

# Maldon District Council: Refreshed Equality Information

Second Edition 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012



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**The Equality Act 2010 [Specific Duties] Regulations 2011 brought a requirement for local authorities to publish equality information by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 and for that information to be refreshed at least annually.**

## 1. Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 brought with it a requirement that relevant local authorities publish equality information by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 and that information must be refreshed at least annually.

The specific guidance is as follows.

*Public authorities covered by the specific duties must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty.*

- *All listed bodies (except schools and pupil referral units) must do this by 31 January 2012, and at least annually thereafter.*

*The information must include information relating to people who share a relevant protected characteristic who are*

- *Its employees (for authorities with more than 150 staff)*
- *People affected by its policies and practices (for example, service users)*

Maldon District Council duly published its first document in January 2012 ([available here](#)) and went on to set its equality objectives as required in April 2012. Legally an update of that first document is required by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 but in order to fit in with the Council's action plan and timetable for equalities the Council is publishing the second document earlier than that deadline.

This earlier publication does mean that the comparison of data is difficult due to the different time periods being compared. However plans are in place for 2013/14 to ensure that data is collected and published in such a way so as to make comparisons easier.

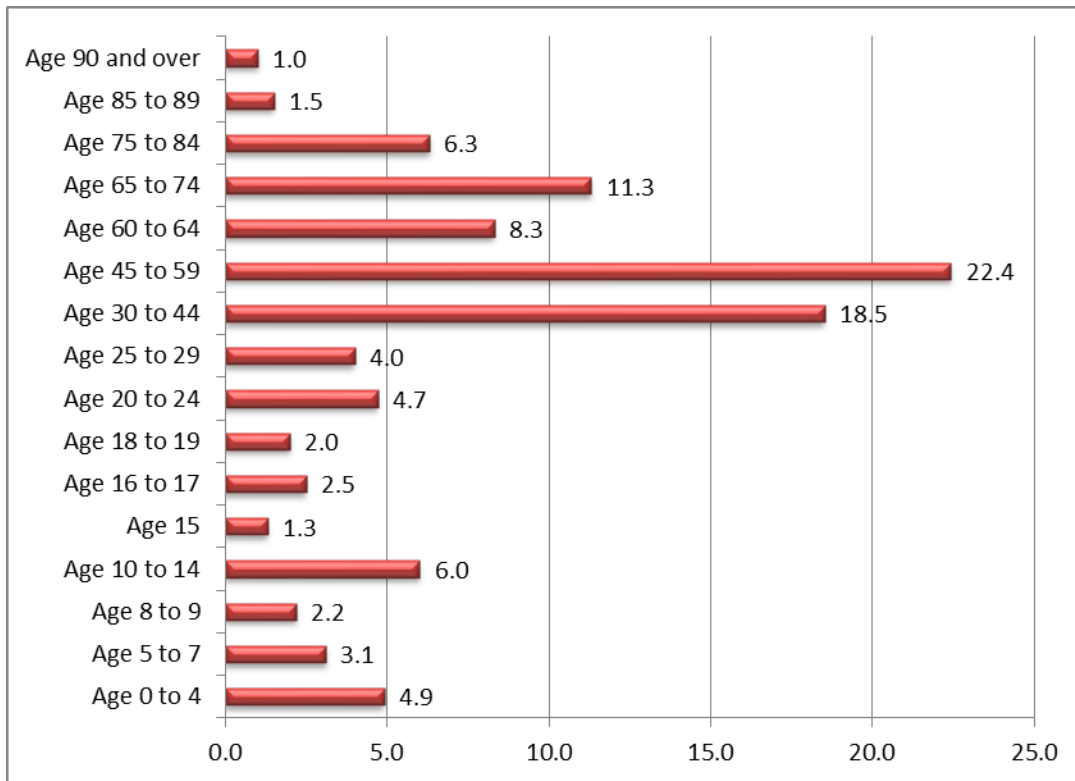
## 2. Our Population

Maldon is a coastal District with a small population spread over a geographically large area of 36,000 hectares. Some areas of the District are particularly rural and isolated which bring challenges for the populations there. The two highest areas of density are the market towns of Maldon and Burnham. The overall density of the population across the District is just 1.7 persons per hectare – one of the lowest population densities in the County.

