

# DRAFT

Appendix 1



## **Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009**

DRAFT 22/9/06



If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call the Corporate Diversity Team on 01432 260216 or e-mail [diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk).

A summary and easy-read version of this document is also available.

# Contents

<b>1. Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Putting it all into Context</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1. What is “Disability”?	6
3.2. Why Have a Disability Equality Scheme?	6
3.3. The Social Model of Disability	6
3.4. Profile of Disability in Herefordshire	7
3.5. Profile of Disability Amongst Council Employees	7
3.6. The Equality Standard	7
3.7. Legal Responsibilities	7
3.8. Enforcement of the Law	8
3.9. The Corporate Diversity Team	8
3.10. The Complaints Procedure	9
3.11. Disability Groups within the Council	9
3.12. Contacts in Herefordshire Council	10
3.13. What the Council Already Does (2006)	10
3.14. Partnership Working	10
3.15. Funding for the DES	11
<b>4. The Priorities</b>	<b>12</b>
4.1. Access to Buildings and the Built Environment	12
4.2. Accessible Information and Communication	13
4.3. Consultation and Involvement	15
4.4. Training & Work Placements	17
4.5. Employment	18
4.6. Transport	19
4.7. Housing	20
4.8. Service Delivery	21
<b>5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review</b>	<b>22</b>
5.1. Consultation and Involvement	22
5.2. Monitoring	22
5.3. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)	23
5.4. Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)	23
5.5. Service Focused Performance Indicators	23
5.6. Building Access Action Plans	23
<b>Appendix 1: Disability in Herefordshire</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Statutory Responsibilities</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Contacts within Herefordshire Council</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix 4: The Current Situation (2006)</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix 5: Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2006-2009</b>	<b>32</b>

# 1. Foreword

Herefordshire Council has both a moral and a statutory obligation to reflect the needs of a diverse population through its service provision and as an employer. As part of our overall approach to equality issues, we recognise that disabled people should have equal rights in relation to employment and services so that they can participate fully as citizens.

In developing this Scheme we are adopting the Social model of Disability as we recognise that disability is caused by the way in which society fails to meet an individual's needs. We are committed to taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination in our policies, practices and procedures. We are also keen to empower disabled people to take control of their lives, and to live independently.

We are committed to employing disabled people and providing equitable services. We believe that if discriminatory factors such as prejudice, inaccessible buildings and inappropriate employment requirements are removed, disabled people will receive good quality services and have enhanced job opportunities.

It is through this Scheme that we can ensure disabled people - irrespective of their age, race, gender and nature of disability - are fully integrated into our community.

Our aim is to fully meet our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and to learn from best practice, as we strive to become an excellent local authority. Disability equality is a priority for the Council as is our whole Comprehensive Equality Policy. This Equality Scheme and Action Plan sets out how we will prioritise work in this area and promote disability equality issues across Herefordshire.

***Councillor Roger Phillips***  
***Leader of Herefordshire Council***

***Neil Pringle***  
***Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council***

## 2. Introduction

Equality of opportunity for disabled people is not just about meeting a legal obligation; it is also about fairness and good sense, and a moral duty to challenge discrimination. The purpose of the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) is to make a commitment to take the needs of disabled people into account in everything we do, whether that's providing services, employing people, developing policies, communicating or consulting. This is called "mainstreaming".

This document is relevant to people who do not consider themselves disabled. It is relevant to people with chronic or progressive illnesses such as long-term depression, cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis and diabetes. It is relevant to older people who may have difficulty walking or whose eyesight may be deteriorating. It is relevant, because where improvements are made for one group of people, they quite often make things better for everyone.

This Scheme should be read in conjunction with the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy (CEP) which is the principal document setting out the Council's commitment to equality. The CEP, Race Equality Scheme and the Disability Equality Scheme are the documents setting out the practical steps that the Council will take to address all forms of discriminatory practice.

The Council recognises that there are cross-overs between issues of disability and other strands of diversity. People can experience discrimination and prejudice for many reasons, and there may be multiple issues which need to be addressed. We work to challenge all forms of discrimination and prejudice.

The DES is a living document which will constantly evolve. It is important to note that the actions described in the action plan are only those currently proposed, and that work towards the elimination of discrimination and achieving equity for disabled people is constantly on-going. Annual reviews of this document will ensure that it remains up-to-date and mindful of current issues.

The DES sets out the Council's overall objectives for improving and addressing disability inequalities, the 8 priority areas that we are concentrating on, and the action plan which will deliver improvements. The 8 priority areas have been identified through a comprehensive consultation and involvement process, so include the issues which are very real to the disabled community in Herefordshire. They are:

1. Access to Buildings & the Built Environment
2. Accessible Information & Communication
3. Consultation & Involvement
4. Training & Work Placements
5. Employment
6. Transport
7. Housing
8. Service Delivery

Incorporated into these priority areas are issues highlighted through the Council's Employee Disability Survey (see Section 4.3) and Equality Impact Assessments (see Section 5.3).

## 3. Putting it all into Context

### 3.1. What is “Disability”?

Throughout this document and in everything the Council does, our definition of “disability” is taken from the Disability Discrimination Act. In the DDA, a disabled person is defined as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term (more than 12 months) impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

A person does not have to be registered disabled to fall within this definition. Neither do they need to have a Blue Badge or have a visible physical impairment. Disability includes sensory impairment, chronic and progressive illnesses, mental health problems, learning disabilities and severe disfigurement.

### 3.2. Why Have a Disability Equality Scheme?

The Disability Discrimination Act requires all public bodies to develop a DES, but the law does not specify what should go into it. The Local Government Association and the Disability Rights Commission recommend that a DES should analyse our practices on access, communication, employment and service delivery. Herefordshire Council’s Scheme is intended to do more than that, so it also covers all the areas that we consider would meet the requirements of the Council and its community focus.

We hope that this DES will help us achieve a number of things:

- Promote equality so that disabled people who live or work in the county can enjoy their full human, social and political rights free from discrimination
- Embrace Herefordshire’s diversity as a source of strength and opportunity
- Meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and make sure that we are taking the needs and views of disabled people into account at all times
- Continuously monitor and improve the ways in which we deliver services to disabled people
- Ensure that we reach our performance targets in relation to the Equality Standard for Local Government (see Section 3.6)
- Meet the principles of the Social Model of Disability
- Become an Authority recognised for excellence and good practice

### 3.3. The Social Model of Disability

The Council has adopted the “Social Model of Disability”. This means that we distinguish between “impairment” and “disability”, and recognise that social barriers are what disable people, not their impairment. These barriers include people’s attitudes to disability, and physical and organisational barriers. The Council is therefore working towards identifying and removing as many of these barriers as possible.

One of the positive effects of adopting the Social Model is that issues of disability are seen as quality of life issues, and are not necessarily associated with health and social care.

We recognise that not everyone accepts the Social Model as the best way of viewing disability. Our decision, however, is based on best practice, which encourages statutory organisations to take this approach. The Social Model is also widely recognised as an improvement on the Medical Model which focuses on medical definitions and impairments.

### **3.4. Profile of Disability in Herefordshire**

Information on disability in Herefordshire can be found in Appendix 1.

### **3.5. Profile of Disability Amongst Council Employees**

According to employment records, 39 of the Council's 5,524 employees had declared a disability as at 31 March 2006. This is 0.39% of the workforce. However this figure is likely to be far higher in reality because:

- Many people do not consider themselves to be disabled
- Some people may not have declared a disability due to fear of discrimination
- The definition of disability has recently been broadened, so that people employed before a certain date may not have been covered by the law

### **3.6. The Equality Standard**

Herefordshire Council has adopted the "Equality Standard for Local Government". The objective of the Equality Standard is to ensure that equality policy and practice is mainstreamed throughout all the Council's activities. It will also help us to meet our statutory obligations in respect of anti-discrimination laws, and it enables the authority to demonstrate that it is a good employer and offers high quality services.

