

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek contributions to, comments on, and final approval of the Race Equality Scheme 2002.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Recently New Forest District Council has been working closely and in consultation with other Hampshire Authorities regarding Race and Equalities issues. It is the intention to continue this and to extend it to include other partners.
- 2.2 While this report and scheme focuses on matters of race it is only part of the work of the Council on matters of Equality. This Race Equality Scheme is therefore felt to be not only a response to the new duty but also a step towards a more comprehensive Equalities and Race Scheme.
- 2.3 It is therefore intended to use this scheme as a tool to help the Council achieve the Equality Standard level 1 (Commitment to a Comprehensive Equalities Policy) and to develop a meaningful dialogue and validation from all parts of the community.

3. THE SCHEME

- 3.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires all public authorities to adopt a Race Equality Scheme 2002 by 31 May 2002.
- 3.2 Guidance and information on this new duty have only recently become available. A scheme has been produced in a short time to meet this requirement and is attached as Appendix A. The scheme as appended contains present Council policies on race and equal opportunities. It is anticipated these policies will be reviewed and a single comprehensive approach to equalities and race will be proposed following wider community involvement and consultation.
- 3.3 The preferred approach would have been to have sought contributions and comments widely before seeking approval. This has not been possible. It is therefore acknowledged the scheme will be revised and extended during its first programmed review after one year.
- 3.4 The scheme is presented in report style. The aim of this is to make it easier for comments to be linked to the relevant paragraph. It is anticipated the final version will be published in the Community in a more friendly and easier to read style. This is likely to include "signposts" to ensure everyone can obtain a copy in a language or format suitable to their individual needs.

- 3.5 The Act suggests the action plan within the scheme should be no longer than 3 years with high priority services being scrutinised in year one. The action plan would then be reviewed and previously excluded low priority services included for scrutiny in the next 3 year plan. It is proposed that all services, using the Best Value model be assessed for priority during year one of the plan and action taken in accordance with the priority given. Thereafter each service be reviewed every 5 years as part of their Best Value Review.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The immediate financial implications of approving a Race Equality Scheme are limited to officer time and publication costs. Neither have been assessed as the works are still in progress.
- 4.2 The financial implications for implementing the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 as contained in the scheme could be significant but would be only incurred at the appropriate level and validated for assessed need for such measures within the District.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A developed scheme includes working with partners and the community to remove discrimination and foster better relations. It is likely this would impact favourably on crime and disorder objectives.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council has a duty to publicise a Race Equality Scheme by 31 May 2002 but lack of guidance made this difficult to achieve.
- 6.2 It is felt the scheme as drafted would contribute to the aims of the Council of equal access to services and employment as well as contributing to the well-being of the wider community.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Comments received on the scheme will be incorporated during its approval or will be used in the first version. To date comments have been included from Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and Corporate and Finance Review Panel.
- 7.2 Once approved wider consultation within the community will be made.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 That the Cabinet approve the scheme as outlined in Appendix A.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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BACKGROUND PAPERS:
None

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NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL RACE EQUALITY SCHEME 2002

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) places a general duty on public authorities to promote race equality. The legislation requires the Council and its employees to
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
 - promote equality of opportunity, and
 - promote good relations between people of different racial groups
- 1.2 The aim of the duty is to make race equality an integral part of the way local authorities work by placing it within policy and decision making, service delivery, employment and enforcement. By pursuing the elimination of discrimination and promoting fair access to all the following outcomes should be achieved
- Decisions based on knowledge, evidence and consultation
 - Targeted action
 - Accessible and appropriate services
 - Increased public confidence in services
- 1.3 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 also places a specific duty on public authorities to publish a Race Equality Scheme. The scheme is required to indicate the actions this Council has and will take to meet the general and specific duties of the Act.
- 1.4 This scheme as published is for
- Residents of the area
 - Customers of its services
 - Elected members
 - Employees
 - Applicants for job vacancies
 - Visitors
 - Businesses in the area
 - Partners
 - Consultants, agents and contractors
- And anyone in contact with or affected by the Council.
- 1.5 Race relations is one part of a group of equalities. Other issues include disability, age, gender and class discrimination. These topics are also being looked at by the Council.
Although this scheme is focussed on race, many of the principles within it will be adopted for general equalities issues.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

2.1 Diversity can be explained as actively promoting the understanding of the differences between people. Life opportunities should be available to all, regardless of an individual person's situation or background. During workshops employees and elected members agreed the following commitment to encouraging a diverse community and workforce which embraces all sections of the community. "We recognise that valuing differences must be one of our core values and is an essential part of community involvement. Building on the Council's on-going commitment to equal opportunities, diversity is much more about encouraging and celebrating a workforce which is diverse in terms of gender, race and colour, age and physical abilities and which reflects the diverse society in which we live."

