

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable on Monday, 26 October 2009

### PRESENT

Cllr M Gibson (Chairman)  
Cllr R W Johnstone (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs R A Baker  
Mrs A Barker  
J A E Clarke

Cllrs D J Hopkin  
J G Jamieson  
J Murray

Apologies for Absence: Cllr Ms J Nunn

Substitutes: Cllr P N Aldis

Members in Attendance: Cllr R Stay

Officers in Attendance:	Mr B Carter	Overview & Scrutiny Manager
	Mr R Ellis	Director of Business Transformation
	Ms C Harding	Corporate Policy Advisor (E&D)
	Mrs S Hobbs	Democratic Services Officer
	Mrs E Malarky	Head of Policy

BT/09/31 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

None.

BT/09/32 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

***that the Minutes of the meeting of the Business Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 September 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.***

BT/09/33 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-**

None.

BT/09/34 **Petitions**

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been referred to this meeting.

BT/09/35 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Chairman announced that no questions, statements or deputations had been received.

BT/09/36 **Call-in**

The Chairman announced that no call-ins had been referred to this Committee.

BT/09/37 **Disclosure of Exempt Information**

There were no disclosures of exempt information.

BT/09/38

**Addressing Equality and Diversity in Central Bedfordshire - The Draft Single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2010 - 2013**

Members considered the report of the Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation, which set out the Council's statutory equality duties and the action to be taken to meet these duties. It provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider and comment on an early draft of the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme. Members received a presentation, attached at appendix A, on the challenges for Central Bedfordshire in addressing equality and diversity.

Members of the Committee were fully supportive of the draft Scheme, and were content to endorse its submission to the Executive during February/March 2010, subject to the following comments and recommendations being incorporated within it before submission:-

- (a) Members clearly stated that the policy direction be followed through and delivered throughout the whole organisation and beyond. They felt that the draft Scheme should contain sufficient enough detail regarding the provision of targeted training and development for both Members and officers to assist in the practical achievement of this policy direction;
- (b) With regard to specific training and development initiatives, the Committee endorsed a number of suggestions from Members as follows, and requested that they too be captured within the draft Scheme:-
  - a phased staff training approach, which concentrated limited resources on frontline staff in the first instance, and also ensured that any training delivered was appropriate to the target audience i.e. back office staff receiving basic training with more comprehensive training for frontline staff;
  - the need to take into account, and coordinate, all Member training and development generally to ensure that limited time and resources were used to best effect. This may well mean the delivery of half/whole day training sessions in future, which addressed a number of topics such as Equalities & Diversity, Health & Safety, Risk Management, etc in bite-sized chunks at one session and it was suggested that the Member Development Champions Group should consider this issue at the earliest opportunity;
  - the need to produce and distribute a 1 page (or 2 page maximum) awareness raising document for all employees & Members, which would distil the draft Scheme into key action points;

- the need to incorporate equality and diversity awareness raising into the staff appraisal scheme; and
  - the need to ensure that Members were aware of how to feedback equality & diversity issues encountered, whilst undertaking their duties as ward representatives.
- (c) Whilst Members reiterated their strong desire to tackle inequalities, they were of the opinion that the draft Scheme should also highlight the responsibility of the individual to strive for self-reliance, a conviction which very much reinforced the concept of Total Place and its primary theme of “from dependence to self-reliance”;
- (d) Members discussed in some detail whether there was a need to establish a Council ambition within the draft Scheme regarding the achievement of Level 3 (Excellent and making a difference) of the new Equality Framework for Local Government introduced by the IDeA in April 2009.
- (e) Whilst Members agreed that this may well be an aspiration, there was no need to make this ambition explicit. Instead, the draft Scheme should make reference to the following overarching principles:-
- the imperative to ensure the Council was legally compliant;
  - the importance of striking the right balance between the costs and benefits arising from particular initiatives – a judgment call would be required to ensure any actions outlined within the draft Scheme were proportionate i.e. actions did not deliver a disproportionate benefit to the few to the detriment of the many; and
  - whilst achieving Level 3 of the new Equality Framework may well be an aspiration, the Council should not commit itself to such an aspiration without first knowing the implications (financial or otherwise) of such a commitment.
- (f) Members commented on improvements to the document itself, which should also apply to any other document produced by the Council in future. These were:-
- ensuring the date of production of the document was clearly highlighted;
  - ensuring acronyms were fully explained at first use and also contained in a glossary towards the end of the document; and

- ensuring that the source of any data/statistics quoted was included in the document.

**RESOLVED**

***that the recommendations above in the preamble be approved.***

BT/09/39

**Work Programme**

The Committee considered the Business Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2009-10.

Councillor Murray enquired whether a report would be considered on the Highways Customer Service. He was advised that this was scheduled to be considered by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2010.

**RESOLVED**

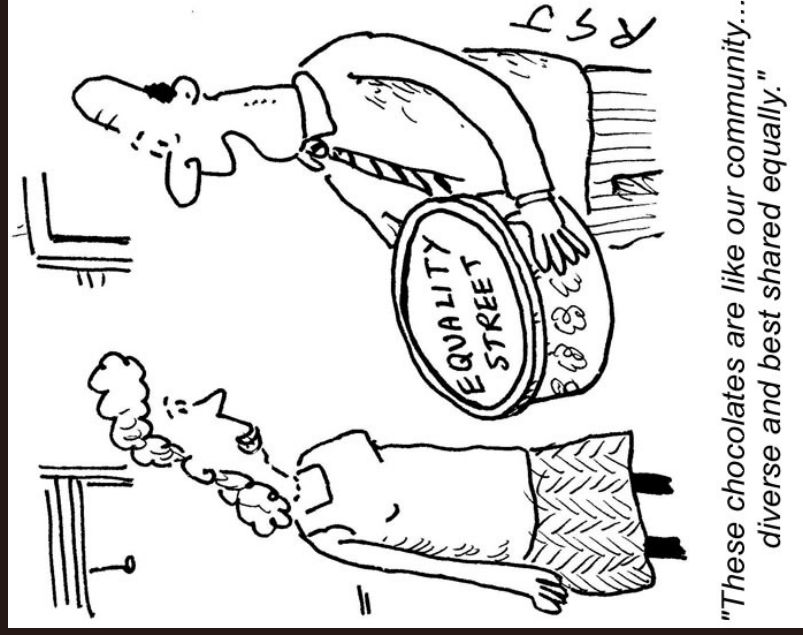
***that the work programme for the Business Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be approved.***

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.25 p.m.)

This page is intentionally left blank



# Equality and Diversity The Challenge for Central Bedfordshire



# Driving Central's Equality "Train":

Central  
Bedfordshire

Clare Harding  
Corporate Policy Adviser  
(Equality & Diversity)

Elaine Malarky  
Head of Policy

Policy, Partnerships & Performance  
Business Transformation

## Role:

- Raise awareness
- Plan the corporate journey
- Develop good practice
- Avoid litigation





# Today's Discussion

---

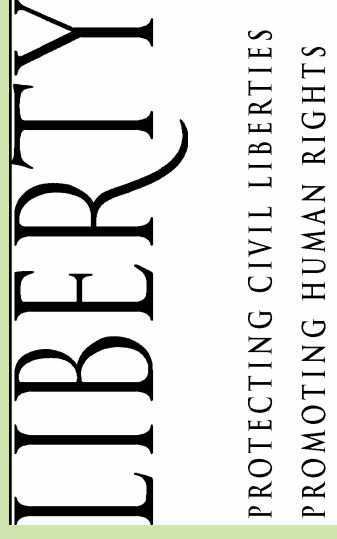


- **Context for equality and diversity & the challenge ahead**
- **Examples of national research & local issues**
- **Key elements of a robust approach**
- **Highlight our progress to date/next steps**
- **Consider the challenge for councillors**

# Context: Barriers to Mainstreaming Equality



- It's a myth!
- It's Political Correctness!
- It's a minority issue!
- It's too radical!
- It costs too much!
- It distracts us from our real work!



## The Challenge

Central  
Bedfordshire



**Tackling inequality is a real issue –**

**It is about:**

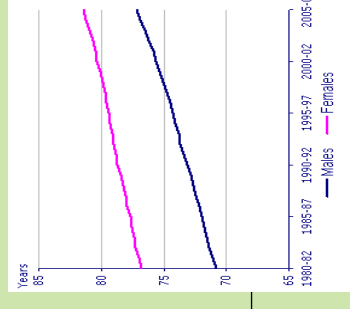
- **reaching everybody**
- **making services accessible**
- **being fair and inclusive in everything we do**

**So we**

- **improve services**
- **achieve Council priorities**
- **avoid personal & financial costs if we get it wrong**

# Examples of Inequality Evidence - Caring for an Ageing Population & Promoting Healthier Lifestyles

Central  
Bedfordshire



- 50% of BME people felt that their cultural & religious needs were not taken into account by social care staff
- 1.7 million single older men are living in isolation, many are aged 75 and over
- 16 % of males will die before age 65 compared to 10% of females
- Gypsies & Travellers, & People of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Caribbean and Irish origin report the poorest health.
- People with a mental health condition / learning disability are less likely to receive early treatment for illness

