



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Date of Meeting: 24 September 2007

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Inside Policy Framework

Title: RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Report of: Head of Policy & Performance Services

Report reference: PPP74/07

Summary:

The report informs the Executive Committee about proposals to review the Council's Race Equality Scheme, 2004.

Recommendations:

The Executive is requested to:

- Note the Council's requirements to meet the Race Equality Duty
- Note and comment upon the proposals to review the Race Equality Scheme (Appendix 1)
- Refer the report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

What is the Race Equality Scheme?

The Race Equality Scheme summarises the Council's overall approach to racial equality and how it plans to meet both its general and specific race equality duties. Authorities are required to review their Race Equality Scheme every three years. The Council's existing Race Equality Scheme was produced in 2004; a review of the scheme should begin by the end of the year.

General and specific duties

The Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a **general duty** on the authority to promote race equality and:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

The Act also places **specific duties** on the authority including the publication of a Race Equality Scheme. The scheme should state the functions and policies, or proposed policies, which the authority has assessed as relevant to its performance of the general duty. It should also include the Council's arrangements for:

- assessing and consulting on the impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
- monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
- publishing the results of such assessments and consultation
- ensuring public access to the Council's information and services
- training staff on the general duty

There is a specific duty on employment that the Council should monitor and publish, by racial groups, the numbers of staff in post and applicants for employment, training and promotion.

What does the Council need to do?

The Council needs to review its current Race Equality Scheme (December 2004) to bring it in line with our equality, disability and gender policies. The scheme will meet legislation and will link into the Council's priorities and vision, stating clear race equality objectives for the authority. The Corporate Equality Action Plan has recently been updated so this is a good opportunity to link the Race Equality Scheme implementation plan into this work and ensure actions are integrated across all corporate equality plans.

A Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group is undertaking a review of Migrant Workers in Carlisle. It is suggested that the outcomes of this review should inform the revised Race Equality Scheme and the draft timetable reflects this proposal.

What are the proposals to review the Race Equality Scheme?

An action plan to review the scheme is attached, Appendix 1 and includes, undertaking a data audit, setting up a cross Council workgroup to lead the review, communication and consultation on the scheme, and reporting arrangements to publish the scheme by April 2008.

The Council needs to challenge its policies and service provision by considering the different needs of racial groups through the Equality Impact Assessment process. It also needs to develop service monitoring to demonstrate what impact and benefits any changes made have on the community.

What difference will it make to the general public and our employees?

The Race Equality Scheme should lead improvements in how the Council acts as an employer and how it improves services for its local communities. Some examples of work already being undertaken by the authority to promote race equality include:

- Leadership of the developing Carlisle Equality & Diversity Partnership
- Support of the Community Law Centre which provides advice and support for migrant workers
- Holding regional jobs fairs offering information on local jobs, training and advice services
- Hosting cultural workshops in schools
- Putting on welcome events for migrant workers and contributing to the development of a welcome pack for migrant workers
- Revision of the Council's communications strategy, including signing up to language line to provide translations and development of a translations database.

What are the benefits of the scheme for the authority?

By promoting racial equality, the Council will improve recruitment practices and encourage greater diversity within the workforce. The Council will also benefit by developing and improving its services so that it understands what the community needs and is able to improve customer satisfaction by tailoring services to meet these needs. This should also help the Council achieve better quality services and target resources more effectively.

The review will also enable the Council to identify progress in implementing the current scheme and drive forward the achievement of higher levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government¹.

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to date:

- Corporate Equality Group
- Senior Management Team and Service Heads

¹ The Equality Standard for Local Government was established in 2001 to mainstream equality of service delivery and employment in local authorities. Carlisle City Council is currently at level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and aims to achieve level 2 by March 2008 (there are 5 levels in total).

- Carlisle Equality and Diversity Partnership has been approached for advice and support on undertaking consultation with community groups

2.2 Consultation proposed:
Consultation is included in the action plan; the exact details of which will be developed as the review progresses.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is requested to:

- Note the Council's requirements to meet the Race Equality Duty
- Note and comment upon the proposals to review the Race Equality Scheme
- Refer the report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the Council has due regard to the needs of employees and all members of its local communities when planning and delivering services.

To meet its statutory requirements of the Race Equality Duty.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing & resources: The project plan includes setting up a working group to spread the workload, and subsequent increased capacity and expertise, across the council.
- Financial: Short term, the Council's research budget will be used to fund consultation. The equality budget will fund the printing costs of the scheme and implementation plan. Longer term, there may be other financial implications depending on the recommendations of the review of the scheme.
- Legal: The Council is required to publish a Race Equality Scheme under the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 to show how it will meet its specific duty and the general duty to promote race equality under the Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- Corporate: The Race Equality Scheme and implementation plan forms part of the Council's corporate policy framework and is fundamental to achieving the Council's target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government as set out in the Corporate Improvement Plan.
- Risk Management: The general duty is enforceable by judicial review. Any person or body affected by a failure to comply with the general duty by a public authority may take action through judicial review proceeding. The specific duties are enforceable under section 71D of the amended Race Relations Act. Failure to comply exposes the Council to financial and reputational risk.

- Equality and disability issues: The Scheme and implementation plan will enable the Council to meet the statutory requirements of the Race Equality duties.
- Environmental: The Race Equality Scheme and implementation plan will be published on the Council's website and a small number will be made available in hard copy.
- Crime & disorder: This will be considered as part of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment programme.
- Impact on Customers: This will be identified through the review of the Race Equality Scheme.

Race Equality Scheme 2007 - Project Plan

Reporting arrangements - Race Equality Scheme

	Aug-07	Sep-07	Oct-07	Nov-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Mar-08	Apr-08
Corporate Equality Group	8.8.07 - Outline Race Equality Duty, ask for comments on draft plans to revise the Scheme.								
Carlisle Equality & Diversity Partnership	30.8.07 - Outline draft plans to revise the Scheme. Request advice & assistance in undertaking consultation on the Scheme.								
SMT		Outline Race Equality Duty, ask for comments on draft plans to revise the Scheme & nominations for working group.							
Executive		24.9.07 Outline Race Equality Duty, ask for comments on draft plans to revise the Scheme & members' involvement	22.10.07	19.11.07	10.12.07 17.12.07	21.1.08	18.2.08	17.3.08 Draft Scheme for comments (incl. consultation results). Migrant Workers Scrutiny Review - final report	21.4.08 or Special Exec meeting in early April to enable the final Scheme to go to Full Council 29.4.08? Final Scheme (incl. O&S comments), agree further updates & establish member champion
Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee			11.10.07 Outline Race Equality Duty, ask for comments on draft plans to revise the Scheme & members' involvement	22.11.07		17.1.08	14.2.08 - Migrant Workers Scrutiny Review final report	27.3.08 Draft Scheme for comments (incl. consultation results) & agree further updates to	
Full Council						15.1.08	5.2.08	4.3.08	29.4.08 Final Race Equality Scheme for approval
	Confirmed dates								
	Indicates provisional dates								