

Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education
- 13th September 2010

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources

Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2010

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the attached annual review of equality and diversity for 2010.

Background

2. An annual review of equality and diversity is prepared for the select committee, in response to its lead scrutiny role on corporate equality and diversity issues, and the Cabinet. The attached report is the ninth such review and gives an overview of progress in implementing equality and diversity priorities and targets.
3. The review meets the various legal requirements for annual reporting of progress on a public authority's race, disability and gender equality schemes, and includes data in relation to the Council's employment policies and practices.
4. The 2010 review highlights that the next few months will see important changes to equality legislation through provisions in the Equality Act 2010 being brought into force. Employees will be supported in understanding the implications of the new legislation through, for example, the provision of up-to-date e-learning courses on equality and diversity which can be accessed through the council's intranet. 'Carers aware' e-learning has already been successfully introduced during the last twelve months which assists carers, employees who work with carers and others with an interest in the area.
5. Revised and updated disability and gender equality schemes were published to meet legal requirements in December 2009 and April 2010 respectively. These report in some detail on progress with disability and gender equality work and highlight key issues and actions for the next three years.

6. A wide range of engagement activity continues to be undertaken each year. All directorates work with a number of groups of disabled people, the purpose of which is to enhance service provision. Various events have been held during 2010 around supporting interested disabled people's organisations in becoming 'user led' to meet commitments made to have at least one such organisation operating in the borough by the end of 2010. The annual BME community engagement event held in November 2009 was again well attended, with the next event being held on 25th September 2010. A Dudley LGBT forum was launched in 2009, has been attended by council representatives, and is looking at issues such as hate crime.
7. The attached review covers in more detail these and other issues and activities which demonstrate the progress that has been made in implementing the actions in the council's equality scheme documents.

Finance

8. 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

9. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Equality Act 2006 place general duties on public authorities to promote equality in terms of race, disability and gender. A range of other equality legislation is in place covering other duties and equality strands.
10. The Equality Act 2010 replaces the existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The first duties of the Act come into force on 1st October 2010.
11. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

12. The attached report contains a range of information, monitoring data and analysis relating to the impact of the Council's policies and practices on promoting equality and diversity. 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

13. It is recommended that:

- Members consider and comment on the attached annual review of equality and diversity;
- the report be referred to the Cabinet for approval.



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List of Background Papers

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