

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY



RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY SCHEME 2007-2010

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FOREWORD

Birmingham is proud of its history as a city that welcomes people from all backgrounds. We recognise the significant contribution that the diversity of our population has made to our economic growth and prosperity. The city is one of the most ethnic diverse cities in Europe.

We have all become familiar with the complex interplay between religious affiliation, race, economic inequality and extremism. Faith is often a powerful factor in personal and community identity. The major faiths are consistent in describing respect for others as a fundamental value. Properly nurtured, this value translates into good community relations and integrity in public life. Faith is therefore fundamentally important to the spirit, warmth and success of our city. Birmingham City Council is committed to continuing and strengthening its relationships with faith communities.

Birmingham City Council's vision for the city places support for equality and diversity amongst our highest priorities. The Religion and Belief Equality Scheme (2007-2010) underlines this commitment as well as fulfilling our statutory duties.

This scheme will continue to develop. We will monitor progress and publicise what we find to ensure that we learn from, and act on, any shortcomings.

The success of any scheme clearly requires dedication and support from our staff, all communities and partner agencies. I am grateful to them for the good spirit they bring to the city, and to their continuing efforts in support of equality, diversity and cohesion. As the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources, with the responsibility for the Council's portfolio for Equality and Diversity, I will champion the progression of this Religion and Belief Equality Scheme and related corporate priorities for the city.

I welcome your comments and suggestions.

Cllr Alan Rudge
Cabinet Member for Equalities & Human Resources
Birmingham City Council

1 THE PURPOSE OF THE RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY SCHEME

The City Council has a long-standing commitment to equality. We have been active in identifying and acting on best practice. This scheme reinforces and deepens that commitment, recognising the unique and significant role that faith has in the life and cohesion of our diverse community.

The City Council will:

- Promote harmony and understanding between different faith groups with the view of promoting community cohesion;
- Challenge discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief;
- Promote equality for employees and service users, regardless of their religion or belief;
- Provide responsive and appropriate services for all sections of the community;
- Create an environment free from harassment and victimisation for faith groups;
- Improve communication, participation and engagement with faith groups.

1.1 What is a Religion and Belief Equality Scheme?

The Religion and Belief Equality Scheme packages the requirements of the European Directive on Religion into a coherent strategy and action plan. It covers all relevant functions and policies, bringing them within a single framework.

The Religion and Belief Equality Scheme makes it clear how Birmingham City Council plans to meet the requirements of the Directive. The Scheme summarises the Council's overall approach to religion and belief equality and how it links to our corporate aims and objectives.

1.2 Consultation

In order to comply with good practice, consultation should be built into each stage of the policy development and planning process. The aim must be to make sure that:

- Employees and stakeholders are consulted, and that their views are taken into account when developing various policy options;
- The consultation methods are tailored to the groups who need to be reached;

- Consultation is not used too often, nor are the same groups used repeatedly;
- The consultation exercise is well managed, properly time-tabled, has clear aims, and is clearly explained to the people involved;
- The consultation methods themselves are monitored and assessed and, if necessary, adapted;
- The results of these consultations are published and fed back into the planning and decision making processes in an open and responsible way.

Consultation with stakeholders was initiated in October 2005 and concluded with a Consultation Event held on the 14 September 2006. This was to discuss the development of the Equality Schemes and encourage debate around the key action points being considered by Birmingham City Council. Further input was gained through focus group discussion.

The Key issues identified during the consultation and the focus group exercise are summarised in Section 5. The Action Plan (see Appendix 1) sets out how they will be progressed.

1.3 Progress to Date

In Birmingham we have been proactive in working with faith groups to explore and prioritise religion, belief and community cohesion issues. Initiatives include:

- Consultation and engagement work with voluntary and community faith based groups such as the Faith Leaders Group and the Birmingham Council of Faiths
- Creation of the Birmingham Faith Round Table as a conduit for communication between the City Council and all faith communities
- Support for the work of faith lead organisations and groups, such as Bringing Hope;
- Joined up working with Government Office West Midlands on issues of cohesion, and reducing gang violence;
- Support by the City Council of a range of religious events and festivals;
- Employment guidelines to support managers and staff in complying with the employment directives;
- Partnership working with the Standing Advisory Council on Religion Education to produce the new agreed syllabus for Religious Education.

