

Brentwood's Equality and Diversity Journey and Public Sector Equality Duty

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Introduction

Both as an employer and a provider of services, Brentwood Borough Council is committed to celebrating diversity and promoting equality of opportunity for all. The Council's Corporate Plan 2012-15 demonstrates our ongoing commitment to put customers at the heart of our work, embrace equality and diversity, and strengthen social inclusion across the borough.

This document provides an overview of what the Council has achieved over the past few years and is used to demonstrate our arrangements to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. It covers projects, activities and achievements across the Council's services and is grouped according to protected characteristics covered under the Equality Act 2010.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brings together for the first time all the legal requirements for the private, public and voluntary sectors, making existing equality laws simpler, more effective and easier to understand. The Public Sector Equality Duty became law in April 2011 and it is made up of a general equality duty, which is supported by specific duties.

Equality Duty

The general equality duty requires public authorities to have a 'due regard' to the following three aims when delivering services and making decisions:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation** and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

Specific duties are intended to help performance on the general equality duty. There are two requirements placed on public bodies:

- to **publish information** to demonstrate compliance with the general equality duty that covers employees and people affected by policies and practices on an annual basis
- publish **Equality Objectives**

Published information relates to protected characteristics, which have been extended under the Equality Act to cover:

- age
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race-this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief- this includes lack of belief
- sexual orientation

- marriage and civil partnership (only for the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)

In addition Brentwood Borough Council also looks at the impact of rural isolation and financial disadvantage within the borough when it comes to providing services.

Equality and Diversity arrangements at Brentwood Borough Council

Brentwood Borough Council anticipates meeting with the Equality Act 2010 by showing best practice to ensure equality of service delivery for all members of the community; and an inclusive, discrimination-free work environment for our staff.

Equality Impact Assessments

When services are changing their service delivery it is best practice to complete an Equality Impact Assessment, so that our services are constantly reviewed to ensure that they do not disadvantage any of the groups mentioned above who have protected characteristics, and identify any possible impacts if services are changed or withdrawn.

Brentwood Borough Council's arrangements:

Brentwood Borough Council has a lead officer for Equality and Diversity to progress in Equality and Diversity in the organisation.

Regular review and reinforcement of the effectiveness of our E&D duties through:

- o Equality Impact Assessments and reviews of services – on going
- o Corporate Plan and Service Plans
- o Provision of training, guidance and examples of good practice to staff
- o Updated Internet and Intranet pages for customers and staff
- o Routine monitoring and data analysis of customers
- o Consultation and engagement activities
- o Joint working with local community groups and partner organisations

Over the years we have implemented a number of policies, such as:

- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Race Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Safeguarding Policy

The equality schemes have been replaced in April 2012 with Equality Objectives under the new Public Sector Equality Duty.

Understanding who our customers are

Understanding who our customers are is crucial to Brentwood Borough Council to ensure that we offer responsive services that meet the needs and priorities of our residents.

The Council use nationally and locally collated data specific to Brentwood, such as:

- [Census 2001](#)
- [Essex Trends 2011](#)
- [Brentwood Area Profiles](#)
- [Neighbourhood Statistics from the Office for National Statistics](#)
- [Health Profile](#)
- [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)
- [Essex Insight](#)

Customer satisfaction

The Council has carried out a number of regular Residents' Surveys, sent to a random sample of residents, and followed by an analysis of the responses, subsequently used to influence local decision-making.

Carrying out the Place Survey was a statutory requirement for all local Councils until 2010/11. The questions enquired about all aspects of life, such as perceptions of crime and satisfaction with Brentwood as a place to live, the Borough's parks and open spaces, theatres and sports and leisure facilities. Demographic questions captured gender, age and ethnicity of residents.

Equality and Diversity

The Council's website has an Equality And Diversity page which set out the details of the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Monitoring of service users

When designing questions, services are encouraged to use a [corporate monitoring template](#), which includes questions covering all of the protected characteristics. These can be adjusted depending on the type and purpose of the questionnaire to ensure that only relevant data is collected.

