

Diversity Peer Challenge

Leeds City Council

9th-11th May 2011

Report



1. Background

This report is a summary of the findings of a Diversity Peer Challenge organised by Local Government Improvement and Development and carried out by its trained peers. The report satisfies the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government for an external assessment at the Excellent level. The Peer Challenge is designed to validate a council's own self-assessment at the 'Excellent' level by considering documentary evidence and by carrying out a series of interviews and focus groups with employees and other stakeholders.

The basis for the Peer Challenge is a benchmark against five areas of performance. They are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

The Peer Challenge is not an inspection; rather it offers an external assessment of a council's own judgement of itself against the Equality Framework benchmark, by critical friends who have experience of delivering an equality/diversity agenda in their own councils.

Peers were:

Councillor Eunice Campbell – Nottingham City Council
Peter Hall – Southend Borough Council
Arif Sain, Senior Consultant, Inclusivity Training & Consultancy Ltd
Becca Singh, LGID Adviser, formerly EOC Local Government Policy Manager

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the council and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

2. Executive summary and recommendations

Following this Diversity Peer Challenge, we have reached the following conclusion:

Leeds City Council has completed a satisfactory self-assessment against the criteria for the Excellent level of the Equality Framework.

Leeds CC demonstrated a high degree of excellence across all areas of the Equality Framework. The high level commitment from the political and managerial leadership was exemplary, and provides inspiration both internally and externally. The organisation has passionate committed staff, who are not afraid to take risks to the benefit of the citizens of Leeds. Partners and service users confirmed that the authority has a positive commitment to, and recognises the benefits of, partnership working. The Equality Team is well

regarded by staff, senior managers and partners and provides good support driving forward the agenda.

There were numerous examples of where individual service areas had used equality data to improve the service for their users. This cut across all service areas, including Education, Museums, Libraries, Adult Social Care, Youth work and Employment and Skills. Procurement and Commissioning processes are particularly of note.

There is good political and managerial leadership, with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive all held in high esteem by staff and partners alike.

There is a strong partnership working ethic with good working relationships with partners, who challenge each other on their performance. There are joint strategic plans for the city. Work with the voluntary and community sectors is open and transparent.

There are very good positive action schemes to improve diversity in employment, not just within the City Council but also amongst partners.

However, there were some areas where further work could be done. To help the council improve we have made a number of recommendations. These are:

1. Improve the EIA process to ensure that voluntary and community sector organisations and the Equality Hubs are consulted and involved before decisions are made. Ensure that the EIA processes is part of the start of the planning process, to identify adverse and positive impacts budget changes have on communities before decisions are made. This is not consistent across all service areas.
2. Improve the sharing of quantitative and qualitative data across the authority and between partners. Although this is good in some areas, not all service areas are making the most of the research and information that is available to them, perhaps because they are unaware of what is available. This should be better communicated to ensure that this information can influence decisions at an early stage. For example, a wider use of the information in the Benefits service, including benefits take-up, can influence wider service delivery.
3. Continue to ensure that information is collected, analysed and shared with partners as well as across the authority.
4. Improve communications internally to share good practice that exists, particularly around decision making, procurement, use of equality data and EIAs.
5. Explore and develop opportunities with the voluntary and community sectors to input into equality mapping and the EIA process. Organisations in these sectors indicated that they were keen to develop stronger working relationships with the authority, recognising the effects of potential financial difficulties that local government faces over the next few years.
6. Consider a corporately co-ordinated approach to consultation and engagement. Currently individual services are expected to and do set up their own consultation and engagement activity. Although it is a strength that services are doing this, there may need to be some further co-ordination corporately to ensure that information is shared that may be relevant to more than one service, and therefore may reduce the amount of engagement activity undertaken to get the same information.

2. The Council made the following observations upon the impact the peer challenge has had: -

'Leeds City Council recognises that it has a leading role in the city to promote equality and value diversity. As a result they have undertaken a considerable amount of work to make equality an integral part of their business and, in particular, how they deliver services, how they employ people, how they work with their partners and how they make decisions.

The council had a clear and agreed way forward to use the Equality Framework to further embed equality and diversity and to be able to demonstrate:

- how the understanding of equality and diversity informs the organisation's values and helps to shape a cohesive community
- the organisation's ability to understand and articulate their local equality challenges
- a capacity to learn from their practice and response to events and national and regional service and policy developments

The outcome of the diversity challenge and the achievement of excellent is the culmination of many years of hard work across all services of the council.

The feedback and outcomes from the Diversity Peer Challenge will be shared widely and discussions will take place on sharing the good practice and developing an improvement plan to address the challenges identified.

The council does recognise that although they have been rated as excellent there are always areas where they can improve further and there is a need to maintain all the work that has taken place. In doing this they can ensure that all citizens of Leeds can access services and opportunities for employment within the council.'

3. Detailed findings

3.1 Knowing your communities and equality mapping

Strengths:

- There is a team which is dedicated to data analysis (qualitative and quantitative) and it provides data to other services and partners to help set objectives, and manage and monitor services delivered. This information is provided as neighbourhood information, including demographics, needs, and equality characteristics. Individual services can use this to then delve deeper into individual neighbourhoods. The information supports a number of interventions across the council and partners. Requests for data are specific, e.g. voluntary sector funding bids from a particular area. The team processes more than 300 requests a year, demonstrating that this is a well used resource, and is considered extremely valuable by other officers.
- Leeds City Council has a commitment to data transparency. All neighbourhood profiling is available to the voluntary sector as well as public sector partners.
- Locality Profiles are for a larger geographic area than neighbourhood profiles and are a result of joint working with health partners. These look at the ways that geographical communities and communities of interest are getting their needs (such as social care needs) met. This facility is hoping to be expanded to include crime data as well as

health and well-being data to improve the commissioning of services in a particular locality.

- Services (such as the Locality Teams) use data from a variety of sources including: locality profiles, the neighbourhood index, resident surveys, intelligence from councillors and from local contacts. However, some services could benefit from being more joined up internally to share data, and good practice from other authorities could support Leeds, for example in improving the links between customer intelligence and Revenues and Benefits.
- Leeds City Council exploits different avenues for generating valuable data, such as working with students at the university to research particular areas (e.g. targeting funds to the voluntary sector appropriately). The imminent Data Observatory (to be launched by the council) will be used by partners and will help the authority to use data to seek additional funding. In common with many local authorities, Leeds City Council uses Mosaic customer intelligence to analyse its customer base for different services.
- All customer data is collected and reported to the Customer Strategy Board. Any equalities issues (such as access to buildings or denial to services) are reported quarterly to service managers.

Areas for consideration:

- There were some comments from partners and community groups that there are some gaps in qualitative information, such as the effects of the levels of literacy on health, participation and services

3.2. Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Strengths:

- The Chief Executive has a background and commitment to partnership working. He is strongly committed to equality of opportunity and embracing the diversity of the workforce and service users. The development of the 'Five Values' for organisational behaviours reflects this.
- The Core Cities have recognised Leeds CC's approach to working with and involving the third sector as successful and beneficial to local communities.
- Staff feel confident that their Chief Executive is committed to involving them in decisions where possible, keeping them informed as situations develop, and allowing them to reach their potential. They believe he sends good messages about commitment to equality.
- Key priorities are identified with partners through joint needs assessments, such as with the PCT and Health and Well Being Board. There is a Joint Director of Public Health.
- The Leeds Strategic Plan is a partnership plan, looking at information and achievements of partners as well as council officers. The Leeds Strategic Plan is outcomes focused (e.g. on public health), and is a mixture of cross-city objectives and targeted work. Partners scrutinise each others' performance, demonstrating a high level of trust between partners. The council's business plan has an internal focus and demonstrates the senior management and political leadership for the city, and reflects the equalities agenda of the council.
- There is strong leadership on equality issues, with the Assistant Chief Executive chairing the Equality Hub Representative Network and working closely with the

Equalities Assembly (see section 3.3 “Community Engagement”). His direct leadership style is respected by the Assembly and by Hub Members.

- The leader of the council is visible, demonstrating support for particular projects such as the Barka project, a community initiative set up in Chapeltown working with local community groups to build the local skills and capacity.
- The Leader and portfolio executive members are held accountable in monitoring the delivery of services in their service areas. There are regular Scrutiny call - ins by the opposition.

Areas for consideration:

- Although there is an understanding in the Communications Department of the effects of branding on good news and bad news, this needs to be more widely understood and embedded. Communication plays a key role in helping the public understand the effects of the cuts, and there is a need to ensure that the general public know that the council will be delivering effective services for vulnerable people, taking diverse needs into account when deciding how to redesign services.
- The council needs to ensure that EIAs are built into the planning for reductions in services in order to determine the adverse and positive impacts on different communities. This includes the reduction in commissioning services. Concern was expressed that EIAs are not routinely built into budget cutting proposals, and that there is not always engagement in the EIA process
- There needs to be a more co-ordinated approach to collecting, publishing and sharing data, both qualitative and quantitative. There are some excellent examples of all of these aspects, but some further work may need to be done to ensure that data published is timely, and that all partners are aware of the information as it is published. Significant improvements have been made and future plans on information sharing demonstrate very good intentions; concern was expressed that this may be lost at a time of budget constraints when it is most needed.

3.3 Community engagement and satisfaction

Strengths:

- There is a system of Hubs (for different equality aspects – BME, disability, carers, age, sexual orientation, religion & belief), with a network of hub representatives (known as the ‘Equality Hub Representative Network’) chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive. There is also an annual equality conference for all hub members and other partners (the ‘Equalities Assembly Conference’). In November 2010, the conference highlighted good practice, and contributed to the development of the Vision for Leeds. The 2011 conference will be user-led, as opposed to developed in partnership with users. Each hub works in a slightly different way, depending on the numbers involved and the history of involvement with the council. For example, there have been mechanisms for good engagement with disabled people and BME people for many years, but not for issues around religion and belief. Some of these hubs are therefore in the early stages of development and this has led to some communities feeling less positive than others about the levels of engagement with the authority. It is important not to lose the positive momentum and to demonstrate to communities how their engagement influences service planning and development.
- There are several examples of where community engagement has led to improved services and satisfaction. For example, the Local Enterprise Grown Initiative (LEGI) in 2006. LEGI was aiming to attract funds from central government and involved private, public and voluntary sectors in identifying needs, as well as communities and

individuals. £15million was secured and various partners were commissioned to deliver projects to encourage business start ups.

- The community engagement reviews looked at improving all the engagement conducted by the authority. The EFLG has been used as a tool to help make sure that the information recorded is what is needed.
- The Housing Options team measures customer satisfaction across all equality characteristics. At the moment data collection is reported to be a laborious process, but have 97% satisfaction overall.
- The new Arena is an example of where Leeds City Council is bringing community engagement into the process at an early stage. The Assistant Chief Executive encouraged the service that is planning the Arena to involve the Equality Hubs at an early stage – before design, before planning, right at the start to identify needs and concerns that could be built into the whole process.

Areas for consideration:

- There were some suggestions to improve the system of hubs, including specific topics (such as activity affecting young carers), ensuring all equality hubs feel involved, ensuring outcomes and objectives coming out of the Equalities Assembly Conference are clear and progress tracked, and that there is good communications between hub meetings, such as having a newsletter.
- Clearer links need to be made between services areas and the engagement of communities in the EIA processes.

3.4 Responsive services and customer care

Strengths:

- There are many examples of use of equality data to help improve and manage services. These include the Gang Diversionary Strategy in East Leeds, the Clean up Streets initiative, and a “you said, we did” facility on the website.
- The well established partnership arrangements mean that best practice is shared regularly, particularly on embedding equalities with procurement process. Leeds CC also benchmarks itself on with other authorities, as well as taking responsibility for sharing awareness of the impact of procurement on communities, and the impact of the Equality Act on procurement.
- Service plans have meaningful equality objectives which are tracked through action trackers which hold service managers to account. Trackers demonstrate a good process and are also demonstrating positive outcomes
- Work programmes regularly report to various scrutiny boards, which includes equality impacts. For example, the review of Contact Centre in addressing frontline services, and how a reduction in funds affects people as a result of the review.
- The complaints system has been revised to include equality monitoring. Case conferences are held with the Equality Team, Service Manager and service team to bring everyone involved to address the complaint.
- Area Management working (in place now for six or seven years) has led to an improvement in communication, engagement, trust and improved outcomes. This includes many examples of “you said, we did – have we done it right?” on the website, participatory budget exercises including “what would you do with £X?”

Education:

- There is an award winning education service for gypsies and travelling communities, recognising the high prevalence of exclusion, NEETs and low achievement in these communities. There are mechanisms for schools to support gypsy and traveller children, and for taking education out to those communities.
- The adoption of the Stephen Lawrence Education Standards (SLES; more detail in section 4)
- There have been significant improvements in the outcomes in BME groups at KS2 and KS4. This has also had an impact on community cohesion. This has been partly the effect of the SLES.
- Disabled children are more confident about the support they can receive. As a result of changes to their support, more disabled children are attending school and attaining higher exam results than in the past.
- Leeds CC has used funding for one to one tuition to encourage schools to focus on underachieving groups (e.g. Looked After Children, Black and minority ethnic children, children on free school meals) to narrow the gap in achievement. An analysis of the impacts this programme has had shows that there have been accelerated progress by children taking part.

Adult Social Care (ASC)

- ASC identified a poor take up of services by people from BME communities, particularly on the personalisation agenda. This information fed into the commissioning process and the contracts for work ensures that their needs are met.
- The Independent Learning provision has led to massively improved outcomes for people with learning disabilities. Service users were involved in the design of those services intended to improve their independence, and has led to increased numbers of people with learning disabilities in employment and education.
- Personalised Support is brokered by a user-led organisation – the Leeds Centre for Independent Living (LCIL). The brokerage service is primarily provided by disabled people, and includes an internet site for advice. This engenders a feeling of greater control over the service individual disabled service users receive. The services provided by LCIL are varied. For some customers, it is simply organising payments. For others, there is a full range of support available to help individuals through the options.

Libraries

- There are libraries throughout the city providing a wide variety of services. For example, English classes are provided for Asian women. The teacher is a qualified ESOL teacher, but the classes themselves are not accredited as this makes them beyond the financial reach of many participants. The libraries target new arrivals to the city for these classes to help them settle in. The Librarian helps them learn every day English and the practicalities of living in Leeds.
- Extended Library and Job Shop – this library helps with benefits (e.g. housing and council tax), housing, environmental health issues. There is a partnership with Housing Options, who hold clinics in the Library, as do Welfare Rights Officers. As a result, people are now accessing these services locally, including people who have low levels of literacy and those who may need significant levels of help to access mainstream services, or those who may not have come into the city centre to access these services previously. There is now an interpretation and translation service based in the library,

aswell as bilingual staff and Language Line. Appointments are available as well as drop in advice sessions. The computers can be used to pay bills and the computers are set up to address mobility, dexterity and visual impairments.

Environmental Services

- The 'Crime and Grime' initiative has used socio-economic data to make the link between run down communities and the high levels of burglary. As a result there has been work with the police to identify key areas, and a taskforce to work with local residents to clean up green spaces. These areas have shown an improvement in the levels of crime over the last 18 months that the scheme has been running.
- Waste services are changing in one area of Leeds that has a high proportion of students and other houses of multiple occupancy in order to address the issue of large numbers of wheelie bins, and wheelie bins that are not large enough to cope with the numbers of residents in properties. There will be a number of street facilities for the communities in order to meet the large demand at peak times (e.g. during academic terms).

Children & Young People

- There is a multi-agency group which looks at all the information given to all children and young people. Children and young people evaluated the effectiveness of all the information provided and the multi-agency group have taken their views on board about how to improve communications in the future.
- There is a mentoring scheme for looked after children that has been running successfully for three years.
- Locality working has helped across the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes, using contextual information to support people's needs in their locality. This has helped service redesign in children's social care, and ensures support is based around need locally.
- The Breeze programme of activities for young people has been going for about 15 years. Breeze events are for all young people in Leeds, but they also target particular groups, such as young carers and looked after children. The Friday Night Project is in South Leeds for a group of young gypsies and travellers. The idea for it came from the community, who approached Breeze for help with a funding bid for mobile equipment. GATE (a local gypsy and traveller organisation) got to know about roadside communities, and now all of their young people are signed up to a Breeze card which entitles them to all Breeze events all over the city. This opens up opportunities to provide support and information to gypsy and traveller children who may not otherwise receive it.

