BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

30th May 2002
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Appendix 1: Race Equality Action Plan
Introduction by the Chairman

One of the main aims of Babergh District Council is to promote a thriving, caring, inclusive community. Delivering race equality is one of a number of ways we can achieve this aim.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a responsibility on all of us in Local Government for ensuring race equality in the delivery of public services. A specific duty, arising from the Act, is the publication of a Race Equality Scheme.

This Scheme commits Babergh to work, in partnership with others, to deliver quality public services in a manner which is fair for all sectors of the community we serve.

Sue Carpendale,
Chairman of Babergh District Council.
1. **INTRODUCTION TO THE RACE RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2000**

1.1 A defining moment for race relations was the tragic murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. In 1997 the Home Secretary set up the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. The report arising from that Inquiry stressed:

> “If racism is to be eliminated from our society there must be a co-ordinated effort to prevent its growth”.

The report defined institutional racism as:

> “The collective failure of an organisation to provide an effective and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people”.

1.2 The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry directly influenced the introduction of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

1.3 Section 2 of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, requires the Council when carrying out all its functions, powers and duties to have due regard to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

1.4 In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Council shall, in carrying out all its functions, powers and duties have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations:

- between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without
- between persons with dependants and persons without

1.5 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 2 obligations in relation to all its functions, powers and duties.
2. **ABOUT BABERGH**

**The Community We Serve**

2.1 Babergh is a mainly rural, relatively prosperous, community covering 59,000 hectares in the south of Suffolk, with Ipswich to the north and Colchester to the south. The total population is in the region of 81,000 living in 36,000 households. The population density, at around 1.4 people per hectare, is low compared to the national average of 3.4. The district has a total of 76 parishes. Approximately 19,600 people live in the Sudbury/Cornard area. Hadleigh, with a population of just under 7,000, and Long Melford, with just over 3,300, are the other main towns. The Council owns just under 4,000 council houses, with 66% of the tenants receiving rent rebates. Based upon the 1991 census, 0.4% of the population is from black and minority ethnic communities.

2.2 A recent MORI survey identified the district as the 7\textsuperscript{th} most desirable place in England in which to live. It includes the attractive “Constable Country” around Flatford and the Dedham Vale, and historic villages such as Lavenham. Crime levels are low and levels of social deprivation are generally low, although there are some pockets of deprivation in the Sudbury/Cornard area. At 2.4%, unemployment is below the national average, with manufacturing, distribution and hotels and restaurants being the main sources of employment.

**The Council – Its Role, Functions and Policies**

2.3 The Council performs four principal roles within its district as follows:

- the direct provision of a range of services and facilities,
- representation/advocacy on behalf of the district and its citizens,
- enabling and facilitating development within the district,
- a consultative role in relation to functions conducted by other Government bodies and agencies.

2.4 In the performance of its direct provision role the Council, in partnership with others, carries out functions and implements associated policies in the following core areas:

- leisure, tourism and culture
- street cleansing
- waste collection, disposal and recycling
- grounds maintenance (parks and open spaces)
- housing (including housing benefit)
• community safety
• the enforcement of building regulations
• the enforcement of environmental health legislation
• community development
• economic development
• animal welfare and pest control
• the licensing and regulation of street trading and places of entertainment
• planning (development control and policy)

2.5 To enable the Council to provide the above services and perform its other functions, the Council must levy an annual rate and has the power to:

• acquire and dispose of land
• borrow money
• employ staff
• procure goods and services

Organisation, Structure and Decision-Making

2.6 The Council comprises 42 Councillors. This will be increased to 43 Councillors in 2003 when Council-wide elections will be held. Since May 1999 the Council has operated a streamlined committee structure. When consulted in 2001, residents endorsed this structure as their preferred system for administering the Council's business.

2.7 The responsibilities and decision-making roles for the Council’s committees can be summarised as:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>setting the overall policy framework and budget for the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Committee</td>
<td>implementing decisions and proposing future policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview &amp; Scrutiny</td>
<td>scrutiny and the review of policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Committee</td>
<td>exercise of local planning powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards Committee</td>
<td>promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct for the Council and for Parish/Town Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals Committee</td>
<td>determining appeals by the public and others on a variety of issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 The work of the Councillors is supported by service areas operating under the leadership of the Council’s Management Team, consisting of the Chief Executive and two Corporate Directors.

2.9 The Management Team is responsible for the giving of strategic direction and advice to the Council and oversees the work of the service areas.

2.10 The Council is committed to the fulfilment of its Section 2 obligations in all parts of the organisation. Full Council will be responsible for approving the scheme. Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee will be responsible for regularly scrutinising and monitoring progress on the scheme. The Management Team will be responsible for the effective implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the Section 2 duty is complied with by the Council in carrying out its functions.

2.11 Michael Hammond, Corporate Director with responsibility for equality issues, will be the point of contact for the Commission for Racial Equality.

3. **BABERGH’S PURPOSE AND APPROACH TO PROMOTING EQUALITY**

3.1 Over recent years the Council has consulted the public on its purpose and corporate objectives. These have been strongly supported and endorsed by the public. In the light of further consultation, including through “Suffolk Speaks”, the objectives have been streamlined and developed further, as shown below:

**Purpose of the Council:**

Making the area a better place to live and work for everyone.

**Corporate Objectives:**

- Establish a safe, secure and healthy community
- Promote a thriving, caring, inclusive community
- Protect and improve the environment
- Provide all services efficiently and effectively
- Listen to and involve local people

3.2 In delivery its purpose, the Council has worked in partnership with others to promote a thriving, caring, inclusive community. This has resulted in:-
• Beacon Council Award for Neighbourhood Renewal

• SRB funding for a community capacity building project in Sudbury/Great Cornard

• “One-stop shop” at Sudbury Town Hall providing information on county/district/town council services

• e-government pilot project to ensure those in rural areas have access to information and services

• Community transport schemes to ensure isolated rural communities have access to services in market and county towns

• Language line – this interpretation service makes an immediate difference to people in great need, and means our services are accessible to all, irrespective of their language

• Babergh’s Chief Executive representing the Suffolk Chief Executives’ Group on the East of England’s Reference Group on Asylum Seekers

• Support to Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality

• Support to county-wide Community Safety Unit’s Racial Harassment caseworker

• Babergh’s active participation in the Suffolk Joint Diversity Group, whose aim is to:-

(a) Act as a co-ordinating body for all aspects of work on diversity across Suffolk.

(b) Work in partnership for the development of action plans that promote diversity and assist partner organisations in meeting both local and national targets, legal requirements and expectations.

(c) Share and promote best practice between and within partner organisations.

(d) Examine and develop joint approaches/solutions to diversity issues.

(e) Ensure that diversity issues are reflected in partner organisations’ planning processes.
(f) Provide a network of support for diversity leads from partner organisations.

3.3 In addition to working in partnership with others, the Council will integrate equality issues into its existing service planning performance management and staff appraisal systems, and its proposed Investors in People programme. This will ensure that, where appropriate, equality issues are reflected in all levels of strategic planning within the Council, including setting individual staff objectives and targets.

4. **APPROACH TO BE ADOPTED FOR ASSESSING COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 2 DUTIES**

**Stage 1: Initial Screening of Policies/Functions**

4.1 The Council has carried out an initial screening of its key policies and functions, i.e. those functions that involve or affect the public and functions which the Council carries out as employer. An assessment grid was prepared according to the Commission for Racial Equality’s guidance.

4.2 The layout of the assessment grid is set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy, service or function</th>
<th>Is it relevant to the general duty?</th>
<th>What is the degree of relevance?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which of the 3 aspects does it relate to (if any or all)?</td>
<td>How much evidence is there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Eliminating discrimination?</td>
<td>0 none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Promoting EOP?</td>
<td>1 a little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Promoting good race relations?</td>
<td>2 some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 2: Setting Priorities

4.3 Following the initial screening, described above, the relevant functions were placed in priority order for further work. This listing of priorities over the three years of the scheme is shown in the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

4.4 The Action Plan must be regarded as fluid. It will need to be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis. Further screening of the Council’s functions and policies will be required during the term of the scheme.
4.5 Other public authorities in Suffolk, in particular district councils, are currently identifying their priorities. Wherever possible joint working on developing and delivering the scheme will be undertaken. The established forum of the Suffolk Joint Diversity Group should help facilitate this.

4.6 In addition, wherever possible, existing procedures such as Best Value Reviews will be used as a vehicle to assess and monitor whether the Council’s policies have an effect on equality and elimination of discrimination. This will ensure that the issue of equalities is addressed through the Council's established procedures.

**Stage 3: Equality Impact Assessments**

4.7 In those areas where the screening process has identified a need, the Council will carry out an equality impact assessment.

4.8 The purpose of the impact assessment will be a systematic way of finding out whether an existing or proposed policy/function has a differential effect on different groups. It will allow the Council to take full account of the needs and experiences of those affected by its policies in order to:

- achieve better results generally
- identify actual and potential inequalities
- respond appropriately to those inequalities

4.9 The Council intends to develop its approach to impact assessments in Year 1 of the Action Plan (see Appendix 1). This will be achieved by learning from others and, wherever possible, working in partnership with the Suffolk Joint Diversity Group.

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Council is committed to carrying out consultation.

5.2 A particular challenge for the Council, serving a community with a very small black and minority ethnic population, is how to identify and engage with appropriate representative groups and individuals.

5.3 The Council intends to meet this challenge by working with the Suffolk Joint Diversity Working Group to establish a consultation list of appropriate groups/organisations across the county.
5.4 In addition, the Council will build on its success with “Suffolk Speaks”. The Council established with others a Citizens’ Panel of “Suffolk Speaks” in order we could hear first hand what residents think about local services. The panel was designed to be a representative sample of the Suffolk population, taking into account data from the 1991 census on black and minority ethnic numbers within the county. The panel has acted as a “sounding board” on local community needs and concerns.

5.5 However, we recognise that due to the small black and minority ethnic population, “Suffolk Speaks” may not be an effective means of consultation. Hence the Council is co-funding the Suffolk Black and Minority Ethnic Consultation and Involvement Project. This project aims to engage with and empower black and minority ethnic communities, initially within Ipswich, and then rolling out to the rest of Suffolk in due course. The project should increase the capacity of rural Suffolk district councils, such as Babergh, to meet its obligations in respect of consultation.

5.6 In particular, the project will enable Babergh to engage with communities and community leaders through co-ordinated consultations, thereby making better use of resources, avoiding duplication and ensuring a small number of community members and leaders are not overloaded.

6. **MONITORING**

6.1 The Council will monitor the progress of the scheme through its established performance management systems. This will ensure that the issue of equalities is “mainstreamed” into the work of the Council.

6.2 This will result in the Council’s Performance Review and Audit Manager including the Race Equality Scheme Action Plan in the list of action plans which are regularly monitored.

6.3 The results of this monitoring will be reported to the Council’s appropriate Corporate Director and on a six monthly basis to the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee.

6.4 In addition, through its work with the Suffolk Joint Diversity Group, the Council will seek to develop systems which report the results of its assessments, consultations and monitoring to interested parties in the black and ethnic minority community.
7. **PUBLICATION OF THE SCHEME, OF ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATIONS AND MONITORING**

7.1 The Council will make the Race Equality Scheme publicly available on the Council’s website [www.babergh.co.uk](http://www.babergh.co.uk).

7.2 The scheme and the outcome of any equality impact assessments, consultations and monitoring will also be available in printed form by writing to the Chief Executive at Babergh District Council, Corks Lane, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 6SJ.

7.3 The Council will work with the Suffolk Joint Diversity Group to inform the public about the availability of this material, for example, through press releases, display of public notices, posters and contacting any identified representative groups or individuals.

8. **MONITORING BY EMPLOYERS**

8.1 Good practice includes monitoring by employers of employees by reference to racial groups.

8.2 The results of such monitoring need to be published annually. In the first year of the scheme, and as set out in the Action Plan, the Council's Head of Policy and Personnel will consider how best to establish such monitoring procedures.

9. **TRAINING**

9.1 The Council will raise awareness of the Race Equality Scheme through the Council's staff newsletter.

9.2 Staff responsible for delivering all or part of the scheme will be allocated a specific task(s), and set an individual target(s), under the Council’s appraisal scheme.

9.3 The Council will then, through its staff appraisal process, identify training needs of staff arising from the scheme. All staff are appraised on a six-monthly basis.

9.4 Once training needs have been identified, a training plan will be prepared by the Council’s Head of Policy and Personnel.
10. **COMPLAINTS**

10.1 The Council will respond to complaints that it has not fulfilled its statutory obligations and will seek to resolve such complaints by agreement. When a person believes that he/she has been affected by a failure of the Council to comply with the scheme, he/she will be provided with a copy of the Council's guide to making a complaint entitled, “Don’t Be Afraid to Complain”. The guide includes a form on which to complain. The Council will then deal with the complaint in the manner explained in the guide.

10.2 Under the Council's procedures, a Corporate Director will deal personally with the complaint. The complaint will be acknowledged within three working days of being received and, in normal circumstances, a full written response will be sent within ten working days. If the complainant remains unhappy, he/she can complain to the Chief Executive, who will look at the matter afresh and independently. Again, the letter will be acknowledged and the Chief Executive will normally give a full reply within ten working days. The reply will detail what the decision is and the reason for it. If the complainant still remains unhappy, he/she will be advised of the procedure for pursuing the complaint further with the Commission for Racial Equality.

11. **REVIEW OF THE SCHEME**

11.1 Within three years of submitting this scheme to the Commission for Racial Equality, the Council will conduct a formal review of the scheme to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting the statutory duty. This review will include an assessment of how the Council has complied with its Section 2 obligations and how equality of opportunity and good relations have been advanced in relation to the direct services and key policies. The review will be reported to the appropriate committee for scrutiny and review before submission to the Commission for Racial Equality.

In undertaking the review, the Council will take into account any guidance provided by the Commission for Racial Equality.

The report of this review will be made public.
### RACE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Action</strong></th>
<th><strong>Who</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comments</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Suffolk-wide consultation list/plan and hold a stakeholder conference</td>
<td>Suffolk Joint Diversity Working Group</td>
<td>In view of the comparatively small minority ethnic communities in Suffolk, particularly rural Suffolk, it is recognised that joint consultation work is necessary and likely to be the most effective means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an employment monitoring and training programme – Phase 1</td>
<td>Head of Policy &amp; Personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider developing a Suffolk-wide Race Equality Scheme leaflet</td>
<td>Suffolk Joint Diversity Group</td>
<td>Publish a leaflet, in various languages, providing information and advice on the Race Equality Schemes published by public authorities in Suffolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a Black and Ethnic Housing Strategy for Babergh's housing service</td>
<td>Head of Housing</td>
<td>Strategy to be in accordance with Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) guidance. Strategy to ensure that Babergh’s housing policies and actions reflect local need and promote race equality and equal opportunities for all in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates</td>
<td>Housing Benefits Best Value Review Team</td>
<td>Assess policies and functions for impact on promotion of race equality and elimination of discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Sports Programme</td>
<td>Head of Leisure &amp; Community Services in liaison with Active Sports Partnership</td>
<td>Establish procedures to monitor ethnic minority participation in key sports over life of Active Sports Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Value Review Methodology</td>
<td>Best Value Officer Group</td>
<td>Develop mechanisms/procedures for ensuring Best Value Reviews take into account equality issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop approach to Equality Impact Assessments</td>
<td>Policy Officer in consultation with Suffolk Joint Diversity Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and review progress of actions of Race Equality Scheme including report to Overview &amp; Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee and, if appropriate, amend actions in 2003/04 and 2004/05</td>
<td>Performance Review &amp; Audit Manager</td>
<td>An annual monitoring report in accordance with the Council’s performance management and monitoring procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2003/04 MEDIUM PRIORITY ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County-wide Community Safety Best Value Review</th>
<th>Suffolk Crime and Disorder Group</th>
<th>Ensure that equalities are considered when reviewing the Council’s, and the partnership’s, crime and disorder strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure (Sport and Culture)</td>
<td>Leisure Services Best Value Review Team</td>
<td>Assess policies for impact on promotion of race equality and elimination of discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Policy and Economic Development</td>
<td>Planning Policy and Economic Development Best Value Review Team</td>
<td>Assess policies for impact on promotion of race equality and elimination of discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an employment monitoring and training programme – Phase 2</td>
<td>Head of Policy &amp; Personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and review progress of actions of Race Equality Scheme including report to Overview &amp; Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee and agree a detailed list of actions for 2004/05</td>
<td>Performance Review &amp; Audit Manager</td>
<td>An annual monitoring report in accordance with the Council’s performance management monitoring procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2004/05 LOWER PRIORITY ACTIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Control</td>
<td>Development Control Best Value Review Team</td>
<td>Assess policies for impact on promotion of race equality and elimination of discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and review progress of actions of Race Equality Scheme</td>
<td>Performance Review &amp; Audit Manager</td>
<td>An annual monitoring report in accordance with the Council’s performance management and monitoring procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including report to Overview &amp; Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee</td>
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</table>