



# Uttlesford District Council

## Uttlesford District Council Race Equality Scheme



**March 2007**

# UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL EQUALITY AND INCLUSION POLICY RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

Whilst the Race Equality Scheme is a stand alone scheme it is an integral part of the Equalities and Inclusion Policy and can be found at Annexe A in the policy document. Please also see section 9 within the policy document.

This document focuses on the issue of race equality and has been produced in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. We are committed to achieving positive outcomes on the whole range of equalities issues and the Race Equality Scheme should be seen as forming part of a broader equalities policy.

## 1.0 Race Relations Act 1976

- 1.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 revised the Race Relations Act 1976 and strengthened its application to public authorities. The Act places a general statutory duty on a wide range of public authorities to promote race equality and prevent racial discrimination. It also provides the Home Secretary with the power to impose a range of specific duties where deemed necessary to assist authorities in the fulfilment of the general duty.
- 1.2 The Commission for Race Equality has powers of enforcement over general and specific duties and is able to issue statutory codes of practice providing practical guidance to public authorities on how to fulfil the duties.

The scope of the Race Relations Act 1976 covers us in our role as:

- An employer
- A provider of services
- An agent of procurement
- A partner

It is now unlawful for authorities to discriminate on racial grounds, whether this is direct or indirect discrimination, while carrying out any of these functions.

## 2.0 The General Duty

- 2.1 The general duty is a positive one. We are obliged to take positive action for improvement. The Act specifies that public authorities must fulfil their general duty to promote race equality by ensuring that all their actions, where relevant:
  - Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination.
  - Promote equality of opportunity.
  - Promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

2.2 Under the general duty we are required to define our functions – what it is that we do – and assess the impact that our activities or proposed activities have on racial equality to decide whether this is positive or negative. Where current or proposed policies are demonstrated to have a negative impact on the elimination of racial discrimination, the promotion of racial equality or good race relations, we are expected to consider how that policy should be changed to counteract this. The necessary changes then need to be made to ensure that in the long term everything we do has a positive impact and is therefore assisting us in fulfilling our commitment to equality.

### **3.0 The Specific Duties**

3.1 The specific duties must be fulfilled in addition to what is done to fulfil the general duty, although they will assist us in doing this. The specific duties require that all public authorities must publish a Race Equality Scheme. This document forms our Race Equality Scheme. The Race Equality Scheme must set out how we intend to meet our obligations under the general and the other specific duties.

3.2 The Race Equality Scheme must:

- i. Identify which of our functions are relevant to the fulfilment of the general duty.
- ii. Set out arrangements for how we will assess our policies to determine the affect they have on race equality.
- iii. Set out how we will let people know about the results of our assessments, and any consultation and or monitoring exercises that we do.
- iv. Set out how we will ensure our services are equally accessible to all.
- v. Set out our arrangements for training staff on issues relevant to race equality.

3.3 In addition to the production of a Race Equality Scheme there is a specific duty on us to monitor our workforce by ethnicity, including the numbers of:

- Staff in post.
- Applicants for jobs.
- Applicants for promotion.
- Applicants for training.
- Complainants/respondents in grievances.
- Respondents/principals in disciplinaries.
- Staff taking part in performance planning and review.
- Staff who are dismissed or leave for other reasons.

3.4 In our Race Equality Scheme we intend to clarify our arrangements for doing this and let you know how you can access the results of these monitoring exercises.

3.5 The Race Equality Scheme sets out our approach to the general and specific duties over a three year period. Our timetable for assessing our services for their impact on race equality will be spread over this timescale.

We intend to review the Scheme and carry out a second round of impact assessments in 2011.

#### **4.0 Our Vision**

4.1 Our vision is to be the pre-eminent small district council by 2011. Our commitment is that we will have maintained and built upon our record as an inclusive place, where all people, whether resident or visitor are treated fairly, equally and with respect and where diversity is acknowledged as one of the Districts key strengths. Uttlesford is a rural district and we recognise the importance of social inclusion in all forms and aim to ensure that a continuing community spirit is embraced.

#### **5.0 The Purpose of Our Scheme**

5.1 This Scheme states our commitment to fulfil our statutory duties under the Race Relations Act by eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity between people of different racial groups within the community and ensuring that equality for people of different racial groups is embedded into the culture of the organisation.

5.2 This Scheme is part of our wider commitment to equality and diversity issues, but focuses specifically on race equality.

5.3 This Scheme identifies the ways in which we plan to influence practice, it complements our mainstream activities with regard to service provision for people of different racial groups and provides a platform for us to identify;

- Our priorities in relation to race equality.
- How we plan to improve the accessibility of services.
- The timescale to achieve improvements.
- What we expect the outcomes to be.

