

Meeting of the Cabinet – 30th October 2013

Report of the Director of Corporate Resources

Annual Review of Equality 2013

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the annual review of equality and diversity for 2013, a full copy of which is available in the members' room and electronically on the council's committee management information system (CMIS).

Background

2. An annual review of equality is prepared for the Cabinet which gives an overview of progress in implementing equality objectives and progressing equality work.
3. The council's current three-year equality scheme was approved by the Cabinet in March 2012. This sets out the equality objectives that the council has identified in response to the requirements of the specific public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, along with a range of information around the council's approach to equality, which also contributes to meeting the duty to publish equality information. The annual review provides a summary of progress in implementing the scheme's objectives, along with other relevant information which includes analysis relating to the council's workforce and employment record.
4. The 2013 review draws attention to changes in equality legislation and steps being taken by the Government towards its aim of reducing 'red tape'. In particular, the Government's review of the public sector equality duty has now reported to Ministers. The review's steering group felt that it was too early in the life of the duty to draw robust conclusions and a further full review has been promised by the Government in 2016. No changes to the duty are suggested at this stage, although the review recommends some measures for reducing what was seen in some areas as an overly bureaucratic approach to implementing the legislation. The Government is currently consulting on proposed changes to the judicial

review process which include ways to resolve disputes relating to the duty without resorting to judicial review. The Cabinet should be mindful of the continuing need to ensure that the public sector equality duty, as it stands, is complied with, for example, during the consideration of relevant budget proposals.

5. The draft review was circulated to members of the Corporate Performance Management, Effectiveness and Efficiency Scrutiny Committee for comment, in line with its lead scrutiny role on corporate equality issues.

Finance

6. Any costs which might be associated with responding to the issues raised in the report which cannot be met from within existing budgets will need to be assessed in due course.

Law

7. The Equality Act 2010 replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The first duties of the Act came into force on 1st October 2010.
8. Public sector equality duties under the Act came into force on 5th April 2011 requiring public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations covering the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
9. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 required public authorities to publish equality information by 31 January 2012 (and annually thereafter) and equality objectives by 5th April 2012 (to be reviewed at east every 4 years).

Equality Impact

10. The review contains a range of information, monitoring data and analysis relating to the impact of the council's policies and practices on promoting equality and the achievement of equality objectives in relation to both services and employment. More information is given in the Directorate of Children's Services annual equality action plans and reports on the promotion of equality relating to children and young people.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the annual review of equality 2013.



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Director of Corporate Resources

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List of Background Papers
Dudley MBC employment monitoring data