



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

## MINORITY COMMUNITIES DIVERSITY FORUM 29 MARCH 2007

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Social Services

### Equality Standard for Local Government progress report

#### RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the report
- 1.2 To nominate six members from each of the Gender, Minority Communities and Disabled People's Diversity Forums to attend one of two external reference/challenge group meetings with the Equality Standard auditors in September 2007. The Disabled People's Diversity Forum Project Group had already nominated some members.
- 1.3 To let us know if any member has comments to make on completed equality impact assessments and if they would like to be involved in doing an equality impact assessment.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 In 2003, the Council and the previous Equality Advisory Committees, agreed to us working through the five levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The five levels are:

- Level 1 – Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy
- Level 2 – Assessing and consulting
- Level 3 – setting equality objectives and targets
- Level 4 – information systems and checking we are meeting targets
- Level 5 – achieving and reviewing what we said we would do.

We have already self-assessed that we have reached Level 2 and have been collecting evidence and working towards Level 3 over the last year. To officially achieve Level 3 we have to be externally audited. We have already supplied the auditors with our documentary evidence and they will be coming in to meet employees and external reference challenge groups in September 2007.

2.2 We had a preliminary meeting with one of the auditors who gave us some feedback of our progress and also identified for us what we needed to work harder on to make sure we achieve Level 3 by September 2007.

2.3 The auditor commented that our strengths are:

- our community and consultation work
- our Equality and Diversity Plan
- our equality impact assessment guidance
- that we are doing a lot of good work in equality and diversity, much more than some councils who are claiming to be at Level 3.

The auditor also felt though, that we needed to make sure we:

- do more equality impact assessments – we only have 15 on the website and yet in 2005/2006 we agreed to do 37, in 2006/2007 we agreed to do 31 and for 2007/2008 we agreed to do 27. This is in addition to the ones with a three-year deadline, which amount to 22
- create robust equality objectives from the equality impact assessments we do, so that they do make a difference to the way we do things, which ultimately makes a difference to our service users
- consult our Diversity Forums on completed equality impact assessments
- include equality objectives from the impact assessments in business plans.
- have an effective Corporate Equality and Diversity Task Group that drives the Standard forward throughout the Council
- help Children and Young People's Department start to do their equality impact assessments and include robust equality objectives from these in their business plan.

2.4 Chief Officers have agreed to treat achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard as a top priority for the Council and also the importance of producing robust equality objectives, for including in business plans.

2.5 The auditors will be coming to the Council House on 11 and 12 September 2007 to interview employees and they would also like to have two external reference/challenge groups to meet with. So, we need five representatives from each of the Minority Communities and Gender Diversity Forums. The Disabled People's Diversity Forum Project Group has already nominated their representatives.

2.6 We have been collecting completed equality impact assessments and actions from 2005/2006 of our Equality and Diversity Plan and are currently producing a review report. You can see the completed equality impact assessments on the Council's website at [www.derby.gov.uk](http://www.derby.gov.uk) under community and living and then into equality and diversity. Please let us know if you have any comments about a particular equality impact assessment or would like to be involved in a group of employees doing one

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<b>Background papers:</b>	Evidence folders on the Equality Standard for Local Government
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications

**Appendix 1**

## IMPLICATIONS

## **Financial**

- 1.1 The external audit fees are being met from existing budgets

## **Legal**

- 2.1 The Equality Standard for Local Government is not in itself a legal requirement, but it is a framework to make sure we stay within the law on all equality legislation. There are legal requirements under race and disability legislation, and from April 2007, gender, to doing equality impact assessments.

## **Personnel**

- 3.1 The Equality Standard Project Manager co-ordinates and advises departments on the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Equality and Diversity Task Group scrutinises the work on the Equality and Diversity Plan and makes sure departments are working through the agreed actions.

## **Equalities impact**

- 4.1 Equality impact assessments are valuable tools to demonstrate what works well or not so well on equality in the way we deliver our services and employ people. From these, we can produce equality objectives for including in our business planning process to further promote equality and diversity.

## **Corporate priorities**

- 5.1 Equality and Diversity cuts across all Council activities and priorities...
  - Improve the quality of life in derby's neighbourhoods
  - Encourage lifelong learning and achievement
  - Build health and independent communities
  - Deliver excellent services, performance and value for money.