PLEASE NOTE VENUE

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE AGENDA

HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Friday 18 January 2008

at 1.30 p.m.

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE:

Councillors Akers-Belcher, Brash, R W Cook, S Cook, Fleet, Flintoff, James, Laffey, A E Lilley, G Lilley, A Marshall, Plant, Preece, Shaw, Simmons and Wright.

Resident Representatives:

Jean Kennedy, Iris Ryder and Linda Shields

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

3. **MINUTES**

    3.1   To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 4th January 2008 *(to follow)*

4. **RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

    No Items

5. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS FROM COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND NON EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

    No Items

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

6.   FORWARD PLAN

No Items

7.   CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

7.1   2008/09 Budget and Policy Framework Proposals: Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees – *Scrutiny Manager/Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (to follow)*

8.   CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL MONITORING/CORPORATE REPORTS

8.1   Corporate Plan 2008/09 – Proposed Outcomes – *Assistant Chief Executive*

8.2   Data Quality Audit Report - *Chief Financial Officer / Audit Commission Representative in attendance*

9.   ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

9.1   New Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008/11 – Proposed Outcome and Targets Framework – *Head of Community Strategy*

9.2   Corporate Access Strategy and Publicity for Translation and Interpretation Services– *Chief Personnel Officer*

10.   CALL-IN REQUESTS

11.   ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Date of Next Meeting Friday 8 February 2008, commencing at 1.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre.

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│ **SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE** │
│ │
│ **18 January 2008** │
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Report of:　　　Assistant Chief Executive

Subject:　　　Corporate Plan 2008/09 – Proposed Outcomes

1　　PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1　　To enable the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) to consider and comment on the proposed Corporate Plan outcomes for 2008/09.

2　　BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1　　The Government introduced the Best Value regime as part of its programme to modernise local government and the Corporate Plan for 2008/09 must be approved and published by the Council by 30 June 2008. This is the Council's top-level corporate plan. It sets out the Council's top priorities and contributions for delivering the Community Strategy aims in 2008/09 and those matters which do not form part of the community strategy but which are priorities for the council.

2.2　　The Corporate Plan is an important document because it formally communicates the council's vision and priorities. The process for producing the plan has been designed to ensure the risk is minimised and that the Corporate Plan is fit for purpose.

2.3　　This year the Corporate Plan outcomes have been developed in conjunction with the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to ensure the outcomes included in the LAA are embedded in the Council's Corporate Plan. The LAA is currently being negotiated with Government Office North East (GONE) and any changes to those proposals will be reflected in the Corporate Plan. The LAA sets out the "deal" between central government, the Council and partners to improve services and the quality of life in Hartlepool. Any potential changes resulting from the negotiations will be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting for consideration.

2.4　　The Corporate Plan is based around the Hartlepool Partnership's Community Strategy aims, which have been adopted by the Council. In previous years there have been seven aims, but the Community Strategy is currently being reviewed and is proposing to split the Environment and Housing theme into two separate themes. For that reason, the proposed

Corporate Plan outcomes have been organised around the eight themes, with an additional section proposing outcomes around organisational development priorities (as in previous years).

2.5   The Corporate Plan outcomes and actions approved by Council in June will be incorporated into the Council's performance management database and progress reported quarterly to Cabinet and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

2.6   The focus of the Corporate Plan for 2008/09 is on priority activities for improvement at a strategic level rather than day to day service delivery outcomes. The operational service delivery outcomes are picked up through Departmental service plans which are reported to individual portfolio holders.

2.7   Scrutiny Coordinating Committee is asked to consider whether the outcomes identified properly reflect the council's priorities for the year ahead and, if they wish, suggest amendments.

3   THE CORPORATE PLAN

3.1   As in previous years the plan will be produced in 2 parts. Part 1 describes the Council's overall aim, contributions to the Community Strategy aims and organisational development priorities.

3.2   Part 2 will continue to contain the detailed supporting information relating to performance statistics which the Council is required to publish, including the Best Value performance indicators for 2007/08. This information cannot be collected until after 31 March, and is therefore not available at present. As with previous years, this will be presented to Cabinet and SCC in May/June for consideration. At this stage Members are therefore only being asked to consider the Corporate Plan outcomes, which are attached at Appendix A, although both Cabinet and SCC will be given further opportunities to consider the Corporate Plan as further progress is made.

3.3   The proposed list, at appendix A, is not a final definitive list. Officers will continue to review the outcomes over the coming months, and will amend, if deemed appropriate and if changing priorities demand it. Any proposed changes to the list of outcomes will be brought to Cabinet and SCC for consideration. In addition to this the next stage of the process is to identify those key actions which underpin the priorities. This will be reported to all Scrutiny Forums, and Coordinating Committee, in February or March of 2008

3.4   In addition, and in line with previous years officers will be identifying those key performance indicators which underpin the Corporate Plan. This process in most years has been based on an established set of Best

Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Local Performance Indicators (LPIs). This process will be slightly delayed this year as the Government have only recently issued the definitive list of 198 new performance indicators. There are currently no definitions for these indicators (consultation closed in December). The definitions are due to be confirmed in February 2008. It is only when this is completed that officers will be able to determine baselines and targets.

4   TIMETABLE FOR CONSIDERING THE PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

4.1   The key dates for completing the plan are as follows.

4.2   Cabinet and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee will be asked to consider a more detailed action plan in February, agree Part 1 of the Corporate Plan in April and Part 2 in May/June. Final approval of the Plan will be by Council in June.

4.3   All service Scrutiny Forums will be given the opportunity to comment on the more detailed action plan in February and March. Their findings will be reported back to SCC on 15 March 2008.

5   RECOMMENDATION

5.1   The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is asked to consider and comment on the proposed Corporate Plan outcomes for 2008/09.

Contact Officer: -   Andrew Atkin – Assistant Chief Executive
Chief Executives Department
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523003
Email: Andrew.Atkin@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS
No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Service Planning 2008/09

Corporate Plan 2008/09 – Proposed Outcomes

Outcome	
Jobs and the Economy	**LAA**
Attract Investment	✓
Be Globally Competitive	✓
Create more employment opportunities for local people	✓
Achieve economic wellbeing for all children and young people ensuring that they are prepared for working life* (Children and young people will achieve the qualifications, develop the skills and be given the necessary life experiences to enable them to lead full and active adult lives)	✓
Promote Hartlepool's interests in economic regeneration policy-making at the national, regional and sub-regional levels	
Support and promote appropriate physical and economic regeneration and pursue external funding opportunities	
Lifelong Learning and Skills	**LAA**
Enjoy and Achieve* (Raise the achievement and standards of children and young people in the early years, primary and secondary phases of education)	✓
Provision of high quality learning and skills opportunities that drive economic competitiveness, widen participation and build social justice	✓
Health and Care	**LAA**
Improved Health	✓
Be Healthy* (Children and young people will be physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, lead healthy lifestyles and choose not to take illegal drugs)	✓
Increased choice and control and retention of personal dignity	✓
Improved Mental Health and Wellbeing	✓
Easier Access to Services	✓
Community Safety	**LAA**
Reduced crime	✓
Reduced harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol	✓
Improved neighbourhood safety and increased public confidence, leading to reduced fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	✓
Reduced anti-social and criminal behaviour through improved prevention and enforcement activities	✓
Stay safe* (Children and young people will live, grow and learn in safety, where parents, carers and all adults take responsibility for their safety and well-being)	✓
Environment	**LAA**
Deliver sustainable communities through high quality planning, new build and sensitive conservation and protect and enhance the local natural environment.	✓
Improve the quality of the local environment by having cleaner, greener and safer public, private and community spaces.	✓
Provide a sustainable, safe, efficient, effective and accessible transport system	✓
Make better use of natural resources and reduce the generation of waste and maximise recycling	✓
Prepare for the impacts of and secure local and global action to tackle climate change	✓
Promote community involvement in positive action to reduce poverty through fair trade and promoting peace and security.	✓

Outcome	
Housing	**LAA**
Balancing Housing Supply and Demand	✓
Meeting the Decent Homes Standard	✓
Meeting the Housing Needs of Vulnerable People	✓
Improving the energy efficiency of houses	
Culture and Leisure	**LAA**
Enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve places where people live through enjoyment of leisure, culture and sport	✓
Cultural and leisure services, better meet the needs of the community, especially those from disadvantaged areas	✓
Strengthening Communities	**LAA**
To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and the delivery of services	✓
Make a positive contribution * (Children and young people who live in Hartlepool are provided with the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the community)	✓
Improving quality of life and ensuring service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs with particular focus on disadvantaged areas	✓
Increasing financial resources within family environments to provide improved lifestyle opportunities	✓
Freedom from discrimination or harassment	✓
Improving Financial Inclusion	
Ensure communities are well prepared to respond to emergency situations	
Organisational Development	**LAA**
Improve management and governance	
Improve access and understanding between the Council and the public	
Improve Elected member and Workforce arrangements Improve efficiency and financial management	

Outcomes marked * form the outcome framework for Children and Young People.

For completeness and ease of reference these are shown together below:

Outcome
Children and Young People
Achieve economic wellbeing for all children and young people ensuring that they are prepared for working life* (Children and young people will achieve the qualifications, develop the skills and be given the necessary life experiences to enable them to lead full and active adult lives)
Enjoy and Achieve* (Raise the achievement and standards of children and young people in the early years, primary and secondary phases of education)
Be Healthy* (Children and young people will be physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, lead healthy lifestyles and choose not to take illegal drugs)
Stay safe* (Children and young people will live, grow and learn in safety, where parents, carers and all adults take responsibility for their safety and well-being)
Make a positive contribution * (Children and young people who live in Hartlepool are provided with the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the community)

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

18th January 2008

Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Subject: AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT- DATA QUALITY

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1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To inform Members of the Committee that arrangements have been made for a representative from the Audit Commission to be in attendance at this meeting, to present the results of the Audit Commissions work on Data Quality.

2.   BACKGROUND

2.1   Audit Commission work on Data Quality supports the Commission's reliance on performance indicators in its service assessments for comprehensive performance assessment (CPA). This delivers the commitment to reduce significantly the level of service inspection required.

3.   FINDINGS OF THE AUDIT COMMISSION

3.1   Attached, as Appendix A, is the Audit Commission report on Data Quality. The report points to the fact that the Council's overall management arrangements for ensuring data quality are demonstrating adequate performance and analytical review work identified that the PI values reviewed fell within expected ranges and were substantiated by evidence.

4.   RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee:

   i.   Note the report of the Audit Commission.

Audit Summary Report

November 2007

audit
commission

Data Quality

Hartlepool Borough Council

Audit 2007/08

External audit is an essential element in the process of accountability for public money and makes an important contribution to the stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of public services.

Audit in the public sector is underpinned by three fundamental principles:

- auditors are appointed independently from the bodies being audited;

- the scope of auditors' work is extended to cover not only the audit of financial statements but also value for money and the conduct of public business; and

- auditors may report aspects of their work widely to the public and other key stakeholders.

The duties and powers of auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are set out in the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Local Government Act 1999 and the Commission's statutory Code of Audit Practice. Under the Code of Audit Practice, appointed auditors are also required to comply with the current professional standards issued by the independent Auditing Practices Board.

Appointed auditors act quite separately from the Commission and in meeting their statutory responsibilities are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of both the Commission and the audited body.

Status of our reports

The Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission explains the respective responsibilities of auditors and of the audited body. Reports prepared by appointed auditors are addressed to non-executive directors/members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body. Auditors accept no responsibility to:

- any director/member or officer in their individual capacity; or

- any third party.

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Contents

Hartlepool Borough Council

Background

1 Public bodies are accountable for the public money they spend: they must manage competing claims on resources to meet the needs of the communities they serve, and plan for the future. The financial and performance information they use to account for their activities, both internally and externally, to their users, partners, commissioners, government departments and regulators, must be appropriate for these purposes, providing the level of accuracy, reliability and consistency required.

2 Considerable weight is attached to published performance indicators as the basis for reducing the burden of regulation and awarding freedoms and flexibilities. This has made reliable performance information, and the quality of the underlying data, significantly more important. Regulators and government departments need to be assured that reported information reflects actual performance. This will provide confidence that they are focusing on the key areas for improvement.

3 Auditors' work on data quality and performance information supports the Commission's reliance on performance indicators in its service assessments for comprehensive performance assessment (CPA). This delivers the commitment to reduce significantly the level of service inspection required.

4 Introducing the comprehensive area assessment (CAA) framework from 2009 will make reliable performance information more important. The CAA will place greater emphasis on assessments that are proportional to risk. Councils will also be required to use information to reshape services, and to account to the public for performance.

5 The responsibility for securing the quality of the data underpinning performance information can only rest with the bodies that collect and use the data. Producing data which is fit for purpose should not be an end in itself, but an integral part of a body's operational, performance management, and governance arrangements. Organisations that put data quality at the heart of their performance management systems are most likely to be actively managing data in their day-to-day business, and turning that data into reliable information.

6 This is the second year in which we have undertaken work on data quality in local government. Our work is complemented by the Audit Commission's paper, '*Improving information to support decision making: standards for better quality data.'* This paper sets out standards, for adoption on a voluntary basis, to support improvement in data quality.

7 The expected impact of our work on data quality is that it will drive improvement in the quality of local government performance information, leading to greater confidence in the supporting data on which performance assessments are based.

Hartlepool Borough Council

Scope and objectives

8   The Audit Commission has developed a three-stage approach to the review of data quality.

Table 1

Stage 1	**Management arrangements**
	A review to determine whether proper corporate management arrangements for data quality are in place, and whether these are being applied in practice. The findings contribute to the auditor's conclusion under the Code of Audit Practice on the council's arrangements to secure value for money (the VFM conclusion).
Stage 2	**Analytical review**
	An analytical review of 2006/07 BVPI and non-BVPI data, and selection of a sample for testing based on risk assessment.
Stage 3	**Data quality spot checks**
	In-depth review of a sample of 2006/07 PIs all of come from a list of specified BVPIs and non-BVPIs used in CPA, to determine whether arrangements to secure data quality are delivering accurate, timely and accessible information in practice.

9   All three stages of the review have been carried out at Hartlepool Borough Council.

Conclusions

Stage 1 – Management arrangements

10 The Council's overall management arrangements for ensuring data quality are demonstrating adequate performance.

11 The Council has implemented the action agreed after our previous review, approving a data quality policy and allocating member responsibility for data quality. Arrangements could be further improved by ensuring the policy and detailed guidance cover all data, not only performance indicators.

Stage 2 – Analytical review

12 Our analytical review work at stage 2 identified that the PI values reviewed fell within expected ranges and were substantiated by evidence.

Stage 3 – Data quality spot checks

13 Our review and spot checks found that BV199 (cleanliness of public spaces), BV214 (homelessness prevention) and PLSS7 (library satisfaction users 16 and over) were fairly stated. HIPHSSA (private sector homes vacant over 6 months).

14 An action plan has been agreed with the Council (see Appendix 1) to address the issues arising from this review.

Management arrangements (Stage 1)

15 Overall, the Council's corporate arrangements for data quality are demonstrating adequate performance.

Governance and leadership

16 Responsibilities for data quality are clearly defined, there is top level commitment at officer and member levels and data quality issues relating to performance indicators (PIs) are reported as part of the Council's performance management arrangement. Arrangements would be further strengthened if the Council's arrangements covered all data, not just PIs.

Recommendation
R1 *Extend monitoring and review of data quality to include all data used in performance monitoring, not just that used for published performance indicators.*

Policies

17 A comprehensive policy for data quality relating to PIs is in place, supported by a current set of operational procedures and guidance. The policies for collection, recording, analysis and reporting are being applied in practice by all service areas. The policy does not currently cover partnerships and contractor arrangements.