5.4 This Scheme has been devised and developed in consultation with the community, councillors and staff. It is our intention to inform the whole community on how we will deal with racial issues, including the services we commission, staff, voluntary organisations, specialist groups and the public. We are also keen to monitor and evaluate in which areas the Scheme is successful and those which require improvement.

#### **6.0 Our Strategy**

6.1 We aim to be sensitive to the needs of the diverse communities that we serve and to provide facilities and services that are free from unlawful discrimination. We recognise our position as a large provider of services and employer in the District and our particular role in the community.

6.2 We intend to promote equality of provision in council services and equal treatment of all our employees and job applicants without reference to race,

colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability, gender, HIV status, marital status, political or religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

- 6.3 All services we provide directly or by our contractors, partners or related agencies, are covered by this commitment as are all permanent, temporary and casual employees and all job applicants. Additionally, individual services are committed to producing their own service equality statements, giving details of how their services comply with equal opportunities best practice.
- 6.4 We are committed to providing services to the community which reflect the needs and diversity of all our customers and service users. We recognise that discrimination in society exists and seek to provide services fairly to all.
- 6.5 We have an equal opportunities policy, and an equal opportunities in employment policy, which confirm our commitment to tackling discrimination in the services we provide and in the way we treat our staff.
- 6.6 To fulfil our commitment to equal opportunities we will:
- Engage in meaningful consultation with the communities we serve.
  - Ensure our workforce is sensitive to the needs of service users and customers, and act on their comments, suggestions and complaints.
  - Ensure as far as possible that our services reflect the diverse needs of the community.
  - Demonstrate achievements in this area against agreed performance indicators.

We believe it should be the responsibility of managers and supervisors to:

- Develop and implement equal opportunities action plans.
- Review the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy and all related action plans, and communicate their findings to senior management.
- Ensure that within their areas of responsibility the standards established within this policy and related policies are followed.

All employees are bound by this commitment and must:

- Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity.
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- Not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not harass, abuse or intimidate others on account of their race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability, gender, HIV status, marital status, political or religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

## **7.0 Our priorities**

- To challenge any racial discrimination in our District by ensuring all staff are enabled to recognise where discrimination may be occurring and to challenge those situations.
- To promote and implement racial equality of opportunity in our district by actively seeking out diverse groups for consultation and, where possible, acting upon their recommendations.
- To create a culture of change among members and officers so that racial equality is at the core of all our activities by offering consistent high quality training to members and officers.
- To ensure our investment in the voluntary sector supports the empowerment and self-organisation of race equalities groups included in the scheme.
- To ensure our workforce represents the ethnic make up of our district by reviewing job adverts to ensure that where applicable adverts include positive statements actively encouraging applications from diverse groups and by reviewing the places jobs are advertised.
- To ensure our service users represent the ethnic make up of our district by working with the Economic Development Officer to identify methods of encouraging an eclectic mix of service users within the district.

## **8.0 How we act as an Agent of Procurement**

8.1 Under the Race Relations Act we must ensure that our contractors – other organisations and business that we work with to provide services for us – neither discriminate within their employment practices nor through the delivery of services. The responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and guidance remains with us and we must ensure that we are fulfilling the general duty even when discharging our functions through others.

8.2 We intend to review our current procurement structure and processes and ensure we have a clear policy on how procurement is managed. We will ensure that contractors are aware of the scheme and of what we require of them in the way they carry out business on our behalf.

8.3 We are working towards ensuring that:

- Contracts are delivered in non-discriminatory ways.
- Contracts promote equality of opportunity for staff, the public and businesses.
- Services delivered meet the needs of all the communities concerned.
- Racial groups demonstrate the same levels of customer satisfaction with services provided.
- Contractors reflect the diversity of the District's community and are drawn from this where possible.
- Contractors demonstrate their commitment to race equality and show how they are achieving it within their organisation.

## **9.0 How we act as a Partner**

9.1 Similar considerations concerning equal opportunities will be taken into account when we form partnerships with other organisations as when we procure services from them. We must ensure that any organisation we form a partnership with complies with the general and specific duties when they are applicable.

## **10.0 How we act as an Employer**

10.1 We will carry out impact assessments of our employment policies, procedures and practice and implement any changes required.

10.2 We are committed to, and working towards, the provision of full equality of opportunity for our staff. We strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination. We recognise that this requires not only a commitment to remove any potentially unfair treatment but also policies based on the principle of affirmative action so that existing inequalities produced by past discrimination may be challenged and eradicated.

10.3 All employees are expected to contribute to the achievement of this objective and we will ensure that individuals are aware of their personal and professional responsibility to support equal opportunities in employment.