## **Examples of Inequality Evidence – Educating Children and Young People**

**Central  
Bedfordshire**



- **Only 18% of poor White British Boys achieve 5 or more GCSE passes**
- **Boys and Mixed White, Black Caribbean & Black Other pupils have much higher rates of exclusion than average.**
- **Girls are achieving better results but are still being steered towards low paid, low status jobs.**
- **Disabled pupils are often excluded from certain subjects**

# Examples of Inequality Evidence – Managing Economic Growth Effectively

Central  
Bedfordshire

- It will take 99 years for people from ethnic minority communities to have the same job prospects as white people
- Only 50% disabled people are likely to be in employment compared with 80% of non disabled people
- From the age of 18, women receive less pay than men in every occupational group
- 30,000 women in the UK leave their jobs each year due to pregnancy discrimination



## Examples of Inequality Evidence – Creating Safer Communities

Central  
Bedfordshire



- 1 in 5 disabled people don't feel safe at home
- Almost 50% of women in England & Wales experience domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking during their lifetime.
- It is estimated that between 75% and 95% of rape crimes are never reported to the police
- Over 75% of 11-12 year old boys think it is acceptable to hit women if they make men angry

# The cost of getting it wrong

Central  
Bedfordshire



audit  
commission

- 1) Out of Court settlements:
  - Ministry of Defence £300 000 - Bullying
  - Walsall - £613 000 - Disability
- 2) Court Rulings:
  - Ealing - Unlawful Procurement
  - Harrow – Unlawful Budget Cuts
  - Schools – Reasonable Adjustments



# Could it happen here? – examples of current local issues

Central  
Bedfordshire

- Charges at Leisure Centres
- Licensing Policy
- Changes in Office Locations
- Employment Policies
- Budget Cuts
- Violence Against Women
- Racist abuse of staff & pupils
- Schools' Recruitment Practices
- Social cohesion & extremism



# A Robust “Developing” Approach – What do we need to do?

Central  
Bedfordshire

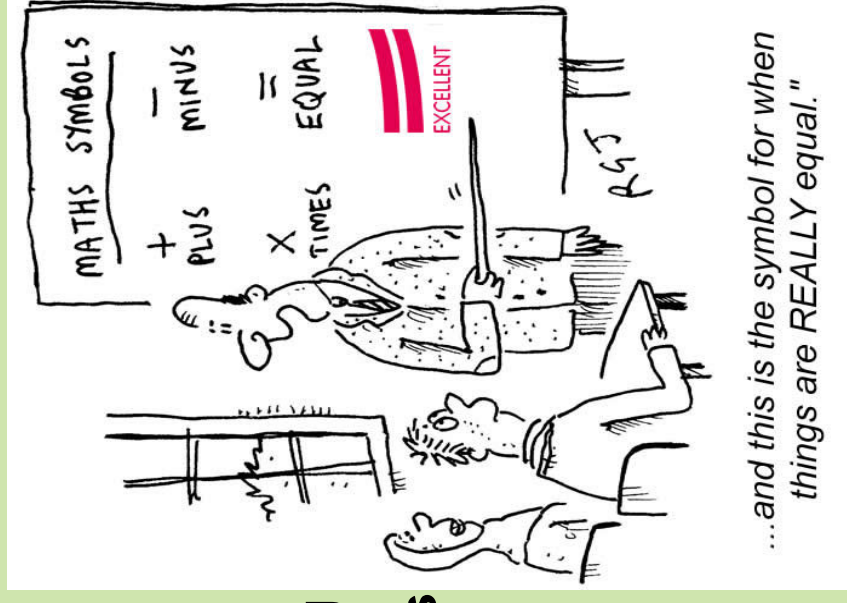
## Key elements:

- Work with partners
- Engage all communities
- Identify needs
- Analyse performance trends
- Raise awareness of issues
- Adapt Service delivery
- Welcome scrutiny & challenge
- Communicate effectively
- Share best practice
- Compliant Equality Scheme



## Achieving Excellence – Making a Difference How will we know we've got there?

- All Councillors and employees are champions for equality
- Effective engagement with all partners
- Equality objectives are part of service planning
- We know the profile and needs of our residents
- Action is taken to reverse adverse impacts
- There is evidence of real outcomes & a narrowing of inequality gaps
- The Scheme is monitored and refreshed



# The Challenge for Councillors

## Adding value:

- **engaging members**– what **support, training and challenge** is required?
- **equality evidence** when scrutinising reports or making decisions
- **equality dimension in task groups/OSC reviews**
- **identify where inequality exists and find solutions**
- **ensuring views of disadvantaged groups are heard**
- **working with partners** to meet equality duties
- **oversee implementation** of Scheme & action plan

Central Bedfordshire Council

