

**SCRUTINY OF EQUALITIES ISSUES INCLUDING COMMISSION FOR RACIAL  
EQUALITY STANDARD**

*Report of Corporate Director (People and Property)*

Author: - Gillian Hibberd Tel. 01992 556653

Executive Member: David Beatty

**1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 To provide the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Select Committee with a summary of the range of equalities issues scrutinised by the Equality Panel over the past year. The report also includes details of the outcome of recent scrutiny of progress towards achieving level 3 of the Commission for Racial Equality Standard (CRE) - Racial Equality Means Quality.

**2. Summary**

2.1 The Equality Panel has responsibility for the monitoring of progress in implementing 'Putting People First', the County Council's integrated equality policy. Its work programme over the past year has included scrutiny of:

- equality action plans for all six departments of the County Council
- progress against service delivery and employment equality performance indicators
- action being taken by the County Council in relation to the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry
- implications of equality legislation
- action being taken to implement the Disability Discrimination Act
- the outcome of a review of translation and interpreting services across the County Council
- progress in achieving CRE Standards

2.2 At its last meeting the Panel scrutinised the outcome of a preliminary self-assessment of achievement of level three of the CRE Standard on Racial Equality, which is now reported to the Committee for consideration.

**4 Conclusion**

4.1 The Equality Panel has scrutinised a number of important equality issues over the past year and will continue to scrutinise progress towards achieving the objectives set in 'Putting

People First'. The Panel believes that the original targets for achieving the CRE Standard, set in 1998, should remain. It recognised that the County Council had not yet achieved level 3 of the Standard, but wished to emphasise the importance of achieving this level by March 2001 by bringing this matter to the attention of the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Select Committee.

- 4.1 Since the last meeting of the Equality Panel departments have completed their assessment and analysis of work that still needs to be undertaken to reach level 3. They have indicated that a realistic timescale for developing new practices and providing sufficient and consistent evidence across the whole organisation would be December 2001.

### **Scrutiny of Equality Issues including CRE Standard**

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 In 1999 the Policy Committee agreed a new integrated equality strategy for the County Council - 'Putting People First'. From that date, the Equality Panel has been responsible for monitoring and scrutinising progress towards achieving the objectives set in the strategy. Since implementation of the new strategy the County Council has made considerable progress on equality issues, as demonstrated by achievement against service delivery and equality performance indicators. During the past twelve months the Equality Panel have monitored a number of equality issues including:

- detailed equality action plans for all six departments of the County Council
- progress against service delivery and employment equality performance indicators
- action being taken by the County Council in relation to the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry
- implications of equality legislation
- action being taken to implement the Disability Discrimination Act
- the outcome of a review of translation and interpreting services across the County Council
- progress in achieving CRE Standards

- 4.1 At its last meeting the Equality Panel scrutinised the outcome of a recent self assessment of the County Council's progress in achieving level 3 of the CRE Standard. The details of this process are set out in this report for the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Select Committee to consider.

#### **The CRE Standard**

- 4.1 The CRE Racial Equality Standard provides a common framework for the development of racial equality that can be used by all local authorities. Published in 1995, it aims to enable local authorities to enhance the quality of services they provide for all sections of the population by measuring commitment, actions and outcomes of racial equality policy. Achievement against the Standard is measured through regular review and audit of implementation.
- 4.1 All local authorities are now required to monitor and publish the level of the Standard that they have achieved. Hertfordshire County Council adopted the Standard on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1996 and a self assessment undertaken at that time indicated that the Council was at level 2.

- 4.1 In November 1998 the Equality Panel agreed a set of targets for progression through the various levels of the standard:

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Target:</b>
2000/01	Achieve level 3
2001/02	Achieve level 4
2002/03	Achieve level 5

The County Council is next required to publish the level of Standard it has achieved in March 2001.

### **The Self Assessment Process**

- 4.1 The method recommended by the CRE for checking compliance with the standard is a self-assessment process. The method of conducting the self-assessment is left to the discretion of individual authorities and this also allows for varying levels of rigour in the process. Within Hertfordshire we have taken a very detailed and methodical approach. Although this means that we have been particularly thorough, it also means that we can be sure that we have substantial evidence for each element of the standard which gives greater credibility to our assessment overall. It also means that we have gained greater learning and understanding of the areas where the authority needs to demonstrate more effective partnership with black and minority ethnic communities.
- 4.1 The self-assessment process applied at Hertfordshire has required each service to produce a portfolio of evidence against each element of the standard at level 3. In order to be able to achieve any level of the Standards an authority must be able to demonstrate that each department within the organisation has reached that level. Therefore if one part of the organisation has only reached level 2 then that is considered to be the standard reached by the whole organisation.
- 4.1 Within the Standard there are five areas to measure each of which have five levels. The table below shows a very simplified description of each of the levels.

