

Equality Standard for Local Government

Middlesbrough Council

Level 4 Self-Assessment Report

March 2009

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Supporting Evidence Key

Where documents cited within this self-assessment have been identified as evidence, a reference number is entered in brackets after the document, indicating which department has identified that evidence and what number it has been given.

Escorporate – Corporate
EsCentral Services – Central Services
ESCFL – Children, Families and Learning
ESHR – Human Resources
ESEnvironment – Environment
ESR – Regeneration
ESSocialcare – Social Care.

The vast majority of this evidence is available via the Council's website. Access can also be provided upon request to the Performance and Policy team where confidentiality issues allow.

1. Executive Summary

1. Middlesbrough Council celebrates diversity and promotes equality for all, regardless of gender, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. The Council believes that everyone should have fair and equal access to services and opportunities in every aspect of their lives and ensures that its service provision meets the diverse needs of local communities.
2. Equality and diversity considerations are fundamental to the Council's policy development and decision-making processes. The Council's suite of equality and diversity policies aims to ensure that:
 - Services meet the needs of the town's diverse communities.
 - No employee, job applicant or service user receives less favourable treatment because of his or her gender or transgender, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age.
 - The Council promotes and monitor equality and diversity in employment and deals effectively with discrimination and harassment.
 - Any barriers that discourage access to employment or services are minimised or removed.
3. The Equality Standard for Local Government is structured around the four themes of:
 - Leadership and Corporate Commitment
 - Community Engagement and Accountability
 - Service Delivery and Customer Care
 - Employment and Training.
4. There are five progressive levels of the Standard and the Council aims to perform at the highest level. The Council has been working towards the achievement of the five levels since 2002, meeting the requirements of Level 1 in financial year 2003/2004 and of Level 2 in 2005/06.
5. At Level 1, the Council demonstrated a commitment to a comprehensive equality policy by putting policies and structures in place to support the achievement of equality in race, gender or transgender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age.
6. At Level 2, processes were established which enabled the Council to undertake a systematic approach to self-assessment of progress against diversity targets.
7. In May 2008, the Council was awarded Level 3 status, following an assessment by the Local Centre for Policy Studies, on behalf of the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA). In their final report, the assessors stated that they "were impressed with the top-level commitment within the authority to the equality and diversity agenda".

8. When the Council achieved Level 3, it demonstrated that it had an effective engagement strategy, and used this to set objectives and actions against all diversity strands.
9. The assessors advised that the Council was very strong at Level 3 and was well placed to meet Level 4 in the short-term. This self-assessment outlines the approach the Council has taken to address those few areas where additional actions were required to achieve Level 4.
10. This self-assessment will inform the Council's approach to the revised Equality Standard for Local Government, to be launched in April 2009. By declaring Level 4, the Council is declaring that there are robust processes in place to measure progress against diversity strands.
11. Using a bespoke version of the ES@T toolkit, this self-assessment outlines in detail the processes that the Council has put in place to ensure equality and diversity issues are identified, addressed and promoted within the Council and the local area.
12. The Council's Corporate Diversity Group oversees planning across the Council for the achievement of all levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government, ensuring that the relevant criteria of the Key Lines of Enquiry are met and actions are undertaken to deliver continuous improvement. The Group also manages the self-assessment process. In addition to a corporate self-assessment, which covers the Employment and Training theme, each Department has completed a self-assessment, covering every service area across the Council. These assessments inform this high-level self-assessment document.
13. The Council is pleased to declare that it has achieved Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, and looks forward to working with partners and local communities to further develop the equality and diversity agenda in Middlesbrough in the coming years.

2. Middlesbrough in Context

The Town

14. Middlesbrough is at the heart of the Tees Valley and has a population of 138,700 [Source ONS mid-year estimates 2007], made up of a range of different people (see table 1 below).

Table 1 – Middlesbrough Population Profile

Indicator	Group	Percentage of the Population
Gender	Male	49%
Gender	Female	51%
Age	Under 16	20%
Age	Over 65 (men) and over 60 (women)	18%
Long Term Health Problem	People with a long-term health problem	22%
Non-White Population	Non-white population	7.5%
Declared Religion other than Christianity.	Declared religion other than Christianity	5.1%

(Source – Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit)

15. As the above table demonstrates, Middlesbrough's non-white population comprises 7.5% of the total population; this is the highest concentration in the north east. It is also ranked as the 9th most deprived Council in England. Despite these challenging figures community cohesion in Middlesbrough is strong. According to the 2007 Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Survey 79% of BME residents agree that having a mix of people makes the local area a more enjoyable place to live and 82% of the BME population feel Middlesbrough is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, compared to 72% for all residents.
16. The town is at the heart of the Tees Valley conurbation, which is strategically positioned between Newcastle in the north and Leeds in the south and serves a substantial population between these two major regional centres.
17. The area's economic strengths were built on iron and steel, shipbuilding, heavy engineering and chemicals. It retains strengths in several of these areas, but massive industrial restructuring has changed the town's economy. The service sector is now the main economic driver and the town centre provides most of the town's employment.
18. Middlesbrough's geography and historical legacy are key drivers in setting the local priorities, identified in the Sustainable Community Strategy and associated Local Area Agreement. High levels of disadvantage, evidenced by high levels of unemployment and ill health and low levels of entrepreneurship and aspirations, present major challenges to the Council and its partners.
19. However, Middlesbrough also has many advantages that help its drive for regeneration, including close proximity to the second largest port in Britain and two

international airports; strong road and rail transport links; proximity to the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales; and a ready and flexible labour supply.

