



Chesterfield Borough Council

WORKING TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY FOR ALL: Equalities Annual Report 2009/2010

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CONTENTS

Paragraph	Subject	Page Numbers
1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Equalities Achievements	3 - 9
3.0	Equalities Framework	9 - 10
4.0	Equalities Impact Assessments	10
5.0	Looking forward to 2010/11	11
6.0	Comments and Further Information	12

1.0 INTRODUCTION BY CLLR. MARK HIGGINBOTTOM, DEPUTY LEADER AND LEAD MEMBER FOR EQUALITIES

- 1.1 Welcome to Chesterfield Borough Council's Equalities Annual Report for 2009/10. Chesterfield Borough Council is committed to striving towards our aspiration for Chesterfield Borough to be a cohesive community with equality of access to services. We aim to develop an inclusive Borough where everybody feels valued and has equal access to all local services and employment opportunities. We want everyone to enjoy living, visiting, working and investing in Chesterfield Borough. We respect our diverse communities, recognising the valuable contributions that everyone makes to Chesterfield.
- 1.2 Our Equalities Annual Report highlights our achievements during 2009/10, including improvements arising from our Equalities Achieving Level Action Plan, along with a summary of all the Equality Impact Assessments we have undertaken during 2009/10. During 2009/10 we have been particularly concerned about inequalities in income and employment opportunities during the economic downturn. Regeneration and attracting new economic investment into Chesterfield Borough is a priority for the Council. We will also highlight what equality improvements we are planning to make during 2010/11.

2.0 EQUALITIES ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2009/10

- 2.1 2009/10 has been an extremely challenging year both for the Council and our Communities, particularly in terms of economic downturn. We are very proud of our achievements during the past year, which we believe have made a real difference to the quality of life of our residents, businesses and visitors. We would like to take this

opportunity to highlight some of our key Equalities achievements and outcomes during 2009/10.

2.2 Work For Yourself Programme and Apprenticeships Scheme

2.2.1 The work for Yourself programme was delivered in the areas covered by Chesterfield Borough and Bolsover District Councils during 2009/10 and funded by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. The programme assists local residents with limiting long-term health conditions/disabilities to start their own businesses. Support was client focused, recognising that personal, financial and other circumstances all play their part in individual achievement. The support available ranged from providing short, straightforward and accessible business information packs to expert and empathetic Business Advisers. All support was flexible to accommodate individual needs and allowed clients to progress at their own pace. During 2009/10 over 200 people contacted the Work for Yourself Programme and 119 clients went on to have one to one meetings with Business Advisers. By April 2010, 81 of the clients were continuing to progress their business ideas, 15 businesses had begun trading, 18 clients had obtained employment and 8 were undertaking further education and training.

2.2.2 One of the most exciting developments of 2009/10 has been the further development of the Council's award winning apprenticeships scheme. We recognise that one of the real problems facing our community is long-term unemployment and in particular, youth unemployment, a situation that has worsened on the back of the economic downturn. With our partners, principally Bolsover DC, we have taken proactive steps to improve outcomes for local people. 105 young people, either aged 16 – 24 at risk of becoming long-term unemployed or over 25 years of age unemployed and living in deprived communities, have been given the opportunity to start a fully supported apprenticeship placement in the public sector or community and voluntary sector. The scheme has been funded through the Government's Future Jobs Fund and CBC and Bolsover DC Working Neighbourhoods funding.

2.3 Equalities Advisory Group

2.3.1 We continue to engage with local community groups and individuals by offering a variety of high quality, accessible engagement activity. One of our key forums is the Equalities Advisory Group. During 2009/10 the Equalities Advisory Group has assisted the Council in developing policies and improving services including:

- Improving accessibility to existing play provision and providing advice on the development of new provision.

- Advising Planning Services on developing and engaging with the community on the Local Development Framework. This was particularly useful in informing Planning Services of the specific challenges faced by communities and how planning can help improve accessibility to services and outcomes - crime, community safety, health inequalities and educational attainment.
- Advising on the new access arrangements at the Healthy Living Centre.
- Advising Environmental Services on issues around Clinical waste collection and Community Toilet provision.
- Advising on the proposed new car parking arrangements at Rose Hill car park; including the location of parking bays reserved for families, disabled parking provision and the introduction of wide parking bays accessible from either side of the vehicle to assist wheelchair users.
- Contributing to the development of the Market Hall feasibility study which includes plans to improve accessibility to the Hall and make the Market Hall more attractive to the wider community.