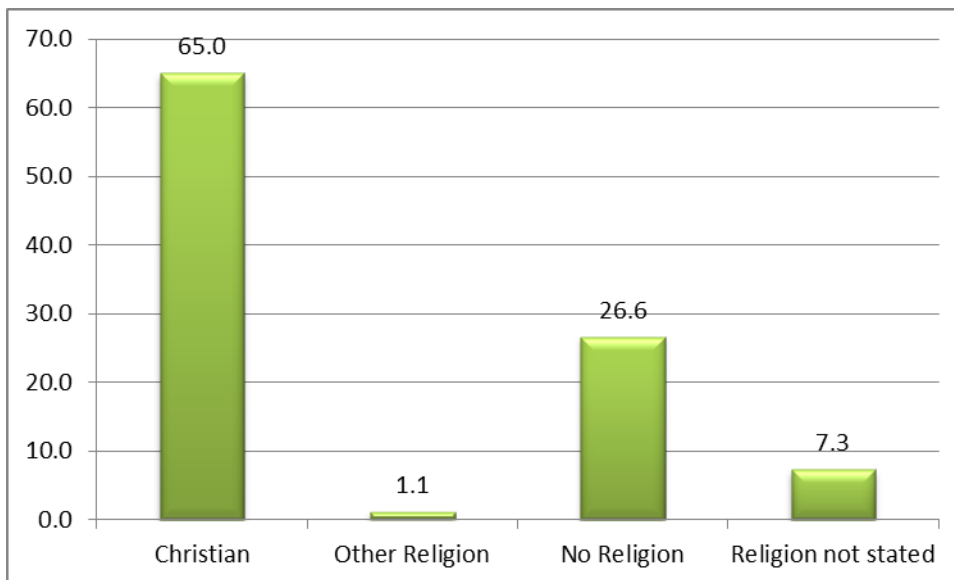
- According to the 2011 census the population of the Maldon District is 61,629 although all projections are that the figure is likely to increase to approximately 74,000 by 2035.
- There is a large population of older people within the District. 20.1% of the population (12,374 people) are aged 65 and over.
- 49% of the District's population is male and 51% is female.
- 95.8% of the population describes itself as White/British (White: English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British). 2.3% describe themselves as being within one of the other white categories (White: Irish, White: Gypsy or Traveller or White: Other White). The remaining percentage is split amongst the other various ethnic groups.
- 65% of the population describes itself as being Christian with 26.6% selecting 'No Religion'.

The charts below show populations in the Maldon District by percentage.

