

Advantage West Midlands Race Equality Scheme

Version 2008 – Produced by Race Equality West Midlands, December 2007

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The Race Equality Scheme for Advantage West Midlands

INTRODUCTION

In order to meet Advantage West Midlands' willingness to comply with the general and specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Agency has produced its Race Equality Scheme (RES) to assist in the mainstreaming of race equality.

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 fulfils recommendation 11 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report and extends the Race Relations Act 1976 to include the functions of public authorities in general. The 2000 Act outlaws race discrimination in public authority functions not previously covered by the 1976 Act. The Act also places a *general duty* on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The general duty will be supported by *specific duties* to be set out in secondary legislation. Both are enforceable by the Commission for Racial Equality.

The Agency's Race Equality Scheme sets out how the Agency will meet the general duty to promote race equality and work towards the elimination of race discrimination. The Agency has a Harassment Policy and Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in place, both of which are intended to support the Race Equality Scheme.

Our Race Equality Scheme (RES) is effectively a strategy and action plan to assist the mainstreaming of race equality in the work and functioning of the Agency. As such, the Race Equality Scheme provides an opportunity to build on this experience to develop a holistic framework for equality to encompass age, disability, gender and sexual orientation.

In essence, our Race Equality Scheme summarises our...

- i. Approach to race equality and corporate objectives
- ii. Arrangements for assessing, consulting, monitoring and training
- iii. Approach in any cases of adverse impact

We hope that you find our scheme a comprehensive yet straight-forward demonstration of our genuine attempts to embrace race equality in the key functions of the Agency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Edwards'.

John Edwards
Chief Executive

1. What Advantage West Midlands does and its central role in the region's economic development.

Advantage West Midlands is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for the West Midlands, the region at the heart of the UK, comprising:

- the counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire,
- the three unitary authorities of Herefordshire, Stoke on Trent and Telford & Wrekin, and
- the seven metropolitan districts of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.

Advantage West Midlands was established by the Government in 1999 along with seven other RDAs, to transform England's regions through sustainable economic development. All RDAs are non-departmental public bodies accountable to the Department of Trade and Industry. A ninth, the London Development Agency, was established in July 2000.

Advantage West Midlands is the regional leader for developing economic prosperity. It works with a range of public sector partners, voluntary and community organisations, and the private sector, to develop strategies and support projects to transform the West Midlands economy.

Its main objectives are defined in the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 and are:

- To further economic development and regeneration.
- To promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness.
- To promote employment.
- To enhance development and application of skills relevant to employment.
- To contribute to sustainable development.

It invests around £300 million each year into activity to transform the West Midlands economy, through developing:

- *Business* – improving the collective performance of traditional industries and diversifying the business base.
- *Skills* – supporting the work of the West Midlands Regional Skills Partnership to set skills policy and priorities.
- *Infrastructure* - working to improve transport, communication and land and property infrastructure.
- *Communities* - helping communities, whether urban or rural, enjoy a better quality of life
- *Promoting the region*, nationally and internationally.

Its work is underpinned by three principles:

- *Sustainable development* - ensuring that economic growth, social cohesion, protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources go hand in hand.
- *Urban and rural renaissance* - achieving sustainable economic growth in both the region's urban and rural areas.
- *Equality, diversity and inclusion* - ensuring that all communities within the region benefit from economic growth.

AWM's corporate plan 2005-08 sets out what it is doing to make the region a more prosperous and better place to invest, work, learn, visit, and live. In this three-year period, AWM is working to:

- create or safeguard at least 30,000 jobs.
- create over 3,500 new businesses.
- support at least 17,000 businesses in to improve their performance.
- improve the skills of at least 50,000 people.
- bring back into use at least 120 hectares of brownfield land.
- Influence £6 million of public sector investment.

The corporate plan sets out what AWM is doing to create a world-class region. The plan for the region as a whole is detailed in the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES). An equality, diverse and inclusion statement accompanies the WMES. AWM, then, is a complex organisation, with an annual budget of £300 million, serving a large region with a population of more than 5.2 million people – roughly that of the whole population of Scotland. The long-term impact on race equality in the West Midlands (where more than 11.26 per cent of the population is of minority ethnic origin) is likely to be profound.

2. Why Advantage West Midlands promotes equality and diversity

Advantage West Midlands promotes equality and diversity for five main reasons:

- It has general and specific duties to do so under law (legal reason).
- It is committed to ensuring that all communities within the region benefit from economic growth (strategic reason).
- A strong business case can be made for it (business reason).
- It is morally right and proper to do so (moral reason).
- To fail conspicuously to do so would damage its relationship with the public (public relations reason).

Legal reason

As a regional development agency established under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, Advantage West Midlands (AWM) is subject to the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended 2000, and is bound by both the general and specific duties (sections 71 (1) and 71 (2)), which came into force on 3 December 2001. AWM must comply with, and demonstrate it complies with the law on race equality.

Strategic reason

The Government set up Regional Development Agencies to develop and regenerate regions and contribute to their economic prosperity and sustainability, helping communities enjoy a better way of life, and ensuring all share the benefits of economic growth. By adopting strategic aims that include regenerating communities, creating jobs and access to them, developing and supporting new businesses, promoting learning and skills, and valuing equal opportunities, the Regional Development Agency has identified itself as a major regional force for eliminating irrational and non-competitive discrimination in the labour market and promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations.

In a multi-ethnic region such as the West Midlands, this must involve consideration of the relative needs of different ethnic communities. AWM has strategically committed itself to delivering greater equality across the region and its success, therefore, has to be judged in part on its contribution to racial equality. Indeed, it is inconceivable that race equality in the West Midlands could be significantly enhanced without the effective contribution of the Regional Development Agency.

Business reason

The business reason, first developed in American management circles, is that companies can add value to their operation by recognising and building on the knowledge, skills and experience of the available multi-racial labour force and the diversity of their employees. The concept of a rational corporate choice based on naturally-occurring individual differences which can be engineered for business success is different in kind from that of a legal requirement supporting the right to equal treatment of disadvantaged sections of the population.

The business case for promoting non-discriminatory practices in the workforce and setting out the benefits of a multi-racial and otherwise varied workforce has, in recent years, been developed into a specialised field of management, referred to as 'the management of diversity'. The management of diversity is based on the premise that most large modern workforces consist of employees who differ in terms of their sex, age, background, colour, race, disability, personality and workstyle. (Race is only one of a large set of variables.) The management task is to make full use of the mosaic of individuals' differences in pursuit of the company's goal.

Managing diversity involves not only the elimination of discrimination in favour of a fully-rational utilisation of employee resources but identifying and realising through staff

development techniques and innovative team building, the organisation's human resource potential.

The West Midlands is a region of considerable and increasing ethnic and cultural diversity, which needs to be fully utilised in developing a dynamic business base and management itself, Advantage West Midlands can convince others in the region of the business case for racial equality.

The business model of equality promotion appears to be more applicable to the operation of a Regional Development Agency than the public service improvement model. AWM is strategically placed to benefit from managing the diversity of its own work force and also to encourage the entire business sector to maximise the benefits of regional labour market and work force diversity.

Moral reason

The Board, Chief Executive, and staff of Advantage West Midlands all believe in equality of treatment and oppose unlawful and irrational discrimination of any kind. They would wish all those who have contact with their organisation to be accorded respect and dignity. At all times, AWM seeks actively to conduct its business ethically and not to comply only minimally with the letter of the law.

Public relations reason

As the Regional Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands must retain the confidence and support of national government, local authorities, major public institutions, and ultimately the region's general population of more than five million people. It is important to safeguard its reputation for impartiality and fairness and to avoid the risk of negative publicity arising from legal action taken against it for alleged violation of equality law. More positively, success in promoting race and other equalities might be used to good effect in improving the public image of AWM and giving it a human face.

3. The statutory duty of Advantage West Midlands to promote race equality

Under the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended 2000, Advantage West Midlands has general and specific duties to promote race equality.

The general duty

The general duty requires AWM, in everything it does, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination,
- promote equality of opportunity, and
- promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

This means that it should make the promotion of race equality central to the way it works and to the delivery of its functions and services.

Specific duties

Specific duties imposed on AWM require it to publish a race equality scheme and to meet its employment duty.

By stating in a race equality scheme how it plans to meet its statutory duties under the Race Relations Act and publishing that scheme, Advantage West Midlands renders itself publicly accountable for its proposals. Its race equality scheme must state those of its functions and policies that are relevant to the performance of its duty and arrangements for:

- assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality.
- monitoring its policies for their impact on race equality.
- publishing consultation and monitoring data, and ensuring public access to information of this nature.
- training staff on their race equality duties.

The first race equality scheme had to be produced by 31 May 2002. Thereafter, schemes were to be reviewed and amended every three years (31 May 2005, 31 **May 2008**, 31 May 2011).

Employment duties

Under the Race Relations Act, Advantage West Midlands also has specific employment duties. It should include in its race equality scheme its arrangements for meeting the employment duties. These are to monitor by reference to the racial groups to which they belong:

- the numbers of staff in post.
- applicants for employment, training and promotion.
- those in receipt of training.
- those benefiting or suffering detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures.
- persons involved in grievance procedures.
- persons involved in disciplinary procedures.
- those ceasing employment with the organisation.

Advantage West Midlands is required to publish the results of employment monitoring on an annual basis.

Existing policies

Set up in 1999, AWM already had in place internal policies and procedures to ensure that it conducted its business efficiently and in compliance with the employment duties under the Race Relations Act (as amended 2000). AWM already had an:

- Equal opportunities policy,
- Harassment policy
- Recruitment and selection policy

Best business practice

While not legally obliged to do so, best business practice (of which AWM should be an exemplar) suggests that these requirements, in particular, monitoring, publication, training and review, should be systematised and made an integral part the regular management cycle of evidence gathering, performance (impact) assessment, decision making, and adaptation. That is, they should be mainstreamed as part of AWM's overall monitoring and evaluation framework and not allowed to stand alone. In this context, the resultant race equality scheme or action plan should operate alongside and as part of AWM's day-to-day business activity and be seen as integral and essential to the delivery of the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Corporate Plan.

Lessons learned from earlier AWM race equality schemes.

Reviews of earlier race equality schemes and accompanying action plans suggest that while they were well-conceived and grounded in the ongoing work of the Regional Development Agency, they were insufficiently related to day-to-day management processes, making it more difficult to ensure delivery and measure achievement. It remained difficult to quantify the impact of AWM's regular functions on race equality in the region.

Publication of monitoring data and of the outcomes of consultation, together with activities to raise staff awareness, and progress in regard to any policies or targets set as part of the employment duties, needed to be put on a more systematic footing. To ensure success, the race equality activities envisaged or proposed in the race equality scheme would have to be mainstreamed and performance managed alongside AWM's other strategic objectives, see Section 5 below.

4. Relationship of the race equality scheme to the delivery of the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Corporate Plan

Advantage West Midlands's vision is that the West Midlands be recognised as a world-class region in which to invest, work, learn, visit, and live and the most successful in creating wealth to benefit its entire people. AWM's corporate plan sets out how AWM will contribute to the delivery of the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan which identifies the challenges the region needs to address to become world-class. There are thirteen interrelated challenges, five of which have been prioritised. These are enterprise, manufacturing, skills, transport, and economic inclusion.

AWM's corporate plan is structured around four 'pillars':

- developing a diverse and dynamic business base,
- promoting a learning and skilful region,
- creating the conditions for growth, and
- regenerating communities and providing a powerful voice in the region.

In addition, the pillars are underpinned by three key principles:

- *sustainable development*: ensuring that economic growth, social cohesion, protection of the environment and the prudent use of national resources go hand in hand.
- *urban and rural renaissance*: achieving sustainable economic growth in both urban and rural areas.
- *equality, diversity and inclusion*: ensuring that all communities within the region benefit from economic growth.

The last of those is central to the promotion of regional race equality and relates directly to the strategic purpose of the organisation. Advantage West Midlands is structured to prioritise the delivery of its own corporate plan and to contribute to the West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan. The AWM race equality scheme must facilitate this delivery, particularly in regard to the principle of equality, diversity and inclusion.

5. Performance management of the race equality duty

To deliver its vision and strategy, AWM is managed by a non-executive board served by an executive corporate management team comprising the Chief Executive and five corporate directors in charge of directorates, each contributing to the delivery of an aspect of an agreed three-year corporate plan. This management structure has responsibility for delivering outcomes and monitoring performance at corporate level and within each directorate. It is accountable for the delivery of the agreed equality action plan which forms a central part of AWM's statutory race equality scheme. Much of the specific planned action on race equality will be delivered at directorate level, but overall performance management and the monitoring systems needed for that task will be undertaken at the level of the corporate team who will report progress at regular intervals to the board.

Basic performance management requirements

Self-evidently, basic requirements for successful performance management are:

- agreement and prioritisation of a set of achievable outcomes (as set out in the race equality scheme).
- allocation of responsibility for delivering them.
- the time frame for their delivery.
- baseline data/targets against which progress can be monitored.
- a monitoring system, with ethnicity treated as a key variable, generating periodic progress reports for management oversight.
- regular review of progress and achievement.
- management intervention if there is evidence that the time frame is slipping and there is a danger that outcomes will not be achieved.

Performance management and the race equality duty

Compliance with the statutory duty to promote race equality requires AWM to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and good race relations between people of different racial groups, by ensuring that it:

- identifies those of its function most likely to impact on race equality.
- makes an informed assessment as to whether they have a differential impact on ethnic groups.
- systematically monitors the take-up, use and outcome of services by ethnicity.
- alters and adjusts its activity in the light of evidence, to safeguard against adverse differential impact.
- consults regularly on the impact of its policies with the groups affected by them
- publishes monitoring information to allow independent assessment of AWM's progress in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations.
- provides training for staff on how their work might contribute more effectively to AWM's performance in promoting race equality.
- monitors by ethnicity the numbers of staff in post, applicants for employment, training and promotion, those in receipt of training, the effect of performance assessment procedures, grievances, disciplinary procedures and those leaving the organisation.
- publishes the results of its ethnic monitoring of human resources on an annual basis

To deliver AWM's race equality duties, each of AWM's directorates need to have in place a system of performance management (requirements as outlined above), to identify relevant functions, assess and consult on impact, monitor ethnically, publish monitoring information, organise appropriate training and modify its activities in the light of evidence of impact.

6. Action by directorates

AWM's directorates are:

- Economic Development Directorate,
- Economic Regeneration Directorate,
- Resources and Operations Directorate, and
- Strategy and Communications Directorate.

Economic Development Directorate

The Economic Development Directorate focuses on skills, enterprise, innovation, manufacturing, access to finance, and business support. Its key task is to increase the competitive advantage and reputation of the region in key markets and industries, through collaboration and sharing of resources, knowledge and expertise. The directorate is divided into five sub-sections dealing with skills, business support and enterprise, innovation, access to finance, and 'Science City'.

Support is provided to the Enterprise Board, Innovation and Technology Council, Regional Skills Partnership, and Regional Finance Forum. Many of the functions undertaken by this directorate have a bearing on the promotion of race equality, but the following are identified as having a significant impact and prioritised for action:

- Learning and skills.
- Enterprise.

Learning and skills

The function of the learning and skills team is to ensure that the region's labour force is equipped with the skills needed for the changing economy. It contracts for the delivery of training, providing its services via contracts with other agencies. The team recognises that the decision it makes on developing skills and placing contracts for training may have important consequences for the region's ethnic communities.

AWM, in accordance with statutory requirements, will ensure that an effective system of ethnic monitoring for differential impact is put into place and that steps are taken to address disparities detected in the provision, take-up, and results of training and skills enhancement schemes. It will facilitate the monitoring process by amending contracts to include the requirement that those it contracts will report on the ethnicity of service users/beneficiaries. From time to time, it will publish the results of its assessment of the impact of its activities on different ethnic communities.

Enterprise

The main enterprise function is to provide support to businesses for developing products and services, new business start-ups, and funding to higher education institutions and research organisations for research and development. The enterprise team recognises that the decisions it makes on providing support to businesses to develop their products and services or to encourage start up may have important consequences for the region's ethnic communities. In accordance with AWM's statutory requirements, it will ensure that an effective system of ethnic monitoring for differential impact is put into place and that steps are taken to address any disparities detected in its service provision. From time to time, it will publish the results of its assessment of the impact of its activities on different ethnic communities.

Economic Regeneration Directorate

Economic regeneration contributes to economic inclusion: policies that help to ensure that all sections of the population have access to employment and enterprise opportunities. Support is provided for the Regeneration Zones, areas identified as in need of regeneration, management of the regeneration budget, and engagement with the voluntary and community

sector. The sub-sections of the Economic Regeneration Directorate are sustainable communities, sustainable development, transport policy, tourism development policy, and rural renaissance policy. Many of the functions undertaken by the directorate have a bearing on the promotion of race for action:

- Sustainable communities
- Economic inclusion
- Urban regeneration
- Equality and diversity

In addition, the directorate should endeavour to ensure that it regularly reviews all other functions for their differential impact on ethnic groups in the region, puts into place appropriate monitoring systems to enable it to do so, and regularly updates its staff on their duty to promote race equality.

Resources and Operations Directorate

The Resources and Operations Directorate provides support for AWM's internal processes: finance, human resources, information technology, office facilities, and the property portfolio. It also manages a network of partnerships at sub-regional level, and is responsible for developing and sponsoring projects contributing to economic development. Its sub-sections are finance, human resources, IT and knowledge management, development and asset management, partnership management, and projects and contracts. Many of the functions have a bearing on the promotion of race equality, but the following are identified as having a significant impact and prioritised for attention:

- Funding streams and regeneration zones
- Human resources

Funding streams and regeneration zones

AWM targets funds at the region's most deprived areas, many of which have populations with a high proportion of ethnic minorities. By encouraging economic growth and development, AWM can play a significant part in breaking the cycle of deprivation, and contributing to the alleviation of poverty generally, and that of disadvantaged ethnic communities specifically. The measurement of its success in this respect has to be established against ethnically-differentiated floor targets. AWM is informed in its decision about funding allocation by information gathered by the West Midlands Regional Observatory, which is part of the Strategy and Communications Directorate.

AWM recognises that the decisions it makes on the allocation of funding have important consequences for the region's ethnic communities. It will systematically monitor its activities for adverse differential impact and take action necessary to address differences in the light of the available evidence. It will also consult with suitable regional bodies, such as the Equality and Human Right Commission (Birmingham hub), the West Midlands Race Equality Advisory Board, and the West Midlands Race Equality Forum, on any special measures needed to encourage minority ethnic economic development, improve minority ethnic access to funding, and involve minority ethnic groups in partnerships and policy development.

Human resources

The Human Resources (HR) team provides a recruitment and selection framework to meet AWM's business needs by placing the right people in the right jobs. It works to an HR plan. The HR team deals with employee salaries, training/development and other staffing matters. The HR team has compared ethnic data on the AWM workforce with data on the ethnic composition of the West Midlands region's population, which is from where the Agency normally recruits, and has noted disparities between ethnic groups.

The HR team accepts its statutory responsibilities to monitor by reference to the racial groups to which they belong:

- the number of staff in post.
- applicants for employment, training and promotion.
- those in receipt of training.
- those benefiting or suffering detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures.
- persons involved in grievance procedures.
- persons involved in disciplinary procedures.
- those ceasing employment with the organisation.

The HR team understands that AWM is required to publish the results of employment monitoring on an annual basis. The HR team recognises that it has a responsibility to take positive action to address any evidence of adverse impact of race and ethnicity on employment opportunities, and that it needs to manage AWM's performance in this regard, basing action on regular and systematic ethnic monitoring data.

Agency staff profile by race/ethnicity (source HR records)

- Approx 12% of our employees are Black Minority Ethnic (BME)
- Approx 87% of employees are White
- Approx 11% of the West Midlands population are from a BME background*
- Approx 89% of the West Midlands population are White*

*based on the 2001 Census (source: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>).

Notes:

1. As a means of simplifying Census data, the Agency has used 4 broad ethnic classifications to determine BME i.e. African-Caribbean, Black African, Black Caribbean or Black Other in the Census
2. White figure based on those classifying themselves as White, White British, White Irish etc
3. Three members of AWM staff choose not to disclose their ethnic origin
4. The "West Midlands" area covered by the Agency includes Warwickshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Hereford & Worcestershire and the Metropolitan areas of the West Midlands (i.e. Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Solihull, Coventry)

The current staff ethnicity profile of Advantage West Midlands demonstrates the workforce is fairly reflective across all classifications and follows a similar pattern to that of the West Midlands' metropolitan areas (i.e. Birmingham, Coventry, and Wolverhampton). Therefore, it is important that the Agency continues to monitor and review its ethnicity profile and seeks to recruit and retain a staff profile reflective of the West Midlands region.

Strategy and Communications Directorate

The Strategy and Communications Directorate formulates and agrees AWM's contribution to regional strategies, such as the West Midlands Economic Strategy, and communicates its policies and priorities to regional partners and stakeholders through the media, marketing, and public affairs activity. The directorate highlights regional success, encourages inward investment, and raises the profile of the West Midlands region, nationally and internationally. There are directors of communications and strategy, and heads of inward investment, European policy, corporate and business services, marketing, board support, and internal communications.

Many of the functions undertaken by this directorate have a bearing on the promotion of race equality, but the following are identified as having a significant impact and prioritised for attention:

- Economic strategy
- Inward investment

It is also important that the Strategy and Communications Directorate ensures the time is scheduled at board and corporate management team meetings to review progress against the race equality action plan.

Economic strategy

Future development of economic strategy needs to be informed by baseline data (most probably gathered and prepared by the West Midlands Regional Observatory) on the impact of the implementation of previous strategy on ethnic communities in the region, with measures taken to address any emerging disparities in benefit.

Inward investment

One of AWM's purposes is to attract, retain and develop inward investment. This includes foreign direct investment and investor development, working with strategically-placed existing businesses, whatever their provenance. It often involves working with companies around their land and property needs, skills and recruitment issues, access to finance, international trading links, and differing legislative regimes. An understanding of others' national cultures and institutions is important to this work. Work on inward investment and investor development involves meeting business people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and helping them settle and become embedded in the regional and local economy and community. This might range from sorting out work permits or visas, to helping them to find suitable housing or education.

The inward investment team works with partners such as the Birmingham Asian Business Club, 3 Bs group, Minority Business Forum, Business in the Community, and community organisations: e.g. Chinese, Japanese. The team often hosts visits and missions of overseas visitors, from different ethnic, language and religious backgrounds, who have special language, dietary and other requirements. It is important that the team is sensitive and responsive to the clients it is dealing with.

The inward investment team will continue to monitor the ethnicity of the users with whom it is in contact and to provide quantitative and qualitative analysis of the role of colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origin, in the inward investment process. In addition, it will continue to enhance the knowledge and skills of its staff in dealing with people of nationalities and cultures different from themselves. All staff are expected to participate in race equality training.

7. Relationship between AWM's race equality scheme and its action plan

AWM's race equality scheme and action plan will be reviewed and revised every three years in accordance with the *Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (2002)*. Based on a review of AWM's second race equality scheme, this document constitutes the third in the series, operational from the 31 May 2008.

Race Equality Scheme Action Plan 2008-2011

This RES Action Plan highlights key actions that are required during the period. The Action Plan during the period will be added to the published RES and will be reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Manager supported by the Agency's "Diversity Champions Group".

Actions – to be completed no later than March 31st 2010.	Who	Date completed or progress
1. Publish ethnicity profile on the HR section of the Corporate Website for staff and Board Members. This profile should be compared with the regional profile for ethnicity as per latest Census data.	HR TEAM	March 2010.
2. Publish comments and any resulting actions on the staff and Board ethnicity profile as per action 1.	Director for HR	March 2010: Action to follow publication of 2010 staff profile.
3. Provide regular updates on race equality issues to staff and Leadership of the Agency – inc. Board members.	Director for HR and E+D Manager	In place since 2004 with reports to the Remuneration Committee (Board sub-committee) and updates to staff via email and Intranet, lunch and learns, induction workshops etc.
Actions – to be completed no later than Dec 31st 2010		
4. Work in partnership to prepare and publish a report on ethnicity in the region in relation to economic inclusion in terms of employment, education and entrepreneurship (business).	E+D Manager working in partnership with WMRO who produce and "E+D State of the Region report"	KO to contact HD at WMRO to have report featured on E+D section of Agency's website.
5. Complete (race) equality impact assessment of The Agency's Business and Corporate Plans.	Rachel Bestwick, Head of Corporate Planning and Performance	KO to lead and work with RB to get this completed.
Actions – to be completed no later than Dec 31st 2011.		

6. Produce and publish report on the level of Agency support to Black and Minority Ethnic businesses over the last three years	Monica Coke
7. Produce and publish report on the level of Agency procurement to BME business during the last three years.	Procurement Team

The race equality scheme is buttressed by other important documents which do not always run conterminously, in particular the *Equality Diversity and Inclusion Statement* accompanying and expanding on *Delivering Advantage, West Midlands Economic Strategy and Action Plan* produced by AWM and the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

To place additional emphasis on *proactive* development of AWM's efforts to promote race equality, the race equality scheme comes accompanied and supplemented by an action plan setting out specific actions, measures, timescales, responsibilities, and available resources. This Action Plan is the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2007-11 and is available on the 'Equality and Diversity' section of the website via the 'Supporting People' tab on the home page of www.advantagewm.co.uk.

8. Summary

Advantage West Midlands views its race equality scheme as a great opportunity to be active and pro-active in race equality in its role as the West Midlands champion for economic regeneration. The race equality scheme will be used in conjunction with future corporate plans and policies, so that race equality becomes mainstreamed into the culture of regional regeneration activity.

The Agency believes that the race equality scheme provides a sound foundation for the development of a broader, all-encompassing equality scheme that includes arrangements for gender, disability, race, age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation, although only the first three are a statutory requirement.

This meets the core people value stated in the Corporate Plan 2002-2004 as 'treating everyone equally and respecting their contribution'. The race equality scheme is a living document which will be used to monitor progress on meeting general and specific duties, as well as establishing benchmarks for the future. Whilst the Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the scheme, the day-to-day responsibility of driving it rests with everyone but, particularly, the heads of teams leading the identified relevant functions and the diversity champions at executive, board and manager level.

Race equality and equality issues in general can assist in the economic regeneration of the West Midlands, and Advantage West Midlands, so it is important for the key economic agents in the region to engage in the race equality agenda and the broader equality agenda in general, but importantly to work together, so that they make a reality of promoting race equality and eliminating race discrimination.

Contact person

For any comment or queries concerning this race equality scheme, please contact:

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Large print and other format versions of this scheme available upon request.

9. Acknowledgements

Race Equality West Midlands would like to acknowledge the following in producing this version of the Race Equality Scheme

1. Zahid Nawaz, Commission for Racial Equality (Midlands)
2. Joy Warmington, Birmingham Race Action Partnership
3. Richard Corfield, Government Office for the West Midlands
4. Mick Lavery, Advantage West Midlands
5. Lynne Hope, Advantage West Midlands
6. Monica Coke, Advantage West Midlands
7. Sharmin Hussain, Advantage West Midlands
8. Kwabena Osayande, Advantage West Midlands

APPENDICES

1. [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) (latest published version)
2. Minority Business Forum

APPENDIX 2: Minority Business Forum (www.minority4business)

The Forum is an independent advisory body representing the interests of minority ethnic businesses across the West Midlands. The key responsibility of the Forum is to align the challenges and opportunities for the region's minority ethnic communities to the West Midlands Economic Strategy (WMES). In so doing ensure that the proposed Agenda for Action activities recognize the important role that minority ethnic communities in general and minority ethnic owned-enterprises in particular can play in realising the strategic goals as detailed in the WMES.

The board consists of 15 members all entrepreneurs, representing minority ethnic business interest from across the region. Members of the Forum are not paid. The process for membership was through advertisement and election. The chair and vice-chair were nominated and elected by ballot.

Tasks

- Promoting the contribution of minority ethnic business to the West Midlands economy and the benefit of entrepreneurship to individuals within minority ethnic communities;
- Identify and Prioritise issues of concern to minority ethnic businesses focusing on matters relating to constraints to business development having particular regard to issues of equality, including gender and disability;
- Within the context of the Agenda for Action the Forum provide advice and guidance work with Advantage West Midlands and champion the development and sharing of effective practice activities in respect of the core priority areas as detailed in the WMES and as relevant to the region's minority entrepreneurs namely: Regeneration Zones, Clusters & High Technology Corridors
- Lobby decision makers to influence policy development and resource allocation to address these priorities;
- Within the context of the Agenda for Action the Forum will provide advice and guidance work with the Advantage West Midlands and champion the development and sharing of effective practice activities in respect of the core priority areas as detailed in the WMES and as relevant to the region's minority entrepreneurs namely:
 - **Regeneration Zones**
 - **Clusters**
 - **High Technology Corridors**

There is a broader context to the work of the Forum in that it supports the 2 key themes of the WMES as regards the Creation of Wealth through Enterprise and Providing Access to Opportunity with a particular emphasis on the fostering of enterprise and valuing equal opportunities. As an advocate for the region's minority ethnic business community, Forum members are tasked with aligning the challenges and opportunities they face now and in the future to the four pillars as defined in the WMES namely:

- **Developing a dynamic and Diverse Business Base**
- **Promoting a Learning and Skilful Region**
- **Creating Conditions for Growth**
- **Regenerating Communities**

The work of the Forum is therefore driven by this task and is done through the subgroups representing the five priority work areas agreed by its membership namely:

- **Business Support**
- **Access to Finance**
- **Procurement**
- **Information and Communication Technology**
- **Regeneration**
- **Training & Skills Development**

This report contains recommendations to Advantage West Midlands and its strategic partners directly related to these areas based on the intelligence gathered by the Forum over the last year. The report is also intended to provide the basis for the work schedule for the next three-year period to March 2005.

In making these recommendations the Forum recognise that it is not for the Agency to lead on all of the suggested activities, but to encourage and support the relevant regional strategic partner organizations to take the lead on specific recommendations as deemed most appropriate.

Recommendations - Strategic

1. That the Agency within the remit of its commitment to diversity appoints a Minority Enterprise Development Manager as a member of the Business Enterprise Team, within the Business Growth Directorate.
2. That the Agency ensures that a Secretariat tasked with providing administrative support to the Forum is properly resourced for the of undertaking its work efficiently and effectively.
3. That the Agency consider facilitating the establishment of regional 'Centre of Excellence' for Minority Ethnic Business Development to be tasked with the specific responsibility of collating, monitoring, analyzing and disseminating information on all issues relevant to minority ethnic business development in the region. It is anticipated that this will be part of the planned 'regional observatory.'
4. That the Forum's Terms of Reference are reviewed to take into account the need to ensure that the Forum is recognized and accepted as lead strategic body tasked representing the interest of minority ethnic-owned businesses in the region