2.4 Arts, Sport and Leisure

- 2.4.1 The BLISS project (Breaking Loneliness and Isolation through Socialisation and Sharing) has brought people with dementia from Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire and their carers to work together with artists to create memory boxes using a variety of techniques, including a range of photos, images and memorabilia. The project was started by the North Derbyshire branch of the Alzheimer's Society who asked the arts officers of Chesterfield Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council if they could devise a creative arts project for people with mild to moderate dementia. This was a very successful project with participants and carers enjoying the experience. The BLISS memory project run in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire has benefited, to date, 22 people with mild to moderate dementia through creative arts.
- 2.4.2 We have also worked in partnership with the Derbyshire FA and local football clubs to launch Chesterfield's first PAN Disability Football club (Teams comprised of individuals with differing impairments, playing together, regardless of the limitations in play), providing football coaching sessions at Queen's Park Sports Centre for young people with disabilities. The Chesterfield PAN Disability Football Club runs every Tuesday from 6.00pm-7.00pm. All sessions are open to players from 8 to 16 years of age. The sessions are designed for players to enjoy fun based football coaching adapted to the player's individual

needs and ability/disability, as well as providing the opportunity for the young people to participate against other PAN Disability Football Clubs. Sessions are led by FA qualified coaches who hold the relevant Emergency Aid and child protection qualifications.

- 2.4.3 The Healthy Living Centre at Staveley recently achieved the nationally recognised Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) Mark Accreditation, which is an industry standard awarded to fitness facilities that are inclusive of both disabled and non-disabled people alike. We also took part in Inclusive Fitness Week. The campaign aims to raise the awareness of inclusive fitness provision and get more disabled people taking part in local physical activity opportunities. People with a disability were able to access the centre free of charge at certain times and sample a range of activities. During 2009/10 the Centre received an extra 880 attendances by disabled people.
- 2.4.4 We continue to promote and work towards A Safe, Healthy and Active Community. In February 2010, we received the excellent news that Chesterfield now ranked second highest in the United Kingdom for the percentage increase in people taking part in sport and active recreation, as judged via the Department for Culture, Media and Sports' Active People Survey. Mass participation events such as Race for Life (over 2500 women raising money for Cancer Research) and Sport Relief (over 500 participants) have proved extremely successful in attracting large numbers of families, friends and work colleagues to take an interest in active recreation, and raise money for charity. During 2009/10 residents benefitted from 88,627 free swims as part of the national Swim for Life programme with 67,013 (75.6%) of these being younger people and 21,614 from the older age group.

2.5 Housing

- 2.5.1 Around 220 homes every year benefit from adaptations and improvements as a result of disabled facilities grants and investment by the Council in home repair assistance. A further 674 Council Homes were adapted for disability and other needs. This programme enables people to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible.
- 2.5.2 In March 2009, the Council approved the introduction of a boiler servicing scheme for economically vulnerable home owners. The initial pilot involved 120 households which had all heating appliances serviced of which 15 required disconnection or immediate repair to remedy dangerous condition. There has been an estimated £97.30 per

annum fuel saving per household and a reduction in CO2 output of 0.625 tons. The pilot is now being rolled out across the Borough.

2.5.3 After completing Housing needs studies for Black and Ethnic Minority communities, older people, younger people and those with complex needs, a comprehensive sub regional Housing Strategy for North Derbyshire and Bassetlaw has been launched. By increased co-operation with our partners North East Derbyshire DC, Bolsover DC and Bassetlaw DC, we aim to address the challenges and embrace the opportunities arising over the next few years and improve Housing standards across our region.

2.6 Equalities = Respect Event

2.6.1 Our 6th Community Celebration event “Equalities = Respect” took place at the Winding Wheel in November 2009. Hundreds of local people attended the event, which celebrated and promoted Chesterfield’s diverse community, with over 50 Community and Voluntary organisations taking exhibition space. Many of the stalls concentrated on helping local communities cope with the economic downturn and how to access the help and support available to both individuals and groups. The lively programme included performances from local Primary and Secondary Schools, Circus Skills workshops and Hawaiian Dancing.

2.7 Other Equalities Achievements

2.7.1 It would be impossible to list all of our equalities achievements and activities in this report, here is a short list of some of our other key achievements, programmes and activities delivering outcomes for local communities:

- During 2009/10, we provided £300k in grant funding to local Community and Voluntary organisations to ensure continued quality of provision at a time of unprecedented demand for the services of these organisations. Service level agreements were developed with three advice services, the Law Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre to ensure quality of provision in priority areas.
- At our two sports centres, in order to encourage more women to participate in sport and physical activities and to improve access to activities for people with specific cultural and religious beliefs we have developed women only swimming sessions, ladies activity mornings, and the successful Dance Fit Project. We also continue to support the Active Ability project jointly developed by Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire District Council. The Active Ability Project has helped disabled people to get involved in

sport and leisure activities. Activity sessions are now running on a weekly basis at each of the leisure centres in Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire. Activities include; Swimming, Football, Chair Based Exercise, Badminton, Tenpin Bowling, Boccia, Short Mat Bowls, Basketball, Table Tennis and Gym based activity.

- During 2009/10, we have developed and implemented an innovative programme of activities to improve Community Forums. The “Improve Yourself, Improve Your Neighbourhood” programme was funded via the East Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The aim of the programme is to make the Community Forums more inclusive, to enhance their role in developing community cohesion and to increase their capacity. Five different training modules have been delivered on 4 separate occasions during the period September through to December 2009. The training has focused on communication, community development, action planning and budgeting, and chairing and taking part in meetings. The modules were aimed at residents, staff and councillors from Local Authorities, and staff from Partner Agencies e.g. Police, PCT, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- We have worked with our local communities to find sustainable and innovative solutions to maintaining services and facilities. Swanwick Hall, a community hall that we own and manage was poorly utilised and non-Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. Through working with members of a local community group, we have avoided the Hall’s closure through agreeing to lease the building to MacIntyre, a national charity that provides learning support and care to adults with learning disabilities. The building will be improved and the community will have access to an improved facility and more involvement in the running of the Hall.
- We continue to improve accessibility at our venues. 80% of Council owned venues now meet DDA accessibility criteria compared to 76% in 2008/09. We also ensure that all meeting rooms used outside of Council premises are accessible to participants.
- During 2009/10 the Chesterfield and District Joint Crematorium Committee introduced a Civil Funeral Service for bereaved families with no particular religious affiliations. The service provides a qualified Civil Funeral Celebrant who visits the family of the deceased person and constructs a bespoke funeral service in consultation with relatives. The service is available to families throughout Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire for either burials or cremations. In contrast with other non-religious organisations, this service can incorporate prayers or hymns within the funeral service if that is the wish of the family or the

deceased person. Over 40 civil funerals have been carried since the service was launched in 2009.

- Advertising Benefits advice in Eastern European languages in their preferred supermarkets.
- Preparation of multi-lingual Benefits take-up posters on notice boards throughout the Borough.

3.0 EQUALITIES FRAMEWORK

3.1 During 2009/10 we have been working towards the “Achieving” level of the Local Government Equalities Framework (EF) published in April 2009. This framework is an equalities development and monitoring tool for all local authorities. It provides a systematic method for a local authority to monitor its performance on equalities.

3.2 Some of our key achievements towards our aim of being assessed at the “Achieving” level by December 2010 include:

- The development of a comprehensive equalities map to help inform decision making, service improvement and development. This map is available online for the public and community and voluntary groups to use.
- All Services have been looking at ways of finding out more about the people with whom they engage. One way has been to ask users to provide information about their gender, race, religion or belief, disabilities etc through surveys and questionnaires. This information is being used to help shape our service delivery.
- Guidance to employees around developing Lead Member and Cabinet reports has been strengthened and now includes a much more robust process for the incorporation of equalities considerations. The quality of reports has improved during 2009/10 with much greater consideration being given to equalities issues and improving outcomes for people in vulnerable groups.
- Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken for all new and updated policies, procedures and activities; again the quality of these assessments has improved during 2009/10 due in part to the delivery of an extensive employee training programme. Equalities training is now compulsory for all employees and elected members.
- Increased monitoring of equalities objectives has taken place within service areas including the development of service area annual equalities monitoring reports. Equalities objectives have firmly been embedded as part of our new ambitious performance management framework.

