
REPORT TO:	Community Scrutiny Committee	AGENDA ITEM:	11
DATE OF MEETING:	17 February 2003	CATEGORY:	DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Chief Executive	OPEN	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	David Soanes ext 5714	DOC:	
SUBJECT:	Disability Discrimination Act	REF:	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE:	FM01

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That Members note the progress made on implementation of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To advise Members of the progress made on implementation of the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Members were advised at the meeting on 2 December 2002 of the history of the Council's work to audit its property, and of the proposals to ensure that all relevant properties met the requirements of the DDA by October 2004.

3.2 A revenue bid of £40,000 was submitted to pay for the cost of employing consultants to undertake audits of all relevant properties. However, only £20,000 was approved, following the suggestion that existing staff might be able to assist with these audits. Unfortunately the Council does not currently have staff with the training or resources to assist with this work, and therefore the work will need to be undertaken by consultants.

3.3 Rather than try and get the agreed amount increased, it has been decided to work with the £20,000 allocated and see how many properties can be audited. There may need to be an additional bid to cover any shortfall.

3.4 Four access consultants have been approached to quote for undertaking the initial audits.

3.5 In addition, a letter has been sent to all Parish Councils and Commercial tenants advising them of their responsibility as service providers to make necessary improvements to their premises.

- 3.6 A Disability Access Steering Group has now been established to oversee the implementation of work to the Council's properties. This involves officers from a number of departments together with Councillor Harrington.
- 3.7 Although the work to date has concentrated on physical adaptations to buildings, the Council also needs to ensure that it is complying with all aspects of the DDA in the provision of services.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Once the audits have been completed and any necessary works costed, a capital bid will need to be submitted to finance these works.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The DDA will affect all parts of the Council, not just those responsible for property. All divisions should ensure that they are complying with the DDA in respect of their service delivery.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Despite the late start on dealing with these matters, the Council should be on course to ensuring that its buildings are suitably adapted to ensure equal access for all members of the community. However, all divisions need to consider the implications of the DDA on their service delivery.