

THE EXECUTIVE

11 NOVEMBER 2003

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS & LIBRARIES

THE COUNCIL'S RACE EQUALITY SCHEME - YEAR TWO ACTION PLAN (COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT)	FOR DECISION	
<p><i>The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of progress in implementing the Council's Race Equality Scheme (RES) as agreed in May 2002. In particular, it reports on achievements against the Year One Action Plan (Human Resources) and the contents of the Year Two Action Plan (Community Involvement)</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive with a progress report on the achievement of its statutory duties, under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, to positively promote race equality, eliminate discrimination and promote good race relations.</p> <p>The report appraises the Executive of the Race Equality Scheme (RES) Year Two (Community Involvement) Action Plan [Appendix A]. It explains the rationale underpinning the Action Plan and outlines the specific actions under the eight strategic objectives. Also attached as [Appendix B] is a full statement of progress achieved against the 2002/03 Year one (Human Resources) RES Action Plan. For easy reference, the achievements in Year One are also concisely summarised in section 2.1 of the report.</p> <p>The theme for Year Two is Community Involvement and this will work on two levels. Firstly, the Council are planning a number of activities and targeted events designed to build and develop stronger links with the various communities resident within the borough. Secondly, all services will be required to complete the first part of the impact assessment process by consulting with BME communities, and other hard to reach groups, on their existing services, functions and policies. This is the subject of an accompanying report.</p> <p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The Executive is asked to endorse the report and note the progress achieved in implementing the Council' statutory Race Equality Scheme (RES).</p> <p><u>Reason</u></p> <p>To obtain Executive endorsement of progress and achievements against the Council's statutory Race Equality Scheme (RES).</p>		
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1. Background

1.1 On 31 May 2002, the Council published its first Race Equality Scheme (RES) as required under the specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The Council's Scheme was based upon a themed approach with the following prioritisation:

Year One	(2002/03)	-	Human Resources
Year Two	(2003/04)	-	Community Involvement
Year Three	(2004/05)	-	Service Delivery

1.2 The prioritisation was based upon extensive community consultation. A view arose from the consultation with the local Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities that the Council needed to equip its staff to deal with their specific needs. The rationale underpinning the Scheme is that Year One was dedicated to dealing with key Human Resources issues to ensure that the Council 'puts its own house in order.' This facilitated the training and preparation of staff to engage in the community involvement activity required under Year Two of the Scheme.

1.3 Year Two requires activity on two levels. Firstly, that the Council promote community involvement through a number of initiatives designed to forge and improve links with the community; and secondly, for services to engage in consultation with the community to ascertain community views on existing services, functions and policies. This process of needs assessment would, in turn, enable Council services to assemble and evaluate the data upon which services would be changed in Year Three (Service Delivery).

2. Progress on the Year One (Human Resources) Action Plan (2002/03)

2.1 Having completed Year One, an evaluation against the action plan has now been undertaken. Attached for information, as [Appendix B], is a full statement of achievements against the Year One (Human Resources) Action Plan. These can be summarised as follows:

- √ Audited all existing HR policies, practices and procedures for their race equality impact
- √ Established a plan for carrying out Impact Assessments on HR policies, practices and procedures during years 2 and 3 of the RES
- √ Put in place plans to consult with BME groups in the community and the workforce on the results of the HR Impact Assessments
- √ Completed consultation with BME communities on the Council's current 5 Year Equalities and Diversity Strategy in Employment, analysed the views arising and fed in to the proposals
- √ Commissioned a research project to facilitate the creation of a representative workforce and feed its findings in to the Council's 5 Year Strategy
- √ Ensured that the above research project covers an evaluation of positive action initiatives
- √ Integrated race equality in to all person specifications, core competencies for managers, personal appraisal and performance management tools
- √ All staff trained on the Council's duty to promote racial equality through induction, staff team briefings, staff/management equalities and diversity training

courses and specific targeted sessions on the RR(Act) 2000 And the Council's RES

- √ Mainstreamed race equality in to all corporate and departmental training programmes, and work with approved consultants to achieve this objective
- √ Utilised national and regional links to identify more training providers/consultants with specialist skills
- √ Consulted with BME staff on the training and development commissioning process
- √ Began the process of mainstreaming race equality in to the strategic procurement/contracting process

2.2 The summary of achievement indicates that the Council achieved the vast majority of its targets in the Year one (Human Resources) Action Plan. There are two areas of slippage identified, which are developing a tool for managers to undertake self-assessment of equalities and diversity managerial practice and policy proofing proposals. These have been reprioritised for implementation during 2003/04.

3. The Year Two (Community Involvement) Action Plan (2003/04)

3.1 At the same time, as working on the Year One targets, the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Group convened two strategic Task Groups to prepare the Action Plan for Year Two. These task groups were:

- Confronting Racism and Discrimination
- Community involvement

3.2 The action plan is based upon the strategic objectives contained within the RES. Those strategic objectives are as follows:

- Carry out needs assessment/impact studies to secure BME views on Council services and put associated mechanisms in place
- Ensure community awareness of Council's race equality commitment
- Improve view of the Council as a multi-ethnic organisation which listens and values cultural/ethnic diversity
- Build confidence in the ability of the Council to deal more sensitively with racist incidents and build more effective multi-agency initiatives
- Promote community led initiatives to address racism and support more local events to celebrate cultural diversity
- Support tenants/community groups to work effectively on race equality
- Encourage greater BME participation and involvement
- Promote community involvement with regard to gender, disabilities, sexuality, faith and age

3.3 The Year Two Action Plan, attached as [Appendix A], builds upon existing policy work and ongoing initiatives. (e.g. Customer First, Shifting Public Perceptions, Community Cohesion and existing targets in the Community Strategy Equalities and Diversity Implementation Plan).

4. Broadening out of the RES - Rationalising Corporate Equalities & Diversity Work

4.1 In Year Two, the Scheme will begin the process of broadening out to encompass and make reference to other areas of equalities and diversity work. These include:

- Article 13 (work on gender, age, sexuality, disability and faith)
- Community cohesion
- Progress against the Equalities standard for Local Government

4.2 In this way we wish to move towards the creation of an Equalities and Diversity Scheme [incorporating both the Race Equality Scheme and the Council's Corporate Equalities Plan] that pulls together and provides a single focus for the Council's equalities and diversity work; whilst establishing clear links with the Council's partnership work through the Community Strategy.

4.3 It is intended that this will greatly assist Council service departments by rationalising and providing a central point of reference for equalities and diversity priorities and commitments.

5. Consultation with DMTs and Submission to TMT

5.1 The work to date on the RES has been undertaken within existing policy parameters, as laid down by the Executive in May 2002. This includes:

- Implementing the Year One (Human Resources) Action Plan
- Developing and progressing the Year Two (Community Involvement) Action Plan
- Putting in place the necessary training, guidance and structures to ensure that Council services undertake impact assessments

5.2 The Corporate Equalities and Diversity Steering Group agreed that it would adopt a 'bottom up' approach to getting Council services signed up to the specific details of the Year Two Action Plan. In effect this meant taking the proposals to DMTs prior to submission to TMT.

5.3 A report on progress in Year One and the Action Plan for Year Two has been submitted and adopted by all 6 DMTs. They are now working to put in place the necessary mechanisms and resources to deliver the Year Two Action Plan.

5.4 As part of the process of taking the report to DMTs, they were asked to identify the necessary staffing and financial resources to contribute towards the delivery of the action plan.

6. Community Consultation

6.1 In keeping with statutory requirements both specific, targeted and general consultation on achievements under the Year One (Human Resources) Action Plan and the Council's plans in its Year Two (Community Involvement) Action Plan will be carried out.

6.2 This will include:

- Specific consultation meetings with the borough's BEM communities
- The production of a Community Summary of work on the RES, that will be available in community languages, other formats and distributed widely within the borough
- Canvassing the views of BME representative organisations
- The production of a special four page insert in the The Citizen, seeking the community's views
- An article for all staff in People Matters, reporting on progress
- Consultation with relevant Staff Groups and local trade unions
- Use of the Council's intranet/internet web-sites

Background Papers

- CRE Statutory Guidance (November 2001)
- The Council's Statutory Race Equality Scheme (May 2002)