2 THE CITY COUNCIL'S VISION AND PRIORITIES

2.1 Our Vision for Birmingham

Birmingham City Council has a clear vision for Birmingham, for the future of the city and its people. We want Birmingham to be a city with a strong and sustainable economy offering benefits to all its citizens. A city where people are safe, well housed, healthy and enjoy a high quality of life within thriving communities. A city where everyone feels they can play their part to the full. A city where people want to live and work and businesses choose to invest.

Our aim is for people to:

- Succeed economically – benefiting from training, jobs and investment;
- Stay safe – living without crime and the fear of crime;
- Be healthy – enjoying long and healthy lives;
- Enjoy a high quality of life – living in a city which is clean and green with good sports and leisure opportunities;
- Make their contribution – valuing one another and playing an active part in the community.

So our priorities are to:

- protect and support vulnerable people;
- ensure everyone has a decent home;
- make the city cleaner, greener and safer;
- provide excellent services;
- ensure services are connected and customer focussed;
- build the city's reputation at home, nationally and internationally;
- maintain a city where communities get on well together;
- promote the city region.

We will continue to foster understanding between the generations and between communities. And working alongside our partners, we will encourage those who feel excluded to make use of the many opportunities it offers.

We will achieve all of this through:

- Transforming the way we manage our business and work with partners as well as support our staff;
- Improving our approach to customer service, including making better use of complaints to improve services;
- Devolving more responsibility to our communities.

2.2 National Context

77% of the population of England regard themselves as having some religious affiliation (2001 Census). Whilst many of these people will not be actively involved in the worship activities of a faith community, a substantial number are committed members of faith groups whose teachings to a greater or lesser extent guide their values and beliefs. The Christian Churches continue to have a large influence in shaping UK society, and make significant contributions in a wide range of areas such as community development, education, social inclusion and heritage. A key contribution has also been made by the long established Jewish community and is increasingly being made by those faith communities most of whose members are more recently settled, such as Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Together, all the faith communities make a significant contribution to the richness and strength of this country.

Faith community organisations are gateways to access the reserves of energy and commitment of their members, which can be of great importance to the development of civil society.

This is especially pertinent for newer communities who frequently relate to the wider community through trusted organisations that serve their religious and or ethnic group.

2.3 The Local Context

According to the 2001 census 59% of people in Birmingham defined themselves as Christians, with Muslims the next largest group (14%). There are also significant numbers of Sikhs and Hindus. In addition, Birmingham people are also Jews, Buddhists and Jains. Together all these groups have contributed immensely to Birmingham's cultural, social and economic diversity.

Table 1 Population % by Religious Group

	B'ham	West Mids	England
People stating religion as:			
Christian	59.1	72.6	71.7
Buddhist	0.3	0.2	0.3
Hindu	2.0	1.1	1.1
Jewish	0.2	0.1	0.5
Muslim	14.3	4.1	3.1
Sikh	2.9	2.0	0.7
Other religions	0.3	0.2	0.3
No religion	12.4	12.3	14.6
Religion not stated	8.4	7.5	7.7

Sources: 2001 Census © Crown Copyright.

2.4 Aims of the Religion and Belief Equality Scheme for 2007-2010

Birmingham City Council has embarked on a major programme to mainstream equality. The organisation aims to be at the leading edge of thinking and practice in work on equality. The Equality and Diversity Division of the City Council was formed in 2004 with the aim of developing a more holistic approach to tackling inequalities based on faith, race, gender, sexuality, age and disability.

At the core of the City Council's approach to equality are the objectives of consolidating good and excellent practice, progressing equality, recognising the diversity of all of Birmingham's communities and enabling staff of the organisation to become more sensitive to the needs of those communities.

The City Council will continue to work towards the following.

- Supporting the vision for Birmingham outlined above;
- Mainstreaming religion and belief equality within the City Council's service areas;
- Prioritising community cohesion, as expressed through the Community Cohesion Strategy;
- Developing and extending our consultation and engagement with the community, partners and stakeholders;
- Ensuring that Equality Impact Needs Assessments have meaning and impact from a faith equality perspective;
- Taking a joined up perspective to equality - linking religion and belief equality actions to the other five priority equality strands: age, race, gender (including trans-gender), sexual orientation, and disability.

3 THE KEY DRIVERS FOR RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY

3.1 Realising the Vision

Birmingham's diversity is fundamental to its social and economic future. Religion and belief equality is critical if we are to achieve our vision of a city with a strong and sustainable economy, where people play their full part and enjoy a high quality of life within thriving communities.

We all benefit from living in a society that is inclusive and cohesive – where different groups live in mutual respect and acceptance of diversity. Progress and peace result from valuing differences and harnessing these differences to achieve objectives.

There is a clear moral imperative in working to achieve religion and belief equality. In addition, as the City Council, the largest employer in the city, we must demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity, setting an example to other employers including those who provide services on our behalf to mirror our values and beliefs.

There is also a clear business case, based upon the City Council's need to attract, recruit and retain good quality staff. The broader the applicant base, the better the quality. Creativity, innovation and fresh thinking are encouraged if employees comprise people from all walks of life. A diverse workforce should be better able to understand the needs of customers from different backgrounds.

3.2 The Legal Imperatives

A range of legal and best practice frameworks underpin our commitment to equality in religion and belief, as follows.

3.2.1 Article 13 (Treaty of Amsterdam)

In June 1997 the governments of the fifteen Member States of the European Union revised the Treaty of the European Community at Amsterdam. Article 13 of the Treaty provides a legal base for Community action to combat discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin. On 25 November 1999 the European Commission published a package of draft proposals to combat discrimination under Article 13. Included in the package was a draft Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.

The Directive ("the Race Directive") was agreed unanimously at the European Social Affairs Council on 6 June 2000 and published in the official journal of the European Communities on 19 July 2000 as

Directive no.2000/43/EC. It was agreed that Member States would implement the Directive within 3 years of its publication: 19 July 2003 Race directive.

The Race Directive flows from Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam and is largely based on the Race Relations Act 1976 ("the 1976 Act"). It is being implemented together with the Article 13 Employment Directive ("the Employment Directive"), which introduces employment legislation dealing with discrimination or harassment on grounds of sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age, as well as amending the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The European Directive on Religion became part of UK Employment Law in December 2003. From this point it became unlawful to discriminate against employees and potential employees on the grounds of faith, religion or belief. In response Birmingham City Council implemented specific measures to ensure overall compliance.

3.2.2 The Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act 2006 makes discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief unlawful.

3.2.3 Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act (1998) came into force in October 2000 bringing into effect, in UK Law, the European Convention on Human Rights. The implementation and integration of this piece of legislation will increase the accountability of the City Council to local citizens as far as equality, social justice and social exclusion issues are concerned.

3.3 Meeting the Equality Standard (BVPI 2a) Requirement

One of the Best Value Performance Indicators for local authorities is BVPI2a, which is the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Equality Standard sets out a generic 'quality' framework to mainstream and audit equality of opportunities across all parts of the City Council. There are five levels of the Standard. Level 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest. For each of the levels there are list of indicators that the council has to provide evidence on. Birmingham City Council was self-assessed and externally audited as Level 3 in 2004.

The outcomes of the assessment against the Equality Standard will provide information for reviewing the Religion and Belief Equality Scheme.

4 MANAGING CORPORATE EQUALITY

4.1 Planning for Equality

The City Council's Corporate Equality and Cohesion Framework, of which this Scheme is a part, provides the strategic and policy framework for the delivery of equitable services to the diverse citizens of Birmingham. The valuing of diversity will be balanced with the commitment to social and community cohesion.

Each directorate is required to develop equality action plans, which address the specific needs of communities, and the common issues which cut across them irrespective of age, race, disability, gender, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

In this way, the equality and diversity agenda is being embedded systematically in the strategic and business planning processes of the City Council.

