

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME 2005

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is South Staffordshire Council's Race Equality Scheme. It is a statement of how the Council plans to meet both its general and specific duties to promote race equality.
- 1.2 The Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 gave the Council a new statutory duty to promote race equality. The general duty requires the Council in carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity; and
 - promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.
- 1.3 The duty's aim is to make race equality a central part of the way public authorities work, by putting it at the centre of policy making, service delivery, regulation and enforcement, and employment practice.
- 1.4 The Council has prepared this scheme with the objective of assessing, developing and improving existing policies, and implementing new policies where necessary. The development and implementation of the scheme will enable the Council to meet the general duty and other specific duties to promote race equality.
- 1.5 The Council sees this duty as both an opportunity and a challenge and recognises that developing comprehensive and systematic equalities practices are integral to its performance.

2. Aims and Values

- 2.1 South Staffordshire Council aims to tackle racial discrimination and promote race equality and good race relations.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity in employment, service delivery and training. In line with its Equal Opportunities Policy the Council aims to ensure that no prospective employee, existing employee or service user receives less favourable treatment as a result of their gender, race, disability, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, culture, religion, sexuality, marital status or age.
- 2.3 The Council believes in providing and promoting equality of opportunity, equality of access and positive outcomes for all sectors of the community. In doing so, it seeks to embrace the contributions made by all sections of the community to maintain the district's cultural, economic and social well being.

2.4 The Council will consult with its customers to identify their needs and respond positively to these. The Council will empower and encourage all sections of the community to participate in decision making.

3. Fulfilling General and Specific Duties

3.1 In recognising the need for commitment to racial equality the Council will determine where appropriate responsibilities rest for ensuring its general and specific duties are met.

Political - by assigning equality issues to the Deputy Leader (Support Services)

Corporate - by assigning overall responsibility for ensuring equality is embedded within the culture of the organisation to the Chief Executive

Operational - by ensuring compliance with and monitoring of the specific duties through the Head of Human Resources as defined within the equal opportunities policy.

3.2 The Council continues the process of undertaking full assessments of its functions and policies for relevance to the general duty. In undertaking the assessment procedure the Council has developed a strategic approach to determining and evaluating specific relevance to our duties.

3.3 In order to assess how or whether its policies or functions impact differently on racial groups and whether they promote good race relations the following will be considered:-

- Who are the users of services?
- What are their needs and are they different to other users?
- Do they meet their needs?
- What do we need to do or change to meet their needs more effectively and efficiently?

3.4 Each service area will be responsible for carrying out equality impact assessments. All senior managers and elected members will receive training in order to assist them in ensuring the Council meets its general and specific duties. Annual reports on the progress of the action plan will be reported to Management Team and elected members.

3.5 Appendix 1 sets out the assessment of each policy and function with responses to the key questions required for assessing its relevance to the general duty.

3.6 As part of the strategy for addressing the general and specific duties each service area will, as part of the impact assessment process, rigorously challenge existing practices, policies, procedures, documents, application forms, etc. to ensure the Council meets its duty. This will include, depending on its relevance, undertaking the types of assessment identified in Appendix 2. This is not an exclusive or exhaustive list, rather it is one that summarises the types of assessment required.

4. Timetable and Action Plan

- 4.1 This Race Equality Scheme is effective over the three year period from 1st June 2005 when the current Race Equality Scheme expires. It is, therefore, in line with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) guidance and forms a significant element in achieving the Equality Standard for Local Government, to which the Council has given a commitment to achieve. It is the Council's intention to give top priority to those functions which are relevant to all or part of the general duty and for which there is some substantial evidence that different racial groups could be differently affected or about which there is public concern. The objective is to cover all functions over the three year period.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that during the three year period priorities may change and that the scheme will be an ongoing process. The scheme must be a living document, flexible enough to accommodate the changing needs of the community and people of South Staffordshire.
- 4.3 It should be emphasised that the timescale set out in the statutory Code of Practice is the minimum requirement of the Act and each member of the Executive and the Chairman of the Regulatory Committee may consider it appropriate to undertake more frequent reviews in some areas.
- 4.4 The Council recognises that the introduction of new policies, revised or new legislation, and experience may dictate an urgent review of some functions which may result in a different timescale to that indicated above.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1 The Council will assess and monitor its services and policies, including services and policies it is proposing to introduce, to make sure that they are not affecting some groups negatively.
- 5.2 In building on the Council's Best Value principles, and building on the work already underway on the Council's Consultation Strategy, the Race Equality Scheme requires the Council to set out arrangements for monitoring the impact of policies. These mechanisms will include:-
 - Establishing appropriate monitoring systems
 - Monitoring effect on different groups
 - Identifying and highlighting possible inequalities
 - Assessing whether differences constitute any adverse impact and endeavouring to remove any unfairness or disadvantage
 - Investigating underlying barriers or causes that result in some ethnic groups not being treated as well as others.

- 5.3 Customer satisfaction surveys, one-off surveys, and best value consultations with customers will include ethnic monitoring where appropriate.
- 5.4 If any barriers or causes constitute unjustifiable discrimination the policy may need to be considered for revision.
- 5.5 Complaints will be dealt with as quickly and equitably as possible following the Councils established Complaints Procedure. The current Complaints Procedure has itself been time tabled for re-assessment and revised monitoring arrangements will take account of the Scheme's requirements.

6. Arrangements for assessing and consulting on proposed policies

- 6.1 The Council will effectively consult the general public and, particularly, involve ethnic minorities at all stages.
- 6.2 The Council will use a number of consultation methods depending upon the service concerned, the nature of any difference identified and the scope of any proposed policies. These will include:
- Consultation with the CRE, Race Equality Council and other representatives of ethnic groups.
 - Use of targeted questionnaires.
 - Use of focus groups or residents panel.
 - Direct consultation with individual users.
 - Widespread consultation through the South Staffordshire Review and on the Council's website.
- 6.3 In respect of each consultation exercise an assessment will be made of the most appropriate method of consultation, taking into account the need to access the views of those for whom English is not their first language or who are otherwise 'hard to reach' by reason of disability, homelessness or other cause.
- 6.4 The Council will publish the results of its monitoring in our annual Best Value Performance Plan.

7. Access to Information and Services

- 7.1 In developing the scheme the Council will set in place arrangements to ensure access to information and services.
- 7.2 It will achieve this in conjunction with its commitments under The Human Rights Act and The Data Protection Act it will set out arrangements to ensure the public gain access to information and the services it provides as follows:
- 7.2.1 To ensure access is gained to information the Council will:

- Identify information needs of ethnic minorities
- Monitor patterns of use
- Identify and remove barriers to access to information
- Assess the way information is provided, i.e. languages

7.2.2 To ensure access is gained to services the Council will:

- Consult on delivery styles
- Ensure accessibility
- Conduct community outreach where needs are identified
- Provide staff training
- Address e-enablement through e-government
- Provide interpretation and translation service
- Monitor our staff profile
- Take positive action

8. Training

8.1 The Council will ensure that the scheme is promoted amongst all staff so that they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities under the duty to promote race equality.

8.2 A training programme has been developed and is underway to assist the workforce and Members on issues relevant to the general and specific duties to promote race equality. Copies of the scheme have been provided to all employees and Members and published on the Council intranet and website.

8.3 It will provide regular information and training where possible to all staff on the Race Equality Scheme and its implementation. Through its existing Employee Development process it will:

- Identify knowledge and skills required
- Assess extent to which staff have knowledge and skills
- Identify any gaps
- Design, and deliver training

- Monitor and evaluate training

9. Specific Duties in Employment

9.1 It will ensure that it meets its specific duties in employment.

9.2 In line with the draft guidance issued by the CRE it will:

- review current arrangements in place for monitoring ethnicity of employees, prospective employees, employees promoted and training undertaken
- combine monitoring data with existing monitoring systems to ethnically monitor and analyse grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisal, training and dismissals and other reasons for leaving
- analyse data for patterns of inequality
- take action where unjustifiable patterns are revealed
- produce and publish results annually

10. Complaints

10.1 It will ensure that built into its complaints procedure is a specific process for effectively dealing with complaints about the way it is meeting its duties to promote race equality. This procedure will also include an effective process to investigate and resolve other complaints about racial equality.

11. Publishing Results

11.1 It will make sure that everyone, whatever their ethnic background, has access to information about the authority and its services.

11.2 To increase transparency and confidence in the Council, it undertakes to demonstrate its commitment to the promotion of race equality. This will be achieved by establishing arrangements for publishing results, assessments, consultations and monitoring we undertake. It will also include in its publications details of any adverse impact.

11.3 To demonstrate how it meets the aims and objectives of its Race Equality Scheme, it will produce reports yearly on the assessment, consultation and monitoring exercise. A summary of results will be included in the Council's Best Value annual report. Results will also be widely available through existing publications and through the development of the Council's website.

12. Responsibilities

12.1 Mike Owen, Head of Human Resources, has responsibility to co-ordinate the required tasks to ensure the Council meets its general and specific duties. He will make available, update, and promote the scheme throughout the Council.

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MEO/TMR/RES2
August, 2005

APPENDIX 1

**Assessing Functions or Policies for their Relevance
to the General Duty**

	Key questions to ask in Assessing Relevance of Functions and Policies				
	Is it relevant to the general duty?		What is the degree of relevance?		Prioritisation
Function or Policy	Which of the 3 aspects does it relate to (if any or all) 1. Eliminating discrimination? 2. Promoting equality of opportunity? 3. Promoting good race relations?	Is there evidence or reason to believe that some racial groups could be differently affected? Which racial groups are affected?	How much evidence do you have? 0 – none 1 – a little 2 – some 3 – a lot	Is there any public concern that functions/policies are being operated in a discriminatory manner? 0 – none 1 – a little 2 – some 3 – a lot	1. High Priority (Yr 1) 2. Medium Priority (Yr 2) 3. Low Priority (Yr 3)
Accountancy & Financial					
Guidance for Officers	2	No	0	0	1
Councillors Guide	1	No	0	0	2
Medium Term Financial Strategy	1	No	0	0	2
Creditors Payments	2	No	0	0	2
Payroll	-				
Annual Audit Plan	2	No	0	0	3
Income & Collections	2	No	0	0	1
Car Loan Scheme	-				
Insurances	1	No	0	0	3
Customer & Electoral					
Concessionary Travel	2	No	0	0	2
Electoral Registration	2	No	0	0	2
Procurement Strategy	2	No	0	0	1
Sale of Register	2	No	0	0	2
Charges					
Local Government	2	No	0	0	3
Boundary Matters					

Solutions	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Architectural & Landscape					
Arboricultural Advice & TPO's	2	No	0	0	1
Architectural Advice	2	No	0	0	1
Countryside Management	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Contract Management	2	No	0	0	2
Landscape Design	2	No	0	0	3
Landscape Planning	2	No	0	0	2
Benefits					
Visiting Officers Code of Conduct	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Benefits Payments	1,2	No	0	0	3
Fraud & Overpayments	1,2	No	0	0	2
Democratic					
Complaints	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Council & Committee Meetings	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Disabled Persons Key Schemes	1,2	No	0	0	1
Public Rights of Way	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Grants & Loans	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Road Closures	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Car Boot Sales	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Local Land Charges	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Code of Conduct for Members	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Development & Building Control					
Planning Permission	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Planning Applications	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Planning Enforcement	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Street Naming	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Planning Appeals	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Building Regulations	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Consent for Advertising	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Application for listed building consent	1,2,3	No	0	0	2

Engineering					
Drainage advice	1,2,3	0	0	0	1
Drain Cleaning	1,2,3	0	0	0	3
Flood Protection	1,2,3	0	0	0	2
Skip hire service	1,2,3	0	0	0	2
Graffiti Removal	1,2,3	0	0	0	1
Street Lighting	1,2,3	0	0	0	2
Public Car Parks	1,2,3	0	0	0	3
Street nameplates	1,2,3	0	0	0	3
Cesspool & Septic Tank Emptying	1,2,3	0	0	0	3
Dangerous Building Structures	1,2,3	0	0	0	2
Demolition Notices	1,2,3	0	0	0	2
Environmental Health (Commercial)					
Environmental Health Education	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Pest Control	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Dog Wardens	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Food Hygiene & Safety	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Occupational Health and Safety	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Infectious Disease Control	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Health Promotions	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Environmental Health (General)					
Abandoned Vehicles	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Air Pollution/ Quality	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Contaminated Land Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Dog Fouling	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Energy Efficiency	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Fitness of Residential Properties	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Fly Tipping/Dumping	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Home Composting	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Home Improvement Grants	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Home Renovation & Disabled Facility Grants	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Housing Assistance Policy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1

Refuse Collection	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Street Cleansing	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Recycling	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Traveller's policy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Noise Nuisance	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Public Health	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Promotions					
Housing Standards	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Sustainable	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Development / Local Agenda 21					
Information Technology					
E-Government	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
IT Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Training	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Internet	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Intranet	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Legal and Licensing					
Small Lotteries	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Street and house-to- house collections	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Taxi Licensing	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Amusements with Prizes	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Liquor/entertainment/ late night refreshment licensing	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Leisure & Tourism					
Tourism Association	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Leisure Centres	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Baggeridge Country Park/ Railway Walk	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Arts Development	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Sports Development	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
South Staffordshire Sports Council	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Community Provision	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
HYPE	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Leisure Grant Aid	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Local Taxation					
Local Taxation	1,2,3	No	0	0	1

Council Tax Billing	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Council Tax Relief's & reductions	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Council Tax Recovery	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Non-domestic Rates	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Administration of non-domestic rates relief's	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Non-domestic rates recovery	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Human Resources					
Family Friendly Policies	1,2,3	No	2	0	1
Aids Policy	1,2	No	0	0	3
Disciplinary	1,2,3	No	2	0	1
Grievance	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Harassment	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Alcohol/ Substance misuses policy	1,2,3	No	1	0	3
Health and safety policy	2	No	1	0	3
Race equality Scheme	1,2,3	No	1	0	1
Recruitment and Selection	1,2,3	No	1	0	2
Recruitment of Ex-offender's policy	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Whistle blowing policy	1,2,3	No	1	0	3
Appraisals	2	No	1	0	3
Equal Opportunities	1,2,3	No	1	0	1
Training & Development	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Code of Conduct for Employees	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Sickness Absence	2	No	0	0	2
Strategic Development					
Homelessness Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Review of "buildings at risk" register	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Commercial Development	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Conservation	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Housing Register	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Housing Strategy &	1,2,3	No	0	0	2

Advice					
Local Plans	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Submission bids for external funding	-	-	-	-	-
Hinksford Park	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Registered Social Landlords	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Social Housing Grant	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Supporting People Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Anti Social Behaviour Orders	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Protecting tenants from illegal harassment	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Community development	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Management Team					
Best Value Performance Plan	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Corporate Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Performance Management	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Crime and Disorder Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Communication Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	2
Data Protection	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Freedom of Information	1,2,3	No	0	0	3
Community Strategy	1,2,3	No	0	0	1
Local Strategic Partnership	1,2,3	No	0	0	1

- Check design of forms and increase availability over Internet.
- Check advertising format/media to ensure spread and coverage.
- All employees and elected members to be trained in diversity and equalities.
- Monitoring of attendance on training events.
- Assess if the Service Users have particular needs or priorities.
- Review access to the public areas of the building, its signage and facilities to assess whether it meets the needs of visitors.
- Examine letters and written policies and procedures to assess how accessible they are to users.
- Assess whether the use of multi-language forms or having access to a translator would facilitate users of the service.
- Consider whether the format and wording of reports and minutes meet the needs of the public and other service users.
- Examine procedures and questionnaires to establish if there is any different outcomes for different groups.
- Monitor usage of programmes by people from minority ethnic groups.
- Encourage members of minority ethnic groups to participate in User/Non User Forums and Groups.
- Ensure all information and promotional literature and publications conform to corporate standards.
- Ensure that all staff have access to Council policy information to be aware of the Council's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Ensure that current and future Council policies are fully complied with.
- Ensure that all staff administer service requirements to all social and ethnic groups in accordance with Council policies.
- Ensure that contracts (conditions) for goods and services are in accordance with relevant legal requirements with regard to equal opportunities and employment law.
- Ensure outside services are provided to all social and ethnic groups in accordance with standard specifications and service level agreements.
- Pro-active use of ethnically diverse imaging in publications.
- Identify and address any specific employee needs for alternative formats to make internal communications accessible.
- Provide more information about networks/community organisations.
- Publicly state equalities policies.
- Monitoring of equality issues to appear in action plans linked to partnership strategy.
- Close liaison with equality and minority groups.
- Seek support and advice from equality and minority groups.
- Build equality issues into the policy development framework.
- Develop indicators/objectives to monitor how equality issues have been addressed in the review and development of policy.
- Build equality issues into the performance management framework.