

Amended 08.02.06
Version 2



DUDLEY DIRECTORATE OF LAW & PROPERTY

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

2006/2007

7th March 2006

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

(A) INTRODUCTION

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 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
- 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 & workforce profiles.
 - Achievement against previous year's targets.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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 Cabinet Member for Law & Property using the decision sheet process by 31st March 2006. Once approved it will be published on the directorate intranet site and the Council's internet site.

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 11th 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 4th December 2006.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 The objectives and targets relate and contribute, where relevant, to the Dudley Community Strategy, where the overall vision is for stronger communities to be delivered through five key themes:
- Creating a prosperous borough.
 - Promoting a sense of well being and good health for everyone.
 - Celebrating our heritage and local cultural life.
 - Safeguarding and improving the environment.
 - Promoting individual and community learning.

The objectives and targets also relate and contribute, where relevant, to the Council Plan, the six themes of which are:

- Environment Matters
- Safety Matters
- Learning Matters
- Regeneration Matters
- Caring Matters
- Quality Services Matter

3. 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 structure is attached as Appendix 1.

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

The commitment to provide equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in everything we do is contained in our directorate Equality & Diversity policy (Appendix 2). We are committed to building a Directorate which truly values diversity in our workforce and serves the needs of a diverse community. A copy of the Directorate's Equality & Diversity Policy is attached as Appendix 2.

4. KEY DIRECTORATE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES FOR 06/07

CORPORATE TARGETS

4.1 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 4th 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 31st 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 4th December 2006.

4.2 Equality Standard for Local Government

The Corporate 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 31st March 2007 would be a challenging but realistic one.

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

4.3 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.

4.4 Disability Access Strategy

The duty to promote disability equality within the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 will come into force on 4th 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.

Further details of these priorities are contained in Appendix 3.

DIRECTORATE TARGETS

The targets we have identified arise from either reviews of functions/policies or consultation exercises that have taken place during 2005/06 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 4 (Directorate)

5. CONSULTATION

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 the 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.

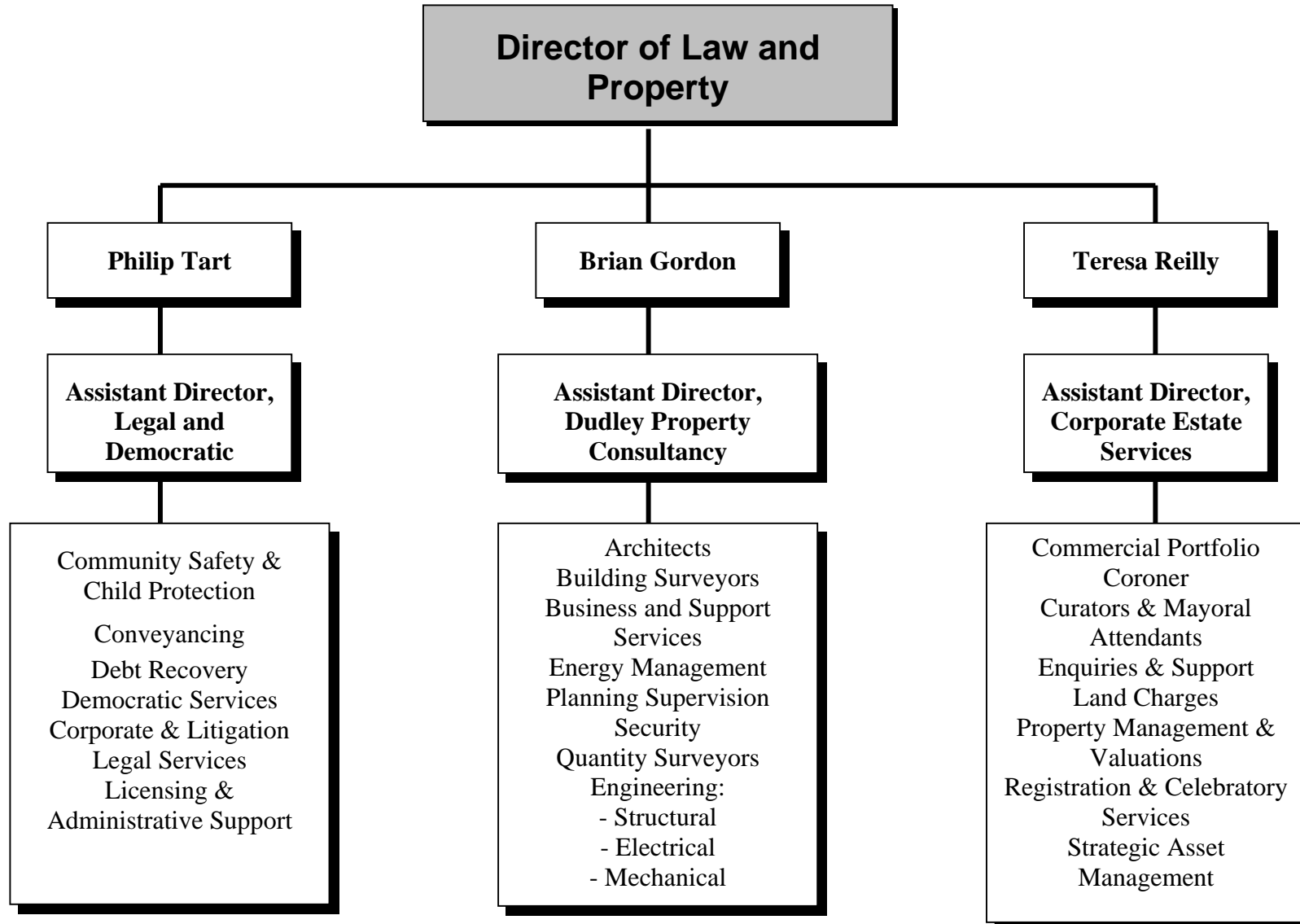
6. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

All of our equality and diversity targets contained in Appendices 3 & 4 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.

DIRECTORATE OF LAW AND PROPERTY



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 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 & 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 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. New staff are made aware of the Corporate Harassment and Victimisation Policy during Induction.

Signed by:
Director of Law and Property March 2006

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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 20TH February 2006

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Approved by: Cabinet Member for Directorate of Law & Property

Review date: January 2007

**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

Directorate Law & Property – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2006/07

Appendix 3
(Corporate)

Corporate Objective	Council Plan Theme	Directorate action/target (and lead officer)	Target Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>CP1. Equality Scheme</u></p> <p>(a) Complete the impact assessments listed in the revised Race Equality Scheme by 31st May 2006..</p> <p>(b) Assess the implications of the Equality Bill</p> <p>(c) Launch equality impact assessment (EIA) guidance and develop a programme of assessments across all directorates to feed into the Scheme’s action plan.</p>	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the impact assessments listed in the revised Race Equality Scheme. 	Continuing	31 st May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments completed by deadline. Impacts/outcomes assessed. Improvements/actions identified.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate authority in building requirements for gender, religion or belief, and sexual orientation into the Equality Scheme (Teresa Reilly) 	New	Report to EDAG – July 2006. Complete by November 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheme published by deadline.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate authority in finalising Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) guidance and develop EIA programme for directorate (Teresa Reilly) 	New	Launch guidance in April 2006. Programme by October 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance launched. Programme agreed
(d) Maintain or increase the score against BVPI 2b) on race equality.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate activity through collection of data. 	New	By March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score at least maintained.

**Appendix 3
(Corporate)**

Corporate Objective	Council Plan Priority	Directorate action/target (and Lead Officer)	Target Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>CP1. Equality Scheme</u></p> <p>(e) Publish the combined Equality Scheme by 4th December 2006</p>	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate activity involving consultation process for production of Equality Scheme with staff, community and other stakeholders (Teresa Reilly) 	New	Consultation plan by April 2006. Publish Scheme by 4 th December 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation plan implemented. Scheme published by deadline.
<p><u>CP2. Equality Standard for Local Government.</u></p> <p>Implement the action plan to achieve level 3 of the Standard by March 2007</p>	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile directorate evidence portfolio to support level 3 of the standard. 	New	31 st March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance gaps identified ready to be addressed through future action plan.
<p><u>CP3. People Management Strategy</u></p> <p>(a) Implement the equality & diversity elements of the strategy.</p>	Quality Services Matter	Support corporate activity to finalise People management strategy, to include workforce targets (Teresa Reilly)	New	Target dates as set out in strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target dates achieved.

**Appendix 3
(Corporate)**

Corporate Objective	Council Plan Priority	Directorate action/target (and Lead Officer)	Target Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>CP3. People Management Strategy</u></p> <p>(b) Produce and implement an age and employment policy and procedure to comply with the new legislation.</p>	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate activity in developing and implementing the policy (Teresa Reilly) 	New	Policy and procedure completed by mid 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair employment policies and procedures in relation to age.
<p>(c) Establish a full framework of flexible working policies.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate activity in developing and implementing the policy (Teresa Reilly) 	New	Mid 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of employees taking up options.
<p>(d) Achieve an increase in the number of disabled employees working for the Council.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate activity to establish revised baseline through completion of employee audit and in reviewing audit findings to determine actions to follow up findings. (Teresa Reilly) 	Continued	December 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More accurate baseline established. Increase in numbers of employees identifying a disability.

**Appendix 3
(Corporate)**

Corporate Objective	Council Plan Priority	Directorate action/target (and Lead Officer)	Target Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<p><u>CP4. Disability Access Strategy</u></p> <p>(a) Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy.</p>	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake audits of any new or changed Directorate premises or office accommodation (Brian Gordon) 	New	2006/2007 Six-monthly progress reports. Complete by December 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to building for customers and employees.
<p>(b) Achieve an improvement in the score against BVPI 156 on access to buildings.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support corporate activity through transfer of further services to Dudley Council Plus in accordance with the programme and develop second customer access centre (Teresa Reilly) 	New	By March 2007.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to services.

Directorate Law & Property – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2006/07

Appendix 4
(Directorate)

Directorate Equality & Diversity Policy 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>	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set Targets for customer satisfaction based on baseline information obtained in 2004/05 and 2005/06 by ethnicity, disability and gender. For Licensing, Registration & Market Traders 	Continuing target	1 st April 2006 Monitor Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved customer satisfaction levels.
		<p>Continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement disability training for private hire & hackney carriage drivers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Review customer (drivers) with driving satisfaction. □ Consult Disability Groups following completion of disability training for Taxi & Private Hire drivers. 	Continuing target	<p>Complete by August 2007</p> <p>October 2006 & August 2007</p> <p>30th September 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased driver awareness • 92% satisfaction with training from those drivers that have completed the course • Improved customer (passenger) satisfaction levels

**Appendix 4
(Directorate)**

Directorate Equality & Diversity Policy Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<u>Consult With & Market Our Services To Customers</u> (Philip Tart & Teresa Reilly)	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Charter Mark Standard for “Excellence in Customer Service” for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Corporate Estate Services □ Licensing 	New target	9 th January 2007 26 th August 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Accreditation focused on customer service excellence.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review weekend & bank holiday death registration service for Muslim & Jewish 	New target	May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners involved in providing the service continue to support it. • Customer satisfaction.
<u>Ensure All Staff Are Treated Fairly And Equally</u> (Brian Gordon)	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff satisfaction surveys undertaken and issues identified acted upon. 	Continuing target	September 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in job satisfaction from employees with disabilities.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree an action plan with Directorate group for staff with disabilities 	New target	May 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement, appropriately, any agreed action/objective.

**Appendix 2b
(Directorate)**

Directorate Equality & Diversity Policy Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<u>Ensure All Staff Are Treated Fairly And Equally</u> (Brian Gordon)	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review process with mentoring scheme for members of staff from under represented groups. 	Continuing target	December 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have supported staff in the attainment of their stated goal.
<u>Widening Our Appeal As An Employee</u> (Brian Gordon)	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of Careers in construction related services to women and ethnic minorities through jobs fairs, school promotional events and work placements 	Continuing target	December 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events participated in. Number of work place students from ethnic minority/female background.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To target ethnic and female groups when advertising professional construction posts. 	Continuing target	March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number posts advertised to these groups. No applicants, short listed and appointed from these groups.

**Appendix 2b
(Directorate)**

Directorate Equality & Diversity Policy Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned Outcome/performance indicator
<u>Widening Our Appeal As An Employee</u> (Brian Gordon)	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-apply for Investors in People status (current accreditation expires 25.09.06) 	New Target	September 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the accreditation.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Directorate of Urban Environment in their trial Multi Racial Employment Selection Panels, by providing training staff to participate. 	New Target	March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DUE supported in the trial.
<u>Improving Services for all our Customers</u> (Teresa Reilly)	Quality Services Matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review trial location of Registrar of Births & Deaths in Dudley Council Plus. 	New Target	February 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take up of appointments.