Recommendation
R2 *Update the data quality policy to cover partnerships and contractor arrangements.*

Systems and processes

18 There are appropriate systems in place for the collection, recording, analysis and reporting of data used to monitor performance. Controls exist to ensure data quality but processes are not corporately defined, leading to variance between departments. Data sharing and management frameworks are in place, but the standards applied are also variable across departments.

Recommendation
R3 *Ensure that approaches and standards are consistent throughout the Council.*

Hartlepool Borough Council

People and skills

19 Training has been provided for all responsible and coordinating officers. Member training has been provided to the portfolio holder (training is being arranged for the member who took over responsibility from May 2007). Training is provided as part of the performance management development programme but there is no specific training for data quality. There is no corporate evaluation of the effectiveness of training, nor is there a training programme to address weaknesses identified through internal or external reviews of data quality.

Recommendation
R4   *Develop specific training for data quality and evaluate the effectiveness of training provided. Ensure training addresses weaknesses identified through internal or external reviews of data quality.*

Data use and reporting

20 A number of different data bases are used to calculate performance indicators. The Council plans to integrate the data onto a single data base to be managed by the central strategy team, to reduce risk of errors and improve efficiency. No business continuity plan is yet in place for all systems, although this is in progress.

Analytical review (Stage 2)

21   An analytical review of BVPIs and non-BVPIs was carried out. The Council provided explanations for variances and this did not highlight any issues for further investigation.

Data quality spot checks (Stage 3)

22   A number of PIs were reviewed using a series of detailed spot checks and audit tests. Our findings are shown below.

Table 2

PI	Description	Assessment	Comment
BV199	Cleanliness of public spaces	Fairly stated	Calculations confirmed, no errors identified and PI compiled in accordance with guidance.
BV214	Homelessness prevention	Fairly stated	Data accurately captured in reporting systems, clearly documented guidance and advice available to staff. A clearer audit trail is required to show the processes involved in management checking and the reporting officer and Head of Service should formally sign-off the BVPI return to enhance accountability. The implementation of a software fix to prevent unauthorised amendment to data after the authorisation stage is being considered (issue raised by Internal audit).
PLSS7	Library satisfaction users 16 and over	Fairly stated	The PI (95.4 per cent v good/good rating) is fairly stated in accordance with the Audit Commission's criteria.

Hartlepool Borough Council

PI	Description	Assessment	Comment
HIPHSSA	Private sector homes vacant over 6 months	Unfairly stated	PI calculation incorrect. The PI was based on data extracted from the council tax system. There was a misunderstanding between departments as to what the data showed. It was assumed the date shown was the date the private dwelling first became empty. In fact the date represented the time the last council tax change was applied. Overall, this means that the council had accidentally omitted 6 months data which included approximately a further 1000 empty dwellings. The error arose from a lack of communication between staff in both the Revenues and Benefits and Housing departments. PI revised from 1.73 per cent to 4.82 per cent.

Recommendations
R5 *Ensure there is a clear audit trail to show the processes involved in management checking of Homelessness (BVPI 214).*
R6 *The reporting officer and head of service should formally sign off the BVPI return.*
R7 *Ensure that those responsible for producing data for and/or calculating PIs understand the definition of the PI.*

Hartlepool Borough Council

Appendix 1 – Action plan

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
7	R1 Extend monitoring and review of data quality to include all data used in performance monitoring, not just that used for published performance indicators.	M	Principal Strategy Development Officer (Peter Turner)	Yes	A fundamental review of PIs is already underway to identify information used in performance monitoring. The results will be used to load data in the Covalent system which will become operational for monitoring purposes from Q1 in 2008/09.	July 2008
7	R2 Update the data quality policy to cover partnerships and contractor arrangements.	M	Principal Strategy Development Officer (Peter Turner)	Yes	Revised policy will be produced and changes reported to Performance Portfolio holder and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee. We will also build on the work of the Head of Internal Audit and Governance that is identifying partnerships across the council and evaluating governance arrangements. For some partners, such as the Police and PCT for example, we would expect to be able to rely on the data provided as they are themselves subject to data quality audit.	March 2008
7	R3 Ensure that approaches and standards are consistent throughout the Council.	M	Principal Strategy Development Officer (Peter Turner)	Agreed	A number of steps are planned following purchase of Covalent Performance Management System, including: fundamental review of PIs following announcement of the national PI set, clarification of responsibilities, electronic sign off procedure before data is published, include data quality risk for each externally reported PI.	July 2008

Hartlepool Borough Council

Page no.	Recommendation	Priority 1 = Low 2 = Med 3 = High	Responsibility	Agreed	Comments	Date
8	R4 Develop specific training for data quality and evaluate the effectiveness of training provided. Ensure training addresses weaknesses identified through internal or external reviews of data quality.	H	Principal Strategy Development Officer (Peter Turner)	Agreed	An element of training will be provided to data providers as part of the introduction of the Covalent PMS. This will emphasise the importance of controls to ensure data quality is assured prior to publication of information. If Audit Commission is aware of best practice in other authorities then we would be grateful if you would identify the authorities so we can discuss with them.	July 2008
11	R5 Ensure there is a clear audit trail to show the processes involved in management checking of Homelessness (BVPI 214).	M	Lynda Igoe	Yes	In the short term the frequency of checks will be increased to monthly and the sample size increased and resulted documented.\n\nIn the medium term and subject to the Council agreeing to participate in the sub regional choice based lettings scheme a new software system will be introduced which requires verification of all cases.	January 2008\n\nMarch 2009
11	R6 R6 The reporting officer and head of service should formally sign off the BVPI return.	M	Principal Strategy Development Officer (Peter Turner)	Yes	As part of the introduction of the Covalent PMS we are considering use of an electronic sign off procedure. This required a designated officer to approve data if is published.	September 2008
11	R7 R7 Ensure that those responsible for producing data for and/or calculating PIs understand the definition of the PI.	H	Principal Strategy Development Officer (Peter Turner)	Yes	As part of the introduction of the Covalent PMS a Control/ Procedure sheet system will be introduced. This will need to be completed by those responsible for producing data for all PIs included within the system. Problems identified through internal audit and external audit will be reported to PI coordinators and fed back to PI responsible officers.	July 2008

Hartlepool Borough Council

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

18 January 2008

Report of: **Head of Community Strategy**

Subject: **NEW LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) 2008/11 PROPOSED OUTCOME AND TARGETS FRAMEWORK**

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1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   This report updates on progress made in developing the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) and sets out the proposed outcome and target framework as the basis for negotiations with Government Office North East (GONE).

2.   BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1   Hartlepool's current LAA was agreed by Cabinet in February 2006 and was signed off by Government in March 2006. 2007/08 is the second year of the current agreement that is due to come to a close at the end of March 2008 and will be replaced by the new LAA.

2.2   Work to prepare the new LAA started in early 2007 following the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) announcement that set the intention to develop the new arrangements. Further information on the new LAA arrangements and recent guidance notes issued by CLG are available on the LAA section of the Hartlepool Partnership Website (www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk)

2.3   The attached report contains the detail of the proposed framework endorsed by the Hartlepool Partnership on the 7 December 2007 and Hartlepool Borough Council Cabinet on the 10 December.

3.   RECOMMENDATION

3.1   That the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee receives this report, and focuses particular attention on the Outcome Framework and the proposed Improvement Targets. Any comments will be considered and can be incorporated into the negotiation process taking place in January and February 2008.

4.   **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers were used in production of this report.

5.   **CONTACT OFFICER**

John Potts – Principal Policy Officer
Regeneration and Planning – Community Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 284 320
Email: john.potts@hartlepool.gov.uk

CABINET REPORT

10th December 2007

Report of: Head of Community Strategy

Subject: NEW LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) 2008/11
PROPOSED OUTCOME AND TARGETS
FRAMEWORK

SUMMARY

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

   To agree the proposed outcome and target framework for the new Local
   Area Agreement (LAA) 2008/11 as the basis for negotiations with
   Government Office North East (GONE).

2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

   Local Authorities have a statutory duty to prepare a LAA in partnership with
   the Local Strategic Partnership. The report presents the proposed outcome
   and target framework that will help to deliver the Community Strategy and
   provide a strong platform for local leadership, enabling the Council to build,
   with partners, a strong shared vision for Hartlepool and ensure action is
   taken to tackle the key challenges. The proposed framework will form the
   basis of negotiations in early 2008 that will enable the new LAA to be in
   place for April 2008.

3. **RELEVANCE TO CABINET**

   Hartlepool's new LAA will be a three year agreement (2008-11) based on the
   Community Strategy that sets out the priorities for Hartlepool and forms an
   agreement between Central Government and a local area represented by
   Hartlepool Borough Council and other key partners through the Hartlepool
   Partnership.

4. **TYPE OF DECISION**

   Key.

5. **DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

   Hartlepool Partnership 7 December 2007
   Cabinet 10 December 2007

6.   DECISION REQUIRED

To agree as a basis for negotiation the proposed outcomes and improvement targets for the new LAA and to delegate responsibility to the Assistant Chief Executive and the Head of Community Strategy to negotiate with relevant lead officers and Government Office on the improvement targets for the new LAA

Report of: Head of Community Strategy

Subject: LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) 2008/11
                    PROPOSED OUTCOME AND TARGETS
                    FRAMEWORK

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1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To agree the proposed outcome and target framework for the new Local
       Area Agreement (LAA) 2008/11 as the basis for negotiations with
       Government Office North East (GONE).

2.0   BACKGROUND

2.1   Hartlepool's current LAA was agreed by the Cabinet in February 2006 and
       was signed off by Government in March 2006. 2007/08 is the second year of
       the current agreement that is due to come to a close at the end of March 2008
       and will be replaced by the new LAA.

2.2   Work to prepare the new LAA started in early 2007 following the Department
       for Communities and Local Government (CLG) announcement that set out a
       strategy for developing the new arrangements. Further information on the new
       LAA arrangements and recent guidance notes issued by CLG are available on
       the LAA section of the Hartlepool Partnership Website
       (www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk)

3.0   LATEST GUIDANCE AND CONSULTATION

3.1   The latest *Operational Guidance for the Development of the New LAA
       framework* was published by CLG in November and needs to be read
       alongside the draft statutory guidance *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous
       Communities* which explains the provisions for LAAs in the Local Government
       and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

3.2   CLG also published – *the Handbook* for the National Indicator Set (Draft for
       Consultation) in November 2007 and is seeking views on the substance or the
       balance of the outcomes represented by the indicators (not the actual set of
       indicators that have already been determined by the Comprehensive
       Spending review 2007).

3.3   Links to the documents relating to the consultation are available on the
       Partnership Website. Responses to the consultation are being coordinated by
       the Assistant Chief Executive and the Head of Community Strategy

4.0   PROPOSED OUTCOME FRAMEWORK AND TARGETS FOR NEW LAA

4.1   Guidance indicates that up to 35 **Improvement Targets** need to be identified that will be informed by existing LAA targets, Community Strategy Priorities, Government Office knowledge of areas and the outcome of the 2007 Spending Review that detailed the latest Public Service Agreements and the 198 National Indicators that replace the Best Value reporting regime. The proposed targets will need to be negotiated and will ultimately be designated by Secretary of State and be subject to upward reporting to Government. These proposed targets should be ambitious but realistic and must be derived from the National Indicator Set.

4.2   Each Theme Partnership has already prepared a discussion paper that proposes the draft framework for the new LAA. Copies of the updated discussion papers are available on the Partnership Website (paper copies are available on request). Each paper identifies the key issues, outlines the response and proposes the **Improvement Targets** and **Local Priority Targets**.

4.3   Appendix 1 *(updated 2 January 2008 for 18 January Scrutiny report)* presents the proposed Improvement Targets and Outcomes for the new LAA.

4.4   In addition to the 35 Improvement Targets in the LAA a number of Statutory Education and Early Years targets need to be set (these are presented in Appendix 1 under the Enjoy and Achieve outcome). The targets set will be subject to negotiations through the National Strategies of the Department for Children, Schools and Families through an existing statutory process.

4.5   In terms of setting Community Safety Improvement Targets, the Safer Hartlepool Partnership has an agreed timetable and statutory responsibilities to develop a Partnership Plan by April 2008. The Safer Hartlepool Partnership will discuss the proposed Improvement Targets at their meeting on 12 December 2007 and will feed into the LAA process in early 2008 to enable the timetable to become synchronized with the development of the new LAA. Appendix 1 shows the possible Improvement Targets that will be considered and prioritised by the Safer Hartlepool Partnership for inclusion in the new LAA.

4.6   For a variety of reasons it has not been possible at this stage to finalise for all proposed Improvement Targets the exact targets to be set for each of the 3 years in the new LAA. One of the key issues is the use of **new** indicators in the national indicators set that need to be included in the new LAA and therefore have no baseline data. Further details of the issues around target setting are shown in the notes section accompanying the templates for each Improvement Target shown in Appendix 2 *(please note Appendix 2 is not included in the 18 January 2008 Scrutiny report)* .

4.7   Where indicators from the National Set are to be used and no baselines currently exist, the operational guidance states that local authorities and partners can use appropriate data sources to assess current levels of performance and GONE have indicated that interim targets based on existing

surveys can be used to provide a proxy update in the first year of the new LAA. Further clarification will be sought from GONE on a case by case basis for each proposed Improvement Target this applies to.

4.8 Further consideration needs to be given to setting targets relating to specific groups of people or smaller geographic areas where evidence reveals inequalities that need to be addressed. The most recent guidance states that such targets can be included as Improvement Targets as well as Local Priority Targets.

4.9 Further work will also be required to develop a set of **Local Priority Targets** where targets are set by the Council and the Hartlepool Partnership and will be subject to local monitoring arrangements.

5.0 THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS
5.1 The final targets for the new LAA will result from negotiations between GONE and the local authority and its partners about the priorities for Hartlepool. Following negotiations GONE will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State to agree the LAA.

5.2 The exact process with GONE has yet to be confirmed. The first stage is the submission of the proposed Outcomes and Improvement Targets agreed by the Hartlepool Partnership and Cabinet. Following this submission the Head of Community Strategy will be seeking an early response and confirmation of the process for negotiations from GONE.

5.3 Any issues raised should be able to be resolved through negotiation dialogue involving the relevant lead officers with the Assistant Chief Executive and the Head of Community Strategy.

6.0 EARLY SIGN OFF
6.1 Government has established a sign off date in June 2008 for new LAAs. However Hartlepool has requested to GONE to be included in the early sign off arrangements so that the new LAA will be in place by April 2008. This was always our intention when new LAAs were announced in early 2007 and will allow better alignment of business planning for the Council and other partners.

6.2 A great deal of work has already been undertaken by Theme Partnership to develop the new LAA and a challenging but realistic timetable (see paragraph 9 for further details) has been set to allow a final draft of the new LAA to be prepared for March 2008, following the negotiation process in early 2008.

7.0 FINANANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS
7.1 Within the LAA a number of funding streams have been brought together into a single 'non-ringfenced' Area Based Grant which the Partnership Board has responsibility for allocating and agreeing with Hartlepool Borough Council. In agreeing the targets for inclusion in the LAA, partners will need to consider

how the delivery of these priorities will be resourced from mainstream and other resources available and how they will be able to demonstrate their contribution.

7.2   A separate report regarding the Commissioning Framework associated with the new LAA was brought to the Partnership in October 2007 and a further report will update the position in February 2008

8.0   REWARD FUNDING

8.1   The Comprehensive Sending Review announced a third round of reward grant that will relate to performance against the LAA. The details of the arrangements and amount of funding available will be outlined by Government in the coming weeks and it is hoped the arrangements will be finalised in January 2008.

9.0   NEXT STEPS

9.1   The proposed Outcomes and Improvement Targets for new LAA will be submitted to GONE on the 10 December (subject to the approval of the Hartlepool Partnership on the 7 December and Cabinet at this meeting).

9.2   Further work will be required to develop 'the story of the place' that will detail the distinctive vision and ambition of Hartlepool and the evidence base which sets out clearly why the issues identified in the LAA are our priority. The discussion papers already prepared by Theme Partnerships, the existing LAA and the current draft of the new Community Strategy provide much of the evidence required for this.

9.3   Negotiations on the Improvement Targets will take place in early 2008 to further develop the LAA and to allow the new agreement to be in place for April 2008. A fully worked up set of Improvement Targets and Local Priority Targets will be submitted to GONE in March 2008 subject to the approval of the Hartlepool Partnership and Cabinet for approval and ultimately sign off by the Secretary of State.

9.4   A progress update on the negotiations will be presented to Cabinet in early 2008.

10.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1   Cabinet is requested to agree the proposed Outcomes and Improvement Targets for the new LAA and to delegate responsibility to the Assistant Chief Executive and the Head of Community Strategy to negotiate with relevant lead officers and Government Office on the improvement targets for the new LAA

Hartlepool LAA 2008/11 Proposed Outcomes and Improvement Targets 02 January 2008

Jobs and the Economy

Outcome: Attract Investment

Improvement Targets	
Overall employment rate	NI 151

Outcome: Be Globally Competitive

Improvement Targets	
VAT Registration Rate	NI 171

Outcome: Create more employment opportunities for local people

Improvement Targets	
Falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits	NI173
Working age people on out of work benefits	NI 152
Working age population claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	NI 153

Outcome: Achieve economic wellbeing for all children and young people ensuring that they are prepared for working life.

Improvement Targets	
16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)	NI 117

Lifelong Learning and Skills

Outcome: Enjoy and Achieve

Improvement Targets	
Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy	NI 72
Achievement of level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2	NI 73
Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3	NI 74
Achievement of 5 or more A-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	NI 75
Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at KS3	NI 83
Secondary School persistent absence rate	NI 87
Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	NI 92
Progression by 2 levels in English between Keystage 1 and Keystage 2	NI 93
Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	NI 94
Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	NI 95
Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	NI 96
Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	NI 97
Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	NI 98
Children in Care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2	NI 99
Children in Care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2	NI 100
Children in Care achieving 5 A – C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)	NI 101

Outcome: Provision of high quality learning and skills opportunities that drive economic competitiveness, widen participation and build social justice.

Improvement Targets	
Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy	NI 161
Learners achieving an Entry Level 3 qualification in numeracy	NI 162
Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher	NI 163
Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher	NI 164

Health and Care

Outcome: Improved Health

Improvement Targets	
All-age all cause mortality	NI 120
16+ current smoking rate prevalence	NI 123

Outcome: Be Healthy

Improvement Targets	
Under 18 conception rates	NI 112

Outcome: Exercise of choice and control and retention of personal dignity

Improvement Targets	
Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individualised Budgets)	NI 130

Outcome: Improved Mental Wellbeing

Improvement Targets	
None	

Outcome: Access to Services

Improvement Targets	
Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carer's service, or advice and information	NI 135

Community Safety

Outcome: Reduced (total) crime

Improvement Targets	
Serious acquisitive crime rate	NI 16
Assault with injury crime rate	NI 20

Outcome: Reduced harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol

Improvement Targets	
Drugs related (class A) offending rate	NI 38

Outcome: Improved neighbourhood safety and increased public confidence, leading to reduced fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

Improvement Targets	
Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	NI 17

Outcome: Reduced anti-social and criminal behaviour through improved prevention and enforcement activities

Improvement Targets	
None	

Outcome: Stay safe

Improvement Targets	
None	

Environment

Outcome: Deliver sustainable communities through high quality planning, new build and sensitive conservation and protect and enhance the local natural environment

Improvement Targets	
None	

Outcome: Improve the quality of the local environment by having cleaner, greener and safer public, private and community spaces

Improvement Targets	
Improved street and environmental cleanliness	NI 195

Outcome: Provide a sustainable, safe, efficient, effective and accessible transport system

Improvement Targets	
People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	NI 47
Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	NI 48

Outcome: Make better use of natural resources and reduce the generation of waste and maximise recycling

Improvement Targets	
Tonnage of household waste recycled and composted	NI 192

Outcome: Prepare for the impacts of and secure local and global action to tackle Climate Change

Improvement Targets	
Per Capita CO_2 emissions in the LA area	NI 186
Adapting to climate change	NI 188

Outcome: Promote community involvement in positive action to reduce poverty through fair trade and promoting peace and security

Improvement Targets	
None	

Housing

Outcome: Balancing Housing Supply and Demand

Improvement Targets	
Number of affordable homes constructed	NI 155

Outcome: Meeting the Decent Homes Standard

Improvement Targets	
% decent public sector homes	NI 158

Outcome: Meeting the Housing Needs of Vulnerable People

Improvement Targets	
Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living	NI 141
Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	NI 142

Culture and Leisure

Outcome: Enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve places where people live through enjoyment of leisure, culture and sport

Improvement Targets	
Adult participation in sport	NI 8
Engagement in the arts	NI 11

Outcome: Cultural and leisure services, including libraries, better meet the needs of the community, especially disadvantaged areas

Improvement Targets	
Visits to museums or galleries	NI 10
Use of public libraries	NI 9

Strengthening Communities

Outcome: To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and the delivery of services

Improvement Targets		
	None	

Outcome: Make a positive contribution

Improvement Targets		
	Participation in regular volunteering	NI 6
	Young people's participation in positive activities	NI 110

Outcome: Improving quality of life and ensuring service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs with particular focus on disadvantaged areas

Improvement Targets		
	Overall/general satisfaction with local area	NI 5

Outcome: Increasing financial resources within family environments to provide improved lifestyle opportunities

Improvement Targets		
	None	

Outcome: Freedom from discrimination or harassment

Improvement Targets		
	None	

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SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

18th January 2008

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Report of: Chief Personnel Officer

Subject: Corporate Access Strategy and Publicity for
                        Translation and Interpretation Services

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1.0   PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an opportunity to consider and comment on
the draft Access strategy and proposals regarding the way the
translation and interpretation services provided by the Council are
publicised for the Performance Portfolio Holder to consider.

2.0   BACKGROUND

2.1   Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee previously considered a report on
the Translation and Interpretation Services strategy as part of a wider
Access Strategy. The purpose of the Access Strategy is to ensure that
the Council continues to assess, anticipate and address any barriers
that might prevent Hartlepool residents and visitors using Council
services. Scrutiny Coordinating Committee agreed it would consider
the Draft Access Strategy when it had been developed further so that
the Performance Portfolio Holder could consider any comments.

2.2   A wide range of translation and interpretation services is available,
including language translation, interpretation service (telephone or face
to face), Audio format, large print, Braille and British Sign Language
interpretation service. Further detail on the services available is
attached as **Appendix A**.

2.3   The only restriction to usage of these services is the reasonableness of
the request. For example, a request to have a single page leaflet
translated would be deemed reasonable whereas a request to have
every Portfolio Holder agenda translated would not be. Each request
is considered on its merits.

3.0   DRAFT ACCESS STRATEGY

3.1   The Draft Access Strategy (**Appendix B**) has been developed and
incudes a suite of connected strategies in respect of
a) Overall Access Framework
b) Access to Council Services and Support

      c) Access to Council Information
      d) Access to Council Employment
      e) Access to Council Education
      f) Access to Council Transport and,
      g) Access to Council Buildings, Land, Sites and Other Facilities.

3.2   The format of the suite of strategies is to have a common overall framework with a more specific strategy in respect of the subject area. This is a similar format to the Communicating with Your Council suite of strategies.

4.0   **GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON TRANSLATION OF PUBLICATIONS**

4.1   The Department for Communities and Local Government has recently provided guidance (**Appendix C**) for local authorities on Translation of Publications. The draft Access Strategy was developed prior to the guidance being made available and will need reviewing in light of the new guidance. It is considered that the draft Strategy generally complies with the guidance although some fine tuning is needed. For example, a responsibility of the Chief Personnel Officer under the draft Access to Information Strategy is to "determine the circumstances in which provision of information in different formats or languages are not provided free of charge". This will need amendment to include a responsibility to provide guidance in order to determine whether the translation is necessary, for which documents it is appropriate, whether it should be available on demand and whether it should be done in a way that helps people learn English.

4.2   The guidance suggests that Councils should attempt to line up the withdrawal of translation services with the provision of English language classes, perhaps provided by local providers, including local employers (including the Council). This may require some changes to the Access to Education Strategy, particularly at a time when Government funding for ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) is being withdrawn.

5.0   **PROPOSALS REGARDING THE WAY THE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL ARE PUBLICISED**

5.1   A key element of the Access to Council Information is the provision of translation and Interpretation services provided by the Council and how these are publicised. Anecdotal evidence is that knowledge and understanding of what services are available and in what circumstances is patchy amongst stakeholders and employees.

5.2   Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee had previously suggested that a logo be developed specifically so that stakeholders who needed translation or interpretation services would be aware that they are

available. There is no national logo available for this. Developing a specific logo would require that it be widely publicised. Rather than having a separate logo it is proposed that the Council logo be used for this purpose. This would be publicised so that stakeholders and employees would be aware that the translation and interpretation services are available wherever the Councils logo has been used (e.g. on buildings, correspondence, leaflets etc). It is not intended that this will be used to restrict access to the services, rather to make it clear that support is available in respect of all Council services. It is envisaged that the current arrangement of including a message (in several languages) on Council documents indicating that they can be translated will be discontinued once the new arrangements have 'bedded in'.

5.3   It will be necessary to make it clear in publicity that the provision of translation and interpretation services will be assessed in accordance with the guidance to be provided by the Chief Personnel Officer (see 4.1 above) and to signpost individuals to English language classes.

5.4   The publicity arrangements being actively considered include

> ➢ Posters
> ➢ Specific leaflets in all the 26 spoken languages of Hartlepool
> ➢ Prompt boards for employees
> ➢ Targeting distribution of the leaflets to specific areas of town (possibly by postcode)

It is envisaged that posters and supplies of the leaflets will be displayed/available in all main Council premises with public access including admin buildings, information centres, libraries, community centres, etc and possibly in partner organisations premises e.g. hospitals, doctor's surgeries, voluntary organisations, etc. The Council's website will be updated to reflect the new arrangements. Training will be provided to all front line staff. Dummy samples of the publicity material will be available at your meeting for comment.

5.5   The potential costs of the publicity material is as follows

> ➢ Translation for leaflets in 26 languages - £3000 approx
> ➢ Production of Posters – 100 A3 size at a cost of £30
> ➢ Production of Leaflets –1000 A5 size at a cost of £75
> ➢ Production of Prompt Boards – 100 A5 at a cost of £50
> ➢ Targeted distribution of leaflets – £500
> ➢ Updating the Council's website – cost of £600
> ➢ Training front line staff – during normal working hours

The services will also be publicised through Hartbeat and Press release. Funding has been identified for the publicity.

6.0   NEXT STEPS

6.1   Following consideration by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, it is proposed that the draft suite of strategies and proposed publicity arrangements will be reviewed in the light of the recent Government guidance and comments made by Scrutiny Coordinating Committee and consulted upon widely with stakeholders prior to consideration by the Performance Portfolio Holder.

7.0   COMMENTS BY SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

7.1   Members are invited to comment on

> ➢ the draft Suite of Strategies
> ➢ how the Government guidance may be applied locally
> ➢ the proposed publicity arrangements for translation and interpretation services
> ➢ the next steps on consultation with all stakeholders

7.2   Officers will attend the meeting to provide any further information, which may be of help to Members, and to facilitate the compilation of views and comments.

8.0   CONCLUSION

8.1   Members are asked to consider the draft Access Strategy and proposed publicity arrangements of the Interpretation and Translation Services and make any comments they wish to be considered.

<div align="right">**Appendix A**</div>

Hartlepool Borough Council

Access to Information

The Council is committed to making its services accessible to all and that their provision is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and sensitive to the needs of all local communities (Race and Diversity Scheme 2005-2008).

The Council has declared achievement of Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Standard establishes the minimum levels of arrangements, which should be in place set out within a framework suitable for all councils. The Council is committed to attaining Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by March 2008. A key strand of Level 3 in respect of service delivery is whether issues of barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustments in the provision of services have been addressed.

Within Hartlepool there are people who have limited understanding about the range of Council services that are available to them or might not be able to make full use of them as a result of communication difficulties.   Visitors and others who have links with the town may also experience barriers to full and equitable access to the council's services.

Communication barriers are often 'invisible' to the majority but through a process of evaluation the council is able to assess the negative impact of how it provides services on certain groups in the community. These diversity impact assessments indicate that without specific arrangements for translation and interpretation services some Hartlepool residents may not know about council services that are available to them or understand how they can make best use of them.

The 2000 Race Relations Amendment Act imposes a legal duty on Councils to prepare and publish its arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services, which it provides.   The Commission for Race Equality guidance is that "public access means more than merely making information or services available. It means that members of the public can, in practice, without discrimination- direct or indirect - and regardless of their ethnicity, have real and equal access to information and services". The 2005 Disability Discrimination Act imposes similar duties in respect of people with disabilities.

Arrangements recommended to all HBC Employees:

- The Council has contracts with <u>Tees Valley Durham Communication services</u> (TVDCS) for providing BSL interpreters and Lip speakers. This contract will expire in Sept 2008.

> To book please fill the <u>TVDCS</u> form and send a fax minimum of two weeks in advance

- The Council has a contract with <u>Browsealoud</u> for web accessibility and this will expire in April 2009.
- At the moment the Council provides telephone translations through <u>Languageline</u>.

- The Regional Centres of Excellence (RCE) as part of the "Procurement Programme" have produced a framework agreement for Translation and Interpretation services which is available to all local authorities to use. A formal contract has been established. Subsequently the translation service should be purchased via the RCE framework contract. The contract is in place, a 'Council Order' quoting the contract reference would therefore comply with standing orders. These companies are <u>thebigwordGroup</u> and <u>K-International</u>. They both provide Language translation service. They provide document translation in Braille. You can get documents translated by simply completing one of the below booking forms:

  - <u>thebigword Booking Form</u>

  - <u>K-International Booking Form</u>

  The Council is making arrangements to switch to <u>thebigword</u> to provide telephone language interpretation services.

- For face to face Interpretation services, quotes from three regional providers is sought and the cheapest is arranged for the specific service need. (Details of these providers is accessed through the Council's Diversity Officer)

- The Council's web site has a <u>Welcome page</u> in 8 different languages. Links are provided in <u>Accessibility site</u> to get documents translated in certain European languages.

For further information please contact the Council's Diversity Officer Vijaya Kotur on 01429-523060 or e-mail <u>vijaya.kotur@hartlepool.gov.uk</u>

Appendix B

CORPORATE ACCESS STRATEGY (DRAFT)

Contents

CORPORATE ACCESS STRATEGY

To ensure that Hartlepool residents and visitors get the best in terms of service and support, the Council has developed an Access Strategy framework to establish an inclusive society where members of the public can, in practice, without discrimination- direct or indirect - and regardless of their personal situation (in terms of their ethnicity, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs) have real and equal access to Council service and support, information, employment, education, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities.

There are 6 key themes that the framework addresses:

- Access to Council services and support
- Access to Council Information
- Access to Council employment
- Access to Council education
- Access to Council transport
- Access to Council buildings, land, sites and other facilities

Aim

To establish an inclusive society where all Hartlepool residents and visitors

- have equal access to all Council services and support, information, employment, education, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities without discrimination (both direct and indirect) except where statutory restrictions or other eligibility criteria apply
- to ensure that all Hartlepool residents and visitors are aware of what is available/provided and how to access them

Key principles

- That all Council services are delivered in line with people's needs
- The people of Hartlepool have a right to expect to have an excellent level of service
- That all Council services and support, information, employment, education, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities should be accessible to all and where necessary, reasonable adjustments should be made to remove barriers preventing such access

Key Outcomes

- The people of Hartlepool are satisfied that they have equality of access to all Council services, information, employment, education, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities
- An inclusive society is created within Hartlepool

- All council services are accessible and that their provision is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and sensitive to the needs of all local communities, subject to any statutory restrictions or other eligibility criteria which apply

It is recognised that achievement of some of the key outcomes will take some time and will be subject to the availability of resources to the Council. General priorities for the next 3 years will be outlined in the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Scheme(s) with more detailed and objectives and actions being identified in Corporate and Departmental Plans, cross referenced to individual Access Strategies. Predictive Impact Assessments (DIA's) will be undertaken whenever significant changes to policies and procedures are being planned and access will be a key feature of such assessments.

Monitoring Arrangements

Monitoring of progress will be undertaken via the Race, Gender and Disability Equality Scheme(s) annual reports and standard performance management arrangements. Retrospective Impact Assessments (INRA's) will be undertaken in respect of all services as part of a rolling programme and access will be a key feature of such assessments.

Legislative Framework

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires the Council to
- promote race equality
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups and
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability Act 2001, requires the Council to prepare an accessibility strategy for schools which seeks to:
- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of written information which is provided to pupils who are not disabled, within a reasonable period and in a format which takes account of the preferred means of communication expressed by pupils or parents.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to
- eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination against disabled persons (including making reasonable adjustments in relation to disabled people)

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life and
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons

The Equality Act 2006, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to the need to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment due to gender, age, religion and sexual orientation and
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Inter-relationships and dependencies

There is a clear relationship and inter-dependency between the 6 key themes, for example

- access to services or education may be denied simply due to the building where the service or education is being provided not being accessible or suitable transport is not available
- Hartlepool residents may not access a particular service because they are not aware of it
- Some people may experience additional hurdles in accessing services such as having learning difficulties, English not being their first language, having a disability etc.

It is recognised that there is not always a clear distinction between the 6 key themes for example provision of sports pitches may be considered as both a service and a facility

As the Access Strategy Framework is fundamental to the way the Council operates, there are relationships with other strategies, plans, policies, partners etc including-

- Council Corporate Plan
- Departmental Service Plans
- Communicating with your Council Strategy
- Race and Diversity Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- People Strategy
- Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy
- Local Transport Plan
- Hartlepool Local Plan
- Accessibility Strategy for Hartlepool Children's Services
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Improving Life Chances
- Hartlepool Access Group
- Hartlepool Blind Welfare Group
- Hartlepool Deaf Centre
- All Ability Forum
- Talking with Communities
- Hart Gables

- 50+ forum and other voluntary bodies

The Framework
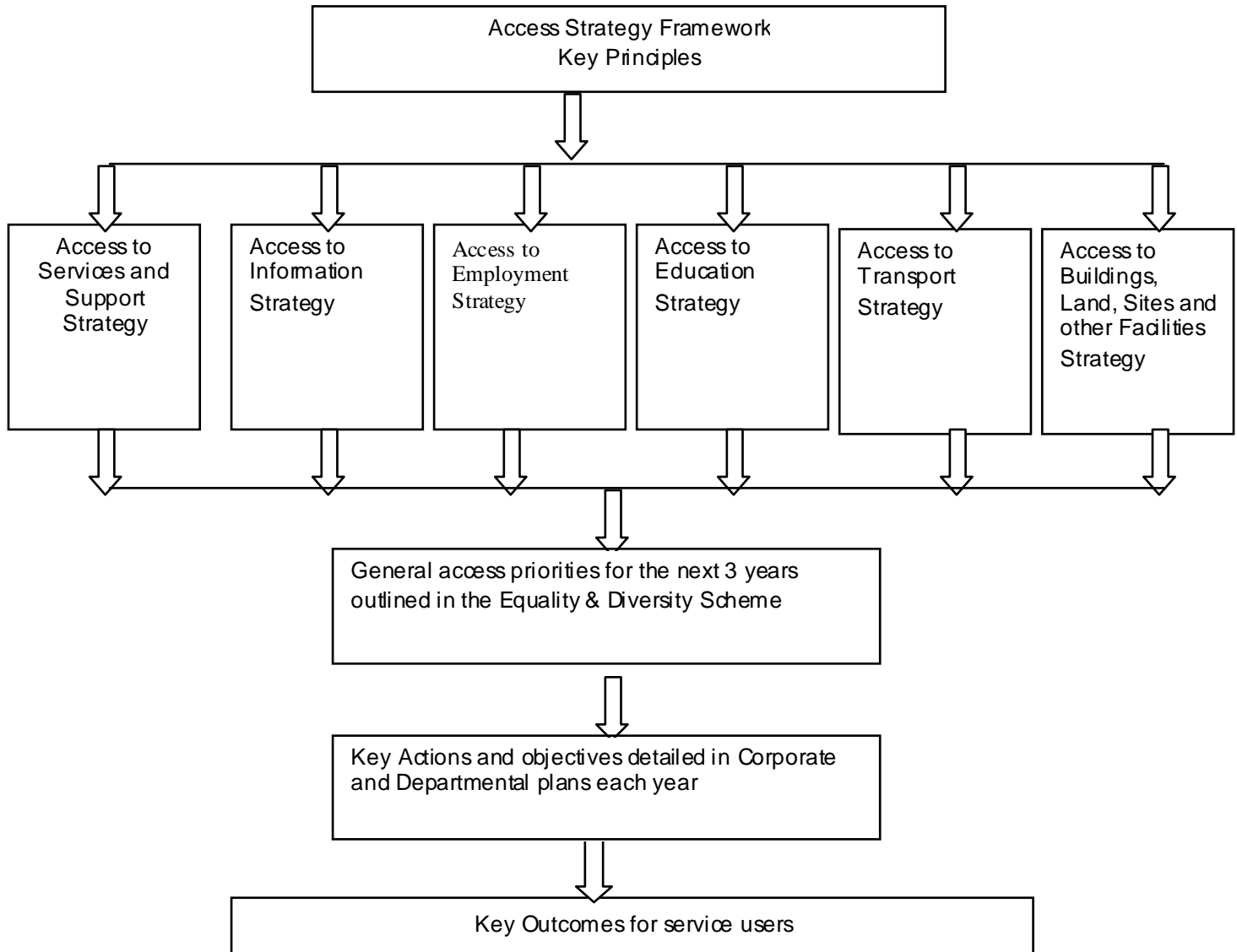
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Access Strategy Framework            │
│              Key Principles                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

| Access to Services and Support Strategy | Access to Information Strategy | Access to Employment Strategy | Access to Education Strategy | Access to Transport Strategy | Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities Strategy |

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  General access priorities for the next 3    │
│  years outlined in the Equality & Diversity  │
│  Scheme                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Key Actions and objectives detailed in      │
│  Corporate and Departmental plans each year  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Key Outcomes for service users       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Individual Strategies

Each individual Strategy details
- how it contributes to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- who can access the strategy
- key principles
- aims and what must be done to achieve them
- responsibilities
- performance measures

The main areas covered by each individual strategy are set out below

A) Access to Services and Support Strategy

The Access to Services and Support Strategy sets out the Councils overall strategy in relation to access to Council services and support. The key areas covered by the strategy include

- Provision of information about all services and support
- Removal of physical, transport or personal barriers to services and support
- Equitable treatment of people, free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination, who access services and support
- Inclusive access to services and support that meet the needs of the community.
- Access to all council services and support, facilities, & sites

B) Access to Information Strategy

The Access to Information Strategy sets the standards to be adhered to when making information available to Hartlepool residents and visitors. The key areas covered by the strategy include

- Paper Information
- Information accessible via computers/websites
- Translation Services
- Communication Services

C) Access to Employment Strategy

The Access to Employment Strategy sets out the overall strategy in relation to Council employment. The key areas covered by the strategy include

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Pay and Conditions

D) Access to Education Strategy

The Access to Education Strategy sets out the overall strategy in relation to Education. The key areas covered by the strategy include

- Education for school aged pupils
- Promotion of inclusive education in schools
- Hartlepool Inclusion Standard
- Adult Education

E) Access to Transport Strategy

The Access to Transport Strategy sets out the overall strategy in relation to Council transport.   The key areas covered by the strategy include

- Transport provided directly by the Council
- Transport commissioned/subsidised by the Council
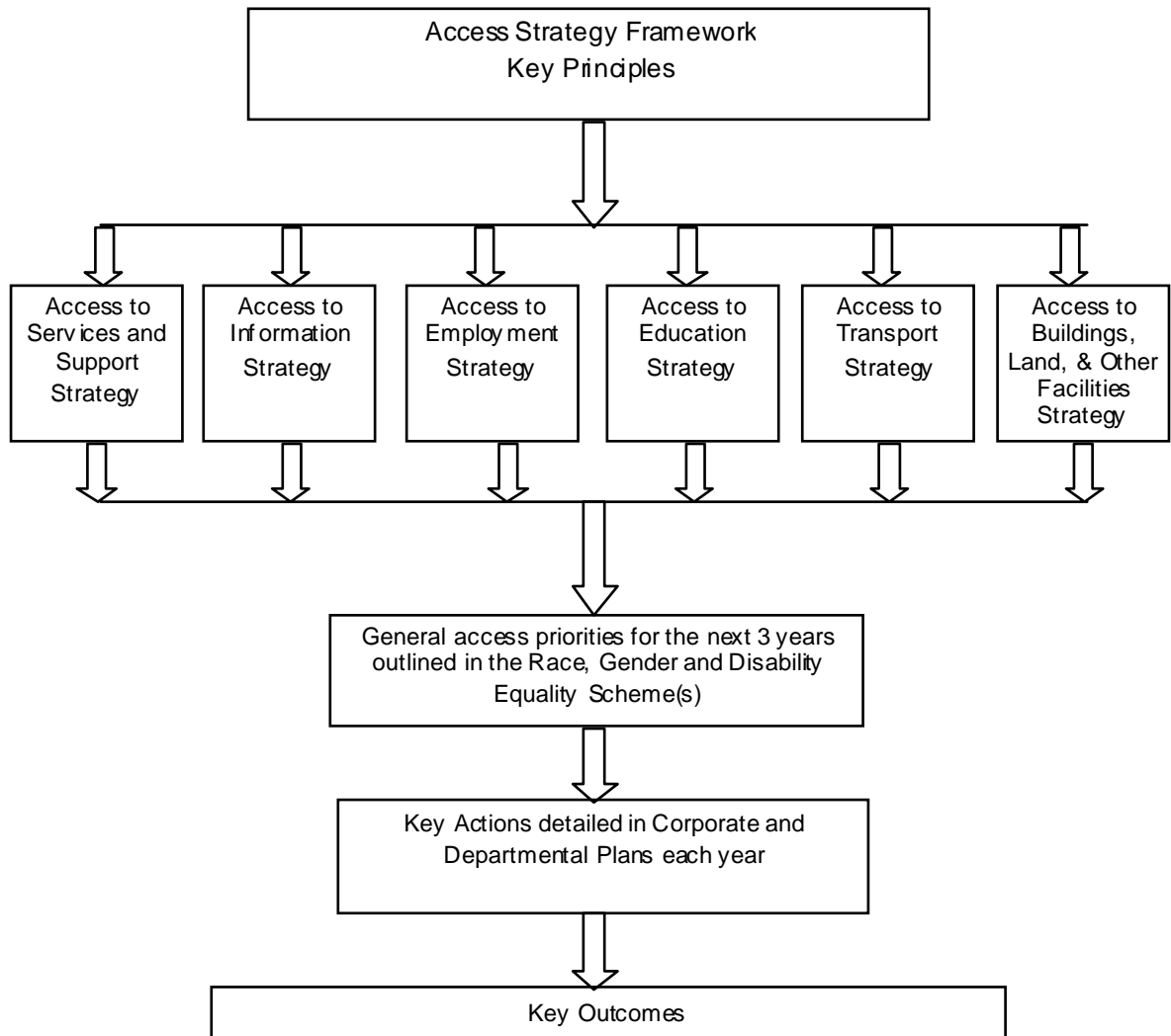- Transport Infrastructure/Highway

F) Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities

The Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities Strategy sets out the overall strategy in relation to Council buildings, land, sites and other facilities.   The key areas covered by the strategy include

- Buildings
- Land
- Sites
- Other facilities

ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES AND SUPPORT STRATEGY

<u>The Framework</u>

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Access Strategy Framework             │
│             Key Principles                   │
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| Access to Services and Support Strategy | Access to Information Strategy | Access to Employment Strategy | Access to Education Strategy | Access to Transport Strategy | Access to Buildings, Land, & Other Facilities Strategy |

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ General access priorities for the next 3 years│
│ outlined in the Race, Gender and Disability  │
│         Equality Scheme(s)                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Key Actions detailed in Corporate and       │
│ Departmental Plans each year                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               Key Outcomes                   │
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Individual Strategies

Each individual strategy details:

- How to contribute to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- Who can access the strategy
- Key principles
- Aims and what must be done to achieve them
- Responsibilities
- Performance measures

How does the Access to Services Strategy Contribute to the Overall Framework?

The Access to Services and Support Strategy sets the Council's overall aims to ensure that these are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring equal access to Services and Support provided by the Council, regardless of the circumstances of the individual, subject to any legislative or eligibility restrictions.

Who can use the Access to Services and Support Strategy?

- Service Users
- Employees
- Councillors
- Trade Unions
- Hartlepool residents and businesses
- Partner Organisations
- People outside the borough

Principles of the Strategy

All Services or Support:

- will be available to be equally accessed by individuals irrespective of their age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or ethnic background , subject to any legislative or eligibility restrictions,
- will make appropriate and reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access.

The Strategy

Background

Whilst the Council makes its services, buildings and land and transport widely available and wishes to see services accessed equally by all sectors of the community, it recognises that there are barriers which prevent equality of access by all sectors.

One of the most significant barriers is a lack of understanding by all sectors of the community of:

a) the services, buildings and land, transport, and education services which can be accessed and,
b) how to access them.

This lack of understanding can often be caused by information (verbal and written) being provided in English which is not readily or cannot be understood because of a disability, literacy difficulties or English not being the first language of a significant proportion of the Hartlepool community.

However there may still be barriers after people have received this information – this is what this strategy aims to address.

Aims
- To provide service and support which are equally accessible by all parts of the community.

To do this it must:

- Ensure that access to all services and support are included in regular retrospective impact assessments using the INRA process and appropriate action taken to address any adverse impact or unmet need,
- Ensure that all new services/policies will be subject to predictive impact assessments using the DIA process to address any adverse impact or unmet need. This will ensure we have considered the implications for all parts of the community.

Responsibilities

a) Corporate responsibilities

 (i)   Assistant Chief Executive
- To ensure the council's performance management framework incorporates equality and diversity issues
- To provide the corporate lead on consultation with the community.

 (ii)   Chief Personnel Officer
- To ensure appropriate guidance and training on INRA and DIA processes are undertaken.
- To ensure that access issues are included in the INRA and DIA processes.

b) Departmental responsibilities

- To undertake impact assessments in all service areas using DIA/INRA processes.
- To implement any identified actions.
- Monitor complaints for any barriers identified and to learn the lessons of these complaints.
- Provide appropriate customer care/diversity training to ensure customers are treated equitably and without discrimination
- Consult with service users regarding their services communities of interest.

