

Huntingdonshire District Council

Race Equality Scheme

Introduction

The Council has a duty to promote race equality. We are also committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations. This scheme describes how we intend to fulfil this positive commitment and to meet our duty.

Functions and Policies

We have identified our functions and formal policies and given them a priority depending on their relevance to race equality. We will use this review (appended) as a programme to assess all our functions over the next three years, as follows –

Year	Priority
2002/03	1
2003/04	2
2004/05	3

By functions we mean the full range of the Council's activities and services provided in accordance with our duties and powers. By policies we mean formal and informal decisions, procedures, plans, strategies and objectives about how we carry out our duties and use our powers.

Strategic Aims for Equality

Our Equal Opportunities and Anti Discrimination Policy formalises our commitment to quality, effectiveness and efficiency in our services, underpinned by equality for users of those services and our employees who deliver them. In 2002/03 it is proposed to enhance this policy into a comprehensive equalities strategy, which will embrace race equality.

Our corporate plan – Huntingdonshire 2000 plus – and our community strategy – Shaping the Future of Huntingdonshire – both express the importance we place on equality. This commitment will be reinforced as we revise our plans and, with others, develop a Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

The Council's Medium Term Objectives complement our work to promote equality and good race relations, specifically –

- ❖ MTO-01: to identify and remove barriers which prevent access or take-up of services
- ❖ MTO-03: providing services effectively, efficiently and economically to meet local needs
- ❖ MTO-14: developing communities to which people feel they belong
- ❖ MTO-15: increased participation in electoral processes
- ❖ MTO-16: improved representation of local people and local interests.

Access to Information and Services

We will ensure that information about the Council and our services is available to all sections of our communities and that services are accessible to everyone. To do this we will –

- ❖ consider access to information and services when assessing and monitoring services
- ❖ make sure our staff have the necessary skills, information and understanding to provide services and information equally and fairly
- ❖ ask local communities what services and information they need and how they want them provided.

Assessment

In a three year cycle we will make a detailed assessment of all our functions and policies, both formal and informal, to ensure that, where relevant, the way that we carry out those functions –

- ❖ eliminates racial discrimination
- ❖ promotes equality of opportunity; and
- ❖ promotes good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Specifically, we will examine each function and policy in detail according to the priority given to it to identify whether there is evidence that they are affecting racial groups differently. To do this we will –

- ❖ use ethnic monitoring to collect and analyse information about people's racial and ethnic origins to assess fair access to and use of services
- ❖ use national guidance and definitions to inform our assessments
- ❖ use historical data, including any available evidence, complaints or public concerns, survey and research findings, ethnic data and census results or general or specific research to assess the effectiveness of our services in promoting race equality
- ❖ compare our policies and the way we carry out our functions with other local authorities and public bodies.

Consultation

We will assess and consult on the likely impact of new or revised policies.

Specifically, we will undertake clear, representative and proportionate consultation, using a range of appropriate methods, which effectively engage people from different racial or ethnic communities to ensure that any new policy does not discriminate or harm good race relations.

Monitoring Arrangements

We will monitor and analyse our policies and functions for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality. We will use a range of methods to do this -

- ❖ statistical analysis of ethnic data
- ❖ satisfaction surveys analysed by racial group
- ❖ random or targeted surveys
- ❖ qualitative research

We will use the same ethnic classification system for ethnic monitoring as that used in the 2001 Census, except where research is targeted at specific communities where more detailed information might be required.

We will incorporate consideration of the duty into review programmes, including Best Value reviews, service planning processes and performance management systems. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on how we conform to the Equality Standard for Local Government.

An annual review of the effectiveness this scheme and our progress will be undertaken and reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) and Cabinet and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

Using the Results

We will use the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring to ensure we avoid or minimise adverse impacts on race equality and race relations. The information will be used to understand and meet the needs of different racial groups and to make new arrangements or change arrangements so that our policies and the way we carry out our functions promote race equality. Any new arrangements or changes we make will be relevant to the nature of the policy or function and its possible effect on the public, particularly any racial group.

Publishing Results

The results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring and reviews of this scheme will be published in a manner that is appropriate, accessible and proportionate.

We will use existing publication methods to publish a summary of our assessments, consultations, and monitoring exercises, including Council newsletters, our Website and Best Value Performance Plan.

A copy of the report compiled after each assessment will be available in full on our Website (www.huntsdc.gov.uk) or on request from the Policy Division, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN 01480 388032.

Where appropriate the Council will consider using or commissioning new methods of publication which are proportionate to achieving race equality.

Employment

To help us achieve our commitments and duty we will carry out monitoring of our employees throughout their employment cycle – from application to leaving. This monitoring will enable us to measure the progress in promoting equality of opportunity and achieving a representative workforce.

Specifically, we will –

- ❖ collect ethnic monitoring data for existing employees, applicants for employment, for training, promotion, performance assessment, for staff involved in grievance or disciplinary procedures and for employees who leave
- ❖ analyse the data to find any patterns of inequality or practices which might harm race relations
- ❖ take any action necessary to remove barriers or discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations
- ❖ publish the results of our monitoring each year.

The ethnic monitoring of employees will be combined with the monitoring of other data in our information systems to build on current practices to promote equal opportunity. In accordance with the Best Value Performance Indicators we will collect and publish data on the percentage of our employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic community population in Huntingdonshire.

The ethnic monitoring of employees will be reported annually to the Council's Employment Panel and included in our Best Value Performance Plan.

Arrangements for Training

The Council has commissioned a training and development programme for its employees to promote an understanding of equality and its implications for meeting the Council's goals and objectives. The programme will incorporate the requirements and benefits of meeting the duty and our commitment to promoting race equality.

Senior management and employees who will be directly responsible for this Scheme will receive additional specific training.

The Council's induction programme for new employees will include initial training on the importance of equality and specifically promoting race equality to meeting the Council's objectives.

Complaints

Complaints about how we are meeting our duties or other complaints about race equality will be dealt with through our established complaints procedure, which is available to all members of the public.