

**REPORT**

<b>To:</b>	<b>SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	<b>Subject:</b> <b>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW</b> <b>DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT</b>
<b>From:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF HOUSING &amp; PROPERTY SERVICES</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 February 2006</b>	<b>Ref: BR/FF</b>

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of North Lanarkshire Council's obligations in terms of compliance with the Audit Scotland's Statutory Performance Indicator on disability access. The report includes information on the background to the performance indicator and supporting explanations are given for the statistics for the 2004/05 period.

**2. BACKGROUND TO SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**

2.1 The indicator reflects the extent to which the Council has been successful in meeting the requirements of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to facilitate access to their buildings for disabled people for the purpose of service delivery.

2.2 The Council is responsible for identifying any physical feature of its buildings, which make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of its services. Where such a feature is identified, then the Council is responsible for taking reasonable action to :-

- Remove the feature
- Alter it so that it no longer has an effect
- Provide reasonable means of avoiding the feature
- Provide an alternative method of making the service available.

2.3 The Council is required to assess the accessibility to services in their buildings and making appropriate adaptations or alternative service delivery arrangements. The indicator is expected to show an improving trend over time as a higher proportion of the Council's buildings are assessed and relevant adaptations are made.

2.4 Audit Scotland provided an access audit form to be used for the assessment. This form was adapted by NLC to give the departments guidance on completing the forms.

**3./**

### **3. STATISTICS FOR 2004/05/**

- 3.1 The statistics in terms of compliance with the Service Performance Indicator for disability access are as follows:-

Total Number of Buildings – 370

No. of Buildings Surveyed – 199

Percentage of Total Buildings showing compliance – 5%

Percentage of surveyed buildings showing compliance – 9%

### **4. EXPLANATION OF STATISTICS FOR 2004/05**

- 4.1 A total of 199 buildings were assessed for compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act from a total building portfolio of 370. In accordance with the guidelines from Audit Scotland, properties which are not surveyed are automatically given a failed score, irrespective of their compliance with the Act. This therefore halves the percentage of buildings which comply with the Act.
- 4.2 Our interpretation of the Service Performance Indicator was that the building would be assessed to show compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Subsequently, Audit Scotland confirmed that the service provision should also be taken into account. This therefore has led to lower results than anticipated.
- 4.3 As a result of the misinterpretation of the SPI, the buildings which were assessed were looked at with full public access throughout. As this is not the case, the surveys should generally have been limited to reception areas, and a greater number of buildings would potentially have complied.
- 4.4 Although the buildings themselves do not necessarily comply with the Act, the Council has taken actions to alter the way the service is delivered to the public. In doing this, the Council is complying with the Act without taking major, unreasonable measures to alter the building stock at considerable expense. This will be taken into account when producing the statistics for subsequent years.
- 4.5 Despite the low results from the surveys, the Council has undertaken to make physical alterations and adjustments to its buildings over the past few years. Works have included the installation of automatic doors at entrances, tactile paving, improved signage, introduction of platform lifts and introduction of hearing devices in reception areas.
- 4.6 The surveys provide the departments (excluding Education) with an indication where non-compliance could have an impact on disabled customers, service delivery and where priorities should be made to overcome these problems.

### **5. STATISTIC ASSESSMENT 2005/06**

- 5.1 An improved disability access form has been developed by the Director of Housing and Property Services for completion during 2005/06. This allows the department to produce statistics which reflect the service provided along with the accessibility of the building, whilst meeting the requirements of the Audit Scotland directive.

5.2/

5.2 The department is in the process of collection, retrieval and analysis of the information from the completed reports to allow us to produce the statistics for 2005/06.

**6. RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 The Panel is asked to note the statistics and explanations outlined in the above report.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 A comprehensive analysis containing information on individual properties by department is available within the Department of Housing and Property Services.



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