



## SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

### 20 APRIL 2006

Joint Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community  
and Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services

## BVPI 156

### RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the BVPI 156 returns and actions taken to deliver improved accessibility to Council buildings open to the public.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 156 measures the percentage of authority buildings open to the public, which are accessible to disabled people.
- 2.2 The Council, including Derby Homes local housing offices but excluding schools, currently have 64 buildings, which are open to the public. 29 of these buildings meet the Audit Commission criteria for accessibility and suitability for disabled people measured against the Building Regulations, Part M 1991. The percentage and comparator returns are:

Derby City Council	45%
Unitary authority top quartile	52%
Unitary authority median	30%

- 2.3 It can be seen that the Council returns exceed by some way the median for similar authorities.
- 2.4 The Council has spent over £1 million on reasonable adjustments to its buildings over the last five years funded through the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Access Improvement Programme. The Council's, Disabled People's Advisory Committee (DPAC) have been consulted on the adjustment priorities. Careful consideration has been given to ensuring that priorities deliver value for money, and maximise the benefit and independent use of our buildings by disabled people.

The priorities being:

- Sports centres
- Libraries
- Arts and entertainment venues
- Community centres
- Administration centres.

- 2.5 The returns to BVPI 156 are clearly important in giving an overview of building accessibility, but they are not the whole picture. Many of the buildings that have benefited from adjustments are usable and independently accessible to disabled people but do not meet fully the Audit Commission criteria for accessibility. They fail perhaps on some minor features and therefore cannot be included in the percentage returns. The true measure of accessibility is feedback from our disabled customers, which has been and continues to be generally positive.
- 2.6 The Council must however not be complacent. There are still many adjustments that need to be implemented, and Council have approved a further £100K to implement adjustments this financial year. The continuing implementation of adjustments is important in delivering our DDA responsibilities, but further adjustments are unlikely to increase the BVPI 156 returns significantly. Without significant additional investment in the DDA Access Improvement Programme, a major programme of building refurbishment or new build, high value adjustments such as improved access to the Council House first floor for powered wheelchair and scooter users are unlikely to be implemented. Failure to implement such adjustments could leave the Council open to a challenge under DDA legislation.
- 2.7 Any new build or major refurbishment work will be subject to Building Regulation scrutiny, and approval. As such accessibility for all users, compliance with DDA legislation, and Audit Commission BVPI 156 accessibility criteria will be met.
- 2.8 By continuing funding for the DDA Access Improvement Programme, the Council sends out a powerful signal to its disabled customers, and indeed other service providers that delivering improved accessibility is an important component of providing excellent customer service, and equality.
- 2.9 The BVPI 156 returns exceed those of many unitary authorities, but the true picture is one of continuing year on year improvements to the accessibility of our buildings.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Mick Watts Telephone 01332 255925 e-mail <a href="mailto:mick.watts@derby.gov.uk">mick.watts@derby.gov.uk</a>
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
---------------------

**Financial**

- 1.1 Over £1 million has been spent on reasonable adjustment to physical features in Council buildings over the last five years. A further £100K has been approved for this financial year.

**Legal**

- 2.1 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 requires service providers to implement reasonable adjustments to physical features that make access unreasonably difficult for disabled people.
- 2.2 The Act also prohibits discrimination in relation to every function of a public authority. Public authorities should also actively promote disability equality.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 None arising from this report.

**Equalities impact**

- 4.1 Implementing reasonable adjustments is an important component of attaining the Equality Standard for Local Government.
- 4.2 Adjustments also help deliver improved accessibility and choice for disabled people.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 5.1 This report has the potential to link to the following Council Corporate Objectives, Values and Priorities.

## Objectives:

- healthy, safe and independent communities.

## Values:

- be open, transparent and honest in everything we do.

## Priorities:

- improve customer services, in the city centre and locally.