

RACE EQUALITY WEST MIDLANDS

**WEST MIDLAND RACE EQUALITY COUNCILS'
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
September 1999 to August 2002**

**END OF PROJECT REPORT
August 2002**

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1 CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Since September 1999, the West Midland Race Equality Development Project has assisted and supported the region's fourteen race equality councils and partnerships. A team of three, based at an office in Worcester, is responsible for delivering a programme of activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of the councils and partnerships through developing strategy, organising and delivering training, improving services, increasing funding, enhancing communications, marketing, engaging in research and development, establishing partnerships, participating in national and regional consultation exercises, installing quality assurance systems, and much else besides.

With current Community Fund grant aid to the project due to expire on 31 August 2002, the team has submitted an application for funding to support a new independent project, to be situated nearer the centre of the region.

Currently, the West Midland Race Equality Forum approves the policy and work programme of the project, which has been renamed as Race Equality West Midlands (REWM). I serve as Chair, Kenneth Rodney, Director of Dudley, as Vice Chair, and Patricia Wright, Director of Sandwell, as secretary.

In the two and a half years of its operation, Race Equality West Midlands (Race Equality West Midlands) has acquired a reputation among race equality councils for its responsiveness and efficiency. Partly as a result of its contribution to setting up a British Federation of Race Equality Councils, its contribution has also come to be recognised nationally. Its officers work closely with councils across the regions of England, and in Scotland and Wales, and disseminate information. They have also developed sound working relationships with the Commission for Racial Equality's regional office and partnership staff. REWM is represented on the CRE's national Joint Working Group. Jointly with the CRE, it has drawn up guidance notes on the respective role of the CRE and councils in assisting public authorities to implement the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

Strategy

In November 2001, Race Equality West Midlands published a strategic review of West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships. The review argued the need for a regional and national strategy, examined the current objectives, structure and work of councils, highlighting resource issues and the environmental factors affecting race equality work.

It assessed the strengths of the councils, the strategic choices and scenarios they faced, and set out the factors critical to the setting of the new agenda for local racial equality work. In the West Midlands, the race equality councils have used the review to develop and adopt their first regional policy and programme. A copy of the strategic review is available from the REWM offices and may be used to assist race equality councils and partnerships in setting their future direction.

Training

In a time of rapid change, race equality councils need staff who are up-to-date and equipped to deal with the increasingly complex demands being made on them. They need to be able to manage the business of the race equality council, its finances, and the various projects involved.

The Race Equality West Midland staff have developed a regional training strategy for councils, based on a training needs audit. The training programme, consisting of three main streams, has now been in place for two years. In partnership with the University of Central England, an accredited professional management training scheme has been organised for race equality officers, approximately ten so far. Race Equality West Midlands has also provided training sessions and visioning events for executive committee members across the region and a series of seminars to update staff on topical developments in the race relations field.

Service improvement

A major contribution of the regional project has been to assist councils by developing policies, procedures, and other documentation to ensure that they are able to meet the CRE core standards, compliance with which has become a condition of funding.

Funding applications

Officers have assisted West Midland race equality councils and partnerships in applying for funds from various funding agencies. Applications for at least £3 million worth of funding have been drafted and most of them submitted. Recently, Walsall has been granted £300,000 and Sandwell £300,000.

Consultation

In the last year, officers have participated in two major formal consultation exercises, one on the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice on the duty to promote racial equality, the other on the Cabinet Office's proposals to implement the European Community Employment and Race Directives. The latter involves the amendment of the legislation on race and disability, and the introduction of new laws to outlaw discrimination in employment on grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion.

Communication

Two editions of the Race Equality Digest have been produced by REWM and circulated to race equality councils nationally.

The project continues to maintain its website www.rewm.org, and undertakes training sessions in IT applications for council administrative staff. Staff also arrange, produce agenda, write reports for, and minute Forum and BFOREC meetings, and act on decisions made.

Collaboration

Project officers have worked closely with the Commission for Racial Equality's partnership officers to coordinate activities undertaken in support of councils and partnerships. They have collaborated with regional ethnic minority capacity-building organisations and served on the EMBRACE steering committee.

As chair of this ground-breaking project, I should like to congratulate the staff on their contribution to capacity-building in the West Midlands. Particular thanks are also due to Waqar Azmi who played such an important part in establishing the project and setting it on course, and to the Board of Worcestershire Racial Equality Council for hosting it. Most of us remember the situation before the project came into being and appreciate the difference it has made to the region's race equality work. Finally, I wish to acknowledge our debt to the project's funders, the Community Fund and Government Office for the West Midlands, without whose generosity none of this would have been possible.

Amir Kabal

Chair of REWM and
Director of East Staffordshire REC

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND, AIMS AND DEVELOPMENT

Background

The West Midlands Race Equality Forum was established in 1997 by the then thirteen racial equality councils and partnerships of the region. Its aim was to plan a strategic response for promoting race equality within the West Midlands by maximising the potential for joint working to increase efficiency and effectiveness. It set out:

- h To promote and protect the interests of constituent members and communities.
- h To identify and address local and regional needs and priorities.
- h To identify and promote best practice and best value.
- h To campaign to maintain and sustain local, regional and national race equality services.
- h To influence policy makers and institutions to deliver race equality outputs.
- h To develop core standards to ensure quality results.
- h To provide professional support and advice to colleagues.
- h To undertake research and consultancy and disseminate information.

The Forum sought funding from the National Lottery Charities Board to set up a West Midland Race Equality Development Project whose purpose was to increase the skills, confidence and capacity of racial equality councils and other organisations with a race equality remit through strengthening existing structures and services and developing innovative methods of working to the long-term benefit of the most deprived and disadvantaged black and ethnic minority communities.

The project was intended to provide the following practical support:

- h advice and training in relation to casework, racial harassment and violence, policy development, community development, and public education.
- h partnership development and the sharing of good practice.
- h raising awareness of changing need, legislation and strategy.
- h any other services to increase the skills, confidence and capacity of race equality organisations.
- h help for unfunded race equality councils.

Its work programme was organised under six headings:

- h building the capacity of executive committee members (by providing advice, training and other support).
- h empowering black and ethnic minority communities (through community involvement and development).
- h building the capacity of volunteers (through recruitment, retention and training).
- h building the capacity of workers (in complainant aid, racial harassment casework, policy development and management skills).
- h improving the organisation and its services (by developing core quality standards).
- h improving organisational efficiency (through managing budgets and human resources, and monitoring and evaluation).

Modification

In the first year of operation, the project's work programme was adapted to meet more closely the particular requirement of the organisations it was meant to serve, following a thorough needs analysis. The original proposal had not made a sufficient distinction between building the capacity of organisations and providing services directly to individuals – a function of local racial equality councils, but not a function appropriate for the regional project. In addition, work with non-funded RECS (of which there was only one in the region) and volunteers (other than those serving on committees or panels) were not pursued, after the partnership agreement between Redditch and Worcester while urgent development work on core standards (recently introduced by the Commission for Racial Equality as a condition of funding) was prioritised.

From the second year of operation, project officers pursued a more customised and differently-categorised work programme more in tune with the day-to-day issues faced by the region's race equality organisations. The new structure was developed more fully for the project's September 2000 - August 2002 (two-year) strategic plan, under the following headings:

With racial equality councils and partnerships:

- h Funding
- h Training
- h Strategic development
- h Service improvement
- h Research
- h Communication
- h Collaboration
- h Monitoring

With national and regional bodies:

- h Consultation
- h Forum advocacy
- h Policy development
- h Development for REWM capacity

Since then, three further headings have been added:

- h Crisis management (for racial equality councils)
- h Marketing and public relations
- h Development of a national network and organisation (BFOREC – the British Federation of Racial Equality Councils).

Development

What was originally mounted as a project hosted and managed by the Worcester Racial Equality Council has since been developed into a fully autonomous organisation with a new name – Race Equality West Midlands – and constitution, set out in a Memorandum of Agreement and Articles of Association. Race Equality West Midlands was registered at Companies House (company no. 4355394) as a company limited by guarantee on 17 January 2002.

Race Equality West Midlands' (REWM) objects are to work towards the elimination of discrimination, especially of the kind based on colour, race, or ethnicity, and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups, especially in the West Midlands region, by:

- h representing, promoting and protecting at regional level the interests of those organisations having the same or similar objects as REWM.
- h working in partnership with organisations in the West Midlands which have the same or similar objects as REWM in order to assist them in building their skills, strategic effectiveness and capacity to provide high quality services.
- h to work with regional and national organisations to develop and implement effective strategies in furtherance of the aforementioned objects and to alleviate racial disadvantage.
- h to undertake policy development, community development, education and training, research, strategic planning of provision, service and quality improvement, the search for, acquisition and allocation of funds, marketing and promotion, consultancy, and other kindred activities in furtherance of the aforementioned objects.
- h to provide information, advice and support and undertake casework and tribunal/court representation for individuals or organisations in regard to matters of discrimination and human and civil rights.
- h to maintain an appropriate programme of public information and public education related to REWM's objects and functions.

In anticipation of the 1999 – 2002 project funding coming to an end, project officers prepared a new application to the Community Fund to fund a further three-year period. The aims of the new project are :

- h to make a significant contribution to the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups by working in partnership with racial equality councils and other bodies with similar aims to assist them in building their capacity to provide high quality racial equality services.

Objectives

The specific project objectives remain broadly those of the 1999 – 2002 project. They are:

- h To assist racial equality councils and partnerships in acquiring funds to develop and extend their services.
- h To arrange and provide suitable training for racial equality council members, executive committee members, staff and volunteers.
- h To advise and support racial equality councils and partnerships on measures to improve and extend their racial equality services.
- h To assist racial equality councils and partnerships to undertake effective strategic planning to ensure the provision of a comprehensive, vibrant, effective and mutually-supportive network of regional racial equality services.
- h To undertake research, environmental scanning, and needs analysis, and to provide management information relevant to the effective operation of racial equality councils and partnerships.
- h To develop and improve communications between racial equality councils and partnerships, their strategic partners and member organisations, by encouraging the use of new information technology and providing West Midlands race equality organisations with a professional and corporate identity.
- h To promote collaborative working and partnerships between racial equality councils and partnerships at local, sub-regional and regional level, and with other organisations with similar objectives.
- h To support racial equality councils and partnerships in monitoring their own work and evaluating their own performance with a view to improving user services, by introducing quality assurance measures, including the CRE core standards.

3 PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS, SEPTEMBER 1999 – AUGUST 2002

The main achievements of the 1999 – 2002 project, its strengths, the weaknesses that remain, and their implications for further development, are set out for the operational areas created for, or emerging out of, the two-year year strategic plan (September 2000).

1 Funding

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø Wrote and/or assisted 7 RECs and REPs with applications for some £3 million of funding and in the course of this activity:
- Ø Brought in grant aid to local RECs of approximately £2 million.
- Ø Helped 5, or more than a third, of West Midland RECs/REPs to increase and diversify their funding.
- Ø Assisted RECs in writing work programmes to comply with Commission for Racial Equality funding requirements.
- Ø Assisted RECs in writing business plans to assure their continued funding.

Strengths

- Ø REWM has experience in writing applications and winning funding for RECs.
- Ø Half of West Midland RECs have been assisted in some way.
- Ø RECs/REPs are becoming increasingly financially autonomous, confidence in capacity to raise funds is growing, and work and employment are expanding.
- Ø CRE recommends RECs to approach REWM for assistance with work reviews and programmes.

Weaknesses

- Ø While applications have been written, they have not always been submitted by RECs.
- Ø Applications are often a response to funding availability and are, therefore, sometimes difficult to accommodate, justify, or deliver, within the overall context of an individual REC's strategic plan.
- Ø Funding is always for short-term projects: most RECs lack essential core funding.

Work remaining

- Ø As funding is short-term and project-related, RECs must keep on making applications for funding.
- Ø As funding is always in short supply and severely rationed, applications must be of a high and improving quality to be successful.
- Ø REWM has an essential role to play both in assisting RECs to acquire additional funding for innovative race equality projects and in ensuring that the resultant money is well spent and can be justified through well-prepared monitoring returns.
- Ø REWM must acquire longer-term funding to sustain itself.

2 Training

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø Produced a policy, procedure, plan and programme for REC/REP executive committee, staff and volunteer training.
- Ø Set up a management training scheme for racial equality officers in partnership with the University of Central England.
- Ø Ten staff persuaded to enrol and assisted to undertake accredited management training and achieving MBA, MSc, DMS, CMS and HNC qualifications.
- Ø Developed a draft management course module on Management of Diversity and Equalities Strategic Theory (MODEST).
- Ø Developed basic materials for training executive committee members and undertook training for more than half of REC executives.
- Ø Produced a booklet entitled *Service on the Executive Committee: what it involves*.
- Ø REWM training sub-committee met regularly to decide on allocation of the REWM beneficiary budget (giving financial assistance with course fees).
- Ø Various workshops organised for REC members and staff on discrimination law, European directives and race equality schemes.

Strengths

- Ø Progress has been made in developing a training policy, procedure, plan and programme.
- Ø A management training programme has been put into place.
- Ø Over the longer term, systematic training of staff and executive committee members will improve REC/REP governance, management and performance.
- Ø Basic training materials have been developed for executive committee training.

Weaknesses

- Ø The training of executive committee members is spasmodic, and does not keep pace with the turnover of members or the development of race equality policy and initiatives.
- Ø There is still no systematic training programme in place for administrative and clerical staff.
- Ø IT training and take-up of in-house training offers remain rudimentary.
- Ø Most RECs still do not operate a human resource policy and procedure and few staff have received staff development interviews.
- Ø Most RECs have inadequate training budgets.

Work remaining

- Ø REWM must maintain and expand the regional management training programme for race equality staff and continue to press for a management of diversity module.
- Ø Training for executive committee members must be expanded and made more attractive, with better materials developed.
- Ø By installing staff development systems and including support staff in training plans, more time and resources should be devoted to the training of administrative and clerical staff.
- Ø More effort must be invested in updating programmes: new approaches need to be developed and explored.
- Ø A more strategic approach to training in casework and tribunal representation has to be adopted, possibly by establishing quality circles.

3 Strategic development

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø REWM coopted onto the CRE/RECs Joint Consultative Forum (now Joint Working Group) to advise the Commission on implementation of core standards and the modernisation agenda, including the Action Plan for Modernising the Partnership (which seeks to encourage close co-ordination between the Commission and RECs on planning and policy development).
- Ø Produced a report and review of REC/REP services available across the region.
- Ø Published *Race equality: the significance of working with local communities. A strategic review of West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships.*
- Ø Produced a set of scenarios for the future of race equality work to encourage REC executive committees to discuss local strategy.
- Ø Published REWM policy on September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre and repercussions for ethnic groups in Britain.
- Ø Adopted a regional race equality strategy and paper on regional collaborative working.
- Ø Facilitated various visioning events and away days for racial equality councils and produced reports of their proceedings.
- Ø Provided race equality guidance with others to Local Strategic Partnerships.

Strengths

- Ø REWM has proved itself well placed to assist RECs, severally or collectively, to plan their work strategically.
- Ø REWM has the research skills to assist RECs in local need analysis.
- Ø The REWM strategic review has been well received by the CRE and by RECs, regionally and nationally, and contains useful scenario material to stimulate strategic thinking by REC members and officers.
- Ø There is evidence of increasing awareness among REC officers of the importance of agreeing regional and national strategy.

Weaknesses

- Ø There is almost no tradition of formal strategic development and planning in the sector, although some RECs have produced business plans in response to the demands of funders.
- Ø Until recently, the CRE did not engage RECs in strategic planning at national or regional level.
- Ø Many RECs do not appear to have undertaken any systematic local needs analyses or to have perceived this important for planning service provision.

Work remaining

- Ø REWM must continue to engage closely with the Joint Working Group, reporting back closely to the Forum and CRE Workshop.
- Ø REWM must update the strategic review on an annual basis.
- Ø REWM must work with particular RECs on setting objectives, needs analyses and developing strategy.
- Ø REWM must develop agreed regional and sub-regional strategy.

4 Research

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø Undertook an audit of the knowledge, skills, experience and training of West Midland racial equality council and partnership employees.
- Ø Compiled data for CRE and RECs on West Midland race equality issues.
- Ø Produced two reports on West Midland electoral activity of extreme right-wing racist political parties.
- Ø Provided critical reviews of publications impacting on race relations theory and practice, eg., Yasmin Alibhai Brown (2000) *After Multiculturalism*, Runnymede Trust (2000) *The Future of Multi Ethnic Britain* (the Parekh report), and the Independent Review Team (2001) *Community Cohesion* (the Cattle report).
- Ø Responded on behalf of West Midland RECs to various national and regional consultation exercises.

Strengths

- Ø The skills and experience of existing staff place REWM in a strong position to engage in applied race equality research.
- Ø REWM has experience in data analysis and needs assessment.
- Ø REWM has undertaken a training audit which has provided useful management information.

Weaknesses

- Ø There is insufficient understanding or use in the sector of the need for management information of the kind to inform the decision-making process.
- Ø The CRE, which should have significant data on RECs at its fingertips, has neither staff nor systems to provide them. As a consequence, the sector has had no reliable means of assessing and demonstrating either user need or the effectiveness of its work.
- Ø Because of the paucity of information about RECs and their work, most useful research in this field has to be primary. This is time-consuming and, as a consequence, Race Equality West Midlands, despite its favourable position, has had to limit its efforts in this area.
- Ø REWM is not sufficiently resourced at present to deliver all that is needed in this area.

