

RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL REPORT

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

15TH JULY, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive an annual report that sets out progress against the Action Plan which accompanies the Council's Race Equality Scheme and to approve its publication

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT progress to date be noted and publication of the report on the Council's website be authorised.

Reasons

This annual report is required in line with legislation and the Action Plan.

Considerations

1. The Government felt that insufficient action was being taken by Local Authorities in response to the findings of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry. It therefore decided to place a number of statutory requirements on Local Authorities through the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 including a requirement to publish an annual report.
2. 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.
3. 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. The group reports to the Corporate Diversity Group
4. 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

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
A. Blundell, Head of Policy and Communication on (01432) 260226

and will also be presented to Strategic Monitoring Committee. The report will be made available within the public domain via the Council's website.

5. A revised action plan for the Race Equality Scheme was accepted by Cabinet in October 2003
6. A report on the progress to date against the Equality scheme action plan is attached at Appendix 1.
7. 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 and the Herefordshire Race Equality Partnership which has its own complementary action plan.
8. Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 2b sets out a number of actions against which the Council's performance is measured. The target for 2003/04 was to comply with 50% of the actions with actual performance being 47%. The target for 2004/05 is 60% and good progress is being made to meeting and hopefully exceeding that target.
9. Key initiatives to monitor and promote Race Equality during 2003/04 included:
 - Anne Frank Exhibition
 - Holocaust Memorial Day
 - Poster campaign
 - Appointment of an Education Race Equality Officer, use of the Museum on the Move bus in schools, purchase of a teachers' resource pack for all schools so they can address and challenge racism as part of the curriculum. Seminar for Councillors,
 - Awareness raising discussions to a wide range of groups throughout the County. These include groups such as the Women's Movement, Victim support, CAB and Newton Farm Advice Centre volunteers. A number of schools and church groups.
 - Establishment of Staff group
 - Comprehensive recording of employment data and provision of management information.
 - Research into Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) issues in the County. The draft report on the Research findings has been received. The report and its implications are being analysed and a report will be presented in due course.
10. Further progress reports will be made to Cabinet and Strategic Monitoring Committee in line with the Action Plan.

Alternative Options

Alternative Option 1

None

Risk Management

Progress against the Action Plan will assist in minimising the risk of legal action and/or damage to the Council's reputation.

Consultees

None

Background Papers

None