2.2 Our commitment will be translated into action as follows

Employees

- Diversity awareness training for all employees and Council members
- Continued review and monitoring of our equal opportunities policy and its application in practice
- Fair access for all employees in training, development and promotion opportunities an anti bullying and harassment policy supported by guidance for managers
- Transparent consideration of the equal opportunities/ diversity dimension in all Council decisions
- Employee's performance on equal opportunities/diversity incorporated into the PDI (performance appraisal) process
- Encouragement of flexible working practices and a commitment to a healthy work/life balance for all employees
- Seeking feedback from employees to ensure that we are meeting our commitment to diversity, and to decide on further action.

Public consultation

- Clients, customers, citizens
- Those who work in the area
- Those who travel through the area
- Local businesses, including small and medium-sized employers
- Community groups and voluntary organisations
- Partners, e.g. Health Trusts, Primary Care Trusts, Police
- Local press and media.

Service Provision

- Provide services that are accessible to all.

3. RACE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICIES

3.1 Race and equality of opportunity in employment

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection, training, career development and promotion regardless of sex, marital status, race, religion, colour, age or disability.

- The effectiveness of the Council's policy will be monitored by the collection of appropriate data as part of its recruitment and selection processes.
- The Council will treat seriously all cases of discrimination, victimisation or harassment.
- All reasonably practicable steps will be taken to facilitate the employment of disabled people.

3.2 Race and Equal opportunities in service provision

This Council will seek to ensure that all the people in the New Forest District, irrespective of their age, disability, ethnic, cultural or religious background, gender, marital status or sexual orientation, have equal access to, and quality of, service which will be provided to a consistently high standard.

3.3 Race Relations Policy

The Race Relations Policy has been adopted to make sure that all people of the New Forest District have equal access to, and quality of service from, this Council irrespective of their ethnic origin.

The Council recognises that its policies for the provision of its services are closely tied to its policies for employees. The policy compliments our policy on equality of opportunity in employment.

This Council acknowledges that all employees have a role to play in developing services which do not discriminate against, or cause disadvantage to, any section of the local or visiting population.

In addition to ensuring that the Council acts lawfully in terms of the Race Relations Act 1976, this policy encourages proactive action to make sure that we achieve, in practice, our stated aim of providing equality of service for all residents and visitors to the District.

This policy has the following objectives:

- To commit the Council to take proactive action that eliminates disadvantages arising from discrimination in service delivery linked to a person's racial or ethnic background.

- To provide and develop services which are appropriate for all ethnic groups in the local community and are equally accessible to all those who need them.
- To ensure that the quality of service we provide is the same for all our customers, irrespective of their racial origin, religion or language.
- To establish mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

4. ~~Action plan~~ ACTION PLAN

4.1 The council has produced an action plan to meet the requirements of the RRA. This is attached as appendix 1. The main commitments within this action plan are as follows:

- To identify relevant functions and policies and assess these for adverse racial impact
- To make arrangements for assessing and consulting on future impact of proposed policies
- To monitor policies for adverse racial impact
- To publish monitoring reports
- To arrange for the public to have access to information and services
- To monitor employment for adverse racial impact
- To train employees in Diversity

5. PUBLICITY FOR RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

5.1 The scheme will be available

- On Council's website
- To local and national press, radio and media
- At Information Offices
- In Performance Matters
- To members in an annual report

6. REVIEW OF SCHEME

6.1 Scheme and action plan to be comprehensively reviewed after one year and, updated annually.

- 6.2 Services/functions to be reviewed every 5 years as part of the Best Value Process
- 6.3 New policies to be assessed as they are approved.

EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

DUTY	PROPOSED ACTION
<p>General duty (1) To eliminate unlawful race discrimination</p>	<p>Promote Race and Equality policies. Train employees and elected members. Complete activities of action plan.</p>
<p>General duty (2) To promote equal opportunity between different racial groups</p>	<p>As a district where less than 1% of the population comes from minority groups this is a challenge and therefore future action may need to be targeted at specific racial groups such as gypsies which are believed at present to be the District’s largest racial group.</p> <p>To include as part of Best Value system</p> <p>To include Recreation & Leisure work - Forest Arts Centre - Playgroup training</p>
<p>Specific duty – policy and service delivery (1) Identify all relevant functions and policies and test these for relevance to the duty to promote race equality – i.e. could the function or policy affect racial groups differently? Could it cause discrimination? Prioritise these.</p>	<p>Each service needs to apply the test of relevance to their policies and processes in a challenging and open way. Develop a pro-forma with criteria to measure services against the Race Relations Act and the general Equality standard. Services which directly interface with the public are likely to be the highest priority – e.g. Housing, Environmental Health. Other services will be reviewed in line with the best value timetable (Appendix 2)</p>

