

REPORT TO: Corporate Services
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 8th September 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Disabled Access to Public Buildings

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report, following a request at the previous meeting, is to bring members up to date with the current position with regards disabled access and DDA compliance with regards to public buildings.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 BVPI 156 'Buildings accessible to people with a disability' was introduced in 2000/01 in order to monitor the improvement of access to local authority buildings for disabled people. The indicator was formally withdrawn following the 2007/08 submission however Property Services have a local indicator PYSLI 12 which replaced it, together with a service objective (PS 07) which measures DDA compliance with regards to public buildings.
- 3.2 To summarise the definition of 'local authority buildings open to the public' in essence this means *"buildings or parts of buildings from which the authority provides a service to members of the public where the service cannot be provided by alternative means and where the inability to access the service in person would be discriminatory...."*
- 3.3 The percentage of our public buildings which now comply with BVPI 156 and the subsequent local indicator PYSLI 12 has risen from 26% in 2003/04 to 72% in 2008/09, the target for 2009/10, which we are confident will be achieved is 75%.
- 3.4 The service objective PS 07 which monitors DDA compliance with regards to public buildings is now at the stage where all priority 1 works have been completed where necessary together with over 60% of necessary priority 2 works. The target for March 2010 is that 90% of

priority 2 works will be completed, following which a review of the remaining works will be undertaken as many of the priority 3 items have already been carried out in conjunction with other works.

- 3.5 The funding that has been made available over the past few years in order to address disabled access and DDA issues in public buildings has had a massive impact on improving the compliance. This is evidenced by the significant increase in the percentage of buildings which now comply with the indicators, Improving the percentage will become increasing difficult however due to the nature of some of the buildings where compliance is extremely difficult to achieve, as such it is important to continue with the funding stream.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The DDA places a statutory duty on the authority as such it is important that we continue to provide funding in this area to ensure we improve our compliance figures still further.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Assists in providing access to all our buildings to enable children to develop.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Buildings can be fully utilised for employment.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A.

5.4 A Safer Halton

N/A.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Potentially there could be financial implications to the authority if a claim is submitted under the Disability Discrimination Act.

- 6.2 If the authority were to receive a claim under the act it may result in negative and adverse publicity for the Council. However, the key drive is, of course, to provide facilities for use by everyone.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The key risk associated with the failure to continue funding these works is that the Authority may leave itself open to claims under the Disability Discrimination Act. As the percentage of buildings complying with the act increases however the likelihood of this occurring decreases.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 It is important to ensure our buildings comply with the legislation as far as possible in order not to discriminate against those with disabilities

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Disability Discrimination Act	Property Services, Municipal Buildings	John Hughes Head of Operations