

City of York Council

**Corporate Fairness and Inclusion
Strategy**

**and
Single Corporate Equality Scheme**

July 2009 to July 2012

Contents

Part A **Introduction** **The strategy**

Section 1 **What do we mean by 'fairness and inclusion'?**

Section 2 **Why 'fairness and inclusion'?**

Section 3 **'Fairness and inclusion' issues in York**

Improving the lives of people from the equality strands - six themes for action (objectives)

- Section 4**
- Know the community
 - Show leadership, partnership and commitment
 - Engage with people from the equality strands
 - Provide responsive services
 - Have a modern, diverse workforce
 - Take action in each directorate

Section 5 Who is responsible for the strategy and scheme?

Section 6 How will we know the strategy is working?

Section 7 Tell us what you think

Part B The Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-12

Part C Annexes

Annex 1 – Examples of inclusive practice

Annex 2 – Equality issues in York

Annex 3 – Who does what in terms of 'Fairness and inclusion' in the council

Annex 4 – Who was engaged and consulted

Introduction

In the autumn of 2005, following extensive consultation and active engagement with communities in York, City of York Council published its first corporate equality strategy and related action plans, called **Pride in our Communities (PIOC)**.

In summer 2008, the council updated PIOC and the action plans, and published its first **Single Corporate Equality Scheme** for 2008-09. This document put in place a plan of action that would enable the council to meet its duties and requirements in terms of equality legislation, standards for local government inclusive working and the new performance management framework for local government.

Pride in our Communities (PIOC) 2005-08 and the Single Corporate Equality Scheme (SCES) 2008-09, began the council's journey towards placing fairness and inclusion at the centre of everything it does. The aim was, and still is, to make a difference to people in York who are facing disadvantage and discrimination in service and employment because of their gender, disability, race, age, sexual orientation, or religion and belief.

The council is a very large organisation made up of many diverse services, each of which must meet the requirements of various pieces of legislation, standards and practice requirements. This means that, although the vision and commitment for fair and inclusive practice are now embedded in the organisation, the practice is not yet consistent across all areas of the council's work.

The Fairness and Inclusion Strategy and the Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-10, update the PIOC and aim to achieve consistency in practice across the council, placing people who face disadvantage and their needs first in the way we plan and deliver our services.

This strategy (our thinking) and single scheme (our action) are based on the **Equality Framework for Local Government 2009¹**.

They take into account:

- What groups and people from the equality strands told us at the involvement and consultation events. Both the strategy and the Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009-12 have been produced following extensive consultation and engagement with groups and people from the equality strands.
- Information collected through research, and the analysis of data that the council and its partners hold.

¹ The framework has been put together by local government associations and is approved by the government. It sets the standards for fair and inclusive public services.

Part A - The strategy

Section 1. What do we mean by 'fairness and inclusion'?

Fairness and inclusion are about treating people according to their needs to achieve fair results across the full range of services and employment opportunities offered by the council, its partners, outside organisations that work for it, and organisations that the council gives grants to.

The aim is to make sure that people do not suffer disadvantage in services and employment as a result of their:

- **Gender** (This includes trans people who are going through sex-change or have a sense of self that belongs to the other gender).
- **Disability**
- **Race**
- **Age**
- **Religion and belief**
- **Sexual orientation**

These are called the "**equality strands**".

Fairness and inclusion are about understanding the needs of people from the equality strands and taking them into account every time we make decisions and act. This means changing the way we work.

In keeping with the expectations of local residents and good management requirements, fair and inclusive services and employment must happen within the council's existing financial means. This means targeting the council's resources where they will have the most impact, in other words where they will benefit large numbers of people or address an issue that affects a large number of people. Therefore, it will not always be possible to meet the needs of every individual. The

council has to prioritise and work in partnership with a number of organisations to make sure that it acts in a fair and inclusive, but cost-effective, way.

Section 2. Why fairness and inclusion?

Fair and inclusive service planning, delivery and employment practice are required by:

- The people who live in the city, because it improves their lives
- Our councillors and senior managers
- Our partners in the private, public, community and voluntary sectors
- The law
- The bodies that inspect us, to confirm that we do a good job.

Improving people's lives

Planning and delivering services in a fair and inclusive way, and putting in place fair and inclusive employment practices, matters to people, particularly those likely to suffer disadvantage because of their gender, disability, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Examples of fair and inclusive cost-efficient council practice, that resulted in life-changing improvement, can be found in Annex 1.

Councillors' vision - Officers' commitment

Our councillors' vision for fairness and inclusion was first stated in **Pride in our Communities 2005-08**:

'York is a diverse city where everyone, regardless of their background, is able to take advantage of its benefits and opportunities, and is supported to contribute towards its future.'

The vision is restated in our refreshed **Corporate Strategy 2009-12**:

'We will do our best to make sure that all citizens, regardless of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender, feel included in the life of York. We will help improve prospects for all, tackle poverty and exclusion, and make services and facilities easy to access.'

In response to this vision, the council's management team (the chief executive and directors) has made the following commitment:

We commit to:

- ⇒ Aiming for fair outcomes in service and employment, working within our means
- ⇒ Valuing diversity and tackling discrimination
- ⇒ Promoting good community relations
- ⇒ Using our economic power to support equality and diversity through procurement, grants and loans
- ⇒ Aiming for a representative workforce and councillor body
- ⇒ Engaging equality groups, and supporting them to influence and scrutinise our decisions
- ⇒ Fairness and inclusion as our core corporate aims.

Partners' vision and commitment

Without Walls, York's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) of public, private, community and voluntary sector groups and organisations, has set and is delivering its long-term vision for York. It aims to improve the lives of local people by ensuring that all citizens feel included.

Part of the vision states:

'We will help improve prospects for all, tackle poverty and exclusion and make services and facilities easy to access'

The law

The council has a legal duty to be fair and inclusive in service planning, delivery and employment, as well as promoting fairness and inclusion in the community that it serves and the organisations it works with.

The council is required to put in place action plans (referred to in this document as 'schemes'), to show how it will meet the requirements of equalities legislation. The aim of equalities legislation is to protect people who may face disadvantage because of their gender, disability, race, age, religion, beliefs or sexual orientation. These are called **the equality strands**.

More information about relevant legislation and regulations can be obtained by emailing equalities@york.gov.uk or writing to the Manager, Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team, The Guildhall, York YO1 9QN

Inspections

The body that looks at whether the council is doing a good job overall is the Audit Commission.

Inspectors from the Commission and other similar bodies, expect the council to know and respond to the needs of groups of people referred to in the equality strands to deliver fair results within its means.

They also expect the council to target resources where they will have a positive effect on as many people as possible.

Section 3. Fairness and inclusion issues in York

A diverse mix of people live in York. Information from the Office of National Statistics produced after the last census in 2001 shows that, **if only 100 people lived in York in 2001:**

- 91 would class themselves as White British and 9 as Black and Minority Ethnic
- 52 would be women; 48 men
- 41 would be over 45 years old; 23 would be under 19 years old
- An estimated five would have different sexual orientations
- 17 would have no faith or belief; 76 would, with about 74 of them saying they were Christian
- 17 would have limiting long-term illness

The council uses a number of sources to identify, research and analyse information about fairness and inclusion issues in York. These include:

a. Data collected and analysed in:

- The equality profile of York based on the 2001 Census
- The Story of Place 2008²
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment³
- The Place Survey⁴

If you would like copies of these documents, please contact equalities@york.gov.uk or write to the Manager, Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team, The Guildhall, York YO1 9QN.

According to the data referred to above, York is a prosperous city with small pockets of deprivation. These pockets are among the 10 per cent most deprived areas in the country. People living in those areas, particularly people who fit into the equality strands, are likely to face poor education, health and employment prospects.

Across the city, the population is growing. The numbers of women, older people and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups are growing. People from different religion and belief backgrounds, and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans communities are increasingly asserting their identities and needs.

b. Issues that groups from the equality strands have raised with the council at involvement and consultation events, and as they engage with the council. A detailed list of issues can be found in Annex 2.

Issues that people in York told us⁵ have a negative effect on people from all six equality strands include:

- Difficulty in accessing information, services and employment, particularly through our publications and website.

² A document that includes information that offers a snapshot of York in year 2008

³ A document that informs the planning commissioning and development of health services in York

⁴ A survey to find out what people think of living in York

⁵ Mapped at a number of engagement and consultation events, which started in 2007 and concluded in May 2009.

Annex 1

- Possibly unfair treatment in services and employment (within and outside the council), arising from lack of understanding and respect for diversity.
- Community safety.
- Bullying and harassment in services and employment.
- A sense of isolation; a need for support networks and places to meet.

These issues will be considered by council services as they assess the likely impact of their decisions and actions on the quality of life of people from the equality strands.

Questions that officers and councillors are expected to ask in relation to these issues will include:

- Does what I am doing/proposing to do lead to unfair treatment of people from the equality strands? What can we do about this?
- Does it make their access to service or employment harder? What can we do about this?
- Does it make them feel safe, welcome, valued and included in the council and in the city? If so, can we apply this action in other things we do?

Action needed as a result of asking these questions will be listed in the action plans included in **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**.

EIAs are documents that will be published, in summary, every year on the council's website and will also be available from the equality and inclusion team upon request.

