

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM**

REPORT SUBJECT: **RACE RELATIONS SCHEME 2008-2011**

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**LEAD OFFICER/
DEPARTMENT** **CORPORATE DIRECTOR BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Management Team of the Authority's position in relation to its Third Race Equality Scheme which was due for completion by the 31st May 2008.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Consideration was initially given to producing a one year Race Scheme whilst work continued on developing a Single Equality Scheme (covering all of the quality strands) by the end of May 2009
- 2.2 It has since been discussed and agreed with relevant officers that to produce a Single Equality Scheme by that date would be unrealistic and put the Authority under unnecessary pressure. It is worth noting that a high number of local authorities are working towards producing a Single Equality Scheme as it is advantageous in bringing all the current equality action plans and deadlines under one timeframe.

3. PRESENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 outlaws Racial Discrimination and places a duty on public bodies to be proactive in their approach to Race Equality and to find practical ways to move the agenda forward. The Authority has produced two Race Equality Schemes which demonstrate its commitment towards Race Equality and a third scheme was due to be published by the 31st May 2008.
- 3.2 The Authority has received positive feedback on its 2005-2008 scheme from the Commission for Racial Equality .The CRE report highlighted both strong and weak aspects of the Scheme. For example, the feedback indicated that overall the scheme was good and this was an encouraging response; it recognised that a lot of work had gone into it; details of work with partners such as the Multi Agency Diversity Forum, LHB ,Race Equality Council and specific work on Gypsies and Travellers and Community Safety .On the other hand ,the scheme was criticised for the lack of information on the Councils policies, procedures and functions, and the lack of detail on

the Assessment of these functions etc. Also there was not enough to support the consultation with minority groups within the community.

- 3.3 In view of the CRE 's feedback and recommendations on the 2005-2008 Scheme and the appreciable progress Blaenau Gwent Council has made in race equality work since May 2005, it has been decided that in order to build on current work and move forward. We will undertake a complete overhaul of the 2005 Scheme. With more effort being made to ensure the involvement and contribution of the local minority ethnic communities and our statutory partner organisations, in producing Blaenau Gwent's third Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011. Also there needs to be a clear description of the Authority's policies, procedures and functions and a timetable for the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

4. **PROPOSAL FOR ACTION**

- 4.1 Following discussion with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on the Authority's position in relation to publishing its third Race Equality Scheme, they have recommended that in order to comply with legislation that a statement is placed on the Authority's website to explain the current situation and reveal the actions and associated timescales that are proposed.(attached at appendix 1)
- 4.2 That a draft Race Equality Scheme is produced and agreed by Council in July 2008 for consultation with the community and partners.
- 4.3 That the final scheme be agreed and published in September 2008.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

6. **STATEMENT CONFIRMING THAT CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- 6.1 Human Rights, Local Agenda 21, Equality Opportunity, Sustainable Development, Crime and Disorder and the Council's Welsh Language Scheme have been considered in the preparation of this report.

7. **STAFFING/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no staffing/personnel implications in relation to this report.

8. **CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The following officers have been consulted in respect of the proposals and recommendations set out in this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES	CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER / MONITORING OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES / S.151	OTHER
			Richard Hughes Chair Welsh and Race Network CMT

9. **CONCLUSION**

9.1 That in order to meet the Authority statutory requirements that a Statement of Intent is published on the Authority's website which outlines the actions and timescales involved in producing its Third Race Equality Scheme.

10. **RECOMMENDATION**

10.1 That the proposals outlined in 4.1 to 4.3 of the report are agreed and actioned as soon as possible.