



ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME 2006 - 2009

September 2006

1. What is a Race Equality Scheme?

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a statutory general duty on a wide range of public bodies, including local authorities, to promote race equality. This means that the Council, in carrying out its functions, must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good race relations

The Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice defines a racial group as 'a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

This Race Equality Scheme has been prepared to enable the Council to meet the requirements of the Act. This Scheme sets out how the Council will meet its statutory obligations over the next three years.

In order to meet these obligations, specific requirements have been placed on local authorities. The specific requirements or duties cover service delivery, policy-making and employment.

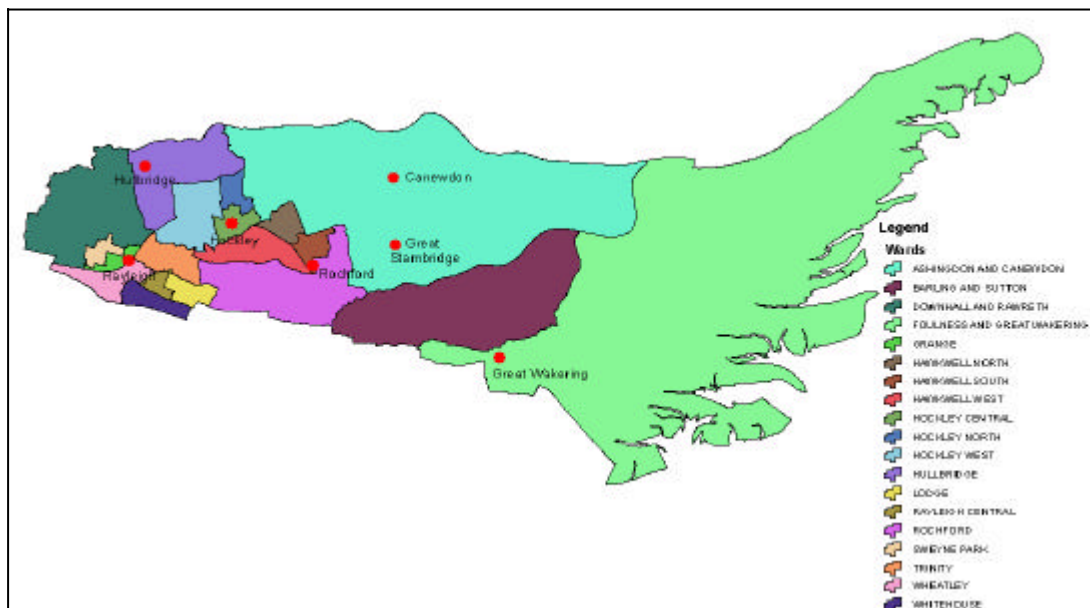
The steps we need to take are to:

1. Identify the Council's functions and policies
2. Assess the relevance of the Council's functions and policies against the General Duty of the Act and prioritise for further assessment during the term of the Scheme
3. Undertake an assessment of all relevant functions and policies to measure any adverse impact on race equalities and consult on the results
4. Consider how a service or policy might be changed to meet the general duty set out above, and take appropriate action
5. Consider the impact on race equality of new policies or changes to policies
6. Monitor our policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of racial equality and establish a rolling review mechanism
7. Publish the results of such assessment, consultation and monitoring
8. Ensure equal public access to information and services
9. Train our staff and elected members in connection with our duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
10. Monitor our workforce by the collection of ethnic origin data and analyse the data to find any patterns of inequality
11. Take any necessary action to promote equality of opportunity for employees and publish the results of our monitoring each year
12. Review the scheme periodically
13. Provide an annual progress update in the Performance Plan each year

2. About Rochford

The Place

Rochford is a small district located in south east Essex. It is bounded by the River Crouch to the north and the urban areas of Southend and Castle Point to the south. The district has three main towns, Rayleigh, Rochford and Hockley. Much of the remaining area is green belt with a large area around Foulness, largely under Ministry of Defence control. London Southend Airport straddles the district's southern boundary with Southend.



The People

The district has a population of 78,900 people, living in 33,534 households. This is predicted to rise to 80,300 by 2011, with a forecasted large increase of those over the age of 85 years.

The area is relatively affluent, ranking 316 out of 354 most deprived authorities nationally. The most deprived ward, Foulness and Great Wakering East, ranks 2,680 of 8,414. Owner occupied homes constitute 75.1 per cent of households. This is amongst the highest in the country. Private renting accounts for 15.4 per cent. The Council's housing stock is currently 1,700 dwellings, of which 665 are allocated to elderly people. House prices are higher than the average for England and Wales. Unemployment levels are below regional and national averages at 1 per cent.

The census categorises the ethnicity of the population as follows:

	Number	%
White British	75,961	96.78
White Irish	476	0.61
White Other	728	0.93
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	167	0.21
Mixed White & Black African	45	0.06
Mixed White & Asian	153	0.19
Other Mixed	100	0.13
Asian or Asian British: Indian	241	0.31
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	28	0.04
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	52	0.07
Asian or Asian British: Other	74	0.09
Black or Black British: Caribbean	77	0.10
Black or Black British: African	49	0.06
Black or Black British: Other	50	0.06
Chinese	189	0.24
Other	99	0.13

3. About Rochford District Council

Rochford has been under a Conservative administration since May 2002, which holds 34 of the 39 seats. New political management arrangements based on alternative committee structures were introduced in May 2002. These have since been refined but currently comprise 5 policy committees, an overview and scrutiny committee, audit & regulatory committees and a standards committee.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is made up of the Chief Executive and two corporate directors supported by six heads of service. The Council employs approx 260 staff. Many of the frontline services are externalised.

Our Plans and Policies

The Council is aiming to make Rochford *'the place of choice in the county to live, work and visit'*. This is to be delivered through collaborative working with partners and communities and is underpinned by six principal aims, to:

- provide quality, cost effective services;
- work towards a safer and more caring community;
- provide a green and sustainable environment;
- encourage a thriving local economy;
- improve the quality of life for people in the district; and
- maintain and enhance the local heritage.

The Council's aims are closely aligned to the six aims of the community strategy: 'Feeling safe', 'Looking after our environment', 'A good education, good skills and good jobs', 'Healthy living', 'Getting around', and 'An inclusive community'.

The Council has also signed up to the County's Local Area Agreement "Health and Opportunity for the People of Essex" which includes a number of proposals that are aimed at positive impacts on disadvantaged groups.

4. Rochford District Council's Race Equality Scheme

Aims of the Scheme

By implementing this Scheme, the Council aims to:

- a) Eliminate any unintended racial discrimination or adverse impact that we are made aware of in the delivery of our public services
- b) Eliminate any unintended racial discrimination or adverse impact that we are made aware of in relation to Human Resources policies and procedures
- c) Promote equal opportunity of access to services, information and employment for all racial groups within the district
- d) Foster good relations within the district

To achieve these aims, we need to:

- meet legislative requirements in dealing with race equalities
- raise awareness of race equality issues with all elected members, employees, partners and stakeholders
- ensure that race equality issues are considered in all service delivery and policy development work
- ensure the public, other agencies and stakeholders have equal access to our services and undertake consultation on this where appropriate
- monitor our progress in implementing this scheme and publicise our performance
- work with groups representing the interests of the community of Rochford and ensure their opinions are heard across the council
- ensure that all people have equal opportunity during all stages of the recruitment and selection process
- provide a work environment which is free from racial harassment and discrimination and where equality is integrated into all employment processes

We will do this by taking the following actions:

Action 1 – Identifying Relevant Functions and Policies

We will identify a list of the Council's functions and policies. An assessment of relevance for each of the identified functions and policies will then be

undertaken and each area categorised as high, medium, low or no relevance to the general duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Those functions identified as 'high' relevance will be impact assessed in year 1 with the remainder timetabled to follow. The functions include those that we undertake as a provider of services and those as an employer.

Where services are provided either in partnership with another agency or by a third party on behalf of the Council, the authority remains responsible for ensuring that all third parties comply with our Race Equality Scheme duties.

Action 2 – Assessing and Consulting on the Likely Impact of Proposed Policies

Each new or proposed policy will require an assessment of the impact on equalities and human rights issues. We will agree an impact assessment methodology for the assessment of proposals.

Each new or proposed policy will potentially require consultation. Each consultation exercise we undertake could be different depending on what the policy says and who it will affect. We will agree the process by which this is undertaken and help inform the review of our Consultation Strategy.

Action 3 – Monitoring Policies for Adverse Impact

The Council is responsible for a large number of functions and policies. To ensure we deliver appropriate services that meet the needs of our customers, we need to understand who our customers are. Our aim is to have information recorded, by ethnic group, of how and when people use our services. We also need to monitor complaints to identify differences across ethnic groups that may show that some ethnic groups are not treated as well as other groups

We will formalise our approach to service monitoring so that it encompasses the following stages:

- Establishing monitoring systems to capture information about our customers by ethnic group
- Analysing information collected and assessing whether ethnic groups are being disadvantaged or suffering adverse impact
- Deciding what action could be taken to deal with issues arising from the above
- Amending policies where appropriate
- Publishing the results on an annual basis

Action 4 – Publishing, Assessment, Consultation and Monitoring

We publish information by a variety of methods including:

- Our website
- 'Rochford District Matters', the Council's newspaper sent to every household
- Leaflets, brochures, strategic documents and reports

We will consider how we can best use these mediums to provide information on equality issues. We will also consider how best to inform our own employees of employment issues related to equality

Action 5 – Making sure the Public have Access to Information and Services

It is vital that our customers have the necessary access to information and services supplied by the Council. We currently supply information to a wide range of stakeholders, other public agencies and the general public. We do this in a number of ways including face to face contact, letter, e-mail and various publications.

One of the potential barriers to our services and information is language and we recognise that we need to make information available in a way that suits the needs of our customers. This will mean that people from ethnic minority groups will be more aware of our services, their rights and entitlements and have confidence in using our services.

As we develop service monitoring mechanisms and undertake impact assessments we will gain an understanding of whether any of our customers or potential customers are experiencing problems accessing council services or information.

In the meantime we will work to ensure that translation and interpretation services are readily and easily available.

A Best Value review of Access to Services is currently being timetabled to take place in late 2006/early 2007. We will have regard to its findings and any equalities implications.

Action 6 – Arrangements for Training Staff

Training for all staff and elected members has been a priority during 2005/06 and all staff have received basic equality awareness training.

Our Corporate Induction Programme includes a session on equalities for all new staff.

We need to develop our training programme further to address specific roles and responsibilities. Those responsible for meeting the specific duties of the Race Relations Act will be fully trained to meet their responsibilities. We also

need to train the staff who will carry out our impact assessments to ensure consistency of approach when reviewing all our functions and policies. Certain staff who exercise employment duties may need training on the equality implications of their roles.

Action 7 – Employment Monitoring

To meet our specific duties under the Race Relations Act, we will monitor, by racial group, the number of:

- Staff currently working for us
- Applicants for employment, training and promotion
- Staff who receive training
- Staff who benefit or suffer from performance appraisals
- Staff who are involved in grievance procedures
- Staff who are the subject of disciplinary action
- Staff who end their service with us

We will publish the results of monitoring this information annually. The current workforce profile shows that we have 3 employees from non-white backgrounds, ie. 1.2% as compared to 1.7% of the population of Rochford.

By monitoring our workforce (and potential workforce) we will evaluate the fairness and availability of all employment practices. Should we identify any discrimination against racial groups in our policies or practices we will take action to remove the discrimination by changing the policies or practices.

5. Administration of the Scheme

Responsibility and Accountability

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for our Race Equality Scheme and he will work closely with the Senior Management Team to oversee it. Political accountability rests with the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee.

Co-ordination of the day to day running of the scheme is the responsibility of the Corporate Policy Manager.

Review of the Scheme

The action plan will be monitored by the Service Development & Improvement Sub-Group and reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purposes. The scheme will undergo a full review in 2009 and every three years thereafter.

6. Action Plan

Action 1 – Identifying Relevant Functions and Policies				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Identify and list all functions and policies	SMT	December 2006	Within existing	Complete list of all functions and policies
Assess all functions and policies for relevance to race equality	SMT	December 2006	Within existing	List of assessed functions and policies available for publication
Prioritise those policies and functions which need to be impact assessed and develop a plan to complete within a 3 year timescale	CPM	January 2007	Within existing	Plan of impact assessments available for publication
Action 2 – Arrangements for Assessing and Consulting on the Likely Impact of Proposed Policies				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Develop an impact assessment tool for new and existing policies and functions	CPM/HRM	October 2006	Within existing	Agreed process in place
Identify responsible officers to undertake the impact assessments	SMT	December 2006	Within existing	List of officers responsible for undertaking impact assessments
Provide training on impact assessment for those identified	HRM	January 2007	Training course/trainer costs	People trained to undertake assessments
Undertake impact assessments in accordance with agreed priority order	Nominated officers	February onwards	Officer time	Completed impact assessments
Provide advice for services undertaking consultation to ensure an inclusive and consistent approach	CPM	February onwards	Officer time	Co-ordinated approach to consultation
Agree procedure for considering result of impact assessments and linkages with service planning process	Service Development & Improvement Sub-Group	January 2007	Within existing	Co-ordinated approach to impact assessments

Action 3 – Arrangements for Monitoring Policies for Adverse Impact				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Agree services which will be required to produce monitoring information	SMT	December 2006	Officer time	Understanding of those services where monitoring information is relevant
Establish monitoring process for identifying service users for all these appropriate services	SMT	November 2006	Within existing	Agreed processes to enable monitoring information to be collected
Develop local performance indicators for equalities in relevant service areas	Individual Heads of Service	March 2007	Within existing	Agreed equalities indicators in relevant areas
Ensure that monitoring information is used as part of the annual business planning process	Service Development & Improvement Sub-Group	March 2007	Within existing	Divisional planning amended to take account of new requirements, if necessary
Action 4 – Arrangements for Publishing, Assessment, Consultation and Monitoring				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Publish this race equality scheme on the website and in 'Rochford District Matters'	CPM	October 2006	Within existing	Published scheme in place
Publish results of impact assessments, including responses to consultation, in the annual Performance Plan	HFAPM	June 2007	Within existing	Results of impact assessments undertaken publicised
Publish employee monitoring information on the website on an annual basis	HRM	June 2007	Within existing	Information widely available

Action 5 – Arrangements for Making Sure the Public have Access to Information and Services				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Ensure a translation and interpretation service is available to all service users	HAMS	March 2007	Actual costs of work undertaken	Service available and advertised
Consider the outcome of the Best Value review on Access to Services and review for equalities implications	HAMS/CPM	March 2007	To be identified	Agreed improvement plan in place
Action 6 – Arrangements for Training Staff				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Complete programme of basic equalities awareness for all members of staff	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	All current staff training On-going provision for new staff in place
Continue to offer training to elected members and particularly those with responsibility for this Scheme	HAMS	May/June 2007	Within existing	Equalities training included in member induction
Continue to include equalities in staff induction programme	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Induction programme in place with equalities content
Agree any specific training necessary for implementation of this Scheme	HRM	January 2007	Within existing	Training in place to enable implementation of scheme
Provide training on impact assessments to designated persons	HRM	January 2007	Within existing	Impact assessment training in place
Action 7 – Employment Monitoring				
Action	Who	Completed by	Resources	Milestones
Provide employment monitoring data to meet the specific employment duties as follows:				
- staff in post	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- applicants for employment	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report

- applicants for training	HRM	May 2007	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- applicants for promotion	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- those who receive training	HRM	May 2007	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- those who benefit or suffer as a result of performance appraisals	HRM	May 2007	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- those involved in grievance procedures	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- those subject to disciplinary procedure	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
- those who end their service	HRM	COMPLETED	Within existing	Data analysed and produced in annual workforce profile report
Publish results of monitoring exercises	HRM	June 2007	Within existing	Annual workforce profile report published on the internet and intranet
Compare data to local population and develop an action plan to address any under representation	HRM	September 2007	Within existing	Action plan in place