

Equality Framework for Local Government

City of York Council's Self Assessment Report

June 2011



Welcome to the City of York Council

An Achieving Authority on its journey towards excellence

We are proud to enclose the City of York council's self-assessment report for Level Achieving of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) and very pleased to welcome the Local Government Improvement and Development Peer challenge team to our city and the council.

The opportunity to share our findings and discuss next steps with the Peers is appreciated. We are confident that their findings will confirm our understanding of where we are and will support us on our journey towards excellence, which we hope to reach within 18 months of this Peer challenge taking place.

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Leader

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About this document

This report summarises our self assessment against Level Achieving of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The self assessment is supported by a portfolio of evidence documents and case studies. The case studies illustrate areas where we have identified significant improvement and in a lot of cases, excellence.

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Summary

- **Equality mapping** is embedded in most of the areas where the customer is known. We have recently invested heavily in advanced customer and staff insight systems that will support equality mapping across the council in the next six months. In the last two years we have used equality mapping information from the Place Survey and the budget consultations to help shape the annual council budget.
- We have strong senior **leadership and commitment** and very effective partnership working. Our organisational priorities focus on action that will narrow the gap and improve lives. Procurement processes contribute to narrowing the gap, especially in housing, adult and children's services.
- **Community engagement and satisfaction** are very strong in areas where we know the customer, in particular, where the customer has multiple needs (for example, disabled children). We have plans to make sure this excellence is translated across the whole organisation and in particular targeted to hard to reach groups within communities of place and of interest. Our Equality Advisory Group, which is led by the Cabinet Member for Inclusion, and the Fairness Commission that we are currently developing will support improvements in this area.
- **Responsive services and customer care are strongly evidenced in** areas where we know the customer, such as children, adult and housing services. Our new customer strategy will ensure that this is the case across the organisation. We are in the process of placing services in accessible locations within neighbourhoods - for example post offices and other local outlets. Individuals can now access services on-line. However, we are aware that we need to improve the quality of our EIAs and also ensure that the findings consistently inform service planning and decision making across all areas of the council.
- Working with the unions we concluded and implemented our **equal pay review in 2007**. We have equality impact assessed key HR policies and practices with guidance from our Staff Equality Reference Group. There is a specific diversity section in the current Workforce plan and there will be specific actions in the refreshed Workforce plan around our workforce profile and areas of improvement. The Staff Equality Reference group has been engaged throughout the service transformation process influencing several improvements. We have refreshed training and development programmes for councillors and officers. However, a cross-council review is underway as a workforce development priority, as we are aware that we need to do better in this area. Another area for improvement is embedding equality and diversity in staff performance and development reviews.

About York

Covering an area of 105 square miles, the city of **York** comprises an urban area surrounded by many small rural and semi-rural settlements. York is more economically prosperous than surrounding areas and classed as a sub-regional centre. There are high levels of economic activity and skills with strong representation in higher end occupations. The Centre for Cities 2011 Outlook Report ranks York second amongst the 10 top cities with the fastest growing population between 1999 and 2009.

Whilst York is seen as a relatively affluent city, geographical and non geographical pockets of deprivation do exist. Therefore, of the 22 council wards, 5 contain 8 areas that are amongst the 20 per cent most deprived in England¹. Whilst the average household income is £30,000, 43 per cent of households earn less than £20,000 per annum². 8% of people aged 16-64 have no formal qualification. Although this is better than the national average, agencies in the city are focussed on improving the skills of this group to help individuals increase access to the changing jobs market.

The ONS population projections **for 2009** (based on the 2001 census) were published in May 2011. They show that between 2006 and 2009:

- York's population has risen by 10% (17,500 people) between 2001 and 2009. This is over double the national average (4.8%) and just under double the regional average (5.7%)
- York's population grew by 2% (3900 people) between 2008 and 2009 which is the biggest rise between 2001 and 2009. This is just over 3 times the % rise in the national population at 0.67%.
- White British population has fallen 6.5 percentage points from 95.1% to 88.6% (3,720 people) – this is a similar fall to regional and national levels
- Asian or Asian British population has risen 2.6 percentage points from 0.8% to 3.4% (5309 people)
- Black or Black British population has risen 1 percentage points from 0.2% to 1.2% (5309 people)
- Chinese population has risen 0.8 percentage points from 0.6% to 1.4% (1695 people)
- Mixed population has risen 0.7 percentage points from 0.6% to 1.3% (1497 people)
- The 0-15 population proportion has decrease by 2.1 percentage points where as the 16-24 has increased by 3 percentage points. This is a proportion of the overall population.

¹ Indices of Deprivation 2010

² York Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007

Our approach to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

Since York became a unitary authority in 1996, councillors and officers have focused on eradicating socioeconomic inequality and ensuring that life in the city is of the highest quality possible for the residents, including temporary residents, such as the student population. As a result, we have been nationally recognised for our work in a number of areas where inequality in outcomes previously existed. One example is the Bell Farm housing estate agreement where residents were supported to lead the regeneration of a previously run down area of social housing. The last Comprehensive Area Assessment also awarded the Council a Green Flag for its work in engaging with disabled children and their families when planning and delivering services they need and use.