Performance Measures

- Progress against Corporate Plan actions
- Progress against Departmental Service Plan actions

ACCESS TO INFORMATION STRATEGY
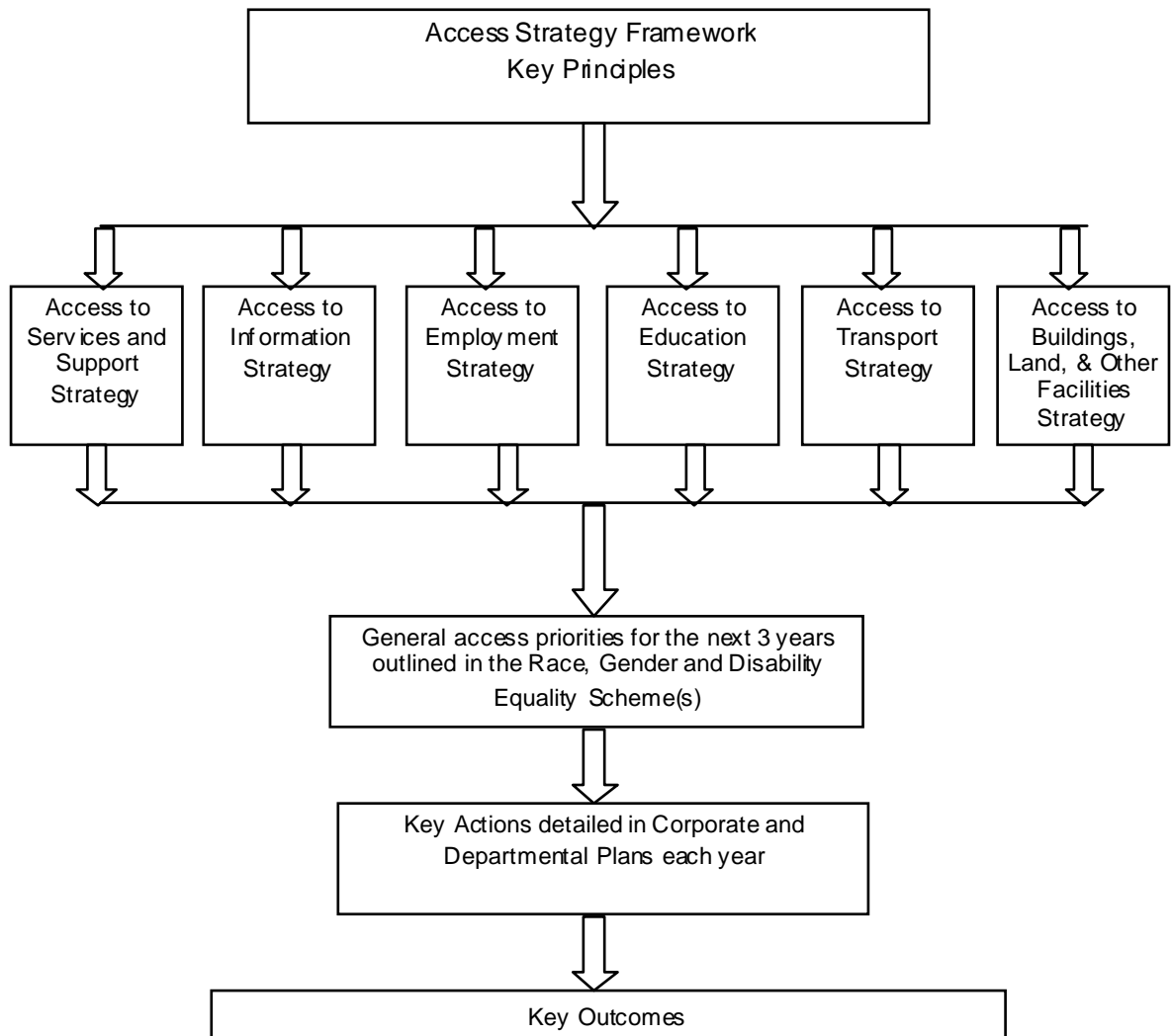
The Framework

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Access Strategy Framework          │
│              Key Principles               │
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Access to Services and Support Strategy	Access to Information Strategy	Access to Employment Strategy	Access to Education Strategy	Access to Transport Strategy	Access to Buildings, Land, & Other Facilities Strategy

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ General access priorities for the next 3  │
│ years outlined in the Race, Gender and    │
│       Disability Equality Scheme(s)       │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Key Actions detailed in Corporate and    │
│      Departmental Plans each year         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Key Outcomes                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Individual Strategies

Each individual Strategy details
- how it contributes to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- who can access the strategy
- key principles
- aims and what must be done to achieve them
- responsibilities
- performance measures

How does the Access to Information Strategy Contribute to the Overall Framework?

The Access to Information Strategy sets the Council's overall aims to ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring equal access to

information about, and how to access, the Council services, employment, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities provided by the Council, regardless of the circumstances of the individual. Equality of access to Council services, employment, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities is highly unlikely to be achieved without knowledge of what services are available, or how to access them.

Who can use the Access to Information Strategy?

- Employees;
- Potential Employees;
- Councillors;
- Trade Unions;
- Hartlepool residents and businesses, including those with disabilities, literacy difficulties and/or those whose first language is not English;
- Partner Organisations;
- People outside the borough.

Principles of the Strategy

All information, whether spoken or written, must
- Be easily understood by the person receiving it
- Be translated into a language or format appropriate to the recipient on request
- Facilitate equality of access to Council services, employment, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities
- Explain how to access Council services, employment, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities, where appropriate

The Strategy

Background

Whilst the Council makes services, employment, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities widely available and wishes to see equal access by all sectors of the community, it recognizes that that there are barriers which prevent equality of access.

Other Strategies deal with barriers in relation to services, employment, transport and buildings, land, sites and other facilities. This Strategy focuses on the removal of barriers in relation to information. Equality of access cannot be achieved without all sectors of the Community understanding what is available and how it can be accessed.

This lack of understanding can often be caused by information (verbal and written) being provided in formats, which is not readily (or cannot be)

understood because of people having a disability, literacy difficulties or English not being their first language.

The provision of information in appropriate formats is one aspect of communications generally and this Strategy supplements the Communicating with your Council Strategy

Aims

- To make available and provide information in a format which is accessible to the recipient
- To provide 'introducer' information about translation and interpretation services in all languages spoken by Hartlepool residents

To do this it must

- Make available and provide information in a format and language which is accessible and understandable to the recipient
- Ensure all Internet and Intranet sites adhere to recognised minimum accessibility and translation facilities
- Provide translation services on request
- Provide communication services on request
- Consult with people having a disability, literacy difficulties or English not being their first language (and groups representing them) to identify their needs. For e.g. documents translated into easy read for Learning disabilities (subject to cabinet approval)
- Ensure that access to all services and support are included in regular retrospective impact assessments using the INRA (Impact Needs Requirements Assessment) process and appropriate action taken to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need
- Ensure that access issues are considered when all new services / policies are subject to predictive impact assessments using the DIA (Diversity Impact Assessment) process to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need.
- Set standards
- Be consistent with other strategies such as the 'Communicating with your Council' suite of Strategies

Responsibilities

a) <u>Corporate responsibilities</u>

i)   Assistant Chief Executive
- To ensure the council's performance management framework incorporates equality and diversity issues
- To provide the corporate lead on consultation with the community

- To ensure all Internet and Intranet sites meet, as a minimum, the WA1 Level AA guidelines (developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)) in respect of accessibility
- To maintain industry standards on all Internet sites in respect of translation services
- Promote and publicise the translation and communication arrangements
- Promote and facilitate the use of Plain English and accessible formats in council communications

ii)   Chief Personnel Officer
- To ensure appropriate guidance and training on INRA and DIA processes are undertaken.
- To ensure that access issues are included in the INRA and DIA processes
- To provide an initial contact point (via the Contact Centre) for requests for translation and communication services
- To arrange and manage corporate contracts for translation services
- To arrange and manage corporate contracts for communication services
- To arrange and manage corporate contracts for providing documents in different formats
- Provide 'introducer' information leaflets in appropriate languages and formats
- Determine the circumstances in which provision of information in different formats or languages are not provided free of charge

b) Departmental responsibilities

- To undertake access impact assessments in all service areas using DIA / INRA processes and implement any identified actions arising there from
- Monitor complaints for any barriers identified and to learn the lessons of these complaints.
- Provide appropriate customer care / diversity training to ensure customers are treated equitably and without discrimination
- Consult with service users regarding their services.
- To ensure all employees are aware of the above services and how to access them
- To access corporate contracts for, and fund translation services, communication services and the provision of documents in different formats in respect of departmental responsibilities

Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives, actions and performance measures (see below) to implement this strategy will be incorporated into the Council's performance management arrangements and cross-referenced to this strategy.
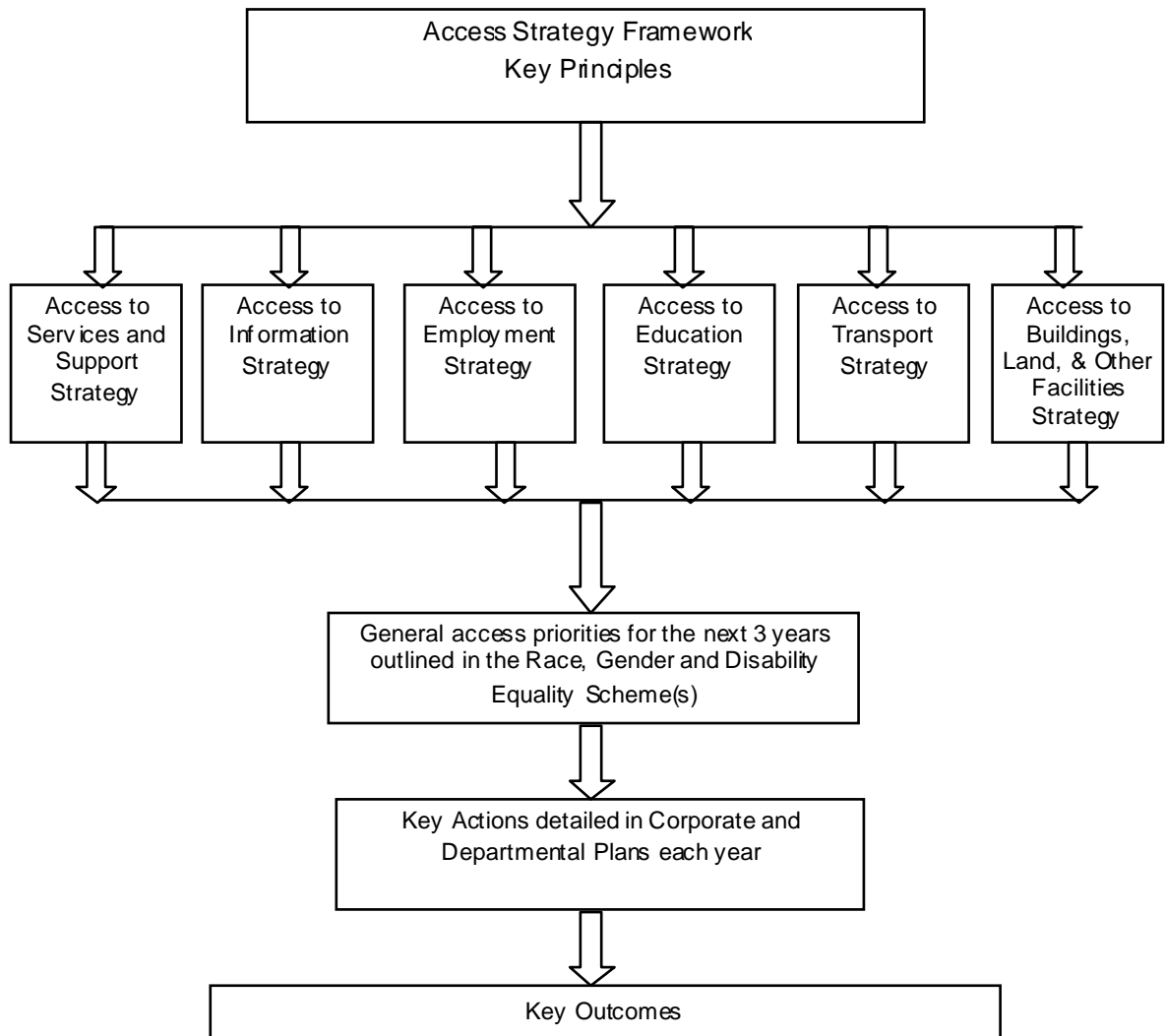
Performance Measures
- Level of satisfaction with translation services provision (via Talking with Communities Group)
- Level of satisfaction of accessibility of Intranet sites (via Talking with Communities Group and Disability Consultation Group – when established)
- Level of satisfaction of users of the Communication Service
- Level of satisfaction of users of the translation services
- Progress against Corporate, Departmental and Service Plan actions

Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against the actions to implement the Strategy and performance measures will be subject to the Council's standard performance management arrangements and will be reported as part of the Annual Diversity report

ACCESS TO COUNCIL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

<u>The Framework</u>

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Access Strategy Framework     │
│            Key Principles            │
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Access to Services and Support Strategy	Access to Information Strategy	Access to Employment Strategy	Access to Education Strategy	Access to Transport Strategy	Access to Buildings, Land, & Other Facilities Strategy

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ General access priorities for the    │
│ next 3 years outlined in the Race,   │
│ Gender and Disability Equality       │
│ Scheme(s)                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Key Actions detailed in Corporate    │
│ and Departmental Plans each year     │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Key Outcomes             │
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Individual Strategies

Each individual Strategy details
- how it contributes to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- who can access the strategy
- key principles
- aims and what must be done to achieve them
- responsibilities
- performance measures

How does the Access to Employment Strategy Contribute to the Overall Framework?

The Access to Employment Strategy sets the way in which the Council will ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring equal access to employment with the Council. The Council is committed to striving for a workforce which reflects the composition of the local population. It believes that by striving to mirror the local population within its workforce, this sends a powerful message to the whole community about the way it wishes to deliver its services.

Who can use the Access to Employment Strategy?

- Employees;
- Potential Employees;
- Councillors;
- Trade Unions;
- Hartlepool residents and businesses;
- Partner Organisations;
- People outside the borough.

Principles of the Strategy

- Equality of access to recruitment to, and training opportunities and promotion within, the Council, regardless of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion
- Equality of treatment whilst in employment
- Elimination of harassment and discrimination of employees and potential employees
- Provision of equality proof pay and grading systems and conditions of service

The Strategy

Background

The council has a well established Equality and Diversity in Employment Policy and has recently developed a comprehensive People strategy, which outlines in detail the Council's strategy in respect of equality and diversity in employment.

Aims

- To ensure equality of access to employment to all people
- To ensure fair and equal treatment, including access to promotion and training, and eliminate discrimination and harassment of employees whilst in employment
- To employ a workforce which reflects the composition of the local population
- To operate non discriminatory proof pay and grading systems and conditions of service

To do this it must

- apply fair and non discriminatory recruitment practices
- provide equality of access to training and promotion
- ensure non discriminatory employment practices are adhered to
- address any harassment of employees
- ensure that employment policies, procedures, practices and other arrangements are included in regular retrospective impact assessments using the INRA (Impact Needs Requirements Assessment) process and appropriate action taken to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need
- undertake regular Equal Pay Audits
- ensure that access issues are considered when all new services / policies are subject to predictive impact assessments using the DIA (Diversity Impact Assessment) process to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need.
- operate non discriminatory pay and grading systems and conditions of service
- monitor the workforce and compare it to the local labour market

Responsibilities

a) <u>Corporate responsibilities</u>

   i)   Assistant Chief Executive
   - To ensure the council's performance management framework incorporates equality and diversity issues
   - To provide the corporate lead on consultation with the community

   ii)   Chief Personnel Officer

   - To ensure appropriate guidance and training on INRA and DIA processes are undertaken.
   - To ensure that access issues are included in the INRA and DIA processes

- To provide specialist HR support to managers
- To develop and maintain non discriminatory recruitment, training, promotion, harassment and other employment procedures and arrangements
- Monitor the workforce profile, compare it to the local population and take corporate action to address any differences
- To develop, implement and maintain non discriminatory pay and grading structures and conditions of service

b) Departmental responsibilities

- To consider the departmental results of employment related impact assessments and address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need
- To implement any identified actions
- Monitor complaints for any barriers identified and to learn the lessons of these complaints.
- Provide appropriate diversity training to all employees
- To recruit and manage employees in a non discriminatory way
- To address any issues of harassment
- To provide equality of access to training and promotion to all employees

Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives, actions and performance measures (see below) to implement this strategy will be incorporated into the Council's performance management arrangements and cross-referenced to this strategy.
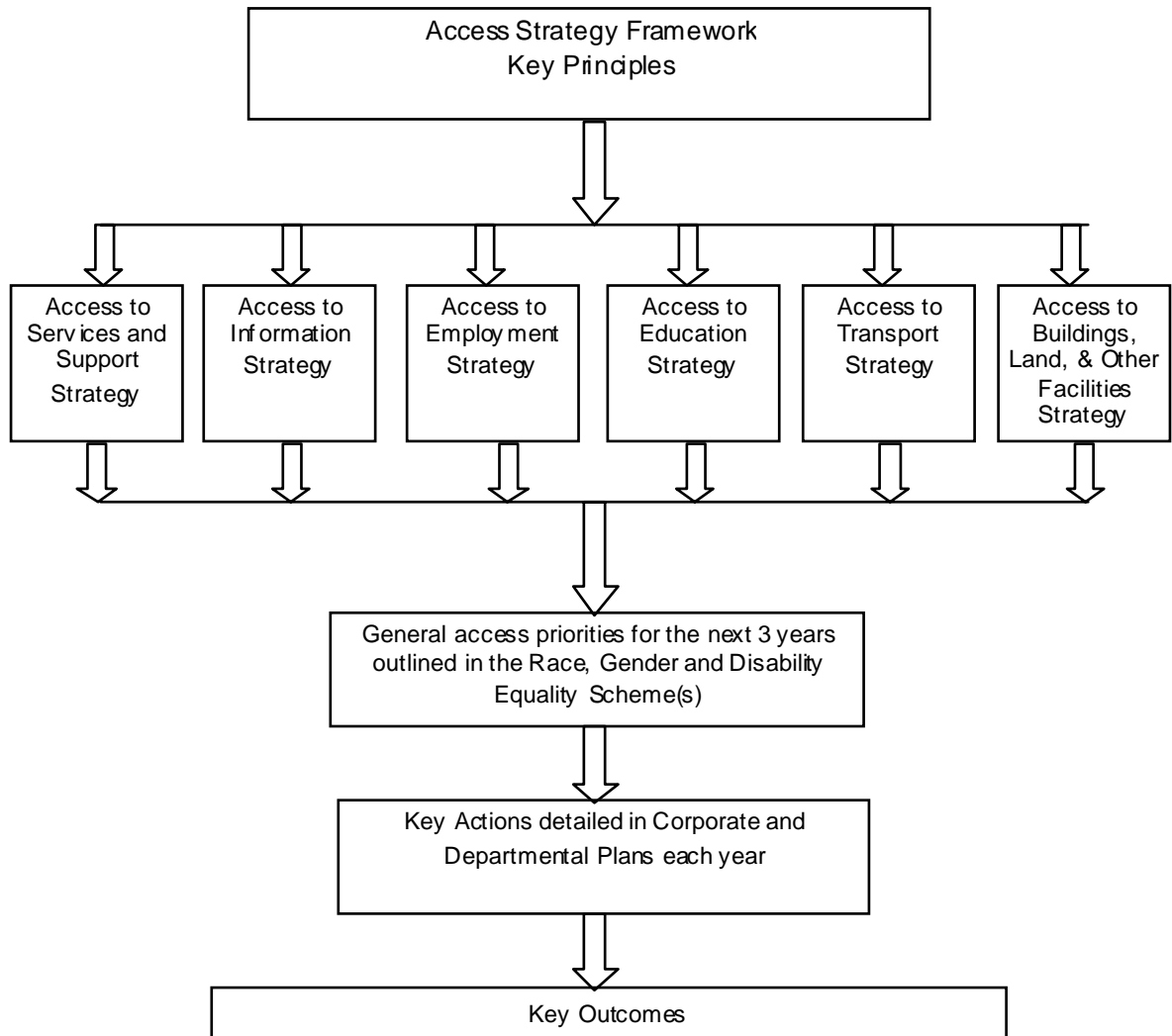
Performance Measures

- Performance measures are outlined in the People Strategy
- Progress against Corporate Plan actions
- Progress against Departmental Service Plan actions

Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against the actions to implement the Strategy and performance measures will be subject to the Council's standard performance management arrangements and will be reported as part of the Annual Diversity report

ACCESS TO EDUCATION STRATEGY

The Framework

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                    │   Access Strategy Framework  │
                    │        Key Principles        │
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| Access to Services and Support Strategy | Access to Information Strategy | Access to Employment Strategy | Access to Education Strategy | Access to Transport Strategy | Access to Buildings, Land, & Other Facilities Strategy |

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │ General access priorities for the    │
                    │ next 3 years outlined in the Race,   │
                    │ Gender and Disability Equality       │
                    │ Scheme(s)                            │
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                    │ Key Actions detailed in Corporate    │
                    │ and Departmental Plans each year     │
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              ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
              │               Key Outcomes                  │
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Individual Strategies

Each individual Strategy details

- how it contributes to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- who can access the strategy
- key principles
- aims and what must be done to achieve them
- responsibilities
- performance measures

How does the Access to Education Strategy Contribute to the Overall Framework?

The Access to Education Strategy sets the way in which the Council will ensure, in conjunction with schools, colleges and other providers, that there

are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring equal access to Education, regardless of gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or ethnic background subject to any legislative or eligibility criteria.

Who can use the Access to Education Strategy?

- Pupils
- Adults
- Employees;
- Potential Employees;
- Councillors;
- Trade Unions;
- Hartlepool residents and businesses;
- Partner Organisations;
- People outside the borough.

Principles of the Strategy

Hartlepool Council recognises that there are forms and patterns of racial, religious, gender and cultural prejudice and discrimination in society. These unfairly limit the learning opportunities of many people. Hartlepool Council is committed to ensuring that all people wishing to access Education are enabled to do so.

Access to Education for school aged pupils:
- Will be equally accessed by children and young people irrespective of gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or ethnic background, subject to any legislative or eligibility restrictions and the agreed admissions code of practice;
- Will make appropriate and reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access.

Access to Education for Adults:
- Regardless of ethnic background religion or belief, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- Actively seek to address inequalities establishing where they exist and then implementing appropriate actions
- Remove barriers to learning and employment
- Acknowledge, celebrate and make effective use of people's differences

The Strategy

Background

Hartlepool Council had adopted a strategy for inclusive education and believes that all children should have an equal opportunity to have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and to be included in all

activities at school that are open to pupils of their age group. The Children's Services Department Outline Accessibility Strategy gives detail of how the Local Authority with schools will seek to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education and associated services;
- Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of written information which is provided to pupils who are not disabled, within a reasonable period and in a format which takes account of the preferred means of communication expressed by pupils or parents.

Schools have open access to support from the Hartlepool Ethnic Minority Achievement Team which assists schools in securing access to a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils from minority ethnic communities and for whom English is a second language.

The Children's Services Department seeks to promote inclusion for all pupils by encouraging schools to work towards gaining the Hartlepool Inclusion Standard, which promotes the continuous process of increasing presence, participation and achievement of all children, young people and adults in local community schools where possible and requires schools to have regard to the needs of all pupils who are at greater risk of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement.

The Local Authority provides guidance to the Governing Bodies of schools in relation to compliance with equal opportunities legislation in relation to both pupils and staff.

Hartlepool Council seeks to promote equal opportunity for all adults who wish to participate in learning. It will work towards ensuring that there is access to a range of opportunities delivered in fully accessible venues. It will ensure that where possible support is provided to individuals to assist in removing any barriers to learning. The council will work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that there is a full range of opportunities suitable for all groups of adults.

Aim

- To promote equality of access to inclusive education for school aged pupils, in line with the Children's Services Accessibility Strategy and taking into account parental preference and having due regard to relevant legislative and admissions criteria.
- To promote equality of opportunity to ensure that there is equal access to learning opportunities for adults.

To do this it must

- Ensure that access to all services and support are included in regular retrospective impact assessments using the INRA (Impact Needs Requirements Assessment) process and appropriate action taken to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need
- Ensure that access issues are considered when all new services / policies are subject to predictive impact assessments using the DIA (Diversity Impact Assessment) process to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need.
- Encourage schools to adopt the Hartlepool Inclusion Standard**.**
- Ensure that access to learning opportunities is open to all who can benefit.
- Provide impartial information and guidance to all prospective learners so that they are placed on the best courses to help them succeed.
- Identify learners' needs at the start of a course and giving them opportunities to experience different ways of learning.
- Ensure content and language of all written course information is clear and free from social and racial bias or stereotypical wording.
- Ensure access, where needed, to additional learner and learning support after assessment of individual needs.
- Locate a wide range of learning opportunities close to where people live.

Responsibilities

a) Corporate responsibilities

   i)   Assistant Chief Executive
- To ensure the council's performance management framework incorporates equality and diversity issues
- To provide the corporate lead on consultation with the community

   ii)   Chief Personnel Officer
- To ensure appropriate guidance and training on INRA and DIA processes are undertaken.
- To ensure that access issues are included in the INRA and DIA processes

b) Departmental responsibilities

- To undertake impact assessments in all service areas using DIA / INRA processes
- To implement any identified actions
- Monitor complaints for any barriers identified and to learn the lessons of these complaints.

- Provide appropriate customer care / diversity training to ensure customers are treated equitably and without discrimination
- Consult with service users regarding their services communities of interest.
- Maintain an up to date Outline Accessibility Strategy in line with legislative requirements.
- Promote the use of the Hartlepool Inclusion Standard by schools.
- Provide relevant guidance for Governing Bodies of schools in relation to their responsibilities under legislation and regulations concerning equal opportunities issues.
- Ensure that there is available a comprehensive programme of leaning opportunities which are accessible to all adults.

Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives, actions and performance measures (see below) to implement this strategy will be incorporated into the Council's performance management arrangements and cross-referenced to this strategy.

Performance Measures

- Progress against Corporate Plan actions
- Progress against Departmental Service Plan actions
- Schools achieving the Hartlepool Inclusion Standard
- Participation in learning reflects the local population.

Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against the actions to implement the Strategy and performance measures will be subject to the Council's standard performance management arrangements and will be reported as part of the Annual Diversity report.

ACCESS TO COUNCIL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
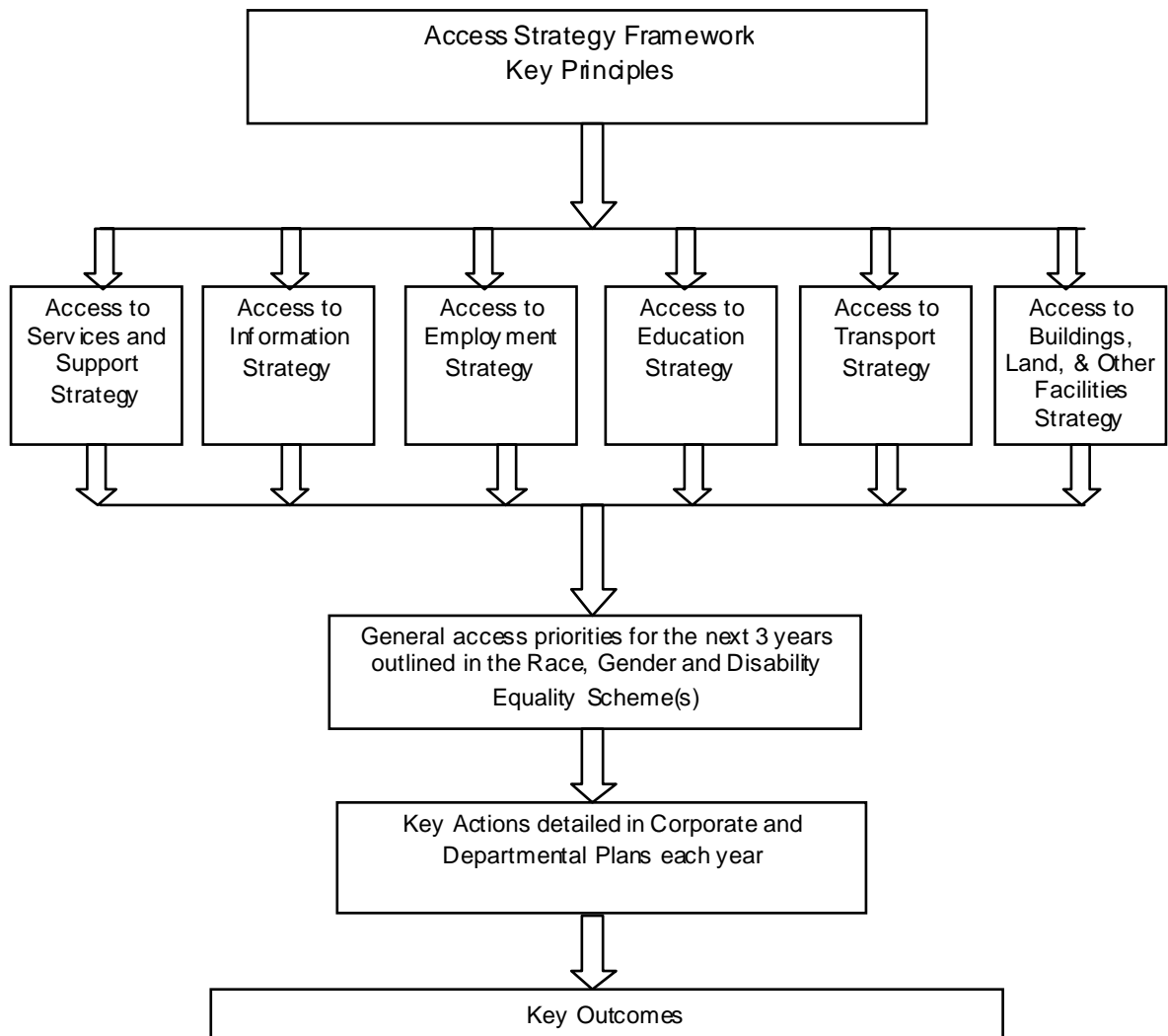
<u>The Framework</u>

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Access Strategy Framework             │
│             Key Principles                   │
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Access to Services and Support Strategy	Access to Information Strategy	Access to Employment Strategy	Access to Education Strategy	Access to Transport Strategy	Access to Buildings, Land, & Other Facilities Strategy

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  General access priorities for the next 3    │
│  years outlined in the Race, Gender and      │
│  Disability Equality Scheme(s)               │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Key Actions detailed in Corporate and       │
│  Departmental Plans each year                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

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│               Key Outcomes                   │
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Individual Strategies

Each individual Strategy details
- how it contributes to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- who can access the strategy
- key principles
- aims and what must be done to achieve them
- responsibilities
- performance measures

How does the Access to Transport Strategy Contribute to the Overall Framework?

The Access to Transport Strategy sets the way in which the Council will ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring equal access to transport within the town of Hartlepool.

Recognising the wider quality of life benefits that transport can bring, the strategy reflects the broader vision for the borough set out in the Community Strategy. This vision is being delivered through the seven priority aims that relate to the shared central-local government priorities and represent key areas for the town's forward planning and prioritisation.

Who can use the Access to Transport Strategy?

- Employees;
- Potential Employees;
- Councillors;
- Trade Unions;
- Hartlepool residents and businesses;
- Partner Organisations;
- People outside the borough.

Principles of the Strategy

A new vision for transport has been developed that reflects the central role of transport in contributing towards the long-term vision and priorities for Hartlepool's community. Our local transport vision for the year 2021 is that:

Hartlepool will have a high quality, integrated and safe transport system that supports continued economic growth and regeneration. It will provide access to key services and facilities for all members of society, promote sustainable patterns of development and movement and minimise the adverse effect of traffic on local communities and the environment. The development of transport services and infrastructure will represent best value for money for the users, operators and the Council.

In achieving the key priority aims for accessibility, road safety, congestion and air quality an improved quality of life for all communities will be achieved. This includes promoting healthy living through more active lifestyles and wider access to health and social care and maintaining continued economic prosperity and regeneration by supporting the needs of the local economy in a sustainable manner.

The Strategy

Background

This strategy is based on meeting the targets contained within the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-2011, which can be viewed at
Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

Some of the methods used to achieve the targets contained within this document are:

- Improving accessibility to public transport by the introduction of low floor bus infrastructure at stops on core and super core routes, together with shelters where possible. (Bus operators have a duty to upgrade their fleets to 100% low floor buses by 2012)
- Introduction of a free concessionary travel scheme in access to the government's minimum requirements (all day rather than off-peak).
- An annual programme for the installation of dropped crossings at all junctions, together with appropriate tactile paving.
- The upgrading of all light controlled crossings to include facilities for disabled, (tactile and audible indicators where possible).
- The creation of an Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) to bring together all passenger transport service planning, procurement and monitoring and management functions across a range of service areas (e.g. local bus services, mainstream school transport, special educational needs (SEN), school transport, social services transport, etc.)
- The investigation into the utilisation of the Council's existing fleet for transport provision for access to support services.

Aims

The transport vision for Hartlepool will be achieved with the following aims: -

- To promote social inclusion by ensuring that everyone can access the key services and facilities that would need.
- To improve the overall safety and security of the transport system for everyone
- To ensure that traffic congestion does not hinder continued economic growth and regeneration
- To minimise the adverse impacts of transport on air quality and climate change

Contribution to the wider quality of life issues is made within each of these aims.

To do this it must

- ensure that access to all services and support are included in regular retrospective impact assessments using the INRA (Impact Needs Requirements Assessment) process and appropriate action taken to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need
- ensure that access issues are considered when all new services / policies are subject to predictive impact assessments using the DIA (Diversity Impact Assessment) process to address any adverse or differential impact or unmet need. .

Responsibilities

   a)   **Corporate responsibilities**

   i)   Assistant Chief Executive
   - To ensure the council's performance management framework incorporates equality and diversity issues
   - To provide the corporate lead on consultation with the community

   ii)   Chief Personnel Officer
   - To ensure appropriate guidance and training on INRA and DIA processes are undertaken.
   - To ensure that access issues are included in the INRA and DIA processes

   iii)   Head of Technical Services
   - To provide a high quality, safe and accessible transport service
   - To maximise the use of existing internal transport resources
   - To develop a flexible transport service that can respond to changing Government priorities and future need
   - To create a specialist team of transport professionals, providing advice and expertise across all directorates
   - To ensure service specific INRAs and DIAs are carried out where appropriate
   - To ensure that individual Service Plans incorporate diversity issues.
   - To maintain, improve and make more efficient use of the existing transport network

   b)   **Departmental responsibilities**

   - To undertake impact assessments in all service areas using DIA / INRA processes
   - To implement any identified actions
   - Monitor complaints for any barriers identified and to learn the lessons of these complaints.
   - Provide appropriate customer care / diversity training to ensure customers are treated equitably and without discrimination
   - Consult with service users regarding their services communities of interest.

Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives, actions and performance measures (see below) to implement this strategy will be incorporated into the Council's performance management arrangements and cross-referenced to this strategy.

Performance Measures

- Progress against Corporate Plan actions
- Progress against Departmental Service Plan actions
- Progress against individual Service Plan actions
- Proposed targets and indicators are detailed within Chapter 11 of the Local Transport Plan (Pages 203-22) Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities Strategy

<u>The Framework</u>
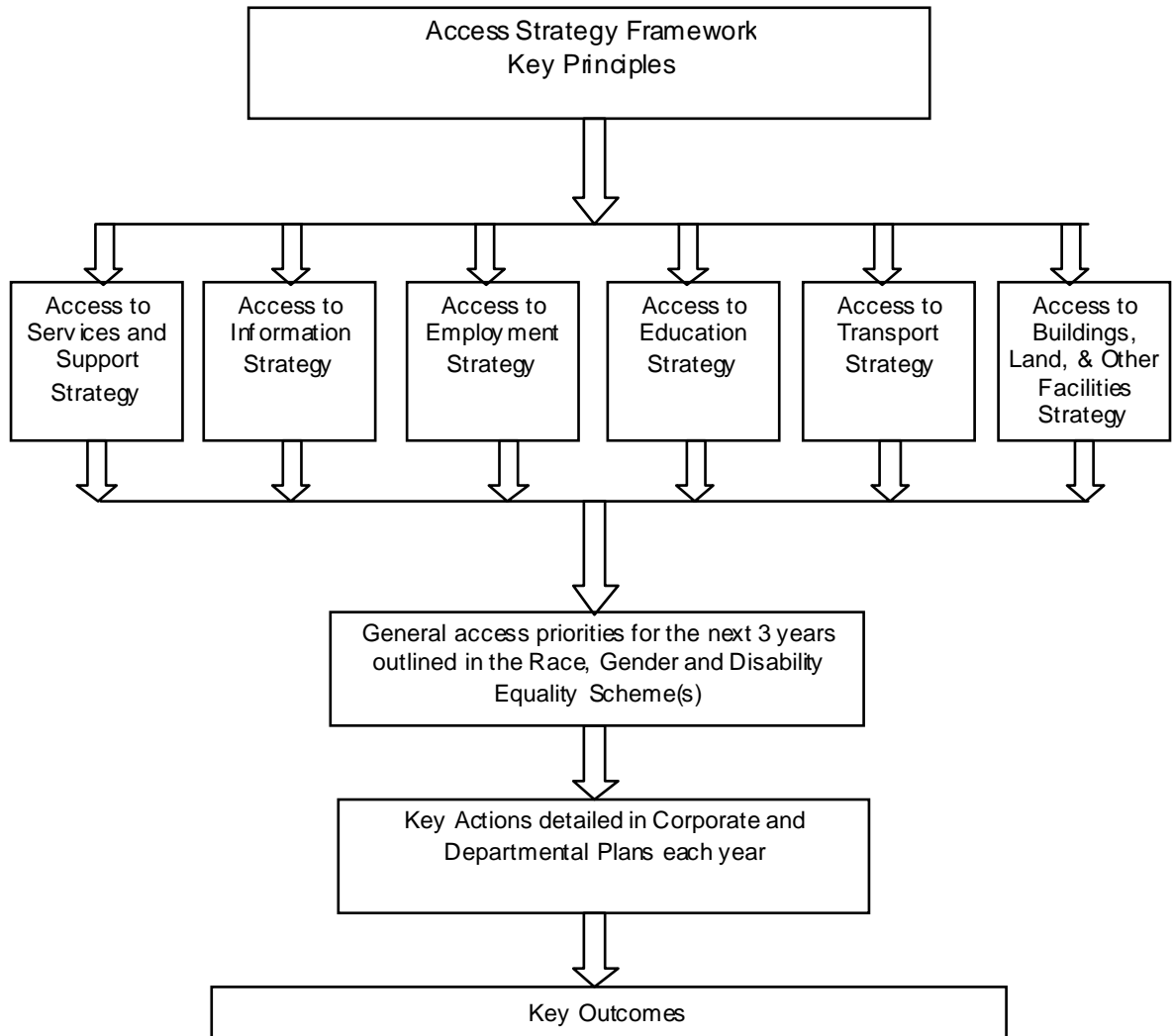
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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Access Strategy Framework         │
│             Key Principles               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Access to Services and Support Strategy	Access to Information Strategy	Access to Employment Strategy	Access to Education Strategy	Access to Transport Strategy	Access to Buildings, Land, & Other Facilities Strategy

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ General access priorities for the next   │
│ 3 years outlined in the Race, Gender     │
│ and Disability Equality Scheme(s)        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Key Actions detailed in Corporate and    │
│ Departmental Plans each year              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Key Outcomes                 │
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Individual Strategies

Each individual Strategy details
- how it contributes to the overall Access Strategy Framework
- who can access the strategy
- key principles
- aims and what must be done to achieve them
- responsibilities
- performance measures

How does the Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities Strategy contribute to the Overall Access Strategy Framework?

The Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities Strategy sets out the way in which the Council will ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place for ensuring equal access to council Buildings, Land , Sites and other Facilities and land in public domain.

Hartlepool Borough Council in accordance with its vision and values will seek:-

- to ensure its own buildings, land, sites and other facilities are reasonably accessible having regard to all relevant design considerations
- to promote access improvements in the wider community through its planning, building regulation and licensing services.

Who can use the Access to Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities Strategy?

- Employees;
- Potential Employees;
- Councillors;
- Trade Unions;
- Hartlepool residents and businesses;
- Partner Organisations;
- People outside the borough.

Key Principles of the Strategy

To Identify, support and prioritise improvements to make Council buildings and all facilities accessible to all.

Buildings access and the built environment include access to Council premises and other facilities that the Council provides such as parks.

Background

Buildings, Land, Sites and other Facilities and land in the public domain means any building or open space in an urban or rural setting. It includes:
- the internal and external areas of buildings;
- equipment that may be installed to enable access to be provided to an activity or a facility, wherever it may be;
- public parks, footpaths and any place the public are permitted to use or enter.

The term "reasonably accessible" refers to the external route to the building (including accessible car parking facilities) and all internal circulation routes plus the provision of specialised equipment where appropriate

The term "accessible for all" includes Disabled people as defined that are people with mobility impairments, sensory impairments, people with learning difficulties and people who experience emotional/mental distress. Non-disabled people such as elderly people, those with prams or pushchairs also benefit from inclusive environment.

The requirements of the DDA allocates responsibility to "Service Providers" and priority has been given to the way in which services are delivered to ensure disabled people are not treated less favourably. It is recognised that where physical features in Council buildings completely prevent or seriously hinder access, sometimes, the only way of delivering a service may be through making alterations to buildings or equipment.

"Physical features" arise from the design or construction of a building and any fixtures, fittings and equipment on the premises. This could include paths, entrances, parking, service counters, doors, toilets, stairs etc.

Each building and the services provided there from is unique and needs its own Access Plan to be written, monitored and kept up to date by the Service Manager responsible.

Hartlepool Borough Council is committed to ensuring that where practicable all services are accessible to all people wishing to access them. We will make every effort to install appropriate facilities in existing premises, whenever practical to do so. Where ever we invest capital in new or refurbished premises every practical effort will be made to provide for the needs of disabled staff and service users to provide an inclusive environment.

The extent to which any building or area is ever going to be accessible will not be the simple product of the level of coercion that any legislation can bring to bear. Of importance is the degree of commitment shown by the people who control that environment, whether it is at a personal or professional level.

Aims

The following aims seek to provide a framework in which the policy and the guidance it offers can be implemented. They represent the targets in any work relating to the environment and disabled people.
- To make provision for disabled people within the mainstream environment.
- The design philosophy should take an inclusive design approach to the provision of access to the environment or to an activity.
- Maximise use of funds to improve and make provision for access for all.

To do this it must:

- ensure that access to all services and support are included in regular retrospective impact assessments using the INRA process and appropriate action taken to address any adverse impact or unmet needs
- ensure that all new services / policies will be subject to predictive impact assessments using the DIA process to address any adverse impact or unmet needs. This will ensure we have considered the implications for all parts of the community.
- Undertake access audits of all the Council's operational buildings open to the public.
- Produce Access Plans for all operational buildings that provide a service to the public.
- Produce a Design Guide to ensure an inclusive environment is being provided in Hartlepool
- Involve service users of council buildings in identifying barriers to service provision

Responsibilities

    a) Corporate Responsibilities

i)   **Assistant Chief Executive**
- To ensure the council's performance management framework incorporates equality and diversity issues
- To provide the corporate lead on consultation with the community

ii)   **Chief Personnel Officer**
- To ensure appropriate guidance and training on INRA and DIA processes are undertaken.
- To ensure that access issues are included in the INRA and DIA processes

iii)   **Head of Procurement and Property Services**
- To make all Council service buildings and other facilities and land in public domain more accessible and ensure that access issues are included in the Asset Management Plan

iv)   **Assistant Director Planning and Economic Development**
- To ensure that access and design guidance is provided to all those who develop services within Hartlepool.
- To ensure that the access advisory function is sufficient to be influential within the Council.
- Ensure Building Regulation standards are enforced for all work within the borough.
- In addition to ensuring the minimum standards of Building Regulations are achieved also provide additional access and design guidance to all those who develop services within Hartlepool
- Promote the access advisory function and access requirements through the authority.

- Provide access advice to ensure access requirements are incorporated into the Councils design and delivery of mainstream services.
- Ensure access to goods, services facilities, provided by the Council comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and all associated legislation.
- Provide Access Audits; recommend improvements and solutions to meet relevant Legislation requirements to enable the Council to prioritise and plan improvements in a practical and cost effective way.
- Provide training and support to clients in the preparation of Disability access action plans and Access Statements
- Work in Partnership as a duty to promote access for all

b) Departmental Responsibilities

- To undertake impact assessments in all service areas using DIA / INRA processes
- To implement any identified actions
- Monitor complaints for any barriers identified and to learn the lessons of these complaints.
- Provide appropriate customer care / diversity training to ensure customers are treated equitably and without discrimination
- Consult with service users regarding their services communities of interest.
- To provide funding in respect of access issues
- To prepare access action plans and ensure that accessibility matters feed into the Service Asset Management process
- To train all staff in access awareness

Objectives and Action Plan

The objectives, actions and performance measures (see below) to implement this strategy will be incorporated into the Council's performance management arrangements and cross-referenced to this strategy.

Performance Measures

- Progress against Corporate Plan actions
- Progress against Departmental Service Plan actions
- Progress against Access Strategy Action Plan
- BVPI 156 Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability
- Percentage of portfolio and number of buildings for which an Access Audit has been undertaken by a competent person (PMI 4 A,B)
- Percentage of portfolio by GIA sq m and number of properties for which an Access Plan is in place (PMI 4C,D)

Measures and Reporting

Progress against the actions to implement the Strategy and performance measures will be subject to the Council's standard performance management arrangements and will be reported as part of the Annual Diversity report

Glossary

BVPI -   Best Value Performance Indicator
DIA   -   Diversity Impact Assessment
INRA -   Impact Needs Requirements Assessment
SEN   -   Special Educational Needs
LTP   -   Local Transport Plan
ITU   -   Integrated Transport Unit
DDA   -   Disability Discrimination Act
GIA   -   Gross Internal floor Area.

APPENDIX C

Guidance for Local Authorities on Translation of Publications

December 2007
Department for Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk
community, opportunity, prosperity

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Contents

Foreword by the Secretary of State

In June 2007, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion published *Our Shared Future*, setting out practical ways in which local authorities could help to build strong communities by promoting cohesion and integration locally.

I have been very encouraged by the way that many authorities have already begun to respond to the recommendations. The government will publish a full response in the new year. But there were a number of areas which needed immediate action. That is why I am publishing this guidance on translation for local authorities.

