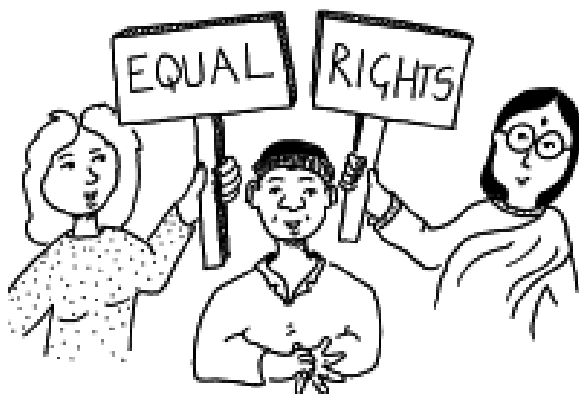


Great Yarmouth Borough Council



Our commitment to meeting the Commission for Racial Equality's Race Relations: Code of Practice in Rented Housing.

“Everyone – whatever their ethnic background, should enjoy equal treatment in finding a home, in the services provided and feeling safe in their home.”



July 2003

Contents

	Page Numbers
How to get this information in a different language	3-4
How we aim to meet the aims of the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing.	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to housing• Service Delivery• General issues	6-8 8-9 9-11
Tackling racist behaviour on Council estates	12-16
Dealing with racist incidents, racial harassment and race crime.	17
Our policy / practice checklist for discrimination	18-19
Our standard agenda for internal working party to progress and monitor aims of the code	20
Statement of intent – March 2001	21-22
References and other background information	23

For extra copies of this, further information or if you would like this on tape, in Braille, in a different language or another format please contact:

Penny Dimond on 01493 846527

Email: pmd@great-yarmouth.gov.uk

This can also be found at:

www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk

"Would you like this information in X (language)? Tick this box and send the leaflet with your name and address to:- ** (English)

Gusto mo ba itong impormasyon sa Tagalog? Pakilagyan ng kudlit sa kahon ? at ipadala ang uhilya na nakalagay ang inyong pangalan at ang iyong tirahan mo sa: ** (Tagalog)

A do deshironit kete informocion ne Shqip?

Shenoni kete kuti

Dergoje fletushken me emrin dhe me adresen tende tek: ** (Albanian)

Aimeriez vous cette information en francais? Veuillez cochez ici ? et renvoyer la brochure avec votre nom et adresse à: ** (French)

Gostaria dessa informação em Português? Tique essa caixa e mande o folheto com o seu nome e endereço para** (Portugese)

¿Le gustaría obtener esta información en español? Ponga un tic en este cuadro ? y envíe este folleto, con su nombre y dirección a: ** (Spanish)

** Penny Dimond,
Housing and Social Policy Manager,
Great Yarmouth Borough Council,
Greyfriars House,
Greyfriars Way,
Great Yarmouth
Norfolk
NR30 2QE

This is a statement to show how Great Yarmouth Borough Council (we) will meet the Commission for Racial Equality's Race Relations Code of Practice in Rented Housing. This code aims to eliminate racial discrimination and to promote equal opportunities. The Commission published this code in 1991.

This means that everyone – whatever their ethnic background, should enjoy equal treatment in finding a home, in the services provided and feeling safe in their home. The code covers housing that is rented, leasehold or occupied under licence.

In March 2001 our Council agreed a statement of intent to implement the Code. Since this time an internal working party of officers has worked together to take practical steps to progress this. This group is led by the Corporate Director of Social Policy and meets at least 4 times each year. Named officers are given responsibility for action within certain time periods. This document specifically targets what we have done or are doing to meet the code, but we also aim to link in to the wider equalities agenda.

The following is a statement of what we have done, what is ongoing and what we continue to need to put in place to make sure we achieve our aim.

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND QUALITY ISSUES

We aim to give everyone, whatever their ethnic background equal treatment in getting access to our own and housing association partners housing. To test this we will monitor the ethnicity of people receiving services and will compare this to the 2001 local census figures.

	In place?	How is it monitored?
Homelessness figures – enquires and acceptances	Yes	Reviewed 4X a year
Lettings – who joins the register, who gets housed and where.	Yes	Reviewed 4X a year
Housing Advice: samples of work to be monitored	Yes	4X a year
<p>We will check our policies and procedures for indirect and direct discrimination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness policies • Lettings policies • Choice Based Lettings 	Reviewed 2003 “ “	
We will make sure that our Housing Association partners have similar systems in place to meet the Code of Practice	2003	
<p>We offer a language facility – INTRAN and will monitor how this is used, so the information can inform our practice.</p> <p>For example we will if requested try to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish our guide for private sector landlords in different languages 	Yes 2003	Reviewed 4X a year Monitor take up 1X a year

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer to translate a range of advice leaflets into different languages • Make some signs for reception areas in the most commonly used languages. (Currently Portugese and Kurdish). 	<p>2003</p> <p>2003</p>	
<p>Where we use any person, agency or partner to provide interim, temporary or permanent accommodation in respect of the Council's housing duties, we will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they comply with the law and code of practice and will include it as a compulsory requirement in any accommodation schemes. • they have a robust system for reporting and dealing with racial incidents and acts of racial harassment. • they have access to interpreters, translators and information in different languages. 	<p>2003/04</p> <p>2003/04</p> <p>2003/04</p>	<p>Report from Tenancy Relations Officer 1X a year</p>
<p>In respect of general private sector landlord lettings in our district we will aim to work with private landlords to drive up the quality of their accommodation and help them to meet the code by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it clear that we expect them to comply with the law and code of practice and include it as a compulsory requirement in any future accreditation schemes. • Offering training and information 	<p>2003/04</p> <p>2003/04</p>	<p>Report from Tenancy Relations Officer 1X a year</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosecuting if the law is broken 	2003/04	
We need to keep up to date on the law and be able to handle enquiries sensitively relating to access to housing for asylum seekers, EEC citizens, migrant workers and refugees. We will do this by giving regular training / briefing to the relevant staff.	2003 and ongoing	1X a year
SERVICE DELIVERY		
We aim to give everyone, whatever their ethnic background equal treatment in levels of service of our and housing association partners housing.		
	In place?	How is it monitored?
<p>To test this, we first wish to find out the ethnicity of our existing tenants. We are reliant on developing IT systems to do this but aim to achieve this by:</p> <p>1) Linking the lettings system to the Estate management system in Autumn 2003. (This has captured information since 1997 with a turnover of 8% each year.)</p> <p>2) Finding out satisfaction levels by ethnic group in the next tenants satisfaction survey.</p>	<p>2003 onwards</p> <p>Autumn 2003</p>	<p>Once data comes, develop mechanisms to monitor repairs, complaints, etc 4X a year</p> <p>Review results of survey</p>

<p>Access to housing benefit</p> <p>We now collect ethnic details on housing benefit form.</p> <p>Monitoring will start once the IT system is implemented.</p>	Autumn 2003	Reviewed 4X a year
<p>Where we support tenants groups we expect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic monitoring included in membership application forms • Constitutions to have a strong equal opportunities clause • A code of conduct outlawing discrimination in meetings • Regular training for tenants groups 	In place and ongoing	Reviewed 2X a year
<p>We have a separate action plan to tackle the Code of practice for racial harassment (see page 12)</p>	In place and ongoing	Reviewed 2X a year
<p>We require that all preferred partners have effective racial equality policies. For contractors, this is a requirement of being on the approved list</p>	In place and ongoing	Reviewed 1X a year or as partners change
GENERAL ISSUES		
<p>We recognise that we must make sure our policies and procedures must not discriminate either directly or indirectly</p>		
	In place?	How is it monitored?
<p>We have developed a checklist (attached) to help us consider the issues.</p> <p>We intend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the checklist to all staff 		

<p>corporate Race equality scheme and will aim to make sure the housing service links to and supports this action. We will also link to the County's Community Cohesion agenda and will aim to learn from other best practice as it arises.</p>		<p>each equal opportunity meeting</p>
<p>We will share this statement of intent and ask for feedback, with partners, and in particular groups supporting ethnic minority communities which in Great Yarmouth may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NNREC (Norfolk and Norwich Racial Equality Council) • GYROS • Community Development Workers • CLIP offices 	<p>2003</p>	
<p>We intend to compile a report each year to detail the results of monitoring, action taken, assess progress and check that we are meeting the requirements of the code. We will investigate with partners other methods to measure the impact of this work on ethnic minority groups.</p>	<p>2003 / 04 and ongoing</p>	<p>Report to Councillors 1X a year</p>

TACKLING RACIST BEHAVIOUR ON COUNCIL ESTATES

Introduction

The Council has a general duty as a local authority to

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

In order to comply with this duty the Council has drawn up a Race Equality Scheme and it is the responsibility of all Council Departments to assist in its delivery.

The policies, procedures and practices adopted by the Council, in its role as landlord, make important contributions to the fulfilment of this general duty. Delivery of the landlord function is the responsibility of the Housing Management Department but significant contributions are also made by wardens and lettings staff within the Housing Needs and Welfare Services Department.

A strategy, entitled "Tackling Anti-social Behaviour and Racial Harassment in Council Areas" (ASB) has been developed and adopted. It sets out how the Council, as landlord, tackles anti-social behaviour and includes procedures specifically to deal with racial harassment. It also seeks to ensure that Housing services are delivered fairly and equitably, that performance is maintained and that the views of victims are sought and taken into consideration.

A condition has been included in the tenancy agreement to prohibit harassment on the grounds of race. This tenancy condition complements those which are concerned with nuisance and annoyance, illegal activity, harassment, abuse and causing or threatening violence.

Work has also been undertaken to meet the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's circular called "Tackling Racial Harassment: Code of Practice for Social Landlords".

Multi-Agency Working

Corporately, the Council has adopted the definition of a racist incident recommended in the Stephen Lawrence report. This is clearly stated in the ASB strategy and has been endorsed by the Council's Executive Committee. All Council staff are required to refer reports of racist incidents to Corporate Services who ensure their referral to the police. Arrangements have been put in place for them to inform Housing Management of any reports from other departments which relate to Council tenants so that appropriate tenancy enforcement action can be taken. Cases of racial harassment are dealt with through the tenancy enforcement procedures.

The Council partners with the Norfolk and Norwich Race Equality Council (NNREC), meeting with them regularly to discuss policy and procedural matters, as well as holding case conferences when appropriate. The NNREC is informed of every racist incident logged by the Council. Any victim is also advised that they are entitled to support from the NNREC or Victim Support and how to contact them.

All tenancy enforcement staff have received specialised training explaining the internal procedure for dealing with racist incidents and detailing how the Council works with other agencies and what support is available.

Prevention and Publicity

The Crime Reduction Partnership leads on reviewing trends in racial crime and has a high level membership from all the leading organisations in the borough, who are fully committed to tackling this problem. The Housing Management Department also has a regular partnership meeting with the Police and, again, crime trends, including hotspots, are examined.

Target hardening has formed a major part of the Council's capital works programmes over recent years and will continue to do so. This work includes extensive environmental improvements to flatted areas specifically designed to deter crime. Other improvements include higher specification locks and the installation of burglar alarms. As well as this, the Council successfully bid for £120,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

specifically for crime prevention measures for Council tenants. Frontline officers regularly refer tenants to this scheme. In addition the Council is currently bidding for a CCTV scheme to cover the Middlegate Estate.

When necessary the Council will look to transfer victims of crime and harassment. However, this is not as a substitute for enforcement action and the Council will try, where it can, to tackle any problems head-on. Extensive staff training has contributed to a greater understanding of the serious nature of racial crime, resulting in it being more readily identified and treated with due seriousness.