Work remaining

- Ø There is a need to assist RECs in gathering local information and analysing local needs. Census 2001 data should shortly become available and will need analysing for local areas served by RECs.

- Ø Other secondary research data needs to be communicated to RECs to help them in developing new projects in areas such as the effectiveness of community-cohesion interventions.
- Ø There is a need to build links with the West Midland Regional Observatory.
- Ø There is an urgent need for a handbook on the theory and practice of effective race equality intervention.

5. Service improvement

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø Produced policies, procedures and other documents to assist racial equality organisations in meeting core standards, since combined as a policy and procedure handbook.
- Ø Published a directory that provides information on the location of RECs/REPs and the range of services they offer.
- Ø Produced a draft quality policy for RECs/REPs to customise to their own requirements.
- Ø Disseminated information on various new and innovative projects mounted by RECs to encourage good practice and to stimulate socially-responsive project development.
- Ø Produced materials to explain and advertise the services that REWM provides.

Strengths

- Ø Service improvement opportunities have been linked to effective strategic development and resource acquisition, for which Race Equality West Midlands has provided assistance.
- Ø REWM have developed policies and procedures focusing on service users.

Weaknesses

- Ø Not all RECs have in place sufficiently systematic means of reviewing and modifying their services on the basis of user feedback.
- Ø The services that RECs provide are determined to a great extent by their constitution and they are expected, irrespective of their resources, to deliver them.
- Ø Very few REC staff are trained or feel competent in Employment Tribunal representation.
- Ø Policy development work, particularly with the private sector, is thin on the ground.
- Ø Three RECs have had CRE funding withheld because they were not able to provide evidence that their services were adequate or appropriate.

Work remaining

- Ø While the first two tranches of core-standards have been developed to level one and two, the third and most demanding tranche must now be put into place, and the earlier ones raised to level 3.
- Ø Existing policies and procedures need to be reviewed and improved in the light of experience.

- Ø A new handbook of policies and procedures needs to be agreed.
- Ø More comprehensive provision of services needs to be planned for the region, including expanded casework and representation facilities.
- Ø REWM must focus on RECs judged to be weak or poorly performing.

6. Improved communications

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø Set up and developed a West Midland race equality council and partnership website, together with e-mail facilities for West Midland racial equality staff.
- Ø Contacted and kept in touch with the 14 West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships and organised regular meetings of the West Midlands Race Equality Forum.
- Ø Organised, jointly with the CRE, a national conference on REC and Commission for Racial Equality internet and IT use.
- Ø Undertook a national audit of REC IT use.
- Ø Assisted in setting up the British Federation of Racial Equality Councils and circulating information to members.
- Ø Produced and distributed nationally two editions of *The Race Equality Digest* (one on the three northern reports and community cohesion report, the other on the Commission for Racial Equality's statutory code of practice).

Strengths

- Ø A web site for West Midland racial equality organisations has been maintained for three years.
- Ø RECs/REPs in the West Midlands meet regularly as a Forum.
- Ø Editions of an occasional updating newsletter have been produced and circulated.
- Ø Information has been regularly disseminated to RECs/REPs nationally.
- Ø A national conference was organised and a British Federation brought into being.

Weaknesses

- Ø RECs/REPs do not make full use of information technology. While computers are used for word processing, they are not widely used for management information, databases, research and communication.
- Ø REC staff need encouragement in IT use.
- Ø REWM has struggled to develop, maintain and update its website.

Work remaining

- Ø The website must be maintained, developed and updated.
- Ø *The Race Equality Digest*, which was well received by RECs, must continue to appear as a digest of the latest ideas in race equality work.
- Ø REWM must continue to service REWM Forum meetings.
- Ø Regular and systematic contact with all West Midland RECs must be maintained.
- Ø REWM must continue to support the nascent BFOREC.

7. Performance monitoring

Achievements 1999 – 2002

- Ø Attended CRE core standard (CRECS) training sessions organised by Resolve Consultancy, and helped RECs install first and second tranches and levels of core standard quality assurance.
- Ø Produced policy and procedures and other documents relating to quality areas: eg. user-centred services, training and volunteering, to assist RECs/REPs in implementing the core standards.
- Ø Provided advice and support for RECs on conducting their annual reviews and planning work programmes.
- Ø Produced complaints procedures and undertook external investigation of complaints for RECs when requested.
- Ø Represented RECs in discussions with CRE on transition from historical funding to a performance-related funding methodology.

Strengths

- Ø REWM has the knowledge and experience to develop effective monitoring systems and performance measures for RECs and to contribute to quality assurance, including the implementation of CRECS.
- Ø REWM has developed policies and procedures and other materials that comply with CRECS.
- Ø Any shift from historical to performance-related CRE funding of RECs will lead to a more balanced distribution of resources.

Weaknesses

- Ø Whatever claims are made for the core standards – even the greatly improved revised version, they were not originally devised for RECs and still need extensive modification and development if they are to contribute to improved service delivery.
- Ø The new performance-related funding proposals are likely to result in some RECS being allocated more money and others less. There is a suspicion that funding levels will remain at their current inadequate level and the new performance criteria will be used to justify REC closure or merger.
- Ø Performance measures for race equality work and intervention have yet to be developed to a level where they can be used to justify allocation of particular levels of performance-related funding.
- Ø Quantifiable performance measures, suited, for example, to measuring the effectiveness of this proposed new capacity-building project, are difficult to develop.

Work remaining

- Ø There is an opportunity here for REWM to make a significant contribution to the development of suitable measures of race equality organisation performance.
- Ø The remaining tranche and levels of the core standard quality system need to be implemented. RECs require assistance to achieve this.