10.4 The Director of Resources will take active steps to ensure this commitment is implemented throughout the organisation and that policies connected with it are evaluated, reviewed and, where necessary, amended, on a regular basis.

10.5 To fulfil our commitment to equal opportunities in employment we will:

- Make the best possible use of the skills, talents and abilities of all employees.
- Encourage and nurture the twin concepts of respect for individual rights and diversity in the workforce.
- Ensure as far as possible that our services reflect the diverse needs of our customers.
- Demonstrate achievements in this area against agreed performance indicators.

To ensure adherence to our Equal Opportunities Policy<sup>1</sup> in respect of employment matters it is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to:

- Assist in the development and implementation of equal opportunities action plans and the impact assessment process.
- Review the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy and all related action plans and communicate their findings to senior management.
- Ensure that within their areas of responsibility the standards established by this document and other related policies, such as those on harassment, are followed.

The Council expects that all employees will:

- Cooperate with any measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity.
- Report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- Not persuade or attempt to persuade others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not victimise others for reporting or providing evidence of discrimination.
- Not harass, abuse, or intimidate others.
- Not lobby job applicants in an attempt to discourage them from applying for or accepting a particular job.

10.6 We have a specific Harassment and Bullying Policy & Procedure<sup>ii</sup>. We are committed to creating a working environment where employees do not suffer harassment or bullying on any grounds. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and have an equal responsibility to treat each other and members of the public with dignity and respect and uphold the provisions of the harassment and bullying policy.

## **11.0 Monitoring in the Workplace**

11.1 We are committed to a system of equalities monitoring for our workforce (which fulfils one of the Race Relations Act specific duties). We collect data including information on race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, gender and disability relating to:

- Staff in post,
- Applicants for jobs,
- Applicants for promotion,
- Applicants for training,
- Staff involved in grievance and disciplinary procedures,
- Staff taking part in performance planning and review,
- Staff who leave the authority.

The results of this monitoring will be used to inform the development of policy and to support the impact assessment process. They will also be published in an annual report to members.

## **12.0 Training**

12.1 We believe that our most valuable resource is our workforce. We recognise the strength that can be found in diversity and are therefore committed to equal access to development opportunities for all staff.

We recognise the importance of training in helping officers and members of the Council understand their duties and responsibilities towards the public and each other.

12.2 We have an induction process and performance review scheme in place to ensure that we work with staff on an individual basis to understand their personal training and development needs.

We have an ongoing programme of awareness raising on the issues of equality and diversity and on the implications of the Race Relations Act.

### **13.0 Internal Complaints**

- 13.1 Any breaches of our Equal Opportunities Policy will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Serious offences are likely to be treated as gross misconduct.

Any employee who has a concern regarding the application of the policies with regard to themselves should normally make use of the Council's Grievance Procedure<sup>iii</sup> in the first instance. Staff concerned over the treatment of others should use the Confidential Reporting Code<sup>iv</sup>.

- 13.2 Prospective employees who believe they have been subjected to unlawful or unfair discrimination during a selection procedure should raise the matter formally under the terms of our formal Complaints Procedure<sup>5</sup>.
- 13.3 Whilst we will make every effort to resolve complaints via our internal mechanisms we also recognise the right of employees and prospective employees to pursue a case through the provisions of the relevant equal opportunities or anti discrimination legislation.
- 13.4 Our Harassment and Bullying Policy and Procedure sets out our policy and procedure for resolving complaints by employees of harassment, intimidation and bullying in the workplace, which may relate to their race, colour, ethnic origin or nationality. Complaints about harassment/bullying will be taken seriously and as far as possible managed speedily and confidentially. Every effort will be made to resolve issues informally in the first instance. Where this is not possible a formal investigation will commence.

### **14.0 Involving People**

- 14.1 At the heart of the Race Relations Act is the requirement to involve people of different racial groups in producing the Scheme including the Action Plan. We have an ongoing commitment to identify relevant people and groups, and ensure that this happens. Once identified, we will work to give people of different racial groups the opportunity to comment on how services are best developed and delivered.
- 14.2 We want to involve people of Black, Asian, Polish, Portuguese and other minority backgrounds by contacting individuals and organisations of diverse ethnic backgrounds within and around the district.

### **15.0 Plan of Action**

- 15.1 As part of the Race Equality Scheme, we have produced an action plan which will reflect the;

- Priorities of people of different racial groups.
- Our strategic priorities.
- Specific outcomes to be achieved.
- Time scales in which these can be achieved.