The Council had developed a Tenant Compact to encourage greater tenant participation. This agreement sets out clearly the Council's commitment to equality. As well as this, tenant representatives have received race equality training and have been offered training regarding the Council's ASB strategy.

Formal tenant groups can only receive Council recognition if they adopt a constitution that promotes equality. The Borough's Compact Monitoring Group can take punitive action against any group guilty of racist attitudes. This commitment was demonstrated when the Council withdrew recognition of the Tenants Federation in 2002.

Encouraging Reporting and Monitoring

As explained above, key front line staff have been trained to identify and report racist incidents, which are logged centrally. Since the training was delivered in 2002, five cases have been logged. The logging forms adopted by the Council are used throughout Norfolk and has been endorsed by the NNREC.

Performance Indicators have been developed as part of the Council's strategy; this includes a target for the number of racial incidents reported. The Council also sends out Victim Satisfaction Surveys and analyses the results by ethnic groupings. The Housing Management Service has set targets to ensure tenants from ethnic minorities are as equally satisfied with the service they receive, as those from ethnic majority. This performance information is monitored at the Divisional Management Team.

Key staff have received internal training on the ASB strategy and have attended a two day training course regarding race equality and racial harassment issues. Procedures have also been drawn up and staff have been trained to follow them. Key frontline staff have also received extensive training in relation to general housing management law and specifically the measures available to the Council under the Housing Act 1985 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Through the Tenant Compact, there is also a greater awareness of the issue and what can be done, amongst tenant groups. It is anticipated that this greater competence and awareness of the issue amongst housing staff, will give victims the reassurance they need to report racist incidents.

To overcome witness intimidation and support victims better, the Council has adopted an approach where it seeks to be helpful and supportive to complainants, regardless of whether a case can be proved. Part of the staff training is aimed at helping them understand victims' perceptions and be aware of the issues surrounding them. Victims are offered target hardening advice and referral to victim support and/or the NNREC.

The Council has also developed a floating support scheme and has entered into a contract with a specialised agency to support people from ethnic minorities. It is also employing INTRAN services and all key frontline staff have received training.

All Council staff have received training in relation to the relevant parts of the Human Rights Act.

Action Against Perpetrators

The Council has a proven track record for taking firm action against antisocial tenants, making use of possession orders, antisocial behaviour orders and injunctions.

The Council work closely with the Police, meeting with them every two months to review performance, develop new initiatives and discuss serious cases. The Council also holds regular case conferences when dealing with serious cases of antisocial behaviour, inviting agencies such as NNREC, Probation, Social Services and Victim Support, as appropriate. The Council and Police also encourage frontline officers to meet regularly, exchanging best practice and appropriate information.

The Housing Management Service has clearly-understood procedures for dealing with all types of antisocial behaviour including those which are race related. The Housing Management Service Performance Plan includes a performance indicator for all complaints of nuisance to be responded to within five working days. A further target, for a response within 24 hours in severe cases – as defined in the ASB strategy – to be made within 24 hours, has also been introduced.

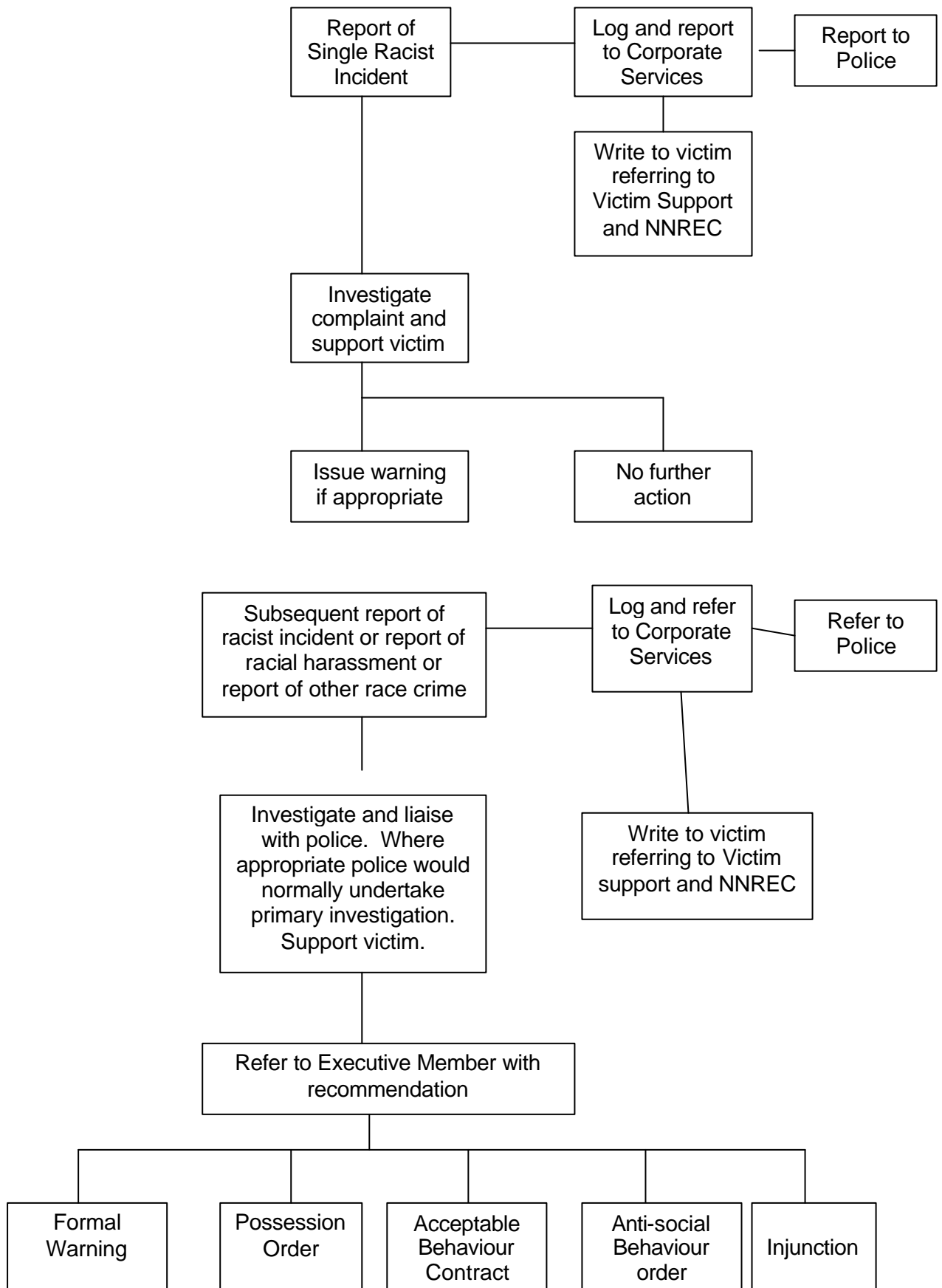
Separate procedures are in place for the different types of racist behaviour, which can be broadly classified under three headings.

A racist incident is logged, referred to Corporate Services and dealt with under the corporate procedure. Unless extreme and sustained, one incident would not normally constitute harassment in the context of the tenancy regulations. However, two or more incidents could help to form a case which would not only justify legal action being initiated against the perpetrator's tenancy but also help to persuade a judge that the reasonableness test was satisfied. For this reason arrangements have been put in place for Corporate Services to inform Housing Management of all reports of racist incidents.

The contravention of tenancy conditions on grounds of race includes harassment, violence, threats of violence and other illegal acts within the vicinity of the home. Estate Managers will investigate complaints of harassment by interviewing complainants, potential witnesses and alleged perpetrators and by liaising with other relevant agencies. Support will always be provided to the victim and, where appropriate, mediation will be attempted. However, staff are fully aware of the range of legal remedies available and of the need to be able to demonstrate to the Court that it would be reasonable to grant the remedy sought.

