

## 10. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME PROGRESS REPORT

**Report By: Head of Policy and Communication**

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To note progress against the Race Equality Scheme action Plan.

### Background

2. In line with Performance Management arrangements set out in the Council's Race Equality Scheme this annual report sets out progress against the Action Plan which accompanies the Scheme.
3. The Government felt that insufficient action was being taken by Statutory Authorities in response to the findings of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry (McPherson report). They therefore decided to place a number of statutory requirements on Local Authorities through the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.
4. In line with the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) Herefordshire Council published a Race Equality Scheme in May 2002 providing a framework for how the Council intends to promote race equality through.
  - Eliminating unlawful racial discrimination
  - Promotion of equal opportunity
  - Promotion of good relations between people of different racial groups
5. In line with guidance from the Commission for Racial Equality, a cross Directorate steering group was established to oversee implementation of the actions detailed within the scheme. This group is chaired by the Head of Policy and Communication
6. It is an integral part of the Race Equality Scheme that the Authority's progress is monitored. This report has been considered by Chief Executive's Management Team and Cabinet. The information on progress will be made available to the public via the Council's website.
7. A report was submitted to Chief Executive's Management Team on 1st April 2003 setting out the difficulties being encountered in securing engagement across the Council. That report also set out details of broader diversity issues requiring a corporate response.
8. Despite these difficulties progress has been made on a number of fronts;
  - Research has been commissioned
  - An awareness raising campaign has commenced

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Alan Blundell, Head of Policy and Communication on 01432 260239

- A pilot monitoring exercise has been introduced alongside the comments and complaints procedure.
  - A pilot common racial incident reporting form has been introduced across local agencies.
9. In response to the report made to Chief Executive's Management Team, a Strategic Diversity Group was set up, chaired by the Director of Policy and Community. This will provide leadership for the Council in all areas of work with regard to the Equalities Agenda e.g. Race, disability, gender, sexual orientation.
  10. A report on the progress to date against the Equality scheme action plan is attached at Appendix 1.
  11. It should be noted that in recognition of Herefordshire's relatively low Black and Minority Ethnic Population, a partnership approach has been adopted with many of the larger projects being undertaken in conjunction with other agencies. The interface for this approach has been the Herefordshire Race Equality Group (HREG), a multi-agency working group whose focus rests solely on Race Relations within Herefordshire.
  12. With regard to next steps, the timescale on the action plan needs to be revisited in order to align it with the work plan of the new Strategic Diversity Group.
  13. A further progress report will be made to Cabinet and Strategic Monitoring Committee in six months time

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT Strategic Monitoring Committee note progress to date.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Herefordshire Council Race Equality Scheme