RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Under the Race Relations Act 1976, the Council has always had a general duty to promote race equality by working towards the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations.

1.2 As a result of an amendment to the Act, the Council is required to publish a Race Equality Scheme which outlines how it will review its services and policies in order to meet the general duty set out above.

2. **COUNCIL POLICIES**

2.1 The Council has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and fairness of treatment. Its relations with ethnic communities are long-standing and fruitful to both parties. The Community Relations Section celebrates 35 years of work in 2002.

2.2 Over 100 languages are spoken in the Royal Borough. Residents trace their origins to many parts of the world with a significant number of people from all the world religions living locally.

2.3 The Council has had an equal opportunities policy for some years and revised it in 2001 to emphasise service delivery aspects as well as employment. It is also committed to progress within the revised equalities standard for local government. A copy of the policy is attached at Appendix 1.

2.4 In addition the Council has agreed a number of strategic priorities in relation to equality of opportunity. The Council will aim to:

- Demonstrate political and administrative leadership in respect of the equal opportunities policy;
- Develop a culture which values, celebrates and promotes diversity and facilitates staff development and training;
- Encourage the diversity of staff at all levels in the organisation to reflect the diversity of local residents;
- Convince the communities in the Borough of the realities of the Council’s commitment;
- Develop a greater understanding, through dialogue and evaluation, of the needs and expectations of the Borough’s communities and respond as necessary and evaluate progress towards these aims on a systematic and regular basis.

2.5 The Council already carries out ethnic monitoring of its existing staff. Under a further amendment to the Race Relations Act, it will extend this monitoring to other aspects of employment, as well as monitoring applicants for employment.
3. **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EQUALITIES**

3.1 The Council is committed to equality of access to services, fairness of treatment when services are provided and equal opportunity as an employer.

3.2 The Council has an Equal Opportunities Advisory Group, comprising Members from both political parties, which reports to the Cabinet. It is responsible for agreeing policies in this area and for monitoring compliance. It reports to the Cabinet as necessary.

3.3 The Town Clerk and Chief Executive has overall responsibility for carrying out decisions of the Council and ensuring that all parts of the Council are implementing these.

3.4 At corporate level, a Diversity Group has been established with representation from each of the Council’s Business Groups, in order to provide guidance to Departments on the Equal Opportunities practical implementation of the Council’s Policy and their duties under the Race Relations Act. It also has a responsibility for proposing and implementing agreed policies on other aspects of equalities.

3.5 Within each Business Group, an equality improvement team has been established to act as a focal point for diversity issues.

4. **RACE EQUALITY SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION**

(a) **Initial Screening of Services**

4.1 The initial stage in implementing the Race Equality Scheme is to review all the Council’s services and policies to determine their importance in promoting race equality. Each Business Group will examine its own areas of responsibility and conduct this initial screening.

4.2 The screening will examine the ethnic profile of service users, whether different ethnic groups have different needs, issues and priorities and whether these groups have been consulted. It will also review the level of complaints from users for any evidence of possible discrimination. Finally the screening process will consider whether any changes to policies and procedures would help to promote equality of opportunity.

(b) **Setting the programme**

4.3 As part of the consultation exercise, a programme of race equality reviews will be drawn up on the basis of a three year cycle of reviews. This programme will be amended as necessary once the views of ethnic groups have been collected as a further part of the screening process. The draft programme is set out in Appendix 2.

4.4 All services with a significant potential impact on race equality will be reviewed over the first three year period and there will be a review of the programme at the end of the three years.

(c) **Race Equality Reviews**
4.5 Each review will involve an examination of:-

- whether there is over or under representation of service users amongst different ethnic groups and possible reasons for this;
- any particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities for different ethnic groups;
- what changes need to be introduced in response to the findings which would better meet, promote and address race equality.

4.6 The race equality review is essentially an audit of the service, using appropriate information including the views of users.

4.7 On completion of the review, the results and any proposed actions will be published. The actions which arise from the race equality review will form part of the service improvement plan for that service. This will be the subject of agreement by the relevant Cabinet Member and reviewed after 12 months, together with an audit by the Council’s external auditors.

(d) New policies

4.8 The race equality scheme programme does not only cover existing policies and services. New policies will also be reviewed for their significance in terms of race equality and their impact on people of different racial groups.

5. **SCHOOLS**

5.1 In parallel to the specific duties placed on the Council, schools also have specific duties. In addition to preparing a written statement of its policy for promoting race equality, each governing body will set out its arrangements for meeting its duties to:-

- assess the impact of its policies, including race equality, on pupils, staff and parents from different racial groups including the impact on attainment levels;
- monitor the impact of such policies on attainment levels.

6. **TRAINING**

6.1 As part of the race equality review process, the Council will offer training and briefing to staff and Members on equalities issues. This will include:-

- specific information on the Council’s equalities policy as part of the induction of new employees;
- training for those involved in conducting race equality reviews and assessing new services and policies for their impact on race relations.
- training activities will involve the use of the Community Associate Trainers drawn from the local community, wherever possible.
7. **CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Council places great importance on consulting with individuals, organisations and partner agencies in the development and implementation of the Race Equality scheme. The process should be transparent and open to challenge.

7.2 The Council will consult with relevant parties as part of the screening process, the race equality reviews and, where appropriate, the introduction of new policies and services. The Borough Community Relations Advisory Group will be asked to assist in identifying appropriate consultation groups.

7.3 The consultation process will be on-going, rather than a one-off activity, to ensure that the views of people and organisations are considered at all stages, from the initial screening process through to annual reviews. Key outcomes for the initial consultation planned for 2002 will be to:

- Gain, from ethnic groups, a better understanding of their views and experiences of Council services and how Council services can be developed or changed to meet the needs of ethnic communities;
- Develop a process of meaningful and on-going consultation that takes account of language, culture and other issues which may traditionally inhibit people from participating in consultation;
- Understand how other local public agencies intend to consult and develop their Race Equality Schemes and identify opportunities for working in partnership.

7.4 The methods used will depend on the needs of specific ethnic groups and on the service being reviewed, but could include meetings or workshops, focus groups, surveys or residents’ panels.

8. **COMMUNICATIONS**

8.1 As part of the Race Equality Scheme, the Council will review the way in which it communicates with residents to ensure that ethnic groups, particularly those whose first language is not English, have access to information and services. Key documents, including this Scheme, will be translated into the main languages present within the Royal Borough.

9. **PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

9.1 The Council will publish a summary of the results of each race equality review. The summary will set out the way in which the review was conducted, consultation undertaken, the results, agreed actions and future monitoring arrangements.

9.2 A review of the entire three year programme will also be published at the end of that period.

9.3 The Council’s race equality scheme is available on [www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk).
Appendix 1

PROMOTING EQUALITY

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICES

FOR OUR STAFF

PROMOTING EQUALITY

The Royal Borough has agreed a clear new policy that sets out its commitment to equal opportunities.

As we run our business, we must be ever mindful that the Council serves a very diverse set of communities. And we rely on the talent of a very diverse staff group to do this.

The new policy has the full support of councillors and of the Executive Board and it will affect every aspect of our services. It will also hold us to high standards in the way we operate as an employer.

I am confident it will help increase public confidence in our services and reassure staff that we are an equal opportunities employer.

The new policy will affect all members of staff and its success will depend upon your commitment. I want you all to take an interest – and a role if, appropriate - in the Action Plans your Business Group is developing to take this work forward.

Derek Myers
Town Clerk and Chief Executive
A new commitment

The new Equal Opportunities policy covers:

- Public access to services
- Staff training
- Staff recruitment and selection

It is backed up by a set of strategic priorities to bring about improvements and your Business Group is now drawing up action plans to ensure that these are achieved. You may be involved in this as it will be a key part of the annual business planning process.

This will cover ALL Council departments and ALL services.

*This policy was developed by the Council’s new Equal Opportunities Working Party and endorsed by the Policy and Resources Committee as well as the full Council.*

Why is this happening?

The Royal Borough has an excellent record as an employer and in providing services to all sections of the community, but a clear public statement about our policies can help sustain the trust of the public – and staff – in our approach.

The Council has also agreed that it will meet the Commission for Racial Equality’s mid-range standards - ‘Level Three’ - on equal opportunities by 2005, as part of its overall Best Value Targets. This work will affect you.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act will also bring changes (see below) and the Council will be working to implement the Commission for Racial Equality’s new Code of Practice, which is expected this summer.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT**

“The Council is committed to promoting equality of access, opportunity and employment in accordance with both the letter and spirit of legislation. It is the policy of the Council that:

- There should be an equal right of access to relevant services, facilities and resources offered by the Council;
- All have a right to fair and just treatment in the delivery of services;
- The sole valid criteria for employment are merit and experience. All applicants for each job will be considered equally on this basis;
- Staff have a right to equal treatment in all aspects of their employment terms, conditions and working arrangements;
- Staff have an equal right to access development opportunities and training.”

*This policy applies to all departments and all employees. Anyone who has a complaint or grievance about the way this policy is implemented should use the Council’s complaints or grievance procedures as appropriate.*
Strategic Priorities

The Council will aim to:

- Demonstrate political and administrative leadership in respect of the strategic aim;
- Develop a culture which values, celebrates and promotes diversity and facilitates staff development and training in this regard;
- Encourage the diversity of staff at all levels in the organisation to reflect the diversity of local residents;
- Convince the communities in the Borough of the realities of the Authority’s commitment;
- Develop greater understanding, through dialogue and evaluation, of the needs and expectations of the Borough’s communities and respond as necessary; and evaluate progress towards the strategic aims on a systematic and regular basis.

What is the Commission for Racial Equality’s Level 3 Target?

This covers a wide range of matters, including:

- Monitoring the take up of our services by different sections of the community.
- Setting standards for translation and interpreting services.
- Encouraging people to report racial harassment.
- Ensure that that people from ethnic minorities have full and equal access to the electoral register.
- Setting racial equality targets.
- Providing racial equality training for managers.

Full information is on the CRE’s web site at [www.cre.gov.uk/publs/dl_keyqs.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/publs/dl_keyqs.html)

What next?

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 outlaws race discrimination in areas not covered by the 1976 Act and extends its reach to all public bodies, including the Royal Borough. It also places a general duty on public bodies to work towards equality of opportunity and to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The Act gives the Commission for Racial Equality powers to issue Codes of Practice to provide guidance and the Royal Borough will be following these.

The Act now outlaws racial discrimination in every area of a public body’s functions including enforcement and licensing, for example.

Further information is available at the Home Office’s web site, [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceact/outracdi.htm](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceact/outracdi.htm)

Any questions?

This leaflet has been produced by Central Personnel, but you should contact your Group Personnel Manager in the first instance for more information.
APPENDIX 2

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF RACE EQUALITY SCHEME REVIEWS (subject to further consultation)

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME REVIEWS

2002-3

Economic Development, Regeneration and Social Inclusion
Revenues, (incorporating local taxation and benefits)
Leisure
Early Years/Under 8s services
Services for Young People*
Waste management
Mental Health Services/Drug misuse
Special educational needs*
Learning Disabilities*
Personnel services*
Community Relations
Housing Initiatives
Supporting people (Housing)
Licencing and Support Services
Environmental Health Commercial
Parking

2003-04

Protecting the public
Community Development and centres inc. voluntary organisations
Environmental health - residential
Housing needs, homelessness and allocations
Housing management*
Children’s Services
Education support services
Environmental Services strategy and service development

2005-6

Housing advice
Physical Disability
Older People’s services*
Social services transport provision*
Libraries
Planning and Building Control
Transportation and Highways
Valuers
Community Education
Housing Capital Programmes and Projects
Housing repairs maintenance*

*Already reviewed under Best Value
NOTE: Schools will be dealt with separately.