

Corporate Equalities Strategy & Race Equality Scheme

Foreword

West Wiltshire District Council is committed to providing high quality services to everyone living in West Wiltshire. We are totally committed to genuine equality of opportunity, the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the actions set out in this document.

The Council fully supports the Race Relations Act which requires services and employment practices to be provided in a way that is fair and accessible to all, irrespective of race, ethnicity or colour. Our Race Equality Scheme which forms part of the Equalities Strategy demonstrates how we will comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and includes an action plan which is aimed at promoting race equality, eliminating discrimination and tackling institutional racism in areas where it may unwittingly exist.

Fair treatment for all is a vital part of service delivery and makes West Wiltshire a great place to live and work. The actions in this document will be taken forward by our staff and in partnership with other organisations in Wiltshire.

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1. Background

The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A 2000) gives public authorities, including West Wiltshire District Council, a general duty to promote race equality. The RR(A)A 2000 was introduced as a result of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. It aims to try to make sure that public organisations take a more positive approach to addressing race equality in all aspects of their functions, from addressing the working environment to dealing with the public and delivering services.

The general duty means that we need to have due regard to:-

- ◆ eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- ◆ promote equality of opportunity; and
- ◆ promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

We also have a specific duty to produce a Race Equality Scheme which details how we will fulfil these duties. We have combined the Scheme with our Corporate Equalities Strategy. This document is intended to fulfil the statutory requirement and builds on the work that has already begun in working towards the Equalities Standard for Local Government. Our target is to reach Level 2 of the standard in 2002/03 (BV2).

2. Introduction

The Council provides a range of services to a wide range of people and is committed to providing these services to a high standard and quality. It is also one of the larger employers in the area and makes a significant contribution to the economic, social and physical wellbeing of West Wiltshire.

We are committed to securing genuine equality of opportunity, whether required by law or not, in all aspects of our activities as a service provider and an employer. In practice this means that every effort is made to ensure that all sectors of the community will have equal access to services and jobs offered by the Council. No person will receive less favourable treatment than others because of gender, disability, age, ethnic or national origin, marital status, religious creed, sexuality or responsibility for dependants.

The Council confirms that equality extends to all the services it provides as well as its employment policies and practices. All staff have a duty to ensure that they do not discriminate against individuals or groups in the provision of services to our customers. The policy applies to potential employees as well as existing staff. It relates to all aspects of employment including recruitment, pay, terms and conditions of service, training, promotion, career management, grievance, disciplinary and capability procedures, and to all arrangements made for working for the Council.

Training and development is an important aspect of the Council's equalities strategy and will form part of each employee's own individual development.

The Corporate Team is responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of the strategy and associated policies. Service Managers are responsible for making sure the strategy and associated policies are put into practice in their areas.

The strategy builds on many years of experience and commitment and includes existing policies and practices. It will be continuously reviewed and improved following consultation with relevant user groups.

3. Strategic Aims

It is important to us at WWDC that race equality and other equality issues become a part of the way we do things in the authority. Over the coming years we will be working to ensure continuous improvement so that all service users and employees are treated fairly and get the best, most appropriate service for their needs. We recognise the challenges in doing so and the actions contained in this document demonstrate how we will be endeavouring to achieve our targets and commitments.

4. Equalities Strategy

West Wiltshire District Council's Equalities Strategy fits in with other activity and policies already in place within the Authority. As an organisation we currently follow the 'Best Value' process which incorporates general equalities principles. The Race Equality Scheme will also be used to inform other work we do which will impact on the services we deliver to people living in all of our communities.

All our services from planning services and environmental services, to council tax and benefits are seeking to incorporate equality principles into their service delivery and our future plans will reflect this.

WWDC has an Equalities Group known as DICE (Driving Improvement Creating Equality) whose remit is to drive and promote the culture of equality throughout the Council. It is made up of service managers who in turn champion equalities in their own areas. A representative from the Wiltshire Racial Equality Council attends the group as necessary which is lead on behalf of the Chief Executive by the Head of Strategy and the Personnel Manager.

5. The Framework for Equalities

The Corporate Equalities Strategy and Action Plan, the Equalities in Employment Policy and the Equalities in Service Delivery Policy provide the strategic framework for action. This framework ensures that we consider the impact that all our policies and procedures have on equal access to services and employment.

- **Equalities in Employment Policy**
In order to combat indirect discrimination, no unnecessary conditions or requirements will be applied to any of the District Council's jobs which would have an adverse effect on any one group.

