

**Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education –
4 March 2009**

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

**Directorate of the Urban Environment's Equality and Diversity Action
Plan for 2009/2010**

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the Directorate of the Urban Environment's annual equality and diversity action plan for 2009/2010.

Background

2. The production of an annual equality and diversity action plan by each directorate is an important commitment in the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. The action plan sets out details of how a Directorate will promote equality in relation to its areas of responsibility during the coming year and responds to the three year framework established by the Council's Equality Scheme 2007-10.
3. Overview and scrutiny of corporate equality and diversity issues is included in the terms of reference of the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education. Select Committee chairmen have agreed that scrutiny of individual Directorate's action plans be split up amongst the five committees.
4. The Directorate of the Urban Environment's action plan for 2009/2010 is attached and covers:
 - its relationship with other plans
 - the Directorate's vision and values
 - key issues and targets in drawing up the plan, and
 - the detailed action plan.
5. The annual report setting out progress with the Directorate's action plan for 2008/2009 will be presented to the first meeting of the Select Committee in the new municipal year.
6. The draft action plan has been considered by the Directorate Management Team. Following scrutiny it will be approved by the appropriate cabinet member before publication.

Finance

7. Any costs associated with implementing the action plan will be met from existing budgets.

Law

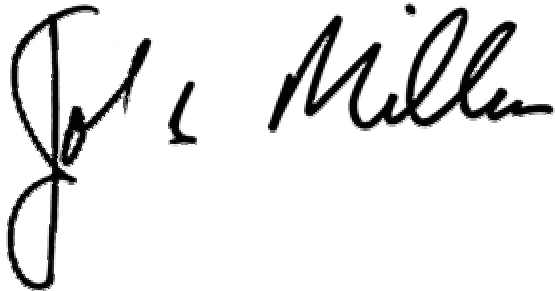
8. The wide range of relevant equality legislation includes:
 - The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a general duty on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.
 - 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 has extended this Act with a duty on public authorities to promote disability equality.
 - The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 renders unlawful certain kinds of sex discrimination. A duty on public authorities to promote gender equality under the Equality Act 2006 came into force on 6 April 2007.
 - Other legislation is in place relating to discrimination on the basis of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
9. 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

10. The action plan sets out proposed actions for promoting and progressing equality and diversity work in the Directorate of the Urban Environment during 2009/2010. Performance indicators or outcomes are identified against each target so that progress in achieving the action plan can be monitored and reviewed.
11. Issues relating to children and young people are covered in more detail in the Directorate of Children's Services equality and diversity action plan.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that the Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education considers and comments on the Directorate of the Urban Environment's equality and diversity action plan for 2009/10.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Millar'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Millar
Director of the Urban Environment

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List of Background Papers

Directorate of the Urban Environment's Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Directorate of the Urban Environment

Annual Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The equality and diversity action plan sets out the Directorate of the Urban Environment's objectives for the year 2009/2010, for implementing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. It includes the directorate's objectives, as well as addressing equality and diversity issues existent due to relevant legislation, and taking into consideration the corporate objectives outlined in the Equality Scheme.
- 1.2 All of the targets within the action plan relate, and contribute to the six themes contained within the Council Plan.
- 1.3 The Directorate of the Urban Environment is a large directorate, carrying out a number of diverse functions, which are:

Culture & Leisure

Culture & Tourism
Sport & Physical Activity
Museums, Parks & Amenities

Planning & Environmental Health

Planning
Environmental Health & Trading Standards

Economic Regeneration & Transportation

Economic Regeneration Strategy
Economic Regeneration Delivery
Engineering, Traffic & Transportation

Environmental Management

Street & Green Care
Waste Care

Underpinning these functions, are the relevant policy and support services, a number of which are included within the Policy and Executive Support Team.

- 1.4 A review of the Directorate's achievements against the objectives detailed in its 2008/2009 action plan will be included in the equality and diversity annual report, submitted to Select Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education in summer of this year.

2 Relationship with other plans

- 2.1 The Directorate's action plan forms part of the authority's response to how it will deal with equality and diversity objectives. The priorities and targets relate and contribute, where relevant, to the Council Plan.
- 2.2 The principles and objectives of the action plan are also integrated into service plans within the Directorate of the Urban Environment, and may be subject to scrutiny as part of external inspection processes.
- 2.3 This action plan will form part of the overall strategic plan for the Directorate of the Urban Environment.