The Council

20. The Mayor's "Raising Hope" agenda for Middlesbrough is based on four pillars, to create:

- a clean, safe environment, in which people can go about their business without fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- physical regeneration of the town's run-down sites and buildings
- a business-friendly enterprise culture which welcomes would-be investors
- a transport network that can meet the needs of a town on its way up

Education and the care of young people and support to vulnerable people in the town provide a foundation for these pillars.

21. The Raising Hope agenda has been developed to respond to Middlesbrough's historical and geographical circumstances and complements the national and local priorities that underpin the Sustainable Community Strategy.

22. The Council's Strategic Plan 2008 –2011 sets out how the Council will contribute to the Sustainable Community Strategy vision. It is structured around the six Sustainable Community Strategy themes, listed below, which are underpinned by medium term strategic priorities:

- Creating Stronger Communities
- Creating Safer Communities
- Supporting Children and Young People
- Promoting Adult Health and Well-being / Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality
- Enhancing the Local Economy (including economic vitality, housing and transport)
- Securing Environmental Sustainability.

In addition, there is a 'Fit for purpose' theme, which covers corporate issues.

23. In May 2007 the Mayoral elections were held and the Mayor was elected for a second four-year term. The Mayor has revised the make-up of the Executive to ensure that it aligned to the Council's revised priorities as detailed within the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Executive portfolios are now:

- Deputy Mayor
- Children, Families and Learning
- Regeneration and Economic Development
- Resources
- Social Care
- Transport

- Community Protection
- Streetscene
- Public Health and Sport.

24. The structure of the Scrutiny function complements the Council's priorities and the Executive portfolios. The scrutiny structure consists of Overview and Scrutiny Board, which includes the Resources and Audit role, and eight thematic panels.

25. Council Departments all work to contribute to the achievement of the Vision. The aims of each directorate as stated in the service plans for 2008/09 are:

Central Services – to ensure that the Council is organisationally 'fit for purpose' to act as community leader and contribute effectively to the achievement of the Sustainable Community Strategy aims and the overall 'Vision for Middlesbrough'

Children, Families and Learning – to strive for excellence by raising hope, aspirations and achievement for children, young people and their families

Environment – to ensure Middlesbrough will be thriving with a clean and safe environment and an efficient transport network where people and business succeed

Regeneration – to promote the economic vitality of Middlesbrough by overturning current poor economic performance and enabling Middlesbrough to fulfil its potential at the economic heart of the city-region

Social Care – to provide, purchase or commission high quality Social Care Services to meet the needs of vulnerable adults in Middlesbrough and provide advice, information, guidance and support on Social Care Services to all. Our emphasis will be on enablement and services which promote people's independence and quality of life.

26. The Council's strategic partner, Mouchel Business Services provides support services to, and on behalf of, the Council. Mouchel's Business Planning and assessment processes reflect the Council's agreed strategic priorities. The Annual Service Review of the Partnership, based on the key strategic priorities demonstrates how the work of the partnership contributes toward the achievement of the Council's priorities ^(Escorporate057).

27. The Council has made significant progress to ensure that the consideration of equality and diversity issues is thoroughly embedded in the Council's policy development, performance management and decision-making processes. This has been achieved through the use of a number of key tools, in addition to adoption of the Equality Standard for Local Government, such as:

- embedded equality and diversity within the Council's decision-making structures
- the Corporate Diversity Group and supporting departmental groups
- a comprehensive set of HR policies and procedures covering all aspects of the equality and diversity agenda
- well-established bullying and harassment contact officers

- good communications and corporate provision of training on key equality and diversity issues made available to all staff
- improved use of Equality Impact Assessments
- robust service planning, which includes the development of Diversity Action Plans
- consultation and community engagement.

3. The Equality Standard for Local Government

28. The Council uses the Equality Standard for Local Government to assess progress in embedding equality and diversity issues within the culture of the organisation.
29. There are five progressive levels of achievement. The Council has gathered evidence of good practice to demonstrate the achievement of Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Each level is not exclusive but more indicative of progress made towards embedding equality and diversity into the culture and values of the organisation.
30. Each of the five levels of the Standard requires a different type of commitment and activity from the Council:

Level 1 – An authority must have adopted a Comprehensive Equality Policy that commits it to achieving equality in race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

Level 2 – Assessment and community engagement is the focus of the second level and the authority must show that it has developed systems for self assessment, audit and scrutiny that are the basis for continuous improvement. It must also demonstrate that it has engaged in the equality impact assessment process; that it has involved community, staff and stakeholder groups in service planning, and that it has engaged in equality action planning for employment, pay and service delivery.

Level 3 – An authority must set equality objectives and targets and demonstrate that it has set objectives across the authority for race, gender and disability. These objectives must address issues around employment, pay and service delivery and be based on the outcomes of equality impact assessments. By March 2009 the authority must also be doing this for religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

Level 4 – Having information systems and monitoring against targets is the primary activity of level 4 of the Standard and requires that an authority is making progress against targets and can measure progress using established information and monitoring systems.

Level 5 – To achieve level 5 of the Standard an authority must have shown that it has made considerable progress in achieving equal employment and service provision with regard to race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

31. Details of progress made against each theme of the Standard since the achievement of Level 3 are contained within the next section.

4. The Council's Progress from Level 3

32. As part of the preparation for Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, the Council completed a self-assessment and identified a number of actions to be undertaken to further strengthen the Council's position, set out in an accompanying action plan ^(Escorporate053). Following receipt of the External Assessors' final report on the Council's achievement of Level 3, an additional action plan was developed to address those areas identified by the inspectors for further improvement ^(Escorporate054). All of these actions have now been completed or embedded into ongoing pieces of work. The main issues are outlined below.

