

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Report by the Chief Executive**

**Social Justice Committee: 13 June 2007**

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**Subject: Progress Report on the Disability Equality Scheme**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The report provides information on the progress of actions under the Disability Equality Scheme and makes a recommendation that further reports should address progress on all three equality duties; race, disability and gender.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires local authorities to produce Disability Equality Schemes, to report progress annually and to review the scheme after three years. Education authorities have to publish their own scheme though this can be included as a section of the main Council scheme.
- 2.2** In November 2006, the Social Justice Committee agreed the current Disability Equality Scheme, including the Education scheme, and the 43 actions which they contain. This report shows the progress of these actions up to May 2007.
- 2.3** The introduction of the three equality duties in respect to race, disability and gender has created a requirement for reports at different times of the year. The Race and Disability Schemes should be reported in November, while the Gender scheme will have a June report date. This report recommends a consolidation of reporting arrangements.

### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** In the six months since agreement of the Disability Equality Scheme, progress has been made on 39 of the 43 actions, including the following key areas.

#### Training

- 3.2** A member of staff from Community Learning and Development is being seconded to develop and deliver equalities training, including disability equality, to all Council staff.

#### Employment

- 3.3** The Council's approach to employment development under the scheme is carried forward through its role in the Community Planning Partnership. The Partnership's 'Workforce Plus' action plan features initiatives which address the employment support needs of people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities.

### Personnel Policy

- 3.4 Personnel Services has initiated reviews of a range of policies including Recruitment and Selection, Maximising Attendance, Dignity at Work and Discipline and Grievance. Each of these will address equality issues and will be linked to a revised policy on equality in employment.

### Access Improvement

- 3.5 In 2006/2007, the Council's target for the statutory performance indicator for disabled access was exceeded by nearly 3%, and the Access Improvement budget for 2007/2008 has been doubled to £200,000. The access improvement programme for 2007/2008 is the subject of a separate report to Committee.

### DisabledGo

- 3.6 The Council, in partnership with the West Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership, has agreed to work with *DisabledGo* to develop a website which will give disabled people clear information on the accessibility of hundreds of public and commercial buildings in the area. Two of the strengths of the approach are the involvement of the local disabled community and the opportunity it provides to promote disability issues within the commercial sector.

### An Advocate for Parents

- 3.7 An advocate has been appointed to provide an independent advocacy service for parents with additional support needs in discussions with education, social work and health

### Further Reports

- 3.8 The Race and Disability schemes should be reported in November of each year, while reporting on the gender scheme will be required in June of each year. An adjustment to the reporting on the Gender scheme would therefore allow an annual 'equalities' report covering all three areas. This would be an efficient and effective approach to reporting, particularly of actions which address all three equality strands, and could be extended to include the other equality strands of age, sexual orientation and belief and religion.

## **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1 This report has no personnel implications.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 This report has no financial implications.

## **6. Risk Analysis**

**6.1** No risk analysis was required by the proposals in this report.

## **7. Conclusions**

**7.1** The report has provided an account of progress on the Council's Disability Equality Scheme and has identified the value of consolidating reporting arrangements for the three equality schemes.

## **8. Recommendations**

**8.1** The Committee is invited to approve the actions taken under the Disability Equality Scheme and agree that further reporting should be part of a wider 'equalities' report. The first 'equalities' report to Committee would be in November 2007.

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**David McMillan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Date: 30 May 2007**

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**Appendix:** Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009: Action Plan  
Progress Report at May 2007

**Background Papers:** West Dunbartonshire Council Disability Equality Scheme,  
2006-9  
  
West Dunbartonshire Council Race Equality Scheme,  
2005-8

**Wards Affected:** All Council wards affected