

Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education – 4th June 2008

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Directorate of the Urban Environment's Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2007/08

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity annual report for 2007/08.

Background

2. The production of an annual equality and diversity action plan and annual report by each Directorate is a requirement of the Council's equality and diversity policy. The Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education considered the Directorate of the Urban Environment's action plan, which sets out its equality and diversity targets for 2008/09, at its meeting held on 5th March 2008. Attached is the annual report which details progress on the targets agreed by Select Committee in the Directorate's action plan for the previous year, 2007/08.
3. This Select Committee has within its terms of reference responsibility for corporate equality and diversity issues, although responsibility for scrutinising individual Directorate's action plans and annual reports is divided between the five select committees.

Finance

4. Any costs associated with the annual report will be met from within existing budgets.

Law

5. The range of relevant equality legislation includes:
6. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 replaces 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.
7. 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 has extended this Act with a duty on public authorities to promote disability equality.

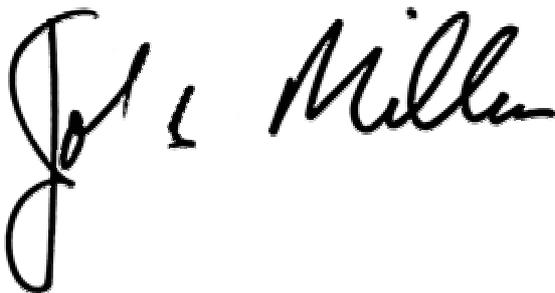
8. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. In particular, Section 29 makes it unlawful for the Council, in providing facilities or services (such as those arising pursuant to the statutory functions of the Council), to discriminate against any person seeking to obtain or use those facilities or services on the grounds of gender. A new duty on public authorities to promote gender equality under the Equality Act 2006 came into force on 6th April 2007.
9. 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

10. The annual report contains details of progress in implementing the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity action plan for 2007/08. Performance indicators or outcomes were identified against each target so that progress in achieving the action plan can be monitored and reviewed. Issues relating to children and young people are covered in more detail in the Directorate of Children's Services' action plan.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that:
 - Select Committee for Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education considers and comments on the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity annual report for 2007/08.
 - Any outstanding actions arising from the Equality and Diversity Annual Report for 2007/08 are incorporated into the Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2008/09.



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Director of the Urban Environment

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**Report to Select Committee for Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education on
Wednesday 4 June 2008**

**Directorate of the Urban Environment's Equality and Diversity Annual Report
2007/2008**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, each Directorate produces an annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan. This identifies working priorities in relation to their services and employment practices. The Action Plan for the Directorate for 2007/2008 was considered by the Select Committee for Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education on 6 March 2007, and approved by the four Lead Members for the Directorate.
- 1.2 All Directorates also produce an Annual Report, which provides information on the implementation of the Action Plan. The Annual Report is prepared after March, to enable reporting on a full year's progress on agreed actions.
- 1.3 This document is the Annual Report covering the period from April 2007 to March 2008 and contains
- key facts about the Directorate, including a workforce profile
 - key issues from equality impact assessments
 - achievements against the Directorate's equality and diversity action plan for 2007/2008.

2 KEY FACTS

- 2.1 As at 31 March 2008, the Directorate contains four Divisions.

The four Divisions are:

Culture & Leisure

Culture & Tourism
Sport & Physical Activity
Museums, Parks & Amenities

Planning & Environmental Health

Planning
Environmental Health & Trading Standards

Economic Regeneration & Transportation

Economic Regeneration Strategy
Economic Regeneration Delivery
Engineering, Traffic & Transportation

Environmental Management

Street & Green Care
Waste Care

- 2.2 Underpinning these functions are the relevant policy and executive support services (including performance management, Information Communication and Technology (ICT), and management support), which are administrated by the Executive Support Team.
- 2.3 As at 31 March 2008 the Directorate employed **1621** employees. Information relating to the Directorate of the Urban Environment's workforce breakdown, as compared to the previous 2 years (2007 and 2006), is indicated in Table 1(a). This can be compared with the Council's profile as a whole which is set out in Table 1(b).

