

**REPORT TO: TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD – 31 JANUARY 2011**

**REPORT ON: MONITORING OF EQUALITY POLICIES**

**REPORT BY: ASSESSOR**

**REPORT NO: TVJB 7-2011**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this Report is to present to the Board:-

- i) the 2010 monitoring information required by current Race Equality, Gender Equality and Disability Equality legislation, and
- ii) the Assessor's annual report on progress made on the commitments contained in the Board's Disability Equality Scheme.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Board notes the contents of this Report.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty and Equality Impact Assessment. There are no major issues.

## **5 BACKGROUND**

5.1 Current equality legislation requires the Board to have in place arrangements for monitoring, by reference to ethnic origin, gender and disability, the number of staff in post and the number of applicants for employment, training and promotion.

5.2 At their meeting on 12 November 2007 the Board approved a recommendation that the Assessor combine the information referred to in 5.1 above into a single report for presentation to the Board in January each year. The results of the monitoring for calendar year 2010 are accordingly attached as Appendices 1, 2 and 3 to this report.

5.3 The Assessor is required to publish an annual report on progress towards meeting the commitments made in the Board's Disability Equality Scheme. The annual report is attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

## **6 CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Clerk and Treasurer to the Board, together with the Head of Personnel, Dundee City Council, have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

**N Clark Low FRICS  
Assessor**

**31 January 2011**







***TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD***



**DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2009-2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with current legislation, Tayside Valuation Joint Board (TVJB) introduced a Disability Equality Scheme on 4 December 2006. The scheme covered the period until December 2009. A revised scheme was prepared during 2009 and now covers the period from December 2009 to December 2012.

The Board are required to publish an annual report on progress towards meeting the commitments made in the Disability Equality Scheme. As Chief Officer of the Board, the Assessor has prepared this annual report on behalf of TVJB.

## **BACKGROUND**

TVJB was established in 1996 as part of the reorganisation of Local Government. The Board takes over from the local authorities in its area certain duties in relation to valuation for rating and council tax. The Board's area covers the three Council areas of Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross.

The Board appoints the Assessor whose statutory duty it is to compile and maintain the Council Tax Valuation List and the non-domestic Valuation Roll for the three Council areas.

The Assessor has also been appointed Electoral Registration Officer for Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils and in this respect compiles and maintains the Electoral Register for these two Council areas.

The Board is required to keep itself informed as to the manner in which the Assessor deals with operational matters and accordingly meets quarterly to receive reports from the Assessor on matters relating to the policies and procedures and operations of the organisation.

This report details the progress made during 2009-10 on the Action Plan contained within the Board's Disability Equality Scheme.

## **EMPLOYMENT MONITORING**

The Board is aware of its specific duty to monitor its employment practices by reference to disability. Arrangements are in place to monitor this information in relation to staff in post and applicants for employment and promotion. The results of the monitoring are reported formally to the Board by the Assessor in January each year. The results are also published on the Assessor's website at [www.tayside-vjb.gov.uk](http://www.tayside-vjb.gov.uk). No potential problems or difficulties have been identified to date, and the Assessor will continue to analyse the results and take any necessary action to address any issues that may arise.

## **COMPLAINTS**

The Assessor has in place a formal complaints procedure for any service user who is dissatisfied with the service they have received whilst conducting business with the Board. During 2009-10, no formal complaints have been received.

## **THE BOARD'S POLICIES**

All of the Board's existing Policies were screened for any possible impact on equality groups, with assistance from Dundee City Council's Personnel Department. These can be found on the Tayside Valuation Joint Board's website.

During 2009-10, no reports or policies presented to the Board have had any perceived impact on disability equality.

## **PUBLICITY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The Scheme has been circulated to all members, officers and employees of the Board. Copies are available from the Assessor at Whitehall House, 35 Yeaman Shore, Dundee, DD1 4BU, and can be found on the website at [www.tayside-vjb.gov.uk](http://www.tayside-vjb.gov.uk).

Translations are made available on request, as are copies in alternative formats such as Easy to Read, Large Print, Braille or audio tape.

All of the Board's policies are published on the Board's website as are the minutes of all formal Board meetings. Disability Equality Scheme Annual Reports continue to be published on the website. Publication of this information allows service users the opportunity to scrutinise agreed policies and to consider the consultations and discussions which have taken place in the lead up to the approval by the Board of reports on policies presented to it. This allows all service users to ascertain whether any disability issues arise out of agreed policies and practices.

## **TRAINING**

The Assessor is committed to ensuring that arrangements are put in place for training staff in relation to the Board's duties to promote equality. In June 2010, the Assessor's senior administrative staff attended a training course designed to enhance their knowledge of Equality Impact Assessments. These staff members now carry out such assessments on policies presented to the Board. Following the introduction of the Board's Recruitment and Selection procedures, staff involved in this process attended a training course designed to ensure that such staff were fully aware of the requirements of the procedures. This training includes coverage of disability employment legislation in relation to the recruitment and selection process. Further training will be arranged during 2011.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

During 2010 the Board were awarded the right to use the disability symbol awarded by the Jobcentre Plus. The symbol now appears on application forms and will be incorporated into other outgoing mail in due course.

A comprehensive Recruitment and Selection procedure was introduced during 2010. The procedures include detailed guidance in relation to disability employment legislation.

It should be noted that the Board continues to operate a guaranteed job interview scheme for people with a disability who meet the requirements of the person specification for the particular post applied for.

## **INDUCTION PROGRAMME**

The Assessor's induction scheme continues to include reference to Disability Equality to ensure that staff are made aware at an early date of the expected commitment to equality matters.

## **EQUIPMENT**

The Board's Divisional office in Dundee is based on the 6th floor of an office block with communal access and stairways. During this year a replacement evacuation chair was purchased to assist with exiting the building in an emergency situation. Relevant staff have been trained in the use of the new chair.

## **CHANGES TO PUBLIC AREAS**

Public Access Assessments were carried out on the Board's three office premises prior to 2006. Since then certain improvements have been made, including easy access doors, safety etching on glass doors, disabled signs on toilets and the installation of pull cord. Induction loop systems have also been installed at reception desks in each of the offices. In each of the 3 office premises visitors are asked to complete a visitors' book on arrival. A column asking for clarification of whether assistance is required to exit the building in an emergency has been added.

The Assessor monitors visits to the office premises and during 2009-10 no complaints or suggestions for improvements to allow easier access have been made.

## **CONSULTATION**

In November 2010, and in accordance with the Board's Disability and Equality Diversity Scheme, the Assessor issued a questionnaire to organisations representing people with disabilities. This was a follow-up to the questionnaire issued in the run up to the preparation of the Board's original scheme. Following comments received at that time, an information sheet outlining the Board's functions and duties was included with the latest questionnaires. Monitoring returns made will allow the Assessor to continue to involve disabled people in further developing the Scheme. Any specific actions identified as being required will be addressed at the conclusion of the consultation period.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

During 2009-10 no disability equality issues have been raised with the Board by any of their stakeholders or service users. Similarly, no employees or prospective employees have raised any issues with the Assessor.

The Assessor, on behalf of the Board, continues to monitor service provision taking account of the commitments made in the Disability Equality Scheme.

The Board continues to be committed to ensuring that it's responsibilities in relation to disability equality are taken seriously and in particular to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons.