



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

Diversity and Equality in Planning

A good practice guide





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January 2005
School of the Built Environment,
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

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Foreword

Consideration of diversity should be at the heart of planning activities. That is the key message in this good practice guide which shows how planners can take account of the planning needs of a diverse population in their policies and practices.

The guide stems from a recommendation in a report prepared by Sheffield Hallam University for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published on the ODPM website early last year. The research revealed that in many local planning authorities the relationship between diversity and the planning system is not well understood – in particular planning officers do not know how to relate spatial planning to diversity issues. This guide is a response to the need for guidance and underlines the Government's commitment to have planning policies which are relevant to the lives that people live today, and which take into account the needs of all sections of society.

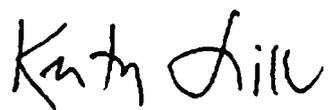
Widespread social and demographic changes over the last three decades mean that equality and diversity issues are no longer minority considerations. The picture is ever changing, and local planning authorities need to keep up with that change to ensure that their approach remains appropriate and complies with the legal responsibilities placed on public bodies.

This guide should help planners to better understand the important role that planning can play in supporting the Government's commitment to tackling disadvantage by reviving the most deprived neighbourhoods, reducing social exclusion, and supporting society's most vulnerable groups. It should help local authorities to achieve Best Value, which requires that in providing their services, they should be responsive to the needs of citizens.

The guide encourages the recruitment of under represented people into core professions (for example women and ethnic minorities) – in particular built environment professions, which is also a recommendation of Sir John Egan's review of the planning service. I am pleased to say that the Tomorrow's Planners initiative featured in the guide is making steady progress in recruiting trainees from ethnic minority backgrounds into the planning profession.

The guide stresses throughout that the key to delivering on diversity is effective engagement with the customers of the planning service, and the preparation of Statements of Community Involvement required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will help local planners to achieve that aim. It is only through listening that planners can become aware of the diverse needs of an ever-changing society.

I hope that this guide will help to raise awareness and encourage local planners to share their knowledge and best practice to help create better and more inclusive environments for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Hill". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Keith Hill

Minister for Housing and Planning
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Executive summary

Planning should aim to improve the lives of the widest cross-section of society. Society today is made up of diverse individuals of varying ages, sexes and sexual orientations, races and ethnic backgrounds, physical abilities, and faiths. Different people may have different needs and may disagree about priorities. It is only by early and effective engagement between local planning authorities and the communities they serve that the best and most sustainable planning outcomes may be achieved. This simple message lies at the very heart of the Government's diversity and planning agenda. Recent research undertaken for The Office of The Deputy Prime Minister has demonstrated that diversity issues are not well understood in planning practice today and this Guide is aimed at helping planners and others to understand that planning for diversity is simply good planning and that diversity issues should be in the mainstream of a planning authority's day-to-day work.

'Diversity' is about recognising that people are individuals. Each person has characteristics that shape their unique identity, but some of these characteristics are also shared with others. Different people can have common over-lapping needs crossing group boundaries. However, it is a mistake to assume that all sections of society have identical needs and to make assumptions based on stereotypes (chapter 1).

The Government is committed to changing the culture of planning to make it more responsive, positive and pro-active. Diversity and equality are at the very heart of this new agenda, helping define sustainable and inclusive communities. Community involvement is one of the key themes underpinning the Government's planning reforms. This Guide will help authorities meet the new requirement to produce a **Statement of Community Involvement** covering planning policy and development control. Authorities who previously have not seen diversity and inclusion as planning matters will need to rethink many aspects of their past approaches to public engagement (chapter 2).

Recognising differing values and needs is the first step toward ensuring that the planning service delivers equality of opportunity. There are legal requirements about discrimination and equality that apply to all public bodies, including planning authorities. Changes are taking place that put the onus on local authorities to be more proactive in demonstrating their commitment to delivering high quality services to all, including those who may have been previously excluded (chapter 3).

Case studies in chapters 4-8 of this Guide show that some planning authorities have recognised diversity and built it into the way they practice planning. The Guide aims to share this good practice and includes a summary list of good practice points at the end of these chapters. The Guide challenges those planning authorities who see themselves as treating everybody the same. Everyone in the planning service – senior officers, professionals, support staff and elected members – can use the Guide to re-think and improve the way they do their jobs.

Planning staff should understand the mix of people within their area and how it might be changing. Effective data analysis combined with local knowledge can help identify planning needs and monitor progress over time (chapter 4). A key message is that information gathering should never be a one-off exercise, since the make-up of communities can and does change over time.

Effective consultation is essential and requires outreach to hear the voices of those who have not been involved in the past. Planning can, and should, become more inclusive (chapter 5). The new planning system requires more pro-activity in consultation – and not simply with those who have traditionally been the most vocal. Planning is for the whole community.

Equality and diversity are not ‘minority’ or ‘fringe’ issues. They need to be in the mainstream of planning practice to improve results on the ground. A focus on positive outcomes is likely to help raise the profile of planning as a service that can provide benefits for a wide range of people. Diversity issues are now material considerations in planning policies and decisions. Policies, procedures and the development control service all need to be infused by recognition of diversity (chapter 6).

The culture of organisations should celebrate diversity, both within the office and in the communities it serves. Strong leadership is essential. Staff development should be used to ensure that all staff appreciate their role in mainstreaming diversity and equality. One way to improve the capacity of the planning service to deliver planning for diversity is to make the profile of those in the service more like that of the communities that they serve. Amongst other things this implies making efforts to attract and retain more women and persons from ethnic minority backgrounds (chapter 7).

Monitoring service delivery (including policy audits) and employment is essential to demonstrate that planning is fair and to help to identify policies and procedures that might need to be changed (chapter 8).

Chapter 9 is a checklist that authorities can use to assess how they are doing and identify required action.

Part 1

Making the Case

1. Why diversity and equality are important for planning

1.1 The role of diversity in planning

- 1.1.1 People should be at the heart of the planning system because planning is a service to improve the quality of everyday lives. Society is made up of diverse individuals of varying ages, different sexes and sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and faiths. Different people may have different needs and may disagree about priorities, although diversity issues do not always result in many different demands being made. The Government is committed to a planning system which addresses the needs of a population with diverse requirements. The case studies in this Guide show how some planning authorities have recognised diversity and built it into the way they practice planning. The Guide aims to share this good practice with everyone involved in planning – senior officers, professionals, support staff and elected members in order that planning outcomes can better meet the needs of everyone.

Key message 1: If you are involved in planning you need to understand diversity

Planning is about making development more sustainable. This includes ensuring that the use and development of land takes account of the needs of younger and older people, poor as well as more affluent households, the less mobile and those who are mobile, men and women, and the people of the many different cultures and faiths that co-exist in England today. Often these needs will overlap, sometimes they will conflict, but everyone has a right to be heard and understood. Therefore, the culture of planning should recognise, respect, value and harness difference.

- 1.1.2 Planning for and with people is not a new concept, yet many believe that planning is bureaucratic and remote, thus alienating people who may benefit from planning outcomes. To make planning more responsive and important to people, local authorities should develop policies and procedures which recognise the diverse make-up of the communities they serve. This Guide seeks to help them to achieve this.

- 1.1.3 Just as ‘people’ is not a monolithic concept, neither is ‘place.’ The planning system has helped to sustain the variety of England’s townscapes and countryside. It has been less confident in addressing the increasing social and cultural diversity of places today. Population characteristics vary enormously across England. In some places the cultural background of the population is changing rapidly. In others the age profile is changing. These changes bring with them different needs, for example an increased need for retirement homes. Planners need to monitor how their area is changing, what the different local residents and businesses value about the place, and the range of expectations and aspirations they have for its future. ‘One size fits all’ is not appropriate when considering people or place.
- 1.1.4 Good diversity practice is about recognising that people are all individuals with individual needs. Each person has characteristics that shape their unique identity, but some of their planning needs are also shared with others. It must be recognised that people who are perceived to belong to certain groups often have overlapping needs with people in other groups. For example, many quite different people would benefit from safer environments, affordable housing and better public transport. However, it is a mistake to assume that all groupings of people have identical needs. Not every woman or disabled person, for example, has the same priorities as everyone else in these categories. Engagement with diversity requires sensitivity and imagination, and skills in listening, explaining and finding ways to reconcile differences.
- 1.1.5 Diversity is a concept linked to, but not the same as, equality; both are equally important. Recognising differing values and needs is the first step. Appropriate policies can then be developed and procedures can be tuned to ensure that they really are fair to everyone. For example, as Chapter 3 explains, legislation that outlaws discrimination applies to planning practice, even if the discrimination arises from ignorance (e.g. of different cultures) rather than intent. Every Local Planning Authority should know, and be able to demonstrate, that its work really does promote equality of opportunity.

Key message 2: There can be no equality of opportunity unless diversity is understood and valued.

Delivering equal opportunities is good practice. By building equal opportunities into all aspects of its work, a local planning authority will be helping to create a more inclusive society, where everyone has the chance to fulfil their potential.

Legislation that challenges discrimination and inequality applies to planning. Practices that do not address the different needs of a diverse society are likely to amount to discrimination, even if that was not their intent. If legal action results, ignorance is not a defence.

- 1.1.6 Equality and diversity are not ‘minority’ or ‘fringe’ issues. They now need to be in the mainstream of planning. This means:
- They may now be material considerations in planning policies and decisions;
 - They should be an integral part of everyday service delivery, not an ‘added extra’;
 - Planners should take positive action to ensure that their practice and policies are inclusive and do not result in systematic disadvantaging of some communities or individuals.
- 1.1.7 Some planners (see next section) think that ‘treating everyone the same’ helps to ensure equality. But this is not the case. Explicit recognition of difference is needed to ensure that the right action can be taken to deliver a planning service responsive to different needs within the communities it serves. The aim of mainstreaming diversity is to create a more equal society.
- 1.1.8 Explicitly recognising diversity can yield social and community benefits, building more positive relations between the planning service and the different communities that it serves. Planning is a means to an end, never an end in itself. The more planning practice embraces diversity, the more its outcomes will benefit society, and the more society will value the planning system. Examples of this are inclusive environments that are accessible to everyone, including those with restricted mobility (including disabled people,

older people, anyone with heavy shopping, young children in pushchairs and those who accompany them) or successful regeneration that creates culturally rich and diverse areas where people like to be.

1.2 Findings from previous research

- 1.2.1 Evidence shows that issues about diversity are not well understood in planning practice. **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** (Sheffield Hallam University / ODPM, 2004), led by Chris Booth, found that many officers did not know how to relate their practice to diversity issues and there was little Central Government advice to help them. This report may be found at: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/downloadable/odpm_plan_028089.pdf. One of the report's main recommendations was the need to publish a good practice guide for local planning authorities. Publication of this Guide underlines the Government's commitment to having a planning system which delivers diverse outcomes so that nobody is ignored or put at a disadvantage.
- 1.2.2 The research that Booth led found that a large minority of local planning authorities do not consult with key groups in the local community. In such situations a vicious circle can develop. Those who have been overlooked are likely to feel that local authorities will not listen to them. Therefore they are unlikely to engage with authorities, and so planners remain unaware of their views and needs.
- 1.2.3 Booth's team urged planners to think more creatively about consultation techniques, so as to engage a wider cross-section of people. A similar point was made in another research report published by the ODPM in 2003 titled **Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities: International experience of mediation, negotiation and engagement in making plans** (2003a). This may be found at: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_023784.hcsp. The very way the planning system operates can unwittingly exclude some persons and groups. Examples are those who do not understand the technical language that planners use, or those whose responsibilities in caring for young children prevent them from attending public meetings held in the evening. Are the homeless consulted when a plan is defining housing problems?

Good diversity practice can help overcome these problems, but first it is important that planners make themselves aware of the issues.

Key message 3: Planning for diversity means being inclusive and engaging in outreach

Since planning serves the public interest and the public is diverse, then planners have to listen to all the different voices, not just those who are adept and articulate in presenting their case. There are barriers that prevent many people from engaging with planning. Therefore planners should be proactive. They need to identify and overcome barriers to effective communication that in the past have excluded people.

Box 1: Knowledge and understanding amongst planning authorities – findings from the research by Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM (2004).

This research demonstrated why a Good Practice Guide is needed and the culture of planning needs to change:

- Some local planning authorities (LPAs) are of the view that diversity issues are not appropriate planning matters.
- In rural areas, or places where there is a perception of a more or less homogenous population, some planners find it difficult to see the purpose of planning for diversity.
- There is a view that strategic planning issues are neutral to diversity issues as they are too far removed from 'people-based issues'.
- The knowledge that planners have of diverse groups is dated and likely to perpetuate policies that are problematic.
- Appraisal of the impacts of development plans and policies on different groups is weak.
- A large minority of LPAs do not consult with key groups in their community.
- Development control officers find it difficult to make the connections between development proposals and diversity, other than in relation to physical accessibility.
- There is little recognition that organisational cultures can unintentionally result in practices of institutional discrimination.

1.3 Aims of this Guide

- 1.3.1 The aim of this Guide is to help local planning authorities address diversity and equality issues in their policies and procedures.
- 1.3.2 It responds to the findings from the research study **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures**. It is aimed at local authority planners, but is also relevant to others involved in regeneration and the building of sustainable communities.
- 1.3.3 To engage effectively with diversity issues, all those delivering the planning service need to have an understanding of what diversity, inclusion and equality mean, and why they are important to planners. Planning operates within a legislative framework which sets requirements for fair treatment, and which provides recompense to those who suffer discrimination, even when the discrimination was caused by ignorance rather than intent. The Guide aims to identify key diversity issues and relate them to planning practice, with suggestions on how this may be done. Case studies drawn from a variety of sources are a key part of this effort and demonstrate creative ways of addressing diversity issues as part of the spatial planning process.
- 1.3.4 The aim in choosing case studies was to illustrate a variety of geographical locations, planning activities and user needs. Case studies were found through literature reviews, a letter to all planning authorities in England, and by placing an article in **Planning**. Some were identified through interviews with key organisations. It proved difficult to find many good studies in suburban and rural areas.
- 1.3.5 There are many barriers to achieving diversity in planning. The Guide identifies some of the main ones (see Box 1, for example) and explains how they can be overcome. It uses practical examples that demonstrate how planning is already changing and show what can be done.
- 1.3.6 Planning for diversity is simply good planning. Diversity should be in the mainstream of a planning authority's day-to-day work, not an occasional afterthought, or something of interest to only one section of the department or a few members of staff. As the Guide shows, there are many positive benefits and outcomes to be gained by planning for diversity.

1.4 Structure of this Guide

- 1.4.1 The Guide is divided into two parts. This first part is 'Making the Case' and explains why diversity and equality are mainstream planning issues. Chapter 2 looks at Diversity and Equality in the new Planning System. Chapter 3 very briefly outlines relevant equalities legislation, advises on how to avoid discrimination and indicates further sources of information and advice which readers are encouraged to make use of.

- 1.4.2 Part Two is about Good Practice. It gives hands-on advice and shows what can be achieved. Readers are encouraged to think critically about what they are doing, and to think creatively about what they might do to put diversity and equality at the heart of their practice.

2. Diversity and equality and the new planning system

2.1 Changing the Culture of Planning: Sustainable Communities

- 2.1.1 The Government is committed to changing the culture of planning to make it more responsive, positive and pro-active. This is reflected in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Diversity and equality are at the heart of this new agenda. The Government is also committed to creating strong, vibrant and sustainable communities and to promoting community cohesion in both urban and rural areas. These are important elements of a strategy for sustainable development, which the Government defines as the purpose of the planning system. **Sustainable Communities: building for the future**, published in 2003, sets out the Government's vision. See ODPM website: www.odpm.gov.uk

Box 2: Definition of Sustainable Communities

“Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity” (ODPM, 2004c, p.18) (The Egan Review).

- 2.1.2 A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures is an important feature of a sustainable community. This mix is necessary because in a diverse society households are of different sizes, ages and incomes. Good accessible public transport and a flourishing local economy are needed for sustainable communities so that everybody can access a range of jobs and facilities that match their individual needs. Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) **Delivering Sustainable Development** (ODPM, 2005) says that planning policies should address accessibility for all to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, leisure and community facilities.

- 2.1.3 As an example, if a built environment is not designed to meet the needs of disabled people, then it will create barriers to their full participation in the life of the community in which they live. If disabled people are excluded from some of the spaces in a neighbourhood the effect is to marginalise them within that community. A sustainable community is one where nobody is excluded, whether by disability or any other characteristic, and where everyone can make their own contribution to the life of the community as a whole. Therefore PPS1 emphasises that planning policies should take into account the needs of women, young people and children, older people, ethnic minorities, as well as disabled people and others.

Key message 4: Diversity and equality are integral to sustainable communities.

Diversity and equality are not 'add ons' to the Government's vision for Sustainable Communities. They are what help define sustainable communities. That is why they need to be put at the centre of planning practice and embedded in all aspects of the work of a local planning authority. Diversity issues may be a material consideration in planning and is relevant to Regional Spatial Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and development control.

2.2 Community Involvement, Diversity and the New Planning System

- 2.2.1 **Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives** was published in 2004 (ODPM, 2004,b). It makes it clear that planning must provide opportunities for people, irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity or background to have their say in how their community is planned and developed.
- 2.2.2 Recognition of a diverse society and the delivery of equal opportunities are fundamental to community involvement under the reformed planning system. PPS1 says that planning authorities need to build an understanding of the make up, interests and needs of the many different groups in their community (ODPM, 2005). More effective community involvement is a key element underpinning the Government's planning reforms.

However, as shown in Chapter 1, many local planning authorities have not built their practice around diversity. Reaching out to groups and individuals whose voices went unheard in the past requires a change of culture.

- 2.2.3 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a key part of the new planning system. Each Local Planning Authority has a duty to prepare an SCI, stating their policy for involving interested parties in preparing and revising Local Development Documents and consulting on planning applications. Thus the SCI sets out the policy of the local planning authority for community involvement and consultation. Box 3 summarises some of the important features of an SCI.

Box 3: An effective Statement of Community Involvement

An effective SCI would:

- Show how the LPA is meeting legal requirements (e.g. in relation to equalities legislation – see Chapter 3 of this Guide);
- Set out the LPA's overall vision and strategy for community involvement (e.g. in understanding the needs of different groups and individuals and so developing policies and practices for land use and development);
- Identify clearly the range of community groups who need to be involved (e.g. through using the approaches discussed in Chapter 4 of this Guide);
- Show that the LPA understands how best these communities can be involved in a timely and accessible way, and has identified suitable techniques to use (see the techniques discussed in Chapter 5);
- Be clear about the different stages of involvement – information, participation, consultation, feedback etc. – and show that these will be done in ways that work for the different stages and for the particular communities;
- Show how the results are fed into preparation of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance (see Chapter 6);
- Set out how the LPA will learn from the experience and improve the arrangements where necessary;
- Set out the LPA's policy for consultation on planning applications.

- 2.2.4 PPS1 stresses the importance of involving a diverse range of people within communities in drawing up specific plans or policies. They should also be consulted on proposals for development.

Box 4: Principles for Community Involvement

- Fit for purpose – appropriate to the level of the plan, the authority’s circumstances and the needs of the community;
- Front-loading of involvement – opportunities for participation in identifying issues and debating options from the earliest stages;
- Methods used to encourage involvement and participation should be relevant to people’s experience, a genuine dialogue is to be established and maintained.
- Clearly articulated opportunities for continuing involvement. There should be a continuous programme, not a series of disjointed one-off steps. A “tick box mentality” to community involvement is not acceptable.
- Transparency and accessibility – a clear process and ground rules. Involvement should extend beyond those who are familiar with the system, and should extend to difficult to reach groups.
- Planning for involvement – the process needs to be planned, and thought should be given to how community involvement in planning can best fit with other involvement processes, particularly the Community Strategies.

Key message 5: To deliver the new planning system, planning authorities need a good understanding of diversity and how it relates to community involvement.

The SCI is an important part of the new planning system. It should show that the LPA has moved on from a “one size fits all” approach, is aware of and responsive to diversity in society and individuals, and is actively working to target groups that in the past have been difficult to reach. Authorities who previously have not seen diversity and inclusion as planning matters will need to rethink many aspects of their past approaches to public participation and consultation.

2.3 Diversity concerns in planning-related programmes

- 2.3.1 The Government's commitment to diversity and equality is not confined to the planning system. It is fundamental to the modernisation and reform of public services in general. **“The Government wants a public service which values and uses the differences that people bring to it...The public sector must also be a part of the society it serves. It must reflect the full diversity of that society if it is to deliver the policies and services required”** (Cabinet Office, 1999). Similarly the Government has tasked the public sector, which includes the planning service, with setting the pace on improving race equality (Home Office, 2001). Planning is now operating within a different context than was the case in the past.
- 2.3.2 The Government's vision is for a Britain where cultural, demographic and social diversity are respected and celebrated; where discrimination is tackled robustly; where different communities co-exist in mutual respect and understanding; and where attitudes that block the progress of individuals and groups are tackled. The planning system has a part to play.
- 2.3.3 Government initiatives exist to tackle disadvantage and create a more equitable society. Many of them seek to integrate the contributions of a number of services and professions so as to increase effectiveness. Key approaches include partnership, local leadership, an active role for the voluntary and community sectors, and outreach.
- 2.3.4 Social inclusion and combating disadvantage are at the heart of the Government's **regeneration** agenda. Planning policies and practices need to be integrated with those in regeneration, urban policy and rural policy. Social and economic considerations are important for good planning. Changing the culture of planning means ensuring planning is a strategic tool of local governance. For example, planning that is responsive to diversity will contribute to social inclusion.
- 2.3.5 The Government has a commitment to narrow the gap between deprived and more prosperous neighbourhoods, so that within 10 to 20 years nobody should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. In other words, the Government is not treating all

neighbourhoods the same. Rather, it recognises that special action is needed in deprived neighbourhoods. Planning practice should support this approach.

- 2.3.6 Many of these neighbourhoods have a long history of blighted environments, poor facilities and services, inadequate transport networks and a housing stock that offers too little in terms of choice and quality. Ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented in deprived areas. Planning should work to strengthen such areas, and support their residents, not leave them behind. While the root causes of social exclusion lie in poverty and unemployment, planning can make a positive contribution to narrowing the gap between these neighbourhoods and others – or risk reproducing and even deepening the barriers that exist.
- 2.3.7 The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (see www.neighbourhood.gov.uk) emphasises the important part that local residents and community groups have in regenerating their neighbourhoods. There are Community Empowerment Networks that serve as a channel for communication between local authorities and the community sector. These networks can be used to close the gap that often exists between the planning system and those in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- 2.3.8 The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) works across government and with a range of partners at national, regional and local level. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) prepare a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. The LSPs are extensively engaged in outreach, especially to usually excluded communities. Some of the Local Strategic Partnerships have been at the forefront of addressing issues of diversity and the ODPM aims to ensure that race equality is embedded in every aspect of neighbourhood renewal policy. This Guide includes examples of such work. Planning policies that are responsive to the needs of deprived communities will aid the work of the NRU.

Box 5: Planning and social inclusion

The research led by Booth (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004) found that some planning officers took the view that “planning is land use based” and therefore not involved in social or cultural issues. One officer was quoted as saying “It is not necessary to seek supposed problems and representations and disadvantages. The Planning Service serves the whole community, not stratified segments of it.”

In contrast, the Planning Minister when introducing the draft of PPS1 for consultation in 2004 said “Planning has a critical role in pulling together the various strands of economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection which are critical to sustainable development and underpin the Sustainable Communities Plan. The best examples of regeneration and development show just what the system can do, where planners take a positive approach, not just preparing the plan...Our draft sets out a vision for planning, to which planners will want to respond positively and show what they can do.”

- 2.3.9 Local authorities have a duty to prepare **Community Strategies**. These are a means of promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Community involvement in planning needs to be integrated with the process of preparing the Community Strategy.
- 2.3.10 In emphasising the need for participation and involvement to be inclusive and transparent, the Government is implementing the objectives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (more commonly known as ‘the Aarhus Convention’). The UK has signed this Convention. The Convention is based on the principle that sustainable development can only be achieved through the involvement of all stakeholders.
- 2.3.11 The **Egan Review** (ODPM, 2004c) **Skills for Sustainable Communities** identified a set of generic skills to help in the delivery of regeneration objectives. These include: brokerage, change management, stakeholder management and working with local residents, evaluation and learning from mistakes,

communication and listening to the community, consumer awareness and how to secure feedback. Egan pointed to the need for behaviour that respected diversity and equal opportunity and effective training initiatives. The review also encouraged recruitment of under represented people e.g. women and ethnic minorities into core occupations, particularly built environment professions.

2.4 Diversity and Best Value

- 2.4.1 The Best Value regime requires that in providing their services, local authorities are responsive to the needs of citizens. The aim is for services of the highest quality for everyone, that are accessible to all who need them. As Circular 3/03 (Best Value and Performance Improvement) noted, providing good services to the majority of local people may not be enough to secure best value: 'The way in which services impact on all sections of the community needs to be addressed explicitly' (ODPM, 2003f). Thus the concept of diversity – **meeting the needs of all sections of the community** – is built into Best Value.
- 2.4.2 Similarly, the idea of consulting service users lies at the very heart of Best Value. Users are important sources of information about how well the service is working. They can suggest improvements. Best Value requires user satisfaction surveys every three years disaggregated by age, sex, disability and ethnicity. The key point is that local authorities need to reach out and listen to the views of all potential users. It is particularly important to engage with people who are traditionally hard to reach and who do not normally get involved with planning. Once they are engaged this will encourage future participation. Best Value will be enhanced.
- 2.4.3 The delivery of Best Value and the process of review provide an opportunity to develop and mainstream diversity activity. However, research by the Audit Commission (2002) found that local authorities in general have made little or no progress in engaging local ethnic minority communities, for example. Even when consultation has taken place, the view from the communities is that often public service providers are not learning from what communities have said. Feedback by local authorities can result in a better sense of working partnership with minority communities.

Key message 6: Best Value requires understanding and application of the diversity approach

Consultation and services must be about everyone, including hard to reach groups.

- 2.4.4 The Planning Officers' Society is committed to raising awareness of diversity and is updating its web-based Best Value Guide to include a section on it. See www.planningofficers.org.uk

2.5 Diversity and the Planning Profession

- 2.5.1 Members of the Royal Town Planning Institute are bound by its Code of Professional Conduct. This requires that they:

‘shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, creed, religion, disability or age and shall seek to eliminate such discrimination by others and to promote equality of opportunity’ (RTPI 2001).

Key message 7: RTPI members have a professional duty to promote equality of opportunity

Chartered town planners have a professional obligation to take positive steps to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity through their practice. This involves recognising different planning needs within different communities.

- 2.5.2 The RTPI has also recognised that the Government's aims to modernise planning requires a different approach to planning practice. The Institute observed that ‘The modernising planning agenda stresses a more holistic approach to planning – one that is reflective of the composition of society. Mainstreaming equalities in plan-making will improve the quality and performance of plan policy.’ RTPI (2003).
- 2.5.3 The RTPI has been a leading force in developing ideas and practices about diversity and equality in planning. Its Equal Opportunities Panel has championed ethnic minority representation and gender equality. It has promoted initiatives for activities such as improving disabled access and environmental education in

schools. It has produced a Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit (RTPI, 2003). The Institute has also nurtured the development of Planning Aid as a service to help those who cannot afford to hire planning consultants to have a voice in planning. The RTPI website is www.rtpi.org.uk

- 2.5.4 The notion that planning should be inclusive is one of the four core ideas around which the RTPI has built its **New Vision for Planning**. Box 6 summarises the RTPI's view that 'successful spatial planning is inclusive'.

Box 6: What the RTPI says about planning and inclusion

Effective planning cannot always be achieved through consensus. Where hard choices are required, clear and equitable decision-making frameworks are essential. Conflicts are often resolved through the established power structures in ways which disadvantage those most in need. Planning must seek to give a voice to those excluded communities – those with a direct interest in creating a better world but little power to influence it.

Planning processes, policies and outcomes therefore need:

- To embrace more fully a respect for differences, notably of gender and ethnicity; changes should be considered to guarantee the rights of all to be included in the process;
- To reduce social and spatial inequalities and not create new ones;
- To be negotiated through a process that is first transparent, and second, subject to independent scrutiny and arbitration;
- To result in a shared commitment to act upon the agreed outcomes of the discussion, and to review and update plans.

(RTPI, New Vision for Planning, 2001)

3. Equality and the Law

3.1 A complex and changing legal framework

3.1.1 There is a legislative framework to promote the equality of opportunity, and planning authorities need to be aware of the statutory duties imposed on them. The law, and its application to particular cases, is complex and this Guide does not, therefore, purport to be an exhaustive guide to it. Rather, it summarises the main issues and refers readers to sources where fuller and up-to-date information can be found.

3.2 Discrimination

3.2.1 The prevention of discrimination is a key concern. But just what is meant by ‘discrimination’? Some discrimination can be crude and direct. If a person was denied a job purely because of a personal characteristic such as their ethnicity or disability, it might be a case of direct discrimination. The RTPI (1996) produced guidance on how to deal with representations that are, or might be, racist.

3.2.2 However, there are other more subtle forms of discrimination, which may be unintentional, but which are also unacceptable. Plans on display in physically hard to reach locations could lessen the opportunities for disabled people to get their views heard. Care must therefore be taken to ensure that unintended outcomes do not arise as a result of thoughtlessness or lack of awareness.

3.2.3 Indirect discrimination occurs when a criterion, requirement or condition is applied to everyone, but in practice a much smaller proportion of some groups can comply with it than is the case for others. In other words, the effect is to operate procedures that systematically put some groups of people at an unfair disadvantage. This means that there must always be grounds for concern and investigation if there are, for example, discrepancies between different groups in the rates of refusal for broadly similar planning applications. There is evidence, for example, that the majority of applications for Gypsies and Travellers sites are refused, whereas the majority of all other applications for planning permission are approved. In isolation this does not prove that indirect discrimination is taking place, but evidence of such discrepancies should certainly

prompt a review of practices and cases. Unrealistic policies are an issue which some local authorities need to address. Criteria-based policies for Gypsy and Traveller sites need to be realistically drawn, in line with the advice given in Circular 1/94 '**Gypsy Sites and Planning**'.

- 3.2.4 If an organisation, even unwittingly, has a range of practices that amount to indirect discrimination, then its actions might be described as institutional discrimination. The concept applies where there is a collective failure of an organisation's policies and/or practices to provide a fair and equal service, and/or employment opportunities, to one or more groups of people.
- 3.2.5 The MacPherson inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence spoke of 'processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people'. MacPherson did not look at the planning system but those who are in planning need to ensure that their own organisations are not open to similar criticisms. There needs to be vigilance, self-awareness and (for RTPI members) adherence to the Code of Professional Conduct. Persons who have experienced racism, for example, in their dealings with authority, are likely to be suspicious of how other public officials, including planners, will treat them.
- 3.2.6 While MacPherson was concerned with race and ethnicity, institutional discrimination can disadvantage a range of people. Stereotyping women, gay men and lesbians, disabled people, young or older persons, for example, is likely to leave them at a disadvantage and lacking confidence in what the planning service has to offer. Similarly, planning policies that take no account of the spatial concentrations of persons with shared characteristics are likely to reflect and perpetuate institutional discrimination. An example would be insensitivity to the needs of the growing Muslim population for sites for more mosques near to their homes and workplaces.

- 3.2.7 Contrary to what many believe, positive discrimination is generally unlawful in Britain. For information on discrimination in employment visit the Employment Relations pages of the Department of Trade and Industry's website – www.dti.gov.uk/er/index.htm
- 3.2.8 This does not rule out positive action under equality legislation to prevent discrimination. Such action is also legal as a way to overcome past discrimination and disadvantage. However, the starting point must be evidence, and therefore monitoring (see Chapter 8) is very important. One form that positive action can take is the setting of targets, e.g. for levels of employment amongst traditionally under-represented groups. Targets, however, need to be distinguished from quotas – i.e. setting aside a proportion of jobs for a particular group which would amount to positive discrimination.

Key Message 8: There are different forms of discrimination, some more subtle than others. Planners and their employers have individual and collective responsibilities to ensure that policies and practices are not discriminatory. Many people in Britain today have experiences of discrimination that are barriers to having trust in authorities.

Planners should understand the nature of direct, indirect and institutional discrimination and ensure that their own actions and the policies and procedures of their employers are inclusive.

3.3 Race Relations Act

- 3.3.1 The Race Relations Act (RRA) 1976 makes it unlawful to discriminate (directly or indirectly) on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins. It provides protection from race discrimination in the fields of employment, education, training, housing, and the provision of goods, facilities and services.
- 3.3.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 puts a greater onus on public authorities to be pro-active and positive. All public authorities, including planning authorities, now have a statutory general duty to promote race equality, including taking measures to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - Promote equal opportunities;
 - Encourage good race relations.
- 3.3.3 Local authorities are also required to undertake a Race Equality Impact Assessment of each strategy and plan, including development plans.
- 3.3.4 The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) can take legal action if public authorities fail to carry out their duties. Any individual can also take legal action if they believe an authority is not meeting the general duty. The CRE also has a general power to investigate any organisation if it believes there is sufficient evidence of unlawful racial discrimination. The CRE website contains considerable useful information: www.CRE.gov.uk

Box 7: Race Equality Schemes

The 2000 Act requires public authorities to produce and publish a Race Equality Scheme explaining how they intend to meet the general duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

In their Race Equality Schemes, public authorities have to:

- Assess whether their functions and policies are relevant to race equality
- Monitor their policies to see how they affect race equality
- Make sure they are not putting people from some ethnic groups at a disadvantage
- Assess and consult on policies they are proposing to introduce
- Publish the results of their consultations, monitoring and assessments
- Make sure that the public have access to the information and services they provide
- Train their staff on the new duties
- Review the scheme at least every three years
- Monitor employment practice

- 3.3.5 **Gypsies and Travellers** who are ethnic or national in origin, such as Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers, are recognised as racial groups for the purposes of the Race Relations Act.

3.4 Sex Discrimination Act

- 3.4.1 The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate (directly or indirectly) on the grounds of sex or marital status. It prohibits sex discrimination in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services to the public. It was amended in 1999 to protect workers undergoing gender reassignment from discrimination at work.
- 3.4.2 The Government has declared its intention to amend the SDA to bring it in line with the more proactive spirit of the RRA (Amendment) Act 2000 discussed above, placing more of an onus on public authorities to take action to ensure equality between the sexes. The Equal Opportunities Commission website provides much useful information: www.EOC.org.uk. Further information can also be found on the webpages of the Women and Equality Unit, part of the DTI: www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk

3.5 Disability Discrimination Act

- 3.5.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in employment (except the Armed Forces), access to goods, facilities and services, and buying or renting land or property, except where this can be justified. Disability can take numerous forms; the definition in the Act is complex, but as a rough guide, a person is regarded as disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disabilities covered by the Act are not necessarily visible, and can include impairments such as mental health conditions, diabetes and severe dyslexia.
- 3.5.2 The DDA prohibits unjustified, less favourable treatment for a reason relating to a person's disability. The Act makes it unlawful for a service provider, such as a Local Planning Authority, to discriminate against a disabled person by:
- Refusing to provide (or deliberately not providing) any service which it offers or provides to members of the public; or

- Providing service of a lower standard or in a worse manner; or on worse terms; or
- Failing to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments if that failure has the effect of making it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the disabled person to make use of the service.

Box 8: Making ‘reasonable adjustments’ under the DDA

The DDA now requires ‘reasonable adjustment’ to the way in which services are provided to make them more accessible to disabled people. Reasonable adjustments cover:

- Changing practices, policies and procedures;
- Providing auxiliary aids and services;
- Providing services by alternative methods where a physical feature acts as a barrier to the service;
- Overcoming a physical feature by removing the feature or altering or avoiding it, or providing services by alternative methods.

An unjustified failure to make a reasonable adjustment is a form of discrimination.

Making reasonable adjustments is about much more than physical alterations to premises (such as installing a ramp or widening a doorway). Often, minor measures such as allowing more time to serve a disabled customer will help disabled people to use a service. This can also extend to access arrangements during public consultation exercises.

3.5.3 The Disability Discrimination Bill is in draft at the time of writing. This proposes, among other things, to introduce a duty to promote equality for disabled people, similar to the duty to promote race equality. It will also amend the DDA to cover the public functions of authorities. For example, planning authorities would need to ensure that Local Development Frameworks do not discriminate against disabled people.

3.5.4 The ODPM’s ‘Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide’ (ODPM, 2003d) stresses the commitment to addressing the needs of disabled people through a co-operative approach and early involvement in the planning process.

- 3.5.5 Information on the disability legislation is contained on the website of the Department of Work and Pensions: www.DWP.gov.uk, and the website of the DWP's disability unit at www.disability.gov.uk. Another useful site is the Disability Rights Commission: www.drc-gb.org

3.6 Human Rights Act

- 3.6.1 The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is a binding international agreement which enshrines fundamental civil and political rights. It was formally incorporated into domestic law in the Human Rights Act 1998 which has, since October 2000, made rights from the ECHR enforceable in UK courts. The Act is about protecting rights rather than guaranteeing outcomes, and has a focus on the rights of individuals.
- 3.6.2 An Audit Commission report offers good practice guidance on applying a human rights framework to decision making in public services. It is available on their website: www.audit-commission.gov.uk. Useful information on human rights can also be found on the webpages of the Human Rights' Unit, based in the Department for Constitutional Affairs; www.dca.gov.uk/hract/hramenu.htm

3.7 The Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)

- 3.7.1 In 'Fairness for All: A new Commission for Equality and Human Rights' (Cm6185, May 2004), the Government set out its plans for integrating the functions and roles of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission into a single statutory body. The CEHR will also deal with equality issues relating to discrimination on the grounds of age, faith and belief, sexual orientation and human rights. The CEHR will work with other standard-setting agencies and inspectorates to ensure that public service providers comply with equalities and human rights legislation and take an integrated approach towards adopting good equalities and human rights practices.

Key Message 9: Equalities legislation is changing to require a more pro-active approach to eliminating discrimination and promoting the equality of opportunity.

There is a complex and evolving statutory framework which places clear obligations and responsibilities on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and recognise the diverse needs of individuals and groups in society. Increasingly, the onus is on local authorities to be proactive in demonstrating their commitment to delivering high quality services to all, including those who may have been previously excluded. But statute sets the minimal limits that local authorities must meet. Good practice builds on the statutory framework by mainstreaming diversity throughout the design and delivery of public services.

3.8 Other Employment Legislation

- 3.8.1 New regulations outlawing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of faith and belief and sexual orientation in employment have already come into effect. Legislation on age is due to come into effect in 2006. There were also amendments to the Race Relations Act (1976) and the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to bring EU directives on discrimination into effect.

Further information on the regulations and other relevant employment legislation can be found on the Employment Relations pages of the DTI's website: www.dti.gov.uk/er/index.htm, including the Employment Relations Act 1999.

Part 2

Good Practice

4. Recognising diversity: Who is in the area?

4.1 The Importance of Information

- 4.1.1 **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** found that local planning authorities' knowledge of diverse groups within their areas tends to be 'dated and is likely to perpetuate policies that are problematic' (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004, p. iii). Diversity was too often defined solely in terms of race, and planners failed to distinguish different needs within one particular racial group or within the wider community. These findings stand in marked contrast to the culture of evidence-informed action that the Government advocates.

Key message 10: Planning staff should understand the mix of people within their area, and how that mix is changing, if they are to deliver the development planning and development control functions properly. Effective data analysis combined with local knowledge is essential to identify needs, forecast future requirements and monitor progress.

Data should be disaggregated and cross-tabulated. However, beware of stereotyping and anticipating needs, and supplement key sources like the census with consultation or special surveys. Care needs to be taken about the spatial units at which data is analysed – concentrations of persons with similar characteristics may straddle ward boundaries, for example.

4.2 The Census

- 4.2.1 The Census gives valuable information about the make-up of areas. It includes data that can be analysed at varying spatial scales (e.g. neighbourhood, city or region) and cross-tabulated (e.g. to show the housing conditions of different ethnic groups).

The 2001 Census gives information that is useful for diversity indicators (ethnicity, country of birth, faith, age, sex, lone parent household, marital status, long-term limiting illness). Cross-tabulations of such indicators with data on factors such as economic activity, household size and type, travel to work, or car ownership, for example, will reveal how different groups use an area. Comparison between groups will highlight relative conditions and disadvantages, though care must be taken not to assume that everyone shares the analyst's values and priorities.

- 4.2.2 Comparisons are also possible with the 1991 or previous Censuses to reveal trends, though changes in data collection and definitions between different Censuses can make this difficult. For example, the 1991 Census was the first to include questions on ethnicity, and there are ambiguities and blurred categorisations for some groups (e.g. European populations were aggregated into a single White group). Furthermore, neither the 1991 nor the 2001 Census included Gypsies and Travellers as an option in the question about race and ethnicity. There is also evidence that recent censuses have under-recorded some groups. For example, Simpson (1996) noted that young children, young adults and the very elderly and men aged 20-34 in city districts had a relatively low response rate.
- 4.2.3 Census data is therefore an important starting point, but not the whole story. The UK Data Navigator gives details of a range of spatial data sources in the UK. It can be accessed at www.espon.lu/projects. In addition the Home Office has useful data sets, e.g. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/racerelate1.html
- 4.2.4 Despite its limitations, planners should use the Census to provide a disaggregated analysis of people and trends in the area. Reliance on aggregate data alone is the antithesis of planning for diversity, since it obscures the diversity that exists in reality.

Box 9: Census statistics from 2001 show the population of England is diverse, and changing all the time. Some examples of the make up of the total population:

- 16% are over 65, up 3.4% since 1991
- 20% are 0 – 15 years old
- 9% are from an ethnic minority, up 3% since 1991
- 51% are women
- 6% practice a non-Christian religion; 3.1% of the total are Muslim
- 9.6% of households are headed by a lone parent, 9 out of 10 are women; 1 in 4 children live in a lone parent household
- 18.2% have a long term limiting illness or disability affecting daily activities, up 4.9% from 1991
- 9.2% say their health is 'not good,' with Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women reporting the highest rate in this category

4.3 Other sources

- 4.3.1 It is therefore good practice to supplement Census data with a range of formal and informal contacts within an area. Schools, for example, may have more accurate information about what countries children come from. Social services, education, leisure and community development departments, equalities sections, refugee councils, various voluntary and regeneration organisations, places of worship, etc. can keep planning departments up-to-date with population characteristics and what services are required to serve local communities. These contacts also potentially provide insights into what planning problems they might be experiencing. Cultivating these contacts can also give information about languages spoken, which the Census did not include.
- 4.3.2 Another useful source of information would be via Government Departments. For example, The Department for Education and Science (DfES) now has a Pupil Level Annual School Census and National Pupil Database which now holds information on individual pupils including information like their mother tongue, etc. The

Neighbourhood Statistics web site (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) is being created as a one-stop shop for information along a range of indicators at various geographical levels including as low as Census Output Areas. At the time of writing it is largely populated with Census data but it will soon be populated with a lot of information from various sources.

- 4.3.3 Adequate methods of data collection over time will allow comparisons to be made and help monitor the success of planning policies (see Chapter 8). However, gathering information, although important, is no substitute for effective consultation, so data collection must be seen in conjunction with the next chapter. Good Community Involvement might involve use of data sources and local knowledge to ensure that different people who experience different patterns of living, working and travelling are taken into account in planning policies and activities.
- 4.3.4 Care must be taken when planning authorities undertake special surveys. Questionnaires should be designed so as to ensure that information is collected for everyone in the household, not just the head of the household. There is a risk that samples with small numbers will at best mean that data for small groups is unreliable, and at worst seriously distort or even miss out such groups. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published a useful guide in 2002 **Ethnic Monitoring: A Guide for Public Authorities** that gives information on data collection and data protection, which also needs to be sensitively carried out (see CRE, 2002).
- 4.3.5 Circular 1/94 '**Gypsy Sites and Planning**' says that it is essential for authorities to have up-to-date information and maintain records of trends through regular counts, taking into account seasonal variations. The ODPM currently conducts a twice-yearly Gypsy and Traveller count but this only includes people living in caravans and not those who, on the count date, live in houses. The CRE's **Gypsies and Travellers: A Strategy 2004-2006** emphasises the need for up-to-date and explicit information gathering and monitoring procedures (CRE, 2004, see pp.6-7, 22). The Circular is being revised for 2005. However the need for an accurate data on Gypsies and Travellers, together with the need for good communication between members of that community and local planning authorities, will lie at the heart of the new circular.

- 4.3.6 The RTPI's Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit emphasises the importance of 'Research and Analysis' (RTPI, 2003, pp. 15-16); the examples it gives throughout the report are supported by statistical information.
- 4.3.7 An important point to remember is that information gathering should never be a one-off exercise. The characteristics of any area changes, sometimes rapidly, so planners should take care to keep their information as up to date as possible.

Box 10: Plymouth Gender Audit of Local Plan

Plymouth City Council carried out a Gender Audit of its Local Plan in 2001. It developed a 'sustainability matrix'. Policies were listed down the left hand side and were analysed by categories listed along the top, including 'Relevant Gender Specific Data'. This method prompted the inclusion of data substantiating policies. For example, percentage of women office workers, public transport users and car owners – relating these to the local plan policy about relocating office development beside the motorway outside town.
(Plymouth City Council, 2001).

Manchester Regeneration Case Study: Identifying Who is in the Community

Community Technical Aid Centre effectively identifies and targets diverse groups in the community planning exercises in an inner city area.



Consultation at local high school using model.
Source: Alison Crush, CTAC

Recognising diversity

- Anson/Hamilton is an inner city area experiencing high levels of unemployment, poor environment, high crime rates, poor health, and lack of community facilities especially for young people. The area crosses ward boundaries and there are two very distinct community areas.
- 42% of the population are from ethnic minorities: Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians, Africans, Caribbeans, and Somalis. For some there are cultural and linguistic barriers that exclude them from the planning system.

Engaging with difference

Manchester Community Technical Aid Centre (CTAC) offers a part grant-aided and independent service to community groups to develop and implement projects that will improve their local environment and community facilities. CTAC identified and then proactively engaged with all sections of the diverse local community to develop bottom-up solutions to neighbourhood regeneration. It made a special effort to work with traditionally excluded groups such as ethnic minorities and young people. Local statistics were drawn from Single Regeneration Budget reports and other research.

Consultation events were held at nine venues where people of different ages and cultures naturally meet. These included the housing office, library, youth centre and a local mosque on a Friday. Two other events were held in the local high schools. Care was taken to involve all children that lived in the area, including those from all cultures. Posters and leaflets advertising the events were translated into Urdu and a community volunteer translated all suggestion cards (400 of them!).

A model of the area was built with local primary schools. Teachers identified what pupils should be involved based on postcodes for the target area.

A monitoring and support (M&S) group was established. All representatives of community groups, the Council and other statutory agencies that work or live in the community were invited.

The M&S group guided the project, using their experience and understanding of the area. They identified whom to involve by using local knowledge and directories. Publicity methods were discussed. Although a variety of languages were spoken, Urdu was the Asian language that most people read. The best venues and times for events were also agreed, ensuring, for example, that events were fully accessible to disabled people.

Participants were asked to provide information on their age, gender and ethnicity to ensure that a range of people were consulted. Records show that a range of ethnic groups and disabled people attended the events, with a high proportion of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and white participants, reflective of the overall mix of the area.

Some community members were trained in community planning and consultation techniques so they could engage with local people about what they wanted.

Positive Outcomes

The main objective of the initiative was to use it as a tool to influence mainstream service providers into targeting their resources more effectively to reflect local priorities. Because of this, services are now working together much more, sharing staff and information resources, and collaborating on joint initiatives.

The project enabled 800 local people to make over 4000 suggestions on how to regenerate their area. Top priority suggestions were turned into a series of Action Plans for environmental and housing improvement, public transport and traffic calming, crime and safety, community issues, health and leisure facilities and employment and training initiatives.

Prior to the project, some Council officers had no contact with local people; it was a real eye opener for some. Some officers were reluctant to change the way they work to incorporate community issues/priorities. However, there was a gradual realisation that the issues raised could effectively direct limited resources and create opportunities for partnership working. Many of the initial projects implemented have been community-led.

The initiative reached a large number of young people from different ethnic groups, including those who may be disaffected. By being involved, young people were given an opportunity to gain understanding of the community consultation process, heighten their awareness of local issues, and their ability to influence the decision making process. The project has been instrumental in breaking down barriers between young people and the police and reducing juvenile crime and nuisance.