15.2 A number of themes have been considered from information gathering exercises. From these themes a number of implementation plans have been produced. These plans acknowledge both the priorities of people of different racial groups and our strategic priorities as follows;

- Working to identify different racial groups and representatives of diverse groups in the District.
- Making sure that the views of people of different racial groups are represented, ensuring that their views are listened to, and are actioned.
- Accessibility of our information, services, and job opportunities in relation to equality. We wish to close the gaps in people of different racial groups' experiences and opportunities. In this way we aim to remove the barriers to access that some people often experience so that information, services, and job opportunities are equally available to everyone in the community.
- Improving services to ensure that they are more inclusive by taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination and provide services which are sensitive to the needs of people of different racial groups.

## **16.0 Equality Impact Assessments**

16.1 In line with the Equality Standard for Local Government, our Equality Impact Assessment framework will help ensure that our activities;

- Do not disadvantage people of different racial groups,
- Identify potential barriers in advance and
- Best promote equality of opportunity.

16.2 We recognise that this is an area which requires a lot of commitment in terms of staff resources and time. To this end it has been agreed that each of our service areas will have its own timetable for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments. Where the assessment identifies a negative impact or missed opportunity to achieve a more positive impact, we will look at what can be done to rectify the situation.

16.3 We will review the Scheme, the Equality Impact Assessment and Actions Plans annually.

## **17.0 The Race Equality Scheme seeks to**

- Encourage and promote the fair employment of people of different racial groups within the organisation and the community.

- Monitor our pay structure and employment policies for compliance with the Race Relations Act.
- Ensure procedures are in place to tackle crime and anti social behaviour motivated by racial issues by linking with organisations, the police and fire services.
- Signpost people to services and groups within the community and by providing a central information source to serve the district.
- Ensure that we can respond to the information needs for anyone within our community and ensure that the information provided is in the correct format and/or language for the user in order to promote inclusion.

## 18.0 Responsibilities for the Race Equality Scheme

18.1 We aim to ensure full commitment to and implementation of the Scheme and responsibility for it is shared between all levels.

18.2 Overall responsibility for the establishment and approval of the Scheme is held by the Full Council The Performance Select Committee is responsible for the results of its implementation, and for monitoring the more detailed aspects of this.

18.3 Responsibility is held by our Strategic Management Board and supported by other officers of the Council. Heads of Division are responsible for the delivery of commitments made in the Scheme on a service-by-service level and for carrying out impact assessments and action planning.

## 19.0 Action Plan

### Timetable in accordance with the consultation programme

Requirement	Evidence/Action	Who to do	Resource	Timetable
Initial consult on draft Race Equality Scheme	Pass to Consultative bodies	Val Rogacs/Victoria Borges to liaise	Race EQ sub group and ESWG	31 March 2007
Public and internal consultation on Race Equality Scheme	Suitable formats to be available, suitable venues, transport etc	Communications Group	ESWG	April 2007
Approval of Race Equality Scheme	Race Equality Scheme	Full Council		April 2007
Race	All amendments	ESWG, SMB,	ESWG, SMB,	July 2007

Equality Scheme	incorporated	HoDs	HoDs	
Measure the promotion of racial equality within the employment field both within the organisation and the community	Link with Access to work, Social Services, Job Centre Plus, business and community organisations	Present through seminars, the Economic Group of the LSP, ESWG	ESWG and Communications Group	May 2008
Arrange further sub-groups to develop this on a quarterly basis	Continuing involvement with the above groups	Feedback through LSP and ESWG	ESWG to monitor	August, November, 2008
Ensure procedures are in place to tackle crime and anti social behaviour motivated by racial issues by linking with organisations and the fire and police services	Link with internal groups within the authority and the LSP	Economic Development Officer	ESWG to monitor	May 2008
Signposting people to services and groups within the community	The Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford has an officer who could assist with this work along with the work being done through u-connect and the CRM system	Information between the two areas needs to be shared for the benefit of both organisations and the community	ESWG, Customer Service Centre Manager and LSP representative	May 2008
Ensuring that the District Council can respond to the information needs for	All originating documents from the authority must show, 'if you require this information in an alternative format	All documentation to be reviewed. This will form part of the impact assessment	ESWG, HoDs, Claire Croft	April 2007 and ongoing

anyone within its community of different racial groups	and/or language please contact...	work carried out by the authority. A strategy is already in place to support these requests. This will be monitored.		
Impact Assessments	All policies and procedures to be impact assessed	HoDs	SMB, ESWG	July 2007 and ongoing
Annual Review of Race Equality Scheme	Statutory Requirement			April 2008
Annual Report to Members	Ethnic monitoring data	HR		April annually

If you require further information or would like this scheme in another format or language please contact:

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