Equality Impact Assessments

33. The Council's approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) was highlighted as an issue in both the self-assessment and the inspectors' comments. Since May 2008 work has been undertaken to further strengthen this area.
34. An additional 22 key policy development staff have attended the Council's workshop on Equality Impact Assessment best practice for refresher training.
35. The EIA pro-formas are in the process of being assessed to ensure they capture the issues in a clear format.
36. The Council plans to build on EIA in developing a comprehensive approach to impact assessment based on the principles of sustainability.
37. The system of EIA scrutiny has been formalised and strengthened. All completed EIAs are now submitted to the Council's Corporate Diversity Group for consideration prior to formal approval. The membership of the Group ^(Escorporate046) ensures that all completed EIAs are scrutinised by a range of professionals who are experienced in diversity issues. An example of an EIA quality check report ^(Escorporate016), submitted to Corporate Diversity Group for consideration is included within the evidence collected to support the Council's declaration of Level 4.
38. In January 2009, Corporate Diversity Group approved a report ^(Escorporate032), which analysed performance of the Council's Diversity Action Plans from the period 2005 – 2008. As a result of this analysis a new approach to the structure of Diversity Action Plans was recommended and agreed by Corporate Diversity Group. This new structure enables the role of EIAs in the setting of targets within DAPs to be more effectively recorded. The new DAP structure will be used from April 2009.

Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief data collection

39. During the level 3 Inspection, the Council's approach to data collection against the sexual orientation and religion or belief strands was raised as an issue. Whilst the Council currently collects this data where there is an explicit need to do so, these questions were not asked on standard Equal Opportunities monitoring forms.

40. To ensure resident and staff views were fully identified on the best approach to this issue, the Council has committed to a series of consultations as part of the development of a policy on this issue. Almost 1200 residents were consulted using the Voiceover Questionnaire ^(Escorporate019) on how they wished to see the Council address this area. The results of this consultation will be used to inform the Council's approach to consultation with existing staff on how to address this issue with existing staff.
41. The questions on race, sexual orientation and religion or belief all include the option of not declaring, to ensure those employees who do not wish to declare their positions have the option not to do so.

Equal Pay

42. During the level 3 inspection, the assessors identified that the Council needed to complete an Equal Pay review. The Council is in the final stages of implementing Single Status; during this interim period the Council has undertaken an Equal Pay review after each phase of Single Status. Once Single Status has been fully implemented a full Equal Pay review will be undertaken. Due to legal and tribunal constraints, the Council has not been in a position to complete a full Equal Pay review before this.

5. Corporate Self-assessment

43. The first three themes within the Standard have been assessed corporately and across the five Departments of the Council. The three themes are:
- Leadership and Corporate Commitment
 - Community Engagement and Accountability
 - Service Delivery and Customer Care.
44. The fourth theme – Employment and Training – has been assessed separately at the corporate level, as it is delivered by the Council’s strategic partner Mouchel Business Services and managed by the HR Client Unit.

Leadership and Corporate Commitment

45. At Level 3, the Leadership and Corporate Commitment theme focused on:
- the development of a comprehensive equality policy
 - the engagement in diversity action planning at both a corporate and departmental level
 - Equality Impact Assessments
 - Corporate structure for the development of information and monitoring systems.
46. Those Councils declaring Level 4 are required to demonstrate how they have further strengthened their position in relation to these issues. There is a particular focus on demonstrating that Councils have the information systems in place to enable them to drive forward progress on equality and diversity issues.
47. As mentioned previously, the Council has utilised a bespoke version of the [ES@T](#) self- assessment toolkit to assess against Level 4. Within the toolkit the following general areas are identified under the theme of Leadership and Corporate Commitment for Level 4:
- corporate oversight of departmental information and monitoring systems
 - system(s) in place to ensure consultation responses inform policy direction.

Corporate commitment to Diversity

48. The Council has thoroughly embedded the principles of equality and diversity within its culture and its decision-making processes. The following documents are in place and outline the Council’s explicit commitment to equality and diversity:
- Diversity and Equality Policy (Escorporate017)
 - Gender Equality Scheme (Escorporate002)
 - Race Equality Scheme (Escorporate005)
 - Disability Equality Scheme (Escorporate003)
 - Single Equality Scheme (Escorporate061).

