

Meeting of the Cabinet – 1st November 2006

Report of the Director of Law and Property

Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2006

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the Annual review of equality and diversity for 2006, a full copy of which is available in the Member's Room and electronically on the Council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS).

Background

2. An annual review of equality and diversity is prepared for the Cabinet each year. This was considered by the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education on the 11th September 2006, in accordance with its lead scrutiny role on corporate equality and diversity issues. The Select Committee made some comments on the report and agreed to recommend it for approval to the Cabinet.
3. The review is the fifth such report prepared for the Cabinet and gives an overview of progress in implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, confirms Council-wide priorities and targets and summarises important developments in equality and diversity such as new legislation and its implementation.
4. The review responds to the increasing statutory requirements for reporting on public authorities' promotion of equality and includes data on employment in relation to different racial groups which the Council is required to publish by the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001. The review will be the main vehicle for reporting on progress with implementing the Council's Equality Scheme in future (see other item on the agenda).

Finance

5. Any financial implications arising from actions to be taken in response to the report which will not be met through existing budgets will need to be identified in due course.

Law

6. A wide range of relevant equality legislation is in place. This includes:
7. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 replaced Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 with a general duty on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

8. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services and the disposal or management of premises. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 will extend this Act by introducing a new duty on public authorities to promote disability equality.
9. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. In particular, Section 29 makes it unlawful for the Council, in providing facilities or services (such as those arising pursuant to the statutory functions of the Council), to discriminate against any person seeking to obtain or use those facilities or services on the ground of gender. The Equality Act 2006 introduces a new duty on public authorities to promote gender equality.
10. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

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

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that:
 - Members comment on and approve the annual review of equality and diversity 2006.

John Polychronakis

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List of Background papers

Audit Commission 2004/05 quartile statistics
Dudley MBC employment monitoring data