

Chief Executive's Directorate

Annual Equality Action Plan 2013/14

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Directorate action plans make an important contribution to implementing the Council's equality policy by making sure that all directorates have a continuing focus on advancing equality through the services for which they are responsible and amongst their employees. Production of the plans form part of the commitments set out in the council's equality scheme.
- 1.2 The Chief Executive's Directorate's plan is circulated to the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee, before being approved by the Leader of the Council.
- 1.3 All directorates also produce equality annual reports on the progress achieved through their equality action plans. These are prepared at the end of the financial year, in order to reflect a full year's activity, and circulated to the relevant scrutiny committee at its first meeting of the municipal year.
- 1.4 This action plan covers the period from April 2013 to March 2014 and contains:
 - an explanation of its relationship with other plans
 - a summary of the directorate's equality vision and values, roles and responsibilities
 - key issues and targets for the plan
 - the action plan
- 1.5 The action plan has again been drawn up against the background of the directorate continuing to need to deliver budget reductions as part of the council's overall savings package. As in recent years these may have some impact on the delivery of the plan during 2013/14.

2. Relationship with other plans

- 2.1 Key elements from this action plan will be incorporated in the overall strategic plan for the Chief Executive's Directorate for 2013/14, which in turn feeds into the three year Council plan.

- 2.2 The council's equality scheme sets out the overall approach to advancing equality across the organisation. An equality scheme for 2012-15 was approved by the Cabinet in March 2012. This contains overall equality objectives for the council in line with the specific public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.3 Council-wide progress on equality is summarised each year in the annual review of equality, which is circulated to the Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee (as the scrutiny committee with responsibility for corporate equality issues) and the Cabinet for approval.

3. Vision and Values

- 3.1 The role of the Chief Executive's Directorate is:

“to promote a high performing, customer-focused Council, with accessible, quality public services that measurably improve the quality of life. We aim to achieve this through: corporate leadership and direction, developing our staff, and developing collaborative partnerships that make a difference.”

- 3.2 As at April 2013, the Chief Executive's Directorate includes the following sections:

- Community safety
- Corporate policy and research/customer access to services
- Elections and electoral registration
- Communications and public affairs
- Credit union
- Office of public health

- 3.3 The directorate takes a lead on corporate equality issues, incorporating overall policy development and the provision of advice and support, but working closely with the Corporate Resources Directorate on equality employment and training issues across the council. It will continue to provide strategic information to support equality planning and impact assessment processes across the council and be a key player in partnership work to promote equality.
- 3.4 The directorate ensures that it continues to focus on equality through the action planning and reporting process, designating responsibility for actions to

particular staff, completing impact assessments and reviewing policies, undertaking engagement activities and continuing training and development.

- 3.5 The directorate aims to mainstream equality so responsibility for promoting equality in employment and services rests with all heads of service. However, a principal officer within the Corporate Policy and Research Team is responsible for overall equality policy development work on behalf of both the council and the directorate. This includes the preparation, monitoring and review of the action plan.
- 3.6 All employees have a responsibility to comply with the requirements of the equality policy in all dealings with elected members, other employees, job applicants, residents, service users and other members of the public, and with other organisations. Training and development needs of employees in the directorate are identified in annual performance review and development discussions with their line managers.
- 3.7 Given that the responsibilities for public health are transferring to the council, the Office for Public Health is being established within the Chief Executive's Directorate. Tackling health inequalities is a key task of Public Health. In 2013/14 the Office of Public Health will be producing its equality action plan to supplement this plan.

4. Key issues and targets

- 4.1 The council's equality scheme contains a number of key equality issues for the council over the three years and publishes the equality objectives required under the public sector equality duties.
- 4.2 Within the equality scheme key issues and challenges for the borough have been identified around:
- the needs of an ageing population
 - high and rising unemployment levels amongst young people
 - child poverty and troubled families
 - impact of welfare reforms
 - health inequalities
 - the impact of the Localism Act and the development of 'our society in Dudley'
 - respect and dignity – hate crime, harassment and domestic abuse

- council employment issues – development of leadership and management skills, equality training, implementing the pay and grading structure, tackling underrepresentation in the workforce.

4.3 Arising from the key issues and challenges, a number of equality objectives have been set out in the scheme. The ones which are particularly relevant for the directorate to contribute towards and against which actions are identified in this plan are:

- develop a financial inclusion strategy which identifies initiatives and actions to support protected groups
- ensure that the actions of the council and its partners in response to the community rights in the Localism Act and in developing our society in Dudley advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
- improve awareness and reporting of, and responses to, hate crime
- improve awareness of domestic abuse amongst those communities which have low reporting rates with the aim of increasing reporting
- improve the equality related knowledge and skills of employees.