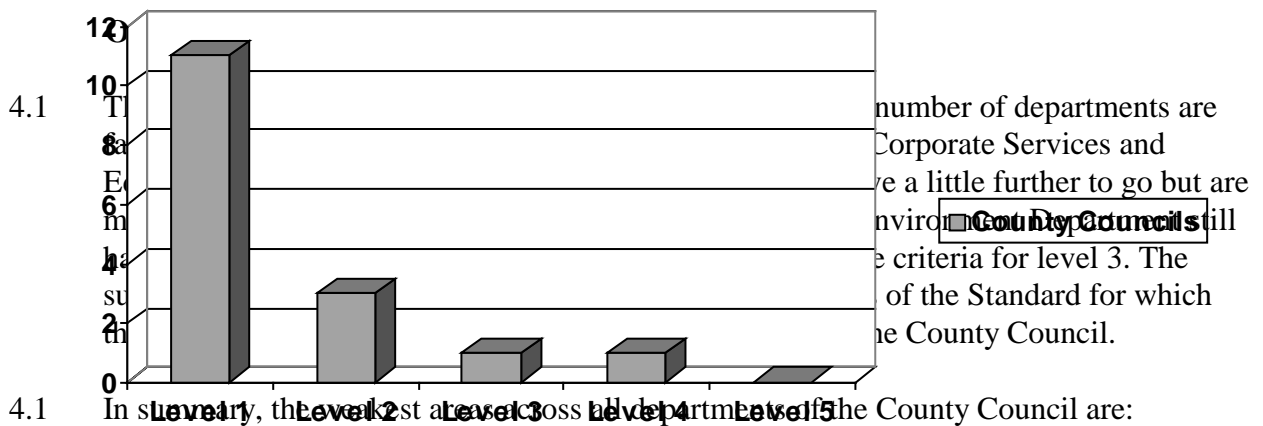
<b>Areas:</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>

<b>Areas:</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 5</b>
<p>4 Policy and Planning</p> <p>4 Service delivery and customer care</p> <p>4 Community Development</p> <p>4 Employment (Recruitment and Selection)</p> <p>4 Employment (Developing and Retaining Staff)</p> <p>4 Marketing and corporate Image</p>	<p>The Council has a written racial equality statement</p>	<p>The Council has an action plan for monitoring and achieving its racial equality policy</p>	<p>Results of ethnic monitoring against an equalities policy and consultations with local communities are used to review overall council policy</p>	<p>The council can demonstrate clear improvements in its services resulting from monitoring, consulting with local communities and acting upon its equal opportunity policy</p>	<p>The council is an example of best practice in the way it monitors and provides services to ethnic minorities and is helping other authorities to achieve high standards</p>

## Benchmarking Data

4.1 Comparative data has been collected from other County Councils on their progress in implementing the CRE Standard. Overall 20 County Councils have formally adopted the Standard and 11 County Councils have not yet adopted the Standard. Only two County Councils have reached level 3 or above - Gloucestershire are at level 4 and Bedfordshire are at level 3. Of the remaining Counties contacted, 3 are at level 2 and 11 are at level 1.

### Benchmarking data for County Councils:



- Evidence of how results of consultation with service users and employees are fed into review and target setting exercises
- Evidence of use of demographic data in planning the supply of services
- Evidence of procedures to review the implications for ethnic minority service users of any decision to increase/decrease or re-allocate funding
- Evidence of consultation with community organisations on the suitability of services already provided
- Evidence of mechanisms to review the quality of translation and interpretation
- Evidence of how the County Council's successful race equality work is promoted in the media
- Evidence of using ethnic minority media as a matter of course to place advertisements and news items

4.1 The areas set out in 4.11 above are the areas currently receiving priority. Some of these will need to be dealt with corporately and some will need to be addressed by each department. The Equality Strategy Group received details of the self assessment process at their meeting in November and is now actively working towards filling any gaps identified.