<p>Specific duty - policy and service delivery</p> <p>(2) Make arrangements for assessing and consulting on, the likely impact of proposed policies</p>	<p>Needs to be considered as part of future policy development. Include Environmental, Social and Economic implications as a paragraph in all reports to members</p> <p>Form race focus groups through contacts in New Forest area or Southampton.</p> <p>Check Citizens Panel is representative of ethnic population.</p>
<p>Specific duty – policy and service delivery</p> <p>(3) Make arrangements for monitoring policies for adverse impact</p>	<p>Include as part of service planning and best value timetable (appendix 2)</p> <p>Use focus groups to review a sample of policies working with partners towards joint consultation and dissemination of data.</p> <p>Monitor use of services by ethnicity where appropriate.</p>
<p>Specific duty - policy and service delivery</p> <p>(4) Make arrangements for publishing monitoring reports</p>	<p>Report to members annually on progress against this action plan and publish in Forest News.</p> <p>Consider developing local PI's based on the Equality Standard (New government performance indicator for equality issues).</p>
<p>Specific duty - policy and service delivery</p> <p>(5) Arrangements for the public to have access to information and services</p>	<p>To introduce welcome cards at Information Offices to identify alternative language or accessibility needs of customers</p> <p>Publicity</p> <p>Employee training</p> <p>Access to translation service</p> <p>Use of website</p> <p>Information offices with local communities</p>

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<p>Specific duty - policy and service delivery</p> <p>(6) Arrangements for training staff</p>	<p>General awareness training of all employees during 2002-2004 with specific emphasis on race. Training co-ordinators to undertake.</p> <p>Heads of Service Seminar (25 June 2002, suggested). To include general awareness training, priority setting, consultation on draft Race Equality Scheme and associated exercises.</p> <p>Similar training for members and Local Strategic Partners by December 2002.</p> <p>Specific training for IO's, VIC's and selected front line staff, contractors and partners during 202/03.</p>
<p>Specific duty – race equality scheme</p> <p>(7) Publish the race equality scheme by 31 May 2002</p>	<p>Draft scheme by mid May 02 To CMT by 25 May 02 To Corporate and Finance Review Panel on 20 June 02 To Cabinet on 8 July 02 To Council on 22 July 02 Publish in next edition of Forest News</p>
<p>Specific duty - employment</p> <p>(8) Monitor ethnicity of applicants and employees, including training and promotion opportunities</p>	<p>To monitor the ethnicity of applicants and employees, including training and promotion opportunities.</p> <p>Additional monitoring may also be considered including discipline and grievance incidents bonus payments; promotion opportunities.</p>

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES

During the first year each Service will prioritise equality issues for their service. If the service is a priority service it may be considered earlier than the date specified below. If it is not a priority service equality issues will be considered as part of the Best Value Review. Services have been already been divided into packages for the Council's Best Value process as shown in the following table. As a result, equality issues will be considered every 5 years.

Functions (BV packages) (in no priority order)	Policies (existing)	Year for review (BV)	Impact assessment	Priority H/M/L	Issues Identified	Links to other Council priorities
Crime Prevention		2001/02				
Planning		2000/01				
Building Control		2001/02				
Economic Development		2002/03				
Refuse & Street Cleaning		2000/01				
Public services		2001/02				
Environmental Commercial Services		2001/02				
Civil Engineering		2002/03				
Sustainability/Quality of Life		2002/03				
Environmental Protection		2004/05				
Fraud Investigation		2000/01				
Directorate Support Services		2001/02				
Financial Management		2001/02				
Information Services		2001/02				
Catering		2001/02				
ICT Services		2002/03				
Internal Audit		2002/03				

Functions (BV packages) contd/....	Policies (existing)	Year for review (BV)	Impact assessment	Priority H/M/L	Issues Identified	Links to other Council priorities
Democratic Services		2003/04				
Property Services		2003/04				
Legal		2003/04				
Exchequer Services		2003/04				
Central Purchasing/Stores		2004/05				
Fleet Management		2004/05				
Revenues and Benefits		2004/05				
Central Control		2002/03				
Housing services		2003/04				
Health Strategy		2002/03				
Recreation Centres		2000/01				
Tourism		2000/01				
Recreation Development		2001/02				
Keyhaven & Coastal Management		2002/03				
Dibden Golf Centre		2003/04				
Public Relations		2000/01				
Communications		To be determined by LSP				
Community Planning/strategy		To be determined by LSP				
Personnel, Recruitment, Health & Safety, Welfare, Central Training and Payroll		2004/05				
Community Safety		2000/01				
Cash collection/reconciliation		2000/01				