### Age

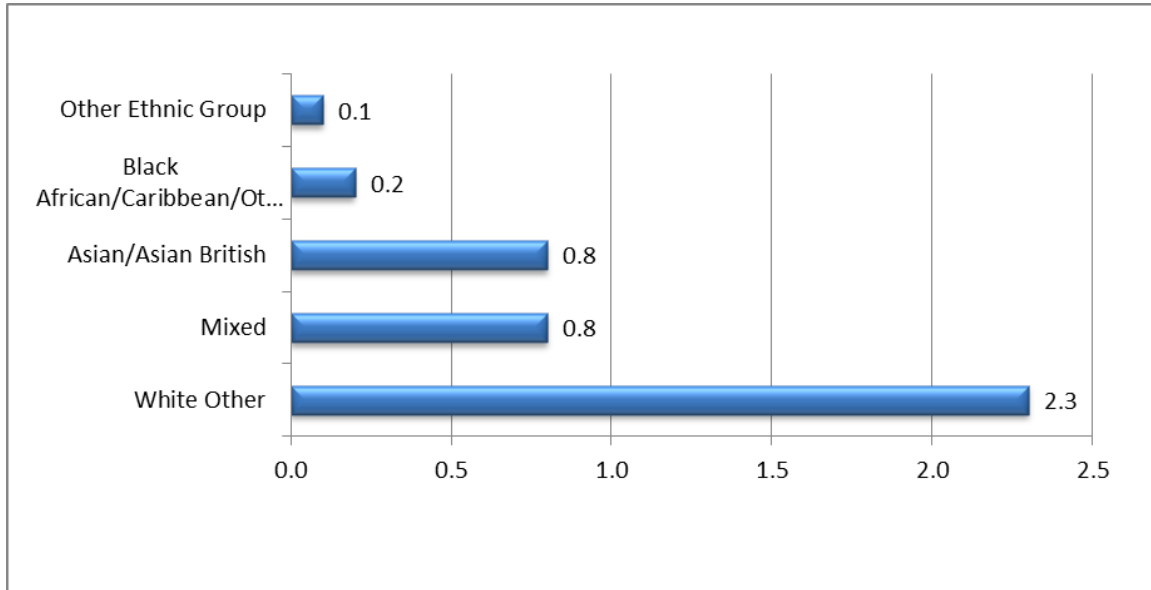


### Religion



## Ethnicity

95.8% of the District's population describes itself as being White British (English/Welsh/Scottish or Northern Irish). This is a fall from 96.1% that was previously recorded (source Essex Insight). The demographics of the remaining ethnic groups are broken down as follows.



Source: 2011 Census data

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-286262>

## 3. Our Customers

The Equality Act states that the Council must publish information on “people affected by its policies and practices (for example service users) and the published guidance goes on to explain that this might include ‘people who are using its services and their levels of satisfaction’.

The following section therefore outlines information about who our customers are and their levels of satisfaction with Council Services.

- **Customer Service** – The number of people accessing the Council's Customer Contact Service (which deals with the majority of enquiries at first contact) is at follows. No demographic information is gathered about customers at this point, so this information cannot be disaggregated.

The number of telephone calls received to the Council has increased in the early part of 2012. This is because of a change to the Council's Refuse and Recycling contractor which generated a great number of queries and requests.

## Telephone Calls

	2011	2012
January	8396	8260
February	7282	7980
March	10061	9179
April	9334	15694
May	8649	10440
June	8213	9044
July	8114	9116
August	8357	9263
September	8969	8162
October	8055	9482
November	7578	8341
December	5879	
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,887 (12 mnths)</b>	<b>104,961 (11 mnths)</b>

## Visits in Person

	2011	2012
January	490	513
February	721	418
March	729	757
April	459	531
May	451	547
June	528	453
July	490	495
August	527	424
September	585	462
October	525	538
November	508	461
December	368	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,381 (12 mnths)</b>	<b>5,599 (11 mnths)</b>

- **Complaints and Compliments**

Service Area	Compliments Recorded		Complaints Recorded	
	01 July 2011 – 20 Dec 2011	21 Dec 2011 – 30 June 2012	01 July 2011 – 20 Dec 2011	21 Dec 2011 – 30 June 2012
Customer and Democratic Services	19	8	9	10
Environment Services	4	10	27	110
Financial Services	1	0	1	0
Housing, Revenues and Benefits	5	7	9	14
Leisure and Community	9	8	12	16
Organisational Development	0	0	3	2
Planning Services	4	0	37	29
Chief Executive	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>181</b>

The Council records corporately the number of complaints and compliments made for the seven service areas of the Council. At the moment no demographic information is collected with regard to the customers making these compliments or complaints, so this information cannot be disaggregated. However, plans are in place to improve this situation so that complaints can be disaggregated in future.

There has been a sharp rise in the number of complaints in the first period of 2012. This was predominantly because of a rise in the number of complaints generated by the new Refuse and Recycling contract which came into force in April 2012.

