

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

**COMMITTEE:** Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee

**DATE:** 22 July 2008

**SUBJECT:** Disability Discrimination Act: Compliance across the City  
Council's Corporate Property Portfolio

**REPORT OF:** The City Treasurer

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To advise Members on progress made to date across the property portfolio on meeting compliance targets set for Disability Discrimination Programme instigated in 2003.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To note progress made and endorse the approach to continuing to improved the accessibility of the corporate estate through the Disability Discrimination Programme.

**FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL  
BUDGETS**

DDA works are funding from the AMP budget which has been agreed for the financial year 2008/09 and future years. Specific amounts are also included within other capital budgets eg the Building Schools for the Future programme to ensure that DDA standards are met.

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**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

**WARDS AFFECTED**

All

**IMPLICATIONS FOR:**

**ANTI  
POVERTY**  
Yes

**EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITIES**  
Yes

**ENVIRONMENT**  
Yes

**EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES**  
Yes

## **1.0 Background**

Government legislation sets out accessibility requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act. Building Regulations Part M - Access to and use of Buildings - provides guidance for the reasonable provision for people to gain access to the building and use of its facilities

Manchester developed its own standard of accessibility 'Design for Access 2.' DFA2 this details Manchester City Council's best practise guidance of inclusive design standards and in some cases improve upon the access guidance and regulations detailed within current government guideline Part M.

In support of this initiative, Manchester City Council instigated a DDA capital programme in 2003 to undertake the goal of making Manchester the most accessible city in Europe. Where possible the DDA programme commissions access improvements to buildings to DFA2 standards. This is not always feasible or possible as the Council's building portfolio is very diverse. Consequently some buildings have access standards to a combination of DFA2 and Part M.

The Building Schools for the Future programme works to DFA2 standard on its programme of new build school provision except where particular circumstances mean that full compliance is not possible.

Access Officers in Planning and Building Control within the Council also check for compliance to and make recommendations on DFA2.

## **2.0 Programme Approach**

The DDA programme instigated a three phase process:-

**2.1** An access audit was commissioned on Council owned buildings and those that the Council provided a service from.

This audit is an assessment of the accessibility of a building premises and takes into account the needs of disabled people as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, It addresses the need to maximise access to and use of the premises, by both visitors and staff. Whilst also observing the need to take into account reasonable functional and financial practicalities of implementing action to improve access. Design for Access2 has been used as the benchmark to assess suitable access and not Part M of Building Regulations.

**2.2** A service review with the building users/service providers is then undertaken on how the building is utilised with respect to occupants and the service that is provided from the premises.

An example of this is the use of interview and or meeting rooms. If rooms are utilised for example by members of the public, the recommendation from the review would be that accessible rooms are provided on the ground floor consequently adjustments would be made to ensure that the area was accessible. Instead of utilising offices, on for example the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, where potentially access would be required throughout the building, this may not be possible because of building design or space constraints.

**2.3** After this review a detailed report is completed on the proposed work to be carried out on the building. This is split into three different priorities

Priority 1 – improvements that are considered essential to accommodate existing employees and work required to minimise risk to Health and Safety.

Priority 2 – improvements that are considered necessary to improve visitor access.

Priority 3 – improvements that should be incorporated into a planned refurbishment/maintenance programme to achieve best practice.

Also recommendations on management arrangements on how the building is managed around access is detailed and recommendations on work that is carried out through any planned maintenance programme and longer term requirements to be considered if a building is refurbished or altered.

### **3.0 The City Council reports its progress in achieving accessibility under BVPI 156.**

This is a best value performance indicator measure adopted by the Audit Commission to measure the percentage of buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people. The all England average for Councils in 05/06 was 66% and this figure was 46% for metropolitan districts. More recent statistics have not yet been identified but work has started to compare performance with other Councils through the Core Cities Group. One of those cities performs at around the 70% mark however another was still just over 60% in 05/06. This benchmarking exercise will be developed so that more meaningful comparisons can be made.

<b>BVPI or CPA Number</b>	<b>BVPI 156</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Buildings accessible to disabled people</b>			
<b>2005/6 Actual</b>	<b>2006/7 Actual</b>	<b>2007/8 Target</b>	<b>2007/8 Actual</b>	<b>2008/9 Target</b>
<b>57%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>75%</b>

The BVPI figure does not include schools as there is no requirement to report against schools or similar educational establishments. However the Council has committed to making school buildings accessible to all and a high percentage of the original DDA programme budget was allocated to making schools accessible.

This information is gathered against the 479 operational buildings.

The Council has shown year on year improvements on the reported BVPI figures. Access improvements to the number of buildings from years 2006 to 2007 did improve, although we did not meet the forecasted target of 78%. This target was not met DDA access works were combined with the larger asset management repairs programme that addresses essential Health and Safety and backlog maintenance. Also as part of the asset management programme a detailed condition survey of the property is completed. This building condition information was combined with the access audit recommendations.

In order to make the most efficient use of resources buildings that did not have a clear long term future identified by services or where the service was due to remain in the building for the short term only would be made safe but would not receive a complete upgrade of access improvements. Work is ongoing to ensure that funds are targeted at buildings with a medium to long-term life and where the services delivered from those buildings are a priority and are making efficient use of space.

These larger combined schemes take a longer period to agree with building users and complete the subsequent design. However this combining of projects equated to less intrusion for the building users and ensured that a service provision was maintained as the works were all combined into one schedule. The 2008/09 target has been lowered from the 2007/08 target of 78% because we anticipate doing fewer numbers but larger overall projects where DDA works will be combined with essential Health and Safety upgrades.