49. In addition to these robust policies, the Council can demonstrate a ‘golden thread’ identifying equality and diversity as a key crosscutting issue, throughout its corporate documentation.
50. *Sustainable Community Strategy* – this is currently in the process of being developed in line with national guidance to replace the existing Community Strategy. The Strategy will set out the Local Strategic Partnership’s overall vision and equality and diversity will be recognised within this as a key crosscutting issue.
51. *Local Area Agreement* – this document outlines the key targets identified by the LSP as priorities for Middlesbrough. Within this document there is a commitment to ensuring the full impact of any LSP policy on diversity will be assessed where applicable.
52. *Joint Single Equality Scheme* – Middlesbrough Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is one of the first Partnerships in England to develop a Joint Single Equality Scheme approach, adopted by all LSP partners. This Scheme sets out how performance on equality and diversity issues within the LSP will be monitored and sets out the LSP’s commitment to developing its performance management systems to enable progress by diversity strand to be measured where applicable, allowing areas of inequality to be identified and addressed.
53. *Strategic Plan* ^(Escorporate008 – 011) – the Strategic Plan outlines how the Council will deliver the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Within that document the importance of equality and diversity is comprehensively recognised.
54. *People Strategy* ^(Escorporate012 – 014) – outlines the Council’s commitment to establishing Middlesbrough as a successful regional centre and achieving the shared vision of a well run, sustainable and highly regarded town whose citizens feel included, safe, healthy and who have both the opportunities, and the ambition, to achieve their full potential. In order to fulfil its role in achieving this shared vision and acting as community leader, Middlesbrough Council needs a workforce that: -
- reflects the community it serves
 - is able to deliver high quality customer service
 - has managers who take ownership and provide clear direction
 - has future leaders who are able to take the Council agenda forward
 - has a flexible and diverse workforce
 - has leaders who are engaged with the community and who promote partnership working.
55. *Minimum Standard for Performance Management* ^(Escorporate052) – the minimum standard outlines the Council’s agreed best practice approach to service plan development and outlines how performance management can practically improve services to the community. It demonstrates how equality and diversity must be embedded into service planning.
56. Embedded diversity as a core value of the organisation is further supported by the Mayor’s Executive and is explicit as one of the portfolio responsibilities of the

Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor raises diversity during his accountability meetings with Executive members, focusing on their involvement and the promotion of diversity within their respective portfolio areas. All Executive Members also have a standing invitation to attend their departmental Diversity Group meetings.

Robust performance measurement

57. The Council has a range measures in place which form the Council's overarching approach to diversity performance management.
58. *Diversity Action Plans (DAPs)* – the Council has a corporate DAP ^(Escorporate011) and all Departments of the Council have had DAPs in place since 2004 ^(ESCFL076, ESEnvironment049, ESRegeneration011, ECSocialcare001, Escentralservice003). Since that time the Council has been committed to a process of continual improvement as it recognised the positive role of DAPs as a tool for service improvement. As detailed previously, in January 2009 a Diversity Action Plan Evaluation report of 2005-2008 ^(Escorporate032) was submitted to the Corporate Diversity Group. This report outlines in detail the major achievements since Diversity Action Planning was adopted. Diversity Action Planning has been further strengthened following a review of the structure, which now more clearly demonstrates how targets are identified, and their links to the Council's overarching strategic priorities. In line with the Council's Minimum Standard for Performance Management ^(Escorporate052) all targets contained within the DAPs must meet the SMARTER criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely, Evaluate and Review).
59. A process of monitoring DAPs on a quarterly basis has also been in place since 2004. The Council's Performance Management Team monitors progress and reports findings to the Corporate Diversity Group for scrutiny ^(Escorporate004). In addition, departments monitor progress of individual service area DAPs on a quarterly basis. All DAPs are reviewed on an annual basis as part of the service planning process.
60. In April 2008, the Council underwent a Corporate Assessment by the Audit Commission as part of Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The final report stated, "...the Council's corporate framework for performance management is clear and comprehensive. This is framed around corporate and service planning together with regular monitoring and a strong focus on accountability. Minimum standards for service planning include the integration of equal opportunities and diversity issues." The Corporate Assessment inspection findings go on to state that "corporate responsibilities for diversity and sustainability are well covered in all [service] plans". ^(Escorporate059)
61. *Retained Best Value Performance Indicators* – In October 2007, following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, the new National Indicator Set was published. From April 2008, this indicator set replaced all other existing sets of indicators by which the government performance manages local authorities, including Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators. To enable continued measurement of performance in key areas the Council has retained ten equality and diversity BVPIs. In nine of these BVPIs the Council has demonstrated improvement against the baseline. The table overleaf outlines the Council's performance against these retained BVPIs.

Table 2 - Performance against retained BVPIs

BVPI Description	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007	June 2008
002a: Level of Equality Standard	1	2	2	3
002b: Duty to promote Race Equality	95%	100%	100%	100%
011a: Senior Women	51.31%	49.29%	65.92%	52.16%
011b: Senior BME employees	0.72%	0.66%	0.76%	0.77%
011c: Senior Disabled employees	2.88%	3.3%	3.81%	4.58%
016a: Disabled employees total	2.76%	2.5%	3.07%	2.9%
017a: BME employees total	2.7%	2.6%	2.39%	2.61%
156: Buildings accessible to people with a disability	22.2%	35.8%	44.2%	54.28%
174: Racial Incidents per 100,000 employees	N/A	24	21.8	31.79
175: Racial Incidents with further action	N/A	100%	100%	100%

62. The Council's achievements in relation to BVPI 11a – the percentage of women in senior positions, are particularly high. When assessing the performance of all Councils, the government ranked Middlesbrough Council in the top quartile for its performance against this particular target.
63. Performance on BV174 has increased in line with expectations. The Council feels the figures demonstrate that employees feel comfortable reporting racist incidents in the knowledge that they will be supported and their complaints fully investigated. It is anticipated that figures will peak and then start to fall as the Council's continued promotion of best practice in relation to equality and diversity issues becomes more embedded within the culture of the organisation.
64. The Council scrutinises this data within the Performance Clinics. As an example, performance against BVPIs 17a and 11b was identified as issue. This resulted in the development of a range of measures to tackle this underperformance, including:
- the Positive Steps initiative (ESHR009)
 - improved workforce planning information to enable more detailed analysis of trends to be undertaken as part of the Annual Workforce Profile report (Escorporate058)
65. This was also identified as an issue for action within the People Strategy (Escorporate012 – 014) and Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) Middlesbrough (Escorporate043).

Community Engagement and Accountability

66. The [ES@T](#) self-assessment toolkit identifies the following general areas that are addressed within the Community Engagement and Accountability theme for Level 4:
- scrutiny processes in place to examine performance
 - involvement of community, staff and stakeholders in consultation and target setting.

Performance regime

67. *Performance scrutiny* – In addition to the Diversity Action Plan monitoring outlined previously, the Council has monitoring of the retained diversity BVPIs embedded within its performance management regime. The Council's approach to performance management was fundamentally overhauled in 2004 and has been regularly updated and improved since. It is designed to ensure a sharp focus on the delivery of priorities, combining all aspects of formal performance management into a seamless integrated framework, including the corporate commitment to equality and diversity as a cross-cutting issue. The table below outlines in detail the key elements of the performance management framework through which the Council's retained BVPIs are scrutinised.

Table 3: Key Elements of the Performance Management Framework

Time	Activity	Main purpose of activity
August to September	Quarter 1 (Q1) Performance Clinic	Monitoring (at detailed level) of key performance information (PIs, Planned Actions, Retained BVPIs, Reviews, Risks and actions identified at previous clinic)
	Integrated Clinic	Member led challenge – strategic level regarding progress in delivering priorities within budget
November to December	Q2 Performance Clinic	Monitoring (at detailed level) of key performance information (PIs, Planned Actions, Retained BVPIs, Reviews, Risks and actions identified at previous clinic) Identification of emerging priorities
	Q2 Budget Clinic	Detailed budget monitoring this clinic includes a review of last financial year's outturn
	Integrated Clinic	Member led challenge – strategic level regarding progress in delivering priorities within budget
December	LSP Accountability Clinics	Review of progress against LSP targets, information fed into Council's performance management process
February	Q3 Performance Clinic Service Planning	Review and evaluation of performance to feed into next year's priorities and targets Service Plan Review Boards – review of draft service plans by Corporate Team, to check they meet the minimum standards
April		Strategic Plan and service plans available
May to June	Q4 Performance Clinic	Evaluation of progress against targets and priorities feeding into a final review of targets and priorities set (during service planning) LSP information informs

68. The 2008 Corporate Assessment inspectors also found that the Council “used performance management effectively to deliver significant improvements in its services. A comprehensive framework for performance management by both councillors and officers combines minimum standards for service planning, regular monitoring and quarterly reporting with effective links to financial management. Accountabilities of councillors and officers for performance are very clear.”
(Escorporate059)
69. *Equality Impact Assessment Process* – as detailed in the progress from level 3 section of this self-assessment, the Council has undertaken a number of actions to further improve its approach to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) processes to ensure EIAs contribute effectively toward policy development. The Audit Commission inspectors found that “diversity is embedded in the Council’s service delivery through service planning and equality impact assessments.” (Escorporate059)
One of the roles of Corporate Diversity Group is to have oversight of all completed Equality Impact Assessments, ensuring equality and diversity issues are appropriately embedded in the policy development and decision-making processes of the Council.

Community Engagement

70. *Community Engagement Framework* (Escorporate036) *and toolkit* (Escorporate037) – these documents provide an overarching framework for community engagement in Middlesbrough together with a best practice guide. The documents aid community engagement in line with Partnership objectives and professional and ethical research standards including guidance on how consultations should be used to inform service planning and policy development. An online electronic Consultation Management System (consultation portal) has been developed by the Council to complement these documents. The portal ensures that there is corporate oversight of consultations, establishing a mechanism for ensuring all consultations meet the Council’s minimum standards.
71. *Community Cohesion Strategy* (Escorporate041) – the key driving principal of the Community Cohesion Strategy is to ensure there are strong and positive relationships between the different groups that live, work and visit Middlesbrough. The Community Cohesion Strategy clearly outlines the Council’s commitment to community cohesion and its links to equality and diversity. The Middlesbrough Cohesion Partnership, a sub-group of the LSP monitors progress against the associated action plan and reports any issues to the Stronger Communities Action Group of the LSP on a quarterly basis.
72. *Annual Equality and Diversity Report* (Escorporate022) – the report pulls together the key pieces of work being undertaken within the Council on equality and diversity within one, high level summary document and sets out the outcomes achieved. It enables the Council to state where it stands in relation to equality and diversity. The report is a key tool for the Council. Its easy read format enables the report to be used to promote the Council’s work on equality and diversity to a wide audience and is published on the Council’s website.

Corporate Consultation and Target Setting

73. As outlined previously, the Council has a number of key performance measures at the corporate level to enable it to effectively assess how well diversity has been embedded into its culture.
74. In addition to the internally focused performance measures, the National Indicator Set and departmental monitoring of individual services, corporately, the Council has also developed the Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Survey and a Voiceover Citizens Panel as key consultation tools:
75. *Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Survey* – The Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Survey, completed every two years, is the most comprehensive attitudinal survey undertaken in Middlesbrough. For the 2007 survey 4,500 people completed 30 minute face to face interviews. The survey covers a wide range of issues and aspects of it were used to measure whether the Council's actions on equality and diversity and community cohesion are having a positive impact on the community. This most recent survey demonstrates that positive progress continues to be made in Middlesbrough on community cohesion issues.
76. *Middlesbrough Voiceover Citizens Panel* – the panel is a sample of 1250 local residents, recruited to be representative of the wider population, who have agreed to respond to several postal surveys per year. The panel includes people from all backgrounds and all areas of Middlesbrough. Residents are randomly selected and invited to join the panel. To ensure that the panel mirrors the population of Middlesbrough, people are selected on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and the ward they live in. The complete panel is designed to be representative of the town as a whole. It therefore provides a response based on a good cross section of the community.
77. *Specific Policy Development consultation example* – As part of the Council's best practice approach to policy development, every effort is made to engage with all appropriate groups, individuals and organisations as appropriate. Consultation for the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) ^(Escorporate055) demonstrates this approach. The level of consultation is scrutinised by Corporate Diversity Group where an Equality Impact Assessment is required.
78. The minimum standard approach to consultation, with embedded corporate oversight ensures consultations are used to inform policy development and target setting. Within departments bespoke approaches have been developed where specialist engagement are more appropriate. In the Social Care department the Social Care Engagement Strategy ^(ESSocialCare021) has been developed to fulfil a need. Within the Children, Families and Learning department there is an Engagement and Policy Framework ^(ESCFL138), supported by guidance from the Middlesbrough Children and Young Peoples Partnership ^(ESCFL156, 257) which details how children and young people should be involved in decision-making. There is a large volume of evidence within all the departmental evidence to demonstrate how the Council has implemented its approach to engagement practically.

Service Delivery and Customer Care

79. The [ES@T](#) self-assessment toolkit identifies the following general areas that are addressed within the Service Delivery and Customer Care theme for Level 4:
- consultation and monitoring of information
 - equality information monitoring processes and progress against targets
 - monitoring procedures across contracts and partnerships.

Consultation and monitoring - Commitment to continuous service improvement

80. *Performance Monitoring* – The Council has a range of monitoring systems in place to assess the impact of its policies on services and monitor who is accessing its services. The Minimum Standard for Performance Management ^(Escorporate052) advises that “a key element of successful performance management is regular reviews and evaluation of progress against priorities by senior managers”. As outlined previously, the Council was praised for the way equality and diversity is embedded into the performance management regime ^(Escorporate059).
81. The Council plans to build on this good practice to further strengthen its approach to performance management with a complementary minimum standard, drawing together guidance held in several places into one Minimum Standard for Policy Development.
82. Monitoring data is fed into the performance management processes of the Council at a number of points as appropriate. In addition to the Diversity Action Planning processes and Performance Clinic processes that have been outlined previously, there is a commitment corporately to ensuring the impact of services is monitored as appropriate. This commitment is expressed within the Minimum Standard for Performance Management^(Escorporate052). In addition to the corporately implemented systems, departments have developed bespoke systems to measure the impact of their services. In Environment for example, the impact of the Council’s approach to waste collection is monitored through the assisted collections performance monitoring system ^(ESEnvironment136).
83. *Minimum Standard for Data Quality* – (included within the Minimum Standard for Performance Management ^{Escorporate054}) has also been developed to ensure that any data produced by the Council is high quality, accurate, consistent and timely to aid effective decision-making and promote high levels of confidence in reported data, in line with the Council’s corporate Data Quality Policy. The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Board and its Panels also undertake reviews of the key policies of the Council and its services. In 2008/2009 to date, 11 investigations were completed through the scrutiny process. It is anticipated that by the end of the municipal year this figure will increase to approximately 19.
84. In addition to these processes there is also a system of corporate oversight. The Council has developed a corporate complaints approach to capture service dissatisfaction. This is scrutinised by the Standards Committee and lessons learned are disseminated through a network of departmental Complaints officers.

Equality monitoring and Progress Monitoring

85. *TEAM Middlesbrough* ^(Escorporate043) - is designed to implement the vision of the People Strategy and sets the best practice framework for how all staff should be treated. The Corporate Appraisal Scheme ^(ESHR005), which sits alongside the TEAM Middlesbrough guidance outlines how all staff should be assessed to ensure their needs are identified and any issues they may have are addressed in a timely and supportive manner. In November 2008 the Council was corporately accredited with the Investors in People standard. As part of the assessment a number of development points were identified to further improve TEAM Middlesbrough. These actions have been incorporated into the planned review currently being undertaken.
86. *Workforce Profile Monitoring* - The Council has recently produced its second Workforce Profile monitoring report ^(Escorporate058). This second report has built on the initial report, developing the quality and range of information contained within the profile, with comparisons made against Middlesbrough, the Tees Valley and regional figures. This year's profile contained data on: -
- Hours of work
 - Race, gender, disability
 - Corporately delivered training.
87. The Council is committed to the continual development of its ability to monitor its workforce profile. In the forthcoming year work is planned to: -
- Improve recording of all types of training delivered by departments
 - Improve recording of progression.
88. The Workforce Profile is a key tool, used to inform monitoring of progress against the Council's key diversity targets.
89. *Corporate Diversity Group* – As outlined at several points within the self-assessment, the Council has a Corporate Diversity Group. The purpose of the group is to:
- direct work for the achievement of the Equality Standard for Local Government and meeting relevant Key Lines of Enquiry
 - ensure corporate compliance with the existing and emerging legislative framework
 - ensure corporate compliance with the general and specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006
 - ensure diversity is an integral part of service delivery, employment and community engagement by service areas engaging in Equality Impact Assessments and Diversity Action Planning
 - produce and monitor reports on the progress of service areas towards targets defined by Diversity Action Plans, the Equality Standard, and the legislative framework

- support the Council in the achievement of its Diversity and Equality Policy and providing a mechanism for sharing good practice across the Council
 - receive reports and act upon initiatives arising from the Middlesbrough Cohesion Partnership, the Joint Agency Working Group and the Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.
90. The membership of the group ^(Escorporate046) and the structure of the meetings has been designed to ensure links between the Corporate and Departmental Diversity Groups are embedded, thus enabling performance issues to be cascaded up and down. Corporate Diversity Group has a standard agenda item, at which point the Departmental representatives can raise any issues they may have.

Monitoring Procedures across Contracts and Partnerships

91. The Council has developed 'Equality and Diversity in Procurement guidance' ^(Escorporate060), based on national best practice to ensure that equality and diversity issues are fully considered as part of the procurement process.
92. In addition to the above guidance, there are many examples of how departments use Service Level Agreements and contract monitoring procedures ^(ESSocialcare041, 042, 098, 099, ESR154, ESEnvironment037, ESCFL044) to ensure equality and diversity issues are recognised by partners and contractors.
93. Middlesbrough has developed an effective working relationship with its strategic partner, Mouchel. Mouchel delivers some key services on behalf of the Council and an effective partnership approach is necessary to ensure that the Council's key priorities in relation to equality and diversity continue to be met. To ensure this occurs, Mouchel deliver their key supporting action, in line, with the Council's key strategic priorities. The Mouchel / Middlesbrough Council Annual Review report explicitly demonstrates how the work of the Partnership is aligned to the Council's key strategic priorities ^(Escorporate057).

Employment and Training

94. The [ES@T](#) self-assessment toolkit identifies the following general areas that are addressed within the Employment and Training theme for Level 4:
- performance regime - monitoring targets and range of data collected
 - training provision.

Performance regime - Monitoring targets

95. *People Strategy performance* – the Council’s approach to performance management has been outlined in detail within this self-assessment. The Council’s People Strategy ^(Escorporate012, 013, 014) and associated plans have been developed to ensure the workforce is fit for the future, well equipped to shape the town and able to continue to deliver excellent services to the people of Middlesbrough. Progress is assessed and disseminated using a variety of tools and associated plans including:
- the Council’s Corporate Workforce Development Plans supported by a suite of departmental plans (Central Services Workforce Plan example ^(Escorporate056))
 - Workforce Profile Monitoring report ^(Escorporate058)
 - regular reviews of the People Strategy action plan reported to CMT ^(Escorporate025, 026, 027, 028)
 - utilisation of the Workforce Profile report ^(Escorporate058) to monitor progress against the People Strategy ^(Escorporate012 – 014)
 - Annual Equality and Diversity report ^(Escorporate022)
 - retained diversity BVPIs which are monitored through the Council’s corporate Performance Management process (as detailed previously)
 - the Positive Steps initiative ^(ESHR009, 010) and the Positive Steps Steering Group.
96. The Council’s approach is supported by a range of HR policies. In particular:
- Managing Attendance /Sickness Capability ^(ESHR003)
 - Flexible Working Right to Request Parents & Carers ^(ESHR006)
 - Disciplinary policy ^(ESHR015)
 - Equal Opportunities policy ^(ESHR016)
 - Grievance policy ^(ESHR017)
 - Performance Capability policy ^(ESHR018)
 - Recruitment and Selection policy ^(ESHR019)
 - Corporate Appraisal Scheme ^(ESHR005)
 - Learning and Development Strategy ^(ESHR014)
 - TEAM Middlesbrough ^(Escorporate043)
 - Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy.
97. Implementation of the above policies / procedures is recorded and disseminated as appropriate and a number of examples have been included within the Training and Development evidence-gathering tool including:
- Sickness meeting records ^(ESHR001)
 - Disciplinary, compromise, grievance and capability records analysis ^(ESHR002)
 - New starters monitoring forms
 - Equal Opportunities monitoring form
 - Leavers forms
 - Training request forms.

98. In addition to the above, the Council is currently developing an Exit Interview process and a pilot exercise has been carried out within the Social Care Department ^(ESHRO13).

Training Provision

99. *Corporate Training provision* – the Corporate Learning and Development Strategy ^(ESHRO14) was developed to ensure that the commissioning and delivery of learning and development, funded at both corporate and departmental level, is fit for purpose, targets skill areas prioritised by the Council and provides value for money.
100. At present, feedback questionnaires are completed by participants at the end of the learning activity, for all corporately funded programmes. This information is used to provide an initial reaction to the programme and provides useful information on the views of participants who have taken part in the activity.
101. Minimum standards and guidance notes were issued to departments in February 2007, setting out an approach to evaluating learning and development activities. This guidance focused on the individual's experiences of the learning received and the extent to which it had met the needs of the individual and their manager, in terms of impact on their service area.
102. The Learning and Development evaluation strategy, by contrast, focuses on the value of the learning and development activity to the organisation, focusing on all participants.
103. As part of the process of IIP organisational accreditation, departments have strengthened their approach to training and development monitoring, using the minimum standards detailed within the Corporate Learning and Development Strategy ^(ESHRO14). There is corporate oversight in place to ensure this occurs as per the agreed minimum standard approach. Work is ongoing to ensure departments effectively implement this approach to capture equality monitoring data.
104. *Departmentally identified training needs* – in addition to the above the Council has corporate guidance in place outlining how learning and development opportunities should be managed by departments through the Corporate Appraisal Scheme ^(ESHRO05).
105. Personal Development Plans contained within the Corporate Appraisal scheme ^(ESHRO05) are utilised across the Council to identify and assess training needs in line with TEAM Middlesbrough ^(Escorporate043). Both documents complement each other and as part of the current review of TEAM Middlesbrough, this relationship will be further developed.