3 Visions and Values

- 3.1 The directorate supports all aspects of the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy, and will take action to implement the policy both in terms of employment practices and service provision.
- 3.2 All employees of the Directorate have an individual responsibility to comply with the relevant legislation, policies and procedures relating to equality and diversity. This responsibility is applied in the directorate's dealings with members, other employees, job applicants, residents, service users, other members of the public and external organisations. Specific responsibilities for ensuring equality and diversity, in both employment and service provision, rests with the Directorate's Management Team, and all Heads of Service, with the support of the Directorate's Principal Personnel Officers. The Head of Policy and Executive Support, a member of the Directorate's Management Team, has the responsibility for co-ordinating this work across the Directorate.
- 3.3 In attempting to ensure that equality and diversity is mainstreamed into service provision, employees of the Directorate undertake relevant training and development in these areas. Information is initially provided as part of an on-site induction, so that employees are immediately made aware of equality and diversity issues, and the role individuals play in extending it into service provision. Other training and development for employees includes recruitment and selection training (which includes information on equality and diversity issues). Refresher training is also offered, ensuring that such employees remain updated in their knowledge and skills.

4 **Key issues and targets for 2009/2010**

The Council's overall equality and diversity commitment is set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy, and the Equality Scheme details the Council's action plan for promoting equality and diversity objectives.

4.1 The Directorate's priorities in formulating its 2009/2010 action plan are based around the following key issues (attached as appendix).

(1) **Equality Scheme**

The Directorate action plan is linked to the Corporate Equality Scheme, which sets out the Council's approach to promoting equality and diversity across all its services and employment. Our identified actions for 2009/2010 therefore look to help achieve and develop some key priorities identified within the Equality Scheme:

- Improve access to buildings and information
(priority 2 & 6 – action plan for 2009/2010)
- Improve communications around what we do and why
(priority 6 – action plan for 2009-2010)
- Continue to assess how our services impact on people from different racial groups and improve the quality and range of data we collect
(priorities 4, 6 & 7 – action plan for 2009/2010)
- Improve consultation and engagement processes with BME communities
(priorities 7 & 8 – action plan for 2009/2010)
- Assess how our relevant services impact on disabled people
(priorities 3, 4 & 6 – action plan for 2009/2010)
- Improve consultation and engagement processes with disabled people
(priorities 3 & 6 – action plan for 2009/2010)

(2) **Equality Impact Assessments**

An impact assessment is a systematic and thorough way of appraising a service and the impact that it will have on different groups and communities. The aim of an impact assessment is to ensure that policies and services are not unfair or discriminatory in the way that they impact on different groups in the community.

The Directorate has a programme of full impact assessments for 2009/ 2010 (one for each division of the Directorate) **(priority 1 – action plan for 2009/2010)**, with a further ongoing prioritised programme of impact assessments to be determined for future

years. The Equality Impact Assessments to take place between April 2009 and March 2010 are:

- Building Control
- Street Cleansing
- Public Halls
- Town Centre Partnerships

These are services that have been prioritised for a full impact assessment as they have been identified as having a significant effect on the public.

(3) **Directorate Equality and Diversity Priorities**

The Directorate has identified its overall equality and diversity priorities which are highlighted in the current Equality Scheme which runs from 2007 until 2010. The 2009/2010 action plan objectives contribute towards achieving some of these priorities. As these overall Directorate priorities run for several years, some of the priorities have already been achieved or have been contributed towards in previous years action plans and therefore are not all reflected in the action plan for 2009/2010.

- Seek to improve the number of employees in the Directorate with a disability, from a BME background, or who are female
- Continuation of the Directorate's Disability Consultation Group, which proactively seeks the involvement of the Borough's disabled residents in the delivery of Directorate services;
(priority 3 – action plan 2009/2010)
- To improve the usage of leisure and sports facilities by people with a disability
- To continue to raise awareness of people from a BME background to the services offered by Trading Standards and Environmental Health;
(priority 7 – action plan 2009/2010)
- To increase the participation of young people from minority ethnic communities in the Prince's Trust Team, Business and XL clubs;
- Briefing of all Senior Managers within the Directorate regarding relevant employment legislation relating to equality and diversity and its impact on employees.

4.2 The Directorate's specific objectives for 2009/2010 relating to equality and diversity are detailed in this action plan.

4.3 Particular priority will be assigned to progressing work through the corporate Equality and Diversity Advisory Group; in particular we will

support action plans put in place to progress with the Equality Framework for Local Government and achieve the levels required.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The Directorate undertakes or is involved in a wide range of consultation about its services and strategic priorities. Members of the Directorate's Disability Consultation Group continue to give an input into how we can improve the Directorate's services. The Directorate Management Team has been involved in determining the priorities identified in this Action Plan.

6 Monitoring

- 6.1 Progress regarding the achievement of the objectives detailed in the action plan will be monitored, and reported to the Continuing Improvement Group, the Directorate's Management Team and the Directorate's Equality and Diversity Working Group.

7 The Action Plan

- 7.1 The action plan is set out in the following tables.

Directorate of the Urban Environment
February 2009

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p>Priority 1 Complete equality impact assessments in the following areas:</p> <p>Lead Officer – Terry Cowley</p> <p>Lead Officer – Dave Wesson</p> <p>Lead Officer – Peter Jordan</p> <p>Lead Officer – George Whitehouse</p>	<p>Complete impact assessments in the following areas:</p> <p>- Building Control</p> <p>- Street Cleansing</p> <p>- Public Halls</p> <p>- Town Centre Partnerships</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Full impact assessments completed within the timescales</p> <p>Integration of identified actions into Service Plans</p> <p>Achievement of Equality Scheme objectives</p>

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 2</p> <p>Provide the updated access guides to publicly accessible council buildings in electronic format.</p> <p>Lead Officer – Terry Cowley & Mark Walton</p>	<p>Provide access guides to DUE publicly accessible buildings in electronic format.</p> <p>Commence work with a view to providing all remaining access guides to publicly accessible council buildings in electronic format.</p> <p>Investigate feasibility of providing the access guides to publicly accessible council buildings in other formats i.e. large print.</p>	<p>June 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Completed access guides available in electronic format.</p>

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 3</p> <p>Involve Access in Dudley in the planning consultation process.</p> <p>Lead Officer –Terry Cowley & Mark Walton</p>	<p>Meet with Access in Dudley on a regular basis to review planning applications and major building control projects.</p> <p>Recommendations from Access in Dudley passed to relevant officer in time to be taken into account during the decision making process.</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>Access in Dudley involved in the planning consultation process.</p> <p>Access in Dudley consulted on major building control projects.</p>

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 4</p> <p>A review of disabled parking places on all Council Car Parks (as detailed in the Parking Order)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lead Officer – Helen Jones & Shirley Birch</p>	<p>Complete review of disabled parking places.</p>	<p>March 2010</p>	<p>Part of work programme for ISO 9001 Identified car parks that need disabled bays to comply with Parking Order.</p>

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Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 5</p> <p>Introduction of increased recycling opportunities for people living in high rise flats.</p> <p>Lead Officer – Paul Edmunds & Shirley Birch</p>	<p>The provision of mini recycling units, in liaison with Building Managers, in order for residents of high rise blocks to have access to recycling.</p>	<p>13 high rise accommodations to have access to a recycling facility or shared facility by June 2009.</p> <p>13 remaining high rise accommodations to have access to a recycling facility or shared facility by December 2009.</p>	<p>100% of all residents within the Borough to have access to recycling.</p>

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 6</p> <p>Review the DUE website to ensure it is accessible for people with a disability.</p> <p>Lead Officer – Sandra Taylor and Clare Marshall</p>	<p>Seek the views and opinions of the DUE Disability Consultation Group on the current website and get input on what would make it more accessible.</p> <p>Investigate possible ways to amend or adapt the website in consultation with Marketing and Communications and Corporate ICT.</p> <p>Produce proposals for the updated website and a plan for implementing these changes.</p> <p>Implement the proposed changes to the DUE website.</p>	<p>April 2009</p> <p>September 2009</p> <p>December 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>DUE website reviewed and updated as appropriate.</p>

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 7</p> <p>To assess and improve the data available on users of the Trading Standards service, in order to identify any particular groups that do not use the service and the reasons why this is the case.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lead Officer – Mike Chambers</p>	<p>To incorporate wider equality monitoring questions into the Trading Standards Customer Satisfaction Survey.</p> <p>To approach service delivery partners such as Consumer Direct and Dudley Council Plus to ascertain further ways to obtain data regarding users of the Trading Standards service.</p> <p>Engage with groups that do not use the Service to establish if there are reasons for this non usage and identify what particular requirements these groups have.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">June 2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;">September 2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 2010</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">To obtain more comprehensive data of users of the service</p> <p>To introduce systems to monitor current and future impact on service users and to identify any possible barriers to accessing the Trading Standards service.</p> <p>To identify specific groups that are non users or low users of the service to target education and awareness the services offered by Trading Standards.</p>

Directorate of the Urban Environment – Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2009/2010

Objective (and Lead Officer)	Detailed Action/ Target	Target Date/ Milestones	Planned Outcome/Performance Indicator
<p style="text-align: center;">Priority 8</p> <p>Establish an agreed method for carrying out Muslim burials in accordance with religious requirements.</p> <p>Lead Officer – Stuart Connelly</p>	<p>Carry out further consultation with the Muslim community to ascertain their requirements in relation to methods of burial.</p> <p>Research how other local authorities meet the burial needs of the Muslim community.</p> <p>Review current Muslim burial arrangements.</p>	<p>June 2009</p> <p>September 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	<p>A method for carrying out Muslim burials to be agreed and established.</p> <p>Establish the feasibility of operating a 7 day burial service.</p>