



**HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN**

INCLUDING

**RACE EQUALITY SCHEME
ACTION ON DISABILITY
GENDER ISSUES**

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INTRODUCTION

Harborough District Council's Corporate Equality Plan has been developed as part of the adoption of the Local Government Equality Standard and the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice.

The plan includes the Council's stated aims relating to its commitment to equality, details of the ways in which it will meet its responsibility, equality targets, methods of consultation and an action plan for the future.

1. STATEMENT OF AIMS

Harborough District Council, in its 2010 vision for South Leicestershire aims to provide:-

- Strong community participation
- A strong local economy and improved transport
- Affordable and decent accommodation
- A cleaner, healthier environment
- Safer, healthier lifestyles
- Responsive and efficient services
- Minimum local bureaucracy

Harborough District Council cares about the quality of life for everyone in the District. It recognises and values the importance of equality and will seek to eliminate barriers to the achievement of such equality by encouraging and implementing good practice throughout all aspects of the Authority's business.

Our aim is to make race equality an integral element of our business operation by putting it at the centre of policy making, service delivery and employment practice.

We will adopt a comprehensive equality policy and procedures, which will cover the following areas identified as priorities:

Race

Gender

Disability

2. CORPORATE COMMITMENT

In order to demonstrate commitment to these aims, Harborough District Council at the meeting of the Executive on 5th June 2002 took the following action:

Adopted the CRE Code of Practice

Adopted the Local Government Equality Standard

*Published a corporate Equality Policy statement**

The Council is committed to the following future actions:

Earmarking resources for improving Equality practice, giving priority to race, gender and disability

Publishing a Corporate Equality plan, which includes Race Equality

Involving all policy and service areas in implementing the plan

Holding regular meetings of key stakeholders

Developing processes for self-assessment

Limited resources are available to turn our commitments into reality. In order to make the most effective use of those resources, we will:

Take advice from the Race Equality Council

Take advice from District Audit

Harness the expertise of other organisations with similar experiences and demands

* see Appendix 1

Work with partners such as the Welland Authorities and the County Council

Ensure that plans and timetables are measured, reasonable and achievable

3. THE POPULATION AND WORKFORCE

The 2001 census provided details of the district and its inhabitants.

Population size	76559
Percentage of:	%
Women	50.4
Ethnic minorities	2.1 (1% economically active)
Disabled people	13.7 (6.2% economically active)
People over 60 years of age	20.9
Economically active	71.8

At 31st of March 2003, the composition of the Council workforce was as follows:

Size

Percentage of:	%
Women	65
Ethnic minorities	1.8
Disabled people	2.2

Workforce monitoring on ethnicity, gender and disability is carried out on a regular basis. The position of the workforce as a whole and also at senior levels is monitored. The composition of the Authority's population is taken into account when setting targets and reviewing recruitment practices. Positive action to recruit under-represented minority groups, including racial groups, will be undertaken if and when appropriate.

Monitoring of both customers and employees can only take place with their co-operation. The sensitivity of information, particularly about ethnic origin and disability must be respected. This can sometimes mean that the amount of available data, from which to draw conclusions, is limited.

4. HOW WE WILL MEET OUR GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES ON RACE AND OTHER EQUALITY ISSUES

Harborough District Council will

- Ensure compliance with the general and specific statutory duties on Race Equality
- Develop fair policies that have taken the impact of equality issues into account
- Provide services fairly to all sections of the community
- Ensure employment and training practices are fair for the entire workforce
- Monitor policies and services
- Raise awareness of race equality issues and gender and disability

5. HOW WE WILL MEET OUR SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES ON RACE AND OTHER EQUALITY ISSUES

This section provides an overview of what is already in place and what is planned in terms of policies, service and employment. The Action Plan on pages 15 to 17 sets out in more detail the timetable and priorities given to future developments.

5.1 POLICY

Examples of our policy commitments are :

- Our Customer Service Strategy addresses equality issues
- Adoption of the Racial Equality standard in sport for our Leisure activities
- Accessibility to our buildings and facilities will comply with the DDA 1995
- Harborough Home Search allocations policy includes an equality statement
- New developments on websites will be “Bobby” compliant**

**for explanation of “Bobby” see Appendix 2

In the future, we hope to:

Include race and other equality issues in customer and employee satisfaction surveys.

5.2 SERVICE

Examples of our service commitments are:

- for our customers, we provide an extensive range of documents on-line, in large print, in other languages and in Braille;
- in planning and building control services, we make plans and documents available in large print;
- plans submitted under Building Regulations are refused if they fail to demonstrate compliance with the DDA;
- we adopt the plain English approach to letters, forms etc;
- we assist customers whose first language is not English by providing access to translators;
- in areas such as Housing allocation and homelessness, we monitor service usage to ensure there is no discrimination;
- through our Technical Services Team and Harborough Improvement Scheme, we link with community groups on disabled access, translation of documents into Braille etc

In the future, we hope to:

- provide visual and audio aids to assist access to committee meetings, hearings and enquiries;
- a minicom system will be installed in all our service shops;
- establish a database of language course providers.

5.3 EMPLOYMENT

Examples of our employment commitments are:

- Selection and recruitment procedures are monitored.
- Workforce is monitored for its make up in comparison to District data on race, gender and disability.
- Leavers are monitored on race, gender and disability.
- Reasonable adjustments in accordance with DDA provisions are made for existing staff and on appointment.
- Employment practices comply with employment legislation, including the Race Relations Act (and amendments), Sex Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act and Disability Discrimination Act.

In future, we hope to :

- Train staff in equality awareness.
- Provide specific training (e.g. on accessibility at the customer interface) to relevant staff.