4.2 Measuring Equality

Under recent legislation, local authorities are required to identify all of the functions and policies that have an impact on race, gender and disability equality and to carry out an impact assessment on each. The City Council has extended this approach to cover all six dimensions of equality. It has reviewed all its functions and policies against all six equalities dimensions, including religion and belief, and has prioritised its approach accordingly.

The Council has also developed a thorough Equality Impact Needs Assessments (EINA) methodology to address the need for impact assessments. The EINA examines how a policy, procedure or service may have an unequal impact on different groups of people. It will enable service managers to improve proposed or existing provision.

All Service areas will go through the process of initial screening, which will be a required part of the Service Planning process. The Cabinet report checklist makes specific reference to Equality Impact Needs Assessments. All new strategies, policies, functions, service developments will be required to have full impact assessment at an early stage.

Wherever possible, the EINA will be included as part of other scheduled reviews. An EINA toolkit has also been developed to assist service areas in conducting impact assessment. Supporting advice and guidance will be provided by the City Council's Equality and Diversity Division.

4.3 Equality Performance

There is little point in mainstreaming equality responsibilities, in planning for equality, and in measuring the equalities impact of what we do, if no real improvements result. Each Directorate is therefore required to show:

- Evidence of measurable improvements in access for all under-represented groups;
- Implementation of the requirements of equality related legislation;
- Evidence of measurable improvements in respect of widening the profile of service users having regard to need and relative to the local population;
- Evidence of measurable improvements in respect of providing services that meet the needs of all groups in the communities the directorate serves.

Where gaps and adverse impact are found through the EINA process, action plans will be developed and included in the annual service plans and work programmes. Where there is insufficient data available about the impact of the service on specific groups, the first stage will be to establish monitoring and feedback mechanisms to obtain it on a regular basis.

4.4 Scheme Responsibility

The Religion and Belief Equality Scheme requires high-level commitment and support if it is going to bring the change that it promises. Responsibility for the effective implementation of duties relating to this scheme lies with the City Council, which is committed to the fulfilment of its obligations in the performance of all its functions, powers and duties.

Cabinet has responsibility for approving, implementing and monitoring the Religion and Belief Equality Scheme on behalf of the City Council. The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources is the lead member for the Scheme and has responsibility for updating Cabinet and the relevant Scrutiny Committees on its implementation and impact. The Head of Equality and Diversity is responsible for the delivery and co-ordination of the scheme within the City Council.

Though Scheme responsibility is as described, responsibility for equalities outcomes rests firmly with Cabinet members and the Directorate management teams. The City Council recognises that the Equality Schemes provide the framework for progressing the equalities agenda, but that results will only be achieved through mainstreamed service provision. This is the mainstreaming agenda. In this context, Equality and Diversity is the conscience of the Council as a whole: advising on impact; monitoring progress against action plans; overseeing EINA implementation and responses.

4.5 The Annual Review

The City Council recognises that the Religion and Belief Equality Scheme has to be a 'living' policy to be effective and therefore it will be monitored regularly. The City Council will ensure that the Scheme is reviewed on an annual basis from March to May every year starting from 2008.

The revised scheme will be published and made available in July on the City Council's website. Hard copies will be available in all the libraries and neighbourhood offices.

4.6 Review of the EINA

The City Council revised its Equality Impact Needs Assessment process in June 2006. Details are available on the City Council's website and intranet facilities.

Impact Assessments have also been built into the following:

- The newly revised Corporate Service Planning Guidance;
- The Risk Management Process;
- Business Transformation arrangements;
- The Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy;
- The Communication Plan;
- The Council Plan;
- The Local Area Agreement.

The Initial Screening Pro-forma will further be reviewed which will take into account the requirements relating to the new Duties for Gender and Disability. All completed Initial Screening Pro-formas and Full Assessment Reports will be published through the internet on an on-going basis throughout the year.

In light of the new duties, a Project Team on EINA has been established to ensure compliance with the new requirements, to further enhance the toolkit in view of the City Council's commitment to mainstreaming the equalities agenda, and to continue to ensure that:

- All service areas have adequate monitoring systems, and where they do not, what they will do to remedy the situation;
- All service areas have a clear criteria they will use to measure equality performance;
- All service areas are encouraged to use different methods of consultation;
- All service areas evidence how adverse impact has been addressed;
- All service areas publish result of assessments, consultation and monitoring.

