

Draft Equality Scheme

2007 - 2010



Draft February 2006

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Contents

Section 1. The Equality Scheme (published)

Section 2. Race Equality (draft)

Section 3. Disability Equality (published)

Section 4. Gender Equality (draft)

Section 5. Action Plan

Section 6. Review

Appendices

A. Equality and Diversity Policy

B. Equality and Diversity Responsibilities

C. Best Value Performance Indicators

D. Functions and Policy Areas assessed as relevant to race equality

E. Glossary

1. The Equality Scheme

Introduction

- 1.1 The Equality Scheme sets out Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's approach to promoting equality and diversity. The Scheme responds to the statutory duties relating to disability, gender and race equality which require the publication of disability, gender and race equality schemes. While this Scheme meets these legislative requirements, the Council has long recognised the importance of ensuring that its policies and services are effective in tackling discrimination, and in promoting equality and good relations between people of different backgrounds, and has had in place an Equality and Diversity Policy for many years.
- 1.2 The Council published its first Race Equality Scheme in May 2002 and this was updated in May 2005. This document incorporates a revised Race Equality Scheme and meets the commitment in that document to develop a combined Scheme.
- 1.3 The Scheme sets out:
 - background information about the Borough and the Council;
 - the Council's overall approach to promoting equality and diversity;
 - specific sections on race equality, disability equality and gender equality; and
 - action plans incorporating overall equality targets across the three areas and targets relating specifically to each of the three areas.

The Legislation

- 1.4 A wide range of equality legislation is in place which places duties on public authorities, and other bodies, to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Race, disability and gender equality schemes are required by specific duties arising from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 respectively. More detail about the relevant legislation is included in the particular sections on race, disability and gender.
- 1.5 There is a range of other equality legislation which places duties upon the Council although there is no requirement to publish related schemes in these areas. The Council has included these other areas within its equality and diversity policy and will be working to integrate fully its approach to promoting equality in the areas of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation into the scheme by April 2009.

- 1.6 The Equality Scheme sets out in detail how the Council intends to meet its statutory duties. It is effectively a strategy and action plan which summarises the Council's approach to equality and diversity across all its services and in employment with the Council.

Dudley Borough

- 1.7 Dudley Metropolitan Borough is situated to the west of the West Midlands conurbation. It consists of several townships including Dudley, Stourbridge, Halesowen and Brierley Hill. The borough's population is 304,500 (mid-year estimate 2004).
- 1.8 The 2001 Census showed that 93.68% of the borough's population were from white communities and 6.32% from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The proportion of the population from BME communities has grown from 4.5% in 1991. The BME population of the Borough is far from evenly spread around the Borough with, for example, the highest concentrations of people of Indian origin in and around Dudley town centre, the Pakistani population concentrated in three areas – to the south-east of Dudley town centre, to the north of Brierley Hill and around Lye town centre – and Caribbean, African and other Black groups concentrated largely to the south and west of Dudley town centre. The Borough also has other communities which may be more transient or not fully reflected in the Census figures, including refugees and asylum seekers, and travellers and gypsies.
- 1.9 The 2001 Census recorded that 19.1% of the borough's population consider themselves to have a long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits their daily activities or the work that they can do. This is higher than the English average of 17.9% but lower than the other three Black Country boroughs and Birmingham within the West Midlands county. The definition used in the Census is different to the legal definition of a disability but the figure gives an idea of the number of people in the borough that are relevant in considering the Council's duties.
- 1.10 The Council holds a wide range of other information, from the Census and many other sources, about the Borough and its population. More details can be obtained from the Council's Strategic Research and Intelligence Unit. The information is used to identify needs and to design policies and services which seek to promote equality and tackle disadvantage or discrimination that may be experienced by any of the Borough's communities.

The Council

- 1.11 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council controls a gross revenue budget of £562.9m (2006/07). It manages the full range of local government services, including education, environmental services, housing, leisure, planning, roads and social services, split into six directorates: Adult, Community and Housing Services; Chief Executive's; Children's Services; Finance, ICT and Procurement; Law and Property; and Urban Environment. It employs approximately 14,000 employees, of which 4.64% are from BME communities, 0.82% have declared that they have a disability and 74.6% are women (April 2006). Around 6,100 employees are employed directly by schools – taking these out of the figures, 5.6% of the workforce are from BME communities, 1.39% have declared that they have a disability and 66.42% are women (April 2006). 61.5% of the female workforce and 16% of the male workforce work part-time (including schools).
- 1.12 The borough is divided into 24 wards, which are represented by 72 councillors. The Council adopted a Leader and Cabinet model with effect from 1st May 2002 and operates five select committees: children's services; community safety and community services; environment; health and adult social care; and regeneration, culture and adult education. The Council also runs five area committees: Brierley Hill, Central Dudley, Halesowen, North Dudley and Stourbridge.
- 1.13 The overall strategic direction for the Council, with its partners, is provided by the Dudley Borough Challenge - the Borough's Community Strategy for 2005-20, developed through Dudley Community Partnership, the local strategic partnership for the borough. This has as its vision the promotion of stronger communities throughout the borough. A primary aim throughout the strategy is to promote greater equality so that all people are able to make a full contribution to society. This aim is integrated into its six priority areas:
- creating a prosperous borough
 - promoting a sense of well-being and good health for everyone
 - celebrating our heritage and local cultural life
 - safeguarding and improving the environment
 - promoting individual and community learning
 - making Dudley a safe and peaceful place in which to live
- 1.14 The Council's priorities for delivering the strategy are outlined in the Dudley Council Plan, which is updated annually. The Council Plan lists the Council's values and governs all of its functions and policies. The 2006/07 Council Plan vision identifies that the Council "is committed to making sure that local

people get the best possible quality public services and are given every opportunity to realise their potential. We recognise and value the diversity of backgrounds, skills and needs within the borough and work hard to respond to these. We aim to serve the people of Dudley borough fairly and efficiently so we can improve the quality of life for everyone.”

- 1.15 The Council’s commitment to equality and diversity is detailed in its Equality and Diversity Policy (see Appendix A).
- 1.16 Further information about the Council, including the Community Strategy and the Council Plan, can be accessed via the Council’s website www.dudley.gov.uk.

The approach to promoting equality

- 1.17 The Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy sets out the policy framework for delivering equality and diversity within the Council covering employment, service delivery and its community leadership role (see Appendix A). The policy sets out the following overall objective:

The overall objective of the Council’s equality and diversity policy is to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds

in its employment policies and practices, in its services, and in its engagement with partners and with the communities of the Borough.

The Council aims to ensure that no job applicants, employees, residents or service users receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

The Council recognises that:

- discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time
- equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by always treating all people alike

The Council is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice which accompany the legislation.

1.18 The Council's planning and organisational arrangements for equality and diversity work are as follows (Appendix B shows officer and Member responsibilities diagrammatically):

- The Equality and Diversity Policy sets out the overall policy framework, is reviewed regularly and approved by the Cabinet.
- The Equality Scheme sets out the Council's approach to promoting equality, responding to legislative requirements, and establishes priorities and actions for three years – this will be updated at least every three years.
- The Cabinet identifies a Member with lead responsibility for equality whose role is to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy.
- An annual review of equality and diversity is produced each year for the lead select committee on corporate equality and diversity issues and the Cabinet. This reports on progress with equality work, including the implementation of the Equality Scheme and statutory and other employment monitoring information.
- Each directorate within the Council produces an annual equality and diversity action plan and annual report which set out how the policy and the scheme are being implemented in their services areas.
- Scrutiny of action plans and annual reports is undertaken by the Council's select committees.
- The Corporate Board of Directors has identified the Director of Law and Property as its equality champion.
- Each directorate has nominated officers to lead on equality and diversity issues.
- Lead officers on equality and diversity meet monthly, as the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group which is chaired by the Director of Law and Property and includes nominees from employee support groups and a representative of the Centre for Equality and Diversity (formerly Dudley Racial Equality Council). The group reports to Corporate Board and links with individual directorate equality and diversity groups or directorate management teams.

1.19 While the Council has specific arrangements to ensure that equality is promoted throughout the organisation, it is the responsibility of all employees and Members to promote equality and this is integral to its leadership values and codes of conduct. Alongside the training already in place, the Council is

aiming to improve the equality and diversity competencies of its employees to help to ensure that equality and diversity can be 'mainstreamed' throughout the organisation.

- 1.20 The Council acknowledges that it has a key leadership role and recognises the need to work with its partners, particularly through the Dudley Community Partnership, in promoting equality and community cohesion in the Borough. For example, a partnership evaluation tool is used to assess key partnerships for their effectiveness and includes measures on the promotion of equality.
- 1.21 The Council also has a responsibility to promote equality through its procurement and commissioning activities. It has developed guidelines on promoting equality in procurement for managers and project teams to support the principles incorporated in its standing orders and procurement strategy. A model service level agreement, with appropriate clauses relating to equality, is also in place to cover funding arrangements with voluntary and community sector organisations as part of the commitments made in the Local Compact with the voluntary and community sector in the borough.

Measuring Progress

- 1.22 The Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government and uses this both to assess its progress and to plan improvements. The annual review of equality and diversity provides a range of information including the Council's performance against relevant Audit Commission best value performance indicators (see Appendix C) which are compared to previous years' figures and other authorities in order to track the Council's progress. The annual review will be the main vehicle for reporting progress on the implementation of this scheme. Directorates also produce annual reports to report on progress with implementing their equality and diversity action plans.
- 1.23 The Council uses a range of mechanisms to engage, consult with and obtain feedback from its customers and the borough's residents. The Council has a consultation strategy and toolkit and publishes details of consultation exercises on its on-line database. Alongside general consultation mechanisms such as the Council's citizens' panel, there are some specific mechanisms in place in order to reach particular communities. The Council also undertakes equality impact assessments to assess the impact of its policies and services. More detail is given in the sections that follow.
- 1.24 The Council uses its performance management system to monitor and report on key equality indicators and processes on a quarterly basis through the Corporate Board, Select Committees and the Cabinet.

1.25 The Council has received some external recognition of its work on promoting equality and diversity. Recent examples are:

- shortlisting as a Beacon Council in 2005 for “Getting Closer to Communities”
- recognition by Jobcentre Plus as a ‘Positive about Disabled People’ employer
- the ‘Disability Sportszone’ at Crystal leisure centre being awarded the first Mencap me2 kitemark in 2005 for inclusive sport and play
- the 2004 Midlands Excellence Award for Best Equal Opportunities Employer for the Financial Services Division of the Finance Directorate
- the BEST (Building Essential Skills for the Construction Trades) employer of the year 2005 and 2006 for Housing Services.

1.26 The Council has undertaken a wide range of initiatives to promote equality over many years. Examples of this work relating to race, disability and gender equality are found in the specific sections of the scheme for each equality area. General equality examples include:

- An ongoing Customer Access to Services programme to improve access by all communities to services and information through accessible customer service centres, information kiosks and other means – the first customer services centre opened in Dudley town centre in May 2005.
- Widespread community engagement in the development of the borough’s community strategy during 2004 and 2005 through community facilitated ‘visioning’ and consultation events involving a wide range of different groups and a leaflet for every household
- A dedicated equality and diversity site for employees and elected Members on the Council’s intranet
- A ‘people management strategy’ to assist the Council in ensuring it can deliver its priorities
- Mandatory training for all employees involved in recruitment and selection and a range of other equality training for employees
- A combating harassment and bullying policy for employees, supported by trained harassment support contacts
- Improvements to marketing material and official publications to ensure that they reflect the diversity of the borough’s population and the Council’s workforce
- A community representatives panel to input into equality plans and policies.

1.27 The Council also recognises the importance of addressing discrimination or promoting equality on more than one ground at the same time and for example:

- provides women-only swimming sessions to meet the needs particularly of women from some ethnic backgrounds who would not otherwise use the facilities
- has established, with partners, a BME Learning Disability sub-group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board
- supports the Asian Women's Centre in Dudley with funding
- provides culturally specific elders housing provision in the Borough to address the identified needs of African Caribbean older people.

Future Priorities

1.28 While the Council has achieved a great deal, it acknowledges that there is much more to be done to promote equality in the borough and will use the Equality Scheme to help drive its work forward.

1.29 The Council recognises that it has finite resources and will be unable to achieve all the desired changes at once. The duties under the various Acts are proportionate in that the weight given to equality should be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. In practice, this means that the Council will need to continue to give greatest consideration and resources to those functions that could have the most effect on different racial groups, disabled people and/or either gender.

1.30 The Corporate Board has held sessions with the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group during 2005/06 to review the Council's achievements and where it needed to go in progressing equality and diversity work. Five areas were highlighted for further development and to help form a framework for the Scheme's action plan. These covered:

- developing clearer targets
- focusing on outcomes rather than policies and plans
- improving communications around what we do and why, externally and internally; celebrating success
- improving approaches to consultation
- identifying required equality and diversity competencies for managers and employees.

1.31 Specific actions relating to these five areas are included in the Scheme's action plan.

1.32 Directorates within the Council have also identified overall equality and diversity priorities for their service areas linked to the three years of the Scheme. These will be reflected in their individual equality and diversity action plans. The priorities are:

Adult, Community and Housing:

- Gaining a clearer understanding of our customer base
- Extending the range of diversity monitoring data held for Private Sector housing to ensure equal access to the services offered
- Providing appropriate and relevant services and to understand the diverse needs of all who use our services
- Ensuring high customer satisfaction rates across services for all groups
- Seeking to ensure that the employee composition of Housing Services reflects the diversity of the communities it seeks to serve and to promote Housing Services as an employer of choice
- Ensuring that all staff receive appropriate and timely training and development opportunities
- Meeting and responding to legislative requirements including the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice

Chief Executive's:

- Progressing the customer access to services programme, including the further development of Dudley Council Plus
- Developing and implementing the corporate equality and diversity priorities e.g. around communications and competencies (see paragraph 1.30)
- Implementing the Council's people management strategy

Children's Services:

- Implementing the Special Educational Needs Strategy
- Ensuring that the Children's Trust is fully operational in 2007 and that its functions support the aspirations of all children and young people
- Improving transitional arrangements for young people from children's services into adult services with particular focus on vulnerable groups
- Implementing measures to secure improved educational and social outcomes for children in care and children with disabilities
- Implementing the revised Accessibility Strategy 2007-10, ensuring that it takes full account of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Finance, ICT and Procurement:

- Using ICT provision to help achieve better delivery of services and information so customers have more choice and control; exchange information with partners; provide information on which to base decisions; and allow staff to work in new ways.
- Continuing to address poverty and social exclusion in the borough by promoting take-up of benefits through communicating and consulting with our customers

Law and Property:

- Completing disability awareness training for taxi and private hire drivers and evaluating its impact with customers
- Encouraging applicants from minority backgrounds by participating in the 2007 Black History Month
- Working with the Employees with Disabilities Group to identify any improvements to our recruitment process that would increase applications from disabled people.

Urban Environment:

- Seeking to improve, on an annual basis, the number of employees in the Directorate with a disability, or from a BME background, or who are female
- Continuing the Directorate's Disability Consultation Group, which proactively seeks the involvement of the Borough's disabled residents in the delivery of Directorate services
- Improving the usage of leisure and sports facilities by disabled people
- Continuing to undertake road shows, as and when requested, for people from a BME background to raise awareness to the services offered by Trading Standards and Environmental Health
- Increasing the participation of young people from BME communities in the Prince's Trust Team, business and XL clubs
- Briefing all senior managers within the Directorate on relevant equality employment legislation and its impact on employees.

2. Race Equality - Draft

Introduction

2.1 Section 1 of the Council's Equality Scheme explains the context to this specific section on promoting race equality and sets out the Council's overall approach to promoting equality. The Council is committed to promoting race equality and to meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation. It has taken a wide range of action over many years in order to fulfil this commitment across its services and in its employment policies and practices and provides a number of services specifically tailored to respond to the needs of particular ethnic communities.

2.2 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a general duty on a wide range of public authorities, including local councils, to promote race equality. This duty means that in everything they do, the authorities should have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

The duty expects public authorities to take the lead in promoting race equality and preventing unlawful discrimination.

2.3 The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 also places specific duties on public authorities to:

- prepare and publish a Race Equality Scheme by 31st May 2002 and review the assessment of its functions at least every three years; and
- monitor their employment procedures and practices.

The scheme is required to identify the functions and policy areas that are relevant to the performance of the duty and to set out the Council's arrangements for:

- consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
- monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
- publishing the results of such assessments and consultation
- ensuring public access to information and services which it provides

- training staff in connection with the duties.

2.4 The Council's first Race Equality Scheme was published in May 2002. This was reviewed and a revised Race Equality Scheme published in May 2005. The revised scheme contained a summary of progress with the action plan included in the first scheme. A substantial component of the action plan was to undertake reviews of relevant services and policies across all directorates to make sure that they were taking into account the requirements of the general duties. These reviews considered issues such as:

- the arrangements for monitoring how the function/policy affects different racial groups – this may include participation rates, satisfaction rates, how services are provided, data on complaints – and the scope for extending this
- what other data we have to assess the impact of the function/policy on different racial groups – this may include demographic data, Census information, research findings – and what other data might be required in order to assess the impact
- what consultation has been and is undertaken with racial groups in relation to the function and what more might be done
- what information is provided about the function and how this is provided
- how the services relevant to the function are accessed.

2.5 Alongside the organisational arrangements for managing and promoting equality set out in section 1 of the Equality Scheme, the Council has a number of teams working with BME communities to meet their needs. In particular:

- The Race Equality and Communications Service, based in the Directorate of Adult, Housing and Community Services, provides a Council-wide translation and interpretation service and works with local communities to address needs and share information.
- The Refugee and Asylum Seekers Team, also based in the Directorate of Adult, Housing and Community Services, provides support to refugees and asylum seekers in the Borough
- The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS), based in the Directorate of Children's Services, provides support to pupils and their parents from communities who have underachieved at school.

2.6 There are a number of good examples of how the Council has changed the way it provides services to meet the needs of different communities. These include:

- The programmes run through EMAS, such as the African Caribbean Initiative Programme - working with schools to enable African Caribbean and Mixed Heritage pupils to raise achievement levels through classroom and homework support, mentoring and partnership with parents, and programmes which develop positive attitudes to education and a sense of identity – and support for three supplementary evening or Saturday morning schools - the Taleeme Markaz Supplementary School, the Al-Markaz Al Taleeme Supplementary School and the Saturday Start Programme for Pakistani, Yemeni and African Caribbean pupils respectively.
- The commissioning of culturally appropriate services delivered through voluntary and community organisations to particular communities, for example, the provision of day services, meals on wheels and an outreach service by Dudley Caribbean and Friends Association.
- Henry Court, developed as a joint venture between Nehemiah Housing Association, Accord Housing Association and the Council, the first culturally specific elders housing provision in the Borough to address the identified needs of African Caribbean older people through 39 supported accommodation units which opened in 2004.
- An accredited interpretation service covering four community languages and British Sign Language in Housing and use of Language Line for Dudley Direct, the housing call centre
- Support to victims of hate crime provided through the Anti-social Behaviour (Hate Crime) Coordinator and the Dudley Racist/Hate Crime Incidents Group
- out of hours registration of deaths for Muslim and Jewish people
- the provision of halal and vegetarian meals on wheels

2.7 A range of activities, events or celebrations are held around promoting race equality or tackling discrimination. Examples are:

- Anne Frank exhibition held in Dudley and follow up events involving young people have continued to be supported by Children's Services
- A programme of events and activities celebrating Black History Month in October
- Production with partners of a DVD on community cohesion activities in the Borough
- Advertising services and publicising achievements on the local Radio Ramadan
- The Leaps and Bounds project involving disadvantaged 15-18 year olds from a range of ethnic backgrounds working with three other Councils, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Youth at Risk and Diverse TV (for Channel 4 – shown on television as 'Bally Hoo!')

- recent events for senior managers on community cohesion and understanding different cultures.

2.8 The Council works with partners to promote race equality through for example:

- A community cohesion sub-group of Dudley Community Partnership, the local strategic partnership
- the multi-agency Dudley Race/Hate Incidents Group which reviews and takes action on racist and other hate crime incidents
- close working with the Centre for Equality and Diversity (formerly Dudley Racial Equality Council) which the Council helps to fund
- a BME Learning Disability sub-group of the Learning Disability Partnership Board

2.9 Examples in terms of employment with the Council are:

- a Council-wide BME employees group and joint Children's Services and Adult, Community and Housing Services group.
- a gradual increase in the proportion of employees from BME communities over the last few years
- involvement in recruitment fairs and other initiatives to encourage people from BME communities to apply for jobs with the Council.
- a procedure for dealing with racist or religious discrimination incidents between employees and trained harassment support contacts amongst staff to give support to individuals

2.10 It is recognised that the promotion of race equality covers not just meeting the needs of BME communities but those of all communities and there will be a particular focus within this Scheme on moving forward the work the Council and partners are undertaking on promoting community cohesion. The Borough's work in this area has been recognised by high profile Government visits and a mention in the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'.

Future Priorities

2.11 While progress has undoubtedly been made, the Council is committed to taking further action to promote race equality. Particular challenges include:

- progressing work with partners to promote community cohesion in the Borough

- continuing to assess how our relevant services impact on people from different racial groups and improving the range and quality of data we collect
- continuing to improve consultation and engagement processes with BME communities and responding to feedback from the Council- wide BME community consultation event to be held in 2007 (and subsequent years)
- identification of appropriate outcomes for race equality
- improving the cultural competencies of our employees
- looking at ways to address the needs of communities to access resources.

2.12 The Audit Commission's self-assessment tool 'The Journey to Race Equality' has been used by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group to help the Council to assess its performance on race equality and to identify and challenge the barriers which might inhibit progress. The tool will continue to be used to help the Council to identify future actions.

Assessment of functions and policies

2.13 The Council carried out an initial assessment of its functions and policies to determine which are relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 for its first Race Equality Scheme. This initial assessment was revised in 2005 and has now been further revised as part of the preparation of the combined Equality Scheme. The current list is published as part of this Scheme at Appendix 5.

Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies

2.14 At the start of each year each directorate is required to identify in its strategic plan which policies are proposed to be developed during the year, whether they are relevant to promoting equality and whether therefore an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

2.15 A guide to undertaking race equality impact assessments was produced for the Council's managers, accompanied by training, in line with the first Race Equality Scheme. The Council's approach to impact assessments has been revised and a new approach introduced to embrace the wider equality agenda, supported by an equality impact assessment guidance document.

2.16 An equality impact assessment uses a variety of source material which may include:

- national or local research
- Census data

- comparisons of policies with other authorities
- survey results
- trend information
- employment or service monitoring data.

2.17 The Council, for example, has derived a wide range of accessible data from the 2001 Census, which provides a wealth of information about the Borough and its communities. This is available to all employees through internal publications and the Council's intranet and is used to inform the development of new policies. 'Community Choice', the Dudley Borough citizens' panel aims to survey a representative cross-section of the Borough's population on a regular basis about a wide range of service issues. The Council also undertakes a regular survey of employees as part of its improvement programme.

2.18 The consultation will be undertaken using various means which may include:

- consultation meetings
- area committees
- the Dudley Borough Citizens' Panel or other survey questionnaires
- focus groups
- meetings with community groups
- community representatives forums e.g. the Community Consultation (Education) Forum
- user forums
- employee groups and trade unions
- the Council's website

2.19 The Council has produced a strategy and toolkit for consultation which it uses to guide consultation exercises. A corporate consultation planner is prepared at the beginning of each year to collect and share information about planned consultation activities. These activities are recorded on the Council's online consultation database available to employees, other agencies and the public through the Council's website. The database is helping to improve planning, coordination and the sharing of results of consultation.

2.20 An audit of consultation with BME communities across the Council is under way which will help to highlight and share good practice. The Corporate Board has agreed to hold annual one day workshop/information events for BME communities to which all Directorates will contribute in order to build on past consultation events. The first of these Council-wide events will be held in

2007 and this Scheme will be supplemented with actions arising from this. Future events will contribute to the review and revision of the scheme.

- 2.21 In order to improve scrutiny of equality impact assessment work, the 'equal opportunities' paragraph in committee reports has been replaced by an 'equality impact' paragraph and reports are required to set out details of equality impact assessment work undertaken where this is relevant to the subject of the report.

Monitoring

- 2.22 The Council will carry out appropriate monitoring of its functions and policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality.

- 2.23 The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 requires the Council to monitor, by reference to the racial groups to which they belong,

(a) the numbers of –

- employees in post, and
- applicants for employment, training and promotion, from each group;

(b) the numbers of employees from each group who –

- receive training;
- benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures;
- are involved in grievance procedures;
- are the subject of disciplinary procedures; or
- cease employment with the Council.

- 2.24 The Council collects information against each of these categories and publishes the results annually on its website and in its annual review of equality and diversity. The annual review also contains analysis of the data and identifies relevant action to be taken in response to the information. The Council is undergoing a phased replacement of its recruitment monitoring and personnel and payroll systems which will largely be completed during 2007/08. The new system is improving the processes of recording, presenting and analysing the data.

- 2.25 The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 also requires the 'Local Education Authority' (LEA) to monitor by racial group, for all the maintained schools in their area, the following:

(a) staff in post; and

(b) applicants for employment, training and promotion;

(c) for schools with 150 or more full-time staff, or equivalent, the number of staff:

- receiving training;
- benefiting, or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures;
- involved in grievance procedures;
- subject to disciplinary procedures; and
- ending employment with these schools.

'LEAs' have a duty to take reasonably practical steps to publish, each year, the results of this monitoring. There are currently no maintained schools with 150 or more full-time staff, or equivalent, in the Borough. The Council's Directorate of Children's Services will publish the results of its monitoring in its equality and diversity annual reports.

2.26 The Council has undertaken monitoring by ethnicity in a number of service areas for some years. The reviews undertaken of the policies and functions listed in the Council's previous Race Equality Schemes have looked at how ethnic monitoring can be introduced or improved for particular service areas. Improvements have been made as a result and will be assessed as part of the Council's continuing programme of impact assessments and as part of its self-assessments under the Equality Standard. Service monitoring used by the Council may include:

- service take-up rates
- levels of satisfaction
- complaints
- how services are accessed.

2.27 The categories to be used for ethnic monitoring of employment and services are those from the 2001 Census for England and Wales.

2.28 The Council recognises that effective monitoring is not just about collecting relevant data, but also requires analysis of this data in order to assess whether its functions or policies may be having an adverse impact on the promotion of race equality and preventing it from meeting the general duty. The Council will be undertaking more work around the equality monitoring of services including the production of a more detailed guide to equality

monitoring. This will sit alongside the Council's equality impact assessment process.

2.29 If adverse impact is found from monitoring information, the Council will address questions such as:

- if the policy is likely to lead to unlawful racial discrimination, can another way be found to achieve the aims of the policy?
- if the policy could adversely affect certain racial groups, can the policy be justified because of its ultimate objectives?
- can different needs expressed by certain groups be met within the policy?
- is the policy harming good race relations?
- will any changes to be made to the policy require fresh consultation?

Publication of assessments, consultation and monitoring

2.30 The Council will publish full equality impact assessment reports on its website, together with its annual review of equality and diversity containing employment monitoring and other data and information, directorate equality and diversity action plans and annual reports and other appropriate documents and information relating to race equality. The Council's on-line consultation database will contain information on consultation exercises planned and undertaken.

2.31 A summary of relevant assessments, consultations and monitoring undertaken by each directorate will also be published in the relevant directorate's equality and diversity annual report.

2.32 The Council may also issue press releases to publicise the results of major assessment, consultation or monitoring exercises where appropriate.

Public access to information and services

2.33 The Council recognises that there are barriers that might make it difficult or prevent some people from different racial groups from fully accessing Council information or services and that particular arrangements may be required to address different needs. The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy includes the aims:

- to provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of the community without discrimination or prejudice;
- to provide clear information about our services in appropriate formats or languages which meet people's needs.

2.34 In carrying out the reviews of its functions listed in its previous Race Equality Schemes, the Council has considered issues around access to information and services such as:

- information in community languages
- when and where information is provided
- whether poor use of a service could be because people do not have enough information about it or for other reasons
- use of interpreters
- how people access services and how they would like to access services.

2.35 A range of improvements have been introduced or are planned, a number being delivered through the Council's major Customer Access to Services programme and the Dudley Council Plus contact centres. The first centre opened in Dudley town centre in May 2005. This programme is progressing initiatives such as:

- providing single points of contact for enquiries and service requests
- better coordination of Council services
- increased service accessibility and availability
- increasing opportunities for citizens to contact the Council and to receive information in a manner and format which best meets needs.

2.36 Opportunities are also taken to use other media to provide information to communities such as through the local Radio Ramadan, for example, during the holy month of Ramadan 2006 which focused on Dudley Council Plus, school admissions, recycling, hate crime, social care services and employment opportunities.

2.37 Paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 above highlight other arrangements which the Council has made to ensure that public access to information and services is available for people from different communities.

Training staff

2.38 Staff responsible for managing and delivering the Council's Race Equality Scheme were provided with training which has included awareness of the contents of the legislation and its implications, the contents of the Scheme itself, and how the reviews were to be undertaken. Staff were prioritised for this training on the basis of their responsibility for functions set out in the original timetable for reviews in the scheme.

- 2.39 A document 'Guidance for Reviews and Impact Assessments' was originally produced to assist staff in implementing the duties. As noted, this has been revised and extended to cover a broader approach to undertaking equality impact assessments, accompanied by appropriate training.
- 2.40 The implications of the duties in the Act have been incorporated in the Council's programme of equality and diversity training for employees, which has been extended to include, for example, a module on the Management Competency Programme – 'Managing Fairly and Inclusively'. Work is under way to review the range of competencies, including those relating to equality and diversity, required of employees at all levels and how to support employees in meeting these competencies.
- 2.41 Further information for employees and elected members about the Scheme is provided on the Council's intranet, which has a specific site dedicated to equality and diversity, access to which will be improved during 2007/08.

Review of the Scheme

- 2.42 Progress with implementing the scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported in the Council's annual review of equality and diversity. The scheme will be revised at least every three years and will form part of the Council's overall Equality Scheme. Individual directorates within the Council will also include details in their equality and diversity annual reports of how they are implementing the scheme in relation to their own service areas.

3. Disability Equality

Introduction

- 3.1 Section 1 of the Council's Equality Scheme explains the context to this specific section on promoting disability equality and sets out the Council's overall approach to promoting equality. The Council is committed to promoting disability equality and to meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation. It provides a number of services specifically for disabled people and has also taken a wide range of action over many years in order to fulfil this commitment across its other services and in its employment policies and practices. The Council has adopted the 'social model' of disability.
- 3.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
 - eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
 - eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
 - promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
 - encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
 - take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.
- 3.3 The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005 require authorities to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, demonstrating how the Council is meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, to implement certain aspects of the Scheme and to report on it. In summary:
- a public authority should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties
 - a public authority should involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme
 - the Scheme should include a statement of:
 - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
 - the authority's methods for impact assessment
 - steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the 'action plan')

- the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions
 - the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes
- a public authority must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information
- a public authority must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

Approach to promoting disability equality

3.4 Alongside the overall arrangements for promoting equality outlined in Section 1 of the document, the Council has in place specific organisational arrangements in relation to promoting disability equality. These include:

- a wide range of services provided specifically to meet the needs of disabled people, some of these integrated with Dudley Primary Care Trust (PCT) (mental health services are fully integrated and managed within the PCT)
- a number of strategies which set out the direction for these services including 'Mapping the Future of Mental Health Services ' – A Joint Mental Health Strategy for Dudley Health and Social Care Economy 2005-2010; the Learning Disability Strategy 2005-08; 'Giving every child the opportunity to succeed ' – the Special Educational Needs Strategy and action plan (2005-09); the Accessibility Strategy 2007-10 (to increase access to school education for disabled pupils); along with major elements of the Supporting People Five Year Strategy and the Older People's Strategy
- a corporate property group which coordinates a programme of building improvements
- in-house staff trained to undertake disability access audits and to advise on and design access improvements
- disabled access information recorded on the corporate land and property management system
- a range of consultative and engagement processes for disabled people (see paragraphs 3.9 to 3.10)

- the employment of an Access Officer to advise clients, developers and builders on the design and appropriateness of access facilities for new construction works
- use of its building control powers to ensure that new construction work complies with the Building Regulations: Access to and use of buildings and the Approved document Part M and encouraging disability access best practice amongst developers, designers and builders
- use of its planning powers to ensure that access for all people is made a material consideration in the planning process.

Previous work on disability equality

3.5 The Council has taken a wide range of action to date to promote disability equality. Examples of the action that has already taken or which is in progress include:

- the Customer Access to Services programme to improve access to services for all customers, which has included the opening of the first Dudley Council Plus centre in Dudley town centre in May 2005 designed with the involvement of 'Access in Dudley', a local voluntary group
- the publishing of a Disability Access Strategy in 2004 (now incorporated in the Disability Equality Scheme)
- full access audits for all 112 maintained schools in the borough together with around 80 other key Council buildings which have identified where access improvements are required
- a continuing programme of improvements of access to buildings demonstrated by the improving score against the Best Value Performance Indicator on access to buildings for disabled people (see Appendix 3)
- major refurbishment of and improvements to particular buildings and facilities, for example, to Dudley leisure centre which has greatly improved the accessibility of the swimming pool
- funding of and joint working with Action for Disabled People and Carers (ADC) and a supporting network of groups of disabled people and carers involved in consultation and service development (see paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 for more details and other examples of involvement)
- the production of a Dudley Carers strategy 2006-11, a carers' network, regular newsletter, and information and advice bulletins
- provision of the 'Home Call' service providing 24 hour support through remote technology to elderly or disabled people in their homes which will be expanded through the receipt of Preventative Assistive Technology Grant to extend the implementation of this 'Telecare' over the next few years

- a review of wheelchair services for adults in the Borough carried out by the Select Committee on Health and Adult Social Care during 2005/06
- a joint agency review of services for children with disabilities during 2006
- the development between Mencap and the Council's Early Years and Childcare Team of the me2 award funded through the Big Lottery Fund to promote inclusive sport and play for disabled children - the first ever kitemark was awarded in October 2005 to the Disability Sportszone, an inclusive play scheme for disabled and non-disabled young people at the Crystal Leisure Centre, Stourbridge, during school holidays
- a programme of disability awareness training for all taxi drivers in the borough
- improvements to the Council's website so it is designed to meet the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) guidelines on accessibility to a minimum double A standard.

Future priorities

3.6 While progress has undoubtedly been made, the Council is committed to taking further action to promote disability equality. Feedback from disabled people has indicated that the Council has improved substantially in the way in which its services meet the needs of disabled people. However, continuing priorities for disabled people remain around improving disability awareness for employees, improving access to buildings and information, availability of transport, and support to disabled people taking part in consultation and engagement processes.

3.7 Particular challenges include:

- continuing to develop the customer access to services programme, opening more access centres as appropriate and transferring further services to Dudley Council Plus
- implementing the specific strategic documents to improve services for disabled people
- completing the review of services for children with disabilities and implementing the recommendations
- developing a strategy for physical and sensory disability services
- increasing the proportion of disabled people in the Council's workforce
- identifying relevant competencies and improving disability awareness amongst our employees
- assessing how our relevant services impact on disabled people, improving the range and quality of data we collect and improving the identification of the outcomes we wish to achieve.

Involving Disabled People

- 3.8 The Council involves disabled people in a number of ways and across a wide range of service areas.
- 3.9 The Council, together with Dudley PCT, funds Dudley Council for Voluntary Service to run Action for Disabled People and Carers (ADC) and a supporting network of groups of disabled people and carers. The project is jointly managed through a stakeholders' group. The project has been in place for more than a decade but was comprehensively reviewed and revised in 2001/02. The project has been involved in a wide range of issues and initiatives over the years. It has been specifically involved in developing the Disability Equality Scheme through prioritising services, sharing experiences and identifying barriers from the point of view of disabled people and carers. This has helped to identify both particular issues or actions and overall priorities for services to undergo impact assessments as part of the 'screening' process used by the Council (see paragraph 3.12). Members of the ADC network of groups are also involved on other forums and provide links into and feedback from these.
- 3.10 Other examples of how disabled people are involved include:
- the Council's Directorate of the Urban Environment's Disability Consultation Group which has been engaged in a range of service improvements including highway design and services at the Borough's crematoria
 - 'Access in Dudley' meets regularly with Council officers, is funded to comment on planning applications and has been commissioned to undertake access audits of various premises, parks and open spaces and a 'street clutter' audit
 - the me2 award is judged by a panel of young people, including those with physical and learning disabilities, who receive training to help them to judge play and sports facilities against a range of criteria to ensure all children can be included in the activities on offer - a number of borough facilities have now received the award
 - the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board includes service user and parent/carer representatives
 - the mental health strategy was developed in consultation with users, carers and agencies who are represented on the Mental Health Local Implementation Team
 - the select committee wheelchair services review project team included wheelchair users

- the Benefits Customer Focus Group includes disabled service users
- a Council-wide employees with disabilities group meets regularly.

Methods for Impact Assessment

- 3.11 At the start of each year the Council will identify in its directorate strategic plans which policies are proposed to be developed during the year, whether they are relevant to promoting equality and whether therefore an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 3.12 The Council has undertaken an initial screening of its services and policies for relevance to promoting disability equality and uses this to assist in the identification of priorities for undertaking impact assessments. An initial programme of equality impact assessments of existing services is included in the action plan and programmes will be developed for subsequent years.
- 3.13 The Council has produced a guide for its staff on how to carry out equality impact assessments. This considers all aspects of equality together but can be applied specifically to assessing the impact of policies or services on disabled people if this is the particular area of concern. The Council's general approach, however, will be to look at all relevant aspects of equality together to avoid duplication.
- 3.14 All new policies, while they are being developed, will therefore need to consider their impact on promoting equality. All committee reports include a paragraph on 'equality impact' where report authors are required to report on details of the likely impact of the report's proposals on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and other relevant groups.

Gathering Information

- 3.15 The Council collects a wide range of information about its services and employment policies and practices. Mechanisms used to gather information include:

Employment:

- recruitment monitoring
- workforce personal data audit
- employees survey
- employees with disabilities group

Services:

- building access audits

- customer surveys
- citizens panel
- focus groups
- service specific forums
- carers groups
- representative forums
- impairment specific forums
- registers
- research projects

3.16 In relation to employment the Council has collected and published, together with analysis, in its annual review of equality and diversity, data on recruitment (at application, shortlisting and appointment stages) and the make up of the workforce broken down by directorate and grade showing those who have indicated that they have a disability. Best value performance indicators on equality are also being used to monitor progress and make comparisons with other authorities.

3.17 Race relations legislation requires a wider range of employment data to be published covering:

(a) the numbers of –

- employees in post, and
- applicants for employment, training and promotion, from each group;

(b) the numbers of employees from each group who –

- receive training;
- benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures;
- are involved in grievance procedures;
- are the subject of disciplinary procedures; or
- cease employment with the Council

From 2006/07 the Council will also start to gather and then publish the full range of this data related to disability.

3.18 The categories used for gathering employment data relating to disability to date by the Council have been restricted to ‘disabled’ and ‘not disabled’. The Council is carrying out a comprehensive personal data re-audit of its entire workforce. This will ask employees for the first time to indicate the type of impairment that they may have. During the lifetime of the scheme the Council will review the appropriateness and usefulness of the ‘disability’ categories to

be used for employment monitoring in the future. The Council's disabled employees will be involved in this review.

- 3.19 In order to encourage as many disabled employees as possible to indicate that they have a disability so that the Council has the best possible picture of the make-up of its workforce and can identify and undertake appropriate action in response, the audit form explains why the data is being collected and encloses a leaflet about the definition of a disability.
- 3.20 The Council has purchased a new personnel system which is being implemented in phases. During 2006/07, modules on training and recruitment will be developed to replace existing, outdated systems.
- 3.21 The Council also carries out an employees survey, currently on a biennial basis. This covers a wide range of questions and, from 2005, includes ones on experience of discrimination within the organisation. An overall summary of responses from disabled employees is prepared so that this can be compared with the results for all employees.
- 3.22 A wide range of information is also gathered in relation to services. Again where questions are asked about disability this usually allows a respondent to indicate whether or not they consider themselves to be disabled rather than what type of impairment they have. Obvious exceptions to this are where disabled people receive specific targeted services related to their impairments.
- 3.23 In schools, a wide range of data is collected related to special educational needs and some related to pupils with other disabilities. The legal definition of a disability is wider than that used for special educational needs and there is therefore a need to expand the coverage of the data collected by the Directorate of Children's Services and in individual schools. The Directorate has worked with schools to help them to develop their own Disability Equality Schemes – secondary schools were required to publish their schemes by 4th December 2006 and primary and special schools by 3rd December 2007 – and to meet their wider statutory responsibilities in relation to disabled pupils.
- 3.24 The Directorates of Children's Services and Adult, Community and Housing Services maintain a number of registers relating to disabled people, such as the children's disability register and a register of people who are blind or partially sighted.

- 3.25 Again during the lifetime of the scheme, the approach to service monitoring by disability will be reviewed, bearing in mind the usefulness of this data and data protection implications.
- 3.26 The specific strategies on services to disabled people also contain more detail of how information is gathered in relation to the areas covered by those strategies.

Using the information

- 3.27 The Council will use the information it gathers about employment to establish a baseline in areas where it does not already collect this information and trends where information already exists. This information will be analysed on a regular basis and best value performance indicators will be used to compare the Council's position with other local authorities. Where the information indicates that the Council compares poorly with other authorities, or where negative trends or barriers to disabled people are apparent, the Council will examine ways to address the situation.
- 3.28 Headline data related to disability and employment will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a workforce profile by directorate produced at the end of each quarter for the Corporate Board. The full range of data will be published, together with an analysis and proposals for further action within the Council's annual review of equality and diversity.
- 3.29 The Council will use information collected in relation to disabled people's use of and views on services to judge how well the services are performing in meeting the needs of disabled people, particularly as part of wider impact assessments, and in identifying any further action required to improve disability equality. The registers held by Directorates of Children's Services and Adult, Community and Housing Services (see paragraph 3.23) are used to make information available to people who may benefit from particular services, although registration is not required in order to access these services. Aggregated, anonymous data is shared with other professionals to help to assess whether the Council and health bodies are, in the case of the children's disability register for example, providing the kind of services that meet the needs of disabled children in the borough, to identify any gaps in provision and to help deliver better services for disabled children.

Review of the scheme

- 3.30 Progress with implementing the scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported in the Council's annual review of equality and diversity. The

scheme will be revised at least every three years and will form part of the Council's overall Equality Scheme. Individual directorates within the Council will also include details in their equality and diversity annual reports of how they are implementing the scheme in relation to their own service areas.

4. Gender Equality - Draft

Introduction

4.1 Section 1 of the Council's Equality Scheme explains the context to this specific section on promoting gender equality and sets out the Council's overall approach to promoting equality. The Council is committed to promoting gender equality and to meeting the requirements of the relevant legislation. It has taken a wide range of action over many years in order to fulfil this commitment in its employment policies and practices and across relevant services.

4.2 The Equality Act 2006 introduced from 6 April 2007 a new statutory duty:

A public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need:

- to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

4.3 The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Order 2006 requires public authorities to produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme by 30 April 2007, demonstrating how the Council is meeting the gender equality requirements of the Equality Act 2006. In summary, these specific duties are:

- to prepare and publish a Gender Equality Scheme showing how it intends to fulfil the general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives
- in preparing a scheme:
 - consult employees, service users and others (including trade unions)
 - take into account any information it has gathered or considers relevant as to how its policies and practices affect gender equality in the workplace and in the delivery of its services
 - in formulating its overall gender equality objectives, consider the need to have objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- ensure that the scheme sets out the actions the authority has taken or intends to take to:
 - gather information on the effect of its policies and practices on men and women, in employment, services and performance of its functions
 - use the information to review the implementation of the scheme objectives

- assess the impact of its current and future policies and practices on gender equality
- consult relevant employees, service users and others (including trade unions)
- ensure implementation of the scheme objectives
- implement the scheme and their actions for gathering and using information within three years of publication of the scheme, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- review and revise the scheme at least every three years
- report on progress annually.

Approach to promoting gender equality

4.4 Alongside the organisational arrangements for managing and promoting equality set out in section 1 of the Equality Scheme, the Council has taken or is taking a wide range of action to promote gender equality.

4.5 Examples in relation to employment include:

- a range of flexible working options for its employees
- a childcare voucher salary sacrifice scheme which assists employees with the heavy cost of childcare
- a grading and pay review of its workforce (see paragraphs 4.28 to 4.32)
- a women into construction programme to encourage more women to enter a traditionally male work environment in Housing Services
- a joint agency funding bid to encourage men to qualify as care workers
- the 'Springboard' personal development programme for women in junior positions which has been running for more than ten years
- a number of other training courses run for employees, such as 'personal safety and managing aggression' and 'strategies for lone working', of benefit to both men and women, but acknowledging that women may be more vulnerable than men in certain work situations
- procedural guidance on lone working
- a combating harassment and bullying at work employees policy and procedure, updated in December 2006, and trained harassment support contacts across directorates

4.6 Examples in relation to its services are:

- activities to celebrate International Women's Day, including sports taster sessions aimed at encouraging more women to take up physical activities

- women only swimming sessions at Dudley and Halesowen leisure centres to meet the needs of particular communities
- the work of the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum and the Domestic Abuse Coordinator within the Council, including a hard-hitting campaign aimed at perpetrators of domestic abuse launched on 14 February 2007
- the production of a Dudley Carers strategy 2006-11, a carers' network, regular newsletter, and information and advice bulletins
- the Children's Information Service
- funding to support the Asian Women's Centre in Dudley
- a comprehensive multi-agency policy and procedures for the protection of vulnerable adults issued in January 2007 to prevent and deal with sexual and other harassment and abuse of vulnerable adults
- support to schools in implementing the requirements of the gender equality duties.

4.7 The Annual Reviews of Equality and Diversity and directorates' equality and diversity action plans and annual reports contain more details of recent and ongoing gender equality work.

Consultation with employees and stakeholders

4.8 The Council undertakes a wide range of consultation. Not all of these mechanisms have been used to consult on gender issues although a considerable amount of useful information has been derived from them which has gender implications. The Council will look to see how they can be better use the variety of consultation mechanisms (which are reflected in paragraphs 4.12 to 4.15).

4.9 Specific consultation on promoting gender equality is undertaken through, for example:

- the last employees survey included questions on employees' experience and perception of discrimination and harassment, including sex discrimination within the organisation
- the Council's Community Representatives Panel has included representatives of women, particular through Dudley Women's Forum
- the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group, which includes representatives of employee groups and the Centre for Equality and Diversity, the Human Resources Network and other working groups

4.10 In drawing up the scheme, the following consultation has been carried out (*or is due to be carried out*)

- employee focus groups
- the Citizens Panel has been used to survey customers
- research carried out through the citizens panel and the employees survey has been analysed by gender to highlight any gender differences
- the trades union have been consulted
- customer focus groups have been consulted
- Dudley Women's Forum

- 4.11 In addition, a comprehensive programme of agency and community consultation was undertaken to draw up the Borough's Community Strategy 2005-20 and the Local Area Agreement which is focussed on achieving key objectives from the strategy. A number of issues relating to gender equality have emerged from this process.
- 4.12 The Council has produced a strategy and toolkit for consultation which it uses to guide consultation exercises. A corporate consultation planner is prepared at the beginning of each year to collect and share information about planned consultation activities. These activities are recorded on the Council's online consultation database available to employees, other agencies and the public through the Council's website. The database is helping to improve planning, coordination and the sharing of results of consultation.
- 4.13 Methods for consultation used by the Council include the following - how better to integrate consultation on gender equality into more of these mechanisms will continue be examined during the lifetime of the scheme:
- consultation meetings
 - area committees
 - the Dudley Borough Citizens' Panel or other survey questionnaires
 - focus groups
 - meetings with community groups
 - community representatives forums
 - user forums
 - employee groups and trade unions
 - the Council's website
- 4.14 Other methods of consultation are also used when children and young people are involved such as:
- the youth council and school councils
 - a range of other forums such as the Young People's Forum on the Children's Fund and the Care Leavers Forum
 - the me2 project (see section 3 of the Scheme)

- online forum to allow children and young people to express their views on a variety of subjects - 8,955 children and young people aged 5–15 are actively registered users
- an extensive audit, consultation and participation programme undertaken to identify the play needs and aspirations of children and young people across Dudley for the development of the Dudley Play Strategy and Big Lottery bid
- adoption of the Hear by Right Standards by the Council.

4.15 Employees are consulted through:

- team meetings
- employee surveys
- focus groups
- employee groups
- trades unions

Gathering and using information

4.16 The Council collects a wide range of information about its services and employment policies and practices. In relation to employment the Council has collected and published, together with analysis, in its annual review of equality and diversity, data on recruitment (at application, shortlisting and appointment stages) and the make up of the workforce by gender broken down by directorate. Best value performance indicators on equality have also been used to monitor progress and make comparisons with other authorities.

4.17 Race relations legislation requires a wider range of employment data to be published covering:

(a) the numbers of –

- employees in post, and
- applicants for employment, training and promotion, from each group;

(b) the numbers of employees from each group who –

- receive training;
- benefit or suffer disadvantage as a result of its performance assessment procedures;
- are involved in grievance procedures;
- are the subject of disciplinary procedures; or
- cease employment with the Council

From 2006/07 the Council will also gather and publish the full range of this data related to gender.

- 4.18 The Council has purchased a new personnel system which is being implemented in phases. During 200708, modules on training and recruitment will be implemented to replace existing, outdated systems, which will assist in the recording, presentation and analysis of this data. The Council will also review the monitoring of other employment areas of importance to gender equality alongside this development.
- 4.19 Headline data related to gender and employment will be monitored on a quarterly basis with a workforce profile by directorate produced at the end of each quarter for Corporate Board. The full range of data will be published, together with an analysis and proposals for further action within the Council's annual review of equality and diversity.
- 4.20 The Council also carries out an employees survey, currently on a biennial basis. This covers a wide range of questions and, as previously noted, from 2005 includes ones on experience of discrimination within the organisation. An overall summary of the gender breakdown of responses is prepared so that the results for women can be compared with the results for men.
- 4.21 A wide range of information is also gathered in relation to services. Best use is not always made of this data in assessing the impact of services on men and women, so the council will be undertaking more work around the equality monitoring of services including the production of a more detailed guide to equality monitoring. This will sit alongside the Council's equality impact assessment process (see below).
- 4.22 Examples of where data on gender is gathered and used to try to improve service outcomes include:
- the attainment rates of boys and girls from different communities in schools
 - domestic abuse (85% of defendants in domestic violence cases in the Borough in 2001/04 were men)
 - *other examples to be added*
- 4.23 *deliberately blank*

Equality impact assessments

- 4.24 All directorates have produced an initial programme of equality impact assessments of existing functions or policies to be carried out in the first year of the scheme and will update this annually. At the start of each year each directorate will identify in its strategic plan which policies are proposed to be developed during the year, whether they are relevant to promoting equality and whether therefore an equality impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.25 The Council has undertaken an initial screening of its services and policies for relevance to promoting gender equality and uses this to assist in the identification of priorities for undertaking impact assessments.
- 4.26 The Council has produced a guide for its staff on how to carry out equality impact assessments. This considers all aspects of equality together but can be applied specifically to assessing the impact of policies or services on both genders if this is the particular area of concern. The Council's general approach, however, will be to look at all relevant aspects of equality together to avoid duplication.
- 4.27 All new policies, while they are being developed, will need to consider their impact on promoting equality. All committee reports include a paragraph on 'equality impact' where report authors are required to report on details of the likely impact of the report's proposals on different racial groups, disabled people, both genders and other relevant groups.

Grading and pay review

- 4.28 The Council is undertaking a grading and pay review of its workforce, initially involving a comprehensive job evaluation exercise of all of its posts. The National Joint Council of Local/Authorities Employers' scheme is being used for this job evaluation, which is due to be completed by April 2007. Its use is fully supported by the trade unions and the Equal Opportunities Commission.
- 4.29 The grading and pay review has looked at grading and pay and other benefit levels for jobs across the Council. It is designed to help the Council to achieve "single status" for its employees by putting in place a pay and reward system which is fair, consistent, equitable and transparent. It will also ensure that the Council can attract and retain the employees it needs to deliver its vision and priorities.

4.30 This work will conclude the Council's response to the national Single Status Agreement which was introduced to harmonise pay and conditions across an authority for comparable posts. Its main features are:

- harmonisation of conditions of service
- standard working week of 37 hours or less
- grading reviews based on the job evaluation system which ensures equal pay for work of equal value
- equal status for part-time employees, and
- partnership working between management and trade unions.

4.31 The Council, like all other local authorities, must complete this under the 2004 National Pay Agreement between local authorities and trade unions.

4.32 Once the job evaluation exercise is completed the next steps during 2007/08 are:

- negotiations with the trades union
- announce new pay and reward structures
- deal with appeals against grading
- implement new grading and pay structure

What information collected and consultation are telling us

4.33 About 75% of the Council's workforce (including schools) are women although this varies considerably between directorates, professions and salary grades. The male/female split is roughly even in the higher salary grades (point 34 and above) (December 2006) but there are more men at the very highest salary levels (top 5% of earners). There is however a strong trend towards this gap gradually closing.

4.34 The introduction of a new recruitment module to replace the current recruitment monitoring system should enable more detailed analysis of recruitment trends by job areas or grades. Top level analysis shows that women who apply for jobs with the Council are slightly more successful than men – this is the case for 'Green book' and fortnightly paid jobs – but may not be consistent across all work areas.

4.35 More analysis is also needed to track the experiences of women from different backgrounds as there can be a tendency to treat women as a homogenised group.

- 4.36 Feedback from employees indicates that job share is often not the preferred option with part-time working frequently being preferable. The figures show that about 17% of men work part-time whereas 62% of women work part-time, although this varies quite considerably between directorates. Part-time working amongst both men and women is far more prevalent amongst employees on lower wage levels than amongst those on higher wages.
- 4.37 Managers and personnel officers are often uncertain about what can be done locally to begin to tackle areas of occupational segregation. Traditionally male occupations have usually been the focus of concern - the Housing service's 'Women into Construction' programme now in its fourth year has proved that successful action can be taken, with a number of women now taking part in its modern apprenticeship scheme. However, there is also concern about the effects of having workforces in some areas which are primarily made up of women such as in primary schools and amongst care workers. The Gender Equality in Care project is looking to deliver NVQ Level 2 training across the Black Country to male care workers. A bid for funding has been written in partnership with Black Country Partnership for Care and the social services training teams from the Black Country Local Authorities.
- 4.38 Although covered in the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and explicitly recognised for example in the combating bullying and harassment at work policy, issues around employment and transsexual people were relatively little recognised amongst managers and employees.
- 4.39 The Community Strategy, Community Safety Strategy and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) consultation processes have revealed concern about domestic abuse. Whilst by no means all victims of abuse are female, certainly the large majority are and the responses to abuse need to be tailored by gender. Tackling domestic abuse has been selected through the LAA consultation process as one of its 12 stretch targets.
- 4.40 Similarly reducing teenage pregnancies has been highlighted through consultation as a priority and a stretch target in the LAA. The 2004 schools lifestyle survey highlighted differences between year 10 girls' and boys' awareness and responses to sexual health issues.
- 4.41 Analysis of the responses to recent Citizens Panel surveys and the 2006 Best Value satisfaction survey has revealed little in the way of notable, statistically significant differences in the responses from men and women. One area where there was a clear difference, though, was that significantly more women than men feel unsafe outside in the Borough after dark (but not during the day).

- 4.42 Whilst the gap between boys and girls attainment rates in schools in the Borough is less marked than the national average there is still concern about the underachievement of boys in school.
- 4.43 Consultation with disabled people and carers highlighted that a significant gender issue for them was that the majority of carers are women. Carers can feel very isolated and unsupported and the information, advice and support provided by the Council are appreciated.
- 4.44 *Other potential issues to be derived from further consultation.*

Emerging priorities *(to be revised following further consultation)*

- 4.45 While progress has undoubtedly been made, the Council is committed to taking further action to promote gender equality. Priorities emerging through the analysis of information and consultation include:

Employment

- implementing the new pay and grading structure
- undertaking further analysis of employment data to understand better the extent and causes of occupational segregation and what further practical action the Council can take
- reviewing the Council's recruitment policy
- promoting flexible working options, particularly part-time working, to men and women, ensuring all managers are aware of their responsibilities in this respect
- looking at the impact of caring responsibilities on employees
- promoting knowledge and understanding of transsexuality and gender reassignment

Services

- continuing to assess how our relevant services impact on women or men and improving the range and quality of data we collect and how we use the data
- continuing to implement the customer access to services programme
- support and information to carers of disabled people
- childcare advice and information
- reducing domestic violence
- reducing teenage pregnancies
- attainment rates of boys in school
- safety issues such as security on council car parks at night

4.46 The action plan in section 5 derives from these identified priorities. Where there are targets set out in the “all equality areas” action plan such as “review and revise the recruitment policy and procedure” (1.12) which relate to the priorities identified for promoting gender equality, then it will be ensured that the gender equality aspects are fully covered.

Review of the scheme

4.47 Progress with implementing the scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and reported in the Council’s annual review of equality and diversity. The scheme will be revised at least every three years and will form part of the Council’s overall Equality Scheme. Individual directorates within the Council will also include details in their equality and diversity annual reports of how they are implementing the scheme in relation to their own service areas.

5. Action plan 2007-10

- 5.1 The Council will aim to build on the progress that has been made in promoting equality. In particular, it will look to build on the assessments of policies and functions undertaken under the previous Race Equality Schemes and to undertake wider equality impact assessments of policies and services over the next three years.
- 5.2 The action plan is arranged so that there are sections on general equality actions together with specific actions identified for race, disability and gender equality.
- 5.3 Individual Directors will be responsible for ensuring that the impact assessments for their directorates are completed in accordance with the timetable set out in the action plan. Actions arising from impact assessments will be incorporated in directorates' annual equality and diversity action plans. Responsibility for other actions is set out in the action plan.

1. All Equality Areas

- 1.1 Progress work through the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in response to the equality and diversity priority areas identified by Corporate Board to ensure there are clear action plans in place for each of these during 2007/08:
- 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
- 1.2 Implement the new approach to equality impact assessments across the Council from April 2007 using the agreed guidelines for undertaking these assessments (Equality and Diversity Advisory Group).
- 1.3 Undertake full equality impact assessments of the following services/policies during 2007/08:
- (a) Adult, Community and Housing Services
- Promoting the cultural and social heritage of the Borough (Libraries and Archives)
 - Strategy for physical and sensory impairments
 - Home care services (older people)

- Residential services (older people)
- Day care services (learning disabilities)
- Statutory (social care) complaints
- Housing management – lettings
- Building services- responsive repairs
- Private sector - HAS

(b) Chief Executive's

- Community Safety – anti-social behaviour
- Dudley Council Plus
- Elections and electoral registration
- Recruitment and selection

(c) Children's Services

- Transitional arrangements for young people into adult services
- Services for children in public care
- Service provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities
- Youth Service curriculum
- Participation and achievement 16 – 19 year olds
- Early years and childcare services delivered by private and voluntary providers
- Assessment of children and young people's needs and parenting capacity
- Health Promoting Schools Lifestyle Survey
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service - provision for pupils in schools
- Complaints policy
- Dudley Performing Arts – Instrumental tuition for school age young people
- ICT Services – hardware and software
- Dudley Play Strategy

(d) Finance

- Benefits Services
- Revenue Services

(e) Urban Environment

- Bereavement Services
- Fair Trading and Consumer/Trade Advice
- Transport (taxis)
- Car Parking Management

- 1.4 Develop annual programmes of equality impact assessments for each directorate for future years to be published in strategic/annual equality and diversity action plans (Directorate lead officers).
- 1.5 Review the approach to equality impact assessments in March/April 2008 (Equality and Diversity Advisory Group).
- 1.6 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 (Head of Policy).
- 1.7 Produce annual directorate equality and diversity reports for June/July select committee meetings and action plans for February/March select committee meetings each year to cover directorate contributions to the Scheme (Directorate lead officers).
- 1.8 Develop equality and diversity web pages on the Council's website by the end of April 2007 to promote accessibility of reports and information related to the Council's approach and progress (Head of Marketing and Communications/Head of Policy).
- 1.9 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 (Equality and Diversity Advisory Group).
- 1.10 Continue to progress work against the Equality Standard for Local Government and to establish action plans to achieve subsequent levels of the revised standard (Equality and Diversity Advisory Group).
- 1.11 Continue the transfer of further services to Dudley Council Plus in accordance with the customer access to services programme and develop a second customer access centre in 2007 (Head of Customer Access to Services).
- 1.12 Review and revise the recruitment policy and procedure during 2007/08 (Head of Personnel).
- 1.13 Implement the remaining elements of the People Management Strategy 2006-08 relevant to promoting equality by March 2008 (Head of Personnel).
- 1.14 Complete the updating of employee personal data and enter it on to the personnel system by July 2007 (Head of Personnel).

- 1.15 Complete the introduction of the remaining elements of the Council's new personnel system by 2007/08 (Head of ICT).
- 1.16 Introduce an e-diversity training package for employees during 2007/08 (Head of Personnel).
- 1.17 Undertake training on promoting equality through procurement for employees and project teams involved in procurement during 2007 (Procurement Steering Group).
- 1.18 Review support to community representatives and others who are engaged in equality policy development and scrutiny processes as part of implementation of the Local Compact code of practice on volunteering (Head of Policy).

2. Race Equality (Draft)

- 2.1 Complete race equality assessments of the following functions/policies by the end of May 2007:

Adult, Community and Housing Services

Adult and community learning – three year development plan

Business services:

- Access to counselling

Children and families:

- Children's homes

- Commissioning and purchasing of care services

- Fostering

Housing

- Performance management

- Quality assurance

Learning disability:

- Day services

Older people and physical disability:

- Day care services

- Domiciliary care

- Fair access to care

Safeguarding and protection of vulnerable adults

Chief Executive's

Corporate marketing and communications

Employee improvement and discipline

Employee grievances

Training and development

Children's Services

Consulting with communities

Hard to place children

Monitoring visits to individual schools

School performance group reporting

Schools effectiveness division - revised standard operating procedure

Youth service curriculum framework

Finance

Business rates

Council Tax

ICT Services

Law and Property

Democratic services

Dudley open market

Urban Environment

Arts culture and creativity services

Halls and entertainment

Himley Hall and Park, events and festivals

Public Protection

- 2.2 Review progress annually against the Audit Commission's framework 'The Journey to Race Equality' self-assessment annually (EDAG)
- 2.3 At least maintain performance against Best Value Performance indicator 2b (EDAG).
- 2.4 Hold at least one major, Council-wide BME community consultation and information event a year (Assistant Director of Housing Strategy & Private Sector)
- 2.5 Identify actions arising from the 2007 event for inclusion in this scheme
- 2.6 Establish good practice arising from the audit of consultation with BME communities across the Council undertaken during 2006/07 by June 2007 (Head of Policy)
- 2.7 Work in partnership with communities to hold annual events and activities for Black History Month (Assistant Director for Partnership and Children's Trust)

- 2.8 Work to achieve the identified targets set out in the Local Area Agreement namely:
- (a) Increase and broaden the impact of culture and recreation to enrich individual lives, promote inclusion and cohesion and enhance community spirit – increase in representation of people from BME communities participating from 2007/8 – 2009/10 (Assistant Director Culture and Community Services)
 - (b) Older people supported to live independently in homes of their choice through a timely provision of equipment (including preventative assistive technology) and adaptations and housing advice – ethnicity of older people receiving an assessment; ethnicity of older people receiving services following an assessment (Assistant Director, Older People and Physical Disability)
 - (c) To increase the numbers of people aged 18 - 64 moving into sustained employment from within either our Priority Areas (as defined) or from Key Priority Groups (as defined), contributing towards a reduction in the numbers of local people claiming key benefits, achieved through key delivery agencies (as defined) (DUE/DACHS)
 - (d) To increase the numbers of working aged adults (18 – 64) drawn from within either Priority Wards or Priority Groups (as defined) who possess NVQ level 1 (or equivalent) & Skills for Life awards and those who possess first rung employer relevant skills and/or qualifications (DUE/DACHS)
- 2.9 Contribute to the work of Dudley Community Partnership's Community Cohesion Sub-Group in producing a community cohesion action plan and implementing the actions for which the Council is responsible (Head of Policy)
- 2.10 Complete the Routes 2 Roots internet resource for schools and launch in schools in the Borough (Director of Education)
- 2.11 Carry out the next stage of the Leaps and Bounds project through the Dancing Caverns Project subject to the receipt of funding from the Big Lottery (Project Director)

3. Disability Equality

- 3.1 Continue work to implement the range of strategies in place in relation to specific services to disabled people:
- the Learning Disability Strategy 2005-08 (Assistant Director Learning Disability)
 - 'Mapping the Future of Mental Health Services ' – A Joint Mental Health Strategy for Dudley Health and Social Care Economy 2005-2010 (Assistant Director Learning Disability)
 - 'Giving every child the opportunity to succeed ' – the Special Educational Needs Strategy and action plan (2005-09) (Director of Children's Services)
 - the Accessibility Strategy 2007-10 (to increase access to school education for disabled pupils) (Director of Children's Services)
- 3.2 Complete the review of services for children with a disability and produce a strategy during 2007 (Head of Service – Children with Disabilities)
- 3.3 Develop a physical and sensory disabilities strategy by September 2007 (Head of Physical Disability Services).
- 3.4 Discuss with Access for Disabled People and Carers and the employees with disabilities group how they wish to be involved in reviewing the scheme and in carrying out impact assessments by July 2007 (Head of Policy).
- 3.5 Maintain an access improvement programme for the Council's buildings and continue to improve the score against Best Value Performance Indicator 156 on disabled access subject to available resources (Corporate Property Group).
- 3.6 Examine the options for and feasibility of updating the Council's series of access guides to buildings across the borough during 2007/08 (Disabled Access Officer).
- 3.7 Update the Council's guide to services for disabled people published in response to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by March 2008 (Head of Policy).
- 3.8 Continue to make improvements to signage to the Council's buildings during 2007/08 (Head of Marketing and Communications).

- 3.9 Provide 900 households with an extended Telecare service over next two years (2007/8-2008/9) ((Head of Physical Disability Services/Assistant Director of Housing)
- 3.10 Publish comprehensive employment monitoring data for disability equality to match race equality requirements from 2006/07 (Head of Personnel).
- 3.11 Identify and implement actions to increase the percentage of the Council's workforce who are disabled from the April 2006 baseline (Head of Personnel).
- 3.12 Complete the employee personal data audit and review its effectiveness with the employees with disabilities group by March 2008 (Head of Personnel).
- 3.13 Retain the JobCentre Plus's positive about disabled people status for the Council and undertake a further awareness raising campaign during 2007/08 to ensure managers and employees are fully aware of the commitments involved (Head of Personnel).
- 3.14 Improve the accessibility of the Council's intranet site for employees during 2007/08 (Head of ICT).
- 3.15 Review the appropriateness and usefulness of the categories to be used for gathering information on the effect of policies and practices on disabled people in employment and services (Equality and Diversity Advisory Group).
- 3.16 Review how the Council provides important information about its services to ensure that this reaches people across the range of disabilities (Head of Marketing and Communications).
- 3.17 Review and improve the data collected in and from schools about disabled pupils (Assistant Director for Policy, Performance and Information).
- 3.18 Work with primary and special schools to assist them in developing their Disability Equality Schemes by December 2007 (Lead Officer, Children's Services).
- 3.19 Ensure that the needs of disabled employees are supported in efforts to promote volunteering amongst the Council's workforce during 2007/08 and to work with partners to identify opportunities to promote disabled people's involvement in public life (Head of Personnel/Head of Policy).

