



LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
AUTHORITY MEETING
22 JANUARY 2015 AT 14:00

Agenda Item No:

6

Report No:

A/4199/15

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE AUTHORITY'S ADOPTED EQUALITY POLICY

Presented by the Head of Planning and Strategic Partnerships

SUMMARY

In 2008 the Authority adopted an Equality Policy Statement designed to underpin the delivery of services. In 2010 the Equality Act extended the groups of people identified in previous legislation who have 'protected characteristics', which are included within a public sector equalities duty. Several of these groups are not included by the Authority's adopted Policy. In October 2014 the Executive Committee (Paper E/373/14) agreed to these amendments and to refer the draft revised policy to the Authority for adoption. This report suggests amendments to the adopted policy with explicit reference to these groups. A draft copy of the adopted Policy with proposed amendments is included in Appendix A to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Members Approve: (1) the adoption of the revised policy.

BACKGROUND

- 1 In December 2008 the Authority adopted an Equalities Policy Statement (Paper A/4024/08). This is designed to support full access to the Regional Park and its facilities for all communities in London, Hertfordshire and Essex and provide a foundation for its policies to ensure there is no discrimination in how services are delivered and staff treated.
- 2 The Equality Act 2010, ('the Act') introduced a public sector equality duty (PSED) requiring public bodies to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equality of opportunity; and
 - to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Authority is included in this 'duty' by reason of section 149(2) of the Act.

- 3 The Authority decided to review its adopted Policy Statement during initial discussions on the establishment of the Lee Valley Leisure Trust. The Executive Committee agreed changes and to refer the draft policy to the Authority for adoption.

PROPOSED CHANGES

- 4 The Act identifies people with 'protected characteristics which include: gender, age, ethnic origin, transitioning between gender and those in civil partnerships.
- 5 The proposed changes to the policy make explicit reference to the PSED and those groups who are not included in the adopted policy.
- 6 Once adopted the policy will inform the work of the Lee Valley Leisure Trust.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7 There are no environmental implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9 There are no human resource implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10 The proposed changes to the adopted Equalities Policy Statement are required by the PSED included in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 11 Failure to have a policy statement which reflects the statute places the Authority at risk of failing in its public duties with a consequent risk of challenge.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 12 Equality implications are fully addressed in the body of this report.

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PREVIOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS

Authority	A/4024/08	Equality Policy	January 2008
Executive Committee	E/373/14	Proposed revisions to adopted Equality Policy	October 2014

APPENDIX ATTACHED

Appendix A Revised draft policy

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PSED Public Sector Equality Duty

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Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Equalities Policy Statement - 'Access for All'

Why do we need a policy?

The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (the Authority) is a statutory body responsible for managing and developing the 26 mile long, 4,000 hectares linear Lee Valley Regional Park – the only Regional Park serving London, Hertfordshire and Essex.

The Authority has a broad and dynamic remit with a duty to develop and provide leisure, recreation, sport, leisure and nature conservation throughout the Regional Park. Although the Park only has an area of 4,000 hectares it has a catchment of almost 10 million people. This population is broad and diverse and it is important that the Authority has a clear commitment to serving their needs in an equitable and fair way.

The Authority will through the delivery of its services and management of staff:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons do not share it.

The policy is also required to maintain our position as an employer of choice to ensure that our recruitment and human resource policies respect and value diversity.

The Authority's aims

The Authority has designed this policy to:

- support full access to the Regional Park and its facilities for all communities in London, Hertfordshire and Essex;
- provide a foundation for policies that ensure there is no discrimination against users, volunteers and our workforce on the grounds of gender, **transitioning between gender**, disability, sexual orientation, **civil partnerships**, marital status, race **ethnic origin**, religious belief, **expectant parents**, **socio-economic status** and age.

How we will deliver our commitment

Our policy, 'Access for All' recognises the fundamental role of the Regional Park and the need to encourage and promote its use by all communities. Services and facilities will be designed to meet the varied and individual needs of users. The Authority will ensure that employment practices (including recruiting, retaining, developing, appraising, promoting employees) are accessible to everyone and that we actively celebrate the wide variety of lifestyles by our users, volunteers and workforce.

The Authority is committed to providing high quality services which everyone can access. Where appropriate it will work through partner organisations to provide services which support equal opportunities by:

- building on our good practice;
- consulting with and involving all sectors of the regional community on developing and using this policy;
- providing accessible information and ways people can comment on all our services;
- delivering services which respect the needs of different regional communities;
- working to remove barriers which may deny people access to our services;
- identifying and removing barriers which may deny access to all services and facilities;
- using our powers to make sure that organisations providing services on our behalf work in line with this policy;
- delivering services which are appropriate to the needs of the regional community;
- providing an environment which gives the regional community an equal chance to learn, work and live free of discrimination.

We will put in place a package of actions to ensure that this policy is fully integrated into our work. These are aimed at preventing prejudice and discrimination by:

- developing a workforce which reflects at all levels the communities we serve;
- making sure that all employees, volunteers and Members understand and own this policy;
- making sure that all employees know about their rights of protection from discrimination, harassment or bullying;
- developing policies which allow everyone equal access to employment and related opportunities; and
- setting performance targets so that we can measure progress.

With the help of feedback from users, volunteers and employees the Authority will monitor its progress on an annual basis. The Authority will address any issues and shortfall in the standards we know are necessary to support successful delivery.