- Equalities in Service Delivery Policy
We are committed to eliminating both direct and indirect discrimination. Within the resources available we will endeavour to provide appropriate, sensitive and accessible services. We aim to involve service users in decision-making through a variety of consultation methods and monitoring processes.

The Legal Framework

The Council's commitment to securing genuine equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices is underpinned by the following legislation:-

Equal Pay Act 1970

To prevent discrimination between men and women in the terms of their contracts of employment, including pay.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

It is illegal to discriminate directly or indirectly against men or women in selection for appointment, promotion or training.

Sex Discrimination Act Amendment 1999 – gender reassignment

It is illegal to discriminate against a person who is undergoing a gender reassignment in terms of employment and training.

Race Relations Act 1976

It is illegal to discriminate, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origin.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

All public bodies, including local authorities, must eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. Local authorities have the specific duties of publishing a Race Equality Scheme and monitoring recruitment and training procedures in terms of ethnicity.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

It is illegal to discriminate against disabled people in employment, provision of goods and services and buying or renting land or property. Employers and service providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers.

Human Rights Act 1998

Local authorities are legally required to consider the impact on people's human rights when setting policies and making decisions.

Freedom of Information Act

The Act introduces a general right of access to information held by a wide range of public bodies with the aim of ensuring that decision-making public organisations are open and accountable.

EU Directive on Employment (Article 13 Amsterdam Treaty)

UK law will be changed to give legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion and sexual orientation in employment and training by 2003; and age and disability by 2006.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Key to translating the Council's strategy into action and ensuring the effective implementation is ensuring that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in relation to equalities.

Statutory responsibility for the effective implementation of the Race Equality Scheme lies with the Council. Ensuring effective implementation corporately is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Corporate Team. Service managers are responsible for implementing equalities in all service areas.

The following responsibilities will be discharged as far as reasonably practicable.

Elected Members will:

- be familiar with the equalities strategy and policies and understand the extent to which they have a bearing on their role
- observe and promote the strategy and policies in the performance of their role and duties
- ensure adequate resources are available for the Council to meet its legal responsibilities concerning equality of opportunity.

The Chief Executive/Corporate Team will:

- serve as a role model
- provide direction and endorse corporate equalities strategies and policies
- encourage the integration of equalities into all the services provided by the Council.
- actively promote equalities issues/actions within service areas.

Service Managers will:

- implement and monitor the effectiveness of equalities policies and programmes in their areas
- reflect equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices in their service plans
- demonstrate commitment to equalities by promoting them within their everyday roles, for themselves and for their staff

- ensure that all employment related issues are dealt with in accordance with Council's policies
- identify appropriate training needs and provide training opportunities ensuring that all employees have equal access to training
- ensure that contractors and others working on behalf of the Council are aware of the Council's equalities strategy and policies and are working to meet standards equivalent to the Council's standards
- considering reports relating to equalities initiatives, consulting with their staff and feeding back comments as appropriate

Staff will:

- be familiar with the equalities strategy and policies and understand the extent to which they have a bearing on their job
- observe and promote policies in the performance of their duties
- demonstrate commitment to equalities by taking active steps to challenge discrimination and disadvantage
- support managers in the development and implementation of equalities
- undertake appropriate training on equalities to meet their duties

DICE:

- identifying priorities for action in relation to both service provision and employment
- ensuring that activities undertaken are corporately co-ordinated and embedded in the corporate planning process
- promoting and sharing best practice
- providing practical advice and guidance on implementing equalities priorities within service areas
- participating in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy, race equality scheme and action plan.
- reporting to the Corporate Team and Council on progress.

7. Setting Priorities - Policy and Service Delivery

We have begun the process of looking at the functions and services that we provide and will be assessing them to see how relevant they are to the general duties laid out in the RR(A)A 2000. This involves staff in each of our three directorates setting out in detail the functions and services they provide, and asking "how does this function or policy affect different racial groups in the community we serve?"

Priorities have been set out in our three year corporate action plan (see appendix E). Further details are included in each service areas equalities action plan. Priority has been given to dealing with services that are in direct contact with the public in the first instance.

8. Specific Duties

8.1 Monitor existing functions and policies

WWDC adheres to the principles of the Government's Best Value process. Over the past few years, a number of our services have been assessed against the Best Value criteria. We will continue to ensure that as our services are continuously assessed, race equality and other equality issues are built in and evaluated with appropriately trained staff being involved in the Best Value review teams.

Additionally, the process described below for assessing the impact of new policies will also be adapted for use with existing functions and policies. Much of our activity in year 1 will be concentrated on monitoring our existing functions and policies and building in equalities actions where needed.

8.2 Conduct Assessments on the impact of proposed policies

WWDC produces a number of policy documents each year which detail the way in which elements of our services will be provided eg Housing Strategy, Best Value Performance Plan, Community Strategy, Local Plan. We want to ensure that when these plans and policies are being developed, racial equality and other equality issues are considered and incorporated into the resultant documents. We will therefore ensure that our processes include these assessments. To assist managers in doing so, a checklist has been developed that will ensure that equality issues form part of the assessment process. This form is shown in appendix A.

Other information which will be used to assist with assessment include the following:-

- Demographic data and other statistics
- Comparison of similar policies within the Council or other public bodies
- Survey data
- Complaints
- Community views arising from community planning activities
- Ethnic monitoring data
- Data from groups and agencies directly in touch with minority ethnic people and communities
- Research such as the Hidden Voices report (a study of Wiltshire's minority ethnic residents)
- Best value reviews

This data will gathered and used to inform service planning, major strategies and the future procedures for service delivery and to trigger where appropriate, changes to policy, procedure or service delivery.

9. Consultation

As part of our assessment process we have taken into account the following internal and external consultation. Internally, all service managers were interviewed about race equality issues affecting their service.

Externally, we consulted with Wiltshire Race Equality Council and drew upon the findings of 'Hidden Voices' – research carried out among ethnic minorities about their experience of living in Wiltshire and accessing services.

The Council has in place a consultation strategy and good practice guidelines which set out who we will consult, what we will consult on and how. The strategy recognises the difficulty in obtaining the views of hard to reach groups including ethnic minorities and makes it clear that no one must be denied access to services and the opportunity to comment on proposals.

The Council has established links with voluntary sector organisations who represent 'harder to reach' members of our community and can assist us in contacting these groups and obtaining their views. In addition we use the following consultation methods as and when they are appropriate:-

- consultation meetings
- focus groups
- citizens' jury
- survey questionnaires
- roadshows and exhibitions
- civic newspaper
- local media
- website

The views expressed as a result of consultation are given to service managers and councillors for consideration as part of the decision making process.

Service Managers are actively involved in developing our Equality Strategy and Race Equality Scheme through the DICE group. All service managers have been consulted about the impact of race equality issues on services as part of our process for assessing our functions and policies. Race equality issues and their impact on services will form a part of our service planning process, which requires service managers to carry out consultation with all staff.

The Council will publish the results of any consultation undertaken through:-

- direct feedback to communities and groups affected
- West Wilts Matters (civic newspaper)
- People's Voice newsletter
- website
- local media

10. Publicising the Strategy

The Equalities Strategy and Race Equality Scheme will be of interest to all of our service users and it will therefore be widely publicised and easily accessible. As well as publicising it on our website, www.westwiltshire.gov.uk, reference will be made to it in 'West Wilts Matters' which is distributed to every home in the district. Additional reference copies will be available in Reception and a contact number is provided at the end of this document for members of the public and staff who may require further information or copies. This document can be provided in alternative languages and formats on request.

11. Training

This part of the duty aims to ensure that staff have the skills required to ensure the Council meets its general duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote good race relations. The Council recognises that training for staff and members is essential to implementing the scheme and action plan.

In year 1 of our action plan we intend to enhance the skills of our Corporate Team and Service Managers on equality issues. This will cover the knowledge required in terms of the general duty, the specific duties, the promotion of equality, the nature of direct and indirect discrimination and the meaning of institutional racism. The Council will also be commencing a programme of awareness training for all staff and members to include preventing and challenging discrimination, harassment and prejudice with regard to race, gender and disability.

Priority will also be given to training staff who are responsible for dealing with reported incidents of racial harassment and complaints.

In addition to formal training programmes, we will be using other ways of disseminating information about equalities to staff which will include the intranet and presentations at committee, management meetings and team briefings.

The Council will promote equality of access to training and development opportunities across all service areas and for all levels of staff.

12 Partnerships

Increasingly the work we do in the Council involves working in partnership with other organisations. Our partners include NHS Trusts, county, district and borough Councils, the voluntary sectors and businesses in West Wiltshire and the surrounding area. During the coming year we will start to consider ways in which we can promote racial equality in the work that we do with our partners.

We will also be looking at areas where contractors are utilised for the provision of services to ensure that they are aware of the Council's expectations, that in delivering contracted services, they meet the general duty of the RRA.

13 Employment

West Wiltshire District Council values its workforce and wants all members of staff regardless of their background, age, race, gender, ability etc to achieve their full potential. Specific obligations are laid down in the RRA relating to employment. These require the following activities:-

- Ethnically monitor staff in post and applicants for jobs, promotion and training
- Ethnically monitor and analyse grievances, disciplinary actions, performance appraisal, training and dismissals and other reasons for leaving
- Publish results annually

Our action plan attached sets out how we will fulfil our obligations towards all staff in West Wiltshire District Council.

14 Complaints

We will be aiming to achieve all of the actions contained in this document. However, even in the best run organisations, there will be times when things go wrong and someone will not be happy with the service they receive or may not feel it to be sensitive to their particular needs. In this case, an individual or organisation can make a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure. The Council positively welcomes feedback and complaints about any aspect of its work as information gathered when investigating complaints is used to improve services.

The Council has a three stage complaints procedure that aims to deal with all complaints at the earliest possible stage. If a customer remains dissatisfied, they will be provided with clear information about how to progress their complaint to the next stage. All officers with responsibility for dealing with complaints will be provided with specific training on handling complaints that they, or the complainant, identify as being race related.

If a customer remains dissatisfied after having gone through the stages of the Council's procedure, they will be advised of their right to take the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Council will respond constructively to suggestions on how its complaints procedure may be improved and will work hard to make it accessible to all persons who wish to complain.

Complaints of a specific racist nature

As a key member of the West Wilts Diversity Task Group, the Council endorses the third party reporting form for racist incidents. This provides an option for reporting incidents other than to the police.

The forms are available in our public areas, and the scheme is administered by Victim Support on behalf of the Group.

The Council also has a duty to record and follow up racist incidents for the National Best Value Performance Indicators 174 and 175. The Council is developing a form in consultation with the Wiltshire Racial Equality Council, along with guidance notes, training and a recording system, which will be in operation from 1 April 2003.

15. Key Indicators

The Council has identified a range of key indicators, which should give a good indication as to the general overall effectiveness of the Council in delivering services. The indicators which are relevant to this document are set out in appendix D.

Appendices

- Equalities Checklist (Appendix A)
- Equalities in Service Delivery Policy (Appendix B)
- Equalities in Employment Policy (Appendix C)
- Corporate Action Plan (Appendix D)
- Corporate Action Plan (Appendix E)
- Employment – Ethnic Monitoring Action Plan (Appendix F)

West Wiltshire District Council would welcome your comments on its first Corporate Equalities Strategy and Race Equality Scheme. If you would like to comment, have any queries or need for information or copies of the document please contact:-

Donna Mountford
Corporate Communications
West Wiltshire District Council
Bradley Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 0RD

Telephone: 01225 776655.
Fax: 01225 770316
Email: dmountford@westwiltshire.gov.uk

Screening Policies for impact – questions to be asked

1. Is any part of the policy likely to have a negative effect on someone because of their race or ethnic origin?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, briefly describe the likely effect

2. Does any part of the policy promote equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their race or ethnic origin?

Yes No Don't know

If no, please suggest a way in which the policy could be amended to achieve this

3. Will the policy affect the rights of one person differently than those of someone else?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, please specify

4. If any negative effects were identified in (1), would you say they are:

Significant and must be addressed	Priority 1
Moderate/low and easy to address	Priority 1
Significant but difficult to address	Priority 2
Moderate but difficult to address	Priority 3

Note: These questions apply to any individuals or groups who have dealings with the Council, including staff, council tax payers, contractors etc

POLICY STATEMENT ON EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Council's Commitment

The Council is committed to ensuring equality of access to all its services for the community of West Wiltshire in line with current legislation. It will endeavour to provide genuine equality of opportunity for everyone and to monitor the outcome.

The Council will aim to ensure that no sector of the community shall be denied access or receive a poorer service on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability or religious or political beliefs.

The Council will aim to ensure that all its statutory and non-statutory services will be provided in line with this anti-discrimination policy.

In order to promote equality of access we will aim to ensure that:-

- services are provided in response to the needs of the whole community;
- services are based on consultation with users and positive steps are taken to include groups usually excluded from decision-making;
- all services are flexible and responsive to the changing needs of our community;
- all services are delivered by a workforce reflecting the diversity of the community;
- information on services is widely available and, where necessary, targeted to ensure maximum awareness of provision;
- systems are developed to audit and monitor service delivery and customer satisfaction;
- positive action programmes are developed to target the needs of groups usually excluded;
- an accessible complaints procedure is maintained to guard against discrimination in service allocation and delivery;
- in advertising and publicity, the Council is presented as an authority committed to promoting equality of access to employment and services;
- staff are consulted and their contribution valued when forming and promoting equality policies;
- staff are trained and supported to carry out their duties in line with our equal opportunities policies.