There are five levels in the Equality Standard, indicating how advanced the organisation is in achieving continuous improvement in the equalities field. They are:

1. Commitment to a Comprehensive Equality Policy
2. Assessment and consultation
3. Setting equality objectives and targets
4. Information systems and monitoring against targets
5. Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The Council has been successful at Level 1 of the Equality Standard, and is aiming to reach Level 2 by March 2007. The DES will contribute towards the strand of disability in our work towards the Equality Standard.

### **3.7. Legal Responsibilities**

Herefordshire Council will abide by all legal responsibilities including:

- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- The Building Regulations 2000
- Part 'M' Requirements (Building regulation amendments 2003)
- Fire Precautions Act 1971 and Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 as amended 1999

We will also abide by our duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to promote disability equality and, when carrying out our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment that is unlawful under the Act
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

Details of the Council's statutory requirements with regards to disability can be found at Appendix 2.

### **3.8. Enforcement of the Law**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) does not give the Council any statutory powers to enforce the access requirements of the Act on other organisations. For example, it cannot compel a private sector provider such as a shop to comply with the law. Instead, it is the responsibility of individuals to take action on their own behalf.

Having said this, the spirit of the DDA supports local authorities to be proactive in the community. This is supported further by the Disability Equality Duty Statutory Code of Practice, which states that from December 2006 the Council (as a planning and licensing authority) will have the power to influence organisations to comply with the DDA. Herefordshire Council is keen to be proactive in the community, and will continue to advise and support any individual who feels that they are disadvantaged due to their disability.

### **3.9. The Corporate Diversity Team**

The Corporate Diversity Team was established in June 2005 to drive forward all issues of diversity, including disability. They work closely with colleagues from all services areas across the authority, including the Access Officer and the Legal team.

Part of their remit is to address complaints or concerns on issues relating to both Council business and in the community. They support employees and members of the public who feel they have been treated unfairly, discriminated against, harassed or bullied. They also work proactively within the organisation and out in the community to initiate projects which will improve the quality of people's lives or raise awareness of important issues.

There has been some debate regarding whether the Corporate Diversity Team should recruit dedicated officers to cover specific strands of the Diversity agenda, eg. a Disability Officer. It is agreed that each of the diversity strands (Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion & Belief) all have specific issues which need to be looked at in their own right. However, with the limited resources available, it has been decided that each member of the team needs to be able to see the broader picture, and though a specialism in any area is an advantage, we need to ensure that there is no inequality between strands or a hierarchy of importance - it must be recognised that many individuals will suffer multiple discrimination.



### 3.10. The Complaints Procedure

- **Complaints about Council services:** There is a standard complaints procedure which is followed in the event of any complaint about Council services. This includes an appeals process.

All complaints where discrimination, prejudice or inequality are perceived are forwarded to the Corporate Diversity Team for investigation or input. Each complaint is designated to an individual officer who will contact all necessary parties and investigate. Customers' individual needs are taken into account at all times. They will seek to resolve the issue to the customer's satisfaction, and to make changes to Council services, policies or procedures, if appropriate, to ensure that problems do not arise again.

Complaints are therefore welcomed as a mechanism for identifying and removing any barriers for disabled people.

- **Complaints about discrimination in the community, private sector or other organisations:** Herefordshire Council is keen to emphasise its community leadership role by championing the cause of disabled people who have encountered discrimination. The Corporate Diversity Team supports and advises anyone who feels they have been discriminated against or treated unfairly. However they cannot provide legal advice. Many complaints have been quickly and simply resolved by the informal involvement of a Council employee.

In cases where disability discrimination is an issue, customers are often advised to contact the Disability Rights Commission. Others are directed to the Citizens' Advice Bureau or local disability organisation with expertise in the relevant issue (see Section 3.14 regarding ABLE).

### 3.11. Disability Groups within the Council

- The Council supports a **Disability Working Group** which champions disability equality throughout the organisation. The group has representatives from across the Authority, and ensures close co-operation between service areas.
- There is also a **Disability Staff Group** open to all Council employees. This acts as a mechanism for employees to communicate their ideas or concerns, and forms a consultation panel for new initiatives.
- Both of these groups feed into the **Diversity Group** which exists to ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory and other commitments in respect of diversity and equality of opportunity. It aims to promote and achieve equal opportunities for all regardless of race, religion or belief, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation, income or geographical location within the county. The group is led and chaired by the Director of Corporate & Customer Services, and members include officers from each Council Directorate.

### 3.12. Contacts in Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council wishes to make it as simple as possible for people to contact the right person if they have a comment to make about disability. In most cases, Info Shops or the Corporate Diversity Team can resolve issues, pass on information, or put customers in touch with the relevant person or department. However a more thorough list of contacts within the Authority is shown at Appendix 3.

### 3.13. What the Council Already Does (2006)

For several years, Herefordshire Council has been making progress towards eliminating discrimination towards disabled people, and providing equitable services. A list of some of the activities carried out and relevant initiatives can be found in Appendix 4.

### 3.14. Partnership Working

Herefordshire Council works closely with:

- Diversity officers in other organisations to share information and ideas.
- Facilitators of the independent advisory group (IAG) for disability for the West Mercia police division.
- Hereford Access for All, a local charity which works to improve and publicise access issues in the city of Hereford.
- The Involving People Team at the Primary Care Trust.

We are also represented on the following partnership groups:

- **Accessible Leisure for All (ALFA) Group:** A county-wide group established and facilitated by the Council.
- **Herefordshire Learning Disability Partnership Board:** A “wider reference group” to support people with learning disabilities.
- **Herefordshire Equality Partnership:** Partners include Police, Citizens’ Advice Bureau, Chamber of Commerce and Learning & Skills Council.
- **Regional Disabilities Awareness Network (DAN):** Focusing on Museums, Libraries and Archives.
- **“In Control”:** A national project being piloted in Herefordshire for a small group of people with learning disabilities.

The Council has Service Level Agreements with numerous voluntary and charitable organisations across the county to provide services. Examples of these are:

- Day opportunities (Age Concern)
- Welfare rights advice (Access to Benefits, Leisure, Employment (ABLE) and Citizens’ Advice Bureau)
- Advice, training support and employment opportunities for people requiring support (Workmatch)

We are currently working with Alliance Hereford (which works across all voluntary sector organisations) to set up a system of accreditation for care providers.

### **3.15. Funding for the DES**

Diversity (which incorporates disability) is a “cross-cutting theme” within the Council’s Corporate Plan and wider, within the Community Strategy. Other themes include partnership and sustainability. This means that disability should be taken account of when we deliver all our services, and that funding for the work we do is therefore generally sourced from individual service budgets.

In addition to this, there is a small budget allocated to the Corporate Diversity Team to fund central initiatives or discretionary activities, and some of these are detailed in Appendix 4 under “Resources”. See also section 4.1.4.

## 4. The Priorities

The DES focuses on 8 key areas which have been identified through consultation with disabled employees and the disabled community. The Action Plan at the end of this document highlights the practical steps that we will take in each of these areas.

It is important to note that these priorities are not the only activity being undertaken. The Council already carries out many initiatives to support disabled people as part of its everyday function, and this work will continue. Some of the initiatives referred to can be found in Appendix 4.

The 8 priorities are:

1. **Buildings access and the built environment** – including access to council premises and other facilities that the council provides such as country parks.
2. **Communications** – including how we communicate with our customers and staff and providing information in accessible formats.
3. **Consultation and involvement**
4. **Training and work placements**
5. **Employment** – including recruitment and retention of disabled people and striving to become an employer of choice.
6. **Transport**
7. **Housing**
8. **Service delivery** – to include making better use of technology and one-stop-shop solutions to enable equitable access to information and services.

Each of these areas is discussed in more detail below.

### 4.1. Access to Buildings and the Built Environment

People are frequently disabled by the way buildings and the environment are designed or constructed. For example, reception desks too high for wheelchair users, or lack of contrast in design causing difficulties for partially sighted people. We are committed to improving physical access across all of our services to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged. This could include public rights of way, Council offices, public toilets, playgrounds, parks and open spaces. This is not always about making alterations to buildings – it may be as simple as making small adjustments to fixtures and fittings such as doors, toilets and light switches.

#### *Why is this a priority?*

The public consultation carried out in preparation for the DES highlighted car parking, public toilets, physical access, kerbs and pavements and bus shelters as key priorities.

#### *What we currently do*

##### 4.1.1. Rights of Way

Herefordshire Council currently ensures that all Rights of Way improvement schemes are assessed for their ability to improve disabled access before they are implemented. Annual reports are produced highlighting where improvements have been made.

### **4.1.2. Access Audits**

An “access audit” identifies physical barriers and determines what reasonable adjustments are required to buildings and equipment to make them accessible.

The Council audits its own buildings, both public and staff areas, in order to identify what improvements need to be made.

However we also advise community buildings, churches and private sector businesses on how they might go about getting an access audit. We can provide a list of companies who carry out access audits, and can provide a checklist of points to consider for those who want to carry out an informal audit of their own premises. The Property team will also provide advice and answer questions on accessibility. This service is free of charge.

### **4.1.3. Projects to Alter Physical Barriers**

The Council has made an on-going commitment to make improvements to the physical environment at every opportunity. Opportunities sometimes arise when large planning applications are put forward, as the Council is sometimes able to negotiate “planning gains”. These are improvements which the applicant must make to the surrounding area, and we use these situations to promote improved access to sporting or community facilities.

### **4.1.4. Standards for New and Existing Buildings**

All new Council buildings will comply with all relevant legislation to meet the needs of disabled people. Existing Council buildings, including leased buildings, shall, where it is reasonable to do so, be improved to the BS 8300 guidelines.

There are certain Council buildings which are inaccessible due to various factors such as age, construction or layout. Where this is the case, we consider replacement of the building altogether, or substantial alterations, whichever is the most appropriate. It may be, however, that services could be delivered in a different way, rather than adapting buildings, and this option is also considered.

Access audits have been done for most Council buildings, and required actions are prioritised. The Council has an annual capital budget of £200,000 for improvements to its corporate buildings. There is also a budget of £275,000 (which comes from the Department of Education & Skills) for upgrading and improving access to school buildings.

## **4.2. Accessible Information and Communication**

This section covers many different areas, for example:

- The language we use to explain our services
- The format in which documents are available
- How we design signs
- How we layout our documents

- The images we use
- How we communicate face-to-face and over the telephone
- How we promote and advertise our services
- How we use the internet and other technologies
- How we manage information

### ***Why is this a priority?***

It is vital that we communicate clearly so that people understand how to access services and what other opportunities are available to them.

Issues around accessible information were a very high priority during public consultation, with people telling us that jargon is still being used, and that they have difficulty finding information. Suggestions for improvement included better use of the media, alternative colour schemes, design improvements to “Herefordshire Matters” (the Council’s newsletter) and a one-stop-shop for disability information.

### ***What are we currently doing?***

#### **4.2.1. Communications Strategy**

The Council has a Communications Strategy which sets out how we should communicate both internally and externally. Our communication should consistently reflect our awareness and understanding of disability equality issues. The Strategy includes clear standards on:

- The materials we use
- Minimum font sizes and type of font
- A statement offering literature in alternative formats (eg. large print, audio, Braille, easy-read)
- Use of plain English

The Authority is constantly open to ideas on how we can better communicate, and is entirely flexible in producing information in alternative formats tailored to individuals if necessary.

#### **4.2.2. Use of the Internet**

The Council is committed to providing information and services over the internet as well as in other ways. In 2001 we developed our first “Implementing Electronic Government Statement” which sets out how we are going to do this. It also specifies how we will make these services accessible to people with particular needs, for example people who use specialised software, or partially sighted people.

The Herefordshire Council’s website reflects our commitment to the highest level of web accessibility (AAA) whenever possible. Where necessary we work with partners and suppliers, promoting good practice to help us achieve this.

We also take a proactive approach by using a number of automated tools to monitor the site. These alert us to areas of concern which we then take steps to put right. This has enabled us to consistently stay in the top performing local and central government websites for

accessibility. We have also earned the Plain English Internet Crystal Mark for our website and have introduced a new vocalisation tool called Browsealoud.

How we put together the content behind the scenes makes it easier for people to find the information they want when it is needed. We use recognized information and content management standards wherever possible to promote accessible information and services on the internet and through other technologies.

### **4.3. Consultation and Involvement**

Consultation and involvement is about finding out what disabled people think about our services and what their needs are, and using this information to improve their quality of life.

#### ***Why is this a priority?***

As a local authority, we need to consult and involve disabled people in the decisions which affect their lives, so that we can shape services according to their needs. Specific projects on which we are required to consult are Equality Impact Assessments and the Disability Equality Scheme.

The frequency and methods we use to consult with disabled people are very important. Firstly, people want to be consulted in a manner they find appropriate, and there are many people who want to be involved who feel they are not being listened to.

#### ***What are we currently doing?***

##### **4.3.1. Community Involvement Strategy**

The Council has a Community Involvement Strategy (2005-2008) with an action plan. This sets out how we plan to involve people who live in, work in and visit Herefordshire in decision making. The Strategy specifies that:

*“Community involvement and consultative activity is accessible to and inclusive of the views of all Herefordshire people within the meaning of the current and future equalities legislation.”*

The Strategy sets out principles as above, and does not detail how we are going to engage the Disabled community, which is what we are seeking to do in this document.

##### **4.3.2. Current Methods of Consultation**

Amongst the general population, the Council consults in a number of ways, for example:

- **Herefordshire Voice:** This is the Council’s citizens panel consisting of 1,200 Herefordshire residents, chosen to reflect the demographic make-up of the county.
- **Community Forums:** An opportunity for local people in 6 different locations in the county to learn about Council initiatives and raise local issues.

- **Regular Surveys:** The Council consults on a regular basis on a large number of topics and issues.

The Council has made a commitment to consistently **feed back** the results of all consultation to the public in a timely and appropriate fashion.

The Authority works in partnership with the **Involving People Team**, a jointly funded initiative with the Primary Care Trust, to develop methods of consultation with service users on issues relating to health and social care. There is also a dedicated **Public Contact Team** within health and social care which aims to collate, research and report on all types of user feedback.

The new planning system changes the way local authorities address planning issues. More community involvement is being encouraged, not just on individual planning applications but in producing development plans which address how areas will develop in the future. Herefordshire Council has developed a “**Statement of Community Involvement**” (SCI) which sets out the standards to be achieved for involving the community in these matters.

The Authority has contacts with most of the key **disability organisations** in Herefordshire and frequently seeks their input on documents and issues. To date (2006) this has been on an informal basis, and we will seek to formalise these arrangements in 2007.

