

ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER LTD

Company limited by guarantee registered in England
Company Number 05564649

Joint Area Board Meeting

REPORT

Date : 12th May 2008

Item : 6

Subject : **Equality Standard for Local Government**

Presented by : **Judith Jones**
Director of Customer Services

Prepared by : **Mahroof Hussain, Diversity Manager**

Purpose : **The Equality Standard for Local Government Progress Report**

Recommendation :

Joint Area Board notes the progress made on Equality Standard for Local Government.

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

**To Joint Area Board of
ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER**

**Agenda Item No. 6
Date: 12th-May-2008**

1. Report Title

1.1 The Equality Standard for Local Government Progress Report

2. Purpose

2.1 To update Joint Area Board on progress of the Equality Standard for Local Government

3. Recommendation

3.1 Joint Area Board notes the progress made on the Equality Standard for Local Government.

4. Background

4.1 Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality Standard recognises the importance of fair and equal treatment in local government services and employment and has been developed as a tool to enable authorities to mainstream gender, race and disability into council policy and practice at all levels.

The Equality Standard is a means to combat the institutional processes that lead to discrimination and which form part of the culture and administration and governance in Britain.

Current assumptions and practices can set up barriers that prevent access and discriminate against people through race, gender and disability. Working with the Standard will allow local authorities to mainstream equality, thereby ensuring that discriminatory barriers which prevent equal access to services and employment are identified and removed.

The Standard has been written to provide a common approach for dealing with equality for race, gender and disability. This common approach is important because it means the same framework can be used for addressing all disadvantaged groups. However, this should not lead to the view that race, gender and disability can be dealt with as a single issue – the barriers will vary and each strand requires separate treatment.

The Equality Standard for Local Government is a comprehensive and systematic performance management framework that mainstreams equalities in all aspects of policy making, service delivery and employment. The standard provides a universal approach for dealing with race, gender and disability equality and can be extended into other equality areas. Its implementation will ensure the cross-cutting issue of equality and diversity is built into all aspects of the ALMO's work.

The Standard sets out a level by level checklist of assessment criteria. Progress through the levels is monitored and audited through a process of self-assessment before achievement of each level can be claimed.

The levels are:

Level 1 - Commitment

Level 2 - Assessment and consultation

Level 3 - Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 - Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level 5 - Achieving and reviewing outcomes

Extending equalities – beyond gender, disability and race

The Standard provides a framework that can be easily extended to anti-discrimination policies for age, sexuality, class and religious beliefs. Local authorities can readily adapt the principles to these other categories of equality by extending their equality objectives, targets and monitoring systems. These additional equality objectives, which should be consistent with published guidelines on age and sexuality, would be driven through the self-assessment procedure and would effectively become part of the Best Value process.

4.2 Achievement of Equality Standard Level 1

- 4.2.1 In September 2006 Executive Management Team noted that St Leger Homes has achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

4.3 Achievement of Equality Standard Level 2

- 4.3.1 In April 2007 Executive Management Team noted that St Leger Homes has achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

4.4 Equality Standard Level 3

- 4.4.1 Doncaster Borough Council has continued to pursue their Equality Standard and is currently self-declared at level 2. On the 13th March 2007 they submitted to their Corporate Management Team a progress report outlining their achievements and strategy for reaching level 3.

- 4.4.2 In order to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard an organisation must be externally accredited by an approved organisation.

St Leger Homes cannot achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard due to the fact that the statutory requirement for achieving the Equality standard lays with the public host body in this case the council and not any subsidiary such as an Arms length Management Organisation. Therefore only the council can be externally accredited at Level 3.

If the Council achieved Level 3 after being externally accredited then St Leger Homes as a Key stakeholder involved in helping the council deliver the standard would automatically adopt this level.

- 4.4.3 In April 2007 Executive Management Team agreed to work in partnership with Doncaster Borough Council in delivering a consistent Equality Standard across the organisations and to help them achieve Level 3 externally accredited, therefore we do not monitor the Equality Standard independently, but to give a progress report on the standard.

- 4.4.4 The original External accreditation date had been set for 9th and 10th April 2008, but this date was postponed. The new date for Accreditation is 18th and 19th June 2008 and will be carried out by Edge Hill University.

Agenda for the two-day external accreditation will be issued shortly by Edge Hill University to Doncaster Council.

5. Achievement of Equality Standard Level 3

- 5.1 The next stage is to build on the positive progress by achieving Level 2 and making progress to Level 3. The actions required to achieve this are set out in the attached work programme at Appendix 1

6 Procurement

- 6.1 There are no specific procurement issues.