After a two year period of consultation and development, the most recent corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy (FIS) and Single Equality Scheme (SES) were approved by the previous administration in December 2009. An Easy Read version was produced, as requested by the Executive and circulated within the council and to the community through the Social Inclusion Working Group (now called the [Equality Advisory Group](#)) in March 2010.

Our senior councillors and managers recognise that “equality equals quality” in life outcomes, as defined in the national [Equality Review \(2007\)](#).³ The 2009-12 [Corporate Fairness and Inclusion Strategy](#) (FIS) and Single Equality Scheme outline the way in which we work to continue to achieve equality, fairness and inclusion in outcomes. Outcome-focused objectives that aim to lessen or stop socioeconomic inequalities can be found in Directorate Equality Schemes (ref 11). To ensure a sustainable and consistent approach to addressing the equality agenda across all our services, our corporate and directorate schemes reflect the EFLG performance areas.

We have invested extensively in engaging with people with protected characteristics in the work we do, and in most cases before we do it. Our engagement work with equality communities of interest takes place mainly, but not singularly, through the [Equality Advisory Group](#) (EAG) (ref 15c) and the Staff Equality Reference Group (SERG) (ref 19c).

The EAG (previously known as Social Inclusion Working Group-SIWG) was set up in 2006, comprising the Executive portfolio holder for Inclusion, councillors from the key political groups and representatives of key equality community groups. It was reviewed in 2010 and new ways of working were considered and approved by the Group in July 2010.

The EAG advises the Cabinet on equality in council policy and practice. It works in as inclusive a way as possible and has been instrumental in helping council officers assess the impact of budget decisions during the two most

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<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100807034701/http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/>

recent council budget rounds. The EAG works closely with the Inclusive York Forum which operates at the city level.

The Inclusive York Forum is part of Without Walls (WoW), our Local Strategic Partnership and its remit is to discuss and debate equality, cohesion and inclusion issues and bring them to the attention of the LSP. The Forum also oversees the delivery of equality targets and objectives allocated to the Inclusive York delivery partnership under the Local Area Agreement.

Our improvement journey

Following extensive work to produce this self assessment report, as well as undertaking two mock peer reviews by regional peers, we are **confident that we are an Achieving council and plan to be Excellent in approximately 18 months time from this Peer challenge**. The key findings of our self assessment are below.

Knowing our community and equality mapping

Community and customer insight

We collect and analyse responses to key opinion and satisfaction surveys from staff and customer groups with protected characteristics. These include the last Place Survey, the budget consultation 2010-2011, the housing status survey, the tenants' satisfaction survey and the two recent staff surveys. The results have been used to shape strategic plans, such as the One City Plan (community cohesion plan) and the Workforce Plan.

The Council (through the Equality Advisory Group) also periodically commissions equality community groups to research and report on the experiences and aspirations of their members and the communities they represent. In the recent past, [reports](#) were received from the York Older People's Assembly, the Interfaith Forum and the York Racial Equality Network (ref 22).

A number of different techniques are used to gather data about residents and to understand the needs of the population and different groups. The council has recently signed up to a partnership with **Experian** to use their Mosaic Public Sector customer profiling licence. Mosaic Public Sector provides a detailed and accurate understanding of households in the city, including their demographics, lifestyles and behaviours. Mosaic will help services understand the needs of different groups of customers and local areas to optimise the allocation of resources, develop personalised communication that is relevant to the audience, as well as anticipate and plan future resource requirements.

A joint **Local Information System (LIS)** is currently being developed in conjunction with North Yorkshire County Council to enable the integration, sharing and dissemination of spatial and statistical information. The system, called **STREAM**, uses both national and local authority area data to bring together service information (e.g. GPs, schools), statistics (e.g. house prices, unemployment) and documents (e.g. regeneration strategies) to help users

answer a range of questions. STREAM holds national and local equalities data which can be used to produce equalities profiles alongside other information in STREAM as well as with data held by different services.

A Population and Ethnicity Profile is currently being created for the city and will be used to help focus work on the community cohesion action plan and will also be made available to all services for strategic planning and service provision.

These different sources will be used by our Business Intelligence Hub to inform priorities for the city, customise service delivery and address issues through understanding the city and the changes it faces now and in the future.

In order to help assess the changing nature of specific local communities six pilot **Ward Profiles** are being developed as part of the new Neighbourhood Management Pilot. The Ward Profiles are based on a whole range of statistics related to population, deprivation, health, crime, housing, economic, and education. Updated annually, the ward profiles will be used to identify inequality in geographical localities so that the necessary action is taken by the council and its partners. Ward Profiles will be supported by local intelligence from elected members and partners delivering services. They were last refreshed during the summer 2010 and the information was used to put in place the residents' ambition for their ward. Equality community groups were consulted during the process and their views were included in the findings. As a result, some ward partnership boards have highlighted action to deal with the needs of older residents as a priority, particularly in relation to transport, access to services and isolation. Others have prioritised the needs of young people covering a raft of challenges such as, child poverty, teenage pregnancy, the need to promote good intergenerational relationships and educational attainment.

Using the evidence

Equality profiling forms have been developed with and approved by the council Equality Advisory Group and the Staff Equality Reference Group. As a result during the 2009 budget consultation almost 100% of respondents completed and returned the equality profiling questionnaire. This was repeated when we recently profiled our housing tenants and also during the recent Staff Wellbeing survey.

The council's Budget 2010 consultation in October 2010 generated 12,694 responses. Upward 11, 000 equality profiling forms were returned with the responses allowing for significant analysis about the priorities of respondents analysed in each key equality characteristics. The analysis was considered by the Executive and informed the full council decision related to the 2010-2011 budget.

In terms of understanding the attitudes and experiences of different groups of staff, the results from the council's last Staff Survey in 2009 were analysed in each of the protected characteristics. The results helped put in place the Workforce Development action plan 2009-12 (ref 29).

The results of the Place Survey (2008-2009) showed that older people (one of the largest groups of residents with protected characteristics in our city) do not have as high a satisfaction rate with life in the city as other groups. Working with our partners we have now produced a comprehensive profile of older people in the city and are using it to finalise key action to be included in our Older People Plan and Community Cohesion plan (known as the One City Plan).

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Agreeing priorities in partnership

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) 'Without Walls' (WoW) sets out and ensures the delivery of a long-term vision for York, and covers the issues that affect people's lives.

The partnership developed and launched the York's first Community Strategy, in July 2004. The Strategy took account of residents' views, collected during the 'Festival of Ideas' which ran throughout 2003.

The Strategy was subsequently updated and re-launched as a [Sustainable Community Strategy](#) (ref 5a) along with York's first [Local Area Agreement \(LAA\)](#) (ref 7) in 2008, based on knowledge and intelligence that was summarised in the ['Story of Place'](#) (ref 1h).

Without Walls comprises an overarching Advisory Forum, which sits above a network of delivery partnerships covering the areas of Community Safety; Culture; Economy; Environment; Health; Inclusion; Learning. Most of the delivery partnerships have voice and influence forums. The Inclusive York delivery partnership champions the causes of the most marginalised and excluded residents in the city. Representatives of groups who advocate for people with protected characteristics attend Inclusive York Forum bi-monthly meetings – establishing a clear two-way communication channel between residents and the strategic decision making structures in the city. Another key function of the Inclusive York Forum is to champion issues of inclusiveness across the LAA delivery themes and to act as the consultative body regarding social inclusion for Without Walls.

The Without Walls Executive Delivery Board was set up to oversee delivery of the **Local Area Agreement (LAA)**. The Board receives regular reports from each of the delivery partnerships about progress with national and local performance indicators and targets that fall within their area of responsibility. Some of the LAA targets were selected because of their focus on bridging the gap between the most and least deprived. All Partners also ensured that their contribution to the LAA was incorporated into corporate or organisational strategies. Inclusive York Forum is the body that co-ordinates and monitors equality and inclusion outcomes in the city such as child poverty, fuel poverty and affordable housing.

Key areas of work upon which the Inclusive York Forum will concentrate in 2011-12 include strengthening community cohesion, reducing poverty and disadvantage and developing a thriving and sustainable voluntary sector. Inclusive York is in the process of refreshing the city's community cohesion plan (One City Strategy). The plan outlines York partners' approach to making sure that the city continues to be fair, inclusive and cohesive. The aim is to:

- Create opportunities for all residents in York to participate in developing the way services are delivered and to be supported to deliver their own solutions;
- Make sure that the right services are delivered for all and that all residents are treated fairly having equal opportunities to participate and thrive;
- Make sure that there are good community relations across the city.

The SCS is now undergoing a further refresh, to ensure that we are continuing to meet the changing needs and aspirations of the citizens of York. In the future, it will be called the 'Strategy for York' and will incorporate the City Action Plan that will focus on the delivery of agreed priorities from 2011 to 2015. The Plan will have three main themes:

- Enabling prosperity and enterprise;
- Creating a strong foundation for growth;
- Building thriving communities.

The refreshed Strategy for York will be agreed along with the City Action Plan when the Partnership next meets on 27 June. Alongside these documents, Partners will approve the One City Community Cohesion Strategy. Partners will also formalise monitoring arrangements for the One City Action plan, which is currently being developed.

We will monitor activity against the action plan and encourage those organisations who are achieving to share good practice with others. The action plan, once populated will provide us with a clear indication of the work that is already taking place to address the priorities within the One City Strategy. From this we can identify gaps and work with partners to fill these gaps.

Following approval of the Strategy for York and City Action Plan in June 2011, Without Walls Partnership structures and governance arrangements will be revised in order to ensure focus against the three key theme areas. In the future, the Partnership Board will be co-chaired by the Leader of the Council and independent chairperson, Sir Ron Cooke. There will also be the introduction of a Chief Executive's Group, whose role will be to identify and articulate local service need, oversee public expenditure reductions and to explore future service delivery options.

Managing our performance

Performance against Without Walls (WoW)/ LAA priorities and council equality priorities is monitored and reported quarterly, both to councilors as well as the WoW Executive Board and each of its thematic executive boards. The reports include progress with equality and inclusion targets and are published on the WoW and council internet sites.

Until mid 2010, WoW and council performance management reporting was based on the set of national performance indicators most of which were measuring results with reducing inequalities and supporting community cohesion.

From vision to outcomes

Our vision related to equality and inclusion in its policies and practices is in the Inclusive City priority of the [Corporate Strategy 2009-12](#). The [corporate equality commitment statement](#) re-inforces the vision and explains how we shall realise it.

Our overall objective is working within our means to narrow any socio-economic gaps between people who face disadvantage and those who do not; focusing on those with multiple disadvantage first where evidence suggests that there is a need to do so.

The fundamental principles of **how** the council approaches equality and diversity are in corporate [Equality Strategy and Single Equality Scheme](#) 2009-2012, which has also been produced in an [easy read](#) version.

Specific equality priorities and objectives are outlined in a number of strategic and operational documents - ranging from our Corporate Plan to directorate single equality schemes and thematic plans, such as the Children's Plan and the Housing Plan.

Leadership and organisational commitment

The Executive (since May 2011 referred to as the Cabinet) has ultimate responsibility for monitoring progress with the corporate Single Equality Scheme led by the Executive portfolio holder for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion.

In addition, the Equalities Leadership Group (ELG) (ref 12a) meets on a monthly basis to consider progress with equality and diversity issues raised by community representatives as well as progress with the current corporate Single Equality Scheme (SES). The ELG is chaired by the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods and is mandated by the Council Management Team to lead on equality and inclusion issues within the organisation. It comprises Assistant Directors from every directorate as well as Heads of Service, the Chair of the Staff Equality Reference Group and the Executive Portfolio holder (now known as the Cabinet member) for Leisure Culture and Social inclusion

Our Council Management Team also receives regular reports, either about the whole Scheme or aspects of the Scheme (such as, updates on the progress with the customer strategy or with our work relating to customer and staff insight).

Every time it meets, the Equality Advisory Group considers aspects of the scheme, such as progress with making our communication inclusive, developing an equality profiling form that is accessible and user-friendly, and assessing progress with Equality Impact Assessments, for example the design of the new council HQ and access to transport services.

The Audit and Governance Committee receives reports every quarter about how risks associated with the scheme are managed. Progress with the scheme is scrutinized by the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny committee at least once a year.

Executive/Cabinet members consider EqIA findings and increasingly request additional information regarding equalities impacts of proposed decisions – for example the decision in respect of the reablement service taken in December 2010 by the Executive

Equality Impact Assessments

The council's [business & service planning guidance](#) includes a specific section on equalities, which requires services to list all the equality-related improvements they intend to make over the next 1-3 years. These include actions that aim to:

- achieve improvement in outcomes for residents facing or likely to face disadvantage because of protected characteristics;
- support community cohesion by promoting equality and diversity in general;
- promote and support inclusive employment practices aiming to proactively meet the needs of employees with protected characteristics, such as assistive technologies, flexible working, home-working and so on.

Many of these improvements are put in place because of the findings of **Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)**, but directorates also include equalities issues identified through other work (i.e. strategy development, consultation with customers or performance monitoring). The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process is outlined in the corporate Equality System and Standards (ref 6b). The process is now well established and embedded across all directorates with a forward plan in place covering all appropriate service areas. We publish a summary of action that we intend to take as result of the EIA process each year on our [website](#).

Our Business Change and Performance team has also integrated the equality impact assessment form into the Service Review template to ensure that any adverse impact from proposed changes is considered from the very beginning of a review. Members of the team receive training and briefings about local, regional and national equality priorities.

Actions arising from EqlAs are fed into directorate and service plans as appropriate. The plans, as well as directorate single equality schemes, are regularly monitored by Directorate Management Teams (item 2.6 in the self assessment matrix provides further details).

In 2009, we were amongst the first councils across Yorkshire and the Humber that undertook equality impact assessments of the Medium and Long-Term Financial Strategy and 2010 budget before council set it. This was done with direct input from equality community groups associated with the council's Equality Advisory Group (EAG). We have used feedback from the group to improve this year's budget process.

Following the introduction of the Equality Act in October 2010 and the Public Sector Duty in April 2011, we have now also refreshed our [EIA form](#) accordingly.

Overview and scrutiny

The Council has five themed scrutiny committees and an overarching Scrutiny Management Committee. Scrutiny Committees receive performance information relating to their areas and undertake reviews. Progress with the corporate Single Equality scheme is monitored by the council's [Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#). Performance information considered by the other Scrutiny Committees does include information relating to equalities issues. For example the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee receives information about hate crime⁴ and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives information about vulnerable people supported into independent living.⁵

Reviews undertaken by scrutiny committees will consider equalities issues, for example, one of the terms of reference for the recent Taxi Licensing Review included the consideration of accessibility issues⁶. The Effective Organisation Committee also considered equalities monitoring as part of its review of the complaints function.⁷ The standard report template used for reports both to scrutiny committees and reports from Scrutiny Committees to the Executive includes equalities implications.

Members can use a call in process to call the Executive to account where they feel that the impact of decisions on equality and cohesion may not have been fully taken into account.

Procurement and commissioning contribute to equality outcomes

Corporate procurement (now known as the Commercial Procurement Hub) historically focused on ensuring compliance with the council financial

⁴ <http://modgov.york.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=46340>

⁵ <http://modgov.york.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=47938>

⁶ <http://modgov.york.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=47857>

⁷ <http://modgov.york.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=46376>

regulations and European Union procurement legislation. In the past 12 months, the function has been reviewed and changed to ensure that it contributes to efficiency and increasingly equality outcomes.

Procurement and commissioning in services for vulnerable groups (such as those related to Supporting People), have been managed in a way that consistently contributes to equality outcomes.

Promoting participation in public and civic life

Our Equality Advisory Group, Ward Committee meetings, residents' associations, the Federation of council tenants associations, community centre committees and groups, and services that support engagement in public and civic life, such as the school governors' support service work towards ensuring that under-represented groups participate in civic and public life.

In October 2010, we held an event to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to consider applying to become an elected member. The "Me? A Councillor?" (ref 14b) event was widely publicised and well attended. During the sessions, information was provided on how to stand for election, the role and duties of a councillor, and the training that would be available to help elected members to carry out their duties. As a result the current councillor body includes an increased number of disabled and young people.

The school governor liaison service looks closely at the composition of school governors and actively recruits to ensure that BAME representation is broadly in line with the BAME numbers on the school role. The service has become more rigorous in asking governors for various information such as age, gender and ethnicity and so on. This information is reported annually to a national benchmarking exercise which seeks to provide a useful comparison between governor services across England. Data shows that the number of BME school governors has increased from 5 to 51, and from 0.5% to 5.4% over the last three years.

In October 2009, thirty-two young people from secondary schools, youth groups and colleges across the city came together for the very first meeting of the York Youth Council. The group works towards improving the city for all young people. Its membership is diverse, as it has young people who hold different life experiences, such as those with disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. The Youth Council have made progress in many areas. By taking part in wide range of consultations, it has been instrumental in making sure that young people are heard. The young people have been involved in consultations related to the neighbourhood action plans, One City Strategy, climate change action plan, child poverty strategy, neighbourhood policing and 0-19 health provision.

The council has also been involved in a pathfinder programme, known as Take Part York, which aims to support young people across the city to take a more active role in local democracy. We have produced a resource pack for primary and secondary school children, which provide the young people with the opportunity to influence local decision making.

Reporting and dealing with Hate Crime

There has been no statistically significant increase or decrease of the level of Hate Crime in York over recent years. The last increase occurred between 2007/08 and 2008/09 but this can be put down to a change in recording standards and classification.

Nevertheless, our Neighbourhood Management Unit was supported by Local Government Yorkshire and Humber to organise free Community Conversations training for staff within the council and partner organisations. The courses involve identifying the different communities within York, discovering the facts behind rumours that fuel poor community relations, practicing ways of talking to people who are really concerned about local issues, looking at practical ways of making everyone feel welcome and safe in York, and discussing how to share learning with others. The training is delivered by an independent worker with over 10 years' experience of handling similar issues around the country.

We also provide core funding to the York Racial Equality Network (YREN), which is a local organisation working to promote awareness of black and minority ethnic issues in York and North Yorkshire. They also provide independent, impartial information and support to individuals who are experiencing racial harassment, victimisation, discrimination or isolation. YREN has been instrumental in the refresh of hate crime policy and practice across the whole Local Strategic Partnership.

Community engagement and satisfaction

We are confident that we have excellent consultation and engagement practice but recognise that this needs to be co-ordinated better across the council. We are refreshing our current community engagement policy and practice to ensure that this happens.

The Place Survey results showed that amongst 352 councils York scored in the top quartile and in within that quartile came second for 'citizen involvement'.

Engaging communities of place

Engagement with communities of place happens in various ways and at regular intervals, such as through ward committee meetings, annual Tenants Federation open days, residents' associations cluster group action planning meetings, and through Streets Ahead (the publication for council tenants) and Your Ward resident newsletters.

York has pioneered residents' engagement, particularly related to social housing areas. We were amongst the first councils to set up estate agreements whereby residents agree the level of services they receive with public and third sector service providers. These include the [Bell Farm Agreement](#) which was renewed in 2007 and the [Foxwood Agreement](#).

In June 2011, we started to develop “Ward Agreements” in the Micklegate, Dringhouses and Woodthorpe wards. They are based on the Bell Farm model (which will be refreshed) and we intend to test the model in these wards before we roll it out the other wards later this year and then across the city. We have a citizens’ panel known as ‘Talkabout’. This is made up of residents randomly selected from the electoral register to give their views on a range of issues, for example, crime and public safety, the Local Transport Plan (LTP), homelessness, leisure centres. In 2009, we launched ‘Backchat’, an online citizens’ panel designed specifically with young people in mind. During winter 2010, we established our presence on Twitter and currently we have 1,448 followers.

Since forming in January 2010, the council’s engagement team has focused on establishing relationships and supporting residents, planning and delivering workshops and training both in house and externally to residents, and attending cross cutting working groups. They have also carried out city wide consultation on the One City strategy and other ward based consultations.

Engaging communities of interest in the LSP

The Inclusive York Forum champions the causes of the most marginalized and excluded residents in the City. Excluded individuals (and their representatives) attend bi-monthly Inclusive York Board meetings – establishing a clear two-way communication channel between residents and the strategic decision making structures in the City. Another key function of the Inclusive York Forum is to oversee the work of the other Without Walls thematic partnerships and quality assess their performance in terms of engagement and inclusivity. Although there is a set membership, meetings are often opened-up to participation from a wider range of community and voluntary organizations, enabling them to express their thoughts or opinions regarding key City-wide issues or developments.

York is increasingly recognised as a diverse city with many languages spoken by its residents and visitors. We provide core funding to the York Racial Equality Network (YREN), which is a local group working to promote awareness of the needs of black and minority ethnic people in the York area. They have worked closely with us during 2010-2011 to develop the One City Strategy. YREN also convene quarterly BME Forums, which allows us to consult directly with a wide cross-section of the BME community around emergent council policies, such as the Child Poverty Strategy.

York Inter-Faith Group is comprised of a wide cross section of faith communities in the city. The Interfaith Group concentrates on the promotion of harmonious relationships between different faiths and cultures in the city. This is encapsulated by the Interfaith Week held on an annual basis year in October. The Inter-Faith Group has also received funding from the EAG to produce a city-wide faith status report.

York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) is a well established group within the city and has strong links to the council and is consulted on a wide range of service issues. In 2009, YOPA was supported by EAG to research their member's needs for public services and the resulting report was fed in the Older People's Review.

We have also established a "Show me I matter!" Group, where young people who are or have been in care meet with some of our councillors on a monthly basis. They discuss how things can be made better for Children and Young People who are Looked After.

Engaging communities of interest in council business

Engagement with key equality community groups happens mainly but not exclusively through our Equality Advisory Group. It advises the Cabinet on equality and diversity in council policies and practices. It promotes and supports communities of interest to engage in the development and scrutiny of council policies and services through the following means:

- 'Help Us to get it Right' days where members of equality community groups and council officers work together to assess the impact of proposed changes to council policy service planning and delivery;
- A day dedicated to assessing the impact of proposals in the council budget ;
- Group development days;
- An annual meeting with the Chief Executive and Directors.

We support our equality community groups to grow, thrive and promote equality diversity and inclusion in our city. The support comes in different formats ranging from grants to free use of facilities and services (such as internet presence) and officer time. Examples of activity include:

- York Racial Equality Network open forums (ref 39)
- [York Interfaith Week](#)
- [The Holocaust Memorial Day](#)
- The Over 50's Festival
- [The Gay Pride picnic](#)
- [York Youth Festival](#)
- [York International Women's week](#)
- The [All About Us film](#) produced by the gypsy and traveller community

EAG and the equality community groups will become actively engaged in the establishment of the **York Fairness Commission**. The Commission will be independently chaired and will focus on engaging with residents to understand their priorities for the services they want and need. The York Fairness Commission will also gain their views on how services should be

paid for and delivered. The work of the York Fairness Commission will lead to a two year council budget being proposed in May 2012. This for the first time will be a people's budget, informed by, and for the city's residents.

Satisfaction

The 2009 Place Survey showed that 87.4 per cent of York's inhabitants were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which was in the top quartile score nationally. It also showed that

- York ranked 2nd amongst 352 council areas in terms of satisfaction with citizen involvement;
- It ranked 12th for 'citizens aged 65 and over who are satisfied with both home and neighbourhood' (91.9%);
- York was in the top quartile for those believing that other people were treated with respect within their locality. 79.4 per cent of respondents felt that their area was one in which people from different backgrounds got on well together.

Responsive services and customer care

Our customer strategy

Our new customer strategy focuses on making it easy for customers and communities to do things for themselves. We aim to work with partners to join up services and solutions in order to provide one customer service organisation within the city. We also intend to assess our processes and services in order to make sure that they are inclusive and deliver on all our diverse customers' needs. Our newly established Business Intelligence Hub will work with partners to hold a holistic view of our customers and create a central, safe data and management information hub.

York Customer Centre offers a service that is accessible to people with different needs and provides access to services and information in the right way to our customers

Positive progress against equality outcomes

The vast majority of recent peer reviews and inspections show that in York we consistently deliver above average outcomes, especially in the case of vulnerable groups, such as children and young people and Black and Minority Ethnic groups, in particular the Gypsy and traveller families.

York has a rapidly changing population, which is evidenced in a number of our schools where 3.3% of children do not have English as a first language. In particular, a growing number of migrant workers children are entering both primary and secondary education. Our Traveller and Ethnic Minority Support Service ensures that all our schools have written guidance on addressing cohesion and equality issues.

Our partnership work with North Yorkshire Police and the NHS North Yorkshire and York led to the production of a gypsy and traveller protocol and action plan that aims to address the current concerns with the gypsy and traveller community. The comprehensive action plan contains five strands of work covering all aspects of Traveller engagement with the council and other partners, including Traveller health, wellbeing, education, training and housing issues. The plan is monitored by a Steering Group which meets on a quarterly basis, and has input from a wide cross-section of agencies (Council Traveller Support Staff, the Police, and NHS North Yorkshire and York). There is also input from the voluntary sector, as the York Traveller's Trust, which represents the voice of the Traveller community has membership on the Steering Group. In addition, a consultation exercise with the gypsy and traveller community has resulted in the production of a newsletter for this community group.

Our adult social services team has led and co-ordinated the multi-agency Carers Strategy Group for a number of years. It is a partnership of health, social care, and third sector organisations; and carers who represent the three local carer led forums: York Carers Forum; CANDI – children and inclusion; and Young Carers Revolution. The group works towards making sure the best possible services and support are in place for all carers in the City. During National Carers Week in June each year a partnership of local organisations join together to organise events to raise awareness about the needs of unpaid carer in York, and provide events that carers can enjoy.

Communications

We have developed a policy and guidance document 'Making Connections - How to Make Communication Accessible and Inclusive' to ensure that all our communication is accessible and inclusive.

We are undertaking a review of our communications approach and intend to redesign our approach in order to encourage greater involvement from those communities who are marginalised and/or have protected characteristics. We intend to have a stronger emphasis on two-way communication between the council and residents. The newly formed Cabinet will also hold its meetings in accessible venues across the city, and intends to make improvements to the meetings, so that they are more welcoming for members of the public. The meetings will also be filmed for Youtube and we also intend to use new media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Satisfaction within the procurement process

The pre-qualification questionnaire for procurement practice is being tailored to encourage small businesses to submit responses to the council. Training has been undertaken to explain what information is required within a PQQ and what support is available to interested parties. The council is exploring e-tender systems which will enable key information to be maintained by suppliers which should remove the need for duplication each time a PQQ is issued. Anybody responsible for letting or managing a contract will be trained

by the Commercial Procurement Hub to ensure awareness of the new legislation and the application of it as part of ongoing activity once the contract has been awarded.

Procurement services in the council became aware that more could be done to develop the number of black minority ethnic (BME) suppliers and intends to hold discussions with the Community and Voluntary Sector to consider how to address this. This work is still in progress but should be completed by July 2012.

Modern diverse workforce

Our workforce strategy and plan

Our Workforce Strategy has six objectives - one being “**Having a modern, diverse workforce**”. The strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive plan containing specific actions. The Plan takes into account the nature of our workforce profile, our local labour market and barriers to employment faced by people from the equality strands.

Progress against the plan is reported on a six monthly basis to Corporate Management Team and subsequently the Effective Organisation Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Having a workforce that is representative of the local community enables us to meet customer needs over a broader range of issues and should provide the skills necessary to meet ever-changing demands and agendas. However, we acknowledge that the current workforce does not fully mirror the demographic make-up of the local population, being under-represented in terms of younger people, BAME and disabled people. Therefore our plan has specific actions to work with community groups to:

- understand why there are a low numbers of disabled people, BAME people and under 25s working for the council and
- to encourage and enable BAME, disabled and young people to work for us by showing them how they can find out about and apply for council jobs.

To that effect, we already have in place a programme of two-year apprenticeships, available to school leavers. Also, in conjunction with LGID, we have participated in the National Graduate Development Programme for local authorities. The latest intake completed their training in autumn 2010.

Other actions in the Workforce plan include assessing the impact of our current and proposed employment practices; delivering training programmes and opportunities that address equality issues; and promoting a workplace culture in which all staff are treated with dignity and respect.

In addition, we are involved in a programme of work experience for disabled people, to provide pathways into employment. This is (known as Work Prep) and is led by Yorkcraft within the ACE directorate.

Where it is lawful and appropriate we 'take positive action' to encourage people from disadvantaged groups to apply for jobs in areas where they are under-represented, for example applicants who declare that they are disabled are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum criteria.

Workforce profile

Workforce equalities data is analysed and reported on in the monthly HR Digest. It is produced for individual directorates and corporately. An overview of the workforce gender, ethnicity and disability profile is reported on monthly with more detailed analysis taking place on a six monthly and annual basis and we are preparing to publish our full workforce profile in accordance with the new equalities duty.

All of our staff equalities data was refreshed and updated in September 2010 and at that time we also captured data on equalities strands which was not previously held, such as religion and belief and sexual orientation, so we now have a complete and up to date workforce profile which we will be maintaining as a matter of course.

A new HR management information system is currently being implemented and has a powerful reporting facility. This will make workforces analysis considerably easier and will allow more regular and detailed information to be produced.

High satisfaction across all staff groups

Underpinning the council's equalities strategy, the council's established Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process is applied to all employment policies, procedures and guidance. During 2010 Human Resources have completed a number of EIAs, on new policies under development and existing policies, which have included Recruitment and Selection, Induction, Disciplinary, Attendance at Work, Harassment and Bullying and a suite of "New Ways of Working" policies. All of the EIAs were undertaken in consultation with the Staff Equality Reference Group (SERG) and actions identified as part of that process have or are currently being included in the policies.

Whilst the Council does not yet have the ability to monitor the outcomes of its employment processes, the HR service is developing a case management system which will capture data around all the stages of its processes and their outcomes. This data can then be mapped back to the individuals equality profiles and the processes checked for their outcomes.

We achieved Carer Friendly Chartermark accreditation in March 2011 by the Equalities Accreditation Service through a programme funded by the Department of Health - Yorkshire and Humber Improvement Partnership (Carers Innovation Fund). The chartermark is awarded to employers, who can demonstrate a plan and commitment to delivering support for carers in the workplace. Our action plan shows an approach to consider carers in all relevant employee policies and our Equalities Impact Assessment documents

provided guidance for managers to ensure none of the councils working practices discriminated against them. Under the council's current policies, carers can request flexible working if they care for a child or adult, can be paid up to five days dependant care leave per year to deal with any family emergencies or unexpected problems. They are also considered in the Comprehensive Equalities policy and have a Carers representative on the Staff Equalities Reference Group.

Equal Pay

We have made significant progress in reaching agreement with unions on the Equal Pay Review. The new arrangements are underpinned by a systematic approach to job evaluation, they have designed to ensure fair and equitable pay and grading across the council, and have been subjected to a comprehensive equality impact assessment. The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the new pay and grading structure has been completed and agreed by the trade unions, the equalities and legal departments.

Implementation was undertaken by way of a collective agreement with the trade unions. A Joint Pay Board is now in operation, which is empowered to maintain the shape of the new arrangements to deal with pay and grading issues covered by the collective agreement. This partnership approach has been a great success with very high levels of ownership of the decisions being made at the Board.

The new structure was implemented with the full agreement of the trade unions in December 2008, backdated to April 2008 across the council. An Equal Pay audit is planned for 2011, specialist software has been purchased to assist with this and work has already commenced on analysing allowances.

Councillors and staff understand the importance of equality and diversity in decision making

The workforce plan, which underpins the workforce strategy, has a specific diversity objective to develop the skills of staff to better understand diversity issues and this is integrated into the Effective Manager Programme and Leadership and Management Standards (LAMS), our behavioural competency framework, for managers to confirm managers' awareness of diversity implications and requirements in their job roles. Equalities is part of the Effective Manager Programme; modules include all the basics that a manager needs to know including how to carry out an effective EIA. The current spring programme of training for EIAs was oversubscribed.

We deliver a range of learning and development opportunities to support councillors and officers to deliver equality outcomes. Reports are made to the council's Equality Leadership Group (ELG) attended by senior officers across the council. For councillors, equalities training is made available as part of the induction process for new councillors, and seminars/training on topics of specific interest are delivered as required. We signed the Member

Development Charter in 2009, which commits to providing all members with a wide range of training and development opportunities.

We have a number of questions relating to bullying and harassment in our staff survey and results are analysed by service area, equality strand and the reported source of the behaviour. We have an established and robust prevention of bullying, harassment and discrimination policy and procedure and details of all bullying and harassment cases are held in HR. This area will also be covered by the case management system to be implemented shortly in HR.

The Workforce plan has a specific diversity objective to develop the skills of staff to better understand diversity issues and this is integrated into the Effective Manager Programme and LAMS standards for managers to confirm managers' awareness of diversity implications and requirements in their job roles.

We have in place an established individual performance appraisal process called Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs). The PDR process links directly to the behavioural competency framework, LAMS, which covers equality and diversity issues. There are recognised issues with the number of PDRs undertaken and there is a specific action in the workforce plan to address this.

In continuing to ensure staff receive the appropriate development opportunities, our target is to ensure that all staff have an annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) to set objectives for the coming year, linked to service plans, which in turn help deliver the higher level objectives and corporate priorities. In 2010 as part of the PDR process, we introduced mandatory objectives to focus all staff on improving customer service and ensuring fairness and inclusion.

Involvement and engagement

Staff are engaged and consulted on service transformation and improving equality and diversity in the workplace. The Staff Equality Reference Group (SERG) was set up in January 2009 and has been heavily involved in developing engagement methods for staff to engage positively in service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working through key HR and transformation EIAs since July 2009 to date.

The Group has its own terms of reference and staff engagement Work Plan, which is set on a 12-month basis and led by a Chair and a group of committed Strand Coordinators with support from a HR Advisor and the Corporate Equalities Manager. It holds quarterly engagement events with SERG members (who are Council employees with a particular interest in equality issues or who hold a 'protected characteristic'); to gather issues and concerns, examples of best practice and solutions to concerns raised or to discuss areas of development on topics discussed at each quarterly engagement event. The Chief Executive and members of the Equalities Leadership Group actively support the work of SERG by publicising and attending the Group's engagement events.

Over the next 12 months, SERG will be investigating the development of other engagement methods such as providing support and networking groups for people with protected characteristics, for example 'Women' and 'Carers' networking groups. The aim of creating networking groups is to support employees who have 'protected characteristics' through informal avenues in addition to existing engagement methods, such as the formal quarterly SERG engagement events with staff.

In October 2010, the Executive also endorsed the implementation of a suite of flexible working policies (known as Smart Working). The aim is provide greater flexibility for employees, particularly in relation to the time and location they can work in order to improve Work/Life balance opportunities. Agreement to flexible working requests are however subject to the requirements of individual jobs and services. The following policies have been developed and are planned to be rolled out middle of 2011: career breaks, part time working, self rostering, variation in hours, term time working, job share, revised flexitime policy, and compressed hours.