#### **4.3.3. Consultation and Involvement on the DES**

The Council consulted comprehensively with disabled people in order to develop the DES. This included:

1. **Disability “Involvement Meeting”** (March 2006): An opportunity for representatives of Herefordshire disability organisations to comment on the draft public questionnaire, and to put forward their views on key priorities.
2. **Council Employee Disability Survey** (April 2006): A survey of disabled Council employees on their experience in the workplace.
3. **People’s Union** (May 2006): A session with people with learning disabilities to provide feedback on the easy read version of the Public Disability Survey, and for them to have their say on the issues it raised.
4. **Public Disability Survey** (May 2006): A comprehensive survey for the community aimed at disabled people, parents of disabled children and carers.
5. **Public Disability Forum** (May 2006): An open public meeting for disabled people, parents, carers and professionals to put forward practical ideas for how the Council could make improvements.
6. **Barrs Court School** (June 2006): A session held with the student council to provide an opportunity for them to have their say.
7. **DES Consultation** (August-September 2006): A four-week period when the public was invited to submit feedback on the draft DES, also posted directly to those who attended the Public Disability Forum and other disabled individuals.



As a result of the process above, the following has already taken place:

- Information added to the Council website on public toilets, RADAR keys (see page 29) and initiatives in place for disabled people.
- The priorities of the DES developed.
- Disabled car parking spaces regularly policed at Council buildings.
- Advice and guidance given to other Local Authorities on how to carry out consultation and develop a DES.
- Project initiated to review disability registration.
- Council employees advised about free postage of items for blind and partially sighted people.
- Instigated policy review on use of Rich Text Format documents on website.

We are seeking new ways by which to consult and involve disabled people in the development of Council services and policies. We will do this by reviewing existing policies, and researching other organisations which already do this well. The Action Plan details exactly what we will do.

#### **4.4. Training & Work Placements**

Work placements are opportunities for people to work within the Council for a short period of time and gain valuable experience.

Training refers both to the training received by Council employees and others, and to providing equitable access to training opportunities for all employees. Provision of training and development is a key strength of Herefordshire Council, and it is keen to ensure that diversity training is targeted and appropriate to people's needs and the expectations of the authority.

##### ***Why is this a priority?***

1. Training Council employees in disability equality has been highlighted by public consultation and the Human Resources Equality Impact Assessment as vital to ensure that employees understand the needs of disabled customers and can work to eliminate discrimination.
2. Equitable access to training opportunities is key to ensuring that all employees can take advantage of opportunities to develop careers, maintain and enhance skills.
3. As the largest employer in Herefordshire, the Council needs to lead on providing and promoting work placements for disabled people.

##### ***What are we currently doing?***

###### **4.4.1. Recruitment & Selection Training**

All managers who participate in recruitment and selection are required to undergo training. This training includes relevant equality and diversity information.

#### **4.4.2. Monitoring of Council Training**

The Council currently monitors all training to ensure that there is no evidence of disadvantage or discrimination against particular groups of employees. In fact in 2006, the percentage of disabled employees taking up training opportunities was higher than the percentage of disabled employees in the wider workforce.

#### **4.4.3. Work Placements**

Herefordshire Council are currently working in partnership with external organisations “Work Assist” (Jobcentre Plus) and Mencap to deliver an action plan to enable disabled people to carry out work placements within each directorate at Herefordshire Council.

### **4.5. Employment**

Employment is about advertising for, recruiting, promoting and retaining employees within the Council. Herefordshire Council aims to work towards a position where its workforce is representative of the community it serves. Removing all barriers to recruitment is part of this aim.

The council also aims to become an “employer of choice” for all, including disabled people, and to have a workforce that reflects the diverse nature of the community it serves. It seeks to be an organisation where disabled people feel empowered and valued, consistent with the Council’s style and values.

#### ***Why is this a priority?***

The Council has a moral, social and legal obligation to ensure that those in employment reflect the community it serves. Some barriers were highlighted by disabled people through our consultation process, some by Council employees through the Employee Disability Survey, and some by the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) carried out within Human Resources.

#### ***What are we currently doing?***

##### **4.5.1. Recruitment Literature**

Council recruitment literature highlights our commitment to equality and diversity, and is sent to everyone who requests further information about an advertised job. This increases applicants’ understanding from the outset of what their responsibilities are, and how seriously the organisation takes its obligations to eliminate discrimination and provide equitable access to employment opportunities.

##### **4.5.2. Flexible working**

The Council operates a flexitime scheme and has a Flexible Working Policy to enable employees to work flexibly where possible, whilst taking into account service delivery issues. These policies were highlighted in the Employee Disability Survey as particularly helpful to disabled members of staff.

Requests for alternative work practices such as home working, job share, and a range of other ways to work flexibly are always considered carefully, and accommodated wherever possible.

#### **4.5.3. Reasonable Adjustments**

The Council complies with legislation which requires us to make reasonable adjustments to allow disabled people to attend interviews and to take up jobs within the authority. Council recruitment literature makes this commitment clear so that we encourage applications from disabled people. We also use the "Access to Work" scheme for employees who may need extra support.

#### **4.5.4. Action Plan to Remove Barriers**

An action plan to remove barriers to recruitment is being developed through the Pay & Workforce Development Strategy (operational plan 2006-7).

#### **4.5.5. Working with Partners**

The Council is actively working with its partner - Jobcentre Plus - to ensure opportunities in employment (including work placements) are promoted to the widest possible audience, whilst ensuring that these are appropriately geared to the needs and circumstances of individuals.

### **4.6. Transport**

Transport is defined as:

- Public transport – buses, taxis and trains
- Roads and car parking
- Community transport

#### ***Why is this a priority?***

Transport is a fundamental way for many people, particularly disabled people, to experience independence. It was one of the key themes raised at every point of the public consultation, and is therefore of the highest importance to disabled people in Herefordshire.

#### ***What are we currently doing?***

The Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2001-2006 seeks to improve accessibility to services and to make the transport system more accessible for disabled people. It also sets out the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 with respect to transport provision. The Council supports a number of initiatives linked to the LTP to enhance transportation and mobility for disabled people, including:

- Provision of bus timetable information in accessible formats, including telephone, mobile phone text message and internet
- The development of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- The establishment of Pedestrian, Access and Cycle Forum, with representation from disabled community groups

- Shopmobility schemes in Hereford, Leominster and Ledbury
- A Parking Strategy providing concessions for disabled persons
- Provision of subsidised bus services with low floor buses helping to improve access and promote social inclusion
- Bus Interchanges and access improvements
- Advice for bus drivers to recognise and understand the needs of disabled passengers
- Rail interchange infrastructure improvements within the county
- Community transport schemes providing wheelchair-accessible vehicles
- A concessionary fares scheme
- Taxi and Private Hire Licensing to improve vehicle accessibility

There are various transport initiatives which the Authority would like to introduce but are unable to because of lack of funds. They include:

- A taxi voucher scheme for disabled people who can't access buses
- Provision of free bus and community transport travel for carers on duty
- Introduction of verbal/LED announcements on buses

These schemes will be reviewed on a regular basis to see if they are feasible or if they can be incorporated into other initiatives.

## **4.7. Housing**

The Council has a statutory duty to provide means-tested grant aid to disabled people for a range of adaptations to their homes regardless of tenure. The Council also works in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to access and develop affordable housing for disabled people.

### ***Why is this a priority?***

Housing is fundamental to people's ability to live independently, and was highlighted as important at the public events held to consult on this document.

### ***What are we currently doing?***

#### **4.7.1. You @ Home**

The Council's Strategic Housing Division operates an 'in-house' home improvement agency called "You @ Home". The agency assists disabled and vulnerable people to access a range of grants and services to enable them to live independently within their own homes. Services include a Handy Person scheme under which people can have minor works of repair, improvement or adaptation carried out at no cost following a referral from a health or social care worker.

You @ Home can also help disabled people to access appropriate benefits and to find alternative ways of funding adaptations.

#### **4.7.2. Adaptations**

The Council has a budget for mandatory disabled adaptations and also provides funding for discretionary adaptations and relocation through the housing renewal policy. Adaptations are considered following a referral from an Occupational Therapist. The Council, in partnership with Housing Associations, also funds the development of disabled

adapted properties in special circumstances to meet specific needs. Schemes providing affordable housing are developed to Lifetime Homes standards which improves the extent to which properties can adapt to meet the changing needs of their occupiers.

#### **4.7.3. Support to Live Independently**

The Council administers funding for housing-related support to enable vulnerable people to live independently. This is funded through the Supporting People Programme. Support includes both floating support (visiting people in their own homes) and accommodation-based support.

#### **4.7.4. A Home of Your Own: Shared Ownership**

The Council works in partnership with Advance Housing to provide opportunities for people with mental health problems or a learning disability to own their own home through “Ownhome” and “SOLD” – shared ownership schemes.

The overwhelming benefit to shared owners is that they get a much greater choice over the house or flat that they live in, who they live with and their location. The scheme works by buying existing properties from the open market.

### **4.8. Service Delivery**

Service delivery is about all the services that the council delivers, and making sure that they are fair and equitable and take into account the needs of disabled users.

#### ***Why is this a priority?***

Service delivery can cover many different areas. It is a priority for residents of Herefordshire as it will take into account many of the issues they have raised throughout the consultation process for this document.

#### ***What are we currently doing?***

The Authority has many initiatives across its various services which aim to ensure that disabled people enjoy equitable access. Many of these are detailed in Appendix 2 and 4.

However we do need to ensure that core standards are adhered to across the whole organisation. All relevant service areas carry out Equality Impact Assessments (see Section 5.3) and any gaps identified are turned into practical actions which make clear reference to specific disability equality objectives, priorities and outcomes. The key actions are incorporated into the Service Plans developed by individual Service Managers, and these in turn are monitored by the performance management process within the council.

However there is more we can do to improve the services delivered to disabled customers, and these are detailed in the Action Plan.

## 5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

It is vital that we monitor, evaluate and review this Scheme in order to meet our duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. In addition, we need to ensure that the Scheme is effectively implemented in order to achieve the targets in the Improvement Plan and to achieve the Local Authority Equality Standard (see section 3.6).

The Scheme and its Action Plan will be continuously monitored by the Disability Working Group (see Section 3.11). Performance against the action plan will be regularly reviewed at the Corporate Diversity Group and reported into Council every six months. All actions in the Action Plan have a named officer in order to make this process easier to monitor.

We are required by law to review the document annually, and to fully review and develop it every three years. Both the annual reviews and updated Disability Equality Schemes are public documents and will be available in hard copy, alternative formats as required, and on the internet.

A range of other measures and performance monitoring criteria is already in place, and some of these are listed below:

### 5.1. Consultation and Involvement

The DES has been developed by involving people across the county. These include individual members of the public, disabled Council employees, and representatives from voluntary and community organisations. All of these have contributed their time and expertise to help refine and develop the Scheme.

Consultation and involvement with the disabled community will be on-going (see the Action Plan for further details), and will continue to be a key feature of our three-yearly DES review.

### 5.2. Monitoring

Equality does not mean providing the same service for everyone or treating every person in the same way. It is about adapting the service when and where appropriate to meet the needs of diverse groups of people. If the Council does not know who its customers are, it will not know whether disabled people have equitable access to services and information.

Monitoring the people who use our services enables the Council to assess if the service is discriminating against certain groups and whether people are getting what they want and need. It is a means of ensuring high quality, appropriate services.

The Council has introduced a standard “diversity monitoring” form which will be used by all the different services. It is a tick-box form which asks questions about ethnicity and nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age, and religion and belief. This will help to give us a clear picture of who our customers are, and to identify if there is higher or lower uptake by certain groups of people (eg. disabled people).

### **5.3. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

An EIA is an analysis of a Council service or policy. Its purpose is to ensure that every service and policy for, or delivered to, the general community is appropriate and accessible and does not, however unwittingly, disadvantage or discriminate against any group.

By law, we are required to assess all services and policies for possible racial discrimination. However the Council has broadened the scope of its assessments to disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, geographical location and income.

EIAs help us to identify any possible areas where discrimination or disadvantage may occur. This leads to actions which help us to prevent this happening. The actions are added to each individual Service Plan, and monitored by the Head of Service.

### **5.4. Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)**

One of the ways of measuring how Herefordshire Council performs is through the use of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). These are targets which help us to make continuous improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of services. They are a good way of comparing local results with other authorities.

There are several BVPIs which relate to disability, and these can be found in Appendix 5, along with our actual results.

### **5.5. Service Focused Performance Indicators**

Services will have their own performance indicators which will provide information on how well we are serving disabled customers. As a minimum, all services should know how many of their customers are disabled and what their needs are in relation to that service.

### **5.6. Building Access Action Plans**

The Access Action Plans that are being developed at service level will include the involvement of disabled service users in monitoring access solutions. These plans will need to be produced as evidence in Health and Safety audits and in inspections to provide evidence of compliance with the DDA and impact assessments related to the Equality Standard.

# Appendix 1: Disability in Herefordshire

The following information has been sourced from the 2001 Census. Further information can be found in the "State of Herefordshire Report 2006" (available from the Herefordshire Partnership website).

<b>Estimated numbers of disabled people in Herefordshire - 2001</b>			
<b>Type of disability</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Serious</b>	<b>Total</b>
Any	18,410	7,780	26,200
Locomotive	13,950	5,460	19,410
Personal care	8,410	2,030	10,440
Sight	2,590	1,060	3,650
Hearing	6,660	580	7,240
Communication	1,460	560	2,020

- 18% of people (all ages) living in Herefordshire described themselves as having a long-term illness, health problem or disability, which limits daily activities or work. Proportions increase with age.
- It is estimated that more than 26,000 adults (aged 16 and over) in Herefordshire have at least one disability and that nearly 8,000 of these could be categorised as having a serious disability. Locomotive disabilities are the most common, followed by personal care.
- 8% people living in Herefordshire people said that their general health was "not good".
- 4% of people aged 16-74 in Herefordshire described their working status as "permanently sick or disabled".

<b>% of people with limiting long-term illness according to their urban/rural location</b>	
Urban	47 %
Rural Town	11 %
Rural Village	22 %
Rural Dispersed	20 %
Total	100 %

- In August 2004, 6,775 people in Herefordshire were claiming Disability Living Allowance. The Department for Work and Pensions publish claim rates for each Local Authority area, which for Herefordshire is 4% of the 2001 total population.
- In August 2004, 5,645 people over 65 years old in Herefordshire were claiming Attendance Allowance (the DWP publish this as 17% of the 65 and over 2001 Census population).
- 3.9% of Herefordshire's dependent children have a limiting long-term illness. (A dependent child is a person in a household aged 0 to 15 (whether or not in a family) or a person aged 16 to 18 who is in a family with parents).

According to the Herefordshire Council's Client Index System, 5,178 Herefordshire residents had a current Blue Badge in July 2006.



## Appendix 2: Statutory Responsibilities

The table below lists the activities which the Council is required to carry out by law.

Service Area	Action	Progress
Corporate	Publish a three-year Disability Equality Scheme by December 2006 including consultation and involvement of disabled people	Completed
Corporate	Review Disability Equality Scheme annually and publish results	Scheduled in
Corporate	Meet Best Value performance indicators	
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination</li> <li>• Eliminate unlawful harassment</li> <li>• Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons</li> <li>• Take account of a person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than others</li> </ul>	
Corporate	Make all public areas accessible or, where this can't be achieved, ensure that services are delivered equitably to all	50% of public areas in Council buildings accessible as at March 2006
Employment	Monitor the number of disabled employees within the authority.	
Social Care	Assessment and care management function to ensure that those people who require services have a comprehensive assessment, care plan and services arranged and commissioned to meet eligible needs. We can also offer a direct payment to service users in lieu of services	This is the core function of Social Care and therefore is on-going practice. Clients receive copies of their assessment and care plan. We regularly review the care plan and care package that the service user is receiving.
Social Care	Liaise with a range of providers to ensure that appropriate services are commissioned.	We have "block & spot" contracts in place with a range of providers that are reviewed.
Social Care	To financially assess those people in receipt of services to set appropriate charges	The welfare rights team can become involved to maximise people's income.
Social Care	Duty to provide information regarding services available	Leaflets to the public are currently being reviewed.

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Social Care	Set procedure for considering representations including compliments, comments and complaints	System is in place to monitor and deal with complaints
Social Care	Carry out carer's assessments for those carers who provide regular and substantial care	These assessments are tied into the care management process. Carers receive copies of their assessments and where appropriate services are arranged. Again, regular reviews of carers' needs are undertaken.
Procurement	Requirements of the DDA are a part of all contracts and commissioning arrangements	
ICT	Ensure that ICT technology provision and electronic publishing environments comply with the DDA	Council website is progressing towards AAA compliance. New tools and technologies are assessed before procurement against AAA compliance checklists.
Housing	To administer Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants in accordance with the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996	
Housing	To administer the discretionary assistance available through The Herefordshire Council Housing Renewal Policy 2006-2009 including Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants, Relocation Assistance, Targeted Minor Works Assistance (general power under Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002)	

## Appendix 3: Contacts within Herefordshire Council

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Access to buildings and the built environment	Colin Birks	Property Services	01432 261980 csbirks@herefordshire.gov.uk
Adult social care: - Physical disabilities - Older people  - Learning disabilities - Mental health	Kath England Sue Dale  Catherine Nolan Sue Bennison	Adult Social Care Adult Social Care Adult Social Care Adult Social Care	01432 261682 kengland@herefordshire.gov.uk  01432 373200 cnolan@herefordshire.gov.uk 01432 361600 sbenniso@herefordshire.gov.uk
Children and young people	George Salmon	Commissioning & Improvement	01432 260802 gsalmon@herefordshire.gov.uk
Communications, public relations, council literature	Robert Blower	Communications	01432 383510 rblower@herefordshire.gov.uk
Consultation and involvement	Martin Heuter	Herefordshire Partnership	01432 383032 mheuter@herefordshire.gov.uk
Discrimination, disadvantage, complaints, compliments, ideas, DES	Harriet Yellin	Corporate Diversity Team	01432 260216 hyellin@herefordshire.gov.uk
Employment and training	Jocelyn Hughes	Human Resources	01432 260232 jahughes@herefordshire.gov.uk
Herefordshire Matters	Robert Blower	Communications	01432 383510 rblower@herefordshire.gov.uk
Housing	Richard Gabb	Strategic Housing	01432 261902 rgabb@herefordshire.gov.uk
Info Shops and customer services	Rachel Bayley	Info in Herefordshire	01432 260433 rbayley@herefordshire.gov.uk
Libraries, heritage and museums	Kate Murray	Cultural Services	01432 383602 kmurray@herefordshire.gov.uk
Licensing	Suzanne Laughland	Environmental Health and Trading Standards	01432 261675 slaughland@herefordshire.gov.uk
Parks, countryside, leisure facilities	Tony Featherstone	Parks & Countryside	01568 798321 afeatherstone@herefordshire.gov.uk
Planning	Chris Botwright	Forward Planning	01432 260133 cmjbotwright@herefordshire.gov.uk
Public transport	Jim Davies	Highways & Transportation	01432 260948 jrdavies@herefordshire.gov.uk

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Officer</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Sport	Jan Perridge	Sports Development	01432 260329 jperridge@herefordshire.gov.uk
Tourism	Jane Lewis	Cultural Services	01432 383068 jlewis2@herefordshire.gov.uk
Website	Ellen Pawley	Knowledge Management, ICT Services	01432 260771 elpawley@herefordshire.gov.uk
Work placements	Kim Thompson	Human Resources	01432 261903 kcthompson@herefordshire.gov.uk

## Appendix 4: The Current Situation (2006)

For several years, Herefordshire Council has been making progress towards eliminating discrimination towards disabled people, and providing equitable services. The list below shows the progress that has already been made. None of these activities are required by law.

- **Complaints Procedure:** Customers no longer have to formally write to the Council to make a complaint. Complaints, comments and compliments can be made by telephone, e-mail or face-to-face. Complaints can also be made on behalf of someone else. Complaints and comments are monitored by disability as well as other personal information, in order to develop an understanding of underlying discrimination or unfavourable treatment.
- **Website Accessibility:** The Council website has earned the Plain English Internet Crystal Mark for providing clear information. It has also been designed to meet the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) A-level standard.
- **RADAR Keys:** Keys are now available at a reduced price from all Herefordshire Tourist Information Centres and Info Shops. RADAR, (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) is a national network of disability organisations and disabled people formed in 1977. The National Key Scheme offers independent access to disabled people to around 7,000 locked public toilets in the UK.
- **Elected Member:** We have an Elected Member (a Councillor) with Diversity as part of their remit (this includes disability).
- **Resources:** In addition to the dedicated Diversity Team, some funds have been allocated for work on disability issues. The funds have been used to support small-scale community projects such as:
  - ABLE's resource book for disabled people
  - Hereford Access for All's directory of restaurants and cafés in Hereford City
  - Advisory leaflet developed by Herefordshire People's Advocacy for people with learning disabilities
- **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs):** The Council is already in the third year of its EIA process. Although local authorities are obliged by law to carry out EIAs in relation to race, Herefordshire Council has broadened their scope to cover many different strands of diversity, including disability.
- **Service Planning:** All Council services are required to mainstream equality issues into their service planning as a result of carrying out a thorough Equality Impact Assessment.
- **Corporate Service Improvements:** Numerous Council initiatives are in place to benefit the disabled community, such as free bus travel throughout the county, concessionary prices at Halo facilities, assistive technology in libraries and museums, and grants to enable people to adapt their home.
- **HR Policies:** There is an on-going programme of review for all Human Resources policies to ensure that they comply with current legislation, and that they reflect the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity.

- **Accessible Information:** Newly printed Council documents and literature carry an “alternative formats” statement, offering the document in different formats upon request. Guidance is in place to help Council staff with translation (eg. Braille) and interpretation (eg. British Sign Language).
- **“Two Ticks” Disability Symbol:** The Council is an authorised user of the symbol which, amongst other things, guarantees disabled people an interview if they meet the essential minimum criteria for the post.
- **Interview Letters:** All letters encourage applicants to request any special requirements to enable them to attend interviews.
- **Job Descriptions and Person Specifications:** There is a focus on competencies in order to attract as wide a range of applicants as possible.
- **Working with Local Partners to Improve Employment Opportunities:** The Council works closely with JobCentre Plus, Connexions and Community Service Volunteers (CSV) to increase the number of people in work placements within the authority.
- **Monitoring:** Whilst some monitoring of the various “diversity strands” (ie. disability, race, gender, etc) is statutory, Herefordshire Council carries out far more extensive monitoring across various service areas. The aim of the monitoring is to ensure that service uptake, recruitment and promotion, etc. is equally accessible to all our customers, and will highlight any areas of concern or possible discrimination so that we can tackle them.
- **Training:** Induction training for all new Council employees includes an afternoon session on equality and diversity, which includes disability.
- **Bus Travel:** Herefordshire Council exceeds its statutory requirement to provide free bus travel for disabled people, by extending the hours of travel to include any time of day and across county borders. Also, in order to make life simpler for those with limited mobility, where appropriate bus contracts specify a “hail and ride” service so that people can access and exit buses closer to their destination.
- **Disabled Car Parking:** Herefordshire Council is one of very few authorities in the UK to offer 3 hours free parking in its Council car parks to Blue Badge holders.
- **Taxis:** All additional taxis to the current fleet are required to provide disabled access.
- **Employment Legislation:** Regular seminars update our Human Resources staff on changes to employment and equality legislation.
- **Housing:** The Council works with housing associations to ensure that people who need adapted properties are prioritised when one becomes available, and also prioritises disabled applicants for social housing in previously adapted properties.
- **Management Competencies:** The Council’s key managers are required to understand equality and diversity issues, and are monitored through a management competency called “Respecting Customers and Colleagues”.

