

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Performance Review Sub-Committee - 22nd March 2000

SUBJECT: Commission for Racial Equality Standards & Stephen Lawrence/Mcpherson Report

FROM: Commissioning Team

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1_ To update Members on the progress made in relation to the Commission for Racial Equality Standards (CRE) & to seek support for the recommendations below to ensure that the Council meet their responsibilities under the more recent, Stephen Lawrence/Mcpherson Inquiry.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall giving a commitment to work towards Level 3 of the CRE Standards (there are five levels in total). In order to achieve this the Commissioning Team have been evaluating Business Units & identifying any gaps. This has resulted in the production of an action plan specific to that Unit and their area of work/service delivery. In addition a corporate action plan is in the process of being produced to include those responsibilities that are Council wide.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 To date, seven Business Units have been evaluated (Appendix 1) and either have an action plan in place or are in the process of drafting one (Appendix 2 - Example; Environmental Health Action Plan). A key element of the Standards is that there should be a monitoring process in place; therefore the progress made by the action plans will be reviewed by the Commissioning Team on a regular basis with each Head of Business Unit. In addition the Council receives support and advice from both the local Racial Equality Council & the Regional Commission for Racial Equality.

3.2 Action already taken on a Council wide basis includes:

- * Advertising job vacancies in ethnic minority publications * Translation, on request of all key literature
- * Equality Statement to be used on all new leaflets produced, to promote the Council's Equal Access position, as agreed by Committee February 1999

3.3 The recent Stephen Lawrence/Mcpherson Inquiry has highlighted specific areas for improvement within Local Authorities & provides the minimum standards required (Appendix 3 - Review of WDC position). The Report recognises the CRE Standards as an appropriate method to provide precise performance indicators & a defined monitoring mechanism. Therefore the works already initiated, as mentioned above, are an appropriate method to continue improvements for the Council.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The Council is making good progress but should not be complacent. This work needs to have a high profile and strong commitment from both Councillors and Officers.

5. KEY ISSUE STRATEGIES

5.1 This assists in the achievement of S05 , progressing the CRE Standards & the mandatory requirements of the Stephen Lawrence/Mcpherson Reports.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are asked to approve the following recommendations & allow Officers to commence work/investigations which will be reported back to this Committee at regular intervals:

Internal

- To continue commitment to the CRE Standards

- To increase staff awareness by:

a) Producing a summary of the Council's responsibilities & how that will affect them

b) Introduction of a detailed 'equality' training course (as the Council did for Disability Awareness). This will compliment/enhance existing training given

- To introduce training for Members in this area to ensure you are kept up to date with changes & developments

External

To produce a leaflet defining the Councils' 'equality' position that states what ethnic minority communities can expect from Warwick District Council as a service provider

The development of an additional complaints procedure which will be specific to issues of race

- To raise the profile of the Councils' current position & future intentions by:

1. Issuing a number of press releases
2. Signing up to the recruitment directory to be produced by the Federation of Black Housing Organisations to promote WDC as an equal opportunities employer

- To proactively commence initiatives to encourage ethnic minorities to come to work for WDC, eg running work experience schemes for ethnic women who have been out of the work place for some time.

Kirsty Russell
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BACKGROUND PAPERS - Equality & Equal Access Working Party - 29th May 1997

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Areas in District: All Affected:

APPENDIX I

BUSINESS UNITS EVALUATED TO DATE

1. Environmental Health
2. Engineering
3. Leisure & Amenities
4. Sports Facilities (Contract)
5. Housing
6. Planning
7. Finance (Personnel)

APPENDIX 3

STEPHEN LAWRENCE/MCPHERSON REPORT - MINIMUM STANDARDS & WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL POSITION

Below is an overview of the Councils' current position in meeting the minimum standards provided by the above Report:

1. PRODUCE A WRITTEN COMMITMENT TO RACE EQUALITY

The Council have an Equal Opportunities statement in place which includes ethnic minorities.

Commitment will also be demonstrated by Business Unit & corporate action plans when the CRE Standards programme is complete.

2. MAINSTREAM RACE EQUALITY PRINCIPLES INTO THE COUNCIL'S POLICIES & PRACTICES

Due to the Council's commitment to the CRE Standards all policies should give consideration to all minority groups including ethnic groups.

However, further attention needs to be given to the monitoring of policies of contractors being used by the Council. The Council must ensure that all contractors have an equal opportunities policy and that they comply with it.

3. PROVIDE EFFECTIVE RACIAL EQUALITY TRAINING

All new staff attend the Corporate Induction Programme which includes a course on equal opportunities.

However, this needs to be complimented by a more detailed course which highlights the issues involved and how to deal with them.

4. ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT A PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The Corporate Complaints Procedure covers the areas of Performance, Policy & Personnel of which a complaint of this nature would fall within.

However, it is recommended that a specific complaints procedure is established.

In addition, the Council must show commitment and encourage victims to report incidents of this nature.

5. TAKE STEPS TO ADDRESS THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF BLACK, ASIAN & ETENIC MINORITY PEOPLE IN THE WORK FORCE

The Council currently advertises job vacancies in ethnic minority publications. However, this is not enough. The Council need to consider other activities to encourage minority groups into the work place. For example structured work experience programmes for black women who have been out of the work place for some time.

6. EVALUATE PROGRESS

The monitoring process provided by the CRE Standards is a recognised evaluating method.

It is important to remember that these are minimum standards & that the Council should aim to improve upon these standards and be seen to be aproactive Organisation in this area of work.