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**DIRECTORATE
OF
LAW & PROPERTY**

**EQUALITY & DIVERSITY
ACTION PLAN**

2009/2010

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

Directorate of Law & Property

Draft Annual Equality & Diversity Action Plan 2009/10

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" for the year ahead is required to be presented before 31st March 2009 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" looking back at the last year 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 the previous year's 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 the success in 2007/08 of the Driver Disability Awareness Course and Consultation with the Taxi Focus Group and the Taxi Committee it was agreed that the Licensing Section would explore the viability of delivering a Road Passenger Vehicle Driving NVQ level 2 courses for hackney carriage/private hire vehicles in 2009/10.
- 1.6 Recruitment of construction related property professionals and from ethnic minorities and females has proved difficult in Dudley. This is no different at a national level. Consequently, it was decided to specifically target these groups through the offering of work placements via Dudley and other schools. This action helps broaden our appeal of Dudley MBC as an employer as well as promoting access to professional careers to women and ethnic minority groups.
- 1.7 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 2009. 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 2009/10. The strategic plan responds to the Borough's Community Strategy 2005-15 and the three year Council Plan.
- 2.2 The overall long-term, policy framework for equality and diversity is set out in the Councils Equality and Diversity Policy. The Councils 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 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 and the Cabinet.

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 Council's 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 213 employees (correct as at 03.02.09) split over three divisions: -

- HR & Citizenship (HRC)
- Corporate Property (CP)
- Legal and Democratic Services (L&D)

As a result of a cabinet decision on 10th December 2008, with effect from 1st April 2009 the Council's HR function will be centralised in the Directorate of Law & Property, moving the function from Chief Executives and various Directorates. A single property division has been created in the Directorate of Law & Property by combining the property services previously in Corporate Estate Services and Dudley Property Consultancy and Corporate Health & Safety from Chief Executives. The two main priorities for the new HR & Citizenship division for the year will be to develop and implement an integrated HR function for the Council which improves consistency, removes duplications and to develop an HR Strategy for the Council as the previous one expired in 2008.

- 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 2009/10

4.1 Equality Scheme

The Council's 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
- Focusing on outcomes rather than policies and plans
- Improving communications around what we do and why, externally and internally; celebrating success
- Improving approaches to consultation
- Identifying required equality and diversity competencies for managers and employees.

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

- 4.2 The 2008 Council's annual review of equality and diversity identified three priorities for the next twelve months, and these are also reflected in the Directorate's action plan, namely:-

Developing and implementing actions for:

- Further access improvements to public buildings, and increasing the number of employees with a disability.
- Updating the Council's vision for delivering equality.
- Ensuring that equality impact assessments are completed.

These priorities arose from analysis of performance indicators, an external review of the Council's approach to equality and a review by the external auditors 'supporting people with a disability' More details are given in the Council's annual review (available on the Council's website).

4.3 In the Councils Equality Scheme, the Directorate also identified overall equality and diversity priorities for our service areas linked to the three years of the scheme, which were to be reflected in the action plan. However, the Directorate has begun to be substantially restructured and the priorities have been amended to reflect the changes.

The priorities for 2009/10 are to: -

- To introduce, in partnership with Dudley College, the Road Passenger Vehicle Driving NVQ level two qualification for taxi and private hire drivers who are 96% from the ethnic minority
- Continued promotion of careers in professional construction related services to women and ethnic minorities through close liaison with schools careers advisors, school careers events and work placements within the Corporate Property division.
- Implement new approaches to E – Diversity training to reach more employees
- Implement outstanding equality elements of the People Management Strategy 2006-2008
- Undertake and improve the approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

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

Year 1 – 2007/2008

Democratic Services - Completed – Level 1 Review Only
Dudley Open Market - Completed – Level 1 Review Only

Year 2 – 2008/2009

Registration & Celebratory Services – To be completed by May 2009

Year 3 – 2009/2010

Licensing

An Assistant Director will take the lead on each of these five priorities for 2009/10 as detailed in the following action plan (pages 7 - 10).

4.4 Whether as part of Equality Impact Assessments, or other activities, the Directorate undertakes a range of consultation and engagement which feeds into the action plan.

The Directorate contributed to the Council - wide BME Consultation event in November 2008 including facilitating a workshop and providing information on the services provided by Citizenship and Registration Services.

4.5 Where items in the attached action plan respond directly to actions set out in the Equality Scheme, reference to the corresponding action in the Scheme are included e.g. (ES1.3)

5. Consultation

The draft action plan has been circulated to staff for comment and suggestions both as service providers and employees. It was also 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

7.1 The detailed action plan for 2009/10 is set out in the following table.

Directorate of Law & Property
February 2009

Directorate of Law & Property – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/10

Objective	Detailed action/target (and lead officer)	Target Date/ milestones	Planned outcome/performance indicator
Priority 1. Quality Service Matters – Ensure High Levels Of Customer Satisfaction			
<p>1.1 Introduce, (in partnership with Dudley College), the Road Passenger Vehicle Driving NVQ level 2 qualification. In order to increase the skills and qualifications of private hire and hackney carriage drivers and improve the service they provide to their customers.</p>	<p>Following pilot course at Dudley College (Brierley Hill Campus) which commenced Jan/Feb 2009 Review and evaluate course with partner agency and the private hire hackney carriage trade.</p> <p>Legal & Democratic Services Licensing – Janet Elliot</p>	<p>Review and evaluate course April 2009.</p> <p>Give consideration to making it a condition of licence that all private hire and hackney carriage drivers undertake the course</p> <p>June 2009.</p>	<p>Private hire and hackney carriage drivers, 96% of whom are from ethnic minority groups, gain the NVQ qualification .The customer service levels received by the users of private hire cars and hackney carriages is improved.</p> <p>Following significant numbers of drivers completing the course a consultation exercise will be undertaken with the travelling public.</p>

Priority 2. Quality Service Matters – Widening Our Appeal as an Employer

2.1 Continued promotion of careers in professional construction related services to women and ethnic minorities through close liaison with schools careers advisors, school careers events and work placements within Corporate Property.	Corporate Property To give work placements as wide an experience as possible to all professional disciplines within Corporate Property. Lead Officer: Andy James	April 2009 – March 2010	Number of placements undertaken by Dudley or other school children or students during the year.
2.2 To improve staff and public access to public buildings with regards to the relevant element of the Audit Commissions value for money review of how the Council is “Supporting People with Disabilities”.	A review of the Council’s performance monitoring arrangements following benchmarking and best practice with other local authorities and top performing councils. Lead Officer: Paul Bickerdike	May 2009	Improved access for staff and members of the public in line with best practice.

Priority 3. Improve equality and diversity competencies of employees

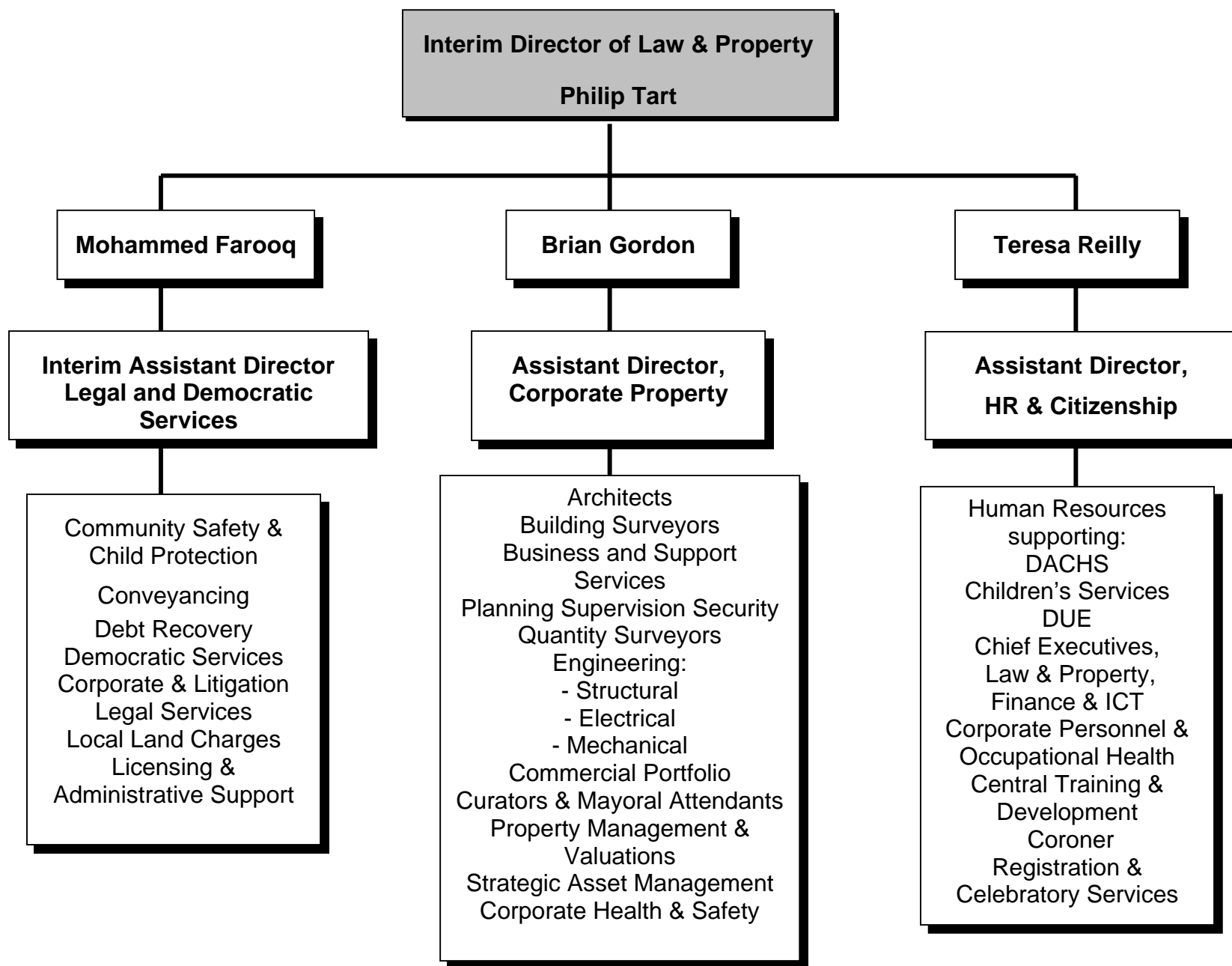
3.1 Implement new approaches to training to reach more employees	Review approach to Equality & Diversity as a competency. Implement E-diversity training for employees. (ES1.16) Lead Officer: Sarah Treneer	March 2010	Increase in employees receiving training.
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Priority 4. Quality Service Matters – Develop Clearer Targets & Outcomes

4.1 Undertake and improve the approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)	Undertake EIA's of the following services during 2009/10 (ES1.3) Citizenship & Registration Jayne Catley Licensing Janet Elliot Training & Development Phil Cutler/Sarah Treneer	May 2009 May 2010 May 2010	EIA's completed within timescales Improvement actions identified
4.2 Review the actions identified in completed Equality Impact Assessments.	Julie Jones Steve Griffiths	May 2010	Have the actions identified made a difference to delivery of the service (measured by customer feedback).

<p>4.3 Improve equality and diversity policy development and performance management.</p>	<p>Trial combined central Directorates Equality Group (Law & Property, Finance, ICT and Procurement and Chief Executives Directorates)</p> <p>Lead Officer: Caroline Glover</p>	<p>From April 2009</p>	<p>Improved co-ordination, sharing good practice and performance management.</p>
<p>Priority 5. Develop and start to Implement An HR Strategy for the Council</p>			
<p>5.1 Develop and implement HR strategy for the Council which includes equality impact assessments, on updated and new HR policies.</p>	<p>Develop draft strategy for Cabinet approval.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Teresa Reilly</p>	<p>HR Strategy to be approved by end of September 2009</p>	<p>Improved Council approach to HR.</p>
<p>5.2 Implement equality related elements of strategy.</p>	<p>Complete review of EIA of recruitment policy. Outstanding objective from Chief Executives.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Tracey Medlyn</p>	<p>November 2009</p>	<p>Improved approach to recruitment.</p>

DIRECTORATE OF LAW & 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 HR & Citizenship 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 and Support Services Manager of HR & Citizenship 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.



Signed by: March 2009
Interim Director of Law and Property

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Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services

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Assistant Director, HR & Citizenship

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Assistant Director, Corporate Property

Reported to: Select Committee on Community Safety & Community Services 12th March 2009

Approved by:
Cabinet Member for Directorate of Law & Property

Review date: January 2010

**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
↑	
Interim Director of Law and Property Philip Tart	Lead Officer for Corporate and Departmental Equal Opportunities
↑	
Directorate Management Team (DMT) Mohammed Farooq 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, HR & Citizenship	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