- **Translations** - The Council receives only a very small number of requests for translation services for customers. In the past year there have been no requests for translations.
- **Community Safety** – The Council’s Community Safety team works to ensure that the District remains a safe place to live, work and visit. They work closely with the Police and other relevant agencies to monitor activity in the District. The team can report that there have been no instances of hate crime and 17 cases of anti-social behaviour in the past year.
- **Benefits Service - Satisfaction Levels (April 2011 to April 2012)**

The Council's Benefits Service carries out regular customer satisfaction surveys which show very high levels of customer satisfaction for the service received. Demographic information is also collected to show who our customers are and that is included below.

The following table shows data for the time period of April 2011 to April 2012 on the levels of satisfaction with the benefit service. During that time, 113 responses were received.

The previous Equality Information document showed results for a longer time period (July 2009 to April 2011) and therefore only percentages are compared in this table. Levels of satisfaction from the first analysis are therefore shown in brackets in red below.

Compared to the statistics published previously the table shows an improvement in customer satisfaction across the board for benefits, in each of the questions asked. The question “How clear and easy to read is our information” shows a particularly big improvement jumping from 66.7% to 80.5% responding ‘very clear’. This is particularly relevant and important as it shows an improvement in the clarity of the benefits information. Providing clear information will be better for customers across the board but is likely to particularly help people who are older or younger, whose first language isn’t English or people who have a learning difficulty.

**Benefits Satisfaction Levels**

	<b>Very</b>	<b>Quite</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Not particularly</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
Overall	647	28	1	2	0
	95.4% (90.3%)	4.1% (7.0%)	0.1% (1.4%)	0.3% (0.6%)	0.0% (0.2%)
How easy was it to claim benefits from us?	108	5			
	95.6% (87.8%)	4.4% (8.4%)	(1.7%)	(1.0%)	(0.5%)
How helpful were we?	113				
	100% (97%)	(1.7%)	(0.2%)		(0.2%)

How polite were we?	113				
	100% (98.3%)	(1.0%)			(0.2%)
How fairly did we treat you?	112	1			
	99.1% (97.5%)	0.9% (1.7%)			(0.2%)
How clear and easy to read is our information?	91	19	1	2	
	80.5% (66.7%)	16.8% (25.1%)	0.9% (5.2%)	1.8% (2.5%)	
How satisfied are you with our Benefits Service?	110	3			
	97.3% (94.3)	2.7% (4.0%)	(1.2%)		

### Benefits Diversity Monitoring

<b>Gender</b> (113 responses)	
Male	41 (36.3%) (40%)
Female	72 (63.7%) (60%)

<b>Age</b> (112 responses)	
Under 18	1 (0.9%) (1.2%)
18-24	15 (13.3%) (11%)
25-34	24 (21.2%) (19%)
35-44	27 (23.9%) (20%)
45-54	15 (13.3%) (18%)
55-64	22 (19.5%) (16%)
65-74	7 (6.2%) (8%)
75+	1 (0.9%) (5.8%)

<b>Ethnicity</b> (112 responses)	
White: British	106 (95%) (98%)
White: Irish	3 (2.7%) (<1%)
Other White	2 (1.8%) (<1%)
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	0
Mixed: White and Black African	1 (<1%)
Mixed: White and Asian	0 (<1%)
Other Mixed	0 (<1%)
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0 (<1%)
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	0 (<1%)
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0
Other Asian	0
Black or Black British: Caribbean	0
Black or Black British: African	0
Other Black	0
Chinese	0

<b>Disability</b> (111 responses)	
Yes	7 (6.3%) (16%)
No	104 (93.6%) (84%)

<b>Sexuality</b> (108 responses)	
Bisexual	0
Lesbian	0
Gay	0 (<1%)
Heterosexual	108 (100%) (99%)

<b>Faith/Belief</b> (111 responses)	
Buddhist	0 (<1%)
Christian	50 (45%) (41%)
Hindu	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	0
Sikh	0
No religion	61 (55%) (58%)

### Environment Services Diversity Monitoring

The Environment Services Team carries out satisfaction surveys and gathers monitoring information on the responses. The monitoring information is included below with last year's figure included in red for comparison.

<b>Gender</b> (75 responses)	
Male	27 (36%) (40%)
Female	48 (64%) (60%)

<b>Age</b> ( 75 responses)	
Under 16	1 (1%)
16-24	2 (2.5%) (2%)
25-44	28 (37%) (8%)
45-64	28 (37%) (47%)
65+	16 (21%) (43%)

<b>Ethnicity</b> (72 responses)	
White: British	70 (97%) (98%)
White: Irish	1 (1.5%)
Other White	
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	(2%)
Mixed: White and Black African	1 (1.5%)
Mixed: White and Asian	
Other Mixed	
Asian or Asian British	
Black or Black British	
Chinese	



<b>Disability</b> (60 responses)	
Yes	9 (15%) (18%)
No	51 (85%) (82%)

<b>Sexuality</b> (35 responses)	
Bisexual	
Lesbian	
Gay	
Heterosexual	31 (89%)
Prefer not to say	4 (11%)

<b>Faith/Belief</b> (31 responses)	
Buddhist	1 (3%)
Christian	21 (68%)
Humanist	1 (3%)
No religion	8 (26%)

### **Housing Service**

The Housing Service helps a high number of customers ever year. At the time of preparing this document 1697 people were on the Choice Based Lettings list waiting for a property and 182 customer enquiries were responded to by the Housing options team. The team currently refers to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to gather its demographic information and is aware that the District's ageing population is an issue to be prepared for. The plan is to continue to strengthen the demographic information that is held.

## **5. Our Employees**

It's important for the Council to understand the demographics of its workforce. Doing so helps the Council to make appropriate strategic and planning decisions when drawing up policies and procedures regarding its workforce. It also helps the Council to monitor whether the workforce is representative of the population of the District.

The Equality Act also requires that the Council must publish information on its employees and therefore the following section outlines relevant information about the Council's workforce.

The statistics used below are those available at the time of preparation of the two documents. Therefore **Year 1** shows the statistics available at quarter three of 2011/12 and **Year 2** shows statistics for quarter 2 of 2012/13. This therefore does not compare exactly 'like for like' but it gives an indication and arrangements have been put in place to ensure better comparisons for the future.

Last years figures are again shown in brackets in red

### **Total Number of Staff**

Number of Staff	224 (210)
FTE	192.02 (183.78)

## Gender

	Male	Female
Full Time (F/T)	73 (32%) (33%)	80 (36%) (35%)
Part Time (P/T)	9 (4%) (4%)	62 (28%) (28%)
	82	142

## Age Analysis – Male Staff

	FT	PT	Total
16-25	5	2	7 (9%) (8%)
26-35	17	0	17 (21%) (19%)
36-45	14	2	16 (19%) (18%)
46-55	20	1	21 (26%) (29%)
56-65	17	3	20 (24%) (24%)
65+	0	1	1 (1%) (1%)
	73	9	82 (78)

## Age Analysis – Female Staff

	FT	PT	Total
16-25	10	3	13 (9%) (10%)
26-35	22	8	30 (21%) (19%)
36-45	22	20	42 (30%) (29%)
46-55	21	19	40 (28%) (29%)
56-65	5	12	17 (12%) (13%)
65+	0	0	0
	80 (56%)	62 (44%)	142 (132)

## Ethnicity

White British / Irish / Other	204 (91%) (92%)
Mixed Ethnic Origin	(0.5%)
Asian	2 (1%) (1%)
Black	0
Chinese	2 (1%) (1%)
Other Ethnic Group	2 (1%) (5%)
Did not say	14 (6%)
TOTAL	224

