

Chief Executive's Directorate

Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2008/09

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy requires all directorates to produce an annual equality and diversity action plan. The policy is supported by commitments and actions in the Council's Equality Scheme. The action plan sets out how a directorate will implement the policy and the Scheme in relation to its responsibilities, service areas and employment practices during the year.
- 1.2 The Chief Executive's Directorate's plan is submitted to the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education, before approval by the appropriate Cabinet Member.
- 1.3 Progress with implementing the action plan is reported in the equality and diversity annual report. The Chief Executive's Directorate's annual report for 2007/08 will be submitted to the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education at its first meeting of the 2008/09 municipal year.
- 1.4 This action plan covers the period from April 2008 to March 2009 and contains:
 - an explanation of its relationship with other plans
 - a summary of the directorate's equality and diversity vision and values
 - key issues and targets for the plan
 - the action plan summary

2. Relationship with other plans

- 2.1 This action plan will be incorporated in the overall strategic plan for the Chief Executive's Directorate for 2008/09. The strategic plan responds to the Borough's Community Strategy 2005-15 and the three year Council plan.
- 2.2 The overall long-term, policy framework for equality and diversity is set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy. The Equality Scheme, published in April 2007, which brings together the statutory disability, gender and race equality

schemes for the Council, provides the overall three-year equality strategy and action plan.

- 2.3 Council-wide progress in implementing the Equality Scheme is reported each year in the Annual review of equality and diversity, which is submitted to the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education and the Cabinet.

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 The directorate maintains its commitment to implementing the Council's equality and diversity policy in relation to its services and employment practices through, for example, the action planning and reporting process, designating responsibility for actions to particular staff, reviewing policies and practices, its consultation processes and continuing training and development.

- 3.3 During 2007/08, Dudley Council Plus and Neighbourhood Management were transferred to other directorates. The Directorate now covers the following sections:

- Administration Services
- Community Safety
- Corporate Learning and Development
- Corporate Personnel
- Corporate Policy and Research
- Credit Union
- Customer Access to Services
- Elections and Electoral Registration
- Health and Safety
- Leaps and Bounds
- Marketing and Communications
- Secretariat, Leader's and Mayor's office

- 3.4 The Directorate takes a lead on equality and diversity issues, incorporating overall policy development and the provision of advice and support, both in

employment and service delivery, and in delivering or arranging training across the Council. It provides strategic information to support equality planning and impact assessment processes across the Council and leads the Customer Access to Services programme to improve access to services for all customers.

- 3.5 Within the Directorate, all employees have a responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Council's equality and diversity policy in all dealings with 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.
- 3.6 The aim of the directorate is to mainstream equality so responsibility for promoting equality and diversity in employment and services rests with all divisional heads. However, a principal officer within the Corporate Policy and Research Team, reporting to the Head of Policy, is responsible for overall equality and diversity policy development work on behalf of both the Council and the Directorate. This includes the preparation, monitoring and review of the Directorate's annual equality and diversity action plan. Corporate Personnel, reporting to the Head of Personnel and Support Services, is responsible for equality and diversity in employment development. The Joint Training and Development Managers, reporting to the Head of Personnel and Support Services, are responsible for arranging or advising on appropriate training provision relating to equality and diversity across the Council and within the Directorate.

4. Key Issues and Targets

- 4.1 The Equality Scheme identifies the key issues, challenges and actions across the Council for the 2007-10 period. Particular priority has been assigned to progressing work through the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in the following areas:
- developing clearer targets and desired outcomes
 - improving communications around what we do and why, externally and internally, and celebrating success
 - improving approaches to consultation
 - identifying the equality and diversity competencies required for managers and employees

4.2 In the Equality Scheme, the directorate identified overall equality and diversity priorities for their service areas linked to the three years of the Scheme which are to be reflected in its action plans. The priorities are:

- progressing the customer access to services programme, including the further development of Dudley Council Plus (NB Dudley Council Plus has now transferred to the Finance, ICT and Procurement Directorate)
- developing and implementing the corporate equality and diversity priorities e.g. around communications and competencies (see paragraph 4.1)
- implementing the Council's people management strategy

4.3 Some of the key highlights in the plan for 2008/09 include:

- The development of a community cohesion strategy. In December 2007, the Cabinet approved a draft community cohesion report as a basis for consultation. Work with local partners will be undertaken to involve local Members, communities and agencies during the spring and summer of 2008 to agree a local plan.
- Linked to the development of the community cohesion strategy, the Council is leading work to develop more comprehensive arrangements to identify and respond to community tensions. Tensions may arise from local or national circumstances and the action is intended to involve key stakeholders in sharing information on emerging or actual tensions and ensuring that appropriate action is commissioned.
- There is an opportunity within the next generation of Local Area Agreements (from 2008/09) to involve partners in undertaking shared equality impact assessments of the key outcomes proposed in the LAA and in how action plans can be developed to promote equality. A pilot development programme for undertaking an EIA on the LAA is proposed for March/April 2008.

4.4 Other items in the attached summary respond directly to the actions set out in the Equality Scheme (the references in brackets e.g. (ES1.3) refer to the corresponding action in the Equality Scheme – available on the Council's website).

4.5 The directorate undertakes a range of consultation which feeds into the action plan. This includes regular discussions with Action for Disabled People and Carers (recently covering elections and anti-social behaviour), involvement in

the Council-wide BME community consultation event held in November 2007 (focussing on community safety issues) and dialogue with Dudley Women's Forum (on taking forward the Gender Equality Scheme). The plan contains further actions around extending consultation and involvement.

5. The Action Plan

- 5.1 The action plan is set out in the attached appendix. In response to comments from the select committee, a less complex presentation has been used than for the 2007/08 action plan.

Chief Executive's Directorate
February 2008

Chief Executive's Directorate – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2008/09

Appendix

Objective	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/performance indicator
Priority 1 Develop clearer targets and outcomes			
CE1. Undertake further equality impact assessments (EIAs) in the directorate and improve the approach to EIAs across the Council	(1) Undertake EIAs of the following during 2008/09 (ES1.3): training and development (PC/ST); marketing and communications (JS); the new Local Area Agreement (GT/DCP).	Complete by March 2009	EIAs completed within the timescales Improvement actions identified and scheduled
	(2) Review the approach to equality impact assessments in light of 2007/08 experience across the Council (ES1.5) (SM/EDAG)	September 2008 (revised target date to allow time for completion of 2007/08 programme)	More effective, user friendly EIA process implemented for future EIAs
CE2. Improve equality and diversity policy development and performance management	(1) Produce the Annual review of equality and diversity for the lead Select Committee on corporate equality issues and the Cabinet by September each year to report on progress with implementing the Scheme (ES1.6) (SM)	September 2008	Legal requirements met Clearer presentation of key performance information to improve equality performance management

	(2) Undertake development work through the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group to integrate other equality strands within the Equality Scheme by April 2009 and meet the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government in this regard (ES1.9) (SM/EDAG)	April 2009	Improved identification and coordination of action for all equality strands
	(3) Take part in the WMLGA regional peer review of local authorities' progress in implementing the Equality Standard for Local Government (ES1.10) (SM)	During 2008/09	Achievement of level 3 of the Standard
	(4) Work with directorates to identify appropriate differentiated targets covering different communities or groups for actions in strategic plans (JWe)	April 2008	Improved service targeting and outcomes for different communities
Priority 2. Improve mechanisms for consultation and involvement			
CE3. Promote engagement with a range of communities in the Borough	(1) Work with ABC Production to complete and analyse research in the local African-Caribbean community (AW)	June 2008	Information about needs of community leading to service improvements

	(2) Contribute to Council-wide BME consultation event in 2008 and feed in good practice from BME consultation audit carried out in 2007/08 (ES2.4/2.6) (SM/JW)	2008/09	Successful event held in 2008/09/ feedback leading to service improvements Good practice built into consultation toolkit leading to improved future consultations
	(3) Develop new annual programme of involvement of Action for Disabled People and Carers in EIAs (SM)	June 2008	Programme agreed Feedback from ADC leading to service improvements
CE4. Extend consultation mechanisms across other equality strands	(1) Build relationship/programme of involvement with Dudley Women's Forum (SM)	September 2008	Agreement for involvement in place Feedback from forum leading to service improvements
	(2) Develop consultation mechanisms on LGBT issues to feed into Equality Scheme and response to hate crime (SM/NS)	March 2009	Mechanisms identified Issues raised informing development of scheme and response to hate crime
Priority 3. Improve communications			
CE5. Celebrate diversity of borough and workforce	Develop an approach to celebrating or commemorating a range of religious/cultural events	September 2008	Wider range of events celebrated

	(JW)		
Priority 4. Improve equality and diversity competencies of employees			
CE6. Provide further training and information to managers aiming at removing barriers to the employment of disabled people (ES3.11)	(1) Include a new training course on disability equality in employment in the training programme (PC/ST)	From September 2008	Improved understanding by managers of disability in employment issues
	(2) Circulate Access to Work leaflets at training courses and other events to remind managers of the support available (PC/ST)	From April 2008	Reduction in barriers to employing disabled people
CE7. Implement new approaches to training to reach more employees	Implement E-diversity training for employees (ES1.16) (SW)	During 2008/09 (revised target)	Increase in employees receiving training
Priority 5. Implement the People Management Strategy			
CE8. Implement equality related elements of strategy	Complete review and EIA of recruitment policy (TM)	September 2008 (revised target)	Improved approach to recruitment
Priority 6. Promote community cohesion			
CE9. Complete community cohesion strategy	(1) Undertake community engagement on draft community cohesion strategy (GT)	September 2008	Community feedback informing strategy and resulting actions
	(2) Agree Dudley Community Partnership action plan (GT)	December 2008	Plan completed for implementation by DCP
	(3) Complete community cohesion baseline and action plan	December 2008	Baseline information established

	as part of first year of new Local Area Agreement (GT)		Action plan for implementation in place
CE10. Implement arrangements for tension monitoring	(1) Establish tension monitoring executive group and implement monitoring framework (DH)	April 2008	Initial audit completed
	(2) Evaluate effectiveness of monitoring framework (DH)	November 2008	Effective monitoring arrangements implemented
Priority 7. Other service issues			
CE11. Increase participation in electoral registration and elections	Undertake targeted advertising in areas/communities with lower levels of registration (AM)	By October 2008	Increase in registration for 2008 electoral register

Glossary:

DCP – Dudley Community Partnership

EDAG – Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

EIA – equality impact assessment

LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

WMLGA – West Midlands Local Government Association

PC – Phil Cutler; DH – Dawn Hewitt; AM – Alison Mason; SM – Simon Manson; TM- Tracey Medlyn; GT - Geoff Thomas; NS – Naveen Sharma; ST – Sarah Treneer; AW – Andy Wright; JWe – Jennie Webb; JW – Jason Whyley; SW- Steve Woodall