4. Gender Equality

- 4.1 Complete the grading and pay review by December 2007 through:
- negotiations with the trades union
 - announcing a new pay and reward structure
 - dealing with appeals against grading, and
 - implementing the new grading and pay structure (Head of Personnel)
- 4.2 Publish comprehensive employment monitoring data from 2006/07 onwards by gender to match the statutory race equality requirements (Head of Personnel)
- 4.3 Undertake further work during 2007/08 to identify and address areas of occupational segregation in the Council's workforce (Head of Personnel)
- 4.3.1 Continue to run the Women into construction programme (Housing)
- 4.3.2 Work with partners on implementing the Gender inequality in care project (subject to a successful bid)
- 4.5 Review the success of the Modern apprenticeship programme in administration in attracting young people of both sexes (Head of Learning and Development).
- 4.7 Implement the Dudley Carers strategy 2006-11 (Assistant Director Adult Care services)
- 4.8 Continue to operate and promote to the childcare vouchers for employees scheme (Head of Personnel)
- 4.9 Implement the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 (Head of Early Years and Childcare)
- 4.10 Promote awareness of transgender issues in employment to managers through issuing advice and guidance during 2007/08 (Head of Personnel)
- 4.11 Provide assistance to schools in implementing their Gender Equality Schemes (Director of Children's Services)
- 4.12 Work to achieve the identified targets set out in the Local Area Agreement, namely:

- (a) Reduction in the under 18 conception rate (*PCT/DCS?*)
 - (b)(i) Maintain reporting levels of domestic violence at 3300 incidents per year (Safe and Sound Partnership)
 - (b)(ii) Reduce repeat incident rates of domestic violence in line with LAA targets (Safe and Sound Partnership)
- 4.13 Promote flexible working options particularly part-time working to men and women in the workforce (Head of Personnel)
- 4.14 Review the approach to service monitoring by gender and produce a guide to equality monitoring (Head of Policy).
- 4.15 *Other targets to be derived from further consultation*

6. Review

Reviewing the action plan

- 6.1 The Equality Scheme will be monitored and reviewed through existing mechanisms, namely:
- directors and their directorate management teams, which will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the directorate contributions to the Scheme
 - the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group, which will monitor the Scheme's action plan on a six-monthly basis and be responsible for leading any review of the scheme
 - Corporate Board, which will undertake quarterly monitoring of key performance indicators
 - the Cabinet, which will receive quarterly performance monitoring reports referred by Corporate Board and the annual review of equality, which will include progress against the Scheme
 - the lead select committee on corporate equality and diversity issues will scrutinise the annual review of equality and diversity
 - Select Committees, which will scrutinise individual directorates' equality and diversity action plans and annual reports.

Dealing with complaints

- 6.2 The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out how complaints relating to the Scheme will be dealt with (see Appendix 1, section 5).

Publication of the Scheme

- 6.3 The Equality Scheme is available in print form on request from Simon Manson, Chief Executive's Directorate, Dudley MBC, Council House, Priory Road, Dudley DY1 1HF, (tel 01384 814713; email simon.manson@dudley.gov.uk) and on the Council's website at www.dudley.gov.uk. Copies of the Scheme will also be available in public libraries in the Borough and from the Centre for Equality and Diversity in Dudley.
- 6.4 A summary of the Scheme will also be available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu, in large print, easy read and other formats on request.

Appendix A. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's equality and diversity policy provides the overall framework for meeting its commitment to promoting equality and diversity. The Council recognises the need to tackle discrimination and to promote equality between different groups in the community whilst also addressing the diverse needs of individuals. The policy covers the Council's own employment policies and practices, the provision of services and its wider community leadership role.

The Equality and Diversity Policy responds to and is supported by a wide range of other documents.

- The overall strategy for the Borough – the Dudley Borough Challenge, the Community Strategy for 2005-20 – has as its vision the promotion of stronger communities throughout the Borough. A primary aim throughout the strategy is to promote greater equality so that all people are able to make a full contribution to society.
- The Council Plan sets out the Council's contribution to achieving the aims of the Community Strategy. It states that: "Dudley Council is committed to making sure that local people get the best possible quality public services and are given every opportunity to realise their potential. We recognise and value the diversity of backgrounds, skills and needs within the borough and work hard to respond to these. We aim to serve the people of Dudley borough fairly and efficiently so we can improve the quality of life for everyone."
- The Equality and Diversity Policy provides the overall framework for statutory equality documents – the Race Equality Scheme, the Disability Equality Scheme and the Gender Equality Scheme. These are brought together as the Council's Equality Scheme.
- This policy is also reflected in the wide range of other policies, plans and documents of importance to promoting equality and diversity.

There is an increasing range of equality legislation which the Council needs to respond to in its employment policies and practices, its provision of services and in its community leadership role. While the policy is not driven solely by legislation, it recognises the importance of ensuring that the Council can meet its statutory duties.

Relevant legislation includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

2. Overall Objective of the Policy

The overall objective of the Council's equality and diversity policy is to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds

in its employment policies and practices, in its services, and in its engagement with partners and with the communities of the Borough.

The Council aims to ensure that no job applicants, employees, residents or service users receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union or political activities, social class, where the person lives or spent convictions.

The Council recognises that:

- discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time
- equality of opportunity cannot be achieved by always treating all people alike

The Council is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice which accompany the legislation.

3. Aims of the Policy

In meeting the overall objective of the policy, a number of more detailed aims have been identified covering general aims, services and employment.

General aims

The Council aims:

- to provide community leadership on equality and diversity issues and to work with its partner organisations and the community to make the Borough a place to live, work and visit free from discrimination and harassment;
- to incorporate equality and diversity principles from the start in all its policies, plans and strategies;
- to undertake equality impact assessments to judge the impact of its policies and services and to determine the needs of its employees, customers and citizens;
- to identify the equality and diversity outcomes it wants to achieve for its employees, customers and communities;
- to reflect the diversity of the Borough in its publications, events and other marketing and communications activities;
- in accepting the definition of institutional racism set out in the Macpherson Report, to seek to address institutional racism and other forms of discrimination;
- in accepting the definition of a racist incident set out in the Macpherson Report, to deal with such incidents with due seriousness;
- to follow the social model of disability;
- to apply the principles of this policy in its procurement activities and in services commissioned through other organisations;
- to work towards achieving level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and to undertake self-assessment, scrutiny and audit of its progress.

Service provision aims

The Council aims:

- to provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of the community without discrimination or prejudice;
- to provide clear information about our services in appropriate formats or languages which meet people's needs;
- to monitor our services to ensure that all sections of the community are receiving fair access and outcomes and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent;
- to consult with and involve all sections of the community in identifying needs and in decisions about services;
- to respond promptly and fairly to any complaints that we receive about our services including those of discrimination.

Employment aims

The Council aims:

- to ensure that its employment policies and procedures do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual on any unjustifiable grounds;
- to make the profile of its workforce at all levels as representative of the Borough's population as possible;
- to monitor its employment processes by age group, disability, gender, racial group and religion or belief and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent;
- to promote a culture of fairness and respect in all its employment policies, procedures and practices
- to provide appropriate training for employees on equality and diversity issues;

- to make use of the Race Relations 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and subsequent legislation, which allow for initiatives to encourage under-represented groups to apply for posts or access specific training where appropriate;
- to review its pay structures to ensure all employees are rewarded fairly;
- to protect its employees from harassment and investigate all claims of harassment that are made;
- to respond to the particular needs of employees, including those relating to religion or culture.

4. Responsibility for the Policy

Responsibility for the policy rests with the Council's Cabinet. The Controlling Group will nominate a Cabinet Member with lead responsibility for equality and diversity and for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy.

The Cabinet Member, in consultation with other Members, officers and communities as appropriate, will identify a number of key issues to be the focus for particular action for equality and diversity work during each year or other appropriate time period.

All Directors are responsible for implementing the policy within their directorates. Corporate Board will identify a lead director on equality and diversity who will act as a champion for promoting equality and diversity and chair meetings of the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

All elected Members and employees of the Council have an individual responsibility to comply with the requirements of this policy in all dealings with elected Members, employees, job applicants, residents, service users and other members of the public, and with other organisations.

5. Rights Under the Policy

The policy assigns rights alongside responsibilities.

Any customer who feels that they have been unfairly treated is entitled to submit a complaint to the Council which will be dealt with through the Council's customer feedback procedure.

Job applicants who feel that they may have grounds for complaint should refer to the 'Fair Deal for Job Applicants' and contact the Head of Personnel and Support Services, Chief Executive's Directorate.

Hate crime incidents can be reported to the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour (Hate Crime) Coordinator, or to other identified reporting centres across the Borough, and action will be taken through the Dudley Race/Hate Incidents Group.

Employees who believe that they are suffering from harassment or bullying can raise the matter through the Council's combating harassment and bullying procedure or approach the Council's trained harassment support contacts. For other complaints related to this policy and arising from an employee's employment, the employee should raise the matter through the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Any serious concerns that an employee may have arising from this policy about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of officers or Members of the Council, or others acting on behalf of the Council, not covered by the above, can be reported under the Confidential Reporting Policy.

The Council will seek to protect individuals from any form of victimisation arising from their taking action in relation to their rights in law or making any complaint through the Council's procedures arising from this policy.

6. Implementation of the Policy

All directors identify officers at a senior level to take a lead on implementing the policy within their directorates. These lead officers will meet on a regular basis as the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group, with representation from relevant employee groups or outside bodies.

The Council will publish an Equality Scheme, incorporating the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes required by legislation, to set out in more detail its approach to promoting equality in these areas. The Equality Scheme will be reviewed at least every three years.

An annual review of equality and diversity will be drawn up each year to report on progress with equality and diversity across the Council. This will be the main vehicle for undertaking the statutory reporting in relation to employment and on progress with the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes required by equality legislation.

All directorates will prepare annual equality and diversity action plans which will be linked with their annual strategic plans and respond to the contents of the Equality Scheme and the annual reviews. Progress in achieving the action plans will be reported in directorate annual reports. Common guidelines will be used in the production of the action plans and annual reports to promote consistency and comparability. Action plans and annual reports will be scrutinised by a select committee. Action plans will be approved by the relevant Cabinet Member(s) for the services concerned.

A select committee will take the lead role on scrutinising corporate equality and diversity issues including the annual review of equality and diversity. Responsibility for scrutiny of individual directorate action plans and annual reports will be allocated across the select committees.

A community representatives panel, consisting of representatives nominated by the Borough's ethnic minority communities, disabled people and women, the Centre for Equality and Diversity and any other bodies or communities identified by the Cabinet, will meet regularly with the Cabinet Member or his/her nominee. Its role will be to raise issues of concern from communities and provide advice or comment to the Cabinet Member and directorates on plans and procedures for implementing the policy.

7. Review

The policy will be reviewed at least every three years in line with the requirements to review the Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes.

Revised policy approved by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
November 2006

Further Information

A number of the relevant Dudley MBC documents referred to in the policy are available on the Council's website <http://www.dudley.gov.uk> .

Council employees will find a wide range of information on its Equality and Diversity intranet site.

For enquiries about the policy, or copies of relevant documents, contact the Corporate Policy and Research Team or Corporate Personnel, Chief Executive's Directorate.

For advice, information and copies of relevant external documents e.g. statutory codes of practice, useful websites include:

Commission for Racial Equality <http://www.cre.gov.uk>

Disability Rights Commission <http://www.drc-gb.org>

Equal Opportunities Commission <http://www.eoc.org.uk>

Age Positive (Department of Work and Pensions)
<http://www.agepositive.gov.uk/index.cfm>

Department of Communities and Local Government <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

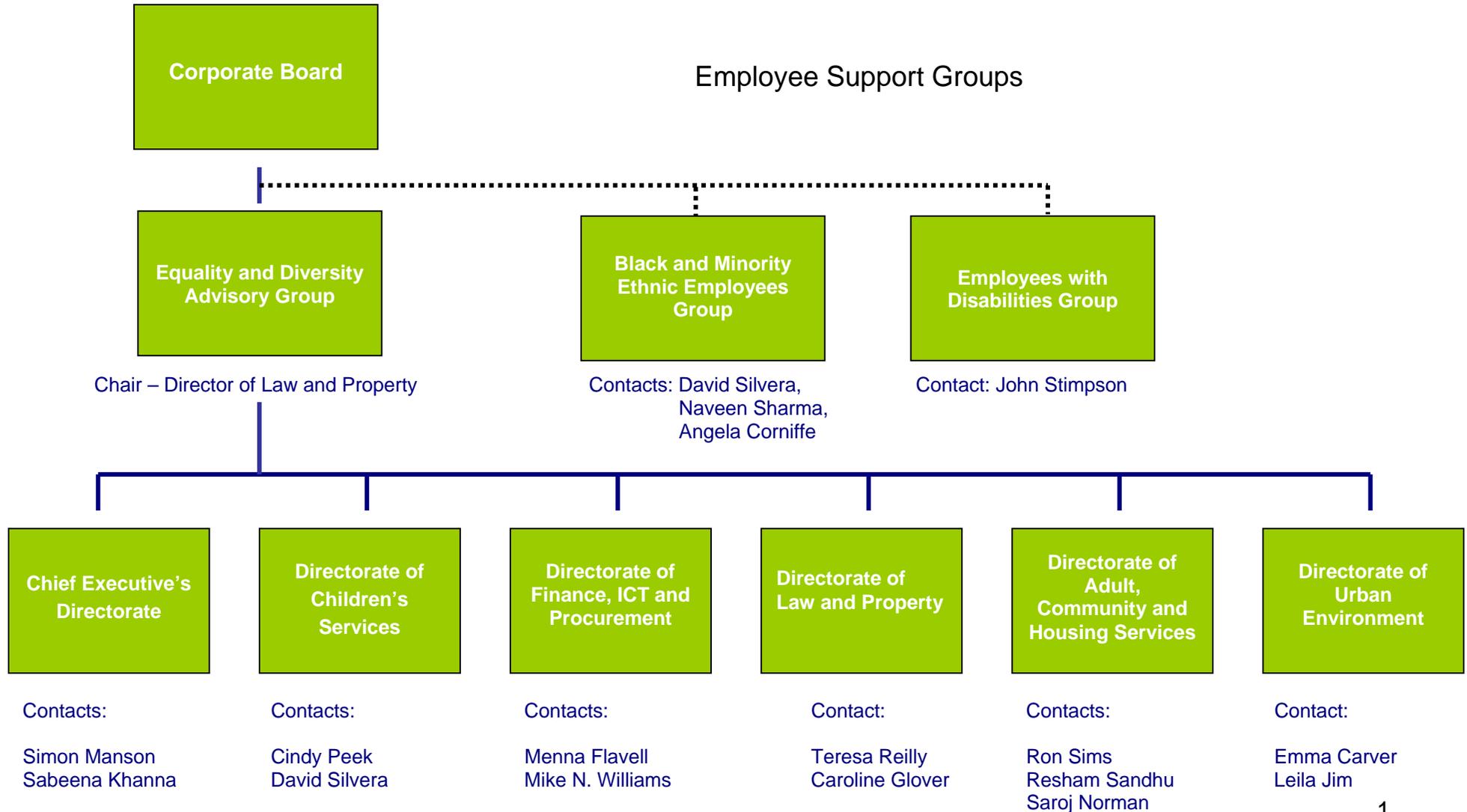
Improvement and Development Agency <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk>

Stonewall <http://www.stonewall.org.uk>

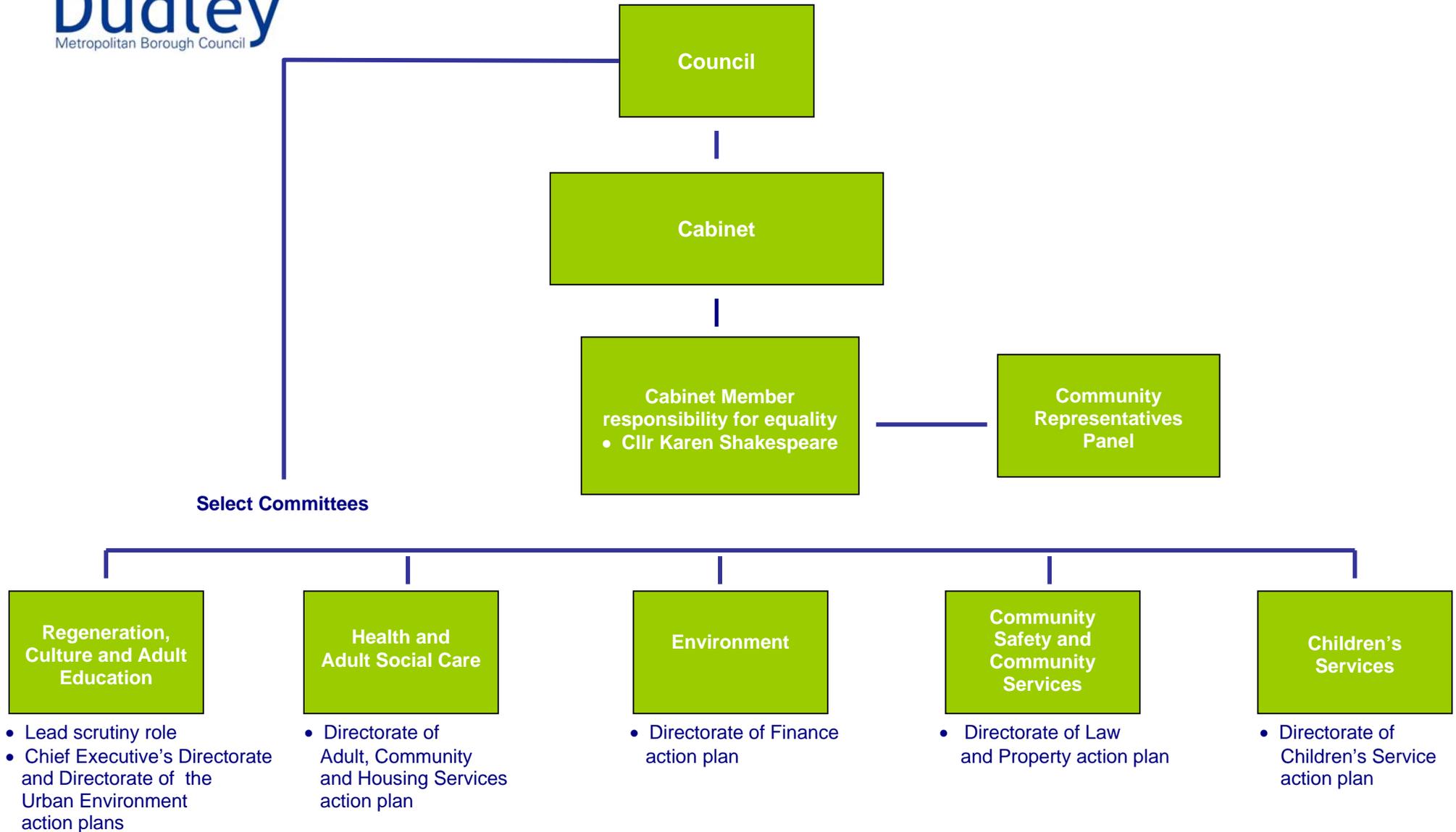
Notes

This document is available on request in large print, on audiotape and in community languages.

Appendix B(i). Equality and Diversity - Officer Responsibilities



Appendix B(ii). Equality and Diversity – Member and Committee Responsibilities



Appendix C.

Best value performance indicators for 2006/07 relevant to equality

BV2a The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability

BV2b The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application

BV11a % of the top-paid 5% of staff who are women (not including schools)

BV11b The percentage of the top-paid 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority (not including schools)

BV11c the percentage of the top paid 5% of staff who have a disability (excluding maintained schools)

BV16a % of employees with a disability

BV17a The percentage of local authority employees from ethnic minority communities

BV17b The percentage of the economically active (persons aged 18-65) population from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area

BV043a Percentage of proposed statements of special educational need issued by the authority in a financial year and prepared within 18 weeks excluding 'exceptions' set out in the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations

BV043b Percentage of proposed statements of special educational need issued by the authority in a financial year and prepared within 18 weeks including exceptions under the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001

BV74b Satisfaction of ethnic minority local authority tenants (excluding white minority tenants) with the overall service provided by their landlord

BV74c Satisfaction of non-ethnic minority local authority tenants with the overall service provided by their landlord

BV75b Satisfaction of ethnic minority council housing tenants (excluding white minority tenants) with their opportunities for participation in management and decision-making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord

BV75c Satisfaction of non-ethnic minority council housing tenants with their opportunities for participation in management and decision-making in relation to housing services provided by their landlord

BV156 % of local authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable and accessible to disabled people

BV165 % of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people, as a proportion of all crossings in the local authority area

BV164 Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing and follow the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in the Code of Practice for Social Landlords: Tackling Racial Harassment?

BV174 The number of racial incidents reported to the Local Authority, and subsequently recorded, per 100,000 population

BV175 The percentage of racial incidents reported to the Local Authority that resulted in further action

BV225 Actions against domestic violence – the % of questions from a checklist to which a local authority can answer 'yes'

Appendix D

Functions and policy areas assessed as relevant to race equality

Chief Executive's Directorate

Directorate of Children's Services

Directorate of Finance, ICT and Procurement

Law and Property Directorate

Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services

Directorate of the Urban Environment

* The local Mental Health Service is now an integrated service and the lead for the service rests with Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust who have the responsibility to include mental health functions and policies (including social care) in their Race Equality Scheme

Appendix E

Glossary of terms

Audit Commission

Beacon Council

Best Value performance indicators

Cabinet

Community strategy

Corporate Board

Directorate lead officers

Dudley Community Partnership

Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

Equality impact assessment

Equality Standard for Local Government

Mainstreaming

Select committees

Social model of disability

Telecare