Consultations

Most consultation exercises ask for optional E&D information and these are also included within feedback forms distributed after events to find out how we can further improve them.

Comment, Compliments and Complaints

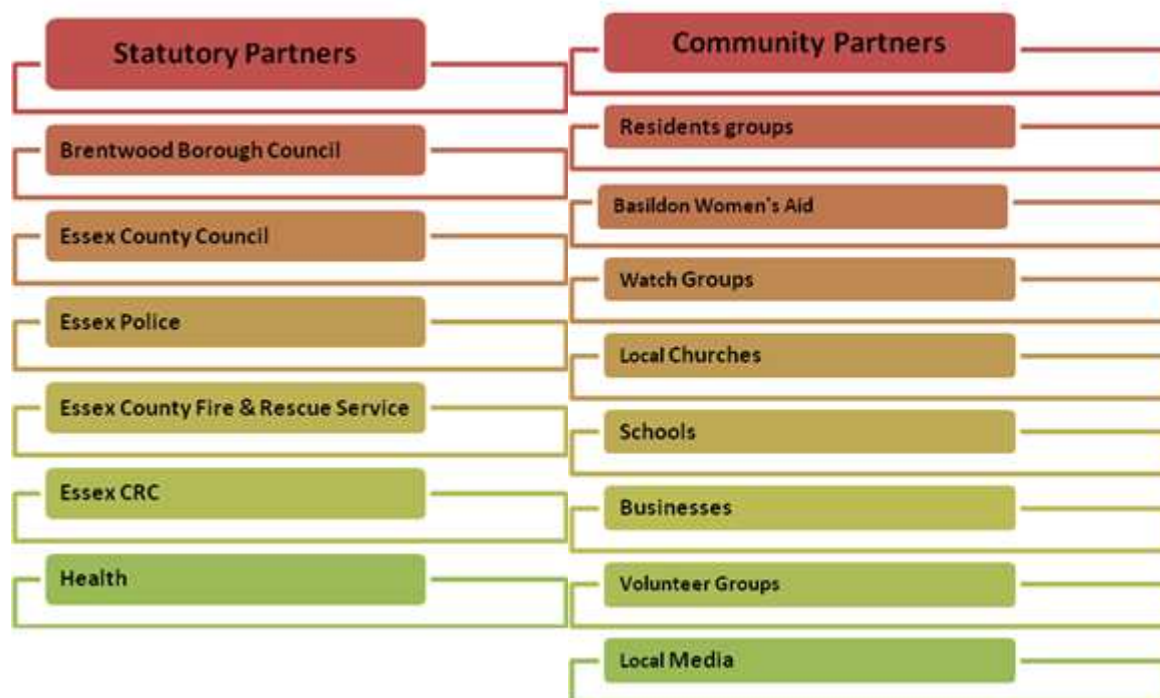
The Council uses a corporate [Comment, Compliments and Complaints](#) scheme to record customer feedback through an online [Feedback Form](#) and hard copies of this form are available from all receptions. The online forms ask for optional equality information relating to all protected characteristics, whilst hard copies ask for gender, age, disability and racial/cultural origin. However, many customers choose to either phone or email us with their feedback and this makes it difficult to ask for equality information. We receive some information via the follow up complaints form, but it is also optional at this stage.

Supporting Our Local Community

The Council aims to create an environment of mutual respect and promote equality of opportunity regardless of age, family responsibility, marital status, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion or belief. A range of our activities are outlined in the sections below.

Safer Brentwood Community Safety Partnership

Safer Brentwood Community Safety Partnership is the local statutory Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for Brentwood. The purpose of the Partnership is to provide a strategic and co-operative approach to addressing local crime & disorder between agencies and the communities within the Borough. The partnership is made up of both Statutory and Community organisations including:



To ensure that the partnership is proactive and well informed they carry out an annual Strategic Intelligence Assessment in order to review existing priorities and identify any new or emerging priorities that the partnership should focus on. For the current year their priorities are:

- Burglary & vehicle crime
- Domestic abuse
- Anti-Social Behaviour

Equality and Diversity for All

Mental Health

The Fitness In Mind™ model is initially targeted at those with lived experience of mental ill health – including those with pan disabilities or long-term illness who experience mental distress as a direct result of their disability. However, we all have mental health and the Fitness In Mind™ model includes a pathway to inclusive physical activities to boost confidence and self-esteem for anyone facing psychological barriers into daily activities including sports.

The model represents a holistic approach to health, fitness and wellbeing for the whole community. From the initial stages of contacting someone about joining a sports centre or sports club, to walking into the first session, to meeting new people, and encouraging exiting of the programme into existing pathways – each step will be supported by trained mental health peer support workers with lived experience. Participants will also be encouraged to support each other and enlarge the peer support network available in the local community. The Brentwood Leisure Centre have extended the program and is free to over 16's.

Mental Health Challenge

Last summer, all 37 Councillors at Brentwood Borough Council became Mental Health Champions as they signed up to undertake the national Mental Health Challenge. From February, the Council will be launching a referral service for residents who are having difficulty paying their council tax. This means that where appropriate they will be supported by key organisations, including MIND, Synergy, Job Centre Plus, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Department for Work and Pensions and Family Mosaic.

Also, the Council is working with other authorities across Essex to ensure that residents are getting the right housing support and has recently signed up to an Essex-wide housing brokerage scheme which means individuals who may have mental ill-health are given help to find independent or supported accommodation.

The Council is proud that our Councillors and staff are supporting Time To Talk Day on Thursday 5 February, which is a national campaign that aims to break the silence and stigma of mental health by encouraging people to spend 5 minutes that day having a conversation about mental health.

Brentwood Community Fund

Brentwood Community Fund was set up to give Brentwood's communities the opportunity to promote local initiatives to improve the quality of life of people living in the local area. Grants of up to £3,500 are available to individuals or community or voluntary organisations, residents/tenant associations etc. Groups do not need to be formally constituted.

Events

Brentwood Borough Council organises a number of events every year in Brentwood which involves voluntary and community organisations, local businesses and volunteers which celebrate Brentwood such as Strawberry Fair and Lighting Up Brentwood. Accessibility Training has been undertaken to ensure that all council organised events are as accessible as possible.

Committee Reports

All Council Committee reports include a section which officers need to complete in relation their report and the impact on Equality.

Fitness for Health

The scheme has been running for a number of years with The Brentwood Leisure Trust and number of GPs. The participants need a referral from their GP to attend a 12 week exercise programme monitored and evaluated by highly trained staff.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

This Phase 4 class runs in conjunction with Phase 3 at many local hospitals. Basildon, Queens and Broomfield Hospitals refer participants following heart attacks and bypass surgery to attend a 12 week monitored gym based programme at The Brentwood Leisure Centre.

Equality for Age

Opportunities for older residents

An Older People Day information event was organised by the Community Safety Partnership in October 2014 at the Hutton Community Centre in Hutton, which provided advice, support and signposted of local services with a number of stands from various partner agencies.

Keep Safe Scheme

Keep Safe is a free scheme to help vulnerable people feel safer when they are out in towns across Essex - and in Brentwood we are the first Borough to extend the scheme to elderly, learning difficulties and mental ill health. Venues will display the Keep Safe sticker and will offer the use of a telephone or will make a phone call for members of the scheme if they are in need. For example, if they lose their keys, telephone or wallet, or they are distressed in any way. Members join the scheme and are given both a card and key ring that have the phone numbers of their contacts to call for help. We provide details about the venues supporting the scheme, which include shops, supermarkets and public places that will be a safe destination to go to.

Door Chain Project

Safer Brentwood and Brentwood Borough Council, with the help of MenShed, a local volunteer group, launched a new project aimed at elderly and vulnerable residents. The partnership received funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner to install door chains into homes for **FREE**. The primary aim of the project is to make the most vulnerable residents of Brentwood feel safer in their homes.

The Door Chain Project has been very popular with residents. There have been 39 applications, of which there have been 28 door chains fitted to date. The feedback received has been extremely positive with most residents thanking us for making them feel safer in their homes.

Senior Safety Day This was the second event funded by Brentwood Borough Council and supported by the partnership. The aim is to provide crime and safety awareness to the elderly

and vulnerable residents of the borough including fraud, fire safety and burglary. It was well attended with over 70 guests including the Mayor and High Sherriff.

The Council was incredibly lucky to have to the support of 25 volunteers from St Martins 6th form who help throughout the day from making tea, performing and helping the guest enjoy the day.

Community Safety Questionnaire

Encouraging residents to have their say. Following initial analysis of the 150 received so far:

72% said that acquisitive crime was either not a very big problem or not a problem at all.

74% felt that anti-social behaviour was not a problem in the borough.

90% of the responses believe that domestic abuse is not an issue.

The Young at Heart Club

Young at Heart is a weekly over 60's social and exercise club which has been supported by Brentwood Borough Council. The project encourages health and wellbeing and promotes social inclusion and lesson feelings of isolation.

Brentwood Centre Tea Dances

The Brentwood Leisure Centre have successfully delivered a Tea dance for over 50's and will continue to run these events on monthly basis.

Brentwood Community Transport

Brentwood Borough Council in partnership with Essex County Council provide the majority of funding for Brentwood Community Transport which operates a number of schemes to assist Brentwood residents.

Health Trax Walking Scheme

Brentwood's Healthy walking scheme Health Trax is a **free** health walk programme that has been running for over 10 years. The scheme is run by volunteer walk leaders supported by Brentwood Borough Council and Macmillan Cancer Research and The Ramblers. Health Trax provides safe walking routes around local parks and countryside led by trained volunteers.

Older People's Activity Sessions

Brentwood Leisure Trust runs two levels of activities aimed at the over 65s. Level 1 aimed at over 65s walking with one stick who want to improve their strength, mobility, balance and be part of a group. Referral may be necessary from a GP. Level 2 aimed at over 65s who walk independently and can get up from the floor unaided. The class focuses on balance, strength, mobility and fun, a great way to meet new people.

Brentwood Borough Council has a number of Sheltered Housing schemes with on site wardens to assist the residents

Alarms for the elderly or the disabled

For the elderly and vulnerable, a 24 hour emergency contact line is available, enabling a person to live independently knowing that help is on hand. A Lifeline Alarm is available in the event of

an emergency, such as a fall or finding an intruder. The touch of a button or pull of a cord connects to an emergency communications centre where the call for help is immediately dealt with. The scheme is available to frail or disabled residents of any age who are living alone, or who are living with someone unable to summon help.

Affordable Warmth

Grants are available for vulnerable households, including the elderly and those on qualifying benefits, for the provision of thermal insulation and first time central heating. The scheme that we refer people to currently is supplied by Aran Services who offer free wall and loft insulation. Disabled facilities grants are available for home adaptations, for those who meet eligibility criteria. These schemes are highlighted on our web page www.brentwood.gov.uk/healthierbrentwood

Revenues and Benefits

Benefit services across the Country have promoted Council Tax Benefit to pension age cases, by sharing data with the pension service and targeting them to claim council tax and housing benefit where no claim existed. This has significantly increased the proportion of pension age benefit awards we are currently paying.

Brentwood Borough Council employs a visiting officer for vulnerable claimants, including pension age and vulnerable claimants such as the disabled. Pension Age benefit regulations allow for pensioners to report their changes in circumstances only once – to the Pension Service and they then liaise with us.

All staff have been given training on identifying people who may become likely to be a victim of loan sharks.

A food-bank has been established in Brentwood and where the Revenues and Benefits department and the Housing department can identify if residents are in deep hardship and refer the customer on to this service.

Assisted Kerbside collections

Assisted collections for waste and recycling are currently being delivered to a total of 276 properties. This includes properties that receive help with their Residual Waste and that receive help with the collection of their recycling materials. Some residents receive assistance with both types of collections and some with either one or other. The criterion for these collections is that the residents are either elderly or disabled and are unable to move bins or materials to the boundary of their property unaided.