- We ensure that contractors, commissioned services and grant receivers regularly review the services provided on our behalf and access to services to ensure they continue to be accessible.
- Increased Community Engagement Activities across the Borough with a variety of accessible methods being employed including the Equalities Advisory Group meetings.
- Services have been targeting activities where possible at vulnerable groups. The Working Neighbourhoods Funding in particular has been targeted at communities most vulnerable to the economic downturn including young people and people with limiting long term health conditions and disabilities.
- We are in the final stages of completing our Workforce Strategy which includes equality implications and monitoring.
- Equalities Impact Assessments are carried out on all new policies, procedures and activities.

4.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

4.1 During 2009/10 the Council undertook 20 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's). These are listed below. The EIAs were published with the relevant reports to the Council's Cabinet.

- Private Sector Housing Act 2004 – Management Orders
- Transfer of Housing owned land to the rear of St. Augustines Church
- Changes to the Housing Tenancy Agreement
- North Derbyshire and Bassetlaw Housing Market Area Housing Strategy
- Appraisal of the door to door rent collection service
- Conversion of Community Rooms into Housing
- Pavements Security Services review and options appraisal
- Chesterfield Market Hall feasibility study
- Paid holiday entitlement for licensed market traders
- Pay on foot car parking – Rose Hill car park
- Future of Swanwick Memorial Hall
- Funding to Voluntary and Community organisations
- Customer Service Centre options
- Playbuilder Initiative
- Fees and charges for Sport and Recreation provision
- Fees and charges for Cemeteries
- Best Value Review – Value for Money
- Working Neighbourhoods Fund: Proposals for Future Commissioning & Extension of Programme
- Working Neighbourhoods Fund: 2010 Commissioning Round

4.0 LOOKING FORWARD TO 2010/11

- 4.1 Our new Corporate Plan 2010 - 2013 sets out an ambitious programme of outcomes, measures, targets and key projects to move us forward over the next three years. The Corporate Plan includes both externally and internally facing outcomes, many of which will be delivered in partnership. The measures and targets included in the Corporate Plan are realistic and demonstrate the Council's ambition to improve performance against a challenging medium term financial position.
- 4.2 One of our six overall aspirations for Chesterfield Borough is for "A Cohesive Community with Equality of access to services". We want to help to develop an inclusive Borough where everybody feels valued and has equal access to all local services and employment opportunities. We want to provide high quality public services which are accessible to all of our customers through a range of channels. We want to be recognised as an equalities leader in our local communities.
- 4.3 During 2010/11 we will be continuing to work towards the "Achieving" level of the Equalities Framework and hope to be externally assessed at that level by March 2011. We will be focusing our activities on the following framework requirements:
- Knowing our community and equality mapping
 - Leadership, Partnership and our commitment to equalities
 - Community Engagement
 - Responsive services and Customer care
 - Developing a modern and diverse workforce
- 4.4 During 2010/11 we will be developing several key strategies that impact and enhance our approach to Equalities. We aim to develop and deliver a "Tackling Health Inequalities" Plan to further enhance the work we have undertaken to reduce health inequalities across the Borough and ensure that residents have accessible opportunities to enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle. We will also be developing a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy which will include specific actions around improving access to sport and physical activities for target groups.
- 4.5 We also aim to increase our offer to younger people including the introduction of gym sessions for under 16's, sport and fitness classes for under 16's and a variety of activities for children and young people delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue, the Primary Care Trust and Chesterfield Community Safety Partnership.

5.0 FURTHER INFORMATION AND COMMENTS

- 5.1 If you have any comments on our Equalities Annual Report or would like to request further information or copies of any of the documents highlighted in the report please contact:

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