Sports and Sports development

- The Sports Development programme (in areas such as Meanwood, Harehills and Chapeltown) links through the Health Project as part of the funding from Support England Pilot from Jan – March 2011.
- There was a pilot project to encourage women from different backgrounds to increase their levels of physical activity. The scheme (now extended) focuses on the needs of individuals, including social networks, friendships, core fitness programme, GP referral appointments and other sports. The programme also includes a pass to access leisure activities outside the project sessions. Many of the women on the pilot programme have taken out subsequent membership and have continued to attend the leisure centres and keep up their levels of fitness.

- The development of Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) has been a priority for some councillors, and they have involved children and young people in the designs.
- There is a wide ranging, well attended and developed disability sports programme, building up sporting skills from an early age in a variety of disability sports. There are also Paralympic legacy programmes, and current international disabled athletes have been trained through the Leeds Disability Sport Programme.
- Links have been made between Adult Social Care and Sport in order that physical activities can continue at a time of cuts. There is a pilot scheme currently running in one area. Participants have used the programmes to improve social networks, make friendships and improve the quality of life for older people.

Regeneration and employment

- The approach to regeneration has changed in recent years, reflecting the changing levels of available funding. Councillors identified the need to invest in jobs and skills and have invested in apprenticeships and training.
- Major new developments (such as Trinity and the Arena) have had equality aspects built into contracts, which include involving diverse reference groups of people in the early stages of design planning to ensure equality of access to the new development.
- The Armley Town street improvements are an example of working with disabled people from the start of a project. The Highways team learned why and how different lighting, street furniture and pathways can improve access to the high street by disabled people with different impairments. This led to local people feeling confident that the council will listen to their views on how things can be improved. The Chapeltown development (more recent), has started from a higher baseline as a result.
- There is a one stop shop currently being developed to include the Law Centre and CAB
- There are job shops in specific areas of need working to engage local people. Based in the community, the job shops are in local communities which improves employment support locally.
- There is a Mobile Job Bus working with people who are not engaging with the local job shop to encourage them to look for work. This is as a result of partnership working with local communities.

Community Cohesion

- The Prevent programme in Leeds has measurably led to improved community cohesion. There have been improvements in aspirations and plans of individuals in key areas of the city as a result of the programme. The programme engaged with Muslim communities to support and contribute to local communities. Ten projects were funded, run by local organisations. Some of the organisations had never been commissioned to deliver work before and needed support on the financial front. A measure of success was the lack of antagonistic and violent behaviour at the EDL march.
- In South Leeds, there had been significant tensions after the 7:7 bombings. There was a merger of two schools to form the South Leeds Academy. Despite these tensions, young people's aspirations have risen, exam results have improved, and there is a visible major reduction in the number of police visits to the school.

Housing

- Work is done with private landlords to ensure that people can remain in areas of the city where they have support rather than having to move to council owned property,

- The CREATE project has led to former rough sleepers moving into accommodation and full time employment.
- The Reconnections project has helped people from outside the UK with no access to funds to go back to their home country.
- As a result of hospitals having 'bed blocking' issues, and voluntary sector housing providers having empty properties, a change in the housing options process for people with mental health issues has been established. See section 4 for more detail.

Areas for consideration:

- Although EIAs are generally considered to be an integral part of service planning, this is a recent development in some service areas, which may still need some support to improve their understanding of the benefits of EIAs, particularly at times of budget constraints.
- There may be a need to consider more support for smaller local businesses to bid for contracts below £100k e.g. holding more inclusive buyer events to invite businesses run by disabled people and women.

3.5 A modern and diverse workforce

Strengths:

- Staff feel supported and valued. They are passionate about service delivery. There is a regular staff survey, and staff feel confident that actions happen as a result of their input into the survey. Staff do feel vulnerable at a time of extreme changes, but still feel very proud to work for Leeds City Council. Improved internal communication would help to relieve some of the vulnerability.
- Staff are committed to the agenda. Several times we heard the sentiment that using equality data and issues can present Leeds City Council with an opportunity at times of cuts to services, ie to use equality data to ensure that cuts do not hit people who need services the most. Staff need to prioritise vulnerable people, and they recognise that working on equality issues helps to identify those people who most need council services, and how best to meet those needs.
- There are various programmes in place to support staff from diverse groups developing leadership skills and confidence (such as the "Common Purpose" scheme), or positive action schemes. (more detail is provided in section 4). However, few examples of outcomes were shared with the team, though we understand some participants are finding new posts, being promoted and setting up businesses. A more systematic evaluation of the programmes would help identify the impact of these programmes, such as how they have led to long-term employment within or without the council.
- Appraisals are carried out across the authority with staff in all areas. They include equality and diversity objectives. However, this is the first year that this has happened, so it is too early to say what impact this is having. A competency framework for appraisals is currently being developed to include equality and diversity.
- It is good that the authority is harmonising its communication activities to enable it to deliver coherent and concise clear messages to residual staff.
- Staff equalities forums (race, gender, disability, lesbian gay & bisexual) have been developed and are supported to varying degrees. However, some middle managers are reluctant to release staff to attend, and it is not clear how much influence these groups have. There may be a need for more consistency on how the forums are supported, whether that is managers supporting staff to attend, or administrative support for them running.

- Workforce data is collected, reported and actions taken on race, gender, disability and age. Every Chief Officer gets regular workforce information, including information highlighting where there are gaps to work on. They report regularly on progress. Although this is very positive, there is little data on sexual orientation or faith. The good practice in other equality areas should be followed across all protected characteristics.
- Equal Pay reviews have been conducted which lead to settlement of equal pay cases. However, it was unclear as to whether the whole process (both phases 1 and 2) have been completed, and how successful the appeals process has been. There may be a need for better communication about the outcomes of both phase 1 and phase 2.
- There are several examples of how the authority has improved the equality of experience for LGBT people. This includes being part of a Yorkshire – wide initiative (an LGBT one year Mentoring Programme where each authority has one to two participants. Participants must be LGBT; the Mentors are also LGBT), the LGBT staff forum helping the authority reach the Stonewall Top 100 index, training delivered by the LGB staff network.
- Equality and diversity training is regularly delivered as part of induction training, and includes a range of equality issues. There is also specialist training at directorate levels on equality issues in safeguarding and honour-based crimes. However, a clearer understanding of the Equality Framework for Local Government may be needed in some parts of the authority as it is very different from the Equality Standard.

Areas for consideration:

- Some concerns were expressed that many experience the organisation as reactive rather than proactive, with an emphasis on legal requirements rather than good practice. Although this was by no means universal, and it is good that legal requirements are widely understood, the authority should consider ensuring that the excellent practice that does exist is understood and promoted across the whole authority more widely. This is about varied issues, such as bullying and harassment, but also about sickness absence reporting, attendance and effectiveness of equality training.
- Sickness absence figures do not appear to take staff with long term conditions into account. The figures are reflected into managers' records which potentially leads to reticence to employ people with disabilities. Some consideration could be given to the possible impact of this.
- There is poor representation of Black and minority ethnic people, Disabled people and women in top 5% of earners. Some consideration could be given to how the council could rectify this.
- Competencies on equality need to be further developed and made easy to assess. For example, there could be different equality competencies for leaders, managers and front line staff.

4. Examples of innovative projects and initiatives

- Breeze – this is the co-ordinated work for young people in Leeds. Breeze events have been running in the city for many years, and have developed the types of event and location of projects in respond to changing needs, changing demographics and the involvement of young people in designing the service. A Breeze card provides young people with a gateway to other services, such as libraries, museums, galleries, sport and leisure facilities and activities. All young people in Leeds have them and it enables analysis of which communities and individuals are using different services.