Opportunities for younger residents

Firebreak The partnership continues to support the project aimed at young people which is delivered by Essex County Fire & Rescue Services. Along with the Council the partnership have assisted in securing three courses this year which have been run from Ingatestone Fire Station for the first time this year.

Prison Me No Way Prison Me No Way is a project aimed at raising awareness amongst young people about the causes, consequences, impact and penalties of crime. It also encourages young people to stay safe, aspire and become good citizens.

With funding from the Council two schools benefited from the project. The Mayor attended the opening at Shenfield High School and the overall event was well received. The schools would like another 2 Prison Me No Way next year

Brentwood Youth Council is part of a number of youth councils across Essex who look at the priorities and issues for young people. They in turn feed into the Young Essex Assembly.

Brentwood Skate Park Association has been set up in conjunction with Brentwood Youth Council and Brentwood Borough Council to progress the re-development of the skate park in King George's Playing Fields

Youth Services Provision at the Hermit provides a number of activities such as live music on a Friday night, Endeavour Club for those with special needs and Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.

Brentwood Art Trail The art trail in 2015 will involve a schools exhibition for both primary and secondary schools

A number of free **Family Fun Days** will be offered to residents across the borough during the school holidays, to encourage use of outside space in Brentwood, give families something to do and sign post families to groups and clubs within Brentwood.

Equality for Disability

Meeting with the requirements the Equality Duty means that some people may be treated more favourably, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. The Equality Duty recognises that needs of disabled people may be different from those of non-disabled people; and the Council takes that into account when making decisions about policies or services, e.g. by making reasonable adjustments.

Disabled Facility Grants

The Council provides Disabled Facility Grants. These are means-tested grants available for up to 100% of the cost of adapting one's home to meet the needs of a disabled occupant. The common types of works undertaken include ramps, level access showers, stairlifts etc.

Accessibility

The Council's website has been designed to be accessible and has a number of facilities that make it easier to use, such as: changing the text size and display, readspeaker and access keys. If requested, large print version can be supplied for any documents and event

Brentwood Access Group

The Council voted to list the blue badge holders car park as an Asset of Community Value when the Access Group nominated it for listing.

Wheelchair focused sports

Brentwood Leisure Centre are in the process of purchasing 10 basketball wheelchairs and 10 dance wheelchair, to start wheelchair dance project along with working with wheelchair basketball groups.

The chairs will be available for anyone to use with our 'Do it in a chair' promotion. People can just use the chairs to partake in their regular exercise programme, to help with upper body strength.

Recoil Trampoline Club

Brentwood Borough Council has worked closely with Brentwood Recoil Trampoline Club to assist them in getting new facilities at Keys Hall. The club provides therapeutic trampolining with Occupational Therapists for all ages who have a disability.

Papworth Trust – co located at the Town Hall and run gardening schemes, handyman schemes for the elderly of those with special needs

Home Improvement Agency Draft Equality and Diversity Objectives

A home improvement agency has been established in partnership with Papworth Trust. The service assist elderly and/or disabled home owners to improve, repair or adapt their houses. The main assistance available is through means tested grants, a gardening service for those on benefits or low income and small repairs scheme.

High Street Toilets

The toilets in the High Street in Brentwood have been refurbishment to become a Changing places facility and is intended for disabled people who require assistance to use the toilet.

Events

When events are organised by the Council, consideration is given to the provision of: accessible toilets, nursing tent for family events such as Strawberry Fair and Disabled viewing platforms where necessary. Copies of event programme are available in large print if required.

Equality for Sex

Our **Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2010** reviewed and developed our services, policies and communication to ensure equal access and treatment for both genders.

Brentwood Community Safety Partnership

The Council works in partnership with organisations such as Basildon's Womens Aid and the Brentwood Community Safety Partnership to address issues of domestic abuse. The Council supports the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women 25 November with a number of activities delivered by the Brentwood Community Safety Partnership.