## Appendix 5: Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

The table below lists the national BVPIs which relate to disability, with a brief description of what they actually measure.

<b>BV Ref</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>
2a	Equality Standard for Local Government (see Section 3.6)	The level of the Equality Standard for local government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability.
11c	Top 5% of earners: with a disability	Percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have a disability. (excluding those in maintained schools.)
15	Percentage of ill-health retirements	The percentage of local authority employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce.
16a	Percentage of employees with a disability	The percentage of local authority employees with a disability.
16b	Percentage of economically active people who have a disability	The percentage of the economically active population in the local authority area who have a disability.
156	Buildings accessible to people with a disability	The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for, and accessible to, disabled people.

The table below shows the Council's recent performance and its future targets against these BVPIs.

<b>BV Ref</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2003/04 Actual</b>	<b>2004/05 Actual</b>	<b>2005/06 Actual</b>	<b>2006/07 Target</b>	<b>2007/08 Target</b>	<b>2008/09 Target</b>
2a	Equality Standard for Local Govt	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3
11c	Top 5% of earners: with a disability	Indicator not introduced until 2005/06		0%	1%	1.5%	1.5%
15	% of ill-health retirements	0.06%	0.14%	0.38%	0.04%	0.04%	0.04%
16a	% of employees with a disability	0.6%	0.42%	0.39%	1.35%	1.5%	1.5%
16b	% of economically active people who have a disability	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%	7.8%
156	Buildings accessible to people with a disability	28.2%	32%	45.9%	55%	60%	68%

# Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2006-2009

This Action Plan is divided into the 8 priority areas of work identified in the DES. There are other initiatives which are currently in place, and these can be found at Appendix 4 (what we do over and above the law) and Appendix 2 (our statutory duties).

Action	Lead Officer	Why	Target Date
<b>1) Buildings Access and the Built Environment</b>			
Gain commitment from Jarvis that diversions around works are fully accessible	Head of Highways/Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To ensure that disabled people can access diversions	January 2007
Ensure that new public seating in High Town is appropriate	Regeneration Officer (Alan Ronald)	To provide comfortable places to sit and rest	October 2006
Publish plan of works for improving pavements and dropped kerbs in villages	Highways (Stewart Barton)	To keep the public informed about planned works	October 2007
Publish plan of works to improve accessibility of Council buildings	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To keep the public informed about planned works	December 2006
Continue with 3-year programme of refurbishment on public toilets	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To improve public toilet facilities	October 2009
Publish plan of works for public toilets on Council website	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	Advise public about work due to be carried out	December 2006
Review feasibility of substantial improvements to disabled toilet facilities	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To identify how we can provide access to highly accessible toilet facilities in the county	December 2009
Investigate feasibility of automatic doors to the rear of the Butter Market	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To improve access to the market	December 2006
Work with partner organisations to improve accessibility of leased buildings (eg. improvements to leisure centres)	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To provide more easily accessible public facilities	On-going
Investigate feasibility of accessible gym and specialist trainer at Halo facilities	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To provide specialist gym facilities for disabled people	December 2006



<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Investigate benefits of using DisabledGo in Herefordshire	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To provide accurate information about accessibility to make it easier for disabled people to plan trips and journeys	March 2007
Undertake improvements to disabled toilet facilities in Town Hall	Property Services Manager (Colin Birks)	To allow for more space and better facilities for disabled users	April 2007
<b>2) Communication</b>			
Finalise and promote guidance on written communication throughout the authority	Head of Communications (Robert Blower)	Council literature will use plain English, offer alternative formats, use appropriate images and font sizes	March 2007
Develop Plain English workshops for Council employees	Knowledge Manager (Ellen Pawley)	To make all Council communication easier to understand	December 2007
Develop Disability pages on Council website to form a central point of information	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To provide a central focus for information relating to disability	On-going (review October 2007)
Seek funding for and, if possible, carry out publicity campaign to stop people parking on dropped kerbs and pavements, or illegally using disabled parking spaces	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To improve access to pavements and disabled parking spaces for disabled people	December 2008
Enable registration of disabled people on Council website	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin) and Knowledge Manager (Ellen Pawley)	To improve ease of registration and develop an additional on-line facility	March 2008
Achieve RNIB accreditation for the Council website	Knowledge Manager (Ellen Pawley)	Improve accessibility and useability for disabled people	March 2007
Mark the International Day of Disabled Persons	Assistant Diversity Officer (Lynsey Radmore)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote the DES</li> <li>To raise awareness of local disability groups</li> <li>To improve understanding of disabled people and what they can do</li> </ul>	3 December 2006 and December 2008
Formalise mailing list (stakeholder database) of local disability organisations	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To ensure that all appropriate groups are informed /involved when relevant	April 2007

Action	Lead Officer	Why	Target Date
<b>3) Consultation and Involvement</b>			
Clarify consultation arrangements with local disability organisations	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin) and Senior Community Involvement Officer (Martin Heuter)	To ensure that local groups are consulted and have the opportunity to shape services	May 2007
Review guidance for Council consultations to ensure that all employees are aware of the needs of disabled people including building in a sufficient consultation period	Senior Community Involvement Officer (Martin Heuter)	Future face-to-date public consultations will be held in accessible venues, with small working groups, and appropriate timing	June 2007
Use Edgar Street Grid proposal to trial methods of involving disabled people in planning developments	Team Leader Local Planning (Chris Botwright) and Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To ensure that disabled people are able to contribute fully and consistently to future planning developments	September 2007
Develop a panel of people from minority groups to consult on a regular basis	Senior Community Involvement Officer (Martin Heuter) and Senior Researcher (Tony Cramp)	To gauge the views of specific groups on service development and evaluation	December 2007
Involve disabled people in the review of the Council's electronic consultation methods	Senior Community Involvement Officer (Martin Heuter)	To ensure that electronic consultation methods are appropriate and accessible	December 2007
Review success of the Involving People team in involving disabled people in Council consultations, and research best practice in other organisations	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To find ways of improving our current procedures for involving disabled people	April 2008
<b>4) Training &amp; Work Placements</b>			
Create new work placements for disabled people in each Directorate and promote them effectively	Assistant HR Officer - Media & Promotions	To promote the Council as an employer of choice for disabled people, which will in turn raise the profile of the authority	April 2007
Investigate feasibility of tailored training for Council employees on disability equality	Human Resources Officer - Organisation Development (Liz Wallace)	To ensure that employees understand Council's approach to disability and are able to better support customers	December 2007

