

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 April 2006**

### **Promoting Disability Equality**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005, this committee agreed terms of reference for a review of promoting disability equality. The review group has now met four times. This information paper summarises progress to date.

#### **2. Update on work programme**

- 2.1 At the first meeting of the group, the following work programme was agreed as the basis of the review. I have updated the programme with the latest progress.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>who</b>
An audit of how well the council is complying with existing disability legislation	Revised programme of access audits completed on 13 of the council's public buildings. The findings of these will then be built into planned maintenance programme.  The review will also look at other communication issues such as language, signage and the web-site	Iain Houston
A consideration of the new disability legislation	Briefing note on the new requirements produced (see appendix A)	Richard Gibson
An assessment of demographic information	Briefing note on demographic produced (see appendix B)	Richard Gibson
Looking at the staffing structure of the council	Review of recruitment processes being undertaken by Human Resources	Human Resources

Theme	Progress	who
Carrying out an impact assessment of key service areas	<p>To be carried out in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waste and recycling collection</li> <li>• Housing – provision, tenancies, management</li> <li>• Urban design</li> <li>• Concessionary transport and community transport</li> <li>• Access to council buildings</li> <li>• Reception services and advice provision</li> <li>• Parking provision, management and enforcement</li> <li>• Leisure provision, sport and play</li> <li>• Development control and building control</li> </ul> <p>Impact assessment process to be piloted on housing management</p>	all
Assessing and improving our consultation with disabled people	Longlist of 90 groups identified. These have been shortlisted down to 10 organisations that members of the group will meet to discuss disability issues	Geoff Sloman / Richard Gibson

### 3. Key developments

- 3.1** The new disability legislation (set out in Appendix A), places a statutory duty on the council to prepare a three year disability equality scheme by December 2006. The Promoting Disability Equality Review will be used as a means of preparing the scheme which has also been included in the council's business planning programme for 2006/07.
- 3.2** The assessment of the prevalence of disability in Cheltenham, attached as appendix B, shows that around 28,000 people in Cheltenham have mild, significant or severe disability need. Mental illness accounts for the highest proportion of disabilities with 12.15% (13,339) people affected in 2004. In terms of benefit claimants, in 2004, 2.9% of the population (3,205) claimed disability living allowance which increased by 7.5% from the previous year and 2.8% of the population (3,045) claimed Incapacity Benefit which increased by 9.4% from the previous year.
- 3.3** The indicators on mental health, health status and limiting long term illness, which are based on the 2001 census, all point to a greater prevalence of disability in our regeneration areas, with Oakley and Hesters Way areas in particular having pronounced numbers of people with poor health and numbers claiming disability benefits. With 60% of disabled people of working age being economically inactive, there is a real link between disability and low incomes which needs to be broken by a concerted effort by all employers to improve recruitment processes and make changes to employment conditions to encourage more disabled employees.

- 3.3 The impact assessment process of the nine service areas will begin on 3<sup>rd</sup> April with a review of our housing management service. A verbal update report will be given at the meeting on the outcomes of this process. The impact assessment process will then be rolled out to tackle the other eight areas over the course of the year.
- 3.4 In terms of consulting with disabled people, the review group has agreed to contact 10 organisations who represent a broad spectrum of disability issues. A timetable for meeting with these groups will be set at the next meeting of the review group.
- 3.5 The review group continues to work closely with Cheltenham Disability Forum, in particular in supporting the forum to plan for an awareness raising event to be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May. This will be an important event which will raise the profile of forum through publicising what has been achieved so far and what the forum's plans are for the future. The event will also raise awareness of disability issues in general and promote the work of other disability organisations

#### 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The review group will meet again on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April and comments from this meeting will be taken on board.

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<b>Background Papers</b>	Project Brief – Promoting Disability Equality in Cheltenham, agreed by Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 <sup>th</sup> June 2005
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<b>Scrutiny Function</b>	Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee