

**Select Committee on Economic Regeneration – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Chief Executive's Directorate's Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2006/07**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the annual equality and diversity action plan for 2006/07 for the Chief Executive's Directorate.

**Background**

2. The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy requires all Directorates to produce an equality and diversity action plan annually.
3. The directorate action plan will be presented for scrutiny in two parts. The first part - the action plan itself - is required to be presented to Select Committee before 31<sup>st</sup> March and covers:
  - Relationship with other plans
  - Vision and values
  - Key issues and targets
  - Action plan summary
4. The second part is the annual report which will be presented for scrutiny to the first meeting of the Select Committee in the new municipal year. The annual report will cover achievements against the previous year's action plan targets.
5. Select committee chairmen have agreed that the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration should take the lead select committee role on equality and diversity issues. They also agreed that select committees should scrutinise individual directorate's action plans and these have been split up amongst the six committees.
6. This draft action plan has been considered by the directorate management team. Following scrutiny it will be approved by the appropriate Cabinet Member before publication.

**Finance**

7. Any costs associated with implementing the action plan will be met from within existing budgets.

**Law**

8. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 replaces Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 with a new 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.
9. 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.

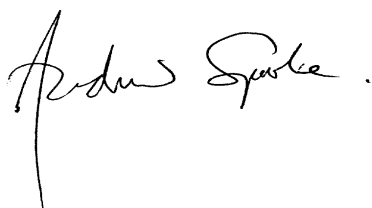
10. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. In particular, Section 29 makes it unlawful for the Council, in providing facilities or services (such as those arising pursuant to the statutory functions of the Council), to discriminate against any person seeking to obtain or use those facilities or services on the ground of gender.
11. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

### **Equality Impact**

12. The action plan sets out proposals for moving forward equality and diversity work led by the Chief Executive's Directorate during 2006/07. Performance indicators or outcomes are identified against each target so that progress in achieving the action plan can be monitored and reviewed.

### **Recommendation**

13. That the Select Committee considers and comments on the Chief Executive's Directorate's equality and diversity action plan for 2006/07.



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**Andrew Sparke**  
**Chief Executive**

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### **List of Background Papers**

Equality Standard for Local Government guidance 3 and draft action plan for achieving level 3  
Guidance for the preparation of directorates' equality and diversity action plans and annual reports

## **Chief Executive's Directorate**

### **Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2006/07**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Chief Executive's Directorate, along with all directorates of the Council, produces an annual equality and diversity action plan. This is the key document for the directorate in implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and in meeting its statutory equality responsibilities in relation to its service areas and employment practices.
- 1.2 Progress with implementing the action plans is reported in equality and diversity annual reports. The Chief Executive's Directorate's annual report for 2005/06 will be submitted to the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration at its first meeting of the 2006/07 municipal year.
- 1.3 This action plan covers the period from April 2006 to March 2007. The plan contains:
  - an explanation of its relationship with other plans
  - a summary of the directorate's equality and diversity vision and values
  - key issues and targets for the plan
  - the action plan summary

#### **2. Relationship with other plans**

- 2.1 This action plan responds to the corporate equality and diversity objectives agreed by the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2006, to be reflected in the Council action plan for 2006/07. The longer-term policy framework is provided by the Council's equality and diversity policy, progress with which is reported in the Annual review of equality and diversity. The approach to promoting race equality is set out in the Council's Race Equality Scheme, which is linked to the equality and diversity policy, but is produced as a separate document in response to statutory requirements. A combined Equality Scheme is to be published by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006.
- 2.2 This action plan will form part of the overall strategic plan for the Chief Executive's Directorate for 2006/07.

#### **3. Vision and Values**

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

"to promote a forward-looking Council, with accessible and responsive services. We aim to achieve this through: corporate leadership and direction, developing our staff, and developing partnerships with others."

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

- 3.2 The Directorate takes a corporate lead on equality and diversity issues, covering overall policy development and the provision of advice and support, both in employment and service delivery, and in delivering or arranging training across the Council. It provides strategic information to support equality planning and impact assessment processes

across the Council and leads the Customer Access to Services programme to improve access to services for all communities.

- 3.3 Within the Directorate, all employees have a responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Council's and the Directorate's equality and diversity policy in all dealings with Members, other employees, job applicants, residents, service users and other members of the public, and with other organisations. All employees in the directorate have at least an annual performance review and development discussion with their line manager where training and development needs are identified.
- 3.4 Specific responsibility for promoting equality and diversity in employment and services within the directorate rests with all divisional heads. However, a principal officer within the Corporate Policy and Research Team, reporting to the Head of Policy, is responsible for overall equality and diversity policy development work on behalf of both the Council and the Directorate, for reviewing and updating the Directorate's policy and for preparing, monitoring and reviewing the Directorate's annual equality and diversity action plan. The Corporate Personnel Section, reporting to the Head of Personnel and Support Services, is responsible for equality and diversity in employment development work on behalf of both the Council and the Directorate and make a key contribution to the Directorate's policy and action plan. The Joint Training and Development Managers, reporting to the Head of Personnel and Support Services, are responsible for arranging or advising on appropriate training provision relating to equality and diversity across the Council and within the Directorate.

#### **4. Key Issues and Targets**

- 4.1 The Council's equality and diversity objectives for 2006/07 are set out below. In addition to consideration by the Select Committee for Economic Regeneration, the Council's Community Representatives Panel was consulted on these objectives and gave them its support. It should be noted that Corporate Board and the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group are currently undertaking work on refining equality and diversity priorities which will be related to these objectives and will form a basis for the development of the Council's Equality Scheme.
- 4.2 The corporate equality and diversity objectives are set out below. Specific targets related to the objectives, with the directorate's contribution towards them, are included in Table 1.

##### **(1) Equality Scheme**

The Cabinet has agreed to the production of a combined Equality Scheme to bring together the existing Race Equality Scheme with the legal requirement to have in place a Disability Equality Scheme by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006. Pending duties under the Equality Bill which will bring in similar requirements for other equality strands will also be taken into account. The legislation contains a range of requirements in terms of equality impact assessments relating to the impact of policies and services.

- Complete the impact assessments listed in the revised Race Equality Scheme by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006
- Assess the implications of the Equality Bill
- Launch equality impact assessment guidance and develop a programme of assessments across all directorates to feed into the Scheme's action plan.
- Maintain or increase the score against BVPI 2b on race equality.
- Publish the combined Equality Scheme by 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006

## **(2) Equality Standard for Local Government**

The Equality and Diversity Officers Advisory Group has undertaken a scoping exercise to assess the requirements of level 3 of the Equality Standard, the national framework for assessing and progressing equality work in local authorities. This has been developed into an action plan with the aim of moving on from level 2 to level 3 of the standard. A target of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 would be a challenging but realistic one.

- Implement the action plan to achieve level 3 of the Standard by March 2007.

## **(3) People management strategy 2006-08**

A people management strategy for 2006-08 is being developed to ensure that the Council has the right employees with the right skills and abilities, doing the right things to deliver its vision and priorities over the next three years. Promoting equality and diversity is a key component of the strategy and the objectives highlight issues from the strategy previously raised by the select committee as priorities.

- Implement the equality and diversity elements of the strategy.
- Produce and implement an age and employment policy and procedure to comply with the new legislation.
- Establish a full framework of flexible working policies by mid 2006.
- Achieve an increase in the number of disabled employees working for the Council.

## **(4) Disability Access Strategy**

The select committee has considered a number of reports on the Council's Disability Access Strategy. The duty to promote disability equality within the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 will come into force on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006 and the strategy will therefore form an important part of the Council's Equality Scheme. The strategy and the Act cover much more than purely physical access to buildings but the best value performance indicator on access to buildings provides one important measure of progress.

- Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy.
- Achieve an improvement in the score against BVPI 156 on access to buildings.

4.3 The directorate's targets related to these objectives are set out in table 1.

4.4 The directorate's overall priorities for the year are set out in its strategic plan, which is updated annually. Included within this are key initiatives which are reflected in this action plan related to:

- Further development of Dudley Council Plus
- Delivery of the Community Strategy and improved partnership working
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Implementing the people management strategy
- Continuing improvements to performance management

4.5 Members of the Council's Community Representatives Panel have been consulted during the preparation of the action plan. The main issues raised, which have been incorporated in the plan, were:

- the value of the engagement of disabled people, through the local group, Access in Dudley, in the design of the Dudley Council Plus centre and the role they could play in future centres

- the need to improve signage to the centre and to consider the needs of disabled people as they enter the building
- the importance of continuing to review recruitment and selection practices to ensure that they were fair to all sections of the community

## **5. The Action Plan**

- 5.1 The action plan is set out in the following tables. As noted, table 1 sets out the directorate's proposed contribution towards the identified Council-wide equality and diversity objectives. Table 2 sets out the other key areas of equality and diversity work for the coming year for the directorate.

Chief Executive's Directorate  
February 2006

**Table 1. Chief Executive's Directorate – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2006/07 - Corporate Priorities**

<b>Corporate Objective</b>	<b>Council Plan theme</b>	<b>Directorate action/target (and lead officer)</b>	<b>Target Status</b>	<b>Target Date/ milestones</b>	<b>Planned outcome/performance indicator</b>
CP1. Equality Scheme  (a) Complete the impact assessments listed in the revised Race Equality Scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2006	Quality service matters	Complete assessments of: - community strategy (AW) - community safety (anti-social behaviour) (DH) - credit union (RW) - harassment and bullying (JC) - recruitment and selection (CH)	Cont'd	By May 2006	Assessments completed by deadline Impacts/outcomes assessed Improvements/actions identified
(b) Assess the implications of the Equality Bill		Build requirements for gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation into the Equality Scheme (SM)	New	Report to EDAG – July 2006 Complete by November 2006	Scheme published by deadline
(c) Launch equality impact assessment (EIA) guidance and develop a programme of assessments across all directorates to feed into the Scheme's action plan.		Finalise corporate EIA guidance and develop EIA programme for directorate (SM)	New	Launch guidance in April 2006 Programme by October 2006	Guidance launched Programme agreed
(d) Maintain or increase the score against BVPI 2b) on race equality.		Include performance monitoring of BVPI2b) on Performance Plus (JW).  Collect data against baselines established for 2005/06 (MW).	New	By March 2007  June 2006	Score at least maintained

(e) Publish the combined Equality Scheme by 4 <sup>th</sup> December 2006		Establish consultation process for production of Equality Scheme with staff, community and other stakeholders (SM)	New	Consultation plan by April 2006 Publish Scheme by 4 December 2006	Consultation plan implemented Scheme published by deadline
CP2. Equality Standard for Local Government - implement the action plan to achieve level 3 of the Standard by March 2007	Quality service matters	(a) Implement E-diversity training package for staff (SW)	New	By December 2006	Training package in place No. of employees completing package
		(b) Review progress with Race Equality Scheme review reports for the directorate in relation to information collection/equality monitoring (SM)	New	By September 2006	Improved equality impact data
		(c) Implement the Partnership Evaluation Tool (PET) over a wider range of partnerships in order to promote equality target setting (JH)	New	By March 2007 Review progress with major partnerships by March 2007	Increase in number of partnerships meeting PET requirements on equality
		(d) Work with thematic partnerships to develop equality targets in response to the new community strategy (AW)	New	By January 2007	Equality targets set by partnerships
		(e) Finalise promoting equality through procurement guidelines and contribute to review of model contract clauses and training of relevant staff (PS)	New	Complete guidelines by April 2006 Training to begin April 2006	Relevant equality considerations built into procurement processes
		(f) Publish directorate action plans and annual reports on website (JW)	New	From April 2006	Wider availability of plans and performance information
		(g) Pursue further involvement of community representatives in select committee scrutiny of action plans (SM)	New	By June 2006	Improved scrutiny of action plans



		(h) Implement new job evaluation scheme Council-wide and introduce new pay and award strategy (SW)	New	Complete by March 2007	Equal pay discrepancies identified and addressed
		(i) Include specific reference to equality action plans in PRD guidance (TM)	New	April 2006	Increased employee awareness of role in promoting equality
		(j) Finalise revised recruitment policy and procedure and support by revisions to training programme (TM/ST/PC)	New	December 2006	Fair recruitment practices
CP3. People management strategy (CH)	Quality service matters	(a) Implement the equality and diversity elements of the strategy.	New	Target dates as set out in strategy	Target dates achieved
(b) Produce and implement an age and employment policy and procedure to comply with the new legislation.		Complete age and employment policy and procedure Launch policy with training and awareness	New	Policy and procedure completed by mid-2006	Fair employment policies and procedures in relation to age
(c) Establish a full framework of flexible working policies by mid 2006.		Complete flexible working policies listed in the strategy	New	Mid-2006	No. of employees taking up options
(d) Achieve an increase in the number of disabled employees working for the Council		Establish revised baseline through completion of employee audit	Cont'd	December 2006	More accurate baseline established
		Review audit findings and determine actions to follow up findings			Increase in numbers of employees identifying a disability