The work is now being used by the City Council in its current review of the UDP. The cycle has reached full circle, with local SRB delivery plans originating in the UDP, and feedback from community planning now influencing policy review and development.

Key lessons

- Community planning can positively contribute to statutory local planning, helping build relationships. Service providers understand community issues and priorities and the real impact of past developments. Local people can understand statutory processes and budgets and there is a shared understanding that partnership working is the most productive. A formal partnership should be created where all partners have equal status and share contributions to implementing action plans.
- Planning departments should be liaising with voluntary sector and regeneration initiatives to gain useful information about who is in an area and what their planning needs are. Local knowledge is needed to identify the different voices within the community and get commitment from all relevant stakeholders. This type of community involvement will be important in delivering Local Development Frameworks.
- It is also important to draw on existing research and surveys so that local people instantly recognise that what they previously said has been taken into consideration. Publicity is key. Once people are at events they are keen to get involved and make suggestions. Outreach is needed to include different groups according to age, ethnicity, language, disability, etc.
- There is always a concern from officers that expectations will be raised and not met. This is a real danger when consultation is controlled and directed by outside agencies, but where the local community is directly involved in carrying out the consultation, and have an opportunity to ensure issues raised are addressed, a more mature reaction to realities is forthcoming. When the community are not allowed an equal responsibility for acting on the findings, the only responses possible are either to demand immediate and full implementation by those controlling the actions, or a lapse into cynicism about consultation. The long-term nature of area improvement must be emphasised. It is useful to implement small-scale achievable projects first to build up momentum and faith in the process.

Resources

This initiative was funded by the A6 Single Regeneration Budget Partnership. CTAC is supported by the National Lottery Community Fund, Manchester City Council and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities.

Throughout the process, time and resources were limited. The process was facilitated by CTAC with the support, valuable time, expertise and knowledge of community volunteers and officers.

At the outset, there were meetings with local people to set up a 'community volunteers group'. The volunteers participated in a series of training days, one for young people and two for other local people, voluntary and statutory agencies. Volunteers supported publicity and event work.

Once the action plans were written the M & S group identified the need for two development workers to co-ordinate the project and implement the tasks in the long term. Some members from this group then formed the Anson Hamilton Partnership to oversee future developments.

Participants' Quotes

“One of the best things about this project was the training that we got in community planning and consultation techniques. We in the community could find out different people’s views rather than relying on others coming in from outside. We know our community better, for example, what languages people speak. As a result, we’ve set up our new Association and the work is ongoing.” Barry Johnson, Hamilton Road Area Community Association

“The community planning process is hard work but enjoyable. Local people and workers know their community: the people, problems and solutions. They speak to representatives from different communities and agencies and share their understanding.” Alison Crush, CTAC

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Good Practice Points: Identifying Who is in the Community

1. Census data, appropriately disaggregated, can help paint a picture of who is in an area (at different spatial scales); what some of their planning needs might be in terms of housing, employment and travel; and trends over time. Cross-tabulations and comparisons can give some indication of issues that some of the population experience more than others.
2. Census data should be supplemented with information from other sources and local knowledge giving a finer grain of up-to-date information on population characteristics which can be related to spatial planning issues.
3. Good Community Involvement should include an analysis of the population characteristics within an area, based on solid evidence. Planning policies and procedures should be founded on sound knowledge of the particular composition and needs of an area.

5. Effective community engagement

5.1 The importance of engaging different communities

- 5.1.1 One of the strongest messages in this Guide is that planners need to recognise and consult different communities. Planners cannot assume they know the requirements of the wide range of people within their area. Furthermore these needs can change over time. So they must put mechanisms in place to seek views of a variety of people, especially those whom traditional consultation methods have failed to reach.
- 5.1.2 Public participation has a long history in British planning. But **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** found that a large minority of local authorities do not consult key groups; the pattern is slow, uneven and often exclusive (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004, pp.28-30).
- 5.1.3 Community engagement links with every other chapter in this Guide. It is the one issue that unites every single case study. It is a principal theme underpinning the Government's planning reforms (see Section 2.2). There is an expectation that Statements of Community Involvement will include evidence that diverse communities have been targeted, including those who, by definition, are 'hard to reach.' Good consultation can help to identify who is in the community in the first place, as discussed in the previous chapter. Chapter 3 demonstrates that equalities legislation requires planners to be proactive in tackling discrimination; promoting engagement with usually excluded communities is a good example of positive action.
- 5.1.4 Effective engagement with often excluded communities can better inform planning policy and result in more positive outcomes for a diverse local population. Effective liaison should be made with other parts of the Council, local groups, national agencies, Planning Aid and regeneration initiatives, among others.

One example found during this research is Community Safety forums, which, in some parts of the country, include representatives of gay men and lesbians who have raised planning issues, e.g. environmental safety in areas where social facilities are concentrated.

Key Message 11: An essential requirement of the new planning system is that planning authorities develop creative and meaningful ways to engage diverse communities, including those who have been traditionally excluded or hard to reach. Different methods and techniques are required for different sections of the population. The Government expects Statements of Community Involvement to show how and when the planning authority will go about this task. Consultation must be properly resourced, including staff with the appropriate skills and attitudes. Doing things the way they have always been done is unlikely to be enough.

5.2 Barriers and how they might be overcome

- 5.2.1 Engaging people effectively requires time, effort, money, staff, information and skills. The task may prove challenging but the results for the wider community will prove worthwhile. Evidence from the case studies and elsewhere shows that there are barriers to overcome and many sustained actions are needed if engagement is to work well. Trying new things always involves risks. But that shouldn't be an excuse for inaction. Even the things that didn't work as well as expected can provide useful learning experience for the future: 'there is no failure, only feedback'.
- 5.2.2 The case studies highlight a range of activities that are already being used to reach out to different people across the country, in both urban and rural areas. The good practice points at the end of this chapter summarise useful advice. The 'Testing the Mix' case study examines barriers traditionally faced when consulting ethnic minorities and how they might be overcome. A catchphrase that emerged is apposite to engagement more generally: 'Failure to plan is planning to fail.' One of the messages from many of the case studies is that when they feel they are making a difference, people, including those from hard to reach groups, are keen to be involved in planning their own environments. This evidence challenges assumptions about people being apathetic.

- 5.2.3 The demands of consultation, including time, resources and skills, can be daunting. Planners can and do link in with others, thus making effective use of limited resources. The Manchester case study in the previous chapter showcases relevant work by the Community Technical Aid Centre as part of regeneration activities. The Southwark case in this chapter highlights the work of Planning Aid and a local planning advice service in training local people and community capacity building. The Birmingham Youth Focus Group and the Holderness Youth Initiative both have planning spin-offs from wider initiatives. The King's Cross case study shows what specialist engagement consultants and an enlightened developer can contribute, as well as an initiative to train local people in planning and consultation techniques and the establishment of a large Development Forum made of diverse community groups. The Test Valley landscape initiative was the result of a partnership between District and County Councils and a national agency.
- 5.2.4 Case studies in the next chapter also illustrate successful consultation initiatives and how barriers can be overcome. The examples cover:
- regional consultation forums for targeted groups;
 - focus groups for usually excluded groups run by 'community visioning' consultants;
 - 'Planning for Real';
 - experiments with simplified forms and eye-catching site notices;
 - use of new technology as a means of commenting on planning applications;
 - positive action to speak to Gypsies and Travellers face-to-face about their needs and run regular consultation forums.
- 5.2.5 Based on all the case studies, the following table summarises the barriers to meaningful consultation that can be faced and how they might be overcome:

Possible barriers – from the community point of view	How barriers might be overcome
Lack of understanding about what planning can do/lack of knowledge.	Use plain English to explain what planning can and cannot do, either orally or in leaflets. Need to take account of the needs of disabled people and ethnic minorities for versions in alternative formats and languages. Use local examples. Take a problem raised by the group/individual and show what planning can offer. Community outreach and training, e.g. in association with Planning Aid. Simple games can be used to help teach people about planning. Listen to the stories people tell about their lives, families, neighbourhoods etc. and use these as a basis to explain how planning and related activity such as regeneration can open opportunities.
Distrust of planners and the system.	Planners exhibiting good listening and interpersonal skills; attitudes and actions demonstrating openness, respect. Earn people's trust. Use role playing games to show that there are different perspectives on any development, and how difficult decisions have to be taken. Use independent mediators (see Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities).
Non-English speakers; jargon and incomprehensible technical language.	Translation and interpretation services (written and oral). Recruit planners with relevant language skills. Simple and straightforward language understandable to lay people. Use graphics, photos etc.

Possible barriers – from the community point of view (cont)	How barriers might be overcome (cont)
	to make points. Consider the need to cater for British Sign Language users.
Bureaucracy, difficult forms.	Simplify language, information, forms; meeting people can be better than writing to explain things; use of IT and different media in creative ways, including the needs of disabled people.
Poverty; lack of resources; concentration on more pressing issues; apathy.	Proactive community work that helps people understand how planning can improve the quality of their lives and what's important to them. The planning service needs to work closely with others to deliver integrated approaches, and to ensure that steps towards poverty alleviation are not blocked by planning policies. The planning system must show that it is part of the solution – not part of the problem. Demonstrate through practical action that involvement in planning can make a positive difference; concentrate on achievable, short-term results that can begin to restore confidence and help everyone to learn from each other. Celebrate success. Respect all communities and recognise that there is diversity within poverty too. Use action research projects to increase understanding and test approaches.

Possible barriers – from the community point of view (cont)	How barriers might be overcome (cont)
<p>People feel marginalised, ignored, frustrated by inability to have an influence and treated like a ‘minority.’</p>	<p>Attitudes promoting genuine engagement and respect, including by senior managers and councillors; feedback about what difference people are making; careful explanation of why and how decisions were taken; valuing views in a way that promotes confidence and motivation. Use visits to introduce people to others from similar backgrounds who have overcome marginalisation and to show how planning has made a difference. Work with organisations representing marginalised groups. Train the trainers – people from marginalised groups who can then take the message to others. Use role playing exercises to train staff so that they appreciate what it feels like to be marginalised.</p>
<p>Consultation fatigue.</p>	<p>Consult in effective ways on real issues without making impossible demands; give feedback on how people are making a difference. Co-ordinate consultation with the Community Strategy or other local authority consultation initiatives. Use focus groups, citizens’ panels etc. where representative groups are recompensed for giving their time.</p>

Possible barriers – from the planners point of view	How barriers might be overcome
Lack of resources: staff, time, finance.	Prioritise community engagement within budgets; link in with other parts of the Council or outside agencies involved in activities relevant to planning; seek outside resources, e.g. Planning Aid, specialist consultation firms; convince developers of major proposals that they should be promoting consultation and producing an SCI; target Planning Delivery Grant on consultation. Ensure funds and sufficient time are built in to provide information in accessible formats or other languages.
Lack of consultation skills; lack of knowledge and experience of consultation techniques, including at regional scale.	Training initiatives as part of Continuing Professional Development (including regional scale), use of specialist consultants including Planning Aid; support staff involvement in Planning Aid as a means of enhancing their skills (e.g. recognise the value of such experience in appointments and promotions); seek feedback and monitor initiatives to inform future work.
Fear of loss of power and lack of control.	Acknowledgement that community empowerment, at least to some extent, involves the transfer of power away from the ‘professionals’ to people who have a legitimate right to influence decisions that make a difference to their lives. Ensure that training of elected members involves their role in participatory planning with diverse communities.

Possible barriers – from the planners point of view (cont)	How barriers might be overcome (cont)
Lack of support from councillors and senior managers	Need to convince councillors and senior managers of the importance of effective consultation in terms of the new planning system, including Statements of Community Involvement, Best Value and equalities legislation.

Example: Birmingham City Council's Consultation in Local Planning: Good Practice Guide

The Department of Planning and Architecture produced a user-friendly good practice guide to consultation methods, partly out of concern that there were people in the community (women, ethnic minorities, disabled people) who did not tend to participate. The Women's Consultation Group and a local school helped in the preparation of the Guide. It includes useful examples and checklists about a wide range of issues, including catering for the needs of disabled people and ethnic minorities.

Testing the Mix Case Study: Positive Action to Engage Ethnic Minorities

PART

2

Southwark, Lambeth, Newham and Hammersmith & Fulham Councils and the Government Office for London encourage participation of ethnic minority communities in regeneration and sustainable development activities



One of the Lambeth meetings
Source: Lambeth Council

Recognising diversity

These boroughs include significant proportions of ethnic minorities:

- Hammersmith and Fulham 22%
- Southwark 37%

- Lambeth 38%
- Newham 61%.

Testing the Mix (TTM) was developed because the Councils recognised that despite these figures, ethnic minorities had little involvement in funded environmental initiatives.

Engaging with difference

Testing the Mix was an action-research project which aimed to:

- Find out why ethnic minorities were not involved
- Test out local solutions that could increase involvement
- Find out how project ideas could best be identified with ethnic minorities
- Give groups who may be thinking of developing projects encouragement and ideas.

A team of consultants experienced in working with excluded communities, Venture International, was commissioned. Each Council's part of the initiative was co-ordinated through its regeneration/environmental/Agenda 21 section, supported by key voluntary agencies. Councillors attended some events.

A host of activities were undertaken including mail-outs, adverts in local newsletters, visiting groups, talking to people on the phone, interviewing Council officers, large voluntary groups and regeneration partnerships, and six half-day workshops. Seventeen local facilitators were trained in engagement techniques and they actively used these methods throughout the project.

The lessons have been translated into guidance for local authorities throughout London on engagement of people from ethnic minorities in regeneration and environmental programmes and policy making.

A longer term goal is to increase ethnic minority representation in policy making.

Positive Outcomes

The project reached and mobilised members of ethnic minorities. Those involved generally felt that this was a first step towards addressing inclusive involvement:

- 26 project ideas were generated and 17 projects funded;
- 85 groups were involved;
- an estimated 1,600 people will benefit from projects funded.

The project made many groups stronger and more able to bid for further funded projects.

Key lessons

Barriers:

- Some important barriers such as childcare, transport, language and times of meetings were experienced by all cultures.
- Key barriers identified included poverty, funding, lack of information, Council bureaucracy, language, group capacity, complicated decision making processes, confusing application forms and jargon, and being misunderstood and considered a 'minority' by service providers.

Overcoming barriers of exclusion:

- Establishing trust is crucial.
- Information providers who took time to listen were crucial in overcoming barriers.
- Success was achieved where officers took positive steps to reach out to all communities, for example, showing people how to access the internet so they can find information more easily.
- Funding and training enabled new groups to gain confidence to engage with agencies, who in turn gave feedback on how views were taken on board.
- Recognition of different cultures through festivals and projects helped break down cultural differences and language barriers.

- The use of innovative consultation techniques and training of volunteers built trust and reached a wider population.
- Children and young people from ethnic communities can help with translation where the officials lack skills in the language of that community, as long as they are not over-burdened.

Overcoming barriers of bureaucracy:

- Keep the process straightforward. Bureaucracy can be frightening for persons with experience of oppressive governments.

Recruitment and consultation process

- Plan early with as large a mail shot as possible
- Face to face contact and meetings with local groups are important
- Using representatives can help break down barriers. An example is with Muslim groups: Lambeth works through Imams at Friday prayers.

Resource support for ethnic minorities-

- Develop links with the voluntary sector who can offer support
- Provide childcare and transport to events.

Networking and information

- Seeing how other groups have done things helps groups avoid making the same mistakes. Making comparisons between boroughs and getting groups to visit others proved to be worthwhile.

However, there are some barriers that Councils simply cannot overcome, so it is important not to make promises that can't be kept.

Resources

TTM was part-funded through a grant from the Government Office for London (GOL) together with staffing and financial support from Councils involved.

Participant's quote

“Testing the Mix was a very useful way to tap into local groups so they could flag up issues that are important to them. Regeneration needs to avoid complex hurdles, we need to keep it simple with documentation to bring the bureaucratic barriers down. Enabling is about being proactive, friendly and approachable. A recurring theme was: ‘Failure to plan is planning to fail’.” Dr. Iain Boulton, Lambeth Council

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Southwark Community Training Initiative Case Study

Willowbrook Centre and Planning Aid for London: Training for community engagement, including youth



Peckham Youth Forum researching food retailing accessibility. Source: Planning Aid for London

Recognising Diversity

In Southwark:

- 20.3% of the population is under the age of 16;
- There are a diverse range of communities: 37% of the population is from an ethnic minority, with over 80 languages spoken in different schools.

Despite these statistics, most local communities and young people were not engaged in the planning process!

Engaging with difference

The Willowbrook Centre is an independent charity that receives funding from Southwark Council to carry out planning advice work with hard-to-reach groups and disadvantaged individuals. For two years it has worked with Planning Aid for London (PAL), training young people and adults in five deprived neighbourhoods. The aim is to build up skills and confidence within the community to interact with the planning system. The training is for people with little or no knowledge of planning. It provides a basic introduction to the system, key terms, how policy is produced, the relationship between policy and development control and how people can get involved. There is also training in urban design terms and how to read plans.

The initiative is a partnership using the expertise of a London-wide training initiative (PAL) and a local centre (Willowbrook) that concentrates on out-reach and follow-up. The initiative was not specifically aimed at ethnic minority communities, but 57% of participants are from this background.

The training is with groups of 4 to 10 people and uses participative techniques, including brainstorming and case studies. It tries to show how planning can be used to improve local environments. Initial training is followed by setting up local groups to meet regularly to discuss planning issues.

The youth training programme (15-18 year olds) is different to the adults'. It has shorter sessions (approx 2.5 hours) and is more hands-on, involving role play and more breakout sessions. Participants are a cross-section of young people and the programme was developed in consultation with the youth council, area youth offices and the voluntary sector. Making planning meaningful and relevant to the participants is important. Finding out what they know about the area, what their priorities are and what is relevant to planning is covered first. The trainers also run an exercise where young people are encouraged to think about setting up a business in their house and what they would need to consider.

Positive Outcomes

Over 2 years, 80 people have been trained, including 23 young people. The sessions were evaluated by the participants and the satisfaction rating was excellent.

Following the training initiatives, in three of the five areas, successful groups have been meeting regularly over the last year, looking at sites, planning applications and emerging policy. In Nunhead, the group has been successful in effecting changes through the UDP review process and are currently discussing the possibility of special supplementary planning guidance for the area. In West Bermondsey the group has input to a project looking at ways of involving the community in Section 106 agreements through the compilation of a community project bank as well as planning applications. In Peckham the group has been looking at emerging planning policies and priorities for the local area.

In the other two areas, it has been harder to find people to participate, probably as a reflection of lower levels of development and lack of confidence resulting from past experiences of the planning system.

The local youth council has recognised the value of the training project and is involving its youth councillors in consulting with their peers in schools and youth clubs. They see the participation as having wider benefits, giving young people confidence, communication and citizenship skills and a role in the regeneration process.

The benefits of this initiative are equipping people to influence change in their environment in the future. The outcomes are skills that people can use in the long term. A monitoring exercise is planned to see how individuals are using their new skills.

Key lessons

- Work through an established community centre, building on their contacts and word of mouth. This is likely to ensure the work and participants are sustained in the longer term as well as making it more manageable in terms of preparation and delivery.

- Long term funding is crucial in ensuring continuity and developing skills, rather than ‘teach and go.’
- Training people to interact with the planning system as a positive force for environmental action is a useful alternative to the usual polarisation about local planning issues. This engenders an openness to other people’s views.
- Plain English demystifies the jargon for everyone.
- Special training techniques are necessary for children and young people.

Resources

Planning Aid for London is a registered charity and receives monies from the ODPM, RTPI, Association of London Government, the Lottery and the Town and Country Planning Association. PAL provides free and affordable planning advice and assistance in-house and through its volunteer network to communities across London.

The Willowbrook Centre is an independent charity funded by Southwark Council.

This particular training is run with Neighbourhood Renewal Funding through the Southwark Alliance.

Participants’ Quotes

“The training was very successful in terms of community capacity building in the longer term. Five people from our Executive Committee have been on the course, which has greatly increased our understanding of core planning issues. This has helped us comment on planning applications and the UDP in a more structured way than previously. We’re now going on to work on more detailed planning guidelines for our local area”.
Christopher Wilson, Chair, Nunhead Community Forum

“We’ve had comments like ‘I was really frightened of planning’ or ‘I didn’t know anything about planning, and now I feel I can do something.’ Some planners generally are against training local people as they think this will lead to more objections. Planners should instead look on local people as the experts in the area and draw on their expertise (it can save planners work!).”

Carol Ryall, Planning Aid for London

“The key capacity building element of the work is very intensive, turning initial training into practical community skills. We believe the programme has been very effective- it has put planning higher on the agenda with local people and the community councils. However, it is a slow process requiring long term commitment in terms of funding to see real returns.”

Emma Williamson, Willowbrook Centre

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Birmingham City Council's Youth Focus Group Case Study

PART

2

Regular meetings of 16-20 year olds to discuss major planning applications and policies

Participation of young people in international youth conferences

Encouraged young people to train in planning and architecture



Youth Focus Group in Action
Source: Birmingham Council

Recognising diversity

- 23.4% of Birmingham's population is under 16 with 6% aged 16 to 19 (2001 Census)

Birmingham City Council's Better Governance objectives led in 1999 to the commitment to actively work with young people. The Council's Planning Service considered that traditional public consultation methods were not very successful in bringing out young people's views, and sought alternative methods.

Engaging with diversity

Active engagement of young people started with a Youth Convention in 1999, targeting a diverse cross section of teenagers representative of Birmingham's various ethnic communities, as well as of different social and economic backgrounds. The aim of this convention was to explore how young people related to the planning and development of their city. One hundred and forty people aged from 16 to 19 took part, and were active in writing up descriptions and outcomes of the event, which included themed workshops, meetings with elected members and senior officers, and plenary debates.

An innovative output from this convention was a **Young People's Voices** video in which young people recorded their feelings, likes and dislikes about Birmingham. This video was shown at meetings of committees and advisory groups in the Council, and was accompanied by a report stating how the issues raised were to be tackled by Planning and other services.

A follow-up Conference was held in 2001, providing young people with the opportunity to speak directly to some of the Council's partner organisations such as police, transport and regeneration agencies. At the conference 24 young people requested an opportunity for more regular and close work with the Planning Service, which led to the establishment of a Youth Focus Group.

The Youth Focus Group meets in the Planning Department approximately every 6 weeks to discuss a range of planning issues, from planning applications to the revisions to the Development Plan. On average around 5 to 15 young people take part in each meeting. The working sessions include group work, site visits and presentations, including by developers. The Group's views are written into the reports that are forwarded to the Development Control Committee or Cabinet.

Positive Outcomes

Young people's views on planning and development have been fed directly into the decision making bodies of the Council through initiatives such as the Young People's Voices video. Incorporation into Committee Reports of the Youth Focus Group's views on specific planning issues allow case officers to follow up on the issues raised, and for young people's views to influence both the recommendation to, and the decision by, the development control committee.

Examples of the Youth Focus Group having an influence on developments on the ground include: a retail scheme which they recommended should be smaller and was eventually amended by the applicant from 4,500 to 2,500 sq m; and a new build scheme within a conservation area where materials were changed in line with the group's views. In both cases, however, the Youth Focus Group's views were considered to have added to the weight of other stakeholders' opinions – members of the community, planners, and the conservation officer – rather than to have had an overriding impact.

Youth Focus Group members have represented the City of Birmingham at youth conventions in Europe, strengthening the city's international links and raising the profile of a Planning initiative.

The Planning Service has also run other initiatives involving young people, for example a competition for a work of art to be realised by a professional artist, to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre and the 10th Anniversary of the International Convention Centre. The accompanying schools packs produced by the Planning Service and the competition itself raised awareness of public art among local young people, as well as providing the city with a sculpture designed by a local child.

Young people's ideas were also called upon through a competition inviting suggestions for 4 sites around the city which the Planning Service was considering improving. However, this had a limited response and has not resulted in developments.

Two of the Youth Focus Group members have gone on to study planning at university.

