

Meeting of the Cabinet – 31st October 2012

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources

Annual Review of Equality 2012

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the annual review of equality and diversity for 2012, a full copy of which is available in the Members' room and electronically on the Council's committee management information system (CMIS).

Background

2. An annual review of equality is prepared for the Cabinet which gives an overview of progress in implementing equality objectives and progressing equality work. The draft review was circulated to the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education scrutiny committee for its meeting on 10th September 2012, in accordance with its lead scrutiny role on corporate equality issues
3. The 2012 review highlights the continuing implementation of equality legislation arising from the Equality Act 2010 and Government plans for reviewing how the legislation is working in practice. The review reports on action that continues to be taken in response to brief and train employees, update policies and other documents and to respond to the implications for the council's services and employment of staff.
4. The review has previously met the various legal requirements for annual reporting of progress on a public authority's race, disability and gender equality schemes. These documents, and the reporting of progress on them, are no longer explicit legal requirements. However, a new equality scheme for the council was drawn up and approved by the Cabinet in March 2012. This sets out the equality objectives that the council has identified and also contributes to the publishing of equality information which are both requirements of the specific equality duties under the Equality Act.

5. The review contains an initial progress report on the identified equality objectives, although it is too early in the life of the equality scheme to be able to report comprehensive progress. Data and analysis relating to the council's workforce and employment record are also included, again contributing to the requirements for the publishing of equality information.

Finance

6. Any costs which might be associated with responding to the issues raised in the report which cannot be met from within existing budgets will need to be assessed in due course.

Law

7. The Equality Act 2010 replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The first duties of the Act came into force on 1st October 2010.
8. Public sector equality duties under the Act came into force on 5th April 2011 requiring public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations covering the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
9. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 required public authorities to publish equality information by 31 January 2012 and equality objectives by 5th April 2012.

Equality Impact

10. The review contains a range of information, monitoring data and analysis relating to the impact of the Council's policies and practices on promoting equality and the achievement of equality objectives in relation to both services and employment. More information is given in the Directorate of Children's Services annual equality and diversity action plans and reports on the promotion of equality relating to children and young people.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that Members approve the annual review of equality 2012.



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List of Background Papers

Audit Commission 2007/08 and previous years' quartile statistics
Dudley MBC employment monitoring data