Corporate Equalities – Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity

1. Executive Summary

This policy meets the requirements of the General Duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, however, a number of potential barriers have been identified which may result in adverse impact.

It is recommended that additional monitoring indicators be developed to cover age, sexuality, and religion or belief and that consultation arrangements should be extended to cover sexuality and religion or belief. The communications strategy for the policy should be impact assessed once sufficient data is available.

Background:

This policy demonstrates that the Council recognises service users and employees may face multiple disadvantages and commits the Council to take positive steps to address these through ensuring that equalities considerations are foremost in all aspects of service planning and delivery activities and employment practices. This ensures that the Council maintains a positive perception in the community, contributing to strong community cohesion. The policy aims to: build and maintain staff confidence by promoting and celebrating diversity and respect for all; ensuring compliance with legislative obligations; ensuring achievement of the key Best Value Performance Indicators for Local Government and the Equality Standard; promoting community cohesion; supporting the provision of high quality and accessible services and employment practices.


2. Data Collection & Consultation

Equalities profile of service users: Multiracial and diverse community and staff

Data Sources:
- Census 2001 data
- Workforce to Reflect the Community reports
- Benchmarking with other Councils and public bodies
- Diversity Champions policies
- Access Strategy
- Race Equality Scheme

Research and Consultation carried out:

Race Issues:
- RHIAF (Racial Harassment Inter Agency Forum), Race Equality Scheme
- Tower Hamlets Stephen Lawrence Monitoring Unit (2002), Race Equality Scheme
- Race Equalities in Tower Hamlets, Race Equality Scheme
**Disability Issues:**
DITO (2002) (Disability Information Training Opportunity)

**Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Issues:**
Stonewall (2002) – Diversity Champions Forum ongoing

**All Strands of Equality:**
Trade Unions – ongoing CESG
Community Cohesion Conference (2003)
Provision of information and advice through emails, meetings or verbally
Co-ordination of equalities work
Representing and presenting equality interests and issues at different stakeholder forums.
Examples of these include: -
Disabled workers group
External/internal Access Group
Stonewall Diversity Champions Forum
Trade Unions
RHIAF (Racial Harassment Inter Agency Forum)
Race Equalities in Tower Hamlets (REITH)
Information has also been passed to the Black Workers Group
LBTH management structure and Equalities Lead Officers
Critical Friend (Corporate HR)

There are ongoing consultation programmes which, in 2003-2004, will be reflected in the new Council involvement framework.

**Views of residents and staff:**
Avoid tokenism and stereotyping
Provide more training for jobs
There is a need for more BME in senior management positions to raise aspirations of young people from BME communities
Focus on employing disabled people within the public sector

**Internal/external Communications:**

**External**
‘EastEnd Life’ community newspaper Website
Libraries, council buildings, reception areas
Poster campaign in council buildings and parks

**Internal**
Payslip mail shot
Intranet
Management/team meetings
Directorate Equalities Focus groups

The policy has been translated into the four main community languages. Availability (by request) on audio tape and Braille.
3. Key Findings

- The policy meets the requirements of the general duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Feedback from consultation indicates a lack of confidence in the application of this policy
- There has been considerable publicity surrounding the policy which is available in different forms and translations
- A covering letter from the Chief Executive should be provided with the policy when it is sent to staff with pay-slips
- Staff should be made aware of the policy when joining the Council and at various stages of the employment cycle
- The communications strategy should be monitored to establish the level of awareness by the public and staff of this policy
- Additional consultation processes should be established to provide feedback on LGBT and Religion or Belief issues
- Monitoring should be undertaken in respect of all equality target groups

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

All equality target groups should be monitored and, accordingly, age, sexuality and religion or belief indicators need to be developed. The communications strategy for this policy should be reviewed in the light of additional information from the consultation process and monitoring data when this is available.

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<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Key Activity</th>
<th>Progress Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measure the impact of the Policy Statement on Equality and Diversity on age, sexuality and religion or belief</td>
<td>Add age, sexuality and religion or belief categories to monitoring forms and provide guidance</td>
<td>Jul 2003</td>
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<td>Explore ways to engage LGBT staff and communities</td>
<td>Undertake survey of LGBT staff and community - Mar 2004</td>
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<td>Establish LGBT Focus Group</td>
<td>Identify interested parties - May 2004</td>
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<td>Explore ways to engage faith groups in the community</td>
<td>LGBT Focus Group established – Sep 2004</td>
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<td>Establish Interfaith Forum</td>
<td>Invite interested parties – Apr 2003</td>
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<td>Develop faith initiatives e.g. Interfaith Calendar</td>
<td>Jun 2003</td>
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<td>Jan 2004</td>
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<td>Impact assess the communications strategy for this policy</td>
<td>Supporting letter from the Chief Executive to be distributed to staff with payslips</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
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<td>Collect and analyse monitoring information on all equalities target groups</td>
<td>Dec 2004</td>
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<td>Carry out impact assessment of communications strategy</td>
<td>Mar 2005</td>
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