**4.0 The amount spent to date on DDA works per client department is below.**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Actual Spend Accumulated over three years</b>	
Chief Executives	<b>£ 219,327</b>	Inc Adult Education
Cultural Services	<b>£ 516,755</b>	Inc Libraries, Leisure and Galleries
Neighbourhood Services	<b>£ 532,093</b>	Inc Operational Services Adults and Trading Services
Corporate Services	<b>£ 426,525</b>	
Children's Services	<b>£ 6,261,589</b>	Inc Schools Early Years and Youth
Expenditure	<b>£ 7,956,289</b>	

Access works to Adult Education establishments was met by funding from the Learning and Skills Council

**4.1 Building Schools for the Future funding**

In addition to the above the basic design and building specification for new build schools meets the majority of DFA2 requirements. Additional monies have been committed to the programme where necessary.

**5.0 An Example of a DDA Project**

To establish the impact of the DDA Implementation Programme, on the users and visitors to Manchester City Council (MCC) buildings and to determine whether MCC is obtaining, Best Value in terms of quality of work and the standards of Design for Access 2. A number of audits have been commissioned to visit and report on buildings facilities after access work has been completed.

**5.1 Terry Dowling Adult Learning Centre**

This items of work highlighted in this report originate from Priority 1 items agreed at the access audit review Priority 1 was defined as – all physical and managerial

alterations considered necessary to provide access into the Education Centre and to all identified visitor areas.

The report is broken into different area's access to and from the building. Access into the building, movement around the building and use of the facilities within the building

As can be seen this is a comprehensive approach to allow users to be able to utilise to the full, all of the facilities available.

## **5.2 Approaches to the Building**

**Approach** - Provide directional signage to pedestrian approach to identify front entrance and accessible entrance

**Car Parking** - Provide new accessible car parking bays including lighting and signage and improvements to the car park surface

**External Ramps** - Provide new ramp to main entrance and provide visual warnings to landings of rear entrance ramp

**External steps** - Provide new handrails, tactile warning top and bottom and colour contrasting nosings to external steps of main entrance. Ensure width of landing is a minimum of 1800mm

## **5.3 Internal to and movement around the Building**

**Entrances** - Provide new door and frame minimum 1000mm clear opening to main entrance. Provide new door entry system and suitable signage to main entrance and rear entrance

**Internal doors** - Provide new door and frame minimum 850mm clear opening to Manager's Office, Stairwell, Small Hall, Large Hall and Room 3  
Provide new door and frame minimum 900mm clear opening to Accessible WC

**Internal stairs** - Provide new handrails, signage and visual warnings to landings of main staircase

**Lift** - Improve facilities inside and outside of lift car to meet Design for Access 2.  
1. Buttons are centred at 1100mm.  
2. Mirror, handrail and colour contrast

**Means of Escape** - Provide new handrails, tactile warning top and bottom and colour contrasting nosings to emergency escape stairs from Large Hall and Room  
3.

#### **5.4 Use of the Building Facilities**

**WC's general** - Improve the facilities to Male and Female WC's on the ground floor as they are open to visitors.

**Accessible toilet** - Upgrade facilities to visitor accessible WC on the ground floor. Provide new accessible WC to first floor

**Way finding** - Provide way finding signage and information to stairwell and main corridor

**Acoustics** - Provide hearing enhancement system to Large Hall and Reception.  
New Item - Provide hearing enhancement system to Small Hall and Room 3

#### **5.4 Verbatim Feedback – From Building Users: Number of responses – 7**

##### **Benefits**

- All building users consulted were aware of the DDA works being undertaken.
- Happy with the work carried out except no ramp access from the rear car park.
- The work has brought the building up to scratch.
- The work has improved the look of the building.
- New accessible toilet upstairs makes a lot of sense is a big plus.
- Front automatic door is very successful.
- The DDA work has improved the building.
- After discussion with building users Agreed works were changed from the original plans.

##### **Lessons Learnt**

- The work took a long time.
- No access to the front entrance during the building works.
- Front door takes ages to close and opens at times when it should not.
- There was a lot of noise and sometimes apparatus in the doorways.
- Concern about the length of time between audit review and approval of the costs.

#### **6.0. Building Schools for the Future**

Major consultative and design expertise input is given into the BSF design teams to ensure that disability access and in particular adhering to DFA2 is high on their

agenda with regard to design and costs.

### **Design Work**

Ensuring that Disabled people are involved in the development of new and existing BSF projects, This involves being proactive with the design team around access and inclusion ensuring all schemes meet the needs of all potential building users.

Schools so far have included St Paul's/Piper Hill, Newall Green, Buglawton, Burnage, Our Lady's, St Matthews and King David's.

### **Access Audits**

Access Audits have been ongoing on existing school buildings, which may form part of a new school campus. The audits allow BSF to take a view on the level of access improvements required to bring specific buildings up to the Manchester standard.

Schools visited to assess access requirements are Plant Hill, Levenshulme, Burnage, Buglawton and Brookway.

### **Review of Access in New Schools**

Newall Green (Phase 3) has been audited to assess the completed works in order to develop a lessons learnt report highlighting good and bad practice in order to reinforce good practice and inform future decision making on other BSF projects.

We are undertaking a similar exercise for Gorton Education Village

### **Academies and Wave 4 Schools**

As designs are emerging advice is being given on access and inclusion at an early stage in the design process. This includes providing equal access and egress for all building users and ensuring community facilities meet the needs of the whole community

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

The DDA programme is an on-going programme and is linked into the asset management repairs programme; as such improvements are often combined with Health and Safety projects being completed on Council buildings. Major

input is continuing into the BSF programme to ensure that new schools are assessable to all and are designed to DFA2 standard.

Projects are also being designed around an individuals needs. For example Overseas House, a building used extensively by Children's services is accessible to Part M regulations, However we are working with the individual requirements of a disabled person to extend the facilities available to his suit specific needs.