Table 1(a). Directorate of the Urban Environment's workforce profile 31 March 2008 (compared with 31 March 2007 and 31 March 2006)

Urban Environment		Female (%)	Male (%)	BME (%)	Disabled (%)
Scale point 34 and above (higher grades)	31/03/08	27.9	72.1	3.2	4.6
	31/03/07	27.3	72.7	3.2	4.2
	31/03/06	26.5	73.5	3.0	2.5
Below scale point 34 (lower grades)	31/03/08	40.4	59.6	3.7	3.3
	31/03/07	40.3	59.7	2.9	2.8
	31/03/06	41.2	58.8	2.1	2.0
Total	31/03/08	39.2	60.8	3.7	3.8
	31/03/07	38.9	61.1	2.9	3.0
	31/03/06	39.3	60.5	2.1	2.0

Table 1(b). Dudley MBC workforce profile 31 March 2008 (compared with 31 March 2007 and 31 March 2006)

<u>Dudley MBC</u>		Female (%)	Male (%)	BME* (%)	Disabled (%)
Scale point 34 and above (higher grades) (excluding schools)#	31/03/08	50.3	49.7	9.1	4.6
	31/03/07	49.6	50.4	8.9	4.3
	31/03/06	48.0	52.0	8.0	2.0
Below scale point 34 (lower grades) (excluding schools)#	31/03/08	69.5	30.5	6.2	2.6
	31/03/07	69.7	30.3	5.9	2.2
	31/03/06	69.3	30.7	5.2	1.3
Total (excluding schools)	31/03/08	66.6	33.4	6.6	2.9
	31/03/07	66.9	33.1	6.4	2.5
	31/03/06	66.4	33.6	5.6	1.4
Total (including schools)	31/03/08	74.9	25.1	5.5	2.0
	31/03/07	74.8	25.2	5.1	1.7
	31/03/06	74.6	25.4	4.6	0.8

Notes: Scale point 34 on 31 March 2007 £28,000 approx.

*BME figures exclude those employees for whom no ethnic origin data is held

#Grade breakdown excludes schools due to the different grading structure for teachers

- 2.4 The Directorate is pleased to note, with regard to its workforce composition, the increase in employees from a black or minority ethnic group, and those with a disability, compared to the previous years.

3 **Equality Impact Assessments (April 2007 – March 2008)**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme, the Directorate has reviewed a number of services and functions. A summary of the outcomes of the reviews is outlined below.

- (a) **Bereavement Services**

The service aims to ensure all matters relating to burial and cremation are carried out professionally, sensitively and with due consideration to the needs of bereaved families. The areas of burial, cremation, consultation and communication were therefore assessed. Service monitoring is undertaken through customer feedback/comments forms which have an attachment requesting monitoring information. These forms are currently being updated to ensure that all relevant issues are considered. It is also planned to arrange an open day in order to obtain more detailed feedback. Regular consultation continues to take place with the Muslim community and recent cultural diversity training for employees included the requirements of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities. Consultation on the needs of people with a disability has taken place through the Disability Consultation Group and this has resulted in a range of improvements including the installation of handrails and re-surfacing of pathways. Although a great deal of progress has already been made in Bereavement Services relating to the needs of people with a disability and BME communities, Bereavement Services will seek to continue to establish the needs of service users through improved consultation and monitoring information and accommodate these as effectively as possible.

(b) Fair Trade and Consumer Trade Advice

The service responds to requests from consumers and businesses, for assistance, support and advice to enable the individual to resolve their problem with a third party when buying goods or services. The service can be accessed in person, by telephone, the internet, by email or by post. Facilities exist to assist individuals who have a disability or who are from a BME community in accessing the service. A quarterly customer satisfaction survey is conducted which gives feedback on the service and some information on service users. Consultation has taken place with the Action for Disabled People and Carers group which has resulted in a number of suggested improvements to the service. Future actions resulting from this impact assessment include engaging in wider consultation with BME groups and the Disability Consultation Group, disability awareness training for Trading Standards staff, better publicity of the consumer direct telephone number through the Dudley Together magazine and reviewing the customer services questionnaire to obtain better service user monitoring information.

(c) Transport (Taxis) Environmental Management

The service provides the mechanical and condition testing of Taxi, Private Hire and Special Event Vehicles on behalf of the Council's Legal and Property Services Division. The work is commissioned, co-ordinated and regulated by Legal and Property Services and relates purely to the mechanical condition of the vehicle. Bookings arrive from Legal and Property Services, identified by the vehicles registration number. Vehicles are assessed against pre-determined criteria, set down on an inspection sheet. This is designed to ensure consistency, and also that the appropriate vehicle standards are achieved in an objective manner. Results of the vehicle tests are fed back through Legal and Property Services.

(d) Car Parking

The service is responsible for the management of off-street parking places, associated enforcement and progression of notices to closure. In addition, with effect from 1 July 2008 the service will change to include on street enforcement and associated progression of notices. Due to the nature of the service it is difficult to gather service user monitoring information as there is little interaction with service users under normal circumstances. The service is accredited to ISO9001/2000. This internationally recognised quality standard requires the whole of the service to have systems and procedures in place to constantly review and monitor service provision and take corrective action where necessary. There is also a process in place to monitor complaints and at present there are no patterns or trends resulting from this. Generally requirements for parking facilities for people with a disability are met. It is anticipated that the introduction of on street enforcement will improve the monitoring of the usage of this facility. In response to the citizens panels comments regarding security for women on car parks, the service is committed to the safer car parks scheme and maintaining this standard. In view of the major change to this service in July 2008, the impact assessment will be continually reviewed during this time to ensure that any issues/actions arising take account of the changed service.

