

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Corporate Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>10 December 2008</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Corporate Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Race Equality Scheme 2009</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Committee of the Council's progress in relation to race equality
- ◆ advise the Committee of the Council's proposals to integrate race equality into a Single Equality Scheme in 2009

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Race Equality Scheme 2009 be approved; and
- (2) that a Single Equality Scheme be produced in 2009.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The Council is required to review and publish its arrangements for meeting the specific duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) every 3 years. This applies to all public bodies.
- 3.2. The requirement to mainstream equalities issues into all policies and strategies is also a Best Value requirement, as set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003. The recent best value audit of South Lanarkshire Council included examination of our equalities performance.
- 3.3. In June 2008, the Government Equality Office published a document "Framework for a Fairer Future - The Equality Bill" which set out proposals to streamline the existing equalities legislation and introduces further duties. Specifically, the Bill proposes to place a new Equality duty on public bodies bringing together the duties on race, gender, and disability and extend those duties to gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation, and religion and belief.
- 3.4. It is anticipated that these new duties will be in place by 2010/11.

## 4. Current Position

- 4.1. In anticipation of the introduction of the "Equality Bill", the Council proposes to move to a Single Equality Scheme in 2009. This will integrate the response to both general and specific duties of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) into a single document.

- 4.2. As the new proposals become clearer about age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, and religion and belief, the Council's plans and actions in relation to these will also be included in the single scheme.
- 4.3. During this transition, in order to meet the statutory duties, the Council must still produce a 3 year review of its current Race Equality Scheme. This has provided an opportunity to set out some of our plans to further embed our mainstreaming of race equality in 2009, until the publication of the integrated scheme.

## **5. Review of the Race Equality Scheme**

- 5.1. The Race Equality Scheme reflects our progress in relation to:-
- ◆ eliminating unlawful discrimination
  - ◆ promoting equality of opportunity
  - ◆ promoting good race relations
- 5.2. In addition, the Council is required to report on progress in relation to Equality Impact Assessment. This is the process of ensuring that our functions and policies do not adversely impact on any minority group. The Council identified 335 functions and policies to be assessed. On review, we have reduced this to 289 by amalgamating and deleting some policies. Impact assessments have been carried out on these and they have been published on the Council's website.

## **6. Summary of Main Areas of Progress**

### **6.1. Employment**

- ◆ The Council produces regular monitoring reports on the composition of its workforce. The percentage of ethnic minority employees who are part of our workforce is 0.7%.
- ◆ The percentage of the Council population which comes from an ethnic minority is 1.1% based on 2001 census figures. The working age minority ethnic population is 0.6%.

### **6.2. Communication**

- ◆ Introduction of an Equalities in Action page in the monthly Works Magazine. This focuses on employees who demonstrate what equality means in their job.
- ◆ Equalities page on the Council website which provides information to the public. This is also where the outcome of Equality Impact Assessments can be found.

### **6.3. Consultation**

- ◆ We engage in regular consultation with black minority ethnic (BME) employees and the BME community through the BME Forum and through the Lanarkshire Ethnic Minority Action Group (LEMAG).
- ◆ Feedback from these groups has led to changes in how we do things, including the introduction of an extensive range of minority language publications in library services.

### **6.4 Research**

Most significantly, the Council with its partners has conducted research into the specific needs of the ethnic minority community. The focus of these pieces of research has been:-

- ◆ housing
- ◆ social care
- ◆ experience of domestic abuse

### **6.5 The Next Steps**

Our commitment to race equality will not diminish with the introduction of a Single Equality Scheme in 2009. We will conduct a programme of consultation and involvement from January to March 2009 with members of our workforce and the community.

**7. Employee implications**

- 7.1. Training and development will be provided for employees in both the Scheme and in specific aspects of racial awareness.

**8. Financial implications**

- 8.1. Can be met from existing budgets

**9. Other Implications**

- 9.1. None.

**10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 10.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the recommendations contained in the report. The proposals contained in the Scheme will have differential impact as the recommendations are intended to target specific sectors of the community. However, it is considered that this impact is justifiable and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council website.

- 10.2. Consultation has been carried out and is detailed in paragraph 6.3.

**Robert McIlwain**

**Executive Director (Corporate Resources)**

24 November 2008

**Link(s) to Council Objectives**

- ◆ Fair and open
- ◆ People focused
- ◆ Working with and respecting others
- ◆ Excellent employer

**Previous References**

16 November 2005

**List of Background Papers**

Race Equality Scheme 2005/2008

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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