<p>CP4. Disability Access Strategy  (a) Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy.</p>	<p>Quality service matters</p>	<p>Develop targets to address gaps in action plans (SM)</p> <p>Link with development of Equality Scheme (SM)</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>Six-monthly progress reports</p> <p>Complete by December 2006</p>	<p>Coordinated strategies and action plans</p>
<p>(b) Achieve an improvement in the score against BVPI 156 on access to buildings.</p>		<p>Transfer further services to Dudley Council Plus in accordance with the programme and develop second customer access centre (see also CE1)</p>	<p>New</p>	<p>By March 2007</p>	<p>Improved access to services</p> <p>Increase in BVPI 156 score</p>

**Table 2. Chief Executive's Directorate – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2006/07 – Additional Directorate Priorities**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	<u>Detailed action/target</u>	Target Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/ performance indicator
CE1. Improve access to Council services through Dudley Council Plus (KM)	Quality Service matters	(a) Improve external and internal signage to take into account needs of disabled people and different communities	New	Notices in key receptions and DCplus - April 2006 Action plan and DCplus marketing strategy - corporate board/cabinet June 2006	Improved access to centre and information
		(b) Engage Access in Dudley to assist in design of next customer access centre	New	Initial consultation with AID & others – start July 2006 Survey to identify suitable premises – September-October 2006	Accessible centre
		(c) Continue programme of awareness training for staff to enhance knowledge of diverse customer needs	Cont'd	Training schedules developed by April 2006	Improved staff awareness and services to customers
		(d) Review process of recruitment and encourage applications for jobs from underrepresented groups	Cont'd	Review and prepare business case by April 2006. Implementation plan by August 2006.	Diverse workforce
		(e) Inform different sections of the community about Dudley Council Plus and its services.	Cont'd	Implement communication plan including roadshow events, engagement of Members and use of different media by March 2007	Increase in community awareness of improved service availability

		(f) Make links between Dudley Council Plus and the Older Persons Strategy	New	Identify and work with 'critical friends' to identify service access needs - begin June 2006 Review outcome - November 2006	Older people's service access issues addressed
		(g) Review the information obtained from research in managed neighbourhoods	New	Report on implications - July 2006 Review locations of kiosk information points – September 2006 Relocate as necessary - February 2007 Review content of kiosk information points to improve access - May 2006	Service access issues of 'hard to reach' communities in managed neighbourhoods addressed
CE2. Improve consultation mechanisms with BME communities (GT)	Quality Service matters	Review corporate consultation arrangements with BME communities	New	December 2006	Improved consultation
CE3. Improve communications with 'hard to reach' groups (JJ)	Quality Service matters	Identify ways to improve targeting of corporate communications with key communities	New	March 2007	Improved targeting of information People/communities better informed
CE4. Improve reporting of and understanding of antisocial behaviour (DH)	Safety matters	(a) Analysis of antisocial behaviour/hate/domestic abuse incident reporting by racial group to establish any significant pattern(s).	New	Monitoring via case management system software - October 2006 Analysis - March 2007	Patterns of incidents by racial group established

		(b) Monitor, with a view to increasing, customer satisfaction levels from victims and witnesses from vulnerable groups		March 2007	Increased satisfaction levels
CE5. Promote engagement with BME communities through Neighbourhood Management (SMc)	Quality Service matters	(a) Undertake follow up research to the 2004 neighbourhood survey in areas where racial harassment was identified as a problem	New	Complete by July 2006	Understanding of why perceptions held Identify which communities are affected and why
		(b) Work with BME communities to encourage more individuals from these communities to participate in local organisations such as community associations and tenants groups	New	By March 2007	Increased participation
CE6. Improve workforce information and planning	Quality Service matters	(a) Improved presentation of employment data in Annual review of equality and diversity (NJ/SM)	New	Review to committee in September 2006	Improved performance management information
		(b) Improve the performance management of employment data (NJ/SW)	New	Quarterly monitoring reports to Corporate Board and Cabinet	Improved performance management of employment

## Glossary

Lead officers: JC – Joyce Carter; PC – Phil Cutler; CH- Christina Hefferon; DH – Dawn Hewitt; JJ - Jan Jennings; NJ – Nicola Johnson; SM – Simon Manson; KM - Keith Mayou; TM – Tracey Medlyn; PS – Pete Sanford; GT- Geoff Thomas; ST – Sarah Treneer; JW- Jennie Webb; RW - Roland Winzer; SW – Steve Woodall; MW – Mike Wooldridge; AW - Andy Wright

### Other terms:

AID – Access in Dudley

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

EDAG – Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

ASB – Anti-social behaviour

DCplus – Dudley Council Plus

EIA - Equality impact assessment