7. Consultation

- 7.2 Working in partnership with Doncaster Council to deliver Level 3.

Throughout the Equality Standard process we have been and continue to carry out consultation with community groups, Tenants & Residents Associations and the Standing Joint Committee and Senior Managers to embed the Equality standard.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 We have a duty to promote equality of opportunity and combat discrimination in the light of the specific duties placed upon it under the Sex Discrimination Act, The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment Act 2000), the Disability Discrimination Act and European Directives

9. Financial Implications / Risk / Diversity

9.1 Financial

- 9.1.1 There are no financial implications at this stage, however it should be noted that the Equality Standard requires the "earmarking of specific resources for improving equality practice". Thus there is a requirement to produce an audit trail of resource allocation.

9.2 Value for Money

- 9.2.1 Implementation of The Equality Standard will have a significant impact on our customers and staff. It will allow SLHD to give good customer service and demonstrate value for money in its service delivery. It will also demonstrate proactively that SLHD is a good employer.

The implementation of these action plans will bring about service improvement and increase outputs and productivity. This would be a 'non cashable saving' within VFM implications.

9.3 Risk

- 9.3.1 Demonstrable achievement towards the Equality Standard is important (although not a statutory duty) to audit/ frameworks and it important that the current momentum is maintained so that no Service Area falls behind and thus reducing the ALMO's overall aggregate score.

Successful implementation of the standard will depend on a partnership between the council and the community.

9.4 Diversity

- 9.4.1 Compliance with the Equality Standard for Local Government will ensure we are meeting our customer's diverse needs and promoting diversity.

This performance led approach to mainstreaming equality will contribute to achieving sustainable social, economic and environmental improvements for Doncaster and demonstrate in action St Leger Homes core values of putting people first, ensuring fairness and equity in service delivery and becoming a better employer.

10. Report Author

10.1 Mahroof Hussain
Diversity Manager
Ext: (8) 62622
mahroof.hussain@stlegerhomes.co.uk

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Equality Standard for Local Government Guidance 1: Audit and Self-Assessment
- 11.2 Executive Management Report September 2006 – The Equality Standard for Local Government , adoption of Equality Standard and achievement of Level 1.
- 11.3 Executive Management Report 9th April 2007 – The Equality Standard for Local Government – Level 2
- 11.4 Doncaster Council Corporate Management Team 13th March 2007 – Equalities Progress Report

12 Appendix 1

- 12.1 Equality Standard for Local Government – Work Programme to achieve Level 3

12 Appendix 1

Equality Standard for Local Government – Work Programme to achieve Level 3

	Action Required	Progress	Lead	Target date	Complete
1	Briefing session for senior managers on Equality Standard for Local Government	Briefing Notes sent to all Assistant Directors and Deputies.	Diversity Team, Training Team	April 2 nd & 3 rd 2008	Y
2	Introduce Equality Monitoring Policy and Guidance to ensure systems and processes are in place to capture equality data on employment, service user take up/non take up, customer satisfaction and complaints and vulnerable clients, etc across all Service Areas.	Draft guidance being developed	Diversity Team	13 th June 2008	
3	Develop Corporate Evidence File for Level 3	Evidence is being collated and File is being developed	Diversity Team	13 th June 2008	
4	Briefing Sessions for stakeholders involved in the two day external accreditation on the 18 th and 19 th June 2008 by Edge Hill University		Policy & Change Team (DMBC)	6 th June 2008	
5	Guidance/agenda to Stakeholders for the two day external accreditation on the 18 th and 19 th June 2008 by Edge Hill University		Policy & Change Team (DMBC)	18 th April 2008	

6	Continue work to improve BVPI performance on workforce representation by increasing the representation of BME workers and women at senior levels within SLHD and disabled workers and BME workers at all levels	<p>Awarded Disability Two Ticks Symbol by Job centre Plus.</p> <p>Working with Berneslai Homes and Rotherham 2010 to investigate the PATH Yorkshire. There is European Social Fund money available to get BME representation in the workforce.</p>	Human Resources / Diversity Team	18 th June 2008	
7	Ensure Managers are familiar with the Equality Impact Assessments carried out in their service area.		Diversity Team/ Service Area Managers	16 th June 2008	
8	Continue the Implementation of the Race Equality Scheme and Race Equality Action Plan.	RES actions are being implemented. The RES Action plan does not have to be complete for the external accreditation.	Diversity Team all Service Areas	3-year strategy to 2008	