4 **Achievements against the Directorate's Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2007-2008**

- 4.1 Table 2 (attached) reports on the achievements against the Directorates' objectives outlined in the Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2007-2008.

		Evaluation of training outcome.	<p>Directorate.</p> <p>The training involved a three stage evaluation – pre and post course feedback followed by focus groups. The evaluation indicates that employees attending the training believe there has been an increase in both confidence and skills when assessing the differences between bullying, banter and challenging inappropriate behaviour.</p>
DUE 3. Raise awareness of Public Protection services to BME communities across the borough.	March 2008	<p>Organise 'educational road show' to raise the profile and understanding of the service within BME communities.</p> <p>Provide more information in ethnic minority languages.</p>	<p>Presentations have taken place at: Green Lane Asian Community, Halesowen. BME consultation event at Dudley College. Guru Nanak Sikh senior citizens group. Afro Caribbean Befriending Group.</p> <p>Food Safety information is now available in Bengali, Chinese, Greek, Punjabi, Urdu, Turkish and Thai.</p> <p>Access to a telephone translation service is also available if required.</p>
DUE 4. Improve and develop the understanding of employees in Bereavement Services of cultural and religious requirements that may affect service delivery.	March 2008	Representative from each Bereavement Services section to participate in cultural awareness development.	10 members of staff have attended a course on Islam and Muslim culture. These staff included memorial management officers, administration officers, cemetery operatives and crematorium technicians.

		<p>Increased understanding of cultural issues relevant to Bereavement Services.</p> <p>Improved information relating to ethnic background of service users.</p>	<p>Staff attendance on training has increased knowledge and understanding. In addition, regular meetings now take place with the Muslim community.</p> <p>Cremation and burial forms are in the process of being re-designed and requests for more information relating to service users will be included.</p>
DUE 5. Improvements to Street Lighting.	March 2008	<p>Number of lighting columns replaced with new equipment.</p> <p>Number of installations complying with BS EN 13201 (standard against which all new authority lighting installations are designed.)</p>	<p>Target for 2007/2008 – 2500 Achieved 2007/2008 – 2641</p> <p>Target for 2007/2008 – 300 Achieved 2007/2008 – 300</p>
DUE 6. Improvements to the Highways Infrastructure.	March 2008	<p>Number of disabled vehicular crossings (where the kerb is lowered to allow a vehicle to cross the highway for the purpose of parking at a property).</p> <p>Number of pram crossings (where the kerb is lowered to allow wheel</p>	<p>Target for 2007/2008 – 68 Achieved 2007/2008 – 154</p> <p>Target for 2007/2008 – 32 Achieved 2007/2008 – 122</p>

		chairs/mobility scooters to cross the road).	
DUE 7. Develop links between Job Centre Plus Advisors and Future Skills in order to promote Equality and Diversity.	March 2008	<p>Greater proportion of females in construction training.</p> <p>Greater proportion of people from BME communities in construction training.</p> <p>Reduction in number of client complaints.</p>	<p>Target for 2007/2008 – 4.5% - 5% female participation Achieved 2007/2008 – 5% female participation</p> <p>Target for 2007/2008 – 14.5% - 15% BME participation Achieved 2007/2008 – 15.2% BME participation</p> <p>Target for 2007/2008 – 43 client complaints (10% reduction on 2006/2007) Achieved 2007/2008 – 28 client complaints</p>
DUE 8. Promote Leisure Centre facilities to people with a disability.	March 2008	<p>Implement the access audit report recommendations.</p> <p>Replace all internal signage.</p> <p>Extension of Sportszone.</p>	<p>Access improvements scheduled to take place between April and August 2008.</p> <p>Halesowen Leisure Centre completed April 2008 Dudley Leisure Centre and Crystal Leisure Centre will take place later in 2008.</p> <p>In addition to existing sessions at Crystal Leisure Centre, sessions have been organised and delivered at both Dudley Leisure Centre and Thorns Community College.</p>

		Develop programmes tailored to the needs of people with disabilities.	Swimming lessons for young people with disabilities are being delivered through a jointly funded programme of swimming tuition involving the PCT, Amateur Swimming Association and Kelloggs Sport and Physical Activity Section.
DUE 9. Examine the options for and feasibility of updating the access guides to publicly accessible buildings in DUE.	March 2008	<p>Access guides to DUE buildings updated.</p> <p>Access guides to DUE buildings published.</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place with Access in Dudley to establish the required form and content of the new access guides in order that they can be accessed by as many disabled people as possible.</p> <p>Due to the processes required to produce the required formats and the translation of access data, this is now anticipated to be completed for DUE buildings by October 2008.</p>