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Review all corporate training events to ensure that disability equality issues are taken account of	Human Resources Officer - Organisation Development (Liz Wallace) and Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To mainstream issues of disability across all training	April 2008
Instigate management development provision incorporating newly developed disability equality issues	Human Resources Manager Organisation Development and Workforce Planning (Amanda Attfield) and Human Resources Officer - Organisation Development (Liz Wallace)	To ensure that managers understand disability equality and are better able to support customers and colleagues	April 2007 onwards
Ensure that Elected Member development training incorporates disability equality issues	Democratic Services Manager (Christine Dyer) and Equality & Diversity Manager (Carol Trachonitis)	To ensure that our community leaders understand disability equality and are better able to support customers and colleagues	December 2006
<b>5) Employment</b>			
Review recruitment and selection guidance for managers to incorporate information on employing disabled people	Human Resources Officer – Recruitment (Sheila Thompson) and Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	Support for disabled employees highlighted through employee survey	December 2006
Advertise all Council job opportunities on the Disabled Workers Cooperative website and the Herefordshire Learning Disability Partnership website, and research other possible media (eg. local newsletters)	Recruitment Team	Increase awareness of jobs at Herefordshire Council amongst disabled people, and raise our profile as a disabled-friendly employer	April 2007
Review guidance available for disabled employees or those who become disabled when in employment, to include the services available to them	HR Manager, Employee Relations (Terry Smith) and Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	Support for disabled employees highlighted through employee survey	April 2007

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Review recruitment and selection guidance for managers to explore possibility of being flexible with job descriptions to enable more disabled people to take up posts within the Council	Human Resources Manager Organisation Development and Workforce Planning (Amanda Attfield) and Human Resources Officer – Recruitment (Sheila Thompson)	To think flexibly about how we develop and promote job roles, and to increase the number of disabled people who are able to apply for jobs	December 2007
Consider how best to promote jobs or part of jobs to disabled people	Assistant HR Officer (Media & Promotions)	To increase the number of disabled people who are able to apply for jobs	December 2007
Review and promote policy on sick leave and time-off for treatment, check-ups, etc.	HR Manager, Employee Relations (Terry Smith)	To ensure that employees are treated fairly and are aware of what they are entitled to	December 2007
<b>6) Transport</b>			
Review contracts with bus operators to ensure that it is a requirement for them to be committed to the Council's value of treating people with fairness, courtesy and respect	Public Transport Manager (Jim Davies)	To ensure that contractors comply with Council policies on equality and good customer service standards	March 2007
Consult the disabled community on accessibility and demand for taxis	Licensing Manager (Suzanne Laughland)	To ensure that we provide taxis according to local need	December 2008
Develop and promote a chart of recommended journey prices for taxis	Licensing Manager (Suzanne Laughland)	To ensure that disabled people can use taxis confidently	March 2007
Investigate feasibility of providing voluntary training for taxi drivers on how to handle wheelchairs	Licensing Manager (Suzanne Laughland)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To give taxi drivers more confidence in driving disabled passengers</li> <li>To make pick-up and drop-off times quicker for driver and passenger</li> <li>To prevent injury to drivers handling wheelchairs</li> </ul>	December 2007
Produce public information leaflet about taxis on customer service standards and where to seek advice	Licensing Manager (Suzanne Laughland)	So that people know what standards of service to expect and how they can complain if necessary	March 2007

Action	Lead Officer	Why	Target Date
Improve access at Herefordshire rail stations by implementing the proposals in the Local Transport Plan	Team Leader Integrated Transport (Amanda Barton)	To enable disabled people to have equitable access to train services	On-going
Review complaints procedure and monitoring for community transport schemes to clarify if improvements are required	Team Leader, Transportation Planning (Steve Burgess)	To ensure community transport continues to meet users' needs	December 2007
Improve the clarity of public transport timetables by complying with recommendations made by ATCO <sup>1</sup>	Public Transport Manager (Jim Davies)	To make timetable information more accessible	December 2006
Implement annual programme of bus stop improvements to make them more accessible	Public Transport Manager (Jim Davies)	To enable easier access to bus services	On-going
Ensure subsidised bus services are operated by low floor, accessible vehicles wherever possible, through the procurement process	Public Transport Manager (Jim Davies)	To ensure services are accessible, and meet target for 80% of contracts for subsidised services to be operated by accessible vehicles	March 2007
<b>7) Housing</b>			
Seek funding for advertising adapted properties in greater detail	Home Point Manager (Jamie Burns)	To ensure that disabled people are given relevant information about vacant properties	September 2007
Investigate the feasibility of providing an advocacy service to coordinate awareness of and access to adapted properties	Head of Strategic Housing Services (Richard Gabb)	To ensure that disabled people have access to suitable accommodation	September 2007
Where appropriate and feasible, incorporate adapted housing into new housing developments	Enabling Manager (Jane Thomas)	To increase availability of adapted housing	On-going (review March 2008)
Develop clearer guidance and leaflets on how to access disabled adaptation and related services	Private Sector Housing Manager (Denise Bradley-Lloyd)	To maximise awareness and ease of access to grants and advice services around adaptations	March 2007

<sup>1</sup> ATCO: Association of Transport Coordination Officers

Action	Lead Officer	Why	Target Date
<b>8) Service Delivery</b>			
Ensure that all contractors and partners are committed to the council's value of treating people with fairness, courtesy and respect	Director of Resources (Sonia Rees)	The Council have a responsibility to promote access within services it commissions as well as those it delivers directly	December 2007
Work towards improvements in Adult Social Care as set out in the Adult Social Care Service Action and Improvement Plan	Head of Adult Social Care (Stephanie Canham)	To ensure that the service continues to deliver timely, appropriate and high quality services to disabled people	On-going
Corporate Diversity Team to work closely with new Community Partnership Manager at Halo	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin) Halo Chief Executive (Jon Argent)	To ensure that the needs of disabled people are taken into consideration in all of Halo's service provision	On-going
Increase the annual numbers of disabled users to Council owned leisure facilities by 100% from the 2005/06 baseline	Halo Chief Executive (Jon Argent) and Parks, Countryside, & Leisure Development Manager (Tony Featherstone)	To improve the opportunities for disabled people to engage in leisure activities based in publicly funded facilities	25% 2006/07 50% 2007/08 76% 2008/09 100% 2009/10
Work with Sports Development Team to develop sports information for disabled people	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To improve and promote sporting opportunities	December 2008
Gain the involvement of disabled people in the planning, development and implementation of all new parks initiatives supported by the Council	Parks Development Manager (Fran White) and Principal Leisure & Countryside Recreation Officer (Ruth Jackson)	To ensure that the needs of the disabled people are fully incorporated into the Parks planning process	Set up of reps for each ongoing scheme by 2007/08
Monitor the number of comments, complaints and compliments registered by disabled people. We will also develop procedures for monitoring our effectiveness in dealing with the comments and complaints	ICT Client Account Manager (Sandra Silcox)	To identify any patterns of discrimination and to ensure that complaints are dealt with effectively	October 2007
Complete the London 2012 "Pre Games Training Camps" criteria questionnaire	Audrey Rust	To become one of the venues for olympic/ paralympic teams	Jan 2007

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Prepare a London 2012 strategy for Herefordshire	Audrey Rust	To highlight areas of support needed from various sectors in order for Herefordshire to accommodate an olympic/paralympic team	Jan 2008
Research possibility of summer exhibition and fun day for disabled people and their families	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	Opportunity for young people and their families to have fun, make contacts and source information	December 2007
Investigate increasing availability of social opportunities for disabled people, particularly young people during school holidays	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To prevent feelings of loneliness and isolation	March 2008
Investigate feasibility of providing gardening and decorating support for disabled people	Diversity Officer (Harriet Yellin)	To aid independent living	March 2008