

THE EXECUTIVE

28 NOVEMBER 2006

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Title: Disability Equality Scheme	For Decision
<p>Summary: This report concerns the Disability Equality Scheme (DES), required as a result of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its 2005 amendment. The report explains what the DES requirements are and what the Council intends to do in order to meet the duty set out in Disability Discrimination Act.</p> <p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial: There are budgetary implications arising from the cost of reasonable adjustments for access to work and access to buildings and these will need to be contained within existing Departmental Capital and Revenue budgets. In 2002 the Executive agreed to ring-fence £50,000 per annum for reasonable adjustments and positive action initiatives in line with the requirements of the “Two Tick Employer” Accreditation, as well as to promote the Council as a disability employer. £1m has been set aside to cover improvements to access to buildings as part of a three year programme: 2006/7 is the second year of this programme.</p> <p>Legal: In April 2005, Parliament passed an extension to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. This placed a new duty for all Public Authorities to adopt a Disability Equality Scheme. This report outlines the proposed way in which the Council will meet this duty.</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <p>The Council is required to develop and produce a DES scheme, including user consultation and engagement, by 4th December 2006. Non compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and its amendment of 2005 could lead to legal enforcement. Agreement of this report will ensure that this risk is closed out.</p> <p>Social Inclusion and Diversity:</p> <p>As this report does not concern a new or revised policy there are no specific adverse impacts insofar as this report is concerned. Adoption of the scheme will lead to the delivery of actions designed to increase inclusion for local disabled people.</p> <p>Crime and Disorder:</p> <p>Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any proposals. There are no specific implications insofar as this report is concerned.</p>	
<p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>The Executive is asked to agree:</p>	

- (i). The publication and borough-wide distribution of the Disability Equality Scheme and action plan, as attached at Appendix One.
- (ii). That the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme be monitored by the Safer Stronger Communities Board within the Local Area Agreement framework.

Reason(s)

By adopting the DES, the Council will meet its legal requirements, signal its commitment to the principle of disability equality and put in place plans to greatly improve access to goods and services for disabled people, as well as supporting the inclusion of disabled people into mainstream community life.

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1. Introduction and Background

The Disability Equality Duty is a new way for public authorities to address disability discrimination. This new duty means that any public body must actively identify ways of ensuring that disabled people are treated equally. Specifically, the Council must produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) by 4th December 2006.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 On the International Day of Disabled People 2005 (December 3rd) Barking and Dagenham Council formally adopted the social model of disability. This was the first step in providing equality to disabled people.
- 2.2 The Council has now drafted a Disability Equality Scheme, informed by consultation with local disabled people, designed to deliver a programme of activities to achieve equality of opportunity for disabled people in the borough.

3. The Disability Equality Scheme

- 3.1 A user involvement programme has identified the following issues and concerns in relation to disability equality in Barking and Dagenham:
 - A lack of understanding of the issues affecting the lives of disabled people
 - A need to look at generic issues of equality as well as disability
 - Staff make assumptions about disabled people based on looks or perceptions
 - The need to improve physical access
 - Lack of understanding of issues faced by the Deaf Community
 - Access to information on existing services
 - Accessible information in preferred formats
 - The need to capture 'disability data' via Customer First
 - The need to know who our disabled customers are
 - Lack of knowledge about the plans for regeneration
 - The need to be involved in changes to the borough

- A lack of safety in the community both day and night

3.2 The Disability Equality Scheme is designed to address the above concerns, through a detailed action plan which is appended to the Scheme. The action plan addresses the following key areas:

- Leadership and commitment
 - corporate working
 - partnership working
- Community engagement and scrutiny: community involvement
- Service delivery & customer care: usage
- Working for the Council
- Community cohesion: building cohesion
- Regeneration
- Community and personal safety

3.3 The first year of work covered by the action plan will focus on collecting baseline data against identified actions and services, in light of equalities impact assessments. Stretching targets for future years will also be identified.

3.4 It is proposed that the implementation of the Scheme be monitored by the Safer Stronger Communities Board within the Local Area Agreement framework. Detailed monitoring and work will be conducted through departmental equality groups and the corporate Equality and Diversity board.

3.5 The proposed Disability Equality Scheme appears at Appendix One.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 Each Council department will be responsible for implementing the DES, by assessing needs and making reasonable adjustments. It is expected that this will be achieved within existing capital and revenue budgets.

5. Consultees

5.1 All departments in LBBD and local organisations of disabled people.

5.2 The list of those engaged by CIIL in the user involvement process is as follows:

- Barking and Dagenham CIIL Membership 752 disabled people with different impairments through hooking up project
- Tuesday Group at Caress – Disabled People with HIV
- Advisory Partners at Mencap
- Parenting Group at Mencap
- Crossroads Children Services – Disabled Children and young people
- Chequers Older Women's Group
- Wednesday Group LGBT Forum
- Gateway Club
- Harp House
- Somalian Womens Group
- All Together Better Project – disabled Children and young people
- Two large scale public events – 3rd July and 3rd October both attended by the Mayor Cllr Dee Hunt

- Individual disabled people who requested to be contacted
- Directors of CIIL who define themselves as disabled people

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

The Social Model of Disability (22nd November 2005)