- Key outcomes and benefits from this initiative have been:
- Active influence of young people on the planning process
- Better quality and delivery of planning services
- Forging closer links between the Planning Service and its public and private sector partners

Key lessons

- The Conventions and Video gave valuable insights into how young people use and view the city. For example they use low cost shopping and markets, rather than prestigious but expensive bars and restaurants in the award-winning Brindley Place redevelopment.
- The Youth Focus Group has allowed young people to learn about planning and development processes, and has been a useful introduction for young people taking up careers in planning.
- Young people move on to jobs or university, so there is a continual need to recruit new youngsters. Publicising the Group on the Web is a useful source of new recruits, as are talks to schools.
- Establishing a group that is representative of young people from different backgrounds is important.
- The range of backgrounds in the Birmingham Youth Focus Group could be improved through wider forms of recruitment; more localised groups; and the prospect of more proactive engagement.
- More localised groups would allow young people who share knowledge of their area to get involved and have a larger impact, with tangible outcomes that would encourage their continuing participation.

Resources

Running the Youth Focus Group requires relevant Planning Officers to attend the group's meetings, as well as follow-up in reports.

Whilst all officers are expected to help students and attend the Youth Focus Group when necessary, environmental education is specifically written into the job descriptions of all Local Planning staff.

The work with young people is funded through existing revenue budgets and is seen as a mainstream activity. Running the Youth Focus Group has minimal costs, (staff time); larger events, such as the Conventions are budgeted and treated in the same way as any public consultation exercise.

There has been a high level of support for developing this work from both senior politicians and the Chief Planning Officer.

Participants' Quotes

“Birmingham City Council is to be congratulated on its approach to involving young people in its planning and decision making. It is both innovative and creative because it brings in new ideas and allows involvement in the processes. It is excellent to see a local authority willing to encourage such an approach and using the results in its work. It is heartening to see young people enjoying and appreciating planning and giving time and commitment to achieve change in their environment. Other organizations and local authorities have much to learn from this project.”

From the statement by the Judges for the 2001 RTPi Awards

“We have achieved results by treating young people seriously and with respect. They are not, as many people believe, citizens of the future, they are citizens now! They have their own individual knowledge and experience of the environment and their views are just as valid as any received from a residents association or pressure group. The Planning Service has learnt a great deal about how young people view and use their city and without doubt this has helped us improve our service.”

Peter Wright – Acting Head of Local Planning

“Young people don’t always have the voice to put their views forward properly.”

Participant in the Youth Focus Group

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Holderness Youth Initiative Case Study: Empowering Young People

A voluntary programme to encourage youth involvement in rural communities in East Yorkshire

Recognising diversity

Holderness is a rural area. As is the case in many such areas there are few recreation and social opportunities for local young people. There were concerns about drug and alcohol use. The Holderness Initiative was piloted in 1999, as a voluntary sector organisation. One of the aims was to promote community cohesion.

Engaging with difference

Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques were used to reach out to young people, more fully involving them in the life of the community. A key task was to improve lines of communication with young people.

Drugs education and awareness raising were important and the initiative sought to give young people alternatives to their past experience in terms of training and skills raising. Training included going on a participatory appraisal course to explore community issues and involvement. Presentation skills, IT, making grant applications and team-working were also part of the learning, as was increasing confidence.

Positive Outcomes

Training of young people led to a Young People's Participatory Appraisal Network. This has raised its own funding over 2 years, leading to engagement with a wide range of local issues. In addition the young people made a presentation to the Council which resulted in a skate park being built.

There has also been progress towards community cohesion, as the young people gained skills, confidence and respect from older groups.

Key lessons

- There can be planning spin-offs from a wide range of projects.
- Young people have definite ideas about their environment and required facilities.
- There is a negative image of young people that has to be broken through.
- Young people's views about the environment were very similar to those of adults.

Resources

The Holderness Initiative is a voluntary organisation that has had to raise funds from many sources. It currently has a senior development officer, two part-time development officers, a development assistant and a part-time administrator. It has funds over 3 years to 2007 from the Big Lottery Fund. Funding uncertainty has limited its activities.

Participants' Quotes

“People think that young people aren't interested... the problem is that no one listens to them.”

Louise Cramond, Development Worker

“I never thought adults would actually listen to us.”

Young participant

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King's Cross Development Case Study (Camden & Islington Councils)

PART

2

Innovative consultation methods involving many different people in major site development feeding into planning brief, master plan, local plan, site design

Cross-Borough & developer involvement

Training initiatives and implementation mechanisms



Community facilitators' training

Source: Kings Cross Community Development Trust

Recognising diversity

In King's Cross

- The resident population is 11,413 (51% male and 49% female)
- 63% of people are single (never married) compared to 30% in England and Wales

- 57% of the population are white, 22% Asian/Asian British, 9% Black/ Black British, 8% Chinese or Other Ethnic Group and 4% mixed race
- 39% of people are employed, compared to 57% in Camden and 61% in England and Wales
- 15% of those unemployed are aged 50 and over, 12% had never worked and 39% were long term unemployed
- 27% of residents in Camden are full-time students and schoolchildren, compared to 5% in England and Wales

(Source: 2001 Census, ONS)

King's Cross is one of the largest inner city regeneration sites in Europe. Major development is planned over 15 years, capitalising on the opportunities created by the new channel tunnel rail link terminus at St. Pancras.

Engaging with difference

Camden and Islington Councils and Argent St George (the developers) are determined to consult on all proposals, including hard-to-reach groups, to make sure social, economic and physical changes benefit local people through the careful integration of new and existing communities. Each local authority set up a King's Cross team within the planning service.

1. How to identify who is in the community

Audits of community groups and housing associations in the area are carried out by the King's Cross Teams and shared with other organisations. These supplement census data in identifying who is in the area, which is especially important where there are population shifts.

2. Early outreach

There has been long standing involvement by a core group of residents. Although this has been positive, these views don't always represent the wider community. The King's Cross Team within Camden wrote to and telephoned 500 community groups

and asked to be invited to their meetings. They had 45 informal sessions and approximately 400 people had face-to-face discussions. Feedback to the groups was given within 10 days. Many groups have not responded, but they remain on the consultation mailing lists and the Team will keep trying to reach them.

During this early stage the community groups did an exercise where they prioritised the main changes they would like to see in the area. This led to a list of the 20 issues most commonly raised at meetings. People want the development to fit in well with the surrounding area. They also want community facilities for various ethnic minorities (including a local mosque), older, young and homeless people; a safe environment; training and employment opportunities; and affordable housing.

3. King's Cross Development Forum

Growing out of this early consultation, the community wanted a regular forum to ensure continuous involvement. The King's Cross Development Forum was established, with one representative from each local business and community group, meeting once every 8 weeks. There are currently 161 members. The turnout varies but there are consistently 40-60 members at each meeting. Having representatives from established groups has been effective in ensuring communication with many more people and allows people to debate together. During the consultation phase for the planning application, the Forum has met weekly.

4. Training initiative: King's Cross Community Development Trust

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Camden Council have contributed to setting up this Trust, which provides basic training for people with no previous knowledge of the planning system. So far, 48 people have been trained in both how to be a community facilitator and how to interact effectively with the planning system. Posters were produced in different languages (Arabic, Somali, Tagalog (i.e. Filipino), etc.) and a community group database is held. A conference was attended by well over 200 people. People in the community who have been trained will be able to feed local views into the planning system as more detailed proposals emerge over time.

5. Developer consultation, including young people

The developer Argent St George has sought effective community involvement. At the start of the planning process (2001) they produced a report **Principles for a Human City**, emphasizing the people aspect of the development proposals. This report (5,000 published) kicked off the developer's ongoing dialogue with over 150 community groups. Five thousand copies of **Parameters for Regeneration** (Jan. 2002) were also published by the developer, to set out principles for debates about such issues as mixed use and density. Ten thousand copies of **Framework for Regeneration** were produced in Sept. 2002 setting out initial ideas, including tear off slips and freepost envelopes. A poster summary was produced on the web with online response capacity. To summarise all the consultation, the developer produced **Framework Findings** in 2003. The developer also organised roadshows and workshops.

Argent St George hired FLUID (a multi-disciplinary design practice specialising in regeneration and engagement) to carry out a consultation with young people. They used innovative techniques to actively engage young people and elicit what they like and don't like about the area, including 'hot spot map', 'canvass cards', 'video project', 'daily diary' and 'mind maps'. Schools and youth clubs were visited and there were open days. The film 'KXC21 – Kids making Connections' was produced, giving 20 rough ideas about what the young people wanted. FLUID produced a report summarising the views of young people (2002) that has fed into the project.

6. Islington Neighbourhood Framework

Although the largest part of the site is in Camden, Islington Council is also seizing the opportunity to have a dedicated team within the planning service to work with local communities and businesses to maximise benefits. In line with the new planning system, a Neighbourhood Framework is being produced, including a Community Engagement Statement and Action Area Plans. Islington circulates a quarterly colour newsletter to over 6,000 addresses near Kings Cross. They regularly consult their database of about 160 local groups and individuals, including ethnic minorities. They have used schools, play and youth centres and places of worship for consultation.

Positive Outcomes

The extensive consultation with the diverse local population has made a real difference in planning outcomes:

UDP chapter – The consultation influenced Camden Council’s UDP chapter on King’s Cross. Many responses were received, emphasising priorities for housing (including affordable housing), jobs and other facilities that local people will benefit from.

Planning Brief – In January 2004 Camden and Islington Councils adopted their Planning Brief, which the local community was influential in developing. The draft was amended as a result of the extensive consultation which raised awareness of the communities’ needs. For example, the community wanted a separate chapter on community safety to stress its importance and this was accepted.

Planning applications and Section 106 Agreements – The submitted plans take account of consultation findings and place more emphasis on housing, heritage and the public realm, compared with earlier drafts. The applications are the subject of roadshow and fixed exhibitions (including summer festivals) leaflet drop to 30,000 houses and businesses, numerous meetings and online information and comment forms. Nearly 60 meetings were attended by Camden’s Kings Cross Team over 14 weeks. It is hoped that Section 106 Agreements will take account of the priorities identified by consultation.

Business spin-offs – The King’s Cross Business Forum is involved in the consultation and includes funding from the London Development Agency for two business co-ordinators. The developers (Argent St George) are keen to market the area as a good place for European corporate businesses to establish themselves but Camden Council is also keen to encourage a mix of smaller, medium sized and start-up businesses to serve local needs. The planning brief includes a range of employment opportunities, 20,000 or more new jobs, with training to help local people.

Monitoring and evaluation – The King’s Cross Team record how many people come to the meetings and take particular care in noting who comes from ethnic minorities to ensure that everybody gets a chance to have their say. It has been important that local communities have been able to see the results of their efforts in the process so far.

Key lessons

1. **Training** – Training local people in the planning system and community facilitation is important. Intensive week-long training has been most effective. Skills develop over time and expectations need to be realistic in terms of timing.
2. **Language/Communication** – The King’s Cross Team found that translating isn’t the most effective way of communicating with some communities. For example, Somalis have had a written language for a relatively short time so most of their communication is done verbally. The older generation especially is not used to accessing information in written form. Each community works differently and word of mouth can be very powerful. A better model is teaching a few core people and then supporting them to reach their communities in a way that suits them.
3. **Development Forum** – A forum bringing together many established community groups has been cost effective in reaching a large number of people. It has also been beneficial because people are able to listen to each other and negotiate, while avoiding confrontation.
4. **Involvement by ethnic minorities** – The King’s Cross Team found that the previous lack of involvement by ethnic minorities was not the result of not wanting to participate but instead, not knowing how to get involved. The Team found that consultation only really works when you put a lot of time into it and get to a point where you build up trust.
5. **Engagement techniques** – Time and cost implications must be planned for and different techniques should be used for different people. Communities often have negative associations with the Council. Keeping in regular touch is important, as is word of mouth in reaching people. Telephoning can be more helpful and personal than writing letters.
6. **Conflicting issues** – It is very important to get people from different groups into an arena where there is a debate as this helps promote compromise. Although there were many shared aspirations, there have been some conflicts, for example, whether to have a religious or non-religious community centre and the role of heritage in the regeneration of the area.

7. **Developer commitment** – The developer sought to engage with the diversity of local people, including employing specialists in innovative consultation techniques.

Resources

The Islington King's Cross Team is funded by Islington Strategic Partnership with guaranteed funding until March 2005. In Camden, a specific post was created with a remit for the King's Cross area (communications, consultation, press literature). This post has a consultation budget of £20,000 in 2003 and £30,000 in 2004.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund supports the King's Cross Community Development Trust, which delivers the community training initiative.

Argent St George has put considerable resources into consultation.

Participants' Quotes

“There were a lot of changes made to the planning brief as a result of the consultation. But we must also remember that the community had a lot of influence in writing the planning brief in the first place. The consultation is part of a much wider process of continuous engagement and two-way dialogue between Camden Council and local communities. The effort put into the consultation has meant that more people hear and read about it and are getting involved in the future.”

Sarah Crow, King's Cross Team, Camden Council

“The outcomes of the brief have been beneficial. There were a long list of recommendations put forward by the King's Cross Development Forum and most of them were taken on board. Not all of them, but I'd like to emphasise the positive things that came out of it rather than the things we didn't get.”

Satnam Gill, Chair of the King's Cross Development Forum

“The training aspect has made all the difference in engaging communities and is now used as a model for other initiatives.”

Arti Nanda, King's Cross Community Development Trust

“There are many different communities in the King’s Cross area who respond to different consultation techniques. Some use published material and websites, some prefer face-to-face contact, kids like videos and pictures. We’ve tried different consultation techniques, even though they are expensive and time consuming, in the hopes that it will make a better quality development in the long run. King’s Cross is a huge development and it would not be possible to do this in every case. We have changed our first ideas to include, for example, more housing and historic buildings and have put even greater emphasis on the public realm – safety and cleanliness. We are trying to get more integration of children’s play and artwork in public spaces and not as something separate.”

Robert Evans, Argent St George, developer

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Test Valley, Hampshire Case Study: Participation in Landscape Character Assessment

A project bringing together landscape professionals, social researcher and diverse members of the public to improve understanding of how to engage people in landscape character and what people value in their local area

Recognising diversity

The initiative was prompted by:

- Review of Test Valley Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) that showed need for wider public involvement, including hard to reach groups
- Interest by the Countryside Agency in research to establish how best to engage with local communities.

Engaging with difference

The project was a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council and the Countryside Agency.

It aimed to:

- Record the value that communities attach to the landscape
- Encourage and develop links between different sections of the rural and urban community
- Increase understanding and awareness of issues affecting landscape

- Involve the public in decisions on managing the landscape
- Inform Local Strategic Partnerships of environmental aspects of Borough and County Community Strategies

A social researcher worked alongside landscape consultants in 6 focus groups, composed to reflect diversity across the Borough in terms of age and socio-economic characteristics. They took place on a geographic basis and people were divided into broad social groups A, B and C1 and C2, D and E on the basis that more open discussion would take place if people felt comfortable with who they were with.

An additional workshop included previous participants and other interest groups such as ramblers and horseriders, bringing everyone together. Discussion group members commented on draft assessments, enabling monitoring of changing views and knowledge.

Positive Outcomes

Public views about what they value in the landscape inform local plan policies, development control decisions and land management guidelines.

The views of the wider public often do not accord with the professional. They often value landscapes that are accessible to them more highly than those that are not. Strong opinions about the language of professionals were expressed, forcing landscape professionals to consider their use of language and terminology.

Generally, people got a lot from the process and felt empowered by their involvement, saying they would be more likely to get involved in planning and environmental issues in the future.

Key lessons

- Focus groups with structured discussion are an effective way of eliciting the public's views. Skilled facilitation is vital. Payment is needed to draw people in.
- It is more difficult to draw in young people than older ones.

Resources

The project was jointly funded by the Countryside Agency, Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council. The social researcher's fees included a small payment for focus group and workshop attendance, which people received at the end of the activity. Total costs for participants were about £1600 – £1700.

Participants' Quotes

“I wouldn't really have known of the different landscapes out there because I hadn't been given the access.”

“If we can keep farming then we will maintain this scenery.”

“I might take this information into the school where I work and hopefully will be able to influence some young people in the community as well.”

“It has made us all think about what is happening. I realise I have views about things that I would never have had the opportunity to voice.”

Workshop participants

The project team found the process fascinating, as the views and opinions of ordinary members of the public about the landscape in which they live and work are so rarely canvassed.
David Carman, Hampshire County Council

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Good Practice Points: Effective Community Engagement

1. **Links** should be made with relevant Council departments and other Councils, regeneration initiatives, local and national voluntary sector agencies, Planning Aid, local community meeting places including places of worship, local universities, developers, etc. Planners don't always have to start from scratch and do everything themselves and should make good use of existing activities, information sources and groups – including local access groups. This also helps to deliver an integrated service.
2. **Timing** of activities is important: engagement should be early enough to be able to influence decisions. Effective engagement happens over a considerable time and is unlikely to result from a 'quick fix.' Adequate notice of activities is required.
3. **Regular contact** is more likely to build trust and provide effective two-way communication flow, although the dangers of consultation fatigue need to be borne in mind.
4. **Clear ground rules** should be established at the outset so people are clear about what the objectives are, which should be realistic and achievable. Limitations should be acknowledged.
5. **Understanding of planning** needs to be promoted simply: jargon and overly-technical terms are exclusive. Explanations could be oral or simple leaflets could be produced.
6. **Communication and publicity** needs to be inclusive. Language needs to be understandable. Translation and interpretation services should be carefully considered and monitored. Decisions need to be taken about whether communication is better done orally or in writing, on the telephone or face-to-face. Various disabilities need to be taken into account. Print should be large enough to read (minimum 12 point). Larger print versions, Braille, audiotapes should be available for key consultation documents. Bureaucracy should be guarded against. Forms and instructions should be simplified and easily understood by lay people.
7. **IT** should be considered in innovative ways. Use of video, the web, e-mails, GIS, illustrations, etc. can all make communication both more interesting and easier. However, not everyone has internet access, and training may also be required. Where internet access is available, there is a need to consider making websites accessible for people who use specialist screen reading equipment.

8. **Targeting** of diverse and under-represented people should occur since choices may have to be made about who is involved. Decisions should be transparent. **Appropriate methods, techniques and publicity** need to be employed, using local newspapers, radio stations, newsletters, mailshots, posters, etc. as appropriate. Meetings need to be carefully scheduled, avoiding holy days. Refreshments should take account of the religious requirements of attendees. Childcare and transport costs and facilities should be considered. Venues and information need to be accessible. Separating men and women might be appropriate for certain cultures. Techniques should give everyone a voice, even those who don't usually speak in a group: this is likely to mean facilitating small group discussions, not plenary question and answer.

9. **Training** community representatives in both planning and engagement techniques can build long-term capacity for continued involvement. Representatives of hard to reach groups can be targeted. Outside groups such as Planning Aid might be brought in to help run the training. Use of local examples and role playing can be helpful.

10. **Engagement with planning issues** should be encouraged, not an overly-simplistic wish list. Priorities should be identified.

11. **Corporate commitment:** Support from senior managers and elected Members is crucial. Some may need to be convinced of the importance of engaging diverse members of the population. For major developments there should be discussion with applicants about their involvement in reaching diverse groups.

12. **Resources** must be realistically identified, in terms of staff, budgets, premises, etc. Departments need to be creative in how they are using resources, including the Planning Delivery Grant.

13. **Engagement and mediation skills** need to be built up. Consultation should form part of the job descriptions and personnel specifications of everyone in the planning department. Skills, experience and attitudes can be tested as part of the recruitment process. Training as part of continuous professional development should be offered, including in mediation and negotiation skills and dealing with conflict. If the resources and skills are not to be found within the planning department, employing consultants who specialise in engagement should be considered.

14. **Staff attitudes** are crucial to the success of any engagement exercise. They must be good listeners, open, honest and engender trust.

15. **Conflict** is inevitable, as not everyone will agree on everything and this has to be positively acknowledged and worked through. Decisions need to be made throughout the process about whether it's better to meet with cohesive groups on their own and when it's better to bring together diverse communities to discuss issues. Both are valid in the right circumstances. Any tensions need to be dealt with explicitly and not shied away from.

16. **Schools** might be involved. Involving children reaches the adults of tomorrow and is a good way to reach their parents and raise the profile of the profession as a potential career. There is evidence that children of people from other cultures or countries are more likely to feel part of the community they are growing up in than some of their parents. They also are likely to have skills in the parents' languages as well as in English.

17. **Monitoring and feedback** is important in different ways. Feedback should be given to the community to tell them how they have made a difference and if not, why not. Information should be gathered and analysed about who attends engagement activities to see who is involved and who isn't. Continual monitoring should pinpoint needed improvements.

6. Securing benefits through policies and procedures

6.1 The importance of outcomes

- 6.1.1 The plan-led system is policy-based. Policies need to recognise diversity and be audited for their impacts on different groups. If this is not done there is a risk that policies, and the decisions that follow from their application, may be discriminatory. However, it is important to avoid ‘policy overload’ – where policies are devised which try to cover every eventuality. Such documents risk becoming over-long and incomprehensible. The new planning system is intended to be more strategic and better integrated with other public and private investment decisions, as well as more accessible. The Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Frameworks (LDF) need to be built on an understanding of the dimensions of diversity that are relevant to the area. Chapter 4 of this Guide points to relevant data and information sources. Chapter 5 shows how consultation can be used to embed diversity into plan making and implementation.
- 6.1.2 Plans need to take account of policy in PPGs (being re-named Planning Policy Statements – PPS’s). The Booth report found that the PPG series gives little advice on diversity issues in planning. The series is being diversity-proofed as they come up for revision. As ever, planners need to take note of these new diversity references in the revised guidance. Chapter 2 noted that diversity may now be a material consideration. Policies recognising diversity which are built from data analysis and consultation will be robust and defensible through the system of public inquiry. Similarly, as some of our case studies show, there are situations where appreciation of diversity is strongly embedded in regeneration partnerships or local agenda 21. In such situations the policies in the relevant RSS and LDF should encompass these initiatives.
- 6.1.3 PPS11 Regional Spatial Strategies (ODPM, 2004d) and PPS12 Local Development Frameworks (ODPM, 2004e) both discuss the importance of community involvement, including with people who are usually hard to reach (paras. 22, Annex D and 3.6 respectively). They also both refer to authorities’ statutory duties in relation to the

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (paras. 2.35 and 3.7 respectively). PPS11 also discusses diversity issues in relation to consultation in paras. 30-33 and 37.

- 6.1.4 It is also important to remember that our planning system is discretionary, and that each application is judged on its merits. Professional planners have to make judgements about the interpretation of policies and the relative weight attached to them. They can do this better if they understand diversity. There may be occasions where policies that have not anticipated or thoroughly assessed the full diversity of needs in an area will need to be set aside to reach a fair decision. Policies that are appropriate in one part of an authority's area may be harmful in another area.
- 6.1.5 The case studies illustrate how harnessing the enthusiasm of different people in the community can influence planning, resulting in positive outcomes on the ground. Policies are a means to an end, not an end in themselves. A developer of one of the case studies wrote, 'Changes in UDPs and briefs are all very well but the acid test is whether what actually gets built is any different as a result. Funnily enough, that's what community groups say as well!'
- 6.1.6 If planning delivers benefits to people, it will be valued by the community, politicians and decision makers. The case studies show a wide range of planning activities that have been influenced by diversity considerations. The outcomes are typically closely aligned with the sustainable communities agenda.
- Policies that promote access to jobs and training, affordable housing, transport, recreation, community facilities and attractive, safe and accessible environments are likely to be supported by diverse groups. Policies that restrict the supply of jobs and housing, or forms of development that make car use essential for accessibility, are unlikely to benefit groups for whom unemployment is high, housing is poor or far from work, and who depend on public transport.
 - The relation between land use and transport is critical to good planning practice for diversity. Strategic policies are needed. For example, corridor based developments, with high density nodes around transport interchanges, are able to offer good public transport, choice in housing and a flexible means of land release if the market signals that there are land shortages.

- In contrast policies that are restrictive on land release, or that deflect development to locations far from those where there is high demand are likely to be inequitable in their outcomes.
- Mixed use areas offer higher levels of accessibility to employment and services than where there is strict land use segregation. This is likely to benefit groups with limited alternatives in terms of mobility. The same groups are likely to benefit from a strong safety dimension in transport planning – e.g. safe routes to school, cycle paths etc.

Key Message 12: The key aim of mainstreaming diversity issues in planning is to improve the quality of results on the ground. Getting the process right is more likely to ensure that change in the environment benefits people. Diversity is important because it recognises that different people have different needs.