They list what council officers propose to do to deal with unfair practice that they have identified that leads to the exclusion of people from the equality strands.

If you want copies of specific EIAs, please contact equalities@york.gov.uk or write to the Manager, Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team, The Guildhall, York YO1 9QN.

Section 4. Improving the lives of people from the equality strands: six themes for action (objectives)

There are six themes for action and on-going improvement in the Strategy and Scheme. They are based on the newly published Equality Framework for Local Government and will help the council to meet the requirements of equality legislation, the Customer Services Excellence Standard⁶, and the Comprehensive Area and Organisational Assessments.⁷

T1 - Know the community

The prosperity and quality of life of people who live in York is affected by their differences in terms of gender, age, disability, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Knowing our community is about collecting data and feedback to help us understand differences within and between communities in York, looking at issues that impact upon people's quality of life, such as access to services, health, education, community safety and access to work, that the council and its partners need to deal with. It also reassures us that we reach all parts of our community, taking on board as many experiences as possible.

⁶ The standard that the government has developed and uses to measure whether public services are effective, efficient, empowering and equitable.

⁷ The two assessments are done by the Audit Commission, and look at life in the city and whether inequalities are being dealt with, as well as how well the council manages its business.

T2 - Leadership, partnership and commitment

Political and managerial vision, and commitment to fairness and inclusion, are key to achieving positive change and improving lives in the city.

Our councillors have a key role in this, as they have up-to-date knowledge of the needs of different sections of the community and changes in the local population.

To make sure that identified gaps are dealt with, our managers and staff will be committed to working in partnership with bodies and groups in the city and beyond, narrowing the gaps and improving lives.

This means that our councillors and managers will work with partners and stakeholders to consider the allocation of resources; fairness and inclusion in procurement and grant-giving; and to support the engagement of people from the equality strands in the planning and delivery of services, as well as the scrutiny of services delivered.

T3 –Engaging with people from the equality strands

To recognise people's different needs, situations and goals, we need to know and work towards removing the barriers that limit what people can do and be. The council has a duty under equality legislation to reach out and engage with people from protected groups, particularly vulnerable people.

Our recently published Corporate Engagement Strategy - visit http://www.york.gov.uk/council/community_eng/ - offers guidance about how to do this. In terms of including people from the equality strands in service planning, delivery and employment improvements, we shall focus on supporting the engagement of vulnerable groups through the **council's Social Inclusion Working Group** and our **Staff Equality Reference Group**. Both groups include people from all the six strands.

T4 – Providing responsive services

Our services, whether provided directly or procured and commissioned, must take into account the needs of people from the six equality strands.

To make sure this happens, we shall assess the impact of services and decisions that we, or organisations that we procure/commission from, make on people from the equality strands to ensure that we don't unintentionally discriminate against some of them. This process is called carrying out an **Equality Impact Assessment (EIAs)**. The results of EIAs will be published on the council's website – www.york.gov.uk - annually and will also be available in various accessible formats from the equality and inclusion team.

Each assessment will lead to action plans being drawn up, which will be included in our service plans and monitored regularly.

T5 – Having a modern, diverse workforce

How well we deliver fair, inclusive and personalised services depends on the make-up, skills, commitment and understanding of our workforce.

Therefore we shall put in place a Workforce Strategy⁸ that has clear and relevant equality objectives, and that takes into account the nature of our local labour market and barriers to employment faced by people from the equality strands. We shall also make sure that all our current employment practices are equality impact assessed; that our training programmes address equality issues and that we promote a workplace culture in which all staff are treated with dignity and respect.

⁸ This is a plan to make sure that we recruit and keep the right people to help us deliver our vision for an inclusive and fair council.

T6 - Acting in each directorate

The council is organised in six directorates or business areas:

- Chief Executive's
- Resources
- Learning, Culture and Children's Services
- Housing and Adult Social Services
- Neighbourhood Services
- City Strategy

Each of these directorates will put in place their own fairness and inclusion action plan for 2009-12 called **Directorate Single Equality Schemes**. These will be based on the five action areas mentioned above, and will begin with yearly programmes of staff training and Equality Impact Assessments.

Section 5. Who is responsible for the strategy and scheme?

The council's **executive and management teams**, led by the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion will be responsible for the delivery of this strategy and single scheme. They will be advised by the council's Social Inclusion Working Group and Staff Equality Reference Group.

In addition, all councilors, employees and partner agencies have a role to play in making sure that fairness and inclusion are at the heart of everything the council does.

The diagram in [Annex 3](#) shows who is involved in fairness and inclusion work in the council.

Section 6. How will we know the strategy is working?

The strategy is a long-term plan and it will take time for its effects to be felt across the entire council.

However, every year we shall look at indicators that tell us whether we are improving and publish the results. These indicators make up the **corporate fairness and inclusion scorecard**, which has four components:

- Progress towards **national performance indicators**, which are set by central government and relate to equality and inclusion at a high level, such as across the city and the entire council.
- Progress towards **local performance indicators** that the council's Executive, and senior managers set, such as the number of women and BME officers holding senior jobs in the council or the number of disabled employees.
- The level⁹ of the **Equality Framework for Local Government** reached by the council as a whole.
- Completing an annual programme of **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**, as agreed by senior managers, and ensuring that actions arising from previous years' EIAs have been included in service plans and are progressing.

In addition to the actions listed above, we shall seek feedback about how we are progressing from community members involved in the Social Inclusion Working Group and our Staff Equality Reference Group.

Section 7. Tell us what you think

This strategy and scheme were put together following extensive internal and external consultation and engagement. They will be reviewed annually as our city, the council and the environment in which we operate, changes.

⁹ The framework has three levels - Developing, Achieving and Excellent.

Annex 1

For example, currently a Single Equality Bill is going through Parliament and aims to draw together the numerous pieces of equality legislation. The bill is expected to come into force in 2011 to streamline the requirements that public bodies must meet in order to make them easier to identify and follow. Also, the role of local government is continuously evolving and the council faces constant change.

Therefore your views about this document are welcome at any time. They will be collected and recorded so that they can be considered when the strategy and scheme are reviewed. Please send your views and comments about the content of this strategy by email to equalities@york.gov.uk or by post to the Manager, Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team, The Guildhall, York YO1 9QN.

You can also fill in a questionnaire to send back to us. If you would like a copy of the questionnaire please email equalities@york.gov.uk or write to the Manager, Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team, The Guildhall, York YO1 9QN.

Part B- The Single Corporate Equality Scheme (SCES)

Introduction and background

This scheme describes the actions that the council will take between July 2009 and July 2012 to deliver the Fairness and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12, and also to meet its legal duties arising from current equality legislation.

It follows on from Pride In Our Communities, the council's first Equality Strategy 2005-08 and corporate Single Equality Scheme 2008-09. As a result of the 2005-8 strategy, the council was able to:

1. Develop participation and engagement mechanisms to help promote and support fairness and inclusion throughout the council.
2. Start collecting, analysing and using equality data.
3. Complete a programme of priority Equality Impact Assessments.
4. Develop, and deliver, a programme of equality and inclusion training for staff.
5. Develop the corporate fairness and inclusion system and standards, which sets out the corporate approach to every aspect of fairness and inclusion work, including collecting and using data, Equality Impact Assessments and inclusive engagement.

The council has a legal duty to have gender, disability and race equality schemes (or action plans) in place. There can be three separate schemes or they can be combined in a 'single' scheme.

This is a **single scheme** that covers the common requirements placed on the council by gender, race and disability legislation. These are::

- To have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality.

- To assess and consult on the impact of proposed policies, as well as monitoring existing policies and key employment processes.

It also covers a number of specific requirements, in particular:

- A requirement under the race equality duty to promote good race relations;
- A requirement under the disability equality duty to treat disabled people preferentially if necessary in order to deliver equality;
- A requirement to involve disabled people in developing the Disability Equality Scheme;
- A requirement to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- A requirement under the gender equality duty to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

Action plan July 2009-July 2012

The plan has six action areas based on the objectives of the strategy, as follows:

1. Know the community
2. Leadership, partnership and commitment
3. Engaging with people from the equality strands
4. Providing responsive services
5. Having a modern diverse workforce
6. Acting in each Directorate

T1 - Know the community

Action 1 – Agree which National Performance Indicators (NPIs) and local Performance Indicators (PIs) are to be collected and analysed by each directorate across the six equality strands. This will enable progress to be measured by directorate. Put in place an agreed protocol and action plan for the collection, analysis and use of reliable equality data across the council.

By: April 2010

Led by: Corporate equalities and inclusion team from the Chief Executive's directorate

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 2: Agree which NPIs will be collected and analysed across the six equality strands by Without Walls, York's Local Strategic Partnership. This will make it possible to measure progress towards achieving fairness and inclusion across the city. Put in place an agreed protocol and action plan for the collection, analysis and use of reliable equality data across the Local Strategic Partnership.

By: July 2012

Led by: Strategic partnerships team in the City Strategy directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

T2 - Leadership partnership and commitment

Action 1: Support the development of a **Community Cohesion Strategy** at Local Strategic Partnership level.

By: July 2010

Led by: Corporate equalities and inclusion team in the Chief Executive's directorate and the strategic partnerships team in City Strategy.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 2: Review the council website and intranet, news releases, publications and general communication, to facilitate **easy access to services and employment.**

By: July 2010

Led by: [Easy@York](#), in the Resources directorate and the marketing and communications team in the Chief Executive's directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 3: As in Action 2 above, working with Without Walls partners

By: July 2012

Led by: Strategic partnerships team in the City Strategy directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 4: Refresh the **council's procurement strategy, third sector commissioning and grants processes** as in the COMPACT¹⁰, to ensure that they are fair and inclusive, and that they promote fairness and inclusion in the city and beyond.

¹⁰ The agreement that governs the working relationships between the public sectors and the community and voluntary sectors in York.

By: July 2010

Led by: the relevant teams in the Resources and City Strategy directorates

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 5: Put in place an action plan to **promote civic and public participation opportunities**, targeting people from the six strands, starting with disabled people and Black and Minority Ethnic people.

By: July 2010

Led by: The civic and democratic services teams in the Chief Executive's directorate

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

T3 - Engaging with people from the equality strands

Action 1: Review how the Social Inclusion Working Group operates to ensure that it reaches and engages with all strands, particularly with hard to reach groups within the strands.

By: July 2010

Led by: The corporate equality and inclusion team in the Chief Executive's directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 2: Support the ongoing development of the council's Staff Equality Reference Group.

By: July 2012

Led by: Corporate human resources with the corporate equality and inclusion team in the Chief Executive's directorate.

T4 - Providing responsive services

Action 1: Undertake a rolling programme of **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)** of current and new council policies, strategies and practices and use these to put in place **Directorate Equality Schemes (DES)**. Ensure that the resulting remedial action is taken on board in directorate and service planning. Monitor that agreed actions have been carried out and whether the effect has been beneficial or not.

By: EIAs completed and published on the council website by end of March each year. Three-year directorate/service equality schemes published after July 2009 and reviewed each year thereafter.

Led by: Corporate Equality Leadership group/Directorate Equality Leads group.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 2: Review current, and new, commissioning and procurement contracts to include a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service fairly and equitably.

By: July 2012

Led by: Corporate procurement team in the Resources directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 3: Develop an equalities accreditation scheme for bodies we procure and commission from.

By: July 2012

Led by: Corporate procurement team in the Resources directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 4: Review our customer strategy and complaints procedures to ensure that they take on board the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups, including homeless people, refugees and asylum seekers.

By: December 2009

Led by: Customer and governance services in the Resources directorate

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 5: Develop and deliver a rolling programme of training in equality and human rights issues for councillors and staff.

By: This will form part of our workforce development plan, which will be completed by January 2010.

Led by: Corporate human resources, corporate equalities and inclusion team, and the civic and democratic services teams.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 6: A rolling programme of service reviews to examine, amongst other things, access to services and participation in public life by people from the six equality strands.

By: On-going to June 2012.

Led by: All directorates; the More for York team in the Resources directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 7: Facilitate the development of a common approach to fairness and inclusion in access to services provided by all LSP partners.

By: Ongoing to June 2012

Led by: Strategic partnerships team in the City Strategy directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

T5 - Having a modern diverse workforce

Action 1: Put in place a corporate workforce development plan that takes on board fairness and inclusion, is based on a good understanding of the local labour market and considers the barriers faced by people from the equality strands, particularly disabled people and BME people.

By: December 2010

Led by: The corporate human resources team in the Chief Executive's directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 2: Review current human resources policies to ensure that they are compliant with the latest requirements of equality and employment legislation.

By: Ongoing to July 2012

Led by: Corporate human resources team with the corporate equality and inclusion team in the Chief Executive's directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 3: Put in place a prioritised programme of EIAs of major and new employment policies and procedures.

By: Ongoing to July 2012

Led by: Corporate human resources team with the corporate equality and inclusion team in the Chief Executive's directorate.

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

T6 - Acting in each directorate

Action 1: Every directorate will put in place a three-year directorate equality scheme that will be monitored annually. This will include how the directorate deals with equality data, a programme of directorate and service level EIAs, and a programme of equality and human rights training for staff.

By: July 2009

Led by: Directorate Equality Leads group

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Action 2: Every directorate will self-assess against the three levels of the equality framework for local government by March each year. Action plans will be put in place to make sure that the directorate is progressing through the three levels of the framework, aiming for the 'achieving' level by July 2012.

By: March each year

Led by: Directorate Equality Leads group

Duties met: All (gender, disability, race)

Part C- Annexes

Annex 1 – Examples of inclusive practice

Interpreting for life-changing decision-making: Housing and Adult Social Services

A social care manager contacted the directorate Equalities and Information Development Manager to get help with interpretation services for an older woman from another country who, because of her confused state, had reverted to her mother tongue.

She had some important life-changing decisions to make about whether or not to move into residential care. She could only answer yes or no and it was felt that an interpreter was necessary to help her understand all the options so that she could make a fully informed decision about her future.

There were no family members available and it was agreed that the professional but impersonal interpreters on offer were not suitable. The Equalities and Information Development Manager contacted the relevant country's Embassy in London to make enquiries. They suggested he approach the church organisation of the woman's country in London. On contacting the church, he was informed that they provide social care support to natives of their country currently living in the UK. They were able to provide a sensitive interpretation service free-of-charge and were happy to have the interpreter travel to York, asking for travel expenses only.

Within a week and a half of the original query, the woman was able to meet with the appropriate professional and, after she received the necessary interpreted advice and guidance, she was able to make the decision that suited her best.

Bridge over troubled waters: Neighbourhood Services

The City Mills sheltered accommodation scheme in Skeldergate is often cut off when the River Ouse floods, preventing residents, care workers, medical staff, friends and family from getting in and out the building. For years, they had to rely on council staff in Land Rovers to drive them to and from the building, often having to be lifted and carried to and from the vehicles.

Thinking about the needs and dignity of residents first, an Operations Manager came up with a solution to allow access to and from the sheltered accommodation during floods. He designed and commissioned a lightweight, portable and adjustable temporary bridge, which can span up to 14 metres of floodwater to a maximum depth of one metre. Strong enough to carry wheelchairs, motorized scooters or ambulance stretchers, the aluminium walkway fits into a Ford Transit-type van and can be erected by two people in one hour. Feedback from residents has been very positive as the bridge is strong, quick to erect and has made a big difference to people who use it, giving them independent and dignified access to and from the building.

Providing support for young people claiming benefits: Benefits service in the Resources directorate

Working with young people, the service put in place the 'young people's report' (YPR) support system, which includes:

1. 'Z' cards and posters on display around the city and at council reception points to advertise the dedicated mobile phone number and **benefits@york** email address.
2. Dedicated staff taking phone calls and dealing with any emails.
3. The ability to identify cases of young people who may need support because they are not managing to deal with their benefit claim and so on. This does not happen that often, as most young people manage their affairs well, however, where a case does require monitoring, a member of the team carries out regular checks.

4. When checking the progress of a claim, staff can phone the young person concerned or text or email them, or offer them an appointment if that would be useful.
5. The system is linked to the benefits advice team, who provide welfare benefits advice and other support.
6. Staff work with a number of teams across the council, and external organisations working with young people, through e-networking. This helps to identify any additional advice or support that a young person might need.

Accessible leisure facilities: Leisure services in the Leisure, Culture and Children's Services directorate.

"We approached City of York Council to request its support in enabling our T4C group to undertake three disability equality audits. We would like to thank the council's leisure services department for its full co-operation with this undertaking, which was based on the experiences of both the T4C group and other disabled young people.

"Disability equality audits were carried out at Oaklands Sport Centre, Yearsley Swimming Pool and Edmund Wilson Swimming Pool. The Disability equality audits would not have been possible without funding from YorOK (York Children's Trust), the Big Lottery Fund and The Children's Society.

"The T4C group has had the full co-operation of City of York Council, and this has been a privilege and an enjoyable learning experience for the young people taking part.

"The Disability Discrimination Act aims to end the discrimination that many disabled people, including children and young people, face, which can take place in two ways – by treating a disabled person less favourably and/or by failing to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can participate in services, including leisure.

“In completing this audit, we have been pleased to acknowledge examples of good practice, with many of our recommendations requiring only minor and inexpensive adjustments in order to make them more fully inclusive of all disabled people.”

PACTS’s T4C young people’s group

The Explore Computer Club – Acomb Library Learning Centre, leisure services team

Prior to the closure of the Huntington Road Day Centre in 2008, its customers were consulted about what activities they would like to continue to participate in. Using computers had been popular at the day centre and the customers were keen to continue this.

It was important that any possible venue had the facilities to accommodate the needs of the customers, who all have some form of physical disability, including three wheelchair users.

In June 2009, Explore Computer Club was launched and it meets every Friday afternoon. Most of the members have problems with remembering, so the key is to repeat bite-sized pieces of learning often. An important part of the afternoon for everyone is break time in the café, where they enjoy a drink and a chat.

The environment at Explore was a new experience for members of the group but, with the support of their activity support leaders, who worked with them at Huntington Day Centre, they have embraced the change and it has empowered them, giving them independence and confidence.

“I had been at Huntington Road Day Centre for over 21 years. It was a big change for me when the day centre closed. I started at the Explore Acomb Library Learning Centre about two months later. This group enables me to carry on learning computer skills. I feel secure here because I am familiar with the staff members from the centre.” (Richard).

“Since arriving to work here, I have found that the staff are very helpful with all the different uses of computer. Having a rather bad memory does not help as I start doing something then seem to forget what I intended to do. Luckily the staff are well aware of my shortcomings and all help me to complete whatever I have started. They do not do it for me, but try to stir my memory so that I can often pick it up and continue to complete the task involved. It’s very awkward being like I am, but with a little help and understanding my task is always fruitful and I am able to be understood.” (Mervyn)

York a top-rated council for disabled children’s services – children’s services, Leisure, Culture and Children’s Services directorate

Information from the council’s children and young people bulletin

Between January and March 2009, the Department for Children, Schools and Families collected information about 30 different councils through a questionnaire, asking parents their views on health, social care and education services for their disabled children over the past 12 months.

The results revealed that the highest scoring authority was City of York Council, which scored 65 out of 100 when judged against five standards - information, assessment, transparency, participation and feedback (though York, like other councils, has to improve on feedback).

The aim of this annual survey is to provide a means of assessing the performance of councils on the provision of services for disabled children. This approach was introduced by the government through [Aiming High for Disabled Children](#). It aims to help councils and primary care trusts to commit to informing and involving disabled children and their parents as their needs are assessed and necessary services are delivered.

Annex 2. Equality issues in York: What you told us

These have been arrived at following consultation and engagement events, as listed in Annex 4.

1. Issues from staff

- Increase the number of women employed in senior management positions.
- Decrease the gap in pay between male and female employees in jobs of the same value.
- Create more opportunities for flexible working.
- Consider how to improve the numbers and position of disabled employees, and employees from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Deal with bullying and harassment in the workplace.

2. Issues from equality groups in the city

Affecting all strands

- Class issues accentuate problems faced by all the strands.
- There is still inequality in employment and education in the city.
- There is a need for free, shared and neutral spaces for groups from the strands to meet and work together.

Gender

- Domestic abuse (all)
- Homelessness (with mental health, men)

- Financial abuse (women)
- Glass ceiling for women still not broken. Pay inequalities are still there.
- Male awareness of female issues is limited.
- Consider the needs of the Trans community.
- Consider the needs of white working class males (employment, life long learning).

Disability

- Independent living; offer training to people receiving direct payments.
- Community safety.
- There is a need for more employment and leisure opportunities.
- Access to services and life in the city is still an issue.

Race

- Discrimination in service delivery and employment is a problem.
- Access to services
- Community safety and hate crime
- Isolation (particularly for refugees and women)
- Feeling unwelcome
- There is a need for special pre-school and early-years education provision, particularly language support. Language can be a barrier. Need to consider the needs of children coming from different education systems.
- Training qualifications from other countries are not recognised.
- Encourage BME engagement in politics.

Age

A number of issues relating to children and young people, and what the council and partners will do about these, can be found in the **Children and Young People's Plan**. Details can be found at <http://www.york.org.uk/children-young-peoples-plan.html>

In addition the following issues relating to age have been identified:

- Receptive council (older)
- Leisure facilities needed (older, younger)
- Safe streets (older)
- Need to raise awareness, educate and promote tolerance towards older age.
- The Social Inclusion Working Group to support and promote intergenerational projects.
- Rural isolation is a problem for people of all ages.
- Student accommodation is limited in some areas of York.
- Dignity in social care needs improving.
- Employment opportunities for older and younger workers.

