

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME 2005-2008.

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

19TH MAY 2005

Wards affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the Council's draft Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2005-2008.

Key decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living and working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendations

- THAT**
- (a) the Race Equality Scheme and action plan 2005-2008 be approved;**
 - (b) Nominated officers be accountable for the carrying out of the actions contained within the action plan; and**
 - (c) The Steering Group be nominated to implement and monitor the Scheme in its entirety.**

Reasons

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (the Act) came into force in April 2001. The subsequent statutory Code of Practice, the Duty to Promote Race Equality, was issued by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to help public authorities meet the general and specific duties under the Act. One of the specific duties required public authorities to assess their policies and function and publish a Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan (RES) by May 2002 and review it least once every three years.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Yulia Tarbath, Corporate Policy Assistant on (01432) 383635

Considerations

1. In line with the CRE requirement, Herefordshire Council had undertaken the assessment of its policies and functions and published its first RES in May 2002. In 2005 the Race Equality Scheme was fully reviewed.
2. The review of the Scheme, including policies and functions took place between January and April 2005. The new draft Race Equality Scheme is aimed to identify changes that have taken place since the first Scheme was developed. The reviewed document highlights our achievements and introduces a strategic action plan for 2005-2008.
3. The public consultation on the draft RES was conducted between February and April 2005. Externally, we consulted with the relevant voluntary organisations, Community Against Racism Group, Trade Unions, Herefordshire Race Equality Group, Herefordshire Equality Partnership and Race Equality West Midlands.
4. The response rate was very low and we received only two responses to the consultation. This may be partly due to the fact that some organisations are small and may not be sufficiently resourced to consider and offer comments on such consultations. This may also in part be due to overload on the public authorities to produce the RES at this particular time.
5. The draft RES was amended in light of consultation. The new draft document represents a comprehensive Scheme with a clear and structured strategic action plan, including nominated officers responsible for every action. The draft RES is attached in Appendix 1.
6. Herefordshire Council's Race Equality Steering Group will continue to oversee the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of the Scheme.

Risk Management

Herefordshire Council has a legal obligation to meet its statutory duties under the Act and agree the new Scheme by 31st May 2005. Failure to meet the deadline may result in compliance action being taken against the authority.

Consultees

Voluntary organisations, Community Against Racism Group, Trade Union, Herefordshire Race Equality Group, Herefordshire Equality Partnership and Race Equality West Midlands.

Background papers

None identified.