6. EQUALITY TARGETS

We will monitor progress against

BVPI 2:

The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government in England to which the authority conforms (corporate)

BVPI 2b:

The duty to promote race equality

BVPI 11a:

The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women

BVPI 11b:

The percentage of top 5% of earners from black and minority ethnic communities

BVPI 16:

The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition compared with the percentage of economically active disabled people in the authority area

BVPI 17:

The percentage of local authority employees from minority ethnic communities compared with the percentage of the economically active minority ethnic population in the authority area

BVPI 156:

The percentage of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people

BVPI 164:

Does the authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing and follow the Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling harassment included in Tackling Racial Harassment: Code of Practice for Social Landlords?

BVPI 174:

The number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population

BVPI 175:

The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action

The position as at 31.3.03 was as follows:

INDICATOR	POSITION AT 31.3.03
BVPI 2	Level 1
BVPI 2b	New indicator – no data until 31.3.04
BVPI 11a	33.3%
BVPI 11b	6.7%
BVPI 16	2.2% compared to 6.2 %
BVPI 17	1.8% compared to 1%
BVPI 156	66%
BVPI 164	Yes
BVPI 174	0
BVPI 175	Not applicable

In future we will:

Meet with the local Racial Equality Council and with District auditors to discuss effective target setting.

7. HOW WE WILL CONSULT AND INFORM OUR STAFF AND THE PUBLIC

Through employee representatives

Staff newsletter

Training and awareness sessions

Media Group

Direct contact with community groups

These currently include:

Market Harborough Disability Access Group

Learning Disability Locality Group

Various customer/consumer groups

Tenants groups

Performance reports and plans

8. HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS

Informal discussion

Customer complaints procedure

Staff grievance procedure

Monitoring officer

Whistle-blowing procedure

9. ACTION PLAN

See pages 15 to 17

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ITEM	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS
PLANNING	Publish Equality plan	30.6.03	Current	Policy team	Available on HDC website
TARGETS	Meet with Audit Commission	31.5.03	Current	HR Manager	Completed 19.8.03 (delay caused by Audit Commission)
RACE EQUALITY	Meet with Leicestershire Race Equality Council	31.5.03	Current	HR Manager	Completed 15.4.03
POLICY	Ensure policies are assessed for equality impact	Ongoing	Current	Policy Team	No progress
	Ensure reports to elected members cover equality impact	Ongoing	Current	Strategic Team	No progress
	Child Protection Policy will address bullying of children from ethnic minorities etc	30.6.03	Current	Child Protection Officer	Achieved

ITEM	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS
POLICY	Include race equality, disability and gender in customer satisfaction surveys	Ongoing	May require additional resources	Customer Service Team	This will be included in future surveys. New CRM software being developed will incorporate race, disability and gender.
	Include race and other equality issues in employee satisfaction surveys	Ongoing	Will require additional resources	HR Team	No surveys scheduled
SERVICE	Provide visual and audio aids for public meetings etc	31.3.04	Not yet costed	Development Control Manager	No progress since Executive paper on Planning Delivery Grant 18.6.03
	Install minicom system in service shops	31.3.04		Customer Services Manager	Looking to include this facility in new Market Harborough Service Shop.
	Establish a database of language course providers	30.9.03	Current	Environmental Services Manager	Unable to complete due to other workload priorities
	Progress DDA needs for One Stop Shop	31.3.04		Customer Service Manager	£25K committed to improvements planned in consultation with local Access Group

ITEM	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS
SERVICE	Guidance notes on completion of HB claim forms available in other languages	30.9.03	Current	Benefits Manager	Cannot be completed as DWP have advised against planned website usage
EMPLOYMENT	Train staff in race equality	Throughout 2003/04	External resources required	HR Manager	Provider selected. Training programme being devised in partnership with Oadby and Wigston.
	Train staff in DDA issues	Throughout 2003/04	Possible additional resources	HR Manager	As above
	Provide specific training to identified groups	Ongoing		Customer Service Manager	
	Carry out equality monitoring on work experience intake	31.3.04	Current	HR Team	In progress

10. APPENDICES

1. Equality statement
2. Explanation of “Bobby”

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

EQUALITY POLICY

As a modern organisation, providing high quality services, Harborough District Council recognises the diversity of its customers and workforce. An Equality Policy acknowledges the fact of social change, the development and impact of social legislation and the need to provide equality within policy development, service provision, and employment.

The policy is underpinned by a legislative framework shown at Appendix A. A strategic plan, together with internal procedures and management guidance, will support the policy and be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Aims

The aim of the policy is to encourage good practice on equality throughout the Authority and to emphasise its importance as an essential element of all aspects of the business it conducts within the community.

Commitment

Harborough District Council promotes equality in its policies, the services it provides and in employment. It is our aim to ensure that no customer, elected member, potential or current employee is treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, age, political beliefs, religious beliefs or Trade Union membership/non-membership. We will seek to identify and eliminate those barriers that create disadvantage.

This aim will take time to achieve in its entirety. As a means of demonstrating commitment to the policy, Harborough District Council will implement the Equality Standard for local government and the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality.

ABOUT “BOBBY”

Bobby is a comprehensive web accessibility software tool designed to help expose and repair barriers to accessibility and encourage compliance with existing accessibility guidelines. Bobby was created at CAST, a not-for-profit research and development organisation whose goal is to expand opportunities for people with disabilities through the innovative use of computer technology.

First released in September 1996, Bobby was originally based on guidance developed by the Trace Research and Development Centre. Bobby is designed for developers to test web pages and generate summary reports highlighting the most critical issues effecting site accessibility before posting to the Web or to Intranets.