

## **AGENDA ITEM NO 7**

### **Select Committee on Economic Regeneration – 1st March 2005**

#### **Report of the Chief Executive**

#### **Chief Executive's Directorate's Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan**

##### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To consider the Chief Executive's Directorate's annual equality and diversity action plan for 2005/06.

##### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The production of an annual equality and diversity action plan by each directorate is a requirement of the Council's equality and diversity policy. Action plans should set out the specific action that the directorate proposes to take during the year in response to the policy and, in particular, the equality and diversity priorities for the year, which were agreed by the select committee at its meeting on 12th January 2005.
- 2.2 An annual report on progress on the equality and diversity targets in the directorate's action plan for 2004/05 will be submitted to the select committee at its first meeting in the 2005/06 municipal year.
- 2.3 This Committee has agreed to take the lead select committee role on equality and diversity issues, although responsibility for scrutinising individual directorate's action plans has been divided between the six select committees.

##### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 That Members consider and comment on the Chief Executive's Directorate's annual equality and diversity action plan for 2005/06.

##### **4. Finance**

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

## 5. Law

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. In particular, Section 25 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.
- 5.4 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

## 6. Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 The action plan contains proposals for implementing the Council's equality and diversity policy by the Chief Executive's Directorate.

## 7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That Members consider and comment on the attached action plan.



----- for

**Chief Executive**

Contact officer: Simon Manson, ext 4713

**Background papers:** Guidance for the preparation of directorates' annual equality and diversity action plans and annual reports; Equality Standard for Local Government

## Chief Executive's Directorate

### Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2005/06

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 All directorates of the Council produce an annual equality and diversity action plan to develop their work in implementing the Council's equality and diversity policy in relation to their service areas and employment practices. All directorates also produce an annual report on implementation of the action plan. This is prepared after the end of March so that it can report on a full twelve months progress on action plan targets. The Chief Executive's Directorate's equality and diversity annual report for 2004/05 will be submitted to the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration at its first meeting of the 2005/06 municipal year.
- 1.2 This action plan covers the period from April 2005 to March 2006. 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 priorities and targets agreed by the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2005, to be reflected in the Council Plan for 2005/06. The longer-term policy framework is provided by the Council's equality and diversity policy. 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 revised Race Equality Scheme is to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2005.
- 2.2 This action plan will form part of the overall strategic plan for the Chief Executive's Directorate for 2005/06.

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

- 3.1 The Directorate's approach to equality and diversity is set out in its equality and diversity policy agreed during 2003 and 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, its consultation processes, continuing training and development, and performance review and development interviews for all staff.
- 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 (CATS) 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. A principal officer in the 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 will make a key contribution to the development of 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 priorities for 2005/06 are set out below. In addition to receiving the approval of the select committee, the Council's Community Representatives Panel was consulted on the priorities and gave them its support.
- 4.2 The priorities are set out below. Specific targets related to the priorities with the directorate's contribution towards them are included in Table 1:

- **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 Scheme. 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.

4.3 The directorate's targets related to these priorities 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. Within this, the CATS programme has great potential to impact very positively on the ability of all communities in the Borough to access information and services from the Council so is of particular importance to promoting equality. The CATS team has carried out a range of consultation with community groups and the involvement of 'Access in Dudley' is proving invaluable in helping to ensure that the Dudley customer services centre will be accessible to people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. A number of other key service delivery and employment issues are covered in this plan. These have arisen through ongoing work, through reviews undertaken as identified in the Council's Race Equality Scheme or through consultation and community engagement.

- 4.6 Members of the Council's Community Representatives Panel have been consulted during the preparation of the action plan. Particular issues raised, which are being incorporated into the implementation of the plan, were around ensuring that additional information, intranet resources and e-training initiatives did not become a substitute for face-to-face training and development for employees; that initiatives such as mixed race recruitment and selection panels can have a positive impact on recruitment from BME communities; the benefits of involving disabled people in the design of services; and the importance of promoting the availability of language support, for example, through the customer service centre.
- 4.7 The role of the Select Committee on Economic Regeneration Working Group on Equality and Diversity has been important in identifying issues addressed in the action plan, particularly concerning employee equality audits and good practice in recruitment.

## **5. The Action Plan**

- 5.1 The action plan is set out in the following tables. Table 1 sets out the directorate's proposed contribution to the identified Council equality and diversity priority areas. 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 2005

**Table 1. Chief Executive's Directorate – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2005/06 - Council Priorities**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/performance indicator
CP1. Review and implement the Council's Race Equality Scheme (SM)	Local people/ caring matters	(1) Complete the service reviews set out in year 3 of the Scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2005: for the directorate - emergency planning (IS) - elections and electoral registration (AM) - health and safety (RF)	Continuing target	Complete by 31/05/05	Reviews complete by deadline  Improved arrangements for ethnic monitoring, consultation, access to information and services
		(2) Complete a review of the Scheme and publish a revised Scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2005	Continuing target	31/05/05	Revised Scheme published by 31/05/05 deadline
		(3) Implement the action plan included in the Scheme	New target	Milestones/target dates to be set out in Scheme	Targets achieved



CP2. Progress work on the Equality Standard for Local Government (SM)	Caring/ local people matter	(1) Achieve level 2 of the Standard  (2) Develop an action plan for achieving level 3 of the Standard	Continuing target	Target date to be set by EDAG  July 2005	Level 2 achieved by directorate and corporately Action plan agreed through EDAG
CP3. Disability issues - improve access for disabled customers (SM)	Caring/ local people matter	Implement the actions contained within the Council's Disability Access Strategy - directorate to contribute to achievement of strategy	New target	Six-monthly monitoring by EDAG; target dates set out in strategy	Actions achieved by deadlines
CP4. Employment issues - increase representation from underrepresented groups in the workforce (SW)	Caring/ local people matter	(1) Work towards targets established for employees from black and minority ethnic communities and disabled employees in all directorates  (2) Complete a further audit of employees to enable them to declare whether or not they regard themselves as meeting the statutory definition of disability  (3) Achieve a figure of at least 96.5% of employees who have declared their ethnic origin	New targets	Review of recruitment to customer services organisation – June 2005  Audit to be completed and data entered by March 2006	Targets established and achieved in directorate  Completion of audit with increase in no. of employees declaring a disability from 2004/05 baseline  96.5% declaration achieved

CP5. Continuing improvement on Best value performance indicator (BVPI) 2b) (SM)	Caring/ local people matter	Achievement of an improved score against the Best Value corporate health performance indicator on race equality BVPI 2b)	Continuing target	Benchmarking/ sharing good practice – April 2005  Half-year review by EDAG – October 2005	Improvement on 2004/05 score
---	--------------------------------------	--	-------------------	--	---------------------------------

**Table 2. Chief Executive's Directorate – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2005/06 - Directorate Priorities**

Objective (and lead officer)	Council Plan Priority	Detailed action/target	Status	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/performance indicator
CE1. Continue to develop and implement the equality aspects of the Customer Access to Services programme (KM)	Local people matter	(1) Implement actions to be identified through the equality impact assessment carried out during 2004/05	Follow on targets from 2004/05	Set out in assessment action plan	Needs of diverse communities identified and built into programme
		(2) Introduce monitoring arrangements to assess improvements to customer access to services		Introduce during 2005/06	Improved access to services
		(3) Continue to engage with Action for Disabled People and Carers, BME, and other community groups throughout process	Continuing target	During 2005/06	Range of consultation/engagement opportunities
		(4) Continue to implement the communications plan and promote the changes to customer access to services to the Borough's diverse communities	Continuing target	Ongoing during 2005/06	Awareness of arrangements for customer access

		(5) Encourage diverse communities to take up jobs with the customer services organisation	New target	Ongoing	Diverse workforce in customer service centres
CE2. Improve language support for customers (TH)	Local people matter	With other directorates, develop plan for improving the provision of language support to customers across the Council	New target	Report to Cabinet – June 2005	Language needs of customers are met
CE3. Engage, with partners, with diverse communities in production of the community strategy (GT)	Local people matter	Produce community strategy responding to input from diverse communities	Continuing target	Consultation – April – June 2005  Launch – September 2005	Strategy published  Involvement of diverse groups in consultation phase
CE4. Promote community cohesion (GT)	Caring/safety matters	(1) Adopt Council strategy on community cohesion  (2) Review current practice in light of current government guidelines  (3) Work in partnership with race and faith community cohesion alliance to identify community-led priorities  (4) Develop education flagship project	Continuing targets    Carried forward	September 2005  December 2005  December 2006  December 2006	Strategy published  Priorities identified  Performance measures identified

CE5. Share good practice on recruitment of disabled people and people from BME communities (SW)	Caring/ local people matter	(1) Hold good practice in recruitment event  (2) Develop intranet resources to support managers e.g. FAQs	New targets	September 2005  December 2005	Managers aware of and implement good practice
CE6. Improve levels of declaration of disability from employees (SW/SM)	Caring/ local people matter	Work with Employees with Disabilities Group to publicise definition of disability and reasons for declaring	New target	Meet with group – May 2005	Increase in declaration from 2004/05 baseline
CE7. Address any gender pay inequalities in the workforce (SW)	Caring/ local people matter	Complete equal pay audit	New target	By 31/03/06	Audit completed
CE8. Provide support to any employees who might suffer bullying or harassment (JC)	Caring/ local people matter	(1) Implement harassment support contacts across directorates  (2) Review operation of the scheme	New target	From April 2005  March 2006	Support provided for employees  Nos. of employees reporting incidents
CE9. Provide training to employees to support them in implementing the equality and diversity policy (GB)	Caring/ local people matter	Introduce new training courses for employees on 'Achieving work-life balance' and 'Understanding cultural differences'	New target	From September 2005	No. of attendees

CE10. Improve equality and diversity in marketing and communications (JJ)	Caring/local people matter	Promote equality and diversity marketing and communications guidelines to internal and external stakeholders	Follow on target	September 2005	More effective marketing and communication of equality and diversity
CE11. Action on Disabled People and Carers (SM)	Caring/local people matter	Continue to develop and work with the group in partnership with DCVS, other directorates and the PCTs	Continuing target	SLA in place – April 2005  Quarterly stakeholder meetings	Input to CATS programme  No. of meetings held Issues raised and responded to
CE12. Assess the health and safety function for any race equality implications (RF)	Safety matters	(1) Establish a baseline for accident/incident reporting by racial group for the 2004/05 year and analyse the data to establish any significant patterns related to race which might emerge during this first year and future years  (2) Ensure that the implications of any follow-up research to the University of Warwick's report 'Review of the occupational health and safety of Britain's ethnic minorities' are applied to Dudley MBC where relevant	New targets	July 2005  Ongoing, when research published	Baseline established

CE13. Improve potential response in major emergencies for diverse communities (IS)	Safety matters	<p>(1) Use of 2001 Census information to inform emergency planning provision.</p> <p>(2) Investigate good practice and lessons learned from other areas in dealing with emergencies with different communities to improve our response.</p> <p>(3) Improve involvement of BME/different faith communities through Crisis Support Team</p> <p>(4) Improve appropriately translated public information on Emergency Planning through the website</p>	New targets	By March 2006	<p>Improved potential targeting of emergency responses</p> <p>Increased involvement of different faiths.</p> <p>Improved information availability for people with language needs</p>
CE14. Improve access to elections and electoral registration (AM)	Local people matter	<p>(1) Commence a further review of disabled access provision at polling stations</p> <p>(2) Include a paragraph in community languages in reminder canvass notifications that assistance available and provide information to canvassers in community languages</p>	New targets	<p>During 2005/06</p> <p>By November 2005</p>	<p>Improved access</p> <p>Increase in electoral registration</p>

## **Glossary**

### Lead officers:

GB – Gill Beards; JC – Joyce Carter; RF – Ray Faulkner; TH – Tony Hinkley; JJ - Jan Jennings; AM – Alison Mason; SM – Simon Manson; KM - Keith Mayou; SW – Steve Woodall; IS – Ian Skidmore; GT- Geoff Thomas

### Other terms:

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

CATS – Customer Access to Services

DCVS – Dudley Council for Voluntary Service

EDAG – Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

FAQs – Frequently asked questions

PCTs – Dudley Beacon and Castle and Dudley South NHS Primary Care Trusts

SLA – Service level agreement