

**COMMITTEE:**            **DISABILITY ADVISORY AND ACCESS FORUM**

**DATE:**                **3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

**SUBJECT:**            **RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE  
DISABILITY RIGHTS COMMISSION  
GUIDANCE ON HOUSING UPDATE**

**REPORT BY:**        **SANDRA LEGATE HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY LIVING DEPARTMENT**

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**IMPLICATIONS:**

**LEGAL**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**EQUALITIES**

✓

**ENVIRONMENT**

**FINANCIAL**

**CONSULTATIONS**

**STAFFING**

**OTHER**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All**

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**PURPOSE**

1. To update the Disability Advisory and Access Forum (DAAF) on progress in relation to meeting the Housing and Disability Equality Duty and completing the tasks within the Corporate Equality Scheme action plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. **The Disability Advisory and Access Forum Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and comment as appropriate.**

## **BACKGROUND**

3. The Borough Council's Corporate Equality Scheme was published in December 2006. Local Authorities received guidance on Social Care, Housing and Disability from the Disability Rights Commission (now known as the Equalities and Human Rights Commission) providing advice on the actions to be followed to ensure compliance with the duty. This guidance has been used to structure the Equality Scheme action plan.

## **REPORT**

4. Set out below is a commentary of actions taken within the Equality Scheme that have and will impact on people with disabilities.
  - **Consulting with Services Users** - Views of a group of service users on housing services within Luton, in the context of the Equality Scheme, have been sought at a stakeholder event and the outcomes of that event are set out in the Appendix to this report. [ The group was also consulted on the development of the Borough wide Housing Strategy, which was approved by the Council in November 2007.

- The group is due to meet again on 2<sup>nd</sup> December to review the areas of concern raised at the initial meeting and also be part of the wider stakeholder group that is refreshing the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
- The Landlord Services Division of the Housing and Community Living Department, that is responsible for managing the Council housing stock, have established a `Sounding Board` of, so far, 790 tenants whose views are regularly sought, 269 (35%) have self classified as having a disability. This is in addition to consulting the Tenants and Representation Panels and the Tenants Consultative Committee which meet regularly to discuss areas of concern, policy review, new policies and the Change agenda being rolled out within Landlord Services.
- The Housing (Strategy and Private Sector) Division are also in the process of developing and expanding the Sounding Board to include a wider group of services users other than just tenants, i.e. homeless households, people who are waiting for an adaptation, people seeking social housing, people living in the private rented sector, and which will also include people with disabilities. Although still at an early stage of development, the aim mirrors the tenants' sounding board, to gain views relating to Private Sector Housing and any new policies, strategies or service provision.
- The overarching aim for the sounding board is to establish on going conversations and consultations with a wide range of users to ensure that services

are meeting the needs and also identifying gaps or concerns for service users.

- All new policies or strategies will have equality impact assessments undertaken as per legislation.
- **Housing Needs** - The Private Sector and Strategy Department n have commissioned consultants to undertake a review of accommodation requirements of Special Needs Housing, this includes:
  - ✓ Older Person
  - ✓ People with Learning Disabilities
  - ✓ People with Physical Disabilities
  - ✓ People with Sensory Impairment
  - ✓ People who have Mental Health issues

Key elements of the work will include;

- ✓ An assessment of the current information on needs across the service user groups and where necessary additional population profiling
- ✓ An analysis of service user needs in Luton including both those that are being met currently and unmet need including those who are currently placed out of area
- ✓ A robust `Gap` analysis based on the above data that will allow a range of Commissioners to make strategic commissioning decisions and also inform providers about future service delivery plans
  - Recommendations will cover both housing and support options including housing options that are supported by care rather than Supporting People funding.

- ✓ The consultants research will include interviews with stakeholders about their views on needs
  - ✓ Map current use and supply of services
  - ✓ Consult with service users
5. The result of this work will be in the production of a needs analysis report.

### **PROPOSAL/OPTION**

6. The DAAF to note the contents of this report and comment as appropriate.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7. The Disability Equality Duty also provided guidance on differing areas that the duty may cover. One of those areas was housing. This covers many differing groups including disability, but could also include areas of ethnicity and gender. An EIA is not required. Sandra Legate Equalities Manager Housing and Community Living 18<sup>th</sup> November 2008

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

Borough Council's Corporate Equality Scheme December 2006