4.1 Corporate Services and Fire and Rescue have indicated that they believe they will have all the procedures in place for level 3 by March 2001, but time will then be required to enable evidence of practice to be collected. The Environment Department has indicated that December 2001 is a more realistic date for them to achieve level 3. Both Education and Social Services are keen to demonstrate that level 3 is fully met throughout both departments so that evidence is representative of all service units and not just 'patches'. There is work being undertaken at the moment to develop a new equality action plan for CSF and Adult Services. That plan includes actions that will bring all service units up to

level 3 of the Standard. The departments have indicated that a realistic deadline for achieving level 3 would therefore be December 2001. This would allow for sufficient time for practices to be embedded across the whole of the new departments.

*Background information used by the author in compiling this report:*

*Racial Equality Means Quality - A Standard for Racial Equality for Local Government in England and Wales, CRE, 1995*

*Auditing for Equality, Stella Dadzie (ed), CRE, undated*

**Self-Assessment for Level 3 of CRE Standard**

**Appendix One**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Outcome of Assessment</b>	<b>Further action needed to meet level 3</b>
Fire and Rescue	<p>The Fire and Rescue Service were able to provide evidence against nearly all the areas within level 3 of the CRE Standard. They presented a very strong portfolio of evidence, which clearly demonstrates that great progress is being made in terms of integrating equalities into the operation of the service. Remaining gaps identified are:</p> <p>Service Delivery and Customer Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does the department plan the supply of services, on an annual and long term basis, using demographic data from the Census to establish new targets?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures are in place to review the procedures in place to review the implications for ethnic minority users of any decisions to increase/ decrease or re-allocate funding?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures does the department use when consulting with relevant community organisations on the suitability of services already provided?</i></li> </ul> <p>Community Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>What mechanisms are in place to measure and review the quality of translation and interpreting services, community care provision and other services purchased from outside agencies?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the authority publish its procedures for responding to racial harassment in order to encourage victims to report incidents?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of how demographic data is directly used to inform service planning and target setting</li> <li>▪ More formal process for consultation with ethnic minority groups about satisfaction with existing services, ideas about how services could be developed, the impact of decisions on services</li> <li>▪ Evidence on usage of translation service and how its quality is measured</li> <li>▪ Evidence of publicity on procedures for reporting racial harassment</li> </ul>

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
Environment	<p>The Environment were able to produce evidence to support some of the areas set out in the CRE Standards. The remaining gaps identified through the self assessment process include:</p> <p>Policy and Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does your department feed the results of consultations with employees and service users into reviews and target setting exercises?</i></li> </ul> <p>Service Delivery and Customer Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is it standard departmental procedure to monitor ethnic take up of all services?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the department evaluate collected ethnic data and feed results into policy reviews and target setting processes?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the department monitor the effectiveness of contributions produced by community consultation and how this has influenced the quality of service delivery?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the department plan the supply of services on an annual and long term basis using ethnic demographic data from the census to establish new targets?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures does the department use to review the implications for ethnic minority users when making decisions about the increase, decrease or re-allocation of funding?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does your department take into account the needs of ethnic minority service users when planning the provision of new services? If so how?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures does the department use when consulting with relevant community organisations on the suitability of the services already provided?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More transparent process for feeding results of consultations with staff and community groups into the service planning and equality action planning process.</li> <li>▪ Process for monitoring ethnic take up of services</li> <li>▪ Evidence of how demographic data on ethnicity is used to determine long term plans for the service</li> <li>▪ More formal process for consultation with ethnic minority groups about satisfaction with existing services, ideas about how services could be developed, the impact of decisions on services</li> <li>▪ Evidence of equalities competencies in staff job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Evidence of requiring contractors to meet specific equalities standards</li> <li>▪ Process for reviewing quality of translation services and frequency of use</li> <li>▪ Evidence of publicity on procedures for reporting racial harassment</li> <li>▪ Evidence for whole of Marketing and Corporate Image section</li> </ul>