8. Collaborative partnerships

Achievements

- Ø Worked closely with CRE partnership officers to coordinate their work and support for RECs.
- Ø Served on the West Midlands Regional Black Voluntary Sector Network.
- Ø Collaborated with organisations such as the Black Regeneration Network, Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations, EMBRACE (Ethnic Minority and Black Regional Action for Community Empowerment), Northern Complainant Aid, Birmingham Voluntary Sector Services, the West Midland Low Pay Unit and the Midland TUC.
- Ø Working with the CRE and GOWM on delivering training and advice to Local Strategic Partnerships on race equality promotion.
- Ø Worked with the CRE to coordinate approaches to, and delivery of, the new duties on public authorities to promote racial equality.

Strengths

- Ø There is a realisation that collaboration and coordination with CRE officers are essential to the capacity-building project.
- Ø Close ties and collaboration with the BME organisations and umbrella groups sustain the project and the credibility of RECs.
- Ø A team approach has been adopted to support public authorities to meet their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Weaknesses

- Ø There is intense competition for resources between BME organisations and the RECs.
- Ø BME organisations are weak in delivering services in rural areas, but the strength of the RECs in this capacity goes unrecognised.
- Ø LSGs are not legal bodies nor listed as public authorities under the RRAA schedule and so require special attention from their local RECs.
- Ø New local partnership arrangements are complex and overlapping. It is difficult to keep track of, or become involved in, all partnership arrangements.

Work remaining

- Ø REWM must establish better links with Advantage West Midlands and Regional Action West Midlands.
- Ø REWM must stay close to the RECs it has been set up to serve and participate in as many of their activities as possible, attending for example all AGMs.

- Ø In order to remain relevant, REWM must continue to collaborate closely with the CRE, especially on the development of performance-related funding.
- Ø REWM must work closely with BME organisations and other bodies at regional level and keep the Forum informed of developments.
- Ø REWM must investigate the possibility of working more closely with other organisations such as NACAB.

9. Consultation

Achievements

- Ø Prepared a West Midland racial equality council response to the government's white paper. *Secure Borders, Safe Haven, Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain*, and a West Midland policy document on asylum seekers and refugees.
- Ø Responded to the draft West Midland Regional Agenda for Action document issued by Advantage West Midlands.
- Ø Provided detailed comments on the Draft Code of Conduct on the duty to promote race equality sent to the CRE.
- Ø Responded to the Cabinet Office's consultation exercise on the European Community's Employment and Race Directives.
- Ø At least five other responses to consultation during the three-year period.

Strengths

- Ø Engaging in regional consultation establishes the views of race equality councils while transferring the burden of formal response to the regional project which can respond on behalf of the Forum as a whole.

Weaknesses

- Ø It is still not always easy, given the short time allocated to consultation exercises, to establish the views of the councils and to make appropriate responses before deadlines.

Work remaining

- Ø It is clearly important that racial equality councils and partnerships in the West Midlands discuss policy documents impacting on race relations and make their collective views known. Race Equality West Midlands is ideally placed to undertake the work involved.

10. **Forum advocacy**

(See also strategic development and other sections below)

Achievements

- Ø Coordinated and assisted in articulating a regional race equality statement of strategy.
- Ø Developed a national response to the Commission for Racial Equality's draft proposals for modernising the partnership.
- Ø Represented the interests of West Midland racial equality councils on the Commission for Racial Equality's Joint Working Group and with the CRE regional office.
- Ø Represented RECs at various conferences and meetings of Advantage West Midlands, Regional Action West Midlands, Black Regeneration Network, and other bodies.
- Ø Nominated representatives to West Midland and West Mercia Criminal Justice Strategy Committees.

Strengths

- Ø The race equality movement in the West Midlands has a regional voice and presence and is in a good position to represent the collective interests of RECs/REPs.

Weaknesses

- Ø It is difficult to gain recognition from some of the more influential regional bodies.
- Ø REWM officers' time to attend meetings or consultation seminars is limited.

Work remaining

- Ø REWM needs to achieve greater recognition of its role and succeed in winning more resources, especially core funding, for local race equality work.

11. Crisis management

Achievements

- Ø Assisted two RECs to manage their affairs until they could appoint new directors.
- Ø Interceded and assisted with work programmes, core standards and business plans, when organisations' funding was threatened.
- Ø Independently investigated, at the request of RECs, complaints against racial equality councils' members and staff.

Strengths

- Ø There is no doubt that the work of some RECs would have been seriously jeopardised, were it not for the help received from REWM staff.

Weaknesses

- Ø Any full-time management support is demanding on time and displaces other REWM activity.
- Ø The importance of crisis management is not fully recognised. Capacity-building work is pointless if a REC is forced to close or even withdraw its services even temporarily.

Work remaining

- Ø There is growing recognition of the need for crisis-management facilities in the event of the long-term absence of a REC director and some standing arrangement for locum cover needs to be made and paid for.

12. Marketing and public relations

Achievements

- Ø Produced a comprehensive directory of West Midland race equality councils and partnerships.
- Ø Have widely circulated publications and literature.
- Ø Produced leaflets on the work of REWM.
- Ø Kept a website updated.
- Ø Mounted displays at various conferences and information exchanges.
- Ø Attended many public events at RECs and elsewhere on behalf of REWM and the Forum.

Strengths

- Ø There is knowledge and capacity to undertake these functions.
- Ø Possibly, the REWM publications are the best way to approach REWM and REC marketing.

Weaknesses

- Ø The directory, although circulated to RECs in draft form, was never published because of difficulties with the printer.
- Ø Overall, insufficient attention was given to promotional activities.

Work remaining

- Ø This has been a neglected area of REWM and REC work that in future needs to be taken far more seriously.

13. **Supporting BFOREC** **(the British Federation of Racial Equality Councils)**

Achievements

- Ø Involved in the nation-wide consultation exercise prior to the setting up of BFOREC.
- Ø Organised the first BFOREC conference which was held in Birmingham, 25 April 2001.
- Ø Helped to set up the BFOREC national committee, servicing and minuting all meetings.
- Ø Sent out all BFOREC national mailings.
- Ø Drafted the BFOREC memorandum of agreement and articles of association for consultation.
- Ø Attended all BFOREC meetings.
- Ø Written application for funds to support two dedicated BFOREC officers.

Strengths

- Ø Have assisted in setting up a strategically-important national organisation that draws on and fortifies the work undertaken at regional level.

Weaknesses

- Ø REWM's prime concern must be to strengthen race equality work at regional level.
- Ø National work is time-consuming and could displace regional priorities.

Work remaining

- Ø To obtain funds to enable BFOREC to mount its own development project.
- Ø To continue to collaborate with and support BFOREC and national and European initiatives.

4 STATEMENT OF REGIONAL STRATEGY 2002

1.0 Introduction

The West Midland Race Equality Forum, consisting of representatives of West Midland Racial Equality councils and partnerships, and incorporated and registered under the title Race Equality West Midlands (company number 04355394), met on the 7 February 2002 and adopted the following statement of regional strategy.

2.0 Foundation Principles

- 2.1 West Midland Racial equality councils and partnerships are committed to supporting the regional forum and capacity-building project, under the name of Race Equality West Midlands.
- 2.2 West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships have set up a West Midlands company (Race Equality West Midlands), of which they are the members and directors and have authorised the company's officers to search out funds to support its activities when current grant aid comes to an end in August 2002.
- 2.3 Race Equality West Midlands' role is to assist local racial equality councils and partnerships with the following tasks:
 - strategic development.
 - service improvement.
 - acquisition of funding.
 - training policy and programmes.
 - research.
 - communication.
 - performance monitoring.
 - collaborative ventures and partnership formation.
- 2.4 Race Equality West Midlands also works at a national and regional level and is involved in:
 - consultation.
 - forum advocacy.
 - policy development.
 - improving Race Equality West Midlands capability.
 - supporting BFOREC.
- 2.5 In collaboration with the West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships, Race Equality West Midlands organises staff development and training on a regular basis ensuring, in particular, the availability of training in:

- general management.
- management of diversity.
- governance (for executive committee members).

It seeks to extend the range of available training to include training in:

- equal opportunities law.
- policy (in fields such as health, education and criminal justice).
- economic and social development/regeneration.

- 2.6 Using the facilities of Race Equality West Midlands, racial equality councils and partnerships work closely to develop, install and achieve compliance with CRE core standards and other quality requirements.

3.0 Additional objectives

- 3.1 On the basis of the Race Equality West Midland strategic review and extensive discussion and consultation with race equality council directors, the following regional objectives are agreed:

- 3.2 Race Equality West Midlands will seek to acquire funds to assist racial equality councils with the following tasks:

- improved marketing.
- crisis management.
- more self-conscious theoretical underpinning of service delivery and intervention.
- mentoring/'buddying' and induction of newly-appointed directors.
- racial equality research and information services (to support regional, sub-regional and local racial equality projects and to underpin racial equality councils and partnerships' work with public authorities).

- 3.3 With the agreement of individual racial equality councils and partnerships, Race Equality West Midlands will seek to facilitate the setting up of a series of regional quality circles, with a membership of West Midland race equality officers and CRE staff, to develop the main modes of racial equality council operation or various race equality areas, eg:

- complainant aid (with a view to helping racial equality councils achieve compliance with core standards).
- community development (bearing in mind the community cohesion agenda).
- policy development (to support racial equality councils and partnerships' input into the implementation of the provision of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the requirements of the CRE Code of Practice).

- 3.4 With the agreement of the relevant racial equality councils and partnerships, Race Equality West Midlands will seek to facilitate collaborative working between racial equality councils by setting up and securing funding for sub-regional projects based on sub-regional areas, eg:

- Staffordshire,
- Black Country,

- West Mercia,
 - Warwickshire and
 - (Solihull).
- 3.5 Race Equality West Midlands will seek to stimulate (for example, by the acquisition of funds for local projects, racial equality council and partnerships) engagement in innovatory work, for example, in relation to:
- rural racism (travellers/gypsies),
 - refugees, asylum seekers,
 - community cohesion, and
 - young people's involvement in decision-making.
- 3.6 Race Equality West Midlands will seek to build on executive committee training by reporting to racial equality councils on good practice in governance of race equality organisations and publicising more effective approaches to, or models of, governance.
- 3.7 In consultation and collaboration with local racial equality councils and partnerships, Race Equality West Midlands will work to develop a set of simple performance measures/indicators of the effectiveness of racial equality work and services, with a view to demonstrating the value of local racial equality councils and partnerships.
- 3.8 Bearing in mind the aims and interests of local racial equality councils and partnerships, Race Equality West Midlands will work in collaboration with officers of the CRE to develop various elements of the West Midland strategy.

These principles and objectives were adopted as regional strategy and as the framework for the Race Equality West Midlands work programme and mode of operation on 7 February 2002.

5 RACE EQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Race equality councils and partnerships and perceptions of their work and functions are affected by events in the wider world. In this respect, recent events been momentous in their effects on, and implications for, race relations.

Attack on the World Trade Centre

It is, of course, too soon to assess the long-term consequences of the 11th September attack on the World Trade Centre, the British government's support for the USA's war of intervention in Afghanistan and the pursuit of Osama Bin Laden and his al Qaida network. Subsequent attacks on mosques, Muslims and, more generally, people of Asian appearance, proved a reminder of the fragility of race relations and the ease with which they could become ideologically polarised.

Following President Bush's 'crusade' remark, the conflict was interpreted by some as a war between Christianity and Islam, with UK Muslims portrayed as a potentially disloyal and alien force. Right-wing organisations took up the ready-made opportunity to make trouble, assisted by the few Muslims who declared their willingness to fight with Bin Laden and, by implications, against British troops.

Anti-terrorism legislation

The government used the opportunity to pass emergency anti-terrorism legislation, involving internment of terrorist suspects (requiring the suspension of article 3 of the European convention on human rights). Compulsory language and citizen classes were proposed for asylum seekers and new immigrants. In the West Midlands, race equality directors agreed to a joint declaration and approach to the conflict that threatened at the time but which, in the event, and with the rapid response of the police, did not materialise. At the time of writing, events in the Middle East, with the severe conflicts between Israelis and the Palestinians, and the occupation of the West Banks by Israeli forces has created a most unstable and unsettling situation, exacerbated by the possibility of American and British military intervention in Iraq.

The British National Party

At home, the 2001 General Election led to another major Labour victory, but also managed to demonstrate a sinister undercurrent in race relations. The British National Party won 16.4 percent of the votes in Oldham West. It also stood candidates in constituencies in the West Midlands, managing to poll 4.7 percent of the vote in Dudley North, thus highlighting its potential for causing tension in this part of the country, too. Abroad, the victory in the first round of the French presidential election of the far-right leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, would seem to underline the need for a bulwark of organisations, such as our own, to stop the European-wide racist swell.

Events in the north of England in the early summer of 2001 led the Home Secretary to set up a ministerial group to look into issues of public order and community cohesion.

This followed outbreaks of violence, inter-ethnic disturbances, and the destruction of property in the district of Bradford in West Yorkshire in April, in Oldham, Greater Manchester, at the time of the General Election in June, and in Burnley, East Lancashire, some weeks later.

In Burnley, for example, skirmishes broke out between white and Asian youths when a gang of white men attacked and seriously injured an Asian taxi driver on his way home from work. The following night at least 200 people took to the streets and a public house was petrol-bombed by Asian youths. Subsequently, in local elections, in May 2002, three BNP councillors were elected to Burnley Borough Council. Race Equality West Midlands has analysed elsewhere the success of the far right both in Burnley and in the West Midlands.

Community Fragmentation

A prescient report by Sir Herman Ouseley on Bradford race relations and written before the violence in the north drew attention to 'community fragmentation'. This was followed by two other local reports on Burnley and Oldham and a National Community Cohesion report which, taken together, have radically altered the national race relations agenda. The official promotion of ethnic diversity is now tempered by a consideration of the need to promote 'community cohesion'.

Statutory duty to promote race equality

In December 2001, the Commission of Racial Equality published its draft statutory code of practice on the duty to promote race equality. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires public authorities to promote race equality in relation to their policy, service delivery and employment practices. The code provides public authorities with guidance on how to go about fulfilling their new duties. They are required, for example, to produce race equality schemes by 31 May 2002, all of which has great significance for the current and future role of local race equality councils. Race Equality West Midlands, in collaboration with the regional office of the CRE, has helped to draw up a protocol spelling out the respective roles of the CRE and the RECs in helping public authorities comply with their duty to promote race equality. (For more detail, see below.)

European employment and race directives

In December 2001, the Cabinet Office issued a consultation document on methods of implementing European Community Employment and Race Directives during the course of the present parliament. It will involve amendment of existing legislation on race and disability and introducing entirely new legislation to outlaw discrimination on grounds of age, sexual orientation and religion, in employment and training. West Midlands race equality councils and partnerships responded jointly to the consultation through Race Equality West Midlands. The Race Directive requires member states to designate a body or bodies to promote race equality and to assist individuals to pursue complaints, such as the Commission for Racial Equality, but the Employment Directive does not have a corresponding requirement. In Great Britain we already have an Equal Opportunities Commission responsible for gender issues and equal pay for men and women, and a Disability Rights Commission.

The government is clearly conscious of the problem of the proliferation of commissions and has concluded that a single statutory commission offering integrated advice, guidance and support on equality matters is required, a position welcomed by the Commission for Racial Equality. This would help victims of multiple discrimination and ensure a more coherent approach.

Implications for race equality councils

But the long-term implications for local race equality councils are far from clear. There is a view that moves at national, regional and local levels towards the rationalisation of provision for human rights work and support for anti-discrimination legislation generally, together with a new emphasis on client-focussed community legal services, will lead to the setting up of 'equalities' councils. The alternative position is that there remains a great deal of work to be done by an agency specialising in social renewal, racial integration and community cohesion. Many areas are desperately in need of a new form of urban regeneration aimed not only at creating jobs and improving property, but at ethnically and racially re-integrating schools, colleges, public facilities, places of work and residential areas, in the face of the economic and political forces driving communities apart. But it is important that the members and staff of racial equality councils and partnerships find time to give the various possible scenarios full and proper consideration. (See section on scenarios).

The events described above demonstrate the importance of race equality councils regularly reviewing their values, structure, work programme, income sources, expenditure and staff development in the context of the broader, changing, social, political and economic environment.

The traditional tripartite approach to race relations

Too often, institutional behaviour is determined not by current circumstances but by history. For nearly forty years, for example, the British political establishment has adopted a tripartite approach to race relations involving strict (some would say racist) immigration laws, anti-discrimination measures to ensure ethnic minorities are treated fairly and welfare provision to deal with poverty and the pressure on public services in urban areas, where ethnic minorities are concentrated. Organisations aimed at promoting race equality have been affected by this prevailing conceptualisation and are fixated with alleviating discrimination and disadvantage at the expense of broader considerations of the growing globalisation of trade and its effect on travel, labour shortage and surplus, and migration. Thus, many race equality councils have steered clear of involvement in the politics of asylum seeking even when there are refugees on their doorstep suffering from the worst kinds of irrational xenophobic behaviour.

Mr Blunkett, the Home Secretary, apparently fears the rise of the far right on the back of issues of asylum and race. The dangers should not be underestimated, but egged on by media coverage of invasions by asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, he has sought powers in the nationality, immigration and asylum bill to restrict the right of appeal against deportation, remove children born in the UK to parents deemed to have entered, illegally, to imprison for up to 14 years for harbouring unlawful immigrants, and a new oath of allegiance.

The question remains, however, as to whether fortifying the nation against would-be immigrants in this way causes irreparable harm to internal race relations, by casting all visible minorities, whether born or resident here for many years, as intruders threatening an otherwise tranquil way of life. There is a danger that in relation to attitudes to asylum seekers and new immigrants, race equality councils may neglect their mission of working to eliminate discrimination.

Prevailing definitions of race relations and their limitations

Race equality councils differ greatly in the communities they serve and in the provision they offer. Some organisations serve compact urban areas with large concentrations of ethnic minorities, often with their own well-established institutions. Others serve a large geographical area with a comparatively small ethnic minority population.

A major problem, affecting all race equality work, lies in the prevailing definition of race relations. Historically, a homogeneously white population is seen as the norm, with more recently-resident black and Asian groups treated as "the issue".

The focus is on how the comparatively small visible black and Asian population can be assisted in adjusting to the English way of life. There is far less awareness of how aptly the large white population responds to the black and Asian population. It should always be remembered that the work of race equality councils involves public education of the majority as well as the support of the minority.

Race relations also tend to be associated with inner city life which, in the rural areas of the region, is frequently interpreted as 'Try Birmingham – not our problem'.

But there is a further dimension. Race relations has become almost exclusively preoccupied with the interaction between black, Asian and white groups. Relations between various white ethnic groups are seen as a separate and distinct matter. The concept of race relations does not seem to embrace matters relating, for example, to gypsies and travellers. These issues and those of rural racism must also be the concern of racial equality councils in the rural areas of the region.

6 SCENARIO-PLANNING EXERCISE, JULY 2001

As part of Race Equality West Midlands research into REC/REP strategy, West Midland directors were first asked how and in what direction they would wish to take their RECs/REPs forward, and then to rank six scenarios from most to least likely. Their response to the scenarios is set out below.

Directors' objectives

Directors spontaneously mentioned the following objectives, which matched many of the factors taken into account when devising the more formally-presented scenarios.

- to become involved in whole-system change as an ethnic minority voluntary sector, community development agency. (1)
- to establish strategic racial equality partnerships. (3)
- to establish strategic partnerships with black and minority ethnic communities. (1)
- to become more effective and efficient in the performance of existing activities, generating funds from a variety of sources. (2)
- to develop as a specialist equalities agency to undertake a wide range of anti-discrimination work (not only race). (2)
- to enter into contracts with government and public sector agencies to provide various services, including community and economic regeneration. (2)
- to engage in advocacy on behalf of ethnic minority individuals and communities. (1)

These proposals, when taken in conjunction with directors' choice of the closed-ended scenarios set out below, give a fascinating picture of their perception of the decision field faced by local racial equality organisations. Directors were clearly not united in their view of the way forward. They mentioned that they recognised elements of all the scenarios in their work and the pressures they were currently experiencing, but were loath to foreclose on the possibilities by opting for one or other of the models available, when there was no apparent consensus generally or in their organisations on the direction to be taken. Some combination of two or more of the scenarios was felt possible. All directors, however, recognised the inevitability of change and the need to act collectively in the face of the uncertainties confronting their organisations.

The scenarios

1. The Racial Equality Council

Racial equality councils will continue much as at present, allowing for a degree of rationalisation as sub-regional centres of excellence. They will deliver much the same kind of service (ie. complainant aid, policy development, community development, public awareness-raising). CRE provision of grant aid to pay salaries will be replaced with a block grant to councils, conditional on the delivery of agreed CRE objectives.

2. The Strategic Race Equality Partnership

As an extension of REC policy development work and in the light of the new positive statutory duty placed on public authorities, strategic race equality partnerships will be set up to help the public sector to provide and improve services suited to ethnic minority users and to fulfil the legally enforceable duty on public authorities to positively promote equality of opportunity. Strategic partnerships will be collaborative ventures, duly institutionalised and constituted, facilitating meaningful consultation with, and involvement of ethnic minorities in the development and delivery of a range of public services (eg. local government, health, criminal justice, law enforcement, education, housing and regeneration).

3. The Equalities Council

There will be moves at national, regional and local level towards the rationalisation of provision for human rights work and support for anti-discrimination legislation generally, together with a new emphasis on client-focused community legal services. RECs will be transformed into local, sub-regional and regional equalities councils aiming to promote a broad spectrum of equalities and providing a professional legal information, advice and representation service for alleged victims of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion, age and sexual orientation.

4. The Alliance for Social Cohesion and Civic Renewal

Stressing the need to relieve and empower disadvantaged and excluded communities, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal recognises that people from ethnic minorities are more likely to live in deprived areas and be poor. Having become increasingly involved in community development, RECs will play a lead role in establishing alliances for action against social fragmentation, eventually dissolving themselves to form new community empowerment companies, with guaranteed and extensive ethnic minority board representation. While the primary focus will be on poverty and disadvantage, measures to tackle discrimination would not be neglected. Funding will be made available from RDAs (threatened with financial penalties for failure to reduce deprivation), GOs (with responsibilities for community development) and LSCs (charged with improving participation).

5. Minority Rights Council

In response to the need to defend and support the rights of minorities and Government Office policy of fostering the black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary sector, RECs will reconstitute themselves as minority rights councils with the primary aim of securing BME rights both legally and socially through capacity building the local BME voluntary sector by providing legal aid, acquiring additional funds, offering training, and mounting community projects. They will seek additional regional development, SRB and Home Office funds.

6. The Commission for Racial Equality Local/Sub-Regional Office

In view of rationalisation of RECs into ‘centres of excellence’, withdrawal of funding (often because of failure to comply with CRECS), the need to provide more professional legal services, and increasing numbers of CRE-employed staff, the CