

**Brighton & Hove City Council**

**For general release**

**Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

**Report of: Deputy Chief Executive**

**Subject: Progress report on the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme 2002/3**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

**1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To advise the OSOC Committee of progress on publishing and implementing the council's Race Equality Scheme in 2002/3.
- 1.2 To clarify plans for the programme of action to April 2004.
- 1.3 To update the OSOC Committee on arrangements for an initial consultation Event, which will consult on the public sector agencies equalities policies, including the Council's Inclusive City Policy.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The OSOC Committee is asked to note the Race Equality Scheme is progressing and comment upon the arrangements for consultation in Equality Impact Assessment.

**3. Information/background**

- 3.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Race Relations [Amendment] Act 2000, the council has published a Race Equality Scheme [RES], setting out plans to assess all its services and functions for impact on race equality over a period of three years [until April 2005]. The RES was distributed in full-finalised version in November 2002. There is a summary version, in addition, that has been distributed to all council staff and buildings and to

citizens through community groups and venues, schools, libraries, doctors' surgeries, City Direct and other public places.

- 3.2 Copies of the summary have been produced on tapes and have been translated into community languages in hard copy.

### **3.3 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 3.3.1 An impact assessment toolkit has been designed to be used alone, or in conjunction with Best Value Reviews, to guide managers who are assessing their services for impact on race equality. In order that the assessments are comprehensive managers are asked to take account of issues that are important to a wide range of people, including disabled people and women, people of different faiths, younger and older people and gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transsexual people, as appropriate. In this way, the needs of a range of people in the Black and minority ethnic communities and beyond can be tackled.
- 3.3.2 The original timetable of assessments has been amended as experience has shown that the original time scale was too ambitious. A more realistic time scale is agreed and a 'service focus' incorporated to prioritise assessments for the coming years. This year housing, neighbourhood renewal, social care and education assessments have been prioritised, along with some core functions such as the Complaints service and Human Resources.
- 3.3.3 All first year Impact Assessors have been provided with training on the RR[A]A and on how to conduct an Impact Assessment. After they have started their assessment, managers are brought together with the same trainer to discuss their assessment and agree a way forward. More training events are planned for assessors who will do second year impact assessments.
- 3.3.4 Each Directorate has formed a Project team, with a lead assessor, supported by the Joint Heads of Equalities and Community Cohesion. Lead Assessors who are the Equalities Programme Board representatives report to the board on progress. Recommendations from assessments will be incorporated in Team Plans and Directorate Development Plans [DDPs], and reviewed for success against monitoring information. It is expected that each assessment will identify the information needed to measure success and managers will put monitoring procedures in place, using census categories. Each assessment will also take account of the workforce profile of the service area and set targets to address under-representation and training needs.

3.3.5 Due to the re-shaping of the Council this year, there has been some delay in identifying some assessors and lead assessors, and therefore some of the Directorates are late in beginning assessments. These have been rolled into the second year.

3.3.6 Adult Care [Assessment Services], Children's' Disability Services, Special Education Assessment Services, Adult Learning, Youth Offending Services, Human Resources, and Allotment Services have completed the first stage of their assessments and are preparing to consult with staff and communities on their findings.

#### **4. Consultation**

4.1 The Race Relations [Amendment] Act 2000 gives all Public Authorities a duty to consult citizens on the results of race equality impact assessments.

4.2 Consultations took place on the draft RES in July 2002. Amendments were made on the basis of these consultations. A consultation process for the impact assessments was agreed at this stage.

4.3 Directorates have undertaken initial assessments of barriers for Black and minority ethnic people and other groups in accessing services. Consultation will be ascertaining whether problem areas have been fully understood and whether the suggestions for actions are likely to be effective. Feedback will also be sought on the best methods of consultation to be adopted in the future. It maybe that this type of event is repeated, if successful, alongside other initiatives consistent with the council's consultation strategy.

4.4 Whilst assessing for race equality impact, the Council has also assessed potential barriers for other groups too, e.g disabled people, women and LGBT people. This is in recognition that many people belong to more than one group and maybe discriminated against on several grounds. The council is also able to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and legislation for other groups of people, in this way. This will result in better quality services and employment for all.

4.5 A multi-agency consultation steering group with community representatives has been formed, to ensure that issues common to several of the city's public authorities are consulted on together, to avoid consultation fatigue as far as possible. Current partners with the Council are South Downs Health NHS Trust [SDHT], Brighton and Sussex University

Hospitals Trust [BSUHT] and the Primary Care Trust [PCT]. Community representatives have joined the steering group from the PCT Ethnic Minority Health Consultation Forum. The police authority indicated that in the future it would join the multi agency consultation steering group.

- 4.6 The steering group has agreed standards for consultation, including evaluation of the event with participants and ways to reach other people. Arrangements include refreshments commissioned from communities themselves, translation and interpreting facilities, childcare arrangements, and travel costs.
- 4.7 A conference organiser has been commissioned to publicise the event with communities and work with them to ensure that practical and communication arrangements will meet the needs of participants. Also, an independent research company will organise, facilitate and evaluate the findings of focus groups.
- 4.8 It is hoped that alongside strong representation from Black and minority ethnic communities in the city, there will also be representation from other groups, such as groups representing disabled people, women, older people, faith groups and the LGBT community.
- 4.9 This is the first consultation on Equality Impact Assessments. The council will be consulting on other services, and will adapt methods of consultation according to feedback and evaluation of this event.
- 4.10 In addition to the above, the Council's Research and Development Team and Head of Corporate services have been consulted, and contributed suggestions on format and professional input on the day. It is intended that the programme of Equality Impact Consultations should be integrated with the Council's Consultation Strategy in future. Feedback will then be available from the Citizens' Panel and other consultative forums too.
- 4.11 Quarterly up-date reports on progress will be made to the Equalities and Social Justice Consultation Forum.

## **5. Conclusion**

Brighton and Hove City Council's RES is published and a programme of Equality Impact Assessment is underway. Consultation arrangements are being made to include a wide range of Black and minority ethnic people and other groups.

Quarterly up-date report will be made to the Equalities and Social Justice Consultation Forum this year.

<b>Meeting/Date</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee/17 November 2003
<b>Report of</b>	Alan McCarthy, DCE
<b>Subject</b>	Progress Report on the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme[RES]
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

<p><b>Financial implications</b>                  Cost for publicity and distribution of the RES has been met from the Strategy and Governance budget.                  Administration costs for assessments include consultation, translation and interpreting materials, training for assessors and other staff will be met from Directorates' existing budgets.                  When consultation events are organised jointly with external partner agencies, they contribute towards the total cost of the events.</p>
<p><b>Legal implications</b>                  The Council's approach in implementing and monitoring the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme is consistent with the requirement of the Race Relations Amendment Act, the specific duties introduced by regulations and Government's guidance.                  There are no adverse Human Rights implications arising from this report.</p>

<p><b>Corporate/City wide implications</b>                  The consultation network for the RES with other agencies will enable many partners to work together on equalities at a city wide level.</p>	<p><b>Risk assessment</b>                  The Race Relation Amendment Act 2000 gives the CRE the power to investigate and take legal action if the Council fails to meet its statutory duties under the Act.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability implications</b>                  Empowering all sections of the community to participate in decision making in order to enjoy a better quality of life is a key aspect to the Council's Sustainability Strategy. To be part of building sustainability communities, Council officers need to understand the equality impact of all their work.</p>	<p><b>Equalities implications</b>                  The Council's RES is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of operation. It is a requirement that an annual report is made on progress to ESJCF, P&amp;R Committee, and OSOC. The results of the scheme will enable better service delivery and employment experiences for diverse groups of people.</p>

**Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder**

Through the impact assessment process, issues of community cohesion will be identified, and a programme of actions will be in place to address community cohesion and equalities.

**Contact Officers**

Manal Ahmed and Claire Debenham, Joint Heads of Equalities and Community Cohesion