The EINA will be managed by the Corporate EINA Task Group which will meet regularly to assess the progress of all the EINAs. The Head of Equality and Diversity will submit a progress report to the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Human Resources and the Corporate Management Team to ensure that: (1) service areas are carrying out EINAs; and (2) as a result of EINA outcomes, the service areas are making the necessary adjustments.

5 RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Key Issues

There are growing concerns in the city as well as nationally about social divisions and the recognition of the need for greater integration at a social, economic and educational level in order to maintain community cohesion and economic prosperity. Religion and Belief are key factors with respect to these concerns. Faith groups can play an important part in progressing strategies for addressing inequalities.

The concept of community cohesion covers a wide range of complex issues, including employment, education, housing, health, access to services, and cultural understanding between different groups. It recognises the importance of citizens sharing a common set of values and a shared sense of identity and belonging. Faith and values are integral to identity for a great many of Birmingham's citizens.

In Birmingham, real community cohesion, as outlined in the City Council's Community Cohesion Strategy, means:

- Living together positively;
- Having a stake in society;
- Building links and relationships;
- Being proud of the City.

5.2 Action Plan

The Religion and Belief Equality Scheme Action Plan is set out in Appendix 1. It responds to the key issues above, setting out in detail how the City Council will work to deliver its commitment to religion and belief equality. In summary, the City Council will:

- Work to mainstream religion and belief equality, by integrating it into core City Council business planning, management, employment and training processes;
- Develop the capacity and involvement of faith organisations, especially with regard to policy development and service delivery;
- Accommodate religious requirements into the development of housing, planning and other infrastructure provision;
- Work with faith groups and families to encourage cohesion, mutual respect and the reduction of religious hate crime.

5.3 Prioritised Functions and Policies

The Action Plan is further underpinned by the EINA process. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 brought with it a requirement for local authorities to set out their functions, policies and procedures and screen them for relevance to the promotion of race equality. The Equality Standard extended that screening to include gender and disability. The City Council will be adopting the approach across all six equality strands: race; gender; disability; age; sexual orientation; and religion and belief.

In practice, this means that every three years in all these equality strands, each service area within Directorates identifies all of their existing functions, policies, procedures, strategies, plans, and any that are proposed or are to be reviewed (or are in the process of change). Due to the disability and gender duties, we have now reassessed the list previously published in May 2005. The refreshed list is included in the Corporate Equality & Community Cohesion Framework. Items on the list relevant to achieving equality are identified, principally covering: (1) those functions or policies that affect the public; and (2) those that are related to employment. The list has been approved by each Directorate's Senior/ Directorate Management Team/ Leadership Team.

Those items on the list are then prioritised from an equalities perspective, against the different equality headings. A schedule of Equality Impact Needs Assessments is then drawn up for listed items, driven by the priorities allocated.

6 ACCESS, INFORMATION AND INVOLVEMENT

6.1 Access to Information and Services

Each service area of the City Council has specific arrangements for public access to information and services. More formal methods include:

- Scrutiny committee reviews;
- Cabinet reports;
- Core cities (sharing good practice and trends);
- Reports through the Best Value Performance Plan;
- Each service area being required to publish a schedule of every impact assessment and monitoring exercise.

The City's Consultation and Engagement Strategy provides a strategic framework to underpin consultation and engagement across the City Council. It sets out the City Council's corporate approach, outlining a set of minimum principles and standards for consultation and engagement. The principles are as follows.

- **Inclusion**
We will try to give all citizens an opportunity to be heard in a variety of ways, using imaginative approaches to give a broader view than through working only with specific interest groups.
- **Respect**
We will respect all consultees and protect their personal data. We will value the opinions and feedback from users of our service on a day-to-day basis. We will be ready to listen and provide feedback.
- **Honesty and Integrity**
We will be clear why we are consulting and what everyone can expect from the outcome (including what decisions are to be made and how, and things we know we cannot change). We will ensure that consultation is not subject to any inappropriate political pressure or influence. When we make decisions, we will do so taking into account the information and views we have gathered. Some decisions may be difficult and unpopular. We will avoid compromising voluntary and community sector independence.
- **Partnership**
We will work in partnership with individuals and other organisations, both in consulting on issues affecting them and in conducting shared consultations where appropriate and cost-effective.

- Empowerment
We will encourage citizens to be involved and provide support where needed. During consultation, we will tell people being consulted how to comment on, complain about or compliment the way the consultation is carried out, by using the City Council's corporate procedure.

In line with the mainstreaming agenda, each service and policy area carries responsibility for ensuring equality of access in its own functional area. The Equality and Diversity Division provides support through advice and guidance to the rest of the organisation in this regard. As described in Section 4, each directorate is required to develop equality action plans, addressing the specific needs of communities, and the common issues which cut across them irrespective of age, race, disability, gender, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

The localisation and devolution programme, under which considerable resources have been allocated by the City Council to the development of customer-facing teams within the ten Birmingham Constituencies, is further evidence of the commitment to local engagement and service access.

6.2 Reputation and Understanding

The City Council recognises, through its Communication Strategy, that it is vital to understand the nature of the City Council's reputation with all groups of people across the City. Three principal measures of this are used.

6.2.1 Annual Opinion Surveys

Annual opinion surveys measure how the City Council's reputation is judged by service users and citizens, as well as measuring citizens' experience and perception of the services themselves.

In Birmingham, while around half (47%) of residents feel that the City Council keeps them informed, just one in twenty (5%) feel very informed. However, people feel more informed in 2004 than they did in 2002 and 2001 (40% and 39% respectively felt informed).

6.2.2 The People's Panel

The 1000-strong People's Panel comprises a representative sample of Birmingham citizens and is consulted regularly in more depth on a range of issues which are then measured for performance and improvement.

6.2.3 The Employee Census

The City Council's own employees are key stakeholders. Communications plays a vital role in informing and involving each member of our workforce. Employees should understand the City Council's priorities and policies and how their work contributes to them, and effective communications with employees helps develop their advocacy role in the community.

The 2004 employee census established that not only had perceptions of Birmingham City Council improved since 2002, but Birmingham City Council now compares favourably with other, similar organisations.

6.3 Impact Consultation

The City Council strongly believes it is important to inform those affected by a policy or function that it is to be reviewed, and to consult about any proposed changes. Consultation is an essential part of the EINA process. The impact of existing and proposed functions and policies is subject to consultation, guided by the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

The City Council's EINA process requires that:

- Consideration is given as to how particular methods may be appropriate for collating information on different groups;
- Each service area examines, and reports that it did so, how it will assess its service for impact on groups with multiple equality issues.
- Due attention is paid to human rights and data protection issues when devising methods of data collation;
- Where a new process for data collation is required, the short term lack of data does not stop the service area from taking action where an adverse impact is suspected based upon other evidence (for instance, anecdotal).

6.4 Impact Monitoring

Knowing that a policy is working as it should is vital to achieving the aims of the general duty. Keeping track of how a policy is working, and whether it is having an adverse impact or harming disability equality, depends largely on having an efficient, up-to-date, and relevant monitoring system.

Monitoring allows the City Council to test on an on-going basis:

- how different people are affected by their policies;
- whether people from all groups are equally satisfied with the way they are treated;
- whether services are provided effectively to all people;
- whether services are suitable and designed to meet different needs.

All policy and service areas are required to monitor policies, procedures and functions to ensure that there is no adverse impact; and the resulting reports must be published.

The City Council employs a range of methods to gather its monitoring data, including:

- Administrative database;
- Citizens' juries/ panels;
- Consultant's Reports;
- Consultations;
- Focus group Interviews;
- Frontline staff feedback;
- Observations;
- Pilot Projects;
- Review of complaints made;
- Surveys (postal, face-to-face, telephone);
- User feedback.

6.5 Information Dissemination

The City Council's overarching Communications Strategy seeks to achieve eight main outcomes, as follows.

