

Meeting of the Cabinet – 29th October 2008

Report of the Director of Law and Property

Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2008

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the attached annual review of equality and diversity for 2008, 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 and diversity is prepared for the Cabinet each year. The draft review was considered by the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education on 8th September 2008, in accordance with its lead scrutiny role on corporate equality and diversity issues. The select committee made some comments on the report and agreed to recommend it for approval to the Cabinet.
3. The report, to be found in the Members' room and on CMIS, is the seventh one prepared and gives an overview of progress in implementing equality and diversity priorities and targets. It meets the various legal requirements for annual reporting of progress on a public authority's Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, and includes comparative data on and analysis of relevant performance indicators and the Council's employment policies and practices.

Finance

4. 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

5. The range of relevant equality legislation includes:
The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 replaces Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 with a 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.

6. 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. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extended this Act with a duty on public authorities to promote disability equality.
7. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. In particular, Section 29 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 ground of gender. A duty on public authorities to promote gender equality under the Equality Act 2006 came into force on 6th April 2007.
8. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

Equality Impact

9. The annual review contains a range monitoring data, information and analysis relating to the impact of the Council's policies and practices on promoting equality and diversity. More information is given in the Directorate of Children's Services annual equality and diversity action plans and reports on the promotion of equality relating to children and young people.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that Members comment on and approve the annual review of equality and diversity 2008.

John Polychronakis

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List of Background Papers: Audit Commission 2006/07 quartile statistics; Dudley MBC employment monitoring data