Policies and procedures are never ends in themselves, they are a means to an end. Planning that is responsive to different needs within the community is simply good planning. Engagement with diverse groups is likely to lead to policies that stress accessibility for all to housing, jobs and training, recreation, community facilities and attractive, safe and accessible environments. The strategic policies and local implementation that result are likely to advance the sustainable communities agenda.

6.2 Case studies and examples illustrating outcomes

- 6.2.1 **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004, p. 20-21) found that some planners working at a regional/strategic scale found it difficult to see the relevance of diversity issues. The case study of the Greater London Authority in this chapter shows how diversity can inform strategic policies and practices in a metropolitan region. **Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities** (ODPM, 2003a, pp. 27-9) uses a case study of Groningen Province in the Netherlands to illustrate how diverse groups, including youth, can be engaged in developing a regional plan. The example of Denver,

Colorado is also referred to in the same report (p. 18) where 50 different stakeholder groups were involved in a regional plan for the whole metropolitan area.

Example: Older People and Regional Assemblies, a Help the Aged model for putting older people on the regional agenda

Help the Aged produced this guide in 2003, which is a good example of a national organisation producing guidance that can help planners reflect on the effects of their policies and practices. It pinpoints regional planning issues that tend to affect older people, such as skills and employment, transport, regeneration, crime, housing, education, sport and health. The document recognises that older people will differ according to sex, ethnicity, income, health, housing and location. It gives useful advice on how to assess policies for any impacts upon older people. See Help the Aged, 2003.

- 6.2.2 The Brighton and Hove case study shows how targeting usually excluded groups in creative ways informed the Local Plan even before the first draft was prepared. When different groups (older people, disabled people, gay men and lesbians, ethnic minorities, women) were targeted in the ‘community visioning’ exercise, they shared many common aims, e.g. clean and safe environments, integrated public transport, community facilities, affordable housing, access to jobs. Diversity issues do not always result in many different demands being made.
- 6.2.3 The Exmoor National Park Local Plan was very successful in reaching 25% of its population who commented on issues affecting their daily lives. This helped legitimise the plan in the minds of the public and elected Members.
- 6.2.4 The Camden case study and the Birmingham Women’s Planning Network show how consultation on planning applications can be tuned to diversity. The King’s Cross case study in the previous chapter shows how community engagement can affect a major redevelopment project, including in terms of design.

- 6.2.5 The Fenland case study about Gypsies and Travellers shows how local planning policy and development control practices need to go hand-in-hand, informing necessary changes over time. It is an example of a planning department working closely with a central equalities section to good advantage. The Fenland case demonstrates outcomes on the ground as well as the important, but less tangible, promotion of strong community relations. The interface between Gypsies and Travellers and the planning system has been contentious. Circular 1/94 **Gypsy Sites and Planning** encourages local authorities to indicate sites in development plans and set out '*clear and realistic*' criteria for suitable sites (criteria-based policies that individual planning applications can be judged against). Fenland is an example of a Council that has followed this guidance in the spirit of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the advice given in Circular 1/94 **Gypsy Sites and Planning**, as well as taking account of Gypsies and Travellers in their Race Equality Scheme.

Example: Gypsies and Travellers: A Strategy for the CRE, 2004-2007

In 2004, the Commission for Racial Equality published this strategy, which helps explain problems commonly faced by Gypsies and Travellers, including prejudice, and what steps may be taken to overcome them. It also gives useful advice on duties under the Race Relations Act. It notes that the ODPM is currently reviewing national policy on Gypsies and Travellers.

- 6.2.6 The Stockwell Partnership illustrates how grassroots activities valuing diversity can secure significant funding for environmental improvements, new development and improved facilities. The Stockwell Faith Forum grew out of the work of the Stockwell Partnership, bringing together diverse parts of the community to speak about community issues.

Example: The Inter Faith Network Partnership for the Common Good: Interfaith Structures and Local Government. A Good Practice Guide

Census statistics from 2001 show that some ethnic minorities, especially Asians and Black Africans are more likely to be members of a faith group. This Inter Faith Network's publication gives practical guidance on how interfaith groups can be used to bring together diverse members of the population to build community cohesion and advise on service provision. See Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2003.

6.3 Translating diversity issues into planning policies and guidance

- 6.3.1 **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004) found that the biggest difficulty for planning officers is not knowing how to relate spatial planning to diversity issues. It is not the purpose of this Guide to list all the planning issues faced by different sections of the population. Indeed, it would be dangerous to presume that anyone knows what policies should be applied in a blanket fashion. Places and people vary across the country and that is why effective public engagement is the key mechanism encouraged in this Guide to translate diversity issues into policy. Nevertheless, there are certain issues that tend to be mentioned time and again by different people that help promote an understanding of different issues amongst planners. The planning needs of different people have been researched elsewhere and the list of references in this Guide may be useful background information. **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004, pp. 9-14) discusses some of the broad connections between planning issues and older people, ethnic minorities, faith groups, Gypsies and Travellers, women, children, disabled people, people with HIV and AIDS and gay men and lesbians.

Example: Research to find out the housing needs of gay men, lesbians and bisexual people in Wales

The Welsh Assembly is funding research which is the first of its kind in the UK, looking into the housing needs of gay men, lesbians and bisexual people. There has been very little research into this issue, which is important because of isolation, unrecognised need, prejudice and harassment. The research will identify key causes of existing problems and recommend changes to policies and practices for more effective service provision. See Stonewall.org.uk

- 6.3.2 Recognition of diversity is an integral component of the proper planning of an area. Mainstreaming means that diversity issues lie at the heart of the service, part of everyone's job as a matter of course. Diversity is not an afterthought or the preserve of a few, it should be part and parcel of policy development and daily practices, the responsibility of everyone. Planners need to be reflective, carefully thinking through the policy and practice implications of demonstrated community needs.

Example: Ashford Borough Council policy on Gypsies and Travellers

The Council recognises the need to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers and consults with them about their needs. Attention is paid to adequate local facilities such as schools and site access and services. The local plan includes a criteria-based policy in line with Circular 1/94. Policy HG13 says that in considering proposed and unauthorised caravan sites for Gypsies and Travellers, proposals close to settlements or in the countryside will be permitted where the following criteria are met:

- a. The applicant is a 'gypsy' as defined in Circular 18/94 'Gypsy Sites Policy and Unauthorised Camping';
- b. the site does not lie within a designated AONB, Conservation Area, SSSI or other land of nature conservation importance or result in the loss of a significant area of best and most versatile agricultural land;
- c. the visual impact of the site and the nature of any business activities proposed on the site would not detract significantly from the appearance of the area nor seriously affect neighbouring residential, or other uses.

- 6.3.3 Diversity issues are more likely to be taken seriously if there is a corporate commitment positively promoting diversity and equality. Some of the case studies (GLA, Fenland, Leicester) provide evidence that central diversity or equalities sections can provide useful contacts, advice and training. Planners should not be on their own in recognising the role that diversity plays. Sharing information can be an efficient use of resources as well as making the planning service more accountable.

**Example: East Midlands Branch of the RTPI
Planning and Ethnic Minorities: ‘Good Practice’
Examples in the East Midlands**

To promote good practice and share ideas, the RTPI East Midlands Branch published this report in 2000, giving examples of development plan policies, development control procedures, consultation and data collection.

- 6.3.4 Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) can be used to elaborate on the way planning policies should be applied to planning decisions. The GLA is producing SPG on Diversity. Councils should give consideration to producing SPG on relevant issues and in advising applicants for planning permission. This includes site-specific development and design briefs and Masterplans. Setting the right principles out early is more likely to achieve the desired outcome.

**Example: Swindon’s supplementary planning
guidance promoting access**

Swindon Borough Council produced in 2003 the well-illustrated Access for All: Revised Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance Note giving advice about how to ensure accessible and inclusive environments free from design barriers. It explicitly recognises that people don’t have identical needs. It also produced in the same year the New Schools Inclusion Brief: Good Practice Guidance for New and Existing School Building Design providing detailed advice on how to design accessible schools, including play areas and outdoor spaces.

6.4 Assessing the impact of plans, policies and procedures on different groups

- 6.4.1 The effects of plans and policies should be monitored to see if they are achieving intended results and to identify unintended impacts. Community engagement as discussed in the previous chapter should form part of this assessment. Communication between policy and development control sections, who have to implement policy on a daily basis, is vital. It is important to keep procedures under review, as illustrated in the Camden case study. The RTPI brought out advice for its members in 1996 urging a hard line to be taken against racist representations to planning departments (RTPI, 1996). It is important to ask searching questions about whether there is any unintentional institutional discrimination that might result from 'custom and practice.' **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004, pp. 27-8) found that there is little diversity impact assessment of planning policies going on in practice.
- 6.4.2 There are a growing number of tools to audit policies that are applicable to diversity issues. These tools prompt questions about the likely affect that particular policies would tend to have on certain segments of the population. The Home Office, Women's Unit, and Department for Education and Employment have produced a Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment (Home Office, 1998). This tool is an impact assessment identifying the effect of a policy on different groups and amending proposals accordingly.
- 6.4.3 A race equality toolkit is included within a report commissioned by the Local Government Association: **Race, Equality and Planning** (Loftman and Beazley, 1998). It recommends the evaluation of development plan policies to determine whether they are serving community needs and not resulting in any indirect discrimination. Policy evaluation and appraisal has links with the next chapter on monitoring. It may be useful to look at ' **Race Equality Impact Assessment: a step-by-step guide**' at www.cre.gov.uk/duty/reia/index.html

Example: RTPI's Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

In 2003, the RTPI produced helpful guidance on mainstreaming gender issues (RTPI, 2003). It includes a discussion about policy auditing, the principles of which are more widely applicable to other groups within the population as well. It advocates analysing needs as well as making sure that policies don't disadvantage certain parts of the population disproportionately. It gives the example of the Plymouth sustainability matrix of its Local Plan, where policies were analysed in a structured way against gender implications (RTPI, 2003, pp. 17-8).

Example: Wolverhampton City Council's Sustainability and Equality Appraisal

Wolverhampton has begun to develop a structured appraisal of its development plan policies against sustainability and equality criteria, employing a system of positive, negative or neutral impact. This system identifies where improvement is required to carry out objectives and has been well received in the Council.

6.5 Resolving policy conflicts raised by diversity issues

- 6.5.1 Planning issues are often inherently controversial and it is rare that everyone within a community will agree. Building diversity issues into planning practice as this Guide advises does not mean that anything that anyone wants should be granted permission, nor that an application should be automatically rejected if somebody objects. Acknowledging conflict and disagreement is an important step toward resolution. There is no substitute for discussing conflicting views with relevant people, be they members of the public, politicians, other officers, etc.
- 6.5.2 **Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities** (ODPM, 2003a) discusses techniques and examples of how mediation, negotiation and engagement can deal with conflict in planning practice, giving examples from abroad (see also DOE, 2000 and ODPM, 2002 for more information on mediation). Indeed, promoting a culture which recognises diversity should result in better conflict resolution: 'Diversity means there are more likely to

be conflicts of interest than in a homogeneous society, but also there is more likely to be tolerance and a culture of compromise and negotiation' (ODPM, 2003a, p.9).

- 6.5.3 Most people understand that planning is a topic that not everyone will agree on but it is important to maintain open dialogue and make sure that processes are carried out inclusively, i.e. where everyone is engaged. It is also important to make sure that policies and development control decisions are kept under constant review so that lessons are learned and improvements continually sought. What is crucial is to ensure that diversity issues have been properly considered and that no one has been excluded. It is critical to ensure that discrimination has played no part in decision and policy making.

Greater London Authority (GLA) Case Study: Mainstreaming Diversity at the Regional Scale

Embedding diversity across the service in a range of policies and procedures

Recognising Diversity

In London:

- An estimated 20% of all households include a disabled person
- 29% of the population belong to a minority ethnic group
- 300 different languages are spoken
- 14 different faith groups formally exist
- 1 in 8 is aged over 65
- In 2003, there were 55,500 asylum seekers
- More than 20% of the population are under 18, higher than most European cities
- 20% of wards in London are in the 10% most deprived wards in England

(Source: GLA website)

The Greater London Authority is the regional body governing the capital. It sets an important strategic context within which the 33 boroughs operate.

Engaging with Difference

Authority-wide emphasis: Recognising that London is a diverse city of people from different backgrounds, the GLA has adopted equality of opportunity as one of its key cross-cutting aims. Mainstreaming equalities and celebrating diversity is at the heart of policy development, implementation, evaluation and review, permeating every aspect of the Authority. Six groups are particularly targeted: disabled people; ethnic minorities; women; older people; children and young people; lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people. Given the fact that these groups cover a great percentage of the total population, the Authority regards equalities as a majority issue. It places a responsibility on all staff to ensure that their work takes into account the specific needs of target groups, is anti-discriminatory, involves these groups in planning and evaluation, and prioritises actions and resources to those in greatest need (GLA, 2003b, **Into the Mainstream: Equalities within the GLA**, p. 3).

The GLA's business plan includes equalities outputs and is backed up by Operational Equalities Action Plans establishing timescales and desired outcomes. The Authority plans to assess the impact on the equality target groups and monitor outputs.

Within this broad policy framework, the planning service is undertaking a number of initiatives, putting the impact of policies on different people at the heart of the service:

The finalised London Plan was published in 2004. It is available in large print, Braille, disc, sign language video, audio tape, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

One of its key objectives is 'to promote social inclusion and tackle deprivation and discrimination' and this is reflected in numerous policies. Policy 3A.14 is 'addressing the needs of London's diverse population,' saying that UDPs should ensure that diverse groups are not disadvantaged through policies relating to the provision of social infrastructure, the public realm, inclusive design and local distinctiveness.

Policy 4B.5 aims to create an inclusive environment and recommends that Boroughs require developers to produce an Access Statement demonstrating principles of inclusive design. 'Inclusive design benefits individuals with physical, sensory or learning impairments, older people, mental health system users/survivors, children, carers of young children, people with temporary impairments or simply encumbered with heavy luggage or shopping. Inclusive design benefits all of us' (GLA, 2004a, Accessible London, p.3). When implementing policies to ensure disabled people, older people and children and carers can easily access buildings and spaces, issues of race, culture and faith should also be addressed. The examples of single sex facilities and prayer rooms are given.

The Plan includes a chapter on implementation. The policy on planning obligations, for example, includes prioritizing affordable housing, public transport, learning and skills, health facilities and childcare provision. Performance indicators fall within the chapter, including, for example, 'age specific unemployment rates for black and minority ethnic groups to be no higher than for the white population by 2016, 50% reduction of the difference by 2011.'

The examination in public about the Plan included discussion about community facilities, affordable childcare and public toilets. Too often such issues crop up only at the detailed design stage. Planning staff fear that if such issues aren't discussed early enough in a strategic way, there is a danger they may get left out completely.

Springing from the London Plan is a range of supplementary planning guidance. **Accessible London: Achieving an Inclusive Environment** was approved in 2004 and there are plans to publish the first draft of **Spatial Needs of Diverse Communities** later in 2004. A steering group was set up to guide the work on the Accessible London document, including a wide spectrum of organisations interested in planning and access issues. The London Access Forum (a network of local access groups in London) are regularly consulted on strategic planning applications.

For the guidance on diverse communities, consultants ran a series of focus groups. This was easier because equality is mainstreamed within the organization and the GLA has good links with relevant groups.

The GLA tries to ensure an inclusive approach in development control and, for example, makes sure that commercial development includes space for small and medium sized units because they are required by most ethnic minority businesses.

Positive Outcomes

Both at Authority-wide level and within the planning service, diversity issues have been mainstreamed into the work of all staff. Because the Authority has only fairly recently been set up and the London Plan and supplementary planning guidance are new, it is too early to fully evaluate policies and implementation mechanisms. So far, however, an impressive array of policies and procedures have been put into place; this case study can only touch upon a few examples.

One such example, in terms of implementation, is that the access specialist within the planning service works with the Planning Decisions Unit to ensure that issues are taken into account early in the process (e.g. masterplans and outline applications). They are trying to overcome common perceptions that accessibility considerations apply only at detailed design level. They are planning to produce more information about what they expect from access statements, including at initial strategy stage.

Key lessons

- A central equalities team can help highlight good practice, train staff and network with local groups. However, it is important that all staff recognise the importance of equalities within their own job, not leaving it to ‘someone else.’
- The earliest stages of planning major development, including outline applications and masterplans, should ensure that inclusive environments are promoted, otherwise it is too late.
- Working with local groups can ensure relevance of policies. However, there is a real need for capacity building in the voluntary sector and adequate resourcing, including funding, training, and accessible premises. There is a danger of consultation overload.

- It's important when working with the public not to raise expectations. Clarity is required about what 'spatial planning' can achieve and what it can't. There has been a move away from mechanistic land use planning to include more economic and social issues, but the boundaries can sometimes get blurred as the new planning system rolls out.
- It is useful to have advice and guidance, including good examples, so that both local authority staff and developers know what is expected. This can cut down the time spent on negotiating planning applications.
- The regional scale of government can set the context and tone for policies of the individual authorities within its boundaries. It can be crucial in pinpointing diversity and equalities issues as a priority, modeling good practice.

Resources

The Authority centrally has an Equalities Unit with specialist advisors on race, sex, disability, faith, age and sexual orientation.

Centrally, the Authority provides staff training on how to mainstream equalities throughout the organization. It has produced the GLA Equalities Toolkit to support staff.

The GLA believes that its own workforce should reflect the resident community and has set employment targets for all levels and pay grades. It is aiming for a workforce of:

- At least 52 % women;
- at least 25% ethnic minorities;
- at least 10% disabled people.

Employment monitoring includes information about age, sexual orientation, sex, ethnicity and disability.

Participants' Quotes

“What we tried to do with the London Plan is put the people element into it, rather than just saying that a piece of land should be a particular use. It is about looking at the effects it might have on the people who would use it.”

Jane Carlsen, GLA

“It’s about putting people at the centre of the planning process; I still don’t think planners do this all the time. It is essential that access and inclusion are considered at the earliest possible stage in the design process and that disabled people are fully involved in the process.”

Julie Fleck, OBE, GLA

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See GLA website: www.london.gov.uk

Disability Guide:
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/accessible_london.jsp

Brighton and Hove Local Plan Consultation Case Study

Successful 'Community Visioning' exercise with 'hard to reach' groups

Recognising diversity

The Council has a vision for a 'cosmopolitan city by the sea where people have a high quality of life in a decent environment.' In contrast to past practice, they decided to engage a wide range of different people, including usually excluded groups, in establishing an overall 'vision' for the Local Plan to ensure the relevance of its aims. One of the Local Plan's aims is to be 'caring and tolerant of all members of its diverse communities.'

Engaging with difference

In 1998, the Council asked the Department of Planning and Urban Design at the University of Westminster to devise an appropriate consultation strategy for the new local plan. This ensured an open and accountable process in conjunction with an independent agency. The University produced a report evaluating alternative consultation methods and recommended a series of representative focus groups and 'community visioning exercises,' bringing together different people to express a vision for the future. A cross-sectoral steering group was set up to oversee the consultation process (including the local Racial Equality Service, Age Concern and the Federation of Disabled People). An internal coordination group helped ensure communication and ownership.

Community visioning workshops were carried out in 1998/99 by an independent consultant (Interact, formerly Planning in Partnership). A hundred people were involved in 8 workshops, almost all of whom hadn't been involved in anything like this before. Separate



workshops were organised for: older people, disabled people, people on low incomes, lesbians and gay men, women, black and minority ethnic groups. Two 'random sample' workshops were also held against which results could be compared. Although there were many issues of shared concern (e.g. traffic, safety, affordable housing) there were also different issues such as the need for care homes for gay men and lesbians.

A set of 7 focus groups were also run, bringing together people with diverse views, representing 64 organisations. A separate workshop was held for secondary school pupils.

Urban design visioning workshops were held in several neighbourhoods which had not previously been the focus of design initiatives, using large-scale maps to identify key buildings, streetscenes and views. The exercise was repeated for local architects.

Other individuals responded to a local newspaper questionnaire, a widely-distributed consultation leaflet and a telephone 'hotline' and e-mail address.

There was a written compact between the Council and participants outlining respective responsibilities.

A 'Results of Consultation' has been sent to every participant as well as a set of draft policies.

Follow-up consultation has also been carried out and the University produced a monitoring and evaluation report.

Positive Outcomes

Results of the 'community visioning' are highlighted at the beginning of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan second deposit version (2001) and consultation results infuse policies throughout. Compared with traditional approaches to Local Plan preparation, the 'vision' is more robust:

1. It benefits from the views of people from socially excluded groups who would not have previously been heard.
2. It was not 'led' by a draft Plan i.e. participants were not reacting to a Plan that had already been drafted by the Council – therefore

the vision is a truer representation of people's aspirations for Brighton and Hove. The 'vision' has been incorporated into the Plan both in terms of setting the context and in justifying individual policies. For the first time preparation of the Plan has been informed by the 'relative weight' attached by people from under-represented groups to different priorities. (Interact website). The Council won an RTPI award for the consultation process.

Key lessons

The following aspects are distinctive and proved successful:

- 'Very strategic and integrated approach to consultation, which drew on academics and 'process' practitioners, as well as the local authority officers and Members
- Use of random samples as a 'control' against which to compare views of socially excluded groups
- Use of visioning techniques with people who haven't before been consulted, to enable them to input strategically
- Use of written 'compact' between participants and council
- Internal capacity building to deal with results, not just 'doing it out there'
- Involvement right from the beginning to the end, including checking back how consultation findings have been used with participants, and asking them for further help on difficult issues
- Use of written justification of policies against results of consultation' (Interact website)
- Innovative techniques gave everyone a chance to contribute
- Forms useful experience for new Statements of Community Involvement

Resources

The Council was committed to this new form of consultation and found the money from existing budgets for the University and consultants' fees and the consultation itself.

Participant's Quotes

“I had been involved previously in Council consultations which were a waste of time; I had been ignored and even abused as part of these. I have worked in the Lesbian and Gay community as a volunteer for a long time, but also have knowledge of how the planning system works, as I worked in planning between 1978 and 1990. The lesbian and gay community are usually invisible and that's why it's so refreshing to have been included. Main criticism – you need to have a lot more than 15 minutes explanation of what the planning process is before having a useful discussion. If you haven't been involved in talking and thinking about issues it's hard to think how sexuality could impact on the built environment.”

Community Visioning Workshop participant

“The results of the consultation made a real difference to the preparation of the Local Plan and its content. The formulation of a community 'vision' helped to establish a robust context for the plan to complement the Council's strategic priorities. The policies and proposals were clearly informed by the contributions of those who attended the community visioning workshops.”

Martin Randall, Assistant Director, City Planning

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The Interact website is a reference for the above material and also includes useful general information on participation:

<http://www.interactweb.org.uk>

Contact: lindsey.colbourne@virgin.net

‘Planning for Real’ in Exmoor Case Study

Widespread participation in rural local plan (25% of population)

Gave the evidence base for new policies, including a major shift in housing provision



Involving a cross-section of the Exmoor community with ‘Planning for Real’ Courtesy of Exmoor National Park Authority

Recognising Diversity

Prompted by the need to review the Local Plan, Exmoor National Park Authority took the opportunity to engage with a broader range of people than previously, including more women, younger age groups and families.

Engaging with Difference

‘Planning for Real’ is a technique to actively engage communities devised by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation. Events were held in 22 settlements across the Park both during the day and evening. Publicity included posters and flyers. Parish Councils and other community groups were targeted to make sure they sent representatives to events. About a quarter of the population of the National Park attended these sessions, a very high percentage for these kind of activities (over 2,500 people). These were drop-in events and allowed people to say what their priority issues were on flip-charts, maps and models, even before the draft plan was written. Events were piloted and were deliberately set out to be informal. Facilitators encouraged people to write their comments down even though many had traditionally remained silent. The profile of people attending was monitored. A particular strength of the project was the participation of young people, as schools were targeted. Children’s work was displayed at other events to encourage them and their parents to attend. Feedback was sent afterwards to participants asking their views on potential policies.

Although the consultation was focused on the Local Plan, it was recognised that views about other services would emerge and these were dealt with by the agencies responsible.

The ‘Planning for Real’ sessions were supplemented with a questionnaire sent to every household in the ‘Park Life’ newspaper, which gained 91 responses.

Positive Outcomes

The Authority sees ‘Planning for Real’ as having proved an effective means of engaging people with policy: it avoids over-burdening people with many different consultations. Events yielded information of direct planning relevance but also on the full range of services, so that views on, for example, transport and health care could be collected.

A much higher and broader proportion of the Park’s population participated than would have done using conventional methods, which generally draw the more traditionally vocal sections of the community. A notable dimension of this was the involvement of young people through schools and youth organisations.

The events allowed members of the public to interact effectively with staff in a fun and interesting way. At the Local Plan Inquiry, the Inspector commended the Authority for its work in involving the Park's residents.

An example of a key outcome from the consultation was a new housing policy requirement that all new housing within the Park meets the local community's need for affordable housing. Other policies and proposals resulting from this consultation included the need for homeworking, siting of telecommunication masts, reduction of light pollution, retention of commercial services and community facilities and village enhancement schemes.

The exercise has formed a model for the continuation of involvement, such as on draft design guidance. It has enthused staff and Members about the benefits of public participation.

Key lessons

- Success can be linked to commitment to the exercise across the authority from elected Members and officers. This took time and effort from some key people and open-mindedness from all. Political support was extremely important.
- 'Planning for Real' can be seen by some as a threat, as it involves transferring power, but its value was clear to the Authority.
- Planning the events and making sure that people knew what was happening and why was also important. Timeframes have to allow for this.
- Corporate ownership is important: to get commitment across an authority and different service areas. There's a need to be clear about the resource costs involved and about ownership of information yielded.
- The agenda for events could be set by the public to a greater extent: if, for example, there's a prior consultation with parish councils to hear what they think the key issues are.

Resources

Corporate commitment to the exercise was significant in direct costs and staff time. The largest item was staff time, with one estimate putting this at 3 person-weeks per event. Staff were trained in ‘Planning for Real’ by the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation.

Special buses were offered to help participants get to events, but no one took this up. The Authority paid going rates for the hire of village halls. A number of disabled and older people attended and needed special help where entrances were not adapted. Refreshments were served to say ‘thank you for expressing your views.’

Participants’ Quotes

“Planning for Real’ is a real opportunity for everyone to engage. The events got people to come – and you don’t always see that. They were seen as social events.”

Mike Knight, Chair of the Planning Committee

“The Exmoor ‘Planning for Real’ was a successful and unique event, bringing a large cross-section of the community together, really creating an atmosphere of information exchange and comment, both critical and supportive. Any process that arouses meaningful dialogue between all parties must be a valuable resource to use.”

Tim Webb, Chairman Old Cleeve Parish Council

“‘Planning for Real’ has provided the Authority with information on what local communities felt was important to them. By avoiding the traditional route of holding meetings or exhibitions of proposals, it enabled a wider cross-section of the community to have their say. The Authority believes that the Local Plan which has been drawn up is, as a result, more reflective of the wider community’s interests and at draft stage, over half the comments received were in support.”

Ruth McArthur, Exmoor National Park Authority

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For information on 'Planning for Real' see Neighbourhood
Initiatives Foundation website: www.nifonline.org.uk

Camden Community Engagement Officer Case Study: Planning

PART

2

Making planning, including development control procedures, more user-friendly to increase participation in Camden



Youth Planning Symposium, Camden Council Chamber 2004
Source: Camden Council

Recognising Diversity

- Ethnic minorities make up 27% of Camden's population

Camden is made up of many diverse communities (see also King's Cross case study). Surveys show that minority ethnic groups don't tend to get involved in planning issues.

Engaging with Difference

Camden created a special post for community engagement to reach out to people who do not normally get involved in the planning system. The aim is to increase engagement with development control and local planning initiatives to make planning more representative.

One aspect of this unique initiative is a public service agreement with the Government to increase the number of comments from ethnic minorities on planning applications by 5% by the end of 2004. A new system of monitoring responses from consultees has been introduced so the Council knows who is commenting in terms of disability, sex, ethnicity and age.

Other procedures have been altered:

Standard letters consulting on planning applications have been changed to make them clearer and easier to understand. They include more information about the proposal to more fully inform people of what is being proposed. There is a carefully designed form to make it easier for people to respond together with a Freepost service for reply. There are also contact forms in different languages giving a telephone number where an interpreter responds within two minutes.

Site notices are being altered to make them less bureaucratic and easier to understand. Work with young people helped critique site notices and develop useful ideas for more colourful, eye-catching advertisements. New brightly coloured recyclable noticeholders are already in use which significantly improve the visibility of site notices.

For major applications, meetings are to be targeted at hard-to-reach communities in conjunction with developers.

Children and young people have been targeted. Sessions were run with young people getting them to role-play the job of a planner constructing a neighbourhood. The groups then presented their views and findings to councilors and senior planners.

In March 2004 a special edition of **Our Voice** was produced by the Council in conjunction with a local school and Planning Aid for London: **Planning in Camden – Making Camden a Great Place to Live**. It is targeted at Citizenship and Geography students in all Camden schools. This is a lively and colourful example of a

publication that explains simply what planning is about and how planning policies affect people's daily lives, including older and disabled people.

A video was produced about planning in Camden as well as audio files and tapes in different languages and leaflets explaining what planning is about.

As part of the UDP consultation, training sessions were run in different targeted local communities so that people could more effectively engage with the system, including in the longer term. Individuals were thus better able to engage with their local communities themselves and feed comments back into the planning system.

Surveys have been undertaken over a number of years to assess consultee satisfaction with the service and identify priorities for improvement. Further extensive consultation was undertaken in 2003 through surveys and focus groups to identify barriers to engagement and what would encourage people to comment or get involved. This feedback will be used to make service improvements.

Outcomes of all the surveys undertaken have found that no more than 2% of people who comment on applications do so as a result of having read a notice in the local press.

The weekly list of applications has been advertised on Camden's Planning website since 1999. The website is an increasing source for people to check on applications with the site being visited by over 6,000 people per month. Improvements to the way information is displayed and accessed are currently in progress.

Positive Outcomes

Most of the above initiatives have not been running long enough to be fully evaluated yet. It has been important to put monitoring and review mechanisms in place to ensure that this happens. There has, however, already been some increase in people commenting on planning applications and people phoning the interpreters' helpline.

Some of the more tangible results of working with local people are videos and publications, which are now widely available as useful engagement tools.

Key lessons

- Training initiatives pay off because they build in a long term capacity to engage with planning effectively. Initiatives like Camden is promoting do not result in changes overnight. Especially when trying innovative new practices, it is important to monitor what works so that lessons are fed into continual improvements.
- A dedicated post for community engagement has encouraged someone with different skills to most planners to take a fresh look at everyday planning procedures to make the process more accessible to a wider range of people.

Resources

Having the right skills base is crucial in this type of outreach work. It is interesting to note that the current community engagement postholder comes from a background in communication and consultation.

The post is funded through the Council's planning budget. As part of the public service agreement with the Government, Camden will be given the discretion not to advertise certain types of application in the local press for a period of 3 years. During this period, Camden will use the advertising revenue saved to pilot other forms of consultation and awareness arising, and will also test the findings from the recent national research report and local survey findings that newspaper advertisements are ineffective.

Participant's Quote

“We’re trying to mainstream diversity issues into the planning service to make the process much more accessible to our local population. Simplifying and demystifying procedures together with training initiatives should help make planning more meaningful to local people who would otherwise be excluded.”
Nuradin Dirie, Community Engagement Officer

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Foresite – Birmingham City Council’s Women’s Planning Network Case Study

Electronic network consulting women on specific types of planning application

Recognising Diversity

- 51.5% of Birmingham’s population is female

Birmingham City Council’s Planning Department used to have a Women’s Network that met regularly to comment on planning applications. Participants were drawn from different sectors of society, ranging from residents’ associations to business groups.

This initiative ran into difficulties because of lack of resources, and women found it difficult to combine participation with other commitments (both day and evening), including caring responsibilities.

A solution was found to facilitate women’s participation through an electronic network.

Engaging with Difference

The electronic network **Foresite** was established in late 2002, offering women from both the voluntary and statutory sectors in Birmingham the chance to express their views on planning applications for major new developments and to find out more about how the planning process works.

Network members receive a quarterly newsletter by e-mail informing them of major new developments in Birmingham (including plans and supplementary planning guidance), and a monthly e-mailed list of planning applications, together with contact details to request further information or submit comments. Views contributed by this network are reported to the Development Control Committee as the official Foresite response.

The initiative started giving participants an opportunity to comment on particular types of planning application throughout the city which were thought to be of particular interest and relevance to women: shopping developments over 1,000 sq. m., parks/play areas/community facilities, large mixed use schemes, residential schemes of more than 20 units, and educational buildings.

For especially large planning applications which many network members may be interested in, the Council intends to organise presentations by developers.

The Women's Network contributed to the Council's **Consultation in Local Planning: Good Practice Guide** which has been useful in guiding participation activities.

Positive Outcomes

The network has attracted 60 participants. By being on-line, it enables a greater number and range of people to participate than the previous women's consultation group.

The Council expects participants' input to ensure that women's needs and concerns are taken account of, and to improve the quality of developments. One example where comments made a difference is the redevelopment of the Bullring, where, on a steeply sloping site, women's concerns about pushchairs and prams coincided with those of people with various disabilities and accessibility was better planned.

Key lessons

- Network is to be relaunched due to staff retirement, highlighting difficulties in maintaining initiatives with limited resources and the importance of planning for staff changes.
- The Planning Delivery Grant can be useful in appointing consultation officers who can help deliver good practice and add value to the planning service.
- Electronic communication can help promote communication with people who have easy access to computers. It might be especially useful for people who don't have time to come to meetings, or are housebound, or who can't easily access meeting places.

- Participants should be informed how their views make a difference to encourage participation.

Resources

The initiative is run with existing staff within existing budgets and, according to the planner managing it, consultation is resource intensive. Some interruption occurred when a member of staff retired, highlighting the importance of continuity.

Birmingham plans to appoint a Consultation Officer with their Planning Delivery Grant to ensure good practice in all consultation.

The Foresite Network is only effective with women who have easy access to computers; electronic techniques are not appropriate for all consultation.

Participants' Quotes

“It is really important that women’s views are heard and understood as part of the development control process – particularly because women are under-represented in the planning profession. Foresite provides a channel for women to have a voice on major development schemes and comments will be fed through to the Development Control Committee.”

(Chris Green, Development Planning, in Birmingham Regeneration Network’s Network News Regeneration, Issue 8, April 2003, p. 14)

“This is a useful initiative. Interested people are just too busy these days to go to lots of meetings. Having online communication makes consultation more accessible to a wider group. The danger now, however, is that people are getting more online and there is information overload. It would also be good if we got some feedback on how Foresite was making a difference.”

Chris Hemming, Foresite participant

“Planning departments are stretched and the Planning Delivery Grant will help deliver aspirations on consultation.”

Liz Jesper, Birmingham Planning Service

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Fenland District Council's Policies and Practice for Gypsies and Travellers Case Study

Positive action to promote social inclusion through consultation, criteria-based policies, monitoring, training and liaison



A typical Fenland Gypsy and Travellers' site. Photo copyright: Traveller Services Team, Fenland District Council

Recognising Diversity

Gypsies and Travellers are the largest ethnic minority in Cambridgeshire, a county that has one of the highest numbers in England. Although the 2001 Census didn't include Gypsies and Travellers, Fenland District Council estimates that they make up over 3% of their total population and include Romanies and Irish and Scottish Travellers.

The loss of some of their traditional agricultural employment and the low pay within the sector contribute to economic problems amongst Gypsies and Travellers.

Virtually all the authorised Council and private Gypsy and Traveller sites are close to, or exceeding their capacity. An increasing number of unauthorised sites within the District indicates a shortfall in site provision.

Engaging with difference

The present proactive strategy has been developed over a number of years and is in the spirit of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Government Circular 1/94 on Gypsies and Travellers and the Council's own Race Equality Scheme. Regular liaison meetings are held with nearby Counties and Districts where Gypsy and Traveller issues are discussed. Planning officers work closely with the Council's Traveller and Diversity Officer and the Traveller Services Unit to build understanding and rapport with Gypsies and Travellers. Consultation takes place with local Gypsies and Travellers as well as a number of national organisations, monitoring need (including statistics), local plan policies and sites. The Council runs a Gypsy and Travellers Forum four times a year; some participants also attend a wider Diversity Forum with older and younger people, disabled people, other ethnic minorities, etc. An overarching Community Forum is also run, where all sections of the population can discuss issues together. There are plans to make use of a local Romany radio station in consultation.

Planning staff have been on training courses to help them become more aware of the cultural background and needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Council's Traveller Services Unit also provides training courses to organisations and the wider community. The sessions have been run by a number of representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller community themselves, which is an effective way of learning about issues, challenging assumptions and dispelling any myths.

The main forward planning approach is two-pronged: site identification and developing realistic, criteria-based local plan policies. In line with Circular 1/94, the Council has developed criteria for its Local Plan policy that it applies both to planning applications and identifying more sites:

- Need for additional Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the District
- Proximity to schools, shops and other local services
- Impact on amenities of existing local residents and adjoining land uses, avoiding over-concentration
- Effect on rural character and appearance and amenities of the surrounding area
- Assimilation into surroundings by existing or proposed landscaping (landscaping scheme required)
- Parking, highway access and service provision
- Effect on buildings or features of historic or archaeological importance or sites of wildlife or nature conservation value.

The Council emphasises actively going out and speaking to families when they set up camp to find out what their needs are, which is appreciated by Gypsies and Travellers. They are invited to discuss proposals with the planning authority before submitting an application or buying land and if the site is not suitable, alternatives are discussed. It recognises that taking enforcement action alone not only creates hostility but often means that Gypsies and Travellers move on to what is probably another unsuitable site.

It is anticipated that sites will be small because experience has shown that they are more successful, easier to manage and favoured by Gypsies and Travellers. The Council emphasise that they will only approve sites that comply with specified criteria and that unsuitable proposals will be refused; applications of this kind have been defended on appeal.

The situation is carefully monitored in close liaison with local Gypsies and Travellers. The Council has recently introduced procedures to monitor planning approvals and refusals by ethnic group. There is no evidence that the Council's proactive approach has led to difficulties or an influx of Gypsies and Travellers.

Positive Outcomes

The approach has gained the trust of the Gypsies and Travellers who are willing to discuss their needs and proposals with the planning authority. It also means that they are prepared to consider alternative sites. The sites can be managed more successfully through the planning system with conditions on occupation, access, landscaping, etc. Enforcement action is very much the exception rather than the rule.

The wider community accepts that the Gypsy and Traveller sites are going through the planning process and can see that the situation is being managed with regard to the location, size and density of sites, applying criteria. There is evidence that this proactive approach is promoting good race relations, promoting inclusion and minimising tensions evident in other places.

The elected members appear happy with the approach because the Council is meeting a demonstrable need within the community and communication has been enhanced. Relationships between Gypsies and Travellers and the wider community are good and there have been limited objections to proposals.

Key lessons

Taking a positive and proactive approach can benefit both Gypsies and Travellers and the wider population, promoting good planning and community relations in the spirit of Circular 1/94 and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. Important aspects include:

- Effective consultation with Gypsies and Travellers monitoring their needs.
- Criteria-based planning policies making clear what is acceptable and not acceptable.
- On-going monitoring of need, provision, planning application approvals and refusals.
- Liaison with nearby authorities and between planners and specialist advisors and organisations.
- Staff training.

Resources

It is acknowledged that going out to meet Gypsies and Travellers and having pre-application discussions is resource intensive but on balance time and money are saved when applications are submitted. As a result, enforcement action and costs of any legal challenges are reduced.

Training and consultation must also be resourced in terms of direct costs and staff time. All members of the planning team have been on the Gypsy and Traveller awareness training course; two officers deal with most of the cases, developing particular expertise.

The Traveller Services Unit has one full-time member of staff and two part-time workers.

Participants' Quotes

“Fenland’s policies are second to none – they are a flagship authority. Their practice should be the norm all over the country. They listen to and respect people and try to understand their needs.”

Sylvia Dunn, President, National Association of Gypsy Women

“Fenland encourages discussion, officer involvement, a common sense approach and proactive action through liaison thereby recognising the importance of working closely with Gypsies and Travellers. This results in trust and respect between officers and all communities within the District. Without this approach division remains and mistrust and community unrest result.”

Marcia Whitehead, Development Control Manager

“To enable this approach to work you must first gain the respect and trust of Gypsies and Travellers. This approach is time consuming but as the results show it is beneficial to both the settled and travelling communities in that it resolves a lot of possible misunderstandings and prevents possible frictions.”

David Bailey, Traveller and Diversity Manager, Fenland District Council

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Stockwell Partnership, London Case Study

Mainstreaming community participation developed into a Masterplan and success in funding projects



The Stockwell Refugee Women's Centre was launched, meeting a defined need in the area
Photo courtesy of Stockwell Partnership

Recognising Diversity

According to the Urban II Action Plan, for the 30,000 Stockwell residents:

- Almost half are under 29 with an increasing number under 10
- More than a tenth are pensioners
- Within Lambeth, represent the highest proportion of Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Portuguese with twice the Borough average for Black Africans

- High levels of unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, crime, rundown environments
- Low levels of economic activity, car ownership, education, skills, open spaces

Yet residents saw Stockwell as a vibrant, dynamic multi-cultural area and sought to redefine its identity through its people.
(Stockwell Urban II Community Initiative Action Plan 2001-06, 2002)

Engaging with Difference

The Stockwell Partnership (SP) was established 1996 with the help of a newly elected councillor and benefited initially from Brixton Challenge Funding in limited environment improvements. SP is a non-profit limited company and registered charity made up of local tenants and residents, community groups and voluntary sector agencies, ward councillors, the police and local housing providers. SP's aim is to improve the quality of life in Stockwell by enhancing the environment, providing jobs, training and facilities, improving community safety and giving local people the skills and confidence to participate in the regeneration of their neighbourhood. A Community Capacity Plan, including training, is a high priority to strengthen community involvement.

In 1999/2000 there was community consultation to shape the Single Regeneration Budget 5 bid; Hyde Housing Association was heavily involved.

In 2000, the SP (Hyde was the accountable body) received £4 million from the Government Office for London. This made a huge difference to the Partnership and allowed the first member of staff to be employed.

It also enabled the Stockwell Masterplan to be developed, a community-owned blueprint detailing a range of environmental and social improvements. A consultant was employed to produce the Masterplan and consulted widely, using a good database of voluntary and community groups and statutory players. Meetings were held with youth, faith groups, tenants' groups, ethnic minorities from Vietnam, Eritrea, Somalia, etc.

The Masterplan was 'adopted' by Lambeth Council Executive and was incorporated within the Council's Interim Local Implementation Plan and draft revised Unitary Development Plan, relying on multi-agency delivery.

The Masterplan led to the creation of a specific ICT programme which enables local residents to design, map and evaluate the neighbourhood (Urban VisionNet). The idea is to use virtual reality software to allow children and adults to 'play at planners' and 'play at developers' to see how their local area might change. The system gets away from an over-reliance on paperwork, consultation workshops and 2-D maps, which often generate major language, cultural and information problems for young people and ethnic minorities. The project consultant was selected in Spring 2004 (VRC at Teeside University) and is now working up an implementation plan, which means going into schools, community centres and estates to 'road test' the system.

The SP activity, including the Masterplan, was successful in attracting considerable funding to implement the ideas generated from the grassroots community:

- The (former) DETR awarded £1million for Mixed Priority Routes project on Wandsworth Road
- £6.5 million European Regional Development Funding to support the development of Masterplan projects and additional workers to encourage greater community involvement.

The report for European funding was particularly good at analysing area statistics in terms of different sectors of the population and relating diverse needs to projects.

Another outcome of the Masterplan is the Stockwell Festival. This began in 2000 and is held annually, bringing together the area's diverse groups. An outgrowth of the Festival is the ongoing 'Stockwell Faith Forum' involving a range of faiths in the area.

Positive Outcomes

The Masterplan and funding fulfilled many of the communities' aims raised in the consultation. Outcomes included:

- Women bi-lingual advocates –support to women refugees and asylum seekers, including the Sure Start programme for young children; the Stockwell Refugee Women’s Centre was recently launched.
- Provision of artists’ studios and community performance space as part of the redevelopment of the Annie McCall Hospital.
- A street tree planting programme with Transport for London and Trees for London – 60 new trees planted.
- The development of ‘safe routes’ across the area.
- Surridge Court – new memorial garden for World War II victims
- The SRB Small Grants Fund and advisor which gives awards to over 60 community and voluntary groups.
- Increased staffing at the SP – existing staff now include a Director, Company Secretary, Advice Worker, Bi-lingual Advocacy Workers and a Festival Coordinator.

It has also helped secure further funding, which has helped address needs raised by the ethnic minority community. For example, the Stockwell Masterplan was used to support a successful £1million bid by the Council to DETR for Mixed Priority Routes project on Wandsworth Road. This is a very dangerous through road and creates an enormous problem for communities, especially families and children who have no access to a car. Many ethnic minority families fall in this category and live near the road. It is one of only five such projects in the UK and the community participation element went in its favour.

Lambeth Council is under huge pressure to sell its assets but the Masterplan has helped save some properties for the benefit of the community, including a disused pub as a new centre for employment and training and a long lease for Oasis Children’s Centre (cycle and activity centre for under 16s).

Other spin-offs from the Masterplan include a ‘Spatial Integration Project’ using Space Syntax, addressing crime and fear of crime. It is hoped that the Partnership will be involved in Section 106 agreements in Stockwell to realise more benefits.

Stockwell Partnership was the Winner of the Best Community Partnership Initiative at the London Planning Awards 2003.

The Stockwell Masterplan has been incorporated into the UDP.

Key lessons

Community engagement: Certain groups were keen to get involved, but for others trust had to be built up over time. Lessons have been learned and there are plans to target more ethnic minority and disability groups; increased funding makes this more possible.

Conflicting Issues: In the Stockwell Square area, there were conflicts between the motoring lobby and local people who wanted to promote walking and cycling. This led to wasted work on environmental improvements and demonstrates that planning issues are sometimes difficult to gain consensus on.

Resources

One of the major achievements of the SP is attracting over £10 million to implement ideas generated by the local community (see above and below). The SP has been successful in plugging into ongoing funds, keeping abreast of changes. Funding for staff has been an important element to keep the project going, including community consultation.

The Masterplan took 9 months to produce and cost £20,000.

Participants' Quotes

“The Masterplan was a real milestone for Stockwell – it gave us credibility within the authority as a serious organisation. At the final meeting when the Masterplan was unambiguously adopted. I’ll never forget it, there were 80 people there and it was a wonderful meeting... an electric atmosphere.”

George Wright, Director, Stockwell Partnership

“Consultations are a good opportunity to meet other people around the subject of how to make Stockwell better; it was successful in getting people right across the range and not excluding anybody. You are very rarely able to do things on your own. The one big consultation had well over 100 people in the local secondary school. The Stockwell Faith Forum resulted from people getting together over the Masterplan and brings together people from the entire world’s faith – especially important at this time in world events.”

Catriona Robertson, representative of a local faith group.

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More on Stockwell Masterplan, from the company that carried out the consultancy (Burns and Nice) www.burnsnice.com/page11.html

Good Practice Points: Securing Benefits Through Policies and Procedures

- 1. Policies need to be informed by recognition of the needs of all groups.** The planning system is policy based and therefore it is important to have policies that reflect the needs of diverse groups in the population. This means combining information from national policy guidance with local data and the outputs from consultation and with many different groups.
- 2. Focusing on outcomes** is the principal aim of planners including diversity issues in their everyday practices. Policy, guidance and procedures are important insofar as they produce results on the ground but are not ends in themselves. An emphasis on outcomes and benefits is likely to convince the public, politicians and decision makers of the value of a diversity approach and raise the profile of planning as a service delivering results that matter.
- 3. Mainstreaming** diversity issues relies on a positive and reflective **attitude of mind** that makes it an integral part of delivering the planning service, not an added extra or somebody else's job. Planners need to understand how different people have different needs as well as how the change from a more narrow view of 'land-use planning' to 'spatial planning' incorporates social and economic issues. Diversity is therefore relevant for all planning activity at all spatial scales. Promoting a diversity culture recognises that conflicts within communities need to be mediated positively. Evidence of mainstreaming diversity should be included as part of the new duty to produce **Statements of Community Involvement**, including proactive approaches to target hard to reach groups.
- 4. Corporate commitment** is more likely to deliver results than planning acting in isolation. Senior managers and elected members should be showing leadership and may need to be convinced about why tackling diversity issues is good planning practice.
- 5. Central equalities or diversity units** can provide useful advice, training and support, for planners in their daily work.
- 6. A variety of engagement techniques** targeted appropriately at different groups is essential for guiding policy, development control decisions and on-going monitoring. (see also chapters 5 and 7)

7. An understanding of relevant equalities **legislation** and how it is changing is important for all planners, as well as understanding the difference between direct, indirect and institutional discrimination (see chapter 3). In particular, planners need to understand the recent duties to more positively promote good race relations and access for people with disabilities, as well as the new requirements for **Statements of Community Involvement**. Planning issues involving Gypsies and Travellers should form part of the duty to produce Race Equality Schemes.

8. **Reviewing** policies and procedures should be an on-going process, including dialogue between policy and development control sections. This review includes whether needs within diverse communities are being met as well as making sure that policies and procedures are not disadvantaging or discriminating against anyone. Service users should be part of reviews.

9. **Sharing information** about good practice can help promote efficiency and good practice. National and local organisations and other Council services can help. See the list of information sources at the end of this report.

10. **Resources** need to be identified. This includes research, training, advertising, community engagement, recruitment initiatives and monitoring. Planning Delivery Grant might be considered to help meet diversity aims as a key requirement of the new planning system.

11. Evidence of **prejudice** in representations to planning departments needs to be actively tackled.

12. **Accessibility** to information and buildings should be positively promoted. This includes removing any physical barriers and making Council premises inviting and comfortable. Communication needs of different groups also need to be acknowledged in documents, letters and publicity. Translations or interpretation services should be considered as well as offering key communication in Braille, tapes, large print, audio-tape or sign language video. Site notices, neighbour notification letters, planning application forms and other publicity should be in clear and simple language that is likely to catch people's attention. IT and other media might also be employed in creative ways to make it easier for people to know about, and respond to, planning issues.

7. Organisational culture, including recruitment, employment and staff development

7.1 Attitudes, ethics and organisational culture

7.1.1 This Guide is about changing the culture of planning authorities. This will involve changing the outlook of those working in planning and updating their skills. The messages in the Guide are addressed to everyone who has a role in the planning service. It applies to senior managers and support staff, designers and researchers, strategic planners, those in development control or in the Planning Inspectorate, and elected members. As the various case studies show, many planners are already alert to issues of diversity and equality, and work in organisations where these concerns infuse all aspects of planning. Those planning authorities where this is not the case should address a range of practices, among them training and recruitment. Leadership and support, from officers and elected members, will be needed to challenge previous assumptions and engage in more diversity-oriented practice. The culture of the organisation should celebrate diversity, both within the office and in the community that it serves.

7.1.2 An organisation committed to working for diverse and sustainable communities is likely to:

- Have a staffing profile that is similar to that of the community it serves;
- Have staff with good inter-personal skills at all levels of the organisation – people who are good at listening, explaining clearly, and mediating between conflicting views. Planners need a combination of grit (determination, focus, goal-orientation) and compassion (honesty, openness, reflectiveness, collaboration, flexibility, fairness);
- Have staff who respect each other and their clients, and who are professionals bound by a code of practice that requires them to act positively to promote equality of opportunity for all;

- Have staff who are engaged with and have knowledge of the local area and its communities.

7.1.3 This should be the model for every planning authority. It is attainable, provided the diversity agenda is:

- articulated and practised by senior managers;
- embedded in recruitment and decisions on promotion;
- sustained through the development and training of all staff; and
- reinforced through continuing good practice.

7.2 Leadership

7.2.1 While every member of the team should be aware of diversity and ensure that all their actions at least comply with equalities legislation, senior managers and elected members have a special responsibility to show leadership and shape the organisational culture. Where the planning authority has a long tradition of 'treating everyone the same' and being 'colour blind' senior managers will need to give a high profile and unambiguous support to the changes. Managing change requires a clear vision of where the organisation wants to go, why that is important and how to get there. This vision has to be shared with all staff and regularly emphasised, so that everyone knows what is expected and why. This strategic approach to steering cultural change must be backed by attention to detail. For example, if unconscious habits of using sexist language persist (such as always referring to 'he', when 'he or she' is more appropriate) then the change process risks losing credibility. If senior managers feel ill-prepared to lead change towards planning based on diversity then they should be able to draw on the skills and experience of colleagues in other departments of a local authority who are more familiar with the issues, or to access training.

7.3 Recruitment and promotion

7.3.1 Community engagement and an understanding of diversity issues, including awareness of the legal requirements discussed in Chapter 3, should be included in all job descriptions and personnel specifications and tested in job applications, interviews

and any other assessment methods. At interview, for example, it might be more appropriate to ask ‘Give examples of how community engagement has changed your mind about issues’ as opposed to ‘Do you have experience of consulting the public?’

- 7.3.2 Attitudes are especially important. Good listeners who respect different people are likely to be successful in implementing the recommendations in this Guide. When recruiting staff, candidates’ skills in different languages used by local residents should be valued as an asset. Similarly, a customer focus or good communications skills developed outside planning should be seen as valuable experience to bring to the planning service. The requirements of promoted posts should also include skills and experience of community engagement and diversity.
- 7.3.3 The case studies show that there are a number of outside agencies, including Planning Aid, consultancies and the national and local voluntary sector that specialise in diversity and community engagement which can be called upon to supplement in-house resources. Human resources and equalities sections within the Council should also be able to offer advice.
- 7.3.4 Although the RTPI has made efforts to increase the numbers of women and ethnic minority planners, the profile of the planning profession does not match that of Britain today. In 2003, 27% of RTPI members were women, and the proportion of ethnic minority planners is very low. The most senior levels of the profession are the most unrepresentative. The RTPI encourages planning schools to take positive action to increase recruitment from ethnic minorities and women (see RTPI’s **Feasibility Study into the Recruitment of Black and Ethnic Minorities into the Planning Profession**, 1998). However, it will take time before the supply of new graduates can correct existing imbalances. Therefore planning authorities should:
- Make every effort to retain staff whose presence helps to balance the staff profile – e.g. through use of job shares or part-time posts that may make it easier for women to return to work while raising a family;
 - Be positive about employing disabled people. Under anti-discrimination law, employers are obliged to make reasonable adjustments to workplaces and procedures to enable disabled people to play a full role;

- Use the Tomorrow's Planners initiative, or similar ones (e.g. there may be scope in some areas to access European funding) to support the progression into planning of under-represented groups;
- Be prepared to promote young staff if they have the skills and potential to deliver planning that is sensitive to diversity and equality, even if they have less experience of more traditional planning than other candidates;
- Place job advertisements in the ethnic minority, disability and other specialist press (the increase in target readership resulting in greater response alone could make this initiative worthwhile);
- Look to develop the skills of all staff, but especially recognise the potential to assist staff recruited on non-professional grades to gain professional qualifications and to earn promotions.
- Ensure they carry out monitoring of ethnic minorities in accordance with the general duty imposed by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (see para 8.1.2(b) of this guide).

7.4 Staff development and training

7.4.1 **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures** (Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM, 2004, pp.19-20) found that training was patchy, with very little specifically aimed at the interface between diversity and planning. Planners who are RTPi members can develop knowledge and skills about diversity and engagement as part of their continuing professional development requirements. There are a number of ways in which the capacity of staff to deliver the diversity aspects of sustainable communities can be enhanced. These include:

- Reflecting on day-to-day experience in the job, explicitly promoting good practice in diversity;
- Action learning sets (small groups which meet regularly to discuss individuals' issues in a non-directive but structured way) so that participants can share experience and reflect on issues associated with diversity;
- Reading about diversity issues can also promote understanding. The references in the back of this Guide are recommended;

- Many Councils, external consultancies and national and local agencies run different types of diversity and equalities training. An example is the Centre for Accessible Environments, a national charity who run training courses to promote accessibility goals. The whole of chapter 8 in **Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities** (ODPM, 2003a, pp.73-82) discusses the skills and attitudes required to engage diverse communities and manage conflict. It makes the point that these skills can be positively identified and actively learned;
- Organising a placement in a local community organisation or inviting young people and/or community representatives to have work experience in the planning service.

- 7.4.2 Training needs to be relevant for planners and well delivered. The Gypsy and Traveller case study in chapter 6 illustrated the benefits of awareness training involving Gypsies and Travellers themselves speaking to planners about their experiences. Awareness training such as this can help get people in touch with assumptions and feelings, and challenge stereotyping. Case studies, role play and reflecting on situations from past experience can also help shift participants' thinking.
- 7.4.3 Training may also help people understand changes in legislation. Often the most effective training takes place in a setting that allows diverse sections of the population to come together to discuss and reflect about feelings and experiences in an open and honest way.
- 7.4.4 Effective staff development will celebrate diversity and challenge the notion that 'treating everyone the same' is what promotes equality. Engaging with people as individuals is essential; as one trainer said, 'You can't deal with diversity by remote control.' People should be encouraged to see and to respect differences in each other, including the less obvious ones. There will be diversity within any group in any room.

7.5 Reinforcement through practice

- 7.5.1 Understanding diversity and raising awareness cannot be learned by a 'tick box' approach. It needs to be done in a way that promotes depth of understanding. Learning is continuous: no one ever knows it all. Attendance on a day or half-day training course does not guarantee good practice in itself. Staff need to learn how to recognise and actively deal with prejudice, harassment and direct, indirect and institutional discrimination, in both employment and service delivery. These are sensitive issues and staff development can help people know better how to handle difficult situations. If someone feels aggrieved, it always needs to be taken seriously and not dismissed.
- 7.5.2 The structures and practices of any workplace are very important in setting expectations, shaping understanding and therefore influencing the attitudes, ethics and skills of those working there. Clear and consistent statements about corporate commitment to diversity, careful explanation of them to all staff, and demonstrable implementation of such commitments will be a very effective means of staff development.

Key message 13: An organisational culture that explicitly and consistently values diversity is critical. This should then infuse employment practices and staff development. The aim should be to ensure that staff attitudes, skills, knowledge, ethics and personal qualities promote diversity throughout service delivery and office practice.

Tomorrow's Planners

10 year programme facilitating the entry of people from ethnic minorities to planning to address low representation



Tomorrow's Planners Launch
Photo courtesy of PATH

Recognising Diversity

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) has implemented a wide-ranging culture change, including equality proofing its procedures and diversifying the workforce. It has been successful in attracting more women Inspectors, but despite targeted recruitment drives, very few people from ethnic minorities have been applying. A further impetus happened in 2000 when Sally Keeble, then Minister for Planning, asked why inspectors tended to be white middle-aged men.

The ethnic minority issue presents a particular challenge because only 1.7% of RTPI members are from ethnic minorities, compared to 7.9% of the UK population. Only 4.9% of planning undergraduates are from ethnic minorities. The Inspectorate therefore launched an

initiative to attract more people from ethnic minorities to the profession, in the hopes that the pool of potential Inspectors would increase in the longer term. Even in London, where almost 30% of the population is from an ethnic minority, only 6.6% of current planners fall into this group.

Engaging with Difference

Tony McNulty, then Planning Minister, launched the Tomorrow's Planners initiative in January 2003. The Planning Inspectorate, in partnership with PATH (Positive Action Training Highway, a charity), the RTPI and the ODPM set up a 10 year programme to attract more people from ethnic minorities to the profession, by recruiting them to jobs and sending them on RTPI-accredited postgraduate planning courses. The initiative has acted like a clearing house, matching interested employers and potential employees. The ambitious aim is to support 500 ethnic minority planners over 10 years.

The programme was made possible under Section 37 of the Race Relations Act 1976, which promotes positive action to address demonstrable under-representation of ethnic minorities in the workplace.

In 2003 the initiative placed 19 trainees in planning offices: local authorities, Government Offices, the Environment Agency and the private sector. Workshops were held in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds to attract host organisations. There were 610 requests for information and 116 applicants. The 2004 recruitment is underway and it is likely that at least a further 32 people will be placed.

Positive Outcomes

During its first year, the programme placed 19 individuals in planning offices across Britain in various sectors, following a rigorous selection process.

The first placements have been working very successfully; interviewers were impressed with the quality of the applications and the enthusiasm of the candidates. The major hope is that the initiative will result in many more ethnic minority planners in the long term.

Key lessons

- This important national initiative forms part of a long-term strategy to help increase the numbers of ethnic minorities in the planning profession. **Planning is the first profession to promote a national programme like this in England.** The initiative includes jobs and education, both key aspects to promote diversity in the profession. The quality of the 19 trainees is very high and most would not have joined the profession had it not been for this initiative. Just under one half of the trainees are women, so one spin-off from the initiative is that more women are also entering the profession.
- One of the long term goals of the project is specifically to ensure that planning professionals are more representative of the communities they serve in the hope that this promotes greater community involvement and understanding. It is also hoped that the status of the profession might rise amongst the ethnic minority community.
- One of the chief challenges has been to raise the awareness amongst ethnic minorities of planning as a career. More outreach work is needed.
- Finding employers to take on the trainees is also not always straightforward and there is a need to advertise and raise the profile. So far, there have only been two private sector firms participating.

Resources

Individuals are taken on for 3 years, placed with host employers and signed up for planning courses. PATH provides administration, monitoring and mentoring; the employer pays a training allowance and management fee to PATH (around £17-£20,000 per annum, including salary, training allowance and course fees), who in turn pay the trainees an allowance of £12,000-£14,000 net per annum.

As a demonstration of its commitment to this important initiative the ODPM gave a grant of £28,500 in 2004, an important start. The Planning Inspectorate has also made resources available to administer the scheme. PATH is trying to interest more regional development agencies and the London Development Agency

is now supporting the programme. A steering group oversees Tomorrow's Planners, with representation from PINS, ODPM, RTPI and planners from various sectors.

The programme is dependent on planning offices taking on trainees and supporting and supervising them. It is also dependent on a part-time postgraduate planning course being within traveling distance.

Participants' Quotes

"I would never have gone into the planning profession if it weren't for this programme, which I came upon by chance while surfing the internet. It might not be intentional, but planning can seem like a 'closed shop' to the outside world and people are not aware of the wide opportunities within the profession. People from ethnic minorities are unlikely to hear about planning at the moment through their families and friends. Meeting the other trainees, I was struck by the vast array of talent and experience and it was sad to hear about how hard it was to find jobs. This initiative is definitely important in terms of placing people in jobs and education to address gaps within the profession."

Jo Gay, trainee with Southwark Council

"Having studied geography, I was finding it hard to get a job and probably wouldn't have gone into planning if it weren't for this initiative, which I found on the Prospects website. I've found it very, very beneficial personally. I'm very much enjoying the variety of my job in the private sector and would encourage more employers to take on staff through this scheme so that ethnic minority planners are spread through every sector of the profession. It might be a small start now but in 10 years time representation would certainly be significantly better. I feel part of a team at work and am benefiting from good supervision and support. The planning course is going well, even though it's a lot to juggle."

Mongezi Ndlela, trainee with Planning, Transport and Environment Division of RPS Group

"Planning must connect with the communities it serves. It must understand the problems of those communities and have credibility within them. To do this we must redress the dramatic under-representation of ethnic minorities which demonstrably exists. Tomorrow's Planners shows that this is possible, though it is a long term project requiring hard work and commitment from

many people. We have already brought some first class people into the profession who would not otherwise have come into planning. But we need help from potential host organisations in order to continue the project. It is ambitious, but necessary.”
Chris Shepley, former Chief Planning Inspector, now Principal,
Chris Shepley Planning

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Good Practice Points: Organisational Culture, Recruitment, Employment and Staff Development

1. **Promoting an organisational culture** that celebrates diversity and which respects differences in the office as well as the community is essential.
2. Mainstreaming diversity depends on **staff attitudes, personal qualities and skills**, which can be positively identified and actively learned.
3. Where planning practice has been dominated by a traditional “we treat everyone the same” approach, **leadership from senior managers and elected members** to change the culture will be particularly important.
4. **Positive action** to recruit and promote people from diverse backgrounds is likely to result in better service delivery.
5. An understanding of diversity and equality and community engagement skills should be included in **job descriptions, personnel specifications** and tested at interview.

8. Monitoring

8.1 The Importance of Monitoring

- 8.1.1 Monitoring is essential. By collecting and analysing relevant data planning authorities can demonstrate that they deliver a fair service to everyone. Monitoring benefits and outcomes is an important management tool to evaluate the impact of services in a way that points to required action. Regular monitoring and review can help to identify barriers that need to be overcome and identify any changes in circumstances, which can sometimes happen rapidly. However, monitoring should never become an end in itself. Staff development might be required to help think creatively about how effective monitoring can be built into work practices. Planning authorities will be aware that such monitoring is being conducted throughout their authority.
- 8.1.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 imposes a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality. Under this general duty there are two specific requirements:
- a. A Race Equality Scheme must be produced, explaining how the organisation plans to meet its general duty, covering its functions and policies. The authority should assess and consult on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality, monitor its policies for any adverse impacts, publish the results, ensure public access to information and services, and train staff in the duties. (see www.cre.gov.uk/duty/duty_schemes.html)
 - b. Employment monitoring must take place with reference to racial groups, in terms of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion. If the authority has over 150 full-time staff, it must monitor the numbers of staff from different racial groups receiving training, benefiting or suffering detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures, being involved in grievance or disciplinary procedures, or ceasing employment. Results must be published annually.

8.2 Monitoring service delivery and employment

8.2.1 The Audit Commission suggests five critical factors for improving equality and diversity:

- **Commitment:** understanding the concept, owning and leading the work at the highest levels, and committing adequate resources;
- **Involving users:** consulting the actual and potential users about needs;
- **Mainstreaming:** integrating equality and diversity into day-to-day work and translating policy into practice;
- **Monitoring performance data:** ensuring that data gathering and analysis on equality and diversity is part of core performance monitoring systems;
- **Sustainability:** continuously keeping up the momentum to counter discrimination and promote diversity, reviewing performance and setting new targets (Audit Commission, 2002).

8.2.2 Measuring success in terms of outcomes lies at the heart of the Government's modernising local government agenda. Monitoring performance and evaluating outcomes underpins the Best Value process, identifying areas for improvement, including relevant targets. Best Value procedures require user satisfaction surveys every three years as a monitoring tool, identifying age, sex, ethnicity and disability. Seeking the views of service users is one important way to evaluate results on the ground and links in with messages about engagement in chapter 5. Hard to reach groups must be included. There are many ways to do this, including the use of focus groups, questionnaires and other forms of surveys. Gathering information on individuals' personal characteristics is sometimes a sensitive issue and needs to be handled carefully. One of the key aspects to any performance indicator is ensuring that data is collected in meaningful categories (e.g. ethnic minorities, sex, disabled people, age, sexual orientation) as stated in chapter 4.

- 8.2.3 Performance indicators can help monitor progress but, as many of the case studies show, involving the public in planning issues – including training and capacity building, results in outcomes that are often long-term and non-quantifiable.
- 8.2.4 There are a number of national publications that could help guide planners with monitoring exercises. The Audit Commission published **Equality & Diversity** in 2002, providing evidence that councils have a long way to go if they are to meet best value principles and statutory duties on equal opportunities, including the new duty to promote racial equality (Audit Commission, 2002). A follow-up report suggested performance indicators to help judge equality and diversity issues in both service delivery and employment generally across all local authority services (Ambrose, 2003).
- 8.2.5 The Local Government Equality Standard, introduced in 2002/03 is an online tool to help local authorities self-assess their level of achievement and promote the idea of mainstreaming equalities (see www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity). It was produced by the Employers Organisation for Local Government in conjunction with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It is now included as a Best Value Performance Indicator for 2003/04. The standard builds on the principles of quality, leadership and community involvement, aiming for a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equalities. The five levels are:
- Level 1: the authority has adopted a comprehensive equality policy including commitments to developing equality objectives and targets, to consultation and impact assessment, monitoring, audit and scrutiny;
 - Level 2: the authority has engaged in an impact needs assessment, a consultation process and an equality action planning process for employment and service delivery;
 - Level 3: the authority has completed the equalities action planning process, set objectives and targets and established information and monitoring systems to assess progress;
 - Level 4: the authority has developed information monitoring systems that enable it to assess progress towards achieving specific targets;

- Level 5: the authority has achieved targets, reviewed them and set new targets. The authority is seen as exemplary for its equality programme.

- 8.2.6 The ODPM published two documents in 2003 which include discussions of monitoring: **Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England** (ODPM 2003,c) and **Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England: A Literature Review** (ODPM 2003,e).

- 8.2.7 Another assessment tool promoted by the Cabinet Office is the Diversity Excellence Model (trade mark), which identifies, shares and promotes best practice (see www.cmps.gov.uk/diversity/default.asp).

- 8.2.8 The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published **Ethnic Monitoring: A Guide for Public Authorities** in 2002, giving useful advice about both service delivery and employment (CRE, 2002a). It makes the point that monitoring is not just about gathering statistics, it is about tackling any barriers or failures that the data has highlighted (CRE, 2002a, p. 7). Under planning, it recommends that consideration be given to monitoring planning applications and outcomes, types of application, objections, satisfaction levels and complaints by service users (CRE, 2002a, p. 79).

- 8.2.9 The CRE also published **Performance Guidelines for Local Authorities** (CRE, 2002b) which helps authorities assess how their policies and practices are impacting on ethnic minorities in comparison with the rest of the population. The CRE's **Ethnic Monitoring Good Practice** gives convincing arguments about the role and importance of monitoring (see www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/em.html).

- 8.2.10 The Equal Opportunities Commission provide advice on their website about good practice in promoting and monitoring sex equality, see www.eoc.org.uk/cseng/advice/service_delivery.asp. The Disability Rights Commission published **Monitoring the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Phase 3** in 2004 which gives pointers about what barriers exist and how they might be overcome.

- 8.2.11 Generally, diversity and equality monitoring within the planning service has been given insufficient attention. With new legislation, Best Value and the plethora of guidance, authorities have an opportunity to think about monitoring as part of mainstreaming

diversity. Monitoring community engagement will be an important part of the new **Statements of Community Involvement**. Planners need to continually ask themselves: Who is using the service and who is not? How do we know? Are there reasons that certain people are not engaging? If so, what actions may be taken to resolve this? This means that records need to be kept in a way that helps identify effectively who is participating and how this compares to who is in the community.

8.3 Case studies

- 8.3.1 It was difficult to find many case studies of effective monitoring procedures. Leicester is a good example of an authority that, for over 20 years, has been monitoring planning application decisions in terms of the ethnicity of the applicant and using the information to change policies and procedures where this is justified by the evidence. Data analysis was supplemented with research commissioned from the local university. Monitoring is therefore not just a paper exercise, rather it is an integral part of mainstreaming diversity.
- 8.3.2 Employment and staff development have been addressed as well as service delivery issues. Staff were trained in equality impact assessments as a monitoring technique and recently carried out an assessment of the house extension policy using this tool. Such assessments analyse the effects that policies are having on particular groups within the population to highlight whether needs are being met and if there are any planning issues requiring action.
- 8.3.3 The GLA case study in chapter 6 includes monitoring techniques. The GLA published a leaflet in 2003 on **Equality Impact Assessments: How to do them**. The guide defines the purpose of assessment as making sure that the work of the GLA is not discriminatory and where possible, promotes equality. The assessment is a tool to ensure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on Londoners and take action to improve strategies, policies and projects. There is a simple form to fill in with prompts about the purpose and activity of the policy, the beneficiaries, whether it might have a negative or positive impact on listed target groups, and needed improvements (see www.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/equalities/eq_impact_assess.pdf) Section 6.4 discusses audits as tools to help monitor impacts of policies on different people.

- 8.3.4 The GLA also monitor the composition of their workforce, including information about age, sexual orientation, sex, ethnicity and disability. They have set employment targets for all levels and pay grades for at least 52% women, 25% ethnic minorities and 10% disabled people, to reflect the resident community.
- 8.3.5 The Camden case study in chapter 6 discusses a new initiative to monitor who is making representations on planning applications by age, disability, sex and ethnicity in an effort to make this more representative of the population. A target has been introduced which aims to increase comments from ethnic minorities by 5% in one year. The Fenland case study, also in chapter 6, is an example of where an authority has set up ethnic monitoring of planning application approvals to monitor effects on Gypsies and Travellers.

Key message 14: Monitoring is a critical activity to help ensure that the new planning system is working, including assessing what benefits planning is having on different people in the community. Ongoing monitoring of the effects that policies and procedures are having on different people is essential for pointing the way to future action. Engaging different communities, including those that are hard to reach, should be an integral part of monitoring procedures for service delivery. Employment monitoring needs to be carried out in parallel.

There are a number of assessment tools that can be used, both corporately and at individual service level. Information needs to be sensitively collected and sufficiently disaggregated to be analysed in terms of different groups within the population.

Leicester: Monitoring of Planning Applications

Longstanding monitoring identifies recurring ethnic minority planning issues that are acted upon

Recognising diversity

- Leicester has a high ethnic minority population: 36%
- 30% of the population is Asian
- 26% of the total population are Indian (2001 Census)

As far back as the late 1970s the Planning Department became aware that a disproportionately high number of planning applications submitted by ethnic minorities were being refused.

Engaging with difference

The Planning Department has been monitoring refusal rates by ethnicity of applicants since the late 1970s to identify issues that can be proactively dealt with. They also commissioned De Montfort University to undertake more research on the issue. An ethnic monitoring form is sent to every applicant, treated confidentially, and used only in the compilation of global statistics. About 40% of applicants self-classify; the remainder are classified by officers on the basis of surname and other information available on the application form. This information is kept separate from the application but is cross referenced.

Many of the problems were found to relate to householder and business applications and the following steps were taken:

- Rather than refuse applications, more time was spent with applicants discussing what kind of development would be acceptable
- Leaflets were prepared and translated to provide advice
- Planners spoke at public meetings and on local Asian radio stations to discuss householder applications
- A policy was included in the local plan to retain larger properties and stop them being subdivided into flats to try to maintain the number of houses suitable for extended families
- Additional work was undertaken about places of worship
- Recruitment initiatives were put into place.

The monitoring of planning applications is part of a six-monthly report to key members of the Development Control and Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. Every Development Control Committee identifies those planning applications that have equal opportunities implications.

Positive outcomes

The proactive approach to dealing with householder, business and places of worship applications led to a reduction in the number of refusals because the community became more aware of what type of development was acceptable. There was also greater confidence in the planning system and knowledge that the recommendations and decisions were being made in a professional manner. The continued monitoring also highlighted issues such as the need for applicants to seek proper advice from agents and to improve the quality of their applications.

The monitoring of planning applications has led to a number of other successful initiatives:

Places of worship: The planning department took a proactive approach helping with site searches. The approach was structured, with the issuing of registration forms and checking the financial viability of groups. This promoted a greater understanding of the issues, in particular the need for a local facility to serve particular

faith communities. Planning policy was amended to permit the consideration of the development of places of worship on sites that had previously been reserved for employment uses. Postgraduate student research exploring housing aspirations of Asian families highlighted the importance of being located near a place of worship.

Business development: Research by a postgraduate student looking at planning for business in Leicester identified the need to improve the service delivery to businesses, particularly those run by ethnic minorities. The planning department appointed a specific officer to liaise with local businesses to try to meet their needs better.

Ethnic minority planners: The need to promote equal opportunities in delivery of the planning service was also extended to the planning workforce. A programme to employ more ethnic minority planners was operated for four years and resulted in eight planners being trained. This scheme finished when the funding source stopped.

Key lessons

- The evidence provided by long-term monitoring enabled informed policies and procedures to be developed and implemented. Consultation has been crucial.
- In addition to the monitoring, use has been made of academic research to inform practice, including research at PhD level, which gave a credible base for formulating appropriate policies.
- A proactive and professional approach to planning applications and siting of places of worship gave confidence in the planning system to the community, promoting trust.
- The initiatives were supported by chief officers and politicians who enabled them to be mainstreamed. The planning service has good links with the Council's Diversity Group. Leicester is now introducing Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) of Council policies. Several planning officers were trained in this technique and are producing an EqIA about house extensions.
- There are concerns that the continuing pressure for speed in decision making is reducing the trend to amend planning applications and this may be affecting Asian applications disproportionately.

Resources

An important element was political and chief officer support for the monitoring initiative and the promotion of equal opportunities generally. This helped the work to be mainstreamed into the daily work of the whole department.

The monitoring is undertaken by senior members of the planning team. In addition to the commissioned De Montfort study, the planning department has also used academic research by postgraduate students to inform their processes and policies.

Training in Equality Impact Assessments was provided by the Council centrally (Human Resources and Diversity Group).

Participants' Quotes

“We have to be able to demonstrate that we offer a professional planning service to all applicants. Planning for ethnic minorities and diversity needs to be part of the mainstream of the planning process backed by credible research and policy development – as would be the case with other areas of planning such as retailing or transport.”

Jeevan Dhesi, Senior Planner

“Although it is recognised that there will still be problems with conflicting land uses and planning objectives, the appointment of a specific officer to be the first point of contact for businesses has encouraged some to seek planning permission to expand and develop that would not have considered it before.”

Mr J Kapasi, Leicester Asian Business Association

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Good Practice Points: Monitoring

1. **Ongoing monitoring** procedures need to be built into office practice to help staff reflect about how policies and procedures are impacting on different people within the population in terms of outcomes.
2. **Involving different communities, including the hard to reach** must be an essential part of monitoring activity. Qualitative information is an important supplement to the more quantitative. Monitoring should be included in **Statements of Community Involvement**.
3. **Corporate monitoring** should go hand-in-hand with more localised activity. Equalities units and human resources should be able to provide guidance and advice.
4. **Data collection** is important and must be handled sensitively, because it is personal information. The Data Protection Act must be followed. Data must be sufficiently disaggregated to be analysed properly. Information about who is using services, giving views on planning applications and draft policies, etc. needs to be compared with statistics about who is in the area (see chapter 4).
5. **Employment data** also needs to be disaggregated and analysed to pinpoint any issues that need to be addressed, including recruitment, promotion, training, grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisals and dismissals.
6. **Monitoring should lead to action**. It should never be a 'piece of paper' exercise and should be linked with improvements to the service.
7. **Policy audits** and monitoring of **planning application refusals and approvals and enforcement action and complaints** in a structured way can monitor what effects policies have on different groups, pinpointing any discrimination and whether needs in the community are being met.
8. **Communication between policy and development control teams and with equalities sections and human resources** is likely to result in effective monitoring.

Good Practice Points: Monitoring continued

9. **Links** with other activities such as Best Value audits, statutory Race Equality Schemes, the Local Government Equality Standard and equality impact assessments can help mainstream diversity.

10. **Performance indicators and targets** reflecting key aims in mainstreaming diversity issues should be considered.

11. **Resources, including staff time and training** need to be made available for monitoring.

9. Learning and self-assessment

9.1 Checklist for self-assessment and action

9.1.1 The following checklist will help planning staff reflect on their own practice in relation to the good practice discussed in this Guide. The questions are intended to prompt action to remedy any deficiencies identified.

Organisational culture (see chapter 7)

1. Is there commitment to recognising and mainstreaming diversity issues amongst senior management, elected members and all staff?
2. What particular staff development needs have been identified to help mainstream diversity?
3. Is an understanding of diversity and community engagement included in all job descriptions and personnel specifications and incorporated into recruitment and promotion processes? Do staff possess the right understanding, skills, personal qualities and attitudes?
4. Are staff characteristics representative of the communities they serve in terms of ethnic make-up, gender and so on? Is there a need for positive action?
5. Have sufficient resources been identified for mainstreaming diversity, including accessible buildings for meetings and accessible information (e.g. alternative printed formats, foreign translations in line with ethnic make-up of the local population, etc.), staff and community development, sufficient and appropriate publicity, engagement activity, and so on?
6. Do staff understand the implications of equalities legislation and how it is changing and the implications for their daily work? Do they understand the differences between direct, indirect and institutional discrimination?

7. Have links been made with other parts of the Council (including any equalities section), outside agencies, regeneration initiatives, Planning Aid, national and local voluntary groups, etc. to share information, contacts and action points?
8. Is there a senior level champion for equality issues?
9. Does the authority have a vision for equality and diversity that runs through its plans and strategies?

Identifying who is in the community (see chapter 4)

1. Is there sufficiently up-to-date quantitative and qualitative information about the characteristics of who is in the community and how this might be changing?
2. Are statistics sufficiently disaggregated and cross-tabulated and other information gathered in a way to analyse how different people have different planning needs?

Community engagement (see chapter 5)

1. What sustained efforts have been made to engage with different people within the community, including people who don't usually get involved in planning? Do people understand what planning is and why it's important in their daily lives? Are they involved early enough to make a difference? How do their views influence results on the ground? Are staff acquainted with the wide range of methods of engaging with different people?
2. Are diversity issues included in the **Statement of Community Involvement**, including hard to reach groups, for both policy and development control?
3. Are links being made with relevant national and local groups and initiatives that might help engagement and establish links?
4. Are enough resources being identified, including staff time?
5. Is information clear, accessible and understandable to different people in the community? Is there a need for translation, interpretation or action to help people with various disabilities? Have new forms of IT been considered?

6. Are there procedures in place and staff with the necessary skills to mediate to resolve any conflicts?
7. Are efforts being made to train community people in planning and engagement to build long-term capacity to influence planning decisions and policy?

Policies and Procedures (see chapter 6)

1. Has there been an audit of policies, at regional and local scale in terms of their effects on different people in the community?
2. Do planners know what the needs of different people in the community are, and are they addressed in planning policy and development control decisions?
3. Do development control procedures include assessments or audits (including access audits) to help decision makers reflect on what impacts development might have on different people?
4. Does community engagement inform policies and procedures?
5. What supplementary planning guidance can help promote diversity and equality aims?

Monitoring service delivery and employment (see chapter 8)

1. Are there effective and continuous monitoring procedures in place for both service delivery and employment to assess impacts of policies and procedures on different people in the community? Is the right data being collected? Are there policy audits concerning different groups, analysis of development control decisions, equality impact assessments? Do policies and procedures discriminate against anyone, even unintentionally?
2. Are service users and hard to reach groups being asked in a structured way for feedback on how planning policies and procedures are working?
3. Is the right data being collected to monitor recruitment, promotion, retention and problems in employment?

4. Is the planning service contributing effectively to the Council's Race Equality Scheme? (see section 8.1.2)
5. How are diversity and equality issues incorporated into Best Value reviews?
6. Are there relevant performance indicators and targets, with timescales? Is there also recognition that some diversity and equality activity may be long term and the outcomes qualitative?

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www.london.gov.uk/londonissues/equalityanddiversity.jsp

Disability Guide:

www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/accessible_london.jsp

www.interactweb.org.uk (Brighton and Hove case study)

www.nifonline.org.uk ('Planning for Real' in Exmoor website)

www.pathuk.co.uk (Tomorrow's Planners Case Study)

www.stockwell.org.uk

Further Information

General Websites

ACAS: www.acas.org.uk includes employment information

Argent St George: www.argentstgeorge.co.uk (Kings Cross case study)

Audit Commission: www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Commission for Racial Equality, Ethnic Monitoring Good Practice:
www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/em.html

Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Human Rights' Unit:
www.dca.gov.uk/hract/hramenu.htm

Department of Trade and Industry, Employment Relations pages:
www.dti.gov.uk/er/index.htm

Department of Work and Pensions: www.dwp.gov.uk

Employers Organisation for Local Government: www.lg-employers.gov.uk
includes a section on diversity; www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity/consultancy.html is the Dialog consultancy service

Equality & Diversity Forum: www.equalitydiversityforum.org.uk

Greater London Authority (good example of mainstreaming):
www.london.gov.uk/londonissues/equalityanddiversity.jsp

Home Office: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Housing Corporation: www.housingcorp.gov.uk Under resources, bank of good practice, there is guidance on housing issues in relation to age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability.

IDeA: www.idea.gov.uk

Local Government Association: www.lga.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit: www.neighbourhood.gov.uk Includes Race Equality Action Plan, information on faith communities.

ODPM: www.odpm.gov.uk; this site has sections on planning, sustainable communities, social exclusion, local government, urban policy and housing

Planning Aid: www.rtpi.org.uk/about-the-rtpi/planning-aid/

Planning Officers' Society: www.planningofficers.org.uk – Best Value guidance to include section on diversity

Planning Portal: www.planningportal.gov.uk

Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk

RTPI: www.rtpi.org.uk Look under resources/panels for Equal Opportunities panels news

UK data navigator: www.epson.lu/projects

General Publications

Audit Commission (2002) **Equality & Diversity**, London, Audit Commission.

Audit Commission (2002) **Directions in Diversity**, London, Audit Commission.

Collier, Rohan (1998) **Managing Equality in Service Delivery**, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Department for Trade and Industry (2004) **Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights**, White Paper, Cm 6185.

DTI (2002) **Equality and Diversity: The Way Ahead**, London, DTI.

Employers Organisation for Local Government **Equality Standard for Local Government**, see <http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity>

GLA (2003) **Equality Impact Assessments: How to do Them**, London, GLA. www.london.gov.uk/gla/publication/equalities/eq_impact_assess.pdf

Home Office (1998) **Model Guidance for Officials on Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment**, London, HMSO.

Improvement & Development Agency (IdeA) (2003) **Building Equality into Best Value**, IdeA.

Local Government Association (2002) **Guidance on Community Cohesion**, London, LGA.

ODPM (2003) **Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England**, London, ODPM.

ODPM (2003) **Equality and Diversity in Local Government in England: A Literature Review**, London, ODPM.

ODPM (2003) **Participatory Planning for Sustainable Communities: International Experience of Mediation, Negotiation and Engagement in Making Plans**, London, ODPM.

ODPM (2003) **Working Towards Equality and Diversity in Local Government**, London, ODPM.

ODPM (2004) **Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives**, London, ODPM.

ODPM (2004) **Skills for Sustainable Communities**, RIBA, London (Egan Review).

ODPM (2005) **Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities**, London, ODPM.

RTPI (2001) **Code of Professional Conduct**, London, RTPI.

Sheffield Hallam University/ODPM (2004) **Planning and Diversity: Research into Policies and Procedures**, London, ODPM.

Disability Websites

Centre for Accessible Environments: www.cae.org.uk

Department of Work and Pensions: www.DWP.gov.uk,
www.disability.gov.uk

Disability Alliance: www.disabilityalliance.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission: www.drc-gb.org

MENCAP: www.mencap.com

Royal National Institute for The Blind (RNIB): www.rnib.org.uk

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID): www.rnid.org.uk

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation: www.radar.org.uk

Disability Publications

Disability Rights Commission (2001) **Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Code of Practice; Rights of Access, Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises**, The Commission, London.

Disability Rights Commission (2002) **What is an Inclusive Environment and How Can it be Achieved?** www.drc-gb.org

Disability Rights Commission (2004) **Creating Sustainable Communities: Report for Party Conferences 2004**, London, Disability Rights Commission.

Disability Rights Commission (2004) **Creating an Inclusive Environment**, London, Disability Rights Commission.

Disability Rights Commission (2004) **Towards Access Standards: The Work of Local Access Groups in England and Wales**, London, Disability Rights Commission. www.drc-gb.org

Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) (2003) **Inclusive Projects: A Guide to Best Practice on Preparing and Delivering Project Briefs to Secure Access**

GLA Disability Guide:
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds.accessible_london.jsp

ODPM (2003) **Planning and Access for Disabled People – A Good Practice Guide**, ODPM, London. Available from ODPM Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870-1226-236. Fax 0870-1226-237. Textphone: 0870-120-7405. E-mail: odpm@twoten.press.net

Ethnic Minorities Websites

Commission for Racial Equality: www.cre.gov.uk

Home Office: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/racerelate1.html

Runnymede Trust: www.runnymedetrust.org

Ethnic Minorities Publications

Audit Commission (no date) **The Journey to Race Equality**, London, Audit Commission.

CRE (2002) **The Duty to Promote Race Equality: A Guide for Public Authorities**, London, CRE.

CRE (2002) **Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality**, London, CRE.

CRE (2002) **Ethnic Monitoring: A Guide for Public Authorities**, London, CRE.

CRE (2002) **The Duty to Promote Race Equality: Performance Guidelines for Local Authorities**, London, CRE.

CRE (2004) **Gypsies and Travellers – A Strategy 2004-2006**, The Commission, London.
www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/docs/g&tstrategyfinal.doc

Home Office (2004) **Strength in Diversity – Towards Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy**,
www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/strengthindiversity.html

Krishnarayan, Vijay and Huw Thomas (1993) **Ethnic Minorities and the Planning System**, London, RTPI.

Loftman, Patrick and Mike Beazley (1998) **Race, Equality and Planning**, Local Government Association, London.

ODPM (2003) **Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England**, London, ODPM.

RTPI (1993) **Translation of Written Material into Ethnic Minority Languages**, London, RTPI.

RTPI (1996) **Dealing with Racist Representations**, RTPI, London.

RTPI (1998) **Feasibility Study into the Recruitment of Black and Ethnic Minorities into the Planning Profession**, RTPI, London.

Thomas, Huw (2000) **Race and Planning: The UK Experience**, London, Taylor & Francis. (includes a chapter on Gypsies and Travellers)

Faith Communities Websites

Home Office: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit website includes faith communities:
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/faith_communities.asp

Faith Communities Publications

Inter Faith Network (2003) **Partnership for the Common Good: inter faith structures and local government. Good Practice Guidelines**, Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the Local Government Association, Home Office, and Inner Cities Religious Council of ODPM.

Local Government Association (2002) **Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities**, LGA, London.

Women Websites

Equal Opportunities Commission website: www.eoc.org.uk

Fawcett Society: www.fawcettsociety.org.uk

Women's Design Service: www.wds.org.uk

Women and Equality Unit (part of the DTI):
www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk

Women Publications

Equal Opportunities Commission **Good Practice guide: service delivery** at http://www.eoc.org.uk/cseng/advice/service_delivery.asp

Greed, Clara (2003) **The Rocky Path: From Women and Planning to Gender Mainstreaming**, Centre for Environment and Planning, University of the West of England, Bristol, Occasional Paper 14.

Greed, Clara, Linda Davies, Caroline Brown and Stefanie Duhr (2002) **Report on Gender Auditing and Mainstreaming: Incorporating Case Studies and Pilots**, Bristol, University of the West of England.

RTPI (1995) **Planning for Women** Practice Advice Note 12, London, RTPI.

RTPI (2003) **Gender Equality and Plan Making, The Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit**, RTPI, London. www.rtpi.org.uk

Older People Websites

Age Concern: www.ace.org.uk

Help the Aged: www.helptheaged.org.uk

Older People Publications

Age Concern (2002) **Age Discrimination**, Policy Position Paper, September, at <http://www.ace.org.uk/AgeConcern/news670.htm>

Age Concern (2001) **Older People in the United Kingdom: Some Basic Facts**, Age Concern

Age Concern England (1998) **Age Discrimination: make it a thing of the past**, Age Concern

Help the Aged (no date) **Older People and Regional Assemblies: A Model for Putting Older People on the Regional Agenda**, Help the Aged, London. www.helptheaged.org.uk

Young People and Children Publications

Adams, Eileen and Ingham, Sue (1998) **Changing Places: Children's Participation in Environmental Planning**, London, Children's Society and Planning Aid for London.

Greater London Authority (2004) **Making London Better for all Children and Young People**, London, GLA. www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/children/docs/main.pdf

ODPM (2004) **Learning to Listen: Action Plan for Children and Young People**, London, ODPM.

Sexual Orientation Websites

Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk Campaigning organisation for gay men, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people

Sexual Orientation Publications

ACAS (2003) **Sexual Orientation and the Workplace: A Guide for Employers and Employees**, London, ACAS. See www.acas.org.uk

Glossary

This glossary is included to help promote understanding of key terms, not to be a definitive guide to words used in equalities legislation. See the section on Further Information for useful websites containing more detailed guidance.

Direct discrimination – To treat someone less favourably solely because of a certain characteristic

Diversity – A recognition that society, such as England today, is made up of many different people with crosscutting bases for identity, e.g. sex, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, faith group, marital status, class, lifestyle

Engagement – Entering into a deliberative process of dialogue with others, actively seeking and listening to their views and exchanging ideas, information and opinions, while being inclusive and sensitive to power imbalances

Equality – The aim of promoting fairness so that a high quality of life and access to opportunities are shared by all individuals, who live free from discrimination and are able to develop their full potential. An understanding of diversity promotes equality, recognising that people have different needs

Equality Impact Assessment – An evaluation tool which analyses the effect that a policy or procedure will have on a particular group of people to highlight whether their needs are being met and if there are any issues requiring further action; the tool promotes equality and makes sure there are no discriminatory effects

Indirect discrimination – To apply a rule or condition that is applied to everyone but can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people with a particular characteristic, to their disadvantage, when the rule or condition cannot be justified; this may be intentional or unintentional

Institutional discrimination – The collective and systematic failure of an organisation's structures, policies and/or practices to provide fair and equal treatment to a particular group of people, often without intention; it can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage certain people

Mainstreaming – Embedding something as an integral and systematic part of everyday routines, not seeing it as something extra

Mediation – A way of resolving disputes in which a person helps parties to try to reach a negotiated settlement

Monitoring – The process of regularly collecting, analysing and evaluating information to measure performance, progress or change

Positive action – Taking action to prevent or overcome past discrimination, aiming to ensure that all people can have access to employment, training and services on equal terms

Positive discrimination – Offering a service or job to someone solely because of a particular characteristic; the Disability Discrimination Act, in providing a duty to make reasonable adjustments, might be considered as positive discrimination but the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts make positive discrimination illegal unless (under certain sections of the Acts) it can be justified as a genuine occupational requirement or where there is evidence of under-representation of particular groups

Race Equality Impact Assessment – Under the general duty to promote racial equality, public authorities must monitor their policies, including employment, to assess their likely impact on race equality, including consulting groups that may be affected; these results should be included in the authority's Race Equality Scheme

Race Equality Scheme – A statutory duty on public authorities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to explain how they intend to meet the general duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups

Statement of Community Involvement – A key part of the new planning system envisaged in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, where every authority has a statutory duty to prepare a report stating their policy for involving different people in planning policy and consulting on planning applications. The Statement must recognise that different techniques are appropriate for different people and provide evidence that authorities are actively trying to engage with hard to reach groups

Targets – Qualitative or quantitative performance indicators or standards used as a monitoring tool that assess whether a particular goal is being achieved; this is different from 'quotas' which are the unlawful reservation or allocation of posts on the basis of personal characteristics

Abbreviations

AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

CPD – Continuing professional development

CTAC – Manchester Community Technical Aid Centre

CRE – Commission for Racial Equality

DETR – Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions

DOE – Department of the Environment

DRC – Disability Rights Commission

DTI – Department of Trade and Industry

DWP – Department of Work and Pensions

EqIA – Equality Impact Assessment

EOC – Equality Opportunities Commission

ECHR – European Convention on Human Rights

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

GLA – Greater London Authority

GOL – Government Office for London

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

IT – Information Technology

LCA – Landscape character assessment

LDF – Local Development Framework

LGA – Local Government Association

LPA – Local Planning Authority

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

M&S – Monitoring and Support

NRU – Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

ODPM – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

ONS – Office of National Statistics

PAL – Planning Aid for London

PATH – Positive Action Training Highway

PINS – Planning Inspectorate

PPG – Planning Policy Guidance

PPS – Planning Policy Statement

RRA – Race Relations Act

RSS – Regional Spatial Strategy

RTPI – Royal Town Planning Institute

SCI – Statement of Community Involvement

SDA – Sex Discrimination Act

SP – Stockwell Partnership

SPG – Supplementary Planning Guidance

SRB – Single Regeneration Budget

TTM – Testing the Mix

UDP – Unitary Development Plan

A key message in this Good Practice Guide is that planning for diversity is simply good planning. Another is that when they feel they are making a difference, people are keen to be involved in planning their own environments – and that includes those from hard to reach groups. Coming in the wake of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this Good Practice Guide should help local authorities to become more responsive to the needs of diverse communities, thus enabling them to achieve Best Value. It demonstrates through case studies the benefits of early and effective engagement between planners and the communities they serve. The importance of culture change in the planning profession is explained and there is also a brief overview of equalities legislation. Among the benefits, planners should be more able to play their part in the revival of the most deprived neighbourhoods, as well as the delivery of more sustainable planning outcomes.