

Amended 07.02.05
Version 3



DUDLEY DIRECTORATE OF LAW & PROPERTY

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

2005/2006

21st February 2005

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF LAW & PROPERTY**

(A) INTRODUCTION

Key Facts

- 2.1 The Council's Equality & Diversity Policy requires all directorates to produce an action plan annually.
- 2.2 This year the directorate action plan will be presented to the Select Committee on Community Safety for scrutiny in two parts. The first part "the action plan" is required to be presented before 31st March and should cover:
 - Purpose of Plan
 - Relationship with other plans
 - Vision & Values
 - Key Issues and targets
 - Action Plan Summary
- 2.3 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 (May/June). The "annual report" will cover:
 - Key facts about the directorate, including full year recruitment & workforce profiles.
 - Achievement against previous year's targets.
- 2.4 Select Committee Chairs have agreed that the Select Committee on Economic Vitality and Jobs should take the lead Select Committee role on equal opportunities issues. They also agreed that Select Committees should scrutinise individual directorate's action plans and these have been split up amongst the six committees.
- 2.5 Following consultation with the Council's Community Representatives Panel, this draft action plan has been agreed by the directorate management team. Following scrutiny it will be approved by the Lead Member for Law & Property using the decision sheet process by 31st March 2005. Once approved it will be published on the directorate intranet site and the Council's internet site.
- 2.6 This action plan sets out the Law & Property Directorate's objectives for implementing the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy for our service areas and employees and includes our response to the Corporate Equality & Diversity priorities identified.

(B) RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

This is a level 3 plan that links to the Council Plan and the Directorate Strategic Plan, as well as Service Plans for sections within the directorate and individual action plans arising out of Two Way Assessments.

(C) DIRECTORATE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY VISION & VALUES

The directorate is committed to building an organisation, which truly values diversity in its workforce by maintaining an environment which maximises the contribution each person can make to the directorate in serving the needs of a diverse society.

The Directorate of Law & Property is fully committed to implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity policy.

The commitment to provide equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in everything we do is contained in our directorate Equality & Diversity policy (Appendix 1). We are committed to building a Directorate which truly values diversity in our workforce and serves the needs of a diverse community. The themes running through our policy and 2005/06 targets are:

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

We will ensure that our recruitment procedures are fair and that we recruit the best applicants by keeping the fairness of our procedures under review, with the aim of creating an environment where people from all sections of the community feel confident to apply for posts and work in the directorate.

WIDENING OUR APPEAL AS AN EMPLOYER

Promoting our organisation as an equal opportunities employer.

LISTENING TO OUR PEOPLE

We consult staff about how we can improve equality of opportunity and support diversity as an employer and as a service provider. We will support staff networks that enable the views of staff from different sections of society to be expressed directly to senior management. These are intended to supplement existing avenues of communication (eg. through line management chains, team briefing, good ideas scheme, staff forum, corporate networks).

RETENTION

We will continue to seek to retain able staff from all sections of society.

CULTURE

We will continue to develop a directorate culture in which the different contributions of all our staff are valued.

We will continue to create an environment where staff and customers feel able to challenge discriminatory practice and feel supported.

DEVELOPING PEOPLE

We will continue to develop all our staff to their maximum potential and make best use of their different talents.

IMPROVING FAMILY FRIENDLY AND WORK/LIFE BALANCE WORKING PRACTICES

We will continue to develop our family friendly and work/life balance practices.

POLICY MAKING

We will take account of the interests of all sections of society in the development of policy.

ASSESSING SERVICE USERS' NEEDS

We will make greater efforts to assess the differing needs and expectations of all our customers.

IMPROVING SERVICES FOR ALL OUR CUSTOMERS

We will continue to seek to develop excellent services that meet the needs and expectations of all our customers. We aim to develop workable and affordable solutions to specific problems encountered by different groups of our service users.

ASSESSING USER SATISFACTION

We will assess the satisfaction of customers, measure changes in satisfaction over time and take steps to address differences in satisfaction levels between different groups.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In our communications with staff, we will reinforce our commitment to valuing and supporting diversity in our own organisation and in the society we serve.

PROCUREMENT

We will seek to influence those from whom we purchase goods and services to share our commitment to valuing diversity and providing equality of opportunity.

A copy of the Directorate's Equality & Diversity Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

(D) KEY DIRECTORATE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES FOR 04/05

1. CORPORATE TARGETS

Five areas have been identified where all directorates will be expected to make contributions to corporate activities. Our contributions to these are in Appendix 2a (corporate). These areas have been identified through the Corporate Equality & Diversity Action Plan Framework. They were agreed by the Select Committee for Economic Regeneration on 15th January 2005. The Community Representatives Panel was also consulted on the proposed priorities and gave them its support.

The priorities are set out below. Specific targets related to the priorities with the directorate's contribution towards them are included in Appendix 2a:

- **Race Equality Scheme**

The Council's Race Equality Scheme was published in May 2002 in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. It sets out the Council's approach to promoting race equality. Within the Scheme, the Council has set out a 3 year programme of reviews of relevant service areas to improve how they are meeting the requirements of the Act. A revised Scheme is to be published by the end of May 2005.

- **The Equality Standard for Local Government**

The Equality Standard is a national framework which a local authority can use to assess how well it is progressing with equality and diversity and to plan improvements. The Council has reached level 1 of the Standard and is working towards level 2. An action plan is currently being drawn up by the Officers' Equality and Diversity Advisory Group in order to achieve the remaining elements required for level 2. A benchmarking group is being established with other West Midlands

authorities to inform the process and to assist with scoping the work required to reach higher levels of the Standard.

- **Disability Issues**

A new Disability Discrimination Bill is likely to be enacted during the current Parliamentary term with the duties in the Act coming into force around December 2006. Proposed within the Bill is the introduction of a new positive duty for public authorities to promote disability equality, which will be similar to the duty in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality, and will include the publishing of a Disability Equality Strategy. The implications for the Council of this new legislation will need to be assessed during the coming year.

Existing disability discrimination legislation continues to be implemented, for example, with the rolling out of the Customer Access to Services programme and through the Disability Access Strategy agreed by the Executive in October 2004.

- **Employment issues**

The Council is aiming to achieve a workforce which is representative of the diverse communities it serves in the Borough. A diverse workforce is best able to meet the range of needs to which the Council has to respond in providing its services.

A new personnel and payroll system is being introduced over the coming months and the opportunity will be taken to update records of employees' ethnic origin and disability status by asking individual employees to amend their records if they are incomplete or inaccurate.

- **Best Value Performance Indicator 2b)**

Best Value Performance Indicator 2b) covers a range of measures around race equality including for example improving customer satisfaction across all ethnic groups, increasing workforce representation from all local ethnic groups, improving staff perceptions of equal opportunities across all ethnic groups and reducing the numbers of complaints from service users of all ethnic groups. Further guidance on the indicator is awaited from the Audit Commission and benchmarking is currently being undertaken with West Midlands regional local authorities to promote understanding and good practice. In order to improve its score against the indicator the Council will need, for example, to ensure that it more clearly identifies and achieves its key race equality outcomes.

2. DIRECTORATE TARGETS

The targets we have identified arise from either reviews of functions/policies or consultation exercises that have taken place during 2004/05 or they are actions which we believe will assist us in further promoting equality & diversity.

The activities to achieve the directorate targets are outlined in Appendix 2b (Directorate)

(E) IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

All of our equality and diversity targets contained in Appendices 2a & 2b have identified lead officers and dates for achievement.

Delivery of this action plan rests ultimately in the hands of everyone working in the directorate. Only if we all ensure fairness in our dealings with each other and with the people whom we provide services can we succeed in achieving these targets. We ask everyone in the directorate to play their part in turning the aspirations of our Equality and Diversity Policy into reality.

The Directorate Management Team will oversee the full implementation of this action plan by monitoring it quarterly and consider issues for the directorate relating to equal opportunity and diversity as they arise. We hold ourselves accountable for the achievements of the targets in this action plan.

APPENDIX 1

THE DIRECTORATE OF LAW AND PROPERTY **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

The Directorate of Law and Property supports the Council's commitment to achieving equal opportunities both as an employer and as a service provider. Through our support and advice to other Directorates, we are helping the Council achieve its aim of developing strong, secure, self reliant, self confident communities, free from unlawful discrimination. We value our diverse workforce and customer base, and aim to meet their needs through:

- Our commitment to build an organisation which truly values diversity in its workforce and meets the needs of the diverse communities it serves.
- Providing appropriate, accessible and effective services to all sections of the community without discrimination or prejudice.
- Providing real equality of opportunity in the recruitment, development and promotion of all our staff.
- Eliminating unfair discrimination and harassment.
- Setting annual targets to promote equal opportunities and monitoring progress.
- Recognising our staff come from different communities and value the contributions they make to our service delivery.
- Implementing and maintaining good practice.
- Promoting good relations between people of different backgrounds.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Directorate will meet its legal duties under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Human Rights Act 1998 and any other legislation impacting on equality and diversity.

RESOURCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A variety of information is available within the Directorate to inform equal opportunities and service development, for example the Council's Equality & Diversity intranet web pages, workforce and recruitment profiles, impact assessments, service surveys, service monitoring and external information such as census data.

Promoting and maintaining equality and diversity in the Directorate is the responsibility of each member of staff. All divisions of the Directorate contribute to the development of the annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan. The task of co-ordinating and reporting on it is undertaken by the Assistant Director of Corporate Estate Services who is a member of the Directorate Management Team. Reviewing and monitoring progress against targets in the annual action plan is undertaken quarterly by the Directorate Management Team. (See chart at end of Policy).

The Director of Law and Property chairs the Corporate Equality and Diversity Advisory Group and the Assistant Director of Corporate Estate Services represents the Directorate.

All employees of the Directorate have an individual responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Council's and the Directorate's equality and diversity policy in all dealings with Members, employees, job applicants, residents, service users and other members of the public, and with other organisations. The Directorate policy was reviewed in January 2005.

An Equality and Diversity Action Plan is prepared annually by the Directorate to be approved by the Lead Member for equal opportunities. This sets out detailed actions to be undertaken by the Directorate in support of the policy within specified timescales and with lead responsibility identified. Consultation on the action plan takes place with staff and the community representative's panel. Depending on specific targets, consultation may also take place with service users and stakeholders.

The key areas for activity are:

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES & WIDENING OUR APPEAL AS AN EMPLOYER

We will continue to ensure that our recruitment procedures are fair and that we recruit the best applicants by keeping the fairness of our procedures under review, with the aim of creating an environment where people from all sections of the community feel confident to apply for posts and work in the directorate.

LISTENING TO OUR PEOPLE

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PROCUREMENT

We will seek to influence those from whom we purchase goods and services to share our commitment to valuing diversity and providing equality of opportunity.

CIRCULATION

To ensure staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities this is annually given to all staff. The corporate equality and diversity policy together with this is included in all recruitment packs issued by the Directorate.

IMPLICATIONS

All Assistant Directors and Section Heads have in their job description an item requiring them to be responsible for the application of equal opportunities in their Division/Section, both in employment and service delivery. All managers are expected to provide leadership and ensure through action and demonstrating commitment that we achieve equality and diversity in employment and service delivery. Assistant Directors and Section Heads have received training in how to deal with allegations of harassment and recruitment and selection. The Corporate Harassment and Victimisation Policy is given out during Induction.

Signed by:
Director of Law and Property March 2005

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Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services

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Assistant Director, Corporate Estate Services

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Assistant Director, Dudley Property Consultancy

Reported to: Select Committee on Community Safety on 21st February 2005

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Approved by: Lead Member for Legal and Property Services

Review date: 2006

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES RESPONSIBILITIES IN
THE DIRECTORATE OF LAW AND PROPERTY**

<u>WHO</u>	<u>AIMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>
Council	Develop strong, secure, self-reliant, self-confident communities free from discrimination
↑	
Director of Law and Property John Polychronakis	Lead Officer for Corporate and Departmental Equal Opportunities
↑	
Directorate Management Team (DMT) Philip Tart Teresa Reilly Brian Gordon	Set targets to promote equal opportunities Monitor Equal Opportunities Action Plan quarterly Monitor Workforce and Recruitment quarterly Value our diverse workforce and customer base
↑	
Assistant Director, Corporate Estate Services	Lead DMT Officer for Equal Opportunities. Annual Report to Select Committee Report and Decision Sheet for Lead Member
↑	
Individual Section Heads	Ensure divisions provide appropriate, accessible and effective services to all sections of the community without discrimination or prejudice Implement good practice
↑	
All Staff	Individually promote and maintain Equal Opportunities

Directorate Law & Property – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2005/06

Appendix 2a
(Corporate)

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>Race Equality Scheme</u> - (Philip Tart)</p>	<p>Local People Matter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the service reviews set out in year 3 of the Scheme by 31st May 2005. • Complete a review of the Scheme and publish a revised Scheme by 31st May 2005. • Implement the action plan included in the scheme. 	<p>Continuing target</p> <p>Continuing target</p> <p>New target</p>	<p>31st May 2005</p> <p>31st May 2005</p> <p>Milestones/target dates to be set out in Scheme</p>	<p>Reviews complete by deadline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan & implement any changes identified. • Support corporate activity. • Support corporate activity to achieve targets set..
<p><u>The Equality Standard For Local Government</u> - (Teresa Reilly)</p>	<p>Local People Matter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve level 2 of the Standard. • Develop an action plan for achieving level 3 of the Standard 	<p>Continuing target</p> <p>Continuing target</p>	<p>Target date to be set by Equality & Diversity Action Group</p> <p>Target date to be set by Equality & Diversity Action Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support corporate work to achieve level 2. • Implement corporate action plan.

**Appendix 2a
(Corporate)**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<u>Disability Issues</u> (Brian Gordon)	Local People Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy. 	New target	Six-monthly monitoring by Equality & Diversity Action Group; target dates set out in strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions achieved by deadline.
<u>Employment Issues</u> (Brian Gordon)	Local People Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work towards targets established for employees from black and minority ethnic communities and disabled employees in all directorates. Complete a further audit of employees to enable them to declare whether or not they regard themselves as meeting the statutory definition of disability. Achieve a figure of at least 96.5% of employees who have declared their ethnic origin. 	New target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly monitoring by DMT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets established and achieved in Directorate.
			New target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit to be completed and data entered by March 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target of 100% completion within Directorate.
			New target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit to be completed and data entered by March 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Already achieved in Directorate of Law & Property.

**Appendix 2b
(Directorate)**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<u>Best Value Performance Indicator 2b</u> – (Teresa Reilly)	Local People Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of an improved score against the Best Value Corporate health performance indicator on equality (BVPI 2b) 	Continuing target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-year review by Equality & Diversity Action Group – October 2005. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support corporate work to improve 2004/05 service.
<u>Consult With & Market Our Services To Customers</u> (Philip Tart & Teresa Reilly)	Local People Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Targets for customer satisfaction based on baseline information obtained in 2004/05 by ethnicity, disability and gender. For Licensing, Registration & Market Traders <p>Over 18 months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement disability training for private hire & hackney carriage drivers. □ Review & measure Customer Satisfaction. 	New target	1 st April 2005 Monitor Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved customer satisfaction levels.
			New target	1 st April 2005 31 st March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved customer satisfaction levels

**Appendix 2b
(Directorate)**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>Consult With & Market Our Services To Customers</u> (Philip Tart & Teresa Reilly)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for charter Mark Standard for excellence in customer service for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Corporate Estate Services □ Licensing • Trial longer opening hours for Registration & Celebratory Services. • Provide staff as celebrants at Civil Funerals for those families who do not want a religious ceremony. • Implement Civil Partnership Registration 	<p>New target</p> <p>New target</p> <p>New target</p> <p>New target</p>	<p>December 2005</p> <p>June to October 2005</p> <p>September 2005</p> <p>November 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Accreditation focused on customer service. • Increased customer choice. • Increased customer choice • Implementation of legislation.
<p><u>Ensure All Staff Are Treated Fairly And Equally</u> (Brian Gordon)</p>	<p>Local People Matter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff satisfaction surveys undertaken and issues identified acted upon. 	<p>New target</p>	<p>Sept 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review the outcomes of the survey and decide on actions as appropriate.

**Appendix 2b
(Directorate)**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>Widening Our Appeal As An Employee</u> (Brian Gordon)</p>	<p>Local people Matter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of Careers in construction related services to women and ethnic minorities through jobs fairs and school promotional events. 	<p>New target</p>	<p>December 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events participated in.