

06.03.08- Final



**DIRECTORATE
OF
LAW & PROPERTY**

**EQUALITY & DIVERSITY
ACTION PLAN**

2008/2009

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

Directorate of Law & Property

Draft Annual Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2008/09

Introduction – Purpose of Plan

1. Key Facts

- 1.1 The Council's Equality & Diversity Policy requires all Directorates to produce an action plan annually.
- 1.2 This year the Directorate action plan will be presented to the Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services for scrutiny in two parts.
The first part “the action plan” is required to be presented before 31st March 2008 and should cover:

- Purpose of Plan
- Relationships with Other Plans
- Visions and Values
- Key Issues and Targets
- Action Plan Summary

- 1.3 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 and workforce profiles.
- Achievement against previous years targets.

- 1.4 Select Committee Chairs have agreed that the Select Committee on Regeneration Culture & Adult Education should take the lead Select Committee role on equal opportunities issues. They also agreed that Select Committees should scrutinise individual Directorates action plans and these have been split up amongst the five committees.
- 1.5 Following consultation with the Centre For Equality & Diversity and Directorate staff, this draft action plan has been agreed by the Directorate Management Team. Following scrutiny it will be approved by the Cabinet Member for Law & Property using the decision sheet process by 31st March 2008. Once approved it will be published on the Directorate Intranet Site and the Council's Internet.

Relationship with Other Plans

- 2.1 This action plan will form part of the overall strategic plan for the Directorate of Law & Property for 2008/09.
The strategic plan responds to the Borough's Community Strategy 2005 and the three year Council Plan.
- 2.2 The overall long-term, policy framework for equality and diversity is set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy. The Equality Scheme, published in April 2007, which brings together the statutory disability, gender and race equality schemes for the Council, provides the overall three-year equality strategy and action plan.
- 2.3 The overall long-term policy framework for equality and diversity is set out in the Councils Equality & Diversity Policy.
- 2.4 The overall progress in implementing the Councils Equality Scheme will be reported in the annual review of equality and diversity to the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture & Adult Education.

3. Visions and Values

- 3.1 The Directorate is committed to building an organisation which values diversity in the 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 structure is attached. (Appendix 1)

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

The Directorate's approach to equality and diversity is set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy (Appendix 2), which responds to the Councils overall policy. We are committed to a Directorate, which truly values diversity in our workforce and serves the needs of our community. The Directorate maintains a commitment to

implementing the Council's policy in relation to its services and employment practices by using:

- Action planning and reporting processes
- Designating responsibility for actions to particular staff
- Reviewing policies and procedures
- Improving consultation processes
- Continuing with staff training and development.

3.2 The Directorate consists of 231 employees (correct as at 19.02.08) split over three divisions: -

- Corporate Estate Services (CES)
- Dudley Property Consultancy (DPC)
- Legal and Democratic Services (L&D)

3.3 Within the Directorate, all employees have a responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Council's and Directorate's Equality and Diversity Policy in all dealings with Members, other employees, job applicants, service users, members of the public and other organisations. All employees in the Directorate have at least one performance, review and development discussion (Two Way Assessment) with their Line Manager where training and development needs are reviewed and performance targets agreed.

3.4 Specific responsibility for promoting equality and diversity in employment and services within the Directorate rests with each of the three Assistant Directors.

4. Key Issues & Targets

Directorate Equality & Diversity Issues for 2008/09

4.1 Equality Scheme

The Equality Scheme identifies the key issues and challenges across the Council for the 2007 – 10 period. Particular priority has been assigned to progressing work through the Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisory Group, in the following areas:-

- Developing clearer targets and desired outcomes
- Improving communications around what we do and why, externally and internally, celebrating success

- Improving approaches to consultation
- Identifying the equality and diversity competencies required for managers and employees.

The Director of Law & Property chairs the Corporate Equality & Diversity Advisory Group.

4.2 In the draft Equality Scheme, the Directorate has also identified overall equality and diversity priorities for our service areas linked to the three years of the scheme, which are to be, reflected in the action plans over those years.

The priorities for 2008/09 are to: -

- Arrange a focus group of female ethnic minority taxi/private hire drivers to look at satisfaction with service provision.
- Work with the Corporate Employees with Disabilities Group and applicants for jobs in the Directorate to identify any improvements to our recruitment process that would increase applications from people with disabilities.
- Brief of all Managers and Supervisors within the Directorate regarding relevant employment legislation relating to Equality and Diversity and its impact on employees.
- Complete programmed Equality Impact Assessments

An impact assessment is a systematic and thorough way of appraising a service and the impact that it will have on different communities. The aim of an impact assessment is to ensure that policies and services are not unfair or discriminatory in the way they impact on different groups in the community.

The Directorate has a prioritised programme of equality impact assessments for 2007 – 2010 which is:

Year 1 – 2007/2008

Democratic Services
Dudley Open Market

Year 2 – 2008/2009

Registration & Celebratory Services

Year 3 – 2009/2010

Licensing

An Assistant Director will take the lead on each of these four priorities for 2007/08 as detailed in the following action plan (pages 9 – 11).

- 4.3 These key issues have been used as a framework for the Directorate Equality & Diversity action plan for 2008/09.
- 4.4 The Councils Disability Equality Scheme was developed with involvement of disabled customers and employees, particularly Action for Disabled People and Carers and the Employees with Disabilities Group.

5. Consultation

The draft action plan has been circulated to all staff for comment and suggestions both as service providers and employees. It has also been sent to the Centre for Equality & Diversity.

6. Implementation & Monitoring

All of our equality and diversity targets 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.

7. The Action Plan

The Action Plan is set out in the following tables.

Directorate of Law & Property
February 2008

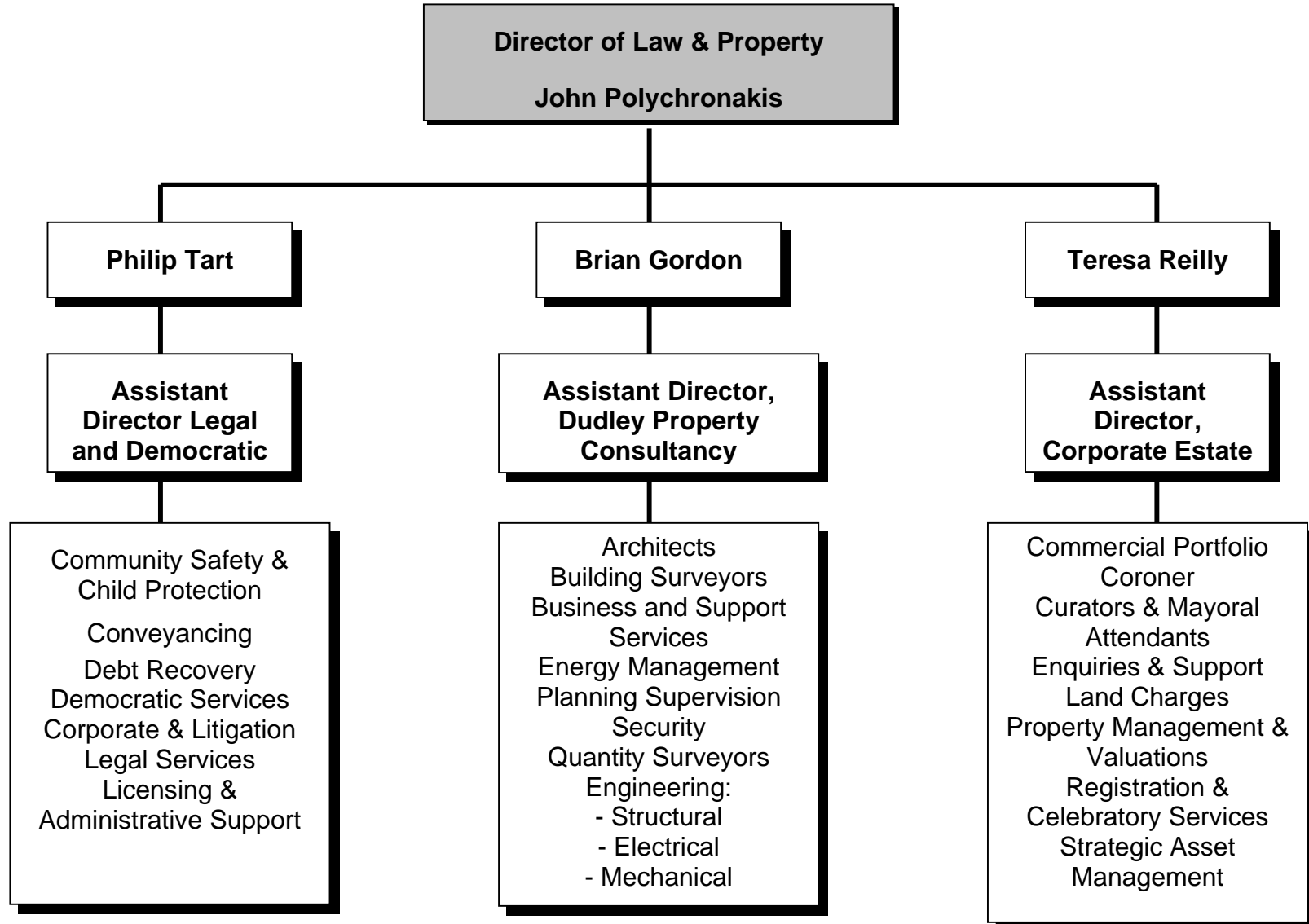
Directorate of Law & Property – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2008/09

Objective	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/performance indicator
Priority 1. Quality Service Matters – Consult With & Market Our Services To Customers			
1.1 Focus group of female ethnic minority taxi/private hire drivers	Legal & Democratic Services Licensing – Philip Tart	May 08 – July 08	% of female driver satisfaction with service provision.
Priority 2. Quality Service Matters – Widening Our Appeal as an Employer			
2.1 Promotion of careers in construction related services to women and ethnic minorities through job fairs, school promotional events and work placements.	DPC Brian Gordon	April 06 – December 09	Work placements offered to Dudley or other school children.
2.2 To target ethnic and female groups when advertising professional construction related posts.	DPC Brian Gordon	April 06 – December 09	Attendance at promotional events to give information on careers in construction related services.
2.3 Work with Corporate Employees with Disabilities group to identify any improvements to our recruitment	DPC Brian Gordon	April 08 – March 09	Consult with Directorate representatives when considering advertising of

process that could increase applications from people with disabilities.			posts.
2.4 Through our application surveys, review with people who apply for packages for vacant posts in the Directorate who then don't apply for the post to see what deterred them.	DPC Brian Gordon	April 07 – December 09	Elicit from enquirers reasons why they didn't apply. Use information to improve job attractiveness to specific groups.
2.5 Through our application surveys, review take-up of unpaid work experience placements for those applicants who were unsuccessful and are unemployed.	DPC Brian Gordon	April 07 – December 09	Satisfaction of unsuccessful applicants offered unpaid work experience.
Priority 3. Ensure All Staff Are Treated Fairly & Equally			
3.1 Briefing of all Senior Managers within the Directorate regarding relevant employment legislation relating to Equality and Diversity and its impact on employees.	Corporate Personnel Margot Worton	Briefings provided to managers and supervisors on the pilot revised flexi scheme and revised disciplinary	100% of Managers receive relevant guidance on legislation relating to Equality & Diversity and its impact on employees.

		process. These briefings covered equality impacts of change.	
3.2 Review need for update/refresher briefing.	Central Personnel Margot Worton	March 09	Briefings provided if required.
Priority 4. Quality Service Matters – Develop Clearer Targets & Outcomes			
4.1 Undertake and improve the approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)	Undertake EIAs of the following services during 2008/09 Dudley Open Market (Julie Jones) Democratic Services (Steve Griffiths) Registration & Celebratory Services (Jayne Catley)	Complete by March 09	EIAs completed within timescales Improvement actions identified.
Priority 5. Implement The Council's People Management Strategy			
5.1 Continue to implement the remaining elements of the People Management Strategy 2006 – 08 relevant to promoting equality,	Corporate Personnel Margot Worton	April 08 – March 09	Deliver our contribution to Corporate targets.

**DIRECTORATE OF LAW AND PROPERTY
APPENDIX 1**



APPENDIX 2

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 and 2005, 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 2006.

An Equality and Diversity Action Plan is prepared annually by the Directorate to be approved by the Cabinet 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

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 (e.g. through line management chains, team briefing, good ideas scheme, staff forum, corporate networks).

RETENTION

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

CULTURE

We will continue to develop a directorate culture in which the different contributions of all our staff is 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 & 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 (including customers from different sections of society), 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.

CIRCULATION

To ensure staffs 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. New staffs are made aware of the Corporate Harassment and Victimisation Policy during Induction.

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Signed by: Director of Law and Property March 2008

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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 & Community Services 15th March 2007

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Approved by: Cabinet Member for Directorate of Law & Property

Review date: January 2008

**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 Cabinet 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