Domestic Abuse Forum

The Domestic Abuse Forum in Brentwood is a sub group of the Community Safety Partnership and is attended by representatives of Basildon Women's Aid, Victim Support, Brentwood Police and officers from Brentwood Borough Council.

Ladies Only

The Council organises a weekly Multi Sports Ladies Only evening at Anglo European School to increase the participation of women in sport in the area.

Equality for Sexuality and Gender reassignment

As part of the review of the Council's Gender Equality Scheme which was undertaken in 2010, it was felt that there was a gap in awareness around gender reassignment. In 2010 the Council ran a number of transgender awareness training for staff which was well received.

Brentwood Borough Council also promotes the **Essex Pride** event held in Chelmsford. The event showcases diversity and promotes acceptance, respect and equality. The event attracts thousands of LGBT and non-LGBT participants from across the county each year.

Equality for Race (includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)

The **Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan** has improved our communication to ensure equal access to information and services, and developed engagement with diverse communities to develop our customer service.

The Brentwood Community Safety Partnership looks at any incidents of Hate Crime and anti-social behaviour that affect residents in Brentwood.

The Council can offer translation and interpretation services on request to enable use of our services. The Council's website can be translated into a number of different languages.

Events to celebrate St George's **Day** and **St Patrick's Day** and their culture, history and heritage are held annually

The Council supports and engages in relevant partnerships to share good practice in addressing race-related issues across Essex, such as the **Essex Equality Diversity Network**.

Equality for religion or belief

The Council promoted an annual Holocaust Memorial Day event, which remembers the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides.

The Council worked closely with Churches Together to deliver the Lighting Up Brentwood event for switch on of the Christmas lights and the introduction of Street Pastors in Brentwood.

Supporting the Council workforce

The Council has worked with the local UNISON branch to complete the **Equal Pay and Single Status Review**. The harmonised terms and conditions of employment and implemented a new pay structure to improve fairness and equality.

Our policies on recruitment, selection, retention, training and development all demonstrate our commitment to equality of opportunity. These include: Bullying and Harassment Policy, Whistle-blowing Procedure, Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Standards.

Two Tick' Positive About Disabled People Scheme. The Council has been awarded the two tick symbol for being positive about employing disabled people. All disabled applicants are given full and fair consideration and are guaranteed an interview if they meet the vacancy's minimum criteria

A Staff Forum has been established a Brentwood Borough Council, which is made up of staff representatives from all service areas, key Directors, relevant Cabinet members, UNISON as well as the Chief Executive. This gives employees another opportunity to be part of the decision-making on matters which will affect them, or raise matters of Equality & Diversity if they wish.

The Below procedures are currently in place. Midland HR are currently reviewing and will update information as part of the new action plan.

Anonymous **staff satisfaction surveys** for all employees take place every two years. The responses help senior managers identify what is working well and make improvements. All analysis and actions taken are fed back to staff via regular Chief Executive briefings and the Corporate Leadership Board.

The following procedures are in place for all employees (available internally):

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Racial Incident Report Form
- Diversity Handbook
- Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan
- Equality Impact Assessment Framework
- Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan
- Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan
- Race Equality Statement
- Disciplinary Policy
- Flexible Working
- Flexible Hours Working Scheme Conditions
- Lone Worker Procedures
- Sickness Absence Procedure
- Procedure for dealing with corrupt practice
- Maternity (statutory) Rights
- Paternity Leave
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Supplement
- Equal Opportunities Policy

Grievance Policy
Social Inclusion Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Physical Security Policy
Whistleblowing Policy
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Midland HR are in the process of updating the below information as part of the new action plan.

The breakdown of Brentwood Borough Council's workforce is as follows

- 1) The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women: **13.33%**
- 2) The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities: **0%**
- 3) Percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have a disability: **6.66%**
- 4) The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, disability definition: **5.18%**
- 5) The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities: **2.41%**

Next Steps

A number of gaps have been identified during the process of collating the information above. This especially relates to demographic data and identifying customers from within the protected characteristics. These gaps will be considered as part of work plan to support the Equality Objectives .