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Do staff job descriptions and contracts with external specify their obligation to deliver effective appropriate services fairly and without unlawful discrimination?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do contracts with external suppliers include standard conditions requiring compliance with the CRE Code of Practice in Employment and systematic checks on the racial equality component of service delivery?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is contract compliance guided by pre contract evaluation?</i></li> </ul> <p>Community Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>What mechanisms are in place to measure and review the quality of translation and interpreting services, community care provision and other services purchased from outside agencies?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the authority publish its procedures for responding racial harassment and encourage victims to report incidents?</i></li> </ul> <p>Marketing and Corporate Image:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is the authority/departments successful racial equality work and policy implementation promoted in the media?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do Chief officers ensure that the authority's commitment to racial equality is reflected in all appropriate internal and external communications?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is ethnic minority media used as a matter of course to place advertisements and news items?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Has the Authority or department sponsored or funded community events, which reflects its commitment to racial equality values?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>When organising public events does your department ensure that its commitment to equal opportunities is clearly obvious in the way the vent is run?</i></li> </ul>	

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
Community Information	<p>Community Information Department was able to provide evidence against many of the areas. The portfolio was particularly strong on policy and planning, service delivery and customer care. There were lots of good examples of how the needs of minority ethnic communities had been integrated into the service planning and delivery programme. Services are provided taken into account specific feedback from community consultation. The needs of a variety of users were obviously assessed and addressed in the delivery of the library service. Remaining gaps identified in the self assessment process include:</p> <p>Service Delivery and Customer Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does the department monitor the effectiveness of contributions produced by community consultation and how has this influenced the quality of service delivery?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures does the department use to review the implications for ethnic minority users when making decisions about the increase, decrease or reallocation of funding?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do staff job descriptions and contracts with external suppliers specify their obligation to deliver effective appropriate services fairly and without unlawful discrimination?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the department have an established and well-publicised mechanism for dealing with complaints of racial discrimination against itself from members of the public?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is staff training in racial equality formally linked to performance appraisal?</i></li> </ul> <p>Community Development:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to develop more formal process for consulting minority ethnic communities about decisions within CID which may affect them</li> <li>▪ Develop process for monitoring data about minority ethnic staff (recruitment, turnover, grades, etc) within Community Information</li> <li>▪ Develop more active media strategy to publicise the excellent work being undertaken to provide services to minority ethnic communities, targeting areas with high ethnic minority populations</li> <li>▪ Evidence of equalities competencies in staff job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Evidence of how training needs in equal opportunities are identified and addressed</li> <li>▪ Process for reviewing quality of translation services and frequency of use</li> <li>▪ Evidence of positive action training provided (Equinox?)</li> <li>▪ Evidence of active monitoring of equality data on staff within the department (e.g. regular reports to Board)</li> </ul>

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>What mechanisms are in place to measure and review the quality of translation and interpreting services, community care provision and other services purchased from outside agencies?</i></li> </ul> <p>Employment (Developing and retaining staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does your department provide any professional training to enhance the skills of under represented ethnic groups in the organisation in order that they can compete on an equal basis?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does your department collect data on the numbers of ethnic minority staff leaving the organisation, if so, is this information monitored to discover problems of inequality or harassment?</i></li> </ul> <p>Marketing and Corporate Image:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is it standard procedure in your department to use ethnic minority media to place advertisements and news items?</i></li> </ul>	

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
Social Services	<p>The Social Services Department provided a very comprehensive portfolio of evidence, which covered many of the areas specified in the standard. There was strong evidence of equality action planning with regular reports being made to the board on progress. The Policy and Planning area of the standard meets level 3 criteria. The gaps in other areas that have been identified through the self assessment process include:</p> <p>Service Delivery and Customer Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does the department evaluate collected ethnic data on take up of services and feed the results into policy reviews and target setting processes?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the department plan the supply of services on a long term basis using ethnic demographic data from the census to establish new targets?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Are procedures in place to review the procedures in place to review the implications for ethnic minority users of any decisions to increase/ decrease or re-allocate funding?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures are in place to consult with relevant community organisations about the suitability of service provision?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does your department have an established and well publicised mechanism for dealing with complaints of racial discrimination against itself from members of the public?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do staff job descriptions and contracts with external specify their obligation to deliver effective appropriate services fairly and without unlawful discrimination?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More active discussion about the needs of ethnic minorities at District Management Teams</li> <li>▪ Stronger, more transparent links needed between monitoring of ethnic data and the development of services and targets</li> <li>▪ Awareness of needs of ethnic minority communities in long term planning process</li> <li>▪ Regular structured process for determining views of ethnic minority service users and for consulting on issues that may impact the provision of services (e.g. impact of budget reductions)</li> <li>▪ Process for reviewing quality and usage of translation and interpreting services</li> <li>▪ Develop more active media strategy to publicise the excellent work being undertaken to provide services to minority ethnic communities, targeting areas with high ethnic minority populations</li> </ul>

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
	<p>Community Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>What mechanisms are in place to measure and review the quality of translation and interpreting services, community care provision and other services purchased from outside agencies?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the authority provide information and training to ethnic minority community groups and voluntary organisations on the decision making process and how to access it?</i></li> </ul> <p>Marketing and Corporate Image:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is the departments successful racial equality work and policy implementation promoted in the media?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is the ethnic minority media used as a matter of course to place advertisements and news items?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do public events organised by the department reflect and reinforce its commitment to racial equality?</i></li> </ul>	

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
Education	<p>The Education Department provided a good portfolio of evidence and had a particularly strong equality action plan. In the area of Policy and Planning the department met the level 3 standard. Remaining gaps identified through the self assessment process include:</p> <p>Service Delivery and Customer Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does the department monitor the effectiveness of contributions produced by community consultation and how has this influenced the quality of service delivery?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures does the department use to review the implications for ethnic minority users when making decisions about the increase, decrease or reallocation of funding?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do staff training needs in equal opportunities arise from the performance appraisal system?</i></li> </ul> <p>Community Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>What mechanisms are in place to measure and review the quality of translation and interpreting services, community care provision and other services purchased from private agencies?</i></li> </ul> <p>Employment (Recruitment and Selection):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Do you use selection tests that are empirically validated to avoid disparate impact?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need more transparent process for feeding views of employees and service users into equality action planning process and service planning process</li> <li>▪ Evidence of how training needs in equal opportunities are identified and addressed</li> <li>▪ Evidence of active monitoring of equality data on staff within the department (e.g. regular reports to Board)</li> <li>▪ Need to develop more formal process for consulting minority ethnic communities about decisions within Education which may affect them</li> <li>▪ Evidence of equalities competencies in staff job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Evidence of how training needs in equal opportunities are identified and addressed</li> <li>▪ Process for reviewing quality of translation services and frequency of use</li> </ul>

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does your department, if requested, provide candidates with guidance, training or practice materials to ensure they are properly prepared for selection testing?</i></li> </ul> <p>Employment (Developing and Retaining Staff):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does your department collect data on the numbers of ethnic minority staff leaving the organisation, if so, is this information monitored to discover problems of inequality or harassment?</i></li> </ul> <p>Marketing and Corporate Image:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does your department ensure that the commitment to racial equality is reflected in all internal and external communications?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is it standard procedure in your department to use ethnic minority media to place advertisements and news items?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Does the department reflect HCC's commitment to equality within the community by sponsoring or funding community events?</i></li> </ul>	

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
Corporate Services	<p>The Corporate Services Portfolio contained a diverse range of evidence including corporate initiatives and service delivery initiatives. The department was able to demonstrate that it fully meets the Policy and Planning elements of the Standard and the Employment elements. Gaps identified in the self assessment process included:</p> <p>Service Delivery and Customer Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is it standard departmental procedure to monitor ethnic take up of all services?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is ethnic monitoring data used to inform policy review and target setting?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is ethnic demographic data from the census used to establish targets and plan services?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What procedures are in place to review the implications for ethnic minority users of any decisions to increase, decrease or reallocate funding?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Do staff job descriptions specify their obligation to deliver effective, appropriate services fairly and without unlawful discrimination?</i></li> </ul> <p>Community Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>What mechanisms are in place to measure and review the quality of</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procedures for monitoring ethnic take up of services</li> <li>▪ More formal process for consultation with ethnic minority groups about satisfaction with existing services, ideas about how services could be developed, the impact of decisions on services</li> <li>▪ Evidence of equalities competencies in staff job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Process for reviewing standard of translation and interpreting services</li> <li>▪ Evidence of providing information and training to community groups on the decision making process.</li> <li>▪ Develop more active media strategy to publicise the excellent work being undertaken to provide services to minority ethnic communities, targeting areas with high ethnic minority populations</li> </ul>

Department	Outcome of Assessment	Further action needed to meet level 3
	<p><i>translation and interpreting services, and other services purchased from outside agencies?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Does the authority provide information and training to ethnic minority community groups and voluntary organisations on the decision making process and how to access it?</i></li> </ul> <p>Marketing and Corporate Image:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Is the departments successful racial equality work and policy implementation promoted in the media?</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Is ethnic minority media used as a matter of course to place advertisements and news items?</i></li> </ul>	