

THE DUTY TO PROMOTE RACE EQUALITY
Updated Race Equality Scheme
(Report by the Head of Policy)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Race Relations Act was amended in 2001 to give the council and other public authorities a new statutory duty to promote race equality with the aim of promoting fair and accessible services and to improve equal opportunities in employment.

2. THE GENERAL DUTY

- 2.1 The aim of the duty is to make the promotion of racial equality central to the work of public authorities, who are expected to take the lead in promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations and preventing unlawful discrimination. In practice, regard must be given to racial equality in the day-to-day work of policy-making, service delivery, employment practice and other functions of the Council.

3. SPECIFIC DUTIES

- 3.1 The Council is required to prepare and publish a race equality scheme (RES) which will explain how we will meet both the general and specific duties. The council's RES was first published in 2002 and has recently been reviewed and updated in line with current good practice.

- 3.2 The RES sets out how the council will —

- assess whether functions and policies are relevant to race equality;
- monitor policies to see how they affect race equality;
- assess and consult on policies we are proposing to introduce;
- publish the result of the consultations, monitoring and assessments;
- ensure that the public have access to the information and services we provide; and
- train our staff on the new duties.

- 3.3 As an employer of more than 150 employees, the Council must also —

- monitor by ethnic group existing staff and applicants for jobs, promotion and training, grievances, disciplinary action, performance appraisals, and dismissals

4. **Progress so far**

- The recent review of the RES was carried out as part of an informal assessment of the council's progress towards achieving the Equality Standard for Local Government. It found that our RES lacked some depth compared with contemporary schemes which achieve best practice. Particularly it was identified that the scheme lacked an action plan and timetable to show how and when the proposed work under the scheme will be completed. The attached updated scheme meets the council's legal requirements and good practice and specifically the Action Plan identifies the links between the RES and the Equality Standard for Local Government.

5. **Recommendation**

- That the Cabinet adopts the updated RES and associated Action Plan.