I agree wholeheartedly with the analysis and recommendations on translation set out by the Commission. Strong communities depend on shared values and experiences. The Commission found that around 60 per cent of people believe that the biggest barrier to "being English" was not speaking the language. Good English skills are vital to finding jobs and participating in society. And, as the Commission says, English **"binds us together as a single group in a way that a multiplicity of community languages cannot."**

Automatic translation of all documents into different languages in some areas is undermining the importance of English as a way of enabling all citizens to communicate and relate to one another. While this approach may be well-intentioned, it means that some may come to rely on the service, lacking the incentive to learn English. In the past I think we have – in however well-meaning a way – translated things that need not have been translated. Translation is a stepping stone to speaking English, but it can never be a substitute for it.

As a result, I am very clear that we should reject automatic translation in favour of a more selective approach, where translation is targeted to particular needs, and which is part of an overall local strategy to promote English.

Of course, there will always be some circumstances in which translation is appropriate – for example, to enable particular individuals to access essential services like healthcare or participate in local democracy. That is why local authorities are responsible for making the decisions which reflect the needs of their community.

This guidance will help them make these decisions, with a checklist of questions based on good practice to consider before choosing to translate material. Much of this re-emphasises the Commission's findings, and as a result, is grounded in common sense. The guidance also highlights some of the good practice and innovative approaches which are already working. I hope that authorities will find this useful, and will continue to share the good practice that works for their communities.
Hazel Blears, Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government

Introduction

Context

1.   This document forms part of our response to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion's final report, *Our Shared Future*. It focuses in particular on Annex E of that document. The report, its case studies and supporting research documents can be found at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk

2.   The Commission was a fixed-term advisory body, tasked with developing practical recommendations aimed at building cohesion in local communities. Its report set out a new framework for local cohesion work, based on four key principles:

      a.   the sense of **shared futures** – an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than the differences that divide them, and prioritising a shared future over divided legacies

      b.   a new model of **rights and responsibilities** – one that makes clear both a sense of citizenship at national and local level, and the obligations that go along with membership of a community, both for individuals or groups

      c.   an ethics of hospitality – a new emphasis on **mutual respect** and civility that recognises that alongside the need to strengthen the social bonds within groups, the pace of change across the country reconfigures local communities rapidly, meaning that mutual respect is fundamental to issues of integration and cohesion

      d.   a commitment to equality that sits alongside the need to deliver **visible social justice**, to prioritise transparency and fairness, and build trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups.

3.   In responding to the Commission, our objective is to set out clearly how those four principles – and the emphasis on interaction outlined in the rest of the Commission's report – can be made tangible in local practice. And to show clearly how cohesion can be successfully embedded in wider policy areas to ensure a greater impact.

Who should read this document

4.   This guidance is for England only and is aimed at local authorities and their partners (particularly LSPs). The principles it contains, however, can be used by other bodies and organisations.

What the Commission recommended on translation

5.   The Commission concluded that speaking English acts as an important binding ingredient for diverse communities – with 60 per cent of those surveyed in their MORI polling identifying language as the main ingredient of "being English". It also found that speaking English was a key way or promoting equality, as it led to greater success in the labour market (the research on this is referenced at the end of this document). Their report set out the importance to cohesion of people being able to communicate with one another – with recommendations for both improved English language skills for new migrants, as well as targeted campaigns to help settled communities understand the nature of migration in their area, and to provide the opportunities to meet migrants and to work together.

6.   As part of this wider emphasis on communications, the Commission considered the translation of written materials, on a general basis, such as leaflets and official forms.

7.   The Commission did not consider changes to the provision of interpreters on a one-to-one basis. Such provision will be necessary, where someone does not have sufficient English language skills and needs to be able to understand their legal rights, medical advice or their financial and other responsibilities. It may be expected, however, that the need for interpretation will eventually reduce as the use of English becomes more universal.

8.   Distilled from their consultation, the Commission found five reasons why Local authorities had made a pro-active decision to translate materials into community languages:

a.   To ensure that non-English speaking residents are able to access essential services, eg the police, education services, and safety campaigns, such as fire, road safety, etc.

b.   To enable people to take part in the democratic process, for example enabling people to register to vote or take part in local consultations.

c.   To support local community groups or intermediaries working directly with new migrants or non-English speaking communities.

d.   To enable people to function effectively as citizens in society and be able to get along with others, by ensuring that they understand local rules and appreciate local customs eg rubbish disposal, parking restrictions and common courtesies.

e.   *To ensure compliance with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and ensure that no one is disadvantaged in accessing services because of their inability to communicate verbally or non-verbally.*

9.   However, the report also noted that there was evidence of more reactive translations where although local authorities were well-meaning in translating materials into community languages, for example seeing this as a way of promoting equality, they were not always considering whether it was the best use of scarce resource:

- where local authorities and organisations were automatically translating background and reference documents that would not necessarily be in widespread use or general circulation, eg annual reports

- Where overly complex leaflets were being translated, and what was really needed was sign-posting to a service

- Where documents were automatically translated into a set of languages, without consideration being given to the audience for that document

10.   The report also identified that where areas were facing similar challenges on translation (for example, those in the deprived rural area with high levels of new migration identified by the Commission), they were not sharing resources.

11.   The Commission therefore recommended that a checklist be prepared for local authorities considering whether or not to translate materials – which is set out in further detail later in this document. They also commissioned a research from the Central Office of Information, which also informs the rest of this guidance, and can be found at the Commission's website – www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk.

Our response to these recommendations

12.   We agree with the Commission's emphasis on the need to speak English and that promoting English is essential for both longstanding migrants (for example, spouses who did not speak English upon arrival) and new migrants who do not speak English.

13.   While there is an argument that fewer translations will reduce costs, in supporting this recommendation, our key concern is that local authorities should provide services in a way that meets the needs of communities – whilst avoiding divisively positioning one particular community against another, and ensuring that people are encouraged to learn English as soon as possible, given the importance of language skills to integrating and accessing the labour market.

14.   In the widest sense, this might mean that local authorities want to consider how all of the support they provide to citizens and service users can be delivered in a way that supports vulnerable

communities, but does not appear to do so at the expense of others.

15.   With regard to the development of a new approach and specifically on the translation of written materials:

•   We therefore agree that local authorities, and other government bodies and organisations should think twice before continuing with, or providing new, written translation materials – considering the impact on both those who actually use them, and also thinking through how English speakers will perceive the special provision of written materials that do not feature any English.

•   Where local authorities do choose to translate – because the information is needed for safety or health reasons, for example, we agree with the Commission's suggestion that this is used as an opportunity to teach English, perhaps by using pictures instead of translation in a document in English, or bilingual translation.

•   We agree that all bodies should be considering whether there are groups which do not speak English in their communities, and have low literacy standards in their own language

•   We also agree that the local approach should be part of a wider communications strategy that seeks both to manage the impact on settled communities of demographic change, and to ensure that all documents – whether translated or not – meet plain English standards.

16.   In short, we would encourage local authorities to consider whether translation is necessary, for which documents it is appropriate, whether it should be available on demand, and whether it can be done in a way that helps people learn English.

17.   Finally, following the Commission's lead, we have specifically focused in this guidance on the translation of general written materials. But we are aware that many local authorities and bodies make use of interpreters and interpretation services to assist non-English speaking people to access essential services. We therefore expect that some of the principles outlined below will also be useful to local authorities when making decisions on when to provide interpreters.

Putting this Guidance into Practice

18.   We strongly agree with the Commission's position the evidence for translation acting as a crutch for people who don't speak English is patchy. But we strongly agree with the Commission's position on the need for English to be used as a binding agent in communities and to promote equality of opportunity. This section reinforces the guiding principles they developed, as well as restating the checklist developed.

Context

The Commission suggested four contextual points, which helpfully set the background for any decisions on translation of written materials:

a.   **There is no legal reason for all materials to be translated.** The Race Relations Act simply says that all parts of the community should have access to services, and although that might involve translation, it does not always have to. The Human Rights Act only requires translation if someone is arrested or charged with a criminal offence.

b.   **Translation can never be a substitute for learning English.** Whatever the considerations *when* translated printing materials, the whole issue needs to be seen in the context of a wider drive to improve English skills in all communities. And that means a greater focus on ESOL and English language provision.

c.   **Translation should be reduced except where it builds integration and cohesion.** Opinion is *divided* as to whether translation is a barrier to integration, or whether it is a stepping stone to better language skills. Our position is that it depends on the individual: where migrants from the past are still relying on community languages, then translations from English are likely to extend their reliance on their mother tongue; where new migrants do not speak English then clearly they need initial information in appropriate languages. Local authorities will judge what is best – but our working assumption is that heading for the translators should not be an automatic first step in all cases.

d.   **Translation should be considered in the context of communications to all communities.** Materials that are not in English can be alienating to existing communities. It is important to keep communications channels open between community groups living in the same area. Local partners should therefore consider ways to use translated materials to underline their even-handed approach to all communities.

Translation Checklist

The Commission suggested a checklist for local authorities, which we agree provides a clear picture of both the intent of this recommendation, and the ways in which it might be implemented (we have revised this slightly
Is it essential that this material be translated?
What is your evidence of a need or demand for this translation?
What is your evidence that people will be disadvantaged without this translation?
Who is the target audience? – for example is it young mothers, pensioners, workers etc and do those target audiences include people who don't speak English?
Are speakers of particular languages being targeted?
Are you using the right data to select the languages to translate this material into?
Have you got information about who cannot speak English locally, and is it being updated as intelligence comes in about local changes?

Does the document need to be translated in full?
Are you confident that people across all communities will have the literacy skills to understand this document?
Should it first be simplified into a plain English version?
Would a short summary do with signposting to further information? – or could it be translated on request rather than proactively?
Could this message be better delivered by engaging with community groups directly or through credible partners, or by using alternative media?
Have you considered the cost/benefit analysis for this translation?
Will these materials be used in full, or is it likely that this form of communication will sit on the shelf?
What would be the cost of not translating these materials – would there be an additional burden on public services?
Have you explored whether other local agencies might already have these materials available in translated form?
Have you networked with other authorities to share leaflets?
Might the police or other partners already be translating similar things?
Is there any national best practice?
Are there practical ways you can support people to learn English even while producing this translation?
Can you use pictures?
Is there an English summary at some point in the document?
Could you include adverts for local English lessons?
Could the whole leaflet be bilingual or multilingual?
Are there practical ways you can keep up with changes within the community?
Have you got a welcome pack for new migrants that can be updated based on their experiences – is produced electronically, or in a format that is easy to update?
Does translation form part of a wider communications strategy?

Translation Checklist *(continued)*

Are you translating something that is about specific services to one community? – have you considered whether they will feel alienated from mainstream provision by having to have this?

Have you considered whether other communities might feel disadvantaged by not having access to similar materials?

Does this material fit well with your communications strategy to all residents, both settled and new?

Updating Local Communication Strategies

In addition to the Commission's work, we have the following thoughts on how existing communication strategies might be updated:

- Local authorities could consult on their strategy with longer term and new migrant communities, recognising that they will have different needs. This exercise could aim to identify when translated materials could be withdrawn and the best way for the signposting of English language classes.

- The consultation process should take account of the many different needs, the nature of each group and the extent of vulnerability. For example, the local authority may wish to consult with minority women's organizations and not base decisions solely upon contact with established community leaders.

- Local authorities could also agree the strategy across the range of local partners, perhaps through the LSP, and ensure that there is a consistent approach which is owned by all stakeholders

- Local authorities could attempt to line up the withdrawal of translated materials with the provision of English language classes and have regard to the capacity and programme of local providers, bearing in mind that this may well need to be augmented. Providers should include local employers.

- For longer term migrants who cannot speak English, the classes might be arranged for older people and for women at times and places suitable for them.

- For new migrants who cannot speak English, material with basic information about the law and other responsibilities should be provided in their languages, but including and signposting ways to learn English.

- The local authority could also negotiate with employers to provide English Language classes at work (employees need to be able to speak English to understand health and safety processes and their employment rights, work instructions, respond to customers, etc) on the basis that employers should be prepared to meet all or some of the costs.

Examples of Good Practice Identified by the Commission

INTRAN Access interpreting and translation is the largest interpreting partnership in the UK, based in Norfolk, it is a multi-agency partnership that provides free and confidential services to users. At least 88 languages are spoken in the increasingly diverse area of Norfolk, and translation costs for single agencies wishing to translate would be exorbitant. Sharing information enables new pressures to be identified quickly and partners share the responsibilities for maintaining and developing INTRAN – for example the 5 hospital trusts in the partnership meet as a group to share experiences and prevent duplication and have developed joint staff guidelines on the effective use of translation resources.

East Lancashire Migrant Worker Welcome Booklet helps new arrivals integrate in the East Lancashire area by informing them about key services. Whilst the booklet was being developed, Pendle Council produced leaflets on key services in appropriate languages, and worked with the Pennine Division Police to inform new migrants of the laws, rights and responsibilities. Through effective partnership working, the booklet was jointly procured by the parties involved, reducing costs and potential replication of similar material. This welcome approach is delivered on a sub-regional basis. The model has enabled the East Lancashire Councils and their partners to limit the burden of direct translation, thus reducing translation costs.

The Peterborough City Council Road Safety Team, in partnership with Cambridgeshire Police, is developing a pictorial approach to its road safety messages. The BASICS campaign in particular used symbols that were easily understandable to get across key messages about road safety such as: speeding, drink driving and seat belts – with an overall aim of raising awareness and changing mindsets so casualties could be reduced. In addition to using pictures, where the leaflets needed to draw out messages in languages other than English, they were multilingual – the English text was set against a number of other languages, all on one poster.

Peterborough City Council and Peterborough Primary Care Trust have an Interpreting and Translating Partnership, which is committed to ensuring that all users are communicated with effectively. They ensure that Interpretation and Translation services are used in all instances where it is not possible to establish effective communication and where not to do so would severely disadvantage
the service user.

"Severely disadvantage" is described as being the following circumstances:

- Financial loss (eg housing benefit claim) and/or

- Health, no improvement or deterioration (eg misdiagnosis, unable to understand medical instructions) and/or

- Lead to legal disadvantage (eg Noise abatement notice – unable to read legal duty to comply) and/or

- Cause severe distress to the service user (eg missing child, fire in the home etc)

The Arun Cultural Ethnic Diversity Forum used both translation and visual images to overcome language barriers through the use of multilingual newsletters. They also promote a two-way interactive learning process with new settlers – migrant workers are encouraged to learn English, and to help provide a more effective service to a changing population base, the neighbourhood policing team has the option of learning other languages (eg Polish) as part of Continued Professional Development. This helps officers communicate and build community trust.

Preston City Council is pioneering a two-year trial to process compost from collect food waste. It used a picture campaign to communicate with all residents. By using visual imagery, the campaign was able to communicate key information to a broad section of the local population, including new arrivals with limited English skills. This reduced translation costs and improved understanding of responsibilities and rights across cultures.

Evidence on the Benefits of Learning English

- Fluency in English (as assessed by an interviewer) increases the average hourly occupational wage by approximately 20 per cent (Shields MA and Wheatly-Price S. 2002. The English language fluency and occupational success of ethnic minority immigrant men living in English metropolitan areas, Journal of Population Economics, pp. 137-160).

- Language increases productivity and communication (and hence the market wage) and also increases employment probabilities. (Dustmann, C, van Soest, A, 2003. The Language and earnings of immigrants, Industrial and labour relations review, Vol 55, No 3).

- A Canadian study concluded that immigrants who do not usually speak either English or French (the two official Canadian languages) at home have earnings 10 to 12 per cent lower than those who do. This study also found that those with better language skills receive more benefit from an additional year of education (in terms of the wages earned). (Chiswick BR and Miller PW. 2003. The complementarity of language and other human capital: Immigrant earnings in Canada, in: Economics of Education Review, vol. 22, no. 5, October 2003. pp. 469-80).