## Salary Analysis

*N.B. Full-time equivalent salary is used for part-time staff*

### Salary Analysis – Male Staff

	Year 2		
	F/T	P/T	Total
£10 – 15,000	4	0	4 (5%) (1%)
£15 – 20,000	18	5	23 (28%) (29%)
£20 – 25,000	14	2	16 (19%) (17%)
£25 – 30,000	10	2	12 (15%) (14%)
£30 – 35,000	5	0	5 (6%) (5%)
£35 – 40,000	11	0	11 (13%) (15%)
£40 – 50,000	4	0	4 (5%) (6%)
£50 – 60,00	6	0	6 (7%) (6%)
£60,000 +	1	0	1 (1%) (3%)
Apprentice			0 (3%)
	73	9	82 (78)

### Salary – Female Staff

	Year 2		
	F/T	P/T	Total
£10 – 15,000	2	7	9 (6%) (7%)
£15 – 20,000	9	14	23 (16%) (26%)
£20 – 25,000	32	28	60 (42%) (37%)
£25 – 30,000	22	11	33 (23%) (17%)
£30 – 35,000	3	1	4 (3%) (3%)
£35 – 40,000	7	0	7 (5%) (5%)
£40 – 50,000	1	1	2 (1.5%) (1.5%)
£50 – 60,00	2	0	2 (1.5%) (2%)
£60,000 +	2	0	2 (1.5%) (1.5%)
Apprentice			
	80	62	142 132

## Recruitment

Candidates Ethnic Group - Applied		
White British / Irish / Other	244	91% (88%)
Mixed Ethnic Origin	5	2% (2%)
Asian	2	1% (3%)
Black	7	3% (5%)
Chinese	0	0% (0.5%)
Other Ethnic Group	9	3% (0.5%)
Not Disclosed	0	0% (1%)
Total	267	

Candidates Ethnic Group - Recruited		
White British / Irish / Other	15	93.75% (100%)
Mixed Ethnic Origin		

Asian		
Black	1	6.25%
Chinese		
Other Ethnic Group		
Not Disclosed		
Total	16	

<b>Disability</b>		
Candidates Applied	13	* 5% (*11%)
Candidates Appointed	1	* 0.5%

\* Percentage of total number of candidates

<b>Gender – Candidates Applied</b>		
Male	159	* 59% (* 38%)
Female	108	* 41% (* 62%)

\* Percentage of total number of candidates

<b>Gender – Candidates Appointed</b>		
Male	6	* 2% (* 1%)
Female	10	* 3% (* 4%)

\* Percentage of total number of candidates

<b>Age Range of Candidates – Applied</b>		
16-25	91	34% (30.5%)
26-35	73	27.5% (26.5%)
36-45	48	18% (17.25%)
46-55	36	13.5% (17.25%)
56-65	11	4% (8%)
65+	0	0 (0%)
Not disclosed	8	3% (0.5%)
	267	
<b>Age Range of Candidates – Appointed</b>		
16-25	2	12% (12.5%)
26-35	3	19% (62.5%)
36-45	3	19% (25%)
46-55	8	50%
56-65	0	
65+	0	
Not disclosed	0	
	16	

## 6. Equalities Progress – Supporting our Community

A number of initiatives have been instigated over the past year with an equalities emphasis. These range from corporate initiatives that help to guide the Council's strategic approach to equalities to practical, hands-on initiatives that help our customers and our community.

As detailed in this report, the District of Maldon has a population with a high proportion of older people and an ageing population. This trend is expected to continue, therefore age is a protected characteristic that the Council focuses its resources on.

### Corporate Initiatives

- The Council's Corporate Equality Policy has been updated and republished.
- The Council's Equality Analysis template has been amended so that it reflects best practice and is fit for purpose. In this way the template guides staff when carrying out impact assessments.
- Taking equalities into account during the decision making process has been strengthened. Equalities is now a specific field on the Committee report template to be completed plus the Committee Services team now specifically question report authors whether a separate equality impact assessment is required. In this way, the requirement to consider equalities during the decision making process is emphasised and reiterated to all report authors and it also ensures that Councillors are aware of equalities implications when making decisions.
- Councillors have been updated on Equality requirements and progress on a regular basis through reports to Full Council and through updates in the Members Bulletin. Similarly, regular updates on equalities are provided to staff through the Council's intranet site.
- An Equality Action Plan has been drawn up and is being used to guide the Council's progress towards equalities.
- The Council holds regular Managers' Forum meetings to ensure that corporate messages and information is shared and communicated. Each of the Managers' Forum meetings has had an update on equalities to ensure that Managers are aware of their responsibilities under the Act.
- The Council is working to target services to those people who need them the most. This ensures that the Council makes the best use of its limited resources and that services that are delivered are as effective and efficient as possible. This is a new project so more progress can be reported in future updates.
- The Council website has been updated to explain why the Council collects monitoring information and what it is used for. Work is also underway to expand the monitoring information that is collected, for example to the complaints process, in order that further analysis can be undertaken. Having comprehensive monitoring information will ensure that the Council understands both its community and its customers.
- The Council set its equality objectives in April 2012 and these are around examining the issues that affect the protected characteristics in the District. The work involves having discussions with community groups in the area to discuss what they perceive the issues to be, and using that information to make forward plans. Looking at the issues in this way will enable the Council to make better informed equality decisions in the future. It is planned that

the outcome of this research will be used to inform an equality action plan and this will be drawn up in the first half of 2013.

### **Customer Services**

- Moat Housing and Job Centre Plus have both physically located staff within the Council offices. The Citizens' Advice Bureau is also located on site. Having these services co-located and working in partnership in this way allows our customers to access numerous services from one location. This is not only convenient and cost effective for all customers it is also particularly helpful for those customers who are older, who have disabilities and also for new mothers. At the time of preparing this document, the co-location arrangement was a new one and therefore there were no statistics available on usage of the services or of satisfaction levels.
- The Council's Customer Service Advisors have received training in helping customers with Learning Disabilities. This provides staff with the knowledge and skills to provide excellent customer service to people with disabilities, covering things like the best ways to communicate and the best ways to respond to customers with particular needs. The training will further enhance the excellent customer service that the team already provides and will ensure that the team continues to deliver excellent customer service.
- One staff member has also attended Disability Awareness training to ensure a better understanding of how to help people with disabilities. This knowledge will be disseminated across the organisation.

### **Housing**

- The Housing team have run a very successful Welcome Homes event. The aim was to promote better awareness of housing options for older people amongst providers of services relating to housing as well as to customers. The event was very successful and it will be run again and even extended next year.
- Meeting the housing need of older people in the District is a key strategic priority for the team as it has recognised the demographic data showing how the population is ageing. The Housing Team is also reviewing the information that it holds on gypsy and traveller families in the District in order that this information can be used in its strategic planning for the future.
- The Housing Team is part of the Greater Haven Gateway Housing Equality and Diversity sub-group. This group meets quarterly to discuss equality and diversity issues in the Housing sector and to share best practice.

### **Community Safety – Spooky Sport and Safe Supper Event**

- The District has an ageing population and although crime levels in the District are very low, there can be a fear of crime. Halloween can be a particularly difficult time for older residents when the perception of antisocial behaviour increases. The community safety team therefore took a proactive approach in 2012 by running a Fish and Chip Supper for older people. Entertainment and refreshments were provided along with transport to and from the event. This gave older people an opportunity to be in a safe environment at a time when they might be nervous of possible anti-social behaviour. Further, young people from the District served the fish and chips to help to build positive relationships between the two groups.

- The feedback from the event has been extremely positive and a number of thank you letters have been received. The event will be run again next year and if resources allow will be expanded.
- The community safety team also ran an 'Urban Fright Night' on 31<sup>st</sup> October. This provided young people with activities such as free running and boxing which provided diversionary activities for young people. This overlapped with the Fish and Chip Supper allowing the older and younger people to enjoy Halloween together and again build positive relationships.
- The aim of the two events was to enforce community spirit, reduce the fear of crime, build relationships between the two age groups and to dispel some of the myths surrounding young people and anti-social behaviour.

### **Council Tax Benefit Reform**

- In common with all local authorities, Maldon District will be facing the challenge of Welfare Benefit Reform. This will bring a number of changes and in particular the first stage brings changes to Council Tax Benefit. There is a requirement that Councils introduce their own Council Tax Benefit scheme as well as making savings. Because of this, in April 2013 a new scheme will be introduced that is likely to have a real impact on customers.
- The Council has been conscious that this change is going to have an impact on customers and therefore has been proactive in preparing for the Council Tax Benefit reform. This has included carrying out a public consultation exercise and in particular proactively contacting those customers likely to be affected to discuss with them the impact of the change and also other ways that they can get help. The efforts to engage with customers has included contacting them direct by telephone to discuss the issues.

## **6. Next Steps**

The Council is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and also to understanding and helping its community and customers. In fact, the Council has a core value of "Customers First" and a section in its Corporate Plan on Equalities. Work on delivering the equality objectives and on embedding equalities throughout the organisation therefore continues. A number of plans for the coming year are therefore already underway and are summarised below.

- The Council will be building upon the work carried out around its equality objectives. This is a piece of work where the Council is looking at the issues surrounding the different protected characteristics in the District in order to plan improvements in the area. The first stage has been to consult with people in the area in order to understand their views of what would be helpful and needed in the area. The next step will be to draw conclusions from the consultation and draw up a plan of equalities actions for the District as a result. This work is focussing on the protected characteristic of age, as the population of the District is ageing and this is most relevant for the District.
- Equalities refresher training is planned for all staff through the Council's forthcoming e-learning system. This will be an interactive system designed to ensure that all staff are aware of the equalities requirements and that their knowledge is refreshed. It is also important that all staff members understand the impact of equalities in their service area and the way that equalities needs to be included within the decision making process. The training will be

mandatory so that all staff must complete it.

- The Council is carrying out a survey to inform its leisure provision and the future delivery of its Leisure Centres. As this is such an important issue with an impact on the community, special arrangements are being put in place to ensure that equalities are fully covered within the arrangements. Therefore the questionnaire will be targeted to all sectors of the community and special efforts will be made to ensure that the results are demographically sound. This will include the usual routes of approaching relevant community groups but additional efforts will be made such as visiting railway stations to target commuters and supermarkets to target shoppers. Efforts such as these will ensure that all of the protected characteristics are reached and represented within the exercise.
- The successful Welcome Homes event will take place again in 2013 and will be extended to take place in a second venue.
- The Council's Human Resources team will establish a new system of gathering and monitoring demographic information about the Council's staff and job applicants in order that this can be monitored. A full year of data can then be published in the next annual update.
- There are plans for demographic information to be included within the Council's Compliments and Complaints forms so that for the first time there can be an understanding of which sectors of the community feel the need to complain to the Council and also to understand if there are any themes in the complaints that are being made.
- Signage at the Council buildings will be produced with Braille alternatives to help blind and partially sighted customers visiting the Council.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Council has embraced the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and is making good progress in its equality work. Equalities is embedded in the decision making process and a number of initiatives are being undertaken which have an equality focus and drive forward the equality agenda.

The Council has recognised that the District of Maldon has an older population and also that the age profile of the District is expected to continue to change towards the older age range.

However, despite the good progress there is always room for improvement and therefore the Council has plans in place for the next steps over the coming year in order to further strengthen its approach to equalities.

## **8. Review Date**

This document will be reviewed annually – therefore an update will be published on or before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014.