Corporate Organisational Arrangements

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. He/she will oversee the development and implementation of equal opportunities work both corporately and departmentally with the appropriate senior managers.

The Corporate Team will be the corporate mechanism for achieving greater equality by driving and advising on corporate and departmental priorities, and reviewing, monitoring and assessing departmental and inter-departmental strategies and performance.

All senior managers will be responsible for the overall implementation of the equal opportunities policies in respective services.

All staff have a moral and legal duty not to discriminate against individuals or groups in the provision of services and should challenge any discrimination.

Contractors and agents working for the Council will be expected to demonstrate their commitment to equal opportunities. Where appropriate, the Council will specify that contractors conduct regular user (and non-user) surveys in accordance with specified guidelines and time periods, and establish a complaints handling procedure.

Developing and Implementing the Policy

Guidelines will be established for setting good service standards, targets and performance indicators. These will be linked to the Citizens Charter. Indicators will also be linked to the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practices relating to service delivery and rented housing.

Managers will be responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing equal opportunities work in their own departments.

Operational Units will make information on services widely available. Where necessary, they will also target information to individuals or group to ensure maximum awareness of provisions.

We will develop and promote mechanisms for consulting customers.

Staff will be trained to ensure that they feel confident to promote and implement the policy.

Monitoring the Policy

To ensure equality in service delivery, and as part of its corporate performance review process, the Council will obtain feedback from the widest range of groups and users as is practically possible, monitor its complaints procedure and refer to customer surveys.

The Council will take serious seriously any allegations of discrimination against or harassment of its customers. The Council will take steps within its resources, to remedy any customer dissatisfaction.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1 POLICY STATEMENT

The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and opposes all forms of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, religion, age, sex, marital status or sexual orientation. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management and terms and conditions of employment are based solely on objective criteria.

2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY

- 2.1 The overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation rests with the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy in their departments.
- 2.3 The Personnel Manager is responsible for specialist advice, training, setting guidelines for policy implementation and operation and for reporting on the policy at regular intervals to the Local Joint Consultative Committee (Staff).
- 2.4 Each employee has a duty, both morally and legally, not to discriminate against individuals or groups in the provision of Council services and equally to challenge any discrimination.

3 CONSULTATION

Consultation on the development and review of the policy will take place with the appropriate unions through the LJCC (Staff).

4 COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 A copy of the Policy will be given to all employees and Members.
- 4.2 The main theme of the Policy Statement shall be used in advertising vacancies and other marketing material.
- 4.3 Copies of the Policy shall be given to all job applicants.

5 TRAINING

- 5.1 Training and guidance will be provided for all those involved in personnel and management procedures and those involved in selection interviewing will undergo training in fair selection techniques. Anyone who has not received such training within a reasonable period will not be eligible to carry out selection interviews.

- 5.2 Training shall include:-
- (i) increasing awareness of the existence of discrimination and prejudice;
 - (ii) examining the nature of discrimination and the ways in which it can occur;
 - (iii) providing information and advice on the implications of the relevant legislation's;
 - (iv) explaining to employees what is expected of them in terms of behaviour;
 - (v) identifying action needed to deal with discriminatory behaviour and processes.

6 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 6.1 All posts will be advertised.
- 6.2 All advertisements will carry the statement "West Wiltshire District Council is working towards and committed to effective implementation of an Equal Opportunities Policy and welcomes applications from all sectors of the Community".
- 6.3 All advertisements will be placed in publications that are readily available to all sectors of the community and will be placed in specialist publications where appropriate.
- 6.4 No methods of recruitment that might unfairly exclude any potential applicant from being recruited will be used.
- 6.5 Tests that are applied will not have any adverse implications for any categories of applicant and will be based on objective, job related criteria.
- 6.6 The Council shall introduce a code of practice for conducting interviews, which shall provide a sensitive framework for those conducting interviews.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1 In order to ensure that the Council's policy objectives are being met, documentation is being designed to collect appropriate information and provide statistics on the workforce and job applicants.
- 7.2 The Council is anxious to emphasise that the information is treated in confidence and is in no way intended to infringe on employees' or job applicant's civil liberties; indeed it is designed to advance them.

8 GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

- 8.1 Any employee who believes he or she has a grievance can pursue it through the Council's grievance procedure.
- 8.2 Any employee accused of unlawful discrimination will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Key Indicators

Indicator	Actual 01/02	DC Average 00/01	Target 01/02	Actual 01/02	Target 02/03
The level (if any) of the 'Equality Standard for Local Government' to which the authority confirms (BV2). Note: New indicator 2002/03					Level 2
The percentage of the top 5% of earners that are women (BV11a) Note: New indicator 2002/03					
The percentage of the top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities (BV11b) Note: New indicator 2002/03					
The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area (BV16)		2.4%	The Council will develop systems and processes	0.5%	1%
The percentage of local authority employees from ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in the authority area.(BV17)		1.4%	The Council will develop systems and processes	0.5%	1%
The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population (BV174)	0	N/A	0	0	0
The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action (BV175)				0	

Appendix E

The Equality Standard for Local Government

Charting Progress (Updated Jan 04)

Action Plan

Leadership and Corporate Commitment	
Level 1 Requirements Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formulate and adopt a comprehensive equality policy for the authority covering race, gender and disability; - ensure that the written policies are in line with current legislation (Race Relations Act and Race Relations (Amendment) Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act, Disability Discrimination Act) and Codes of Practice issued by the three equality Commissions; - make a corporate commitment to developing a Corporate Equality Plan (CEP) indicating how equality policy will be implemented. The CEP should incorporate or be consistent with the authority's statutory Race Equality Scheme' - make a corporate commitment to carrying out a process of equality impact and needs/requirements assessment including those assessments of organisational and individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA; - make a corporate commitment to a fair employment and equal pay policy; - make a corporate commitment to earmark specific resources for improving equality practice;
Level 1 Current Position	<p>The Council has adopted an Equalities Strategy and Race Equality Scheme (November 02) which reflects the Council's corporate commitment.</p> <p>The Council has an Equal Opportunities Policy in employment and an Equal Opportunity Policy in Service Delivery.</p> <p>A service development bid was made during consideration of the 2003/04 budget but was not supported. However, financial resources were earmarked from the Corporate Training Budget in 2003/04 specifically for equalities awareness training for all staff.</p> <p>A programme of equalities awareness training has been set up and all staff and managers will attend during September 03 and March 04.</p> <p>Level 1 achieved in this area.</p>
Level 1 Actions/Notes	<p>Ongoing monitoring and review of the strategy and equal opportunities policies will be undertaken to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice (Ongoing)</p>

Leadership and Corporate Commitment	
Level 2 Requirements Assessment and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - publish draft Corporate Equality Action Plan' - demonstrate corporate engagement in an impact and needs/requirements assessment process; - develop corporate mechanism for assessing development of service level equality objectives and targets; - create corporate structure for overseeing development of information and monitoring systems; - ensure that mechanisms for responding to harassment on the grounds of race, disability and gender are in place.
Level 2 Current Position	<p>The Equalities Strategy and Race Equality Scheme along with a three year action plan is published on the Council's website and available in hard copy.</p> <p>The Corporate working Group , DICE, have completed assessments.</p> <p>The Corporate mechanism set out to assess development of service level equality objectives and targets is through the DICE Group led by the Head of Strategy and Personnel Manager.</p> <p>The Head of Strategy and Personnel Manager will oversee development of information and monitoring systems. Monitoring reports also go to Corporate Team.</p> <p>The Council has a harassment policy which ensures that harassment claims by employees are responded to.</p> <p>An offensive incident reporting form has been developed and introduced which enables the Council to respond to any offensive incident, including harassment, reported d by a member of the public.</p> <p>Level 2 achieved in this area.</p>
Level 2 Actions/Notes	<p>Review impact assessments.</p>

Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny

<p>Level 1 Requirements Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - corporate commitment to consult with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on all aspects of equality policy; - each department and service are to make a commitment to contribute to the consultation and scrutiny section of the CEP; - make a corporate commitment to equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit; - each department and service area to commit to engage in consultation with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its service delivery; - make a corporate commitment to consult departments and service areas on equality objectives; - each department and service area to commit to processes of equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit on its service delivery; - incorporate equality policy as a key theme within the 'Community Strategy' drawn up by the local authority and its partners; - make a commitment to establish mechanisms for responding to discrimination and harassment on the grounds of race, disability and gender.
<p>Level 1 Current Position</p>	<p>The Equalities Strategy and Race Equality Scheme demonstrates the Council's commitment to equalities.</p> <p>The Council has a consultation policy and strategy which addresses wide consultation and engagement.</p> <p>Training for service managers on equalities awareness and the business case for equalities has been undertaken.</p> <p>Level 1 achieved but need to consolidate.</p>
<p>Level 1 Actions/Notes</p>	<p>The Communications Manager is undertaking work to identify the best methodologies for consulting with all minority groups with advice from WREC and other voluntary sector organisations.</p> <p>The Community Strategy is being reviewed with detailed consultation in order that the Council can incorporate relevant equality actions and policies.</p>

Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny

<p>Level 2 Requirements Assessment and Consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that draft Corporate Equality Action Plan has been circulated to designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with consultation timetable and is published in an appropriate range of languages and formats; - review equality content of 'Community Strategy'; - engage in consultation with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups and the wider community on all aspects of equality policy; - engage in consultation with members, employee representatives, departments and service areas on impact and needs/requirements assessments and all aspects of the CEP; - each department and service area to engage in consultation with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups on its impact and needs/requirements assessments and its service delivery; - each department and service area to engage with equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit on its service delivery; - seek to ensure that the quality policy and objectives are incorporated in 'partnership' arrangements engaged in by the authority.
<p>Level 2 Current Position</p>	<p>The Corporate Equalities Strategy and Race Equality Scheme is available and has been circulated. The Council has the facilities to make documents available in a wide range of formats. WREC were consulted during the development of the Equalities Strategy. Consultation, in line with the Councils adopted consultation charter will take place on all equalities issues and policies.</p> <p>Level 2 not achieved in full.</p>
<p>Level 2 Actions</p>	<p>In reviewing the Community Strategy the Council will include detailed consultation and will be subject to the Corporate Equalities Strategy and Consultation Charter.</p> <p>DICE Group to support managers in carrying out service equality self-assessments/reviews on service delivery. This will include reviewing partnership arrangements to ensure that they are addressing equalities issues. Service equality actions plans will be developed by service managers to deal with issues raised through by the self assessments. Assessments will be carried out from April 04 for completion by September 04 in order that any actions required can be accommodated in the Service and Financial Planning process for 2005/06. If any urgent actions are identified during the assessment/review process, Corporate Team will be made aware and appropriate action will be taken.</p>

Service Delivery and Customer Care

<p>Level 1 Requirements Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - departmental and service area commitment to a comprehensive equality policy appropriate to its service delivery; - department and service area commitment to implementing the equality impact 'needs/requirements' assessment for its service delivery including those assessments of organisational and individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA; - department and service area commitment to developing equal access service plan element of CEP, and to set targets within each department and service area as part of their business plans; - department and service area commitment to equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas; - department and service area commitment to allocate specific resources for improving equality practice.
<p>Level 1 Current Position</p>	<p>While there is a corporate commitment and we have had policies at a corporate level for a number of years there is further work to be done to properly ensure equalities issues are considered and embedded consistently into service areas.</p> <p>Level 1 achieved but need to consolidate.</p>
<p>Level 1 Actions</p>	<p>Service Managers to carry out thorough assessments/reviews of their service areas, develop equality action plans with appropriate targets which are included in annual service and financial plans.</p> <p>The service and financial planning process will enable services to bid for resources to take forward their plans and any specific initiatives.</p>

Service Delivery and Customer Care	
Level 2 Requirements Assessment and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engage in department and service area impact and needs/requirements assessment; - engage in development of department/service level equality objectives and targets; - review of services should include the procurement function and all contracted services and partnership arrangements; - each department and service area to establish planning groups for monitoring and information systems.
Level 2 Current Position	<p>While initial assessments by the DICE group have been completed, this is still an area where further work needs to be undertaken by service managers to generate detailed action plans and targets.</p> <p>Level 2 not achieved in full.</p>
Level 2 Actions	<p>Establish DICE group members as equality champions to support service managers to thoroughly assess their service areas and develop and implement action plans.</p> <p>Managers will be encouraged to develop local performance indicators concerning equalities issues specific to their service areas which will be monitored through the performance management framework.</p>

Employment and Training

<p>Level 1 Requirements Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adopt recruitment procedures which use non-discriminatory practices; commitment to an employment equality assessment of the local labour market area, workforce profiling and equal pay review; - commitment to establish a fair employment and equal pay policy; - commitment to establish an equal employment section of the CEP incorporating the employment related issues from the Race Equality Scheme and including those assessments of organisational and individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA; - commitment to adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants; - commitment to produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit; - commitment to review personnel information system for monitoring suitability including underpinning the Council's statutory ethnic monitoring duties; - commitment to make procedures consistent with Employment Codes of Practice; - commitment to develop a programme of staff training in equality issues.
<p>Level 1 Current Position</p>	<p>The Council has recruitment practices which take account of the requirements above, equalities issues and legislation and codes of practice.</p> <p>The Equalities Strategy sets out the Council's commitment concerning equalities and employment issues.</p> <p>The Council is implementing an Employment (Ethnic Monitoring) Action Plan which covers its statutory duties. (See appendix F). Monitoring information is reported to Corporate Team annually.</p> <p>The Council operates a job evaluation system to assist in its commitment to equal pay.</p> <p>A programme of equalities awareness for all staff and managers is being delivered during Sept 03 and March 04. The Council is developing an Equalities Module for its induction programme which all new staff will be required to undertake. Equalities training has been built into the member development plan.</p> <p>Level 1 achieved.</p>
<p>Level 1 Actions</p>	<p>Continuing work needs to be undertaken on improving the Councils knowledge and understanding of the local labour market to support data rich decision making. (Ongoing)</p>

Employment and Training

<p>Level 2 Requirements Assessment and Consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - develop and adopt fair employment and equal pay policy element of CEP; - engage in employment equality assessment of the local labour market area; - engage in an equal pay review; - adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants; - produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions that are clear and explicit; - review personnel information system for monitoring suitability including supporting the council's statutory ethnic monitoring duties; - develop a programme of equality training to support the CEP and departmental service objectives; - ensure that the training programme is consistent with the training arrangements in the council's Race Equality Scheme; - make all employment procedures consistent with current legislation and Employment Codes of Practice.
<p>Level 2 Current Position</p>	<p>The Council already has recruitment practices, which take account of these requirements and equalities issues and legislative requirements Training for managers and staff on equalities has been delivered and is included in the Corporate Training Plan.</p> <p>Level 2 not achieved in full.</p>
<p>Level 2 Actions</p>	<p>Prior to engaging in any assessment of the local labour market and an equal pay review the Council will need to give these issues careful consideration and allocate resources both to facilitating them and implementing them. These issues will be considered as part of the Corporate Plan Improvement Project and picked up in the HR Strategy. (April 04)</p> <p>Introduction of Induction Module concerning Equalities (April 04).</p>

Appendix F

Action Plan 2002 -2005

Employment – Ethnic Monitoring

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Applying to the Council	<p>Monitor job application rates broken down by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applicants applying • Those shortlisted • Those interviewed • Success rates 	Continue work from year 1.	Analyse information gathered to see if there are differences between different racial groups, investigate any reasons behind differences and take appropriate action
Working for the Council	<p>Monitor the representation of different ethnic groups in the workforce broken down by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service • Grade • Gender • Harassment, disciplinaries and grievances – develop and standardise a system for logging these by ethnicity <p>Develop a system for monitoring training applications and appraisals</p>	<p>Second phase of monitoring broken down by pay and employment terms and conditions</p> <p>Implement monitoring process</p> <p>Examine and review staff appraisal process</p>	Analyse information gathered to see if there are differences between different racial groups, investigate any reasons behind differences and take appropriate action
Leaving the Council	<p>Monitor leaving mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismissals • Resignations • Redundancies • Retirement <p>Other</p>	<p>Continue work from year 1.</p> <p>Develop exit interview process</p>	<p>Assess underlying reasons for leaving the Council.</p> <p>Review exit interview process.</p>

	Year 2 2003 / 2004	Achievements	Outstanding Work
Applying to the Council	Continue Work from year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report produced accessing data gathered in 2002 / 2003 - Monitoring activity continuing. Second year of data available in June 2004 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report recommendations to the Corporate Team - Compare data for the years 1 and 2
Working for the Council	<p>Second phase of monitoring, broken down by pay and employment terms and conditions</p> <p>Implement monitoring process</p> <p>Develop a system for monitoring training applications and appraisals</p> <p>Examine and review staff appraisal process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to use the Compel database and spreadsheet to monitor information in these areas. Second year of data available in June 2004 - Monitoring process continuing to be implemented - Appraisal system reviewed and implemented in April 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare data for the years 1 and 2 - A system for monitoring training applications and appraisals requires development and implementation
Leaving the Council	Develop exit interview process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring of leave reasons continuing to use the Compel database - Draft exit interview policy produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further analysis of leaving reasons required - Continue to work on the exit interview policy for submission to the Corporate Team

Period of reference: 1 May – 30 April