4.4 The directorate undertakes a range of engagement, needs assessment and equality impact assessment work which helps to inform the action plan, and supports other directorates in similar work. In terms of engagement activity, the directorate contributes in arranging, running workshops and providing information stalls for the council-wide BME community consultation event each autumn. Engagement with disabled people and carers continues to be supported through the directorate's funding of Dudley Council for Voluntary Service and disabled people's forums are involved in developing plans and improving services. The Centre for Equality and Diversity is also funded by the directorate. The community safety team have arranged annual 'face the people' events on behalf of the Safe and Sound Partnership. Directorate staff are involved in supporting or contributing towards a number of other groups which promote the interests of protected groups such as the Dudley Borough Interfaith Network, as well as providing good practice advice and training to other employees and partners.

5. The Action Plan

5.1 The detailed action plan for 2013/14 is set out at the attached appendix.

Chief Executive's Directorate – equality action plan for 2013/14

Appendix

Objective	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target date/ milestones	Planned outcome/performance indicator
Priority 1 Development and review of council equality policy			
CE1. Update policies and guidance in response to continuing implementation/ review of the Equality Act 2010 (SM)	(1) Assess and provide guidance on the implications of the government's review of the public sector equality duty (PSED)	Review due to report in April 2013	Approach and guidance documents amended to reflect any changes to the law or latest national guidance Council has appropriate guidance to meet as a minimum legal requirements
	(2) Review and update the council's guidance on equality impact assessments in response to any changes to the PSED	New guidance to be in place in line with implementation date of any new legislation	
	(3) Review guidance on age discrimination when issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and assess the implications for the council of any emerging case law	Date for publishing of guidance awaited	
	(4) Work with Procurement services to update guidance on equality in procurement following the issuing of guidance and a training resource by the EHRC	Date for publishing of guidance awaited	
CE2. Ensure continuing compliance with the public sector equality duties (subject	(1) Review equality information published to meet the requirements of the specific duties (SM/JW)	November 2013	Information reviewed and updated

to any changes)	(2) Publish updated information to meet the requirements of the specific duties 2010 (JW/SM)	January 2014	
	(3) Produce 2013 annual review of equality including progress on published statutory equality objectives for the lead scrutiny committee on corporate equality issues and Cabinet (SM)	September 2013	Clear presentation of key performance information to improve equality performance management and accountability
	(4) Contribute to review of budget process to ensure that there continues to be an effective process for assessing and taking into account equality impact of relevant budget proposals (SM/GT)	July 2013 to March 2014	Public sector equality duty addressed in budget decisions
Priority 2. Provide intelligence to support equality work			
CE3. Improve accuracy, reliability and availability of equality data	(1) Continue work with Human Resources and service directorates on closing some of the gaps in equality information and on improving data quality (AW/SM)	March 2014	Improved data for impact assessments and to inform service design and workforce management
	(2) Develop local intelligence system to provide access to equality and other data sources, such as the 2011 census, through one route (AW)	Base system in place by June 2013 Training by September 2013	Improved access to data to support EIAs and service design
Priority 3. Communicating and promoting equality			
CE4. Provide access to up to date equality information	(1) Inform the council, partners and public of key cultural and civic dates and publish	Throughout year	Council, partners and the public aware of key

	information about international and national events on the internet (JW)		diversity and civic dates to inform planning and service delivery
	(2) Provide improved access to equality information published under the Equality Act by updating the equality web pages (JW/SM)	January 2014	Organisations and the public have access to information to judge the council's performance on equality
	(3) With Corporate Resources, update equality matters intranet site providing information and support for employees and members (SM)	December 2013	Improved employee awareness and understanding of equality in their work
	(4) With Learning and Organisational Development, provide briefing/training sessions on public sector equality duties/EIAs as requested (SM)	Throughout year	
CE5. Promote events and celebrations to communities	Encourage groups and communities to take part in and organise events and activities (JJ)	Throughout year	Participation by range of communities in council- and community-run events
Priority 4. Engaging and involving communities			
CE6. Ensure that the actions of the council and its partners in response to the community rights in the Localism Act and in developing our society in Dudley advance equality of	(1) Ensure compliance with legislation on community rights in a fair way by providing appropriate information to communities and managing the assets of community value process	June 2013	List of nominated assets; list of rejected assets

opportunity and foster good relations (AW)	(2) Ensure that opportunities for solution-focussed collaborative work with the voluntary and community sector (the MASH projects) are open to all	Throughout year	Wide range of community groups involved
	(3) Stimulate the local social enterprise economy through managing the bidding process to Community Enterprise and Innovation Fund, ensuring it is attractive to diverse businesses	Future bidding rounds (tbc)	Increase in number of sustainable social enterprises
	(4) Review operation of community forums and make recommendations, including on accessibility and inclusion	April 2013	Improvements identified
CE7. Ensure targeted and cost effective engagement is in place	(1) Review the approach to community engagement with partners, looking at issues such as inclusion (AW/DR)	March 2014	Inclusive engagement activities
	(2) Support community engagement events such as the BME community engagement event in 2013 (JW/SM)	September 2013 (tbc)	Successful 2013 event. Feedback leading to service improvements
	(3) Develop and implement with other directorates and partners revised arrangements for engagement with disabled people in line with new initiatives such as Healthwatch and 'Making it real' (SM)	From April 2013	Wider involvement of disabled people

Priority 5. Transforming how we work			
CE8. Implement agile working in the directorate as part of the 'transforming our workplace' programme (GT)	Respond to employees' diverse needs in moving to agile working and new workplaces	Workplace changes planned for November, with agile working introduced at same time	Reduction in short term sickness Increase in managed homeworking
CE9. Promote customer focus and equality issues through the customer access to services team (ADM)	(1) As part of transferring services to Dudley Council Plus and ongoing service improvement work, highlight opportunities to address through service redesign how services impact on protected groups	Throughout year	Council services designed with the needs of all customers in mind.
	(2) Ensure that a strong focus on the needs of customers, including those related to protected characteristics, is a feature of any transformational activities in which the team is involved.	Throughout year	Broader change and transformation planned with a clear customer focus.
Priority 6. Promote equality through community safety			
CE10. Continue to develop the community cohesion and tension monitoring process (RO)	(1) Align information from the Local Intelligence System with the Counter Terrorist Local Profile	From April 2013	Provision of a broader contextual perspective for the CCTM Executive
	(2) Work to identify cohesion/integration issues and mitigate any tensions emerging in terms of the impact of welfare reforms		
CE11. Work with appropriate directorates to explore whether an overall strategy for Gypsies,	Organise meetings with appropriate officers to consider whether Gypsies, Travellers and Roma are adequately	April 2013	Co-ordinated approach in respect of these communities

Travellers and Roma is required (RO)	supported via strategies across council or whether an overall strategy is required		
CE12. Improve awareness and reporting of, and responses to hate crime (RO)	Review progress one year on from hate crime stakeholder event and update action plan including actions in line with Government's response to 'Hidden in Plain Sight' (EHRC report)	April 2013	Increase in reporting
CE13. Ensure that the membership of Police and Crime Board represents the diverse interests of Dudley's communities (SH/BD)	Through a task and finish group determine an appropriate mechanism to recruit members of the community onto the Police and Crime Board	Board to be established during 2013/14	Community priorities inform the development of Police and Crime Plan and commissioning of services to meet the needs of communities
CE14. Address equality issues in the commissioning and delivery of drug and alcohol services (SH/EH)	(1) Complete equality impact assessments as part of the tender process project team's work on service specifications	By June 2013	Appropriate services are in place that meet the needs of those who misuse drugs and alcohol within the Borough
	(2) Ensure that any actions that arise from the EIAs that have been carried out are addressed before services go out to tender		
CE15. Improve awareness of domestic abuse amongst those communities which have low reporting rates with the aim of increasing reporting (AB)	(1) Continue to implement and monitor the domestic abuse service improvement review action plan and ensure that equality issues are addressed through the actions	Throughout year	Awareness raised around gaps in service and mitigating those gaps

	(2) Raise awareness of the implications of the new Home Office definition of domestic abuse to be implemented in April 2013	Throughout year	Increased awareness around support services for young people and professionals who are able to signpost these services
	(3) Identify services for young people (16 and 17 year olds) who are affected by domestic abuse and who will be included in the new definition		
Priority 7. Resilience and emergency planning			
CE16. Take into consideration the needs of diverse communities when planning for and responding to emergencies (JH)	(1) Continue participation in community cohesion monitoring and activities	March 2014	Negative impact on communities of any incidents minimised through planning and response
	(2) Ensure that published emergency plans evidence consideration of varying faith needs		Plans published in 2013/14 to contain appropriate references and contingencies
Priority 8. Promote financial inclusion through the credit union			
CE17. Promote financial inclusion (DD)	(1) Promote credit union services to BME communities through presentations, events and advertising in community centres	BME community consultation event – September 2013 (tbc)	Increase in take-up of services
	(2) Contribute to corporate work on tackling poverty and promoting financial inclusion	Throughout year	

Priority 9. Ensure the elections process is accessible			
CE18. Improve access to the elections process (AM)	Carry out a further review of polling stations to identify any new sites which are more accessible	In preparation for May 2014 local elections	Review completed/any improved venues identified

Lead officers for actions

AB – Anne Boden; BD – Bob Dimmock; DD - Dharminder Dhaliwal; SH – Sue Haywood; JH – John Hodt; EH – Elaine Hopwood; JJ - Jan Jennings; SM – Simon Manson; AM – Alison Mason; ADM – Ange Moore; RO - Rosina Ottewell; DR – Donna Roberts; GT- Geoff Thomas; JW – Jason Whyley; AW - Andy Wright

Glossary

BME – black and minority ethnic

CCTM – community cohesion and tension monitoring executive

EHRC – Equality and Human Rights Commission

EIA – equality impact assessment

MASH – ‘managing assets and services holistically’

PSED – public sector equality duty

Tbc – to be confirmed