Conclusion

106. Following the award of Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government in May 2008, the Council has continued to embed and strengthen its approach to equality and diversity issues. At that time, the inspectors advised that the Council was a very strong Level 3 and was in a sound position to reach Level 4 in the short-

term. This self-assessment outlines clearly the approach the Council has taken to address those few areas where additional actions were required to achieve Level 4.

107. The structured implementation of the Council's strategic equality and diversity policies (supported by the range of embedded HR procedures and policies) is ensuring the delivery of the Council's objectives in relation to equality and diversity agenda. Equality and diversity issues are embedded into the Council's decision-making and scrutiny procedures and aligned to the key strategic priorities of the Council.
108. Progress is monitored through the performance management regime comprised of several overlaying elements, which complement each other. The Audit Commission rated the Council's approach to performance management as 'excellent' in the April 2008 Corporate Assessment.
109. The Council's robust approach to community engagement has been further strengthened since the award of Level 3 with the launch of the consultation portal, enhancing corporate oversight and co-ordination of consultations. This is balanced against the departmental ownership of service-specific arrangements for engaging with users and local communities. Departments have demonstrated quite clearly how the culture of consultation as part of the policy development process is embedded within the Council.
110. The culture of equality monitoring has been developed within the Council. Work to strengthen the depth of monitoring information within the Council has been fully recognised within its commitment to continuous service improvement and a number of actions have been identified to ensure national best practice continues to be followed.
111. In light of the above progress, the Council has assessed itself as meeting Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

6. The Way Ahead

Consultation on the Self-assessment

112. In addition to ongoing consultation as part of the development of this self-assessment, a full programme of consultation will be undertaken with staff, stakeholders and members. This will include:
- Workforce Development Officers
 - Departmental Diversity Champions
 - Departmental Diversity Groups
 - Departmental Management Teams
 - Corporate Management Team
 - Corporate Diversity Group
 - Employee Focus Groups
 - Overview and Scrutiny Board.
113. An external assessment process is not required for level 4; therefore once the consultation process is completed the self-assessment will be submitted to the Deputy Mayor for consideration.

Post-Level 4 Action Plan

114. Further areas of improvement were identified during the self-assessment process. These issues are all addressed within the following action plan. Progress against the Action Plan will be monitored by the Corporate Diversity Group on a quarterly basis.

Action	Time Frame	Responsible officer
Develop a comprehensive integrated impact assessment process as part of the Minimum Standard for Strategy and Policy Development.	End Q3 2009/2010	Paul Stephens
Identify additional information needs in respect local inequalities in the light of the Comprehensive Area Assessment framework.	End Q2 2009/2010	Paul Stephens
Complete consultations and develop a strategy to embed religion or belief and sexual orientation monitoring within equality monitoring processes in line with consultation findings.	End Q2 2009/2010	Ann-Marie Johnstone
Complete implementation of Single Status and then complete a full Equal Pay review.	End Q4 2009/2010	Linda Maughan
Improve recording of all types of training delivered by departments Ensure recording of progression (promotion).	End Q4 2009/2010 End Q3 2009/2010	Lesley Roe Pip Schofield
Embed equality monitoring within training commissioned by Departments.	End Q3 2009/2010	Lesley Roe
Continue work to ensure equality monitoring of courses delivered departmentally is embedded.	End Q4 2009/2010	Lesley Roe

115. The Council has set a pass mark of 80% for each element of the evidence gathering process and every area assessed has achieved of 80%. As part of the Council's continued commitment to equality and diversity, service areas will utilise the findings of the evidence gathering process to address those areas where they have scored less than 100% (as detailed in Appendix 1). These actions will be incorporated into Service Area Diversity Actions Plans as appropriate.

Appendix 1 - Self-assessment score breakdown

Scores for Services on Equality Standard Diagnostic Tool Level 4	LEADERSHIP & CORPORATE COMMITMENT %	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY %	SERVICE DELIVERY & CUSTOMER CARE %	Average %
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Regeneration

Culture (Arts, Theatre, Town Hall and Events team)	100%	93.40%	98.72%	97.37%
Economic and Community Regeneration	90.00%	85.71%	84.24%	86.65%
Libraries	100%	88.39%	89.69%	92.69%
Museums & Galleries	100%	96.43%	100%	98.81%
Planning, Housing and Regeneration Programmes	100%	100%	94.87%	98.29%
Directorate average score	98%	93%	94%	95%

Central Services

Legal and Democratic Services	95.00%	91.07%	94.05%	93.37%
Strategic Resources	100.00%	94.29%	98.08%	97.46%
Directorate average score	97.50%	92.68%	96.07%	95.42%

Social Care

Physical Disabilities and Older People	100%	100%	100%	100%
Performance and Planning	100%	100%	100%	100%
Adult Disabilities	100%	100%	100%	100%
Directorate average score	100%	100%	100%	100%

Environment

Transport and Design	100%	97.62%	100%	99.21%
Community Protection	100%	100%	96.15%	98.72%
Sport and Leisure	100%	89.58%	92.31%	93.96%
Streetscene	100%	96.08%	98.08%	98.05%
Directorate average score	100%	96%	97%	97%

Children, Families and Learning

Family Services	100%	86.26%	90.71%	92.32%
Community Education	100%	96.08%	95.83%	97.30%
Pupil Support	100%	92.86%	97.44%	96.76%
Raising Achievement	95%	94.23%	96.79%	95.34%
Commissioning and Resources - Average	97.36%	83.48%	80.07%	86.97%
Directorate average score	98%	91%	92%	94%

Human Resources

Employment and Training	100%	100%	100%	100%
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