Calls which appear to involve racially aggravated or other race related crimes will be referred to the Police for investigation and action. Whilst the Police will undertake the primary investigation, the Council will provide support to the victim and undertake tenancy enforcement action in accordance with the outcome of that investigation.

Dealing with Racist Incidents, Racial Harassment and Racially Aggravated Crimes.



Policy / practice checklist for discrimination

Completed by on
.....

Name of policy / practice	
Where are details of this policy / practice recorded?	
When did / does this policy / practice start?	
Who agreed this policy / practice?	
In summary what does the practice / policy do?	
Who does it affect?	
How does it affect them?	

Could the policy discriminate against anyone directly or indirectly?	
What measures will be taken to make sure it does not discriminate?	
How is the policy / practice monitored?	
Who has been consulted to check for possible discrimination?	
Date brought to Equal Opportunities group for approval.	

Equal Opportunities Working Group – Social Directorate

Standard agenda for quarterly monitoring meetings.

1. Minutes of previous meeting
2. Monitoring:
 - Homelessness
 - Lettings
 - Housing Advice
 - Housing Benefits
 - Housing Management
 - Housing Repairs
 - Housing related racist incidents
3. Review of policies / practices (from checklist)
 - New policies / practices
 - Existing policies / practices
4. INTRAN – language service monitoring
 - Actions taken
 - New work
5. Training
 - Tenants
 - Staff
 - Councillors
 - Outside bodies
6. Publicity
7. Corporate issues
8. Working with partners

This statement of intent was agreed by the Council's Social Policy Committee on 8 March 2001 and then by the Council's executive committee.

“Great Yarmouth Borough Council takes its responsibilities under the Race Relations Act seriously. The Council commits itself to implementing the Code of Practice in Rented Housing as far as practicable.

The Council undertakes to notify tenants, prospective tenants and members of the adoption of the policy and to make the Race Relations Code of Practice in Housing available for inspection. Responsibility will be allocated to a specified person and / or groups of people for implementing the overall and component parts of the policy:-

- a) Detailed policies and procedures will be developed to ensure that the Code is implemented. All practices and procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly and that good race relations are fostered.
- b) The Race Relations Code of Practice in Employment produced by the commission will be accepted and progress on its implementation regularly monitored.
- c) Effective action to combat racial harassment and to support victims of such harassment will be introduced.
- d) All staff will receive training and guidance on the equal opportunity policy to ensure that they clearly understand their position in law and the implication of the policy.
- e) Any unmet needs will be identified wherever practicable and action taken to meet them.
- f) The policy will be monitored on a regular basis.”

(continued)

The Executive Committee also agreed the following action plan in respect of the Code of Practice in Rented Housing:-

- Committee at Corporate level with overall responsibility for racial equality policy agrees statement of intent.
- Nomination of specified person to take responsibility in each department / directorate and definition of senior management role
- Responsibilities and resources identified
- Desired outcomes and targets identified
- Timetable and timescales agreed
- Methods of recording progress decided
- Methods of consultation – must show that policy has been the subject of consultation with service users
- Review policies in the light of the Code of Good Practice with regard to service delivery
- Examine allocations, homeless procedures etc
- Set up awareness training
- Set up procedures for dealing with racial harassment
- Publicise policies
- Ensure preferred partners have effective racial equality policies
- Ask key questions; it is not good enough to say “oh yes we do this” we must identify documentary evidence to support our claims.

References and other background information

Commission for Racial Equality (1991) Race Relations Code of Practice in Rented Housing (For the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities) London

DTLR (2001) Code of Practice for social landlords on tackling racial harassment

Great Yarmouth Borough Council (2002) A Racial Equality Scheme for the Borough of Great Yarmouth. Found on Great Yarmouth Borough Council's website: www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk

Norfolk and Norwich Racial Equality Council (1994) Not in Norfolk

Norfolk and Norwich Racial Equality Council (2003) Norfolk at ease – a county with a vision of inclusive communities.

The Race Relations Act 1976

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000