- Procurement and commissioning – consideration of equality and diversity has been integrated within the procedures and guidance for establishing contracts with private and voluntary organisations for goods, works and services. In addition to inclusion within Contracts' Procedural Rules and Pre-Qualification Questionnaires, Leeds has developed a Socially Responsible Toolkit and an Equality Assurance process. These help to ensure that equality and sustainability impacts are identified and mitigated at the tender scoping stage and that, where relevant, equality is specifically included within contract specifications.
- MARS – the Multi-Agency Referral System (MARS) is a partnership where any partner agency can refer an individual they come into contact with to any of the other agencies in the partnership. This includes Employment and skills, adaptations, housing etc.
- LEGI – the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative has been going since 2006. It tries to attract funds from central government for business start up. The project engaged with the private, public and voluntary sectors as well as individual communities, using the indices of deprivation to identify geographical areas to support. £15million was commissioned from the three sectors to deliver projects to encourage start up. The programme ended in March 2011, and the website: sharingthesuccess.co.uk includes a number of case studies showing how it has made a difference
- Sanctuary Scheme – providing a secure place in the home of a victim of domestic violence. This is in order that they do not become homeless, and is a cost-effective measure of support, rather than moving victims and children into temporary accommodation.
- Housing options for people with mental health difficulties – as a result of hospitals reporting bed blocking, and voluntary sector housing providers reporting empty properties, the Housing Options department changed the way housing was allocated for this vulnerable group of people. Officers work with the NHS and housing providers to improve the pathway through hospital and out the other end. Nursing staff assess housing on an individual's admission to hospital, and then referred the assessment to Housing Options officers who could start to address housing need much earlier. This has greatly reduced the numbers of people who remain in hospital long after they are well enough to be discharged. A similar project is being rolled out for older looked after children.
- Acting as the co-ordinating body for the 2011 census, the authority identified communities which have been hardest to count in the past. There was a lot of support from the Equality Team and the Hubs to identify organisations that can get the messages out to communities about the importance of census data, ensuring people understand that it is not just about counting, but about making sure that services provided meet the needs of the local population. T
- Equality Hubs – these are community engagement mechanisms for equality issues. There are hubs on Age, LGBT, Carers, Faith and BME. The hubs meet individually quarterly, dealing with key policy issues (such as cuts and the challenges they face). The hubs are working together in Hub Reps meetings which are chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive. This demonstrates the leadership commitment to equality, as this level of seniority ensures that messages are taken on board by individual services. Members of the hubs feel that although this structure is relatively new, it is a way of ensuring action rather than just discussion. They are confident that Leeds CC listens to them, and takes action. There are already examples of where services have changed as a result (e.g. in refuse collection).

- Migration impact – research conducted by Leeds University and Nottingham University looked at migrant communities and the impact on the local area. This demonstrated some good work done by Leeds CC.

5. Signposting to areas of good practice from Local Government Improvement and Development

- Nottingham City Council has excellent examples of how Communication improves the understanding of and relationship with local people, and how good communication builds partnership between sectors, and engagement with communities.
- Nottingham City Council has worked in partnership with the private sector to assess the impact of the recession on BME communities. This has led to an increase in finding jobs and apprenticeships for young people. Community Development Officers work to find young people who are provided with interview skills and supported to find jobs. The private sector is empowered to employ young people through positive action measures from areas of high employment and social deprivation, primarily BME communities.
- EIAs on budget reductions: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council conduct budget EIAs, including consultation, on each of the 130 budget proposals before decisions were taken. Where staff redundancies were made, 'Workforce' EIAs and 'Restructure' EIAs were completed to see which groups were to be adversely affected and where identified actions were developed to mitigate the impact. Barnsley MBC has also got excellent examples of how EIAs helped and supported budget reductions – the Minimum Council approach.
- Barrow in Furness and Cheshire West & Chester Council have both got good examples of supporting smaller local businesses in bidding for smaller contracts.
- Barrow Borough Council has used its data from Revenues and Benefits to help target support services and improve the lives of local citizens. They also use customer data from Leisure Services to help identify diverse communities. Cheshire West and Chester Council have also good examples of how Benefits data can help to improve the knowledge of local communities.

Local Government Improvement and Development

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