organising a series of five regional events over the forthcoming year. It is hoped that these events, and the ongoing dialogue around them, will form a hub for our support activities; strengthening the business, legal and moral case for equality, and building competence and confidence across the sector. The events will focus on how the sector can work with the Equality Frameworks:

- build a better understanding of how equality and cohesion can improve efficiency
- help local authorities understand their communities and deliver appropriate, high quality services
- empower local authorities to work more effectively in complying with the Equality Act.

**Local Government Improvement and Development**  
Gill Elliott  
Improvement Adviser

07747 753263



**Equalities Work at EDDC – next steps to ‘Achieving’**

In order to take forward the Equalities agenda the following report shows the recommendations of the Peer Assessment and proposed actions. We will need to attach timescales and build into SPAR.

	Peer Review recommendation	Suggested Action
1	Develop CEG into a more strategic group providing coherence and co-ordination across EDDC with an internal and external focus.	Review Terms of Reference, and Agendas of CEG and link to equalities priorities - via PJ.
2	Use CEG to co-ordinate how data and intelligence on communities is shared between services so customer understanding is more sophisticated.	Address this issue though agenda of CEG – especially looking at recent consultations, and linking customer databases - via PJ/CP/JB
3	Communicate more clearly and frequently about when the Council has listened to communities, and take action accordingly.	Link action 2 above, to active use of feedback and press coverage. Also create PR when Council has championed a community cause – via PJ/JB.
4	More systematic “work force monitoring” to allow impact monitoring of decisions.	Continuation of HR surveys of staff, recruitment, grievance and use of information compared to equalities strands (at CEG) – via KJ.
5	Ensure procurement plans are taken forward with meaningful supplier engagement..	CS to get direct reports on this progress – via SD.
6	Ensure cuts and transformation are made with understanding of community impact. Make this information public.	Equalities review to be undertaken as part of budget considerations – via PJ/MW and SD.
7	Develop further ways to improve Member leadership/understanding of Equalities/Diversity. Make links to customer service.	Work with Equalities Champion via CEG to find new routes of understanding for Members for new Council and how Members knowledge about their communities can be captured – via PJ/Cllr Ms VD-S.
8	Develop EEF and find ways to engage with wider range of diverse groups.	Contact equalities reps from Diverse Groups after Council restructure and seek alternative means of getting their input – via CEG, PJ, JB.
9	Review of LSP functioning.	Review of LSP – via PJ
10	Improve relationships with community groups.	New contact approach with community groups - via PJ.

CEG	=	Corporate Equality Group
EEF	=	External Equalities Forum
PJ	=	Peter Jeffs
CP	=	Chris Powell
JB	=	Jamie Buckley
KJ	=	Karen Jenkins
SD	=	Simon Davey
MW	=	Mark Williams
Cllr Ms VD-S	=	Cllr Ms Vivien Duval-Steer
LSP	=	Local Strategic Partnership
CS	=	Colin Slater

Peter Jeffs  
Corporate Director  
November 2010

## Agenda Item 8

Service Delivery and Performance O&S Committee

19 January 2011

EIA Actions



### Monitoring of Equality Actions during April-September 2010

#### Summary

As part of the work on improving the Council's approach to Equality, a series of Equality Impact and Needs Assessments have been undertaken of our various services, policies, processes and activities. This work identified numerous actions which are intended to improve our understanding of our customers and the provision of fair and equal access to services that meet customers' needs. Members are invited to monitor the progress being made by officers in implementing the equality improvement actions during the first six months of 2010/11 (April-September).

#### Recommendation

That the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the progress made in implementing the actions identified by the Equality Impact and Needs Assessments during the first half of 2010/11.

#### a) Reasons for Recommendation

Implementation of the actions identified by the Equality Impact and Needs Assessments is expected to enhance the Council's position in seeking to meet the 'Achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

#### b) Alternative Options

None.

#### c) Risk Considerations

A failure to make satisfactory progress in implementing the actions identified by the Equality Impact and Needs Assessments could lead to criticism and compromise the Council's reputation.

#### d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The Council's Integrated Equality Scheme Statement and Policy states that the "Council aspires to improving its performance against the Equality Framework for Local Government". Most of the financial implications of implementing the improvement actions are expected to be met from within existing budgets but, if there are any additional financial implications, these would be brought to the attention of members separately.

#### e) Date for Review of Decision

Monitoring of progress in implementing the improvement actions during the second half of 2010/11 (October-March) will be undertaken by the Committee in the summer.

---

## **Main Body of the Report**

1. The Council's Integrated Equality Scheme Statement and Policy states that the "Council aspires to improving its performance against the Equality Framework for Local Government (it is currently seeking to meet the 'Achieving' standard)".
2. As part of the work to meet the 'Achieving' standard of the Equality Framework for Local Government, a series of Equality Impact and Needs Assessments were undertaken of our various services, policies, processes and activities during 2009/10.
3. The Equality Impact and Needs Assessments identified numerous actions which are intended to improve our understanding of our customers and the provision of fair and equal access to services that meet customers' needs. The improvement actions have been loaded onto our SPAR.net system so that officers may report to members on their progress in implementing the actions every six months.
4. Members are invited to monitor officers' progress in implementing the improvement actions during the first six months of 2010/11 (April-September) by considering the SPAR.net report summarising progress that is set out on the five pages which follow.
5. In the report, the improvement actions are referred to as Key Strategic Objectives and the corporate ones are featured first followed by those for each service in alphabetical order.
6. Each action has been classified by status in the 'Objective Status' column as one of the following:
  - Red (Concern) which highlights actions with serious problems or significant delays.
  - Amber (Variation) which indicates actions with mild concerns or minor setbacks.
  - Green (Achieved) which displays special achievements or early completions.
7. The 'Code', 'Title' and 'Objective' for each improvement action is shown before officers' updates on progress are set out in the 'Achieved' column.
8. The purpose of the 'Achieved' column is to allow officers to explain anything, particularly when start/completion dates are slipping. For example, the reasons for the delay or slippage, the measures being taken to rectify matters and when things are expected to be back on track.
9. In addition to the SPAR.net report summarising progress which is set out on the pages which follow, a comprehensive report is available, for reference, via a link on the electronic agenda. This report includes not only those actions that have been classified in the 'Objective Status' column as Red (Concern), Amber (Variation) and Green (Achieved) but also those classified as White (Normal) where progress is in line with expectations. In other words, the comprehensive report (of some 22 pages) contains details of progress on all of the improvement actions identified by the Equality Impact and Needs Assessments.

## **Legal Implications**

The new Equality Act 2010 duties will include the requirement (amongst other things) for public bodies to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Actions will assist the Council in complying with the legislation when in force. The Government is currently consulting on the implementation date – latest estimate is April 2011.

### **Financial Implications**

Financial implications are outlined against each action. No additional monies are being specifically requested in this report.

### **Background Papers**

The SPAR.net report, which summarises progress in implementing the equality improvement actions, is set out on the pages overleaf.

A comprehensive report setting out details of progress on all of the improvement actions identified by the Equality Impact and Needs Assessments is available, for reference, via a link on the electronic agenda.

---

Denise Lyon  
Corporate Director & Deputy Chief Executive

Service Delivery and Performance O&S Committee  
19 January 2011

# EIA report for committee

Annual report for 2010/2011

Arranged by Service

Filtered by Flag: Include: Equality Impact Assessment

Filtered by Performance Status: Include Objective Status: Concern, Variation, Achieved

Key to Performance Status:

Objective Status

No Data available

Milestone Missed

Normal

Concern

Variation

Achieved

## EIA report for committee

Service: Corporate Action Plan EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code	Title	Objective	Achieved
CAP-PA-1381	Create a new approach to customers needing help with written material	Create a new approach to customers who need help with written material	new standard text for all public forms about translations etc
CAP-PA-1397	Create and adopt a 'safeguarding vulnerable adults' policy	To create and adopt a 'safeguarding vulnerable adults' policy	now in place
CAP-PA-1402	Create and support 'Youth Press Officers'	To create and support 'Youth Press Officers'	No Youth Press Officer currently in post
CAP-PA-1405	Develop work with the faith community through the LSP faith representative	To develop work with the faith community through the LSP faith representative	Faith Rep has with EDDC assistance been in contact with all local churches identifying their social working and needs
CAP-PA-1371	Direct mailshot to existing contractors re equalities	Direct mailshot to existing contractors re equalities	sent request and reminder re equalities to major contractors
CAP-PA-1403	Disseminate information on transgender issues and facts to officers and Members	To disseminate information on transgender issues and facts to officers and Members	
CAP-PA-1378	Establish an external Equalities forum	Establish an external Equalities forum to represent the equalities strands and use this group to 'test market' and for consultation	forum created and managed (3 meetings to date) Format now being reviewed
CAP-PA-1391	Further promote the internal EDDC Domestic Violence policy	Further promote the internal EDDC Domestic Violence policy	
CAP-PA-1382	Liaise with multi-agency and diversity groups	Liaise with multi-agency and diversity groups for equalities work elsewhere in the County	
CAP-PA-1377	Monitor action plans through SPAR	Monitor action plans through the SPAR system to the Service Planning and	Not ready to report in September though data largely in place

## EIA report for committee

Service: Corporate Action Plan EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code Status	Title	Objective	Achieved
Achieved	CAP-PA-1369 Review and restart Equalities Steering Group	Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee Review and restart Equalities Steering Group	regular meetings now held
Achieved	CAP-PA-1374 Review equalities outputs from the formal complaints process	Review equalities outputs from the formal complaints process	
Achieved	CAP-PA-1376 Set up and develop intranet information for staff on EIA and website information for the public	Set up and develop intranet information for staff on the Equality Impact Assessments and also website information for the public	this has been set up and is available
Achieved	CAP-PA-1380 Undertake a risk management assessment	Undertake a risk management assessment of Equalities work	Equalites risk management now in place on Spar system
Achieved	CAP-PA-1384 Use the new Committee template to permit annual monitoring	Use the new Committee template to permit annual monitoring	The new template has been in place since May 2010 and is in active use. A basic report has been developed which will allow all categories used within each committee report to be identified and reported on an annual basis.

Service: Customer Service EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code Status	Title	Objective	Achieved
Concern	CS2-PA-1339 CSC Reception Action 2	To consider a re-design of the reception area to enhance current facilities. This is subject to funding being made available to complete.	This may not be achieved in light of the financial situation. However, we have repositioned seating to try to enhance the reception area.

Service: Electoral Services EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code Status	Title	Objective	Achieved
Achieved	ES2-PA-1464 Alternative languages	All forms required to be used for Electoral Registration, applying for postal or proxy votes and others are available on the Electoral Commission web site ( <a href="http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk">www.aboutmyvote.co.uk</a> ) in 12 different languages for anybody to down load. The Section is also happy to print off the appropriate form in the language required and post it on the enquirer. Ongoing.	All forms available in 16 languages from Electoral Commission web site

Service: Env Health EIA



## EIA report for committee

Service: Env Health EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code	Title	Objective	Achieved
Variation	EH2-PA-1423 Use EEF to promote all EH services	Use the External Equalities Forum (EEF) to promote all Environmental Health Services	Achieved
		There have not yet been opportunities to promote environmental health services through EEF primarily due to the set back of failing to gain "achieving" status following peer review.	

### Service: Housing EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code	Title	Objective	Achieved
Achieved	H2-PA-1333 Housing Repairs - Action 1 - Repairs monitoring group representation	Target groups that are under represented in Group. Time meetings to avoid 'school run' & involve front line staff in group.	Achieved
Achieved	H2-PA-1353 Housing Repairs - Action 2 - contractor performance	Monitor performance of contractors for equality and diversity	Monitored by Repairs Monitoring Group and reported to HRB. Current performance may be affected by demise of Connaught's. But other contractors especially Skinner Contruction are undertaking this work in the short term and successfully meeting performance standards and targets.
Variation	H2-PA-1354 Housing Repairs - Action 3 - contractor obligations	Use customer newsletters and sheltered scheme notice boards to promote that contractors need to pay for their own electricity when performing aids and adaption work	This has not been carried out. Needs to be reviewed by Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group
Achieved	H2-PA-1355 Housing Repairs - Action 4 - Fuel poverty	Encourage establishment of fuel poverty group as part of SW Procurement Group, to identify potential areas of fuel poverty and target resources accordingly	Yes, we are making good progress on this, we have a meeting of the Fuel Poverty Group on 13 October 2010 in Totnes.
Achieved	H2-PA-1326 Rental Housing Action 1 - Housing files	Request ICT to give Rental team access to 'Housing files' on S drive	All the officers of the Rents team now have access to the 'All Housing' folder on the Housing 'S' drive.
Achieved	H2-PA-1327 Rental Housing Action 2 - online payments	Ensure website is prepared and working for paying online	The website 'payments on line' facility is working normally. Any problems with this facility would be reported by ICT and/or the Cashiers team.
Achieved	H2-PA-1367 Rental Housing Action 3 - Communication methods	Use housing list of people requiring special communication methods rather than separate list. Use as often as is practicable - eg letters rather than rent books.	The Rents team now has access to the housing list detailing tenants who have special communication needs. It will be used where practicable.
Achieved	H2-PA-1330 Sheltered Housing Action 3 - British Sign language	Inform others across the service of availability of British sign language interpreter in house.	Officer has now finished course and the skill will be advertised throughout the Council.

### Service: Information Technology EIA

Printed by: Marianne Rixson

SPAR.net

33

Print Date: 06 January 2011 12:25

## EIA report for committee

Service: Information Technology EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code	Title	Objective	Achieved
12-PA-1448	Documents	Investigate the possibility of producing large print which at a glance is no different from the standard format where large print is required for agendas etc	Achieved
		Investigation showed that while it was technically feasible, every document produced would require a complete second design and there are no resources or time available to do this. The less resource hungry and quicker option is to enlarge each document up to A3 size. This is in place for anyone who requests large print and trials with documents for Housing have been successful.	

### Service: Organisational Development EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code	Title	Objective	Achieved
Variation			
O2-PA-1295	Absence Management Policy - Action 1	Undertake data analysis to identify trends in absence related to equality strands. Use this information to determine necessary changes to policy or procedures.	Data will be produced at the end of the financial year to ensure that all absence for the entire year is included.
Achieved	O2-PA-1297	Absence Management Policy - Action 2	The policy has been amended to create flexibility for people to speak to a manager who is either male or female if they have a specific preference.
Achieved	O2-PA-1299	Absence Management Policy - Action 3	There is a guidance document which is available for managers on the intranet.
Achieved	O2-PA-1457	Acceptable Behaviour Policy	The policy has been updated. Additionally Managers have been given a presentation outlining the key aspects of the Equality Act 2010 and we have provided 3 learning hours for staff to be informed about the changes.
Achieved	O2-PA-1406	Coaching and Mentoring Policy	Undertake analysis to identify trends in take up of mentoring policy.
Achieved	O2-PA-1317	Dress and Appearance Policy	Make changes to the policy to move away from wording which says that hairstyles should be 'conventional' as this may discriminate between different cultures, religions or beliefs.
Achieved	O2-PA-1408	Fertility Policy	Ensure that equality and diversity training incorporates some of the key issues raised by the policy on dress and appearance.
Achieved	O2-PA-1318	Maternity and Paternity Policy	Consider allowing the request to be made via HR rather than the line manager when reviewing the policy.
		Policy wording needs to be improved to highlight that paternity leave is available to same sex couples. This will be addressed through wholesale review of the policy due to legislation changing paternity leave rights to leave and pay.	Review conducted but it was decided that it would not be appropriate for requests to circumvent line managers. Policy reviewed to ensure that eligibility is clearer.

## EIA report for committee

Service: Organisational Development EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code Status	Title	Objective	Achieved
Achieved O2-PA-1319	Recruitment and Selection Policy - Action 1	Survey recent users of the policy to gauge its effectiveness. Ensure monitoring forms are completed and follow up with candidates who do not complete these where possible. Consider advertising in Ethnic Britain to reach candidates from Black, Ethnic and Minority groups	Recent survey of those involved with our recruitment process gave us excellent feedback. From the people surveyed there was only one dissatisfied customer and these issues have been dealt with. We are not able to advertise in Ethnic Britain due to budgetary constraints. We try to ensure we are gaining diversity data at the recruitment stage by following up with candidates where they do not complete the form.

Service: Planning EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code Status	Title	Objective	Achieved
Variation P2-PA-1445	Audit / evaluate Design and Access Statements	Audit / evaluate Design and Access Statements to ensure they fully address access issues particularly where public buildings are involved	There has been some delay in undertaking the research involved in achieving this objective due to other work. It is intended to undertake this work so that the findings can be discussed at the next agents forum in February so that the agents can be advised of areas where the statements are lacking.

Service: StreetScene EIA

### Key Strategic Objectives

Objective Code Status	Title	Objective	Achieved
Variation SS2-PA-1341	Beach Management - Action 2	Look at possibility of building beach access ramps	Not achievable due to lack of budget allocation
Variation SS2-PA-1346	Land Drainage - Action 2	Press for additional finances	Lack of Funds
Achieved SS2-PA-1347	Legionella Policy - Action 1	Monthly monitoring of properties & updating the legionella log on-site	Legionella Policy due for review in 2010. This has been completed and submitted for inclusion on to the Policy Register.
Achieved SS2-PA-1462	Refuse & Recycling Action 2	Ensure staff attend diversity training, that all telephone calls are noted, and any correspondence is saved for reference	

Printed by: Marianne Rixson

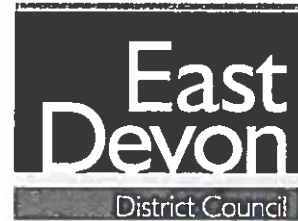
SPAR.net

Print Date: 06 January 2011 12:25

## Agenda Item 9

Service Delivery/Performance Committee

19 January 2011



### Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan 2010/11

#### Meetings for 2010/2011

9 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quarterly Monitoring of Service Plans and Performance Indicators – 3rd Quarter</li><li>• Housing Benefits, Housing, StreetScene and Development Management Service Measures Reports – 3rd Quarter</li><li>• Annual Report of the Service Delivery and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li></ul>	Denise Lyon  Heads of Service
--------------	---	-------------------------------------