- We will contribute to the achievement of the City Council's social and political goals;
- We will improve the reputation of the City Council amongst its audiences, stakeholders and partners;
- We will ensure that communication with our citizens is focused and targeted;
- We will enhance communications as a means of responding to the needs of our audiences, such as communities and interest groups as identified by the consultation strategy and access to services strategy;
- We will improve the quality of information provided by Birmingham City Council;
- We will encourage greater participation in the democratic process;
- We will assist the move towards e-government;
- We will work to develop the Birmingham City Council brand, ensure that all employees feel part of the brand and are able to recreate it at the point of consumption.

A key component in the Operating Plan of the Marketing & Communications Division is to show the diversity and richness of the whole City by:

ensuring that all our communications eg media releases, Forward, Inner Voice, Birmingham.gov, Birmingham Inline and other forms of publicity reflect the diversity of the city; by working with HR and Equality and Diversity to improve information about opportunities in BCC, including information relevant to minority groups...

7 EMPLOYMENT

7.1 Employment Monitoring

The City Council will continue to monitor the composition of its workforce. The aim of the City Council is to have a workforce that reflects the diverse communities we serve at all levels in the council.

The existing employment monitoring systems are being further developed which will enable the City Council to report on a wider range of management information.

7.2 Training

Diversity and equality is an integral part of training being delivered across the city. We have gradually moved away from delivering corporate training programmes on diversity and equality to embedding the key principles in the programmes we offer. However, there are on occasions where there is a specific service need for diversity training. Examples of this include the Development Services' "Diversity in the Environment" and the Library Services' "Dealing with different customers".

Developments are taking place to enhance the City Council's management information systems, which would then enable the reporting of a wider range of management information. One aspect of this development is Managers and Employees Self Service portal which will enable managers to directly input training needs arising from professional development reviews (PDRs) and training requests. The development work on PDRs to capture training needs and requests is currently being tested.

APPENDIX 1: THE CITY COUNCIL'S RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2007 - 2010

Key areas	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Mainstreaming Religion and Belief Equality	Work to integrate Religion and Belief equality issues into the Business Planning Process.	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Ensure Religion and Belief equality objectives become an integral part of management and duties of every employee	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Ensure Equality Impact and Needs Assessment (EINAs) fully take into account Religion and Belief Issues.	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Provide briefings and report to staff on Religion and Belief specific issues as required	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Recording and monitoring systems to be extended to include religious categories to be able to analyse needs.	Director of Human Resources	Ongoing
	To work in partnership with the Standing Advisory Council on religious education developments in the city.	Strategic Director CYPF	Ongoing
Employment and Training	Update current recruitment policy to reflect EU directive requirements	Director of Human Resources	March 2007
	Update Harassment Policy to include Religion and Belief considerations	Director of Human Resources	March 2007
	Ensure Religion and Belief equality training is available for all staff, even if integrated as part of other equalities or induction training.	Director of Human Resources	Ongoing

Key areas	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Consultation, Community Development and Partnership	Ensure consultation strategies take into account working with religious and belief groups to obtain their views on the quality and appropriateness of the service.	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Capacity Build for Religious and Belief organisations to be able to provide appropriate services to communities in their catchment area.	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Ensure the Council's procurement procedures and the development of the approved list of suppliers have due regard to Religion and Belief equality issues.	All Directorates	Ongoing
	Increase the confidence of the community in reporting harassment on the grounds of Religion and Belief and increase satisfaction in the way the incidents resulting in further actions are handled.	Birmingham Hate Crime Partnership	March 2007
	Promote City Council's commitment to action Religion and Belief (e.g.) via Round Table on Religion and Belief.	Head Of Equality and Diversity	Ongoing
Specific Initiatives and Projects by Directorates: Constituencies	Promote the inclusion of Religion and Belief issues in local Consultation & Engagement Plans (it is a non-statutory requirement so will take time to embed).	Strategic Director	March 2008
	Ensure Religion and Belief considerations are integrated into all EINA's.	Strategic Director	March 2007 onwards
	Promote Quiet rooms for prayer and non-prayer activities for staff.	Strategic Director	March 2007
	Where possible for service users	Strategic Director	March 2008
	Provide training to staff on needs based outcome focussed service delivery including Religion and Belief issues.	Strategic Director	Ongoing

Key areas	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Specific Initiatives and Projects by Directorates: Housing Department	Tenants' Groups monitored by religion and belief	Ian Shelly/ Abigail Robson	TBC
	Front-line staff and staff who carry out home visits to receive training in cultural/religious diversity	Housing Training Team	TBC
	Develop, promote and monitor the Equity Release scheme for private households that comply with religious requirements	Ann Burness	TBC
	Harassment cases monitored for religious element	Alison Parsons/ Ian McGibbins	TBC
Specific Initiatives and Projects by Directorates: Development	Identify and respond to religious/faith requirements of persons when allocating homelessness placements	Gurdish Sandhu	TBC
	Consider planning applications for religious gatherings e.g. ensure access and where appropriate car parking to meet needs of disabled people, parents and children	Highways and Planning	
	Street Works that may affect religious/faith events	Lorraine Bennett	
	Traffic Management for City Centre and main roads	Steven Hall	
	Erect festive decorations along roads in response to community led religious celebrations e.g. Christmas, Diwali, St Patrick's parade	Highways	
	Support the work of the retail chaplaincy in Birmingham City Centre	City Centre Management	
	Faith and Religious Awareness Course	Equality and Diversity Team	
	Prayer room for staff in Lancaster Circus. Completed in July 2006.	Highways and Development Strategy	
Faith and Religious organisations are formally included in the consultation list of the Directorate whenever it is appropriate	Communication Teams		

Key areas	Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
Specific Initiatives and Projects by Directorates: Children, Young People & Families	Promote dialogue to develop greater mutual understanding across our multi-faith communities building on the Youth Interfaith Conference (November 2005) declaration of shared values	Strategic Director	TBC
	Engage faith communities and voluntary organisations in planning to divert young people from offending behaviour.	Strategic Director	TBC
	Increase the percentage of children and young people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds, family groups, and lifestyles can get on together.	Strategic Director	TBC
	Reduce the number of young people who are victims of hate crime, including racist, homophobic or faith based bullying, abuse and assault.	Strategic Director	TBC
	Develop a range of youth work interventions and opportunities that help young people to explore and understand their own and others' faith, spirituality and values.	Strategic Director	TBC
Specific Initiatives and Projects by Directorates: Adults & Communities	Draw up a policy on the availability of quiet/pray rooms for staff	Service Directors	July 07
	Robust recording of hate crimes based on religion/faith	Service Directors	Ongoing
	Revise awareness of religious backgrounds of service users and its implications for responsive service delivery	Service Directors	Ongoing
	Celebrate diversity and promote good examples of co-religious working	Service Directors	Ongoing

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING THE SCHEME

M.J.A.H (UK)
Freshwinds
870 House
Aston Legal Centre
Rep: Torch Housing Co-Operative
Refugee Support Team
The Stroke Association
Unison
Muslim Women's Network
Parent Partnership Service
ASIRT
Sampad South Asian Arts
Extending Learning Project
Aston Legal Centre
Community Unity
Victim Support East Birmingham
Youth Service
PATH West Midlands
Pre-School Learning Alliance
Yarnfield Estate Community Project
SIFA (Supporting Independence from Alcohol)
Greenspring Training
Rape & Sexual Violence Project
Birmingham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
Hindu Council of Birmingham
CBLC
Birmingham Central Mosque
JS JS Limited
Small Heath Community Forum
Bangladesh Multi-Purpose Centre
Birmingham Churches Together
Birmingham Council of Faith
Midlands International Buddhist Association

Birmingham City Council
Equality and Diversity
Congreve House
3 Congreve Passage
Birmingham
B3 3DA

Tel: 0121 303 2545

Fax: 0121 233 9117

Txt: 18001 0121 303 2419

Email: equalities@birmingham.gov.uk

Website: www.birmingham.gov.uk/equalities



Age

Disability

Gender

Race

Religion and Belief

Sexual Orientation