Sexual orientation

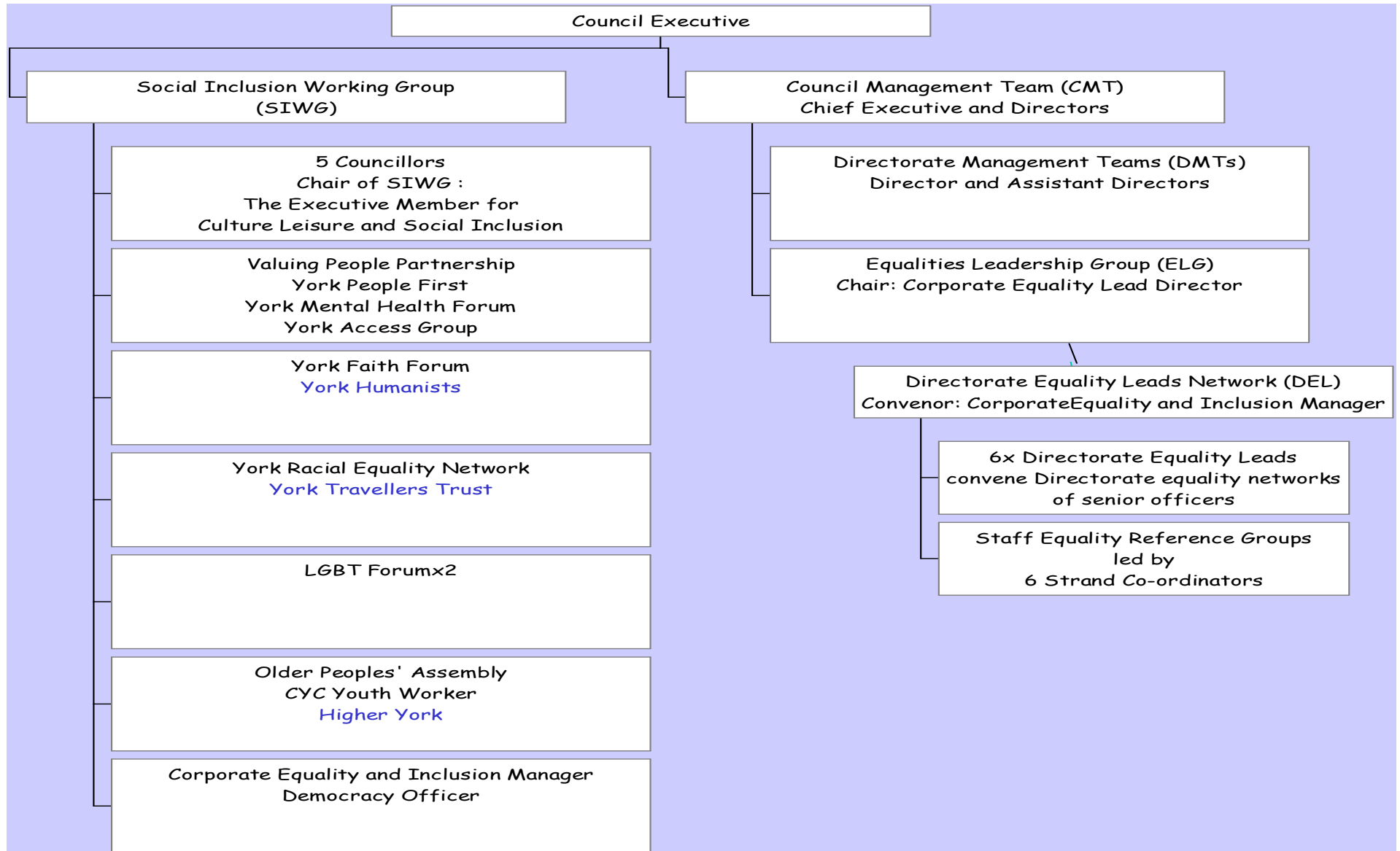
- Community safety; hate crime.
- Organised activities and leisure provision specifically tailored to community needs.
- Need to develop support networks.
- Need to raise awareness about the issues.
- Bullying in schools; specific support needed for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) pupils
- Older LGBT people entering care face discrimination issues; 'gay friendly' services are needed.

- LGBT people should be encouraged to engage in local politics

Religion and belief

- Need support to work together to improve:
 - dialogue
 - the environment
- Need neutral places to meet and publicity about meetings
- Improve knowledge about new groups in the city
- Encourage engagement in politics

Annex 3 Who does what for fairness and inclusion in City of York Council - June 2009



Annex 4– Who was engaged and consulted

Various equality strand groups were consulted and engaged by the relevant council services to inform key council policies and strategies that promote fairness and inclusion; and complement this fairness and inclusion strategy, including the :

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Council Corporate Strategy
- Local Development Plan
- Engagement Strategy
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Private Sector Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Physical and Sensory Impairment Strategy
- Prevent Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Ward committee action plans
- Disability and ethnicity conferences – June 2007
- The Changing Population of York conference – October 2007
- Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) chair and vice chair community surgeries - October 2007 to March 2008
- SIWG Development Days – February 2008 and May 2009
- The Disabled People Together Day – March 2008
- SIWG/Older Peoples Assembly survey – June 2008
- SIWG/Interfaith Forum survey – August 2008
- SIWG/York LGBT Forum survey – Summer 2008
- York Racial Equality Network open forums – Ongoing
- SIWG gender strand engagement project – Autumn/winter 2008/09

Annex 1

- Feedback from staff: Chief Executive's female staff survey 2006; International Women's Day 2008
- 'Dead Ernest' staff sessions - June 2008 and April 2009
- Meeting with the York Council for Voluntary Service chair and chief executive– October 2008
- SIWG EIAs fair: 'Help us to get it right day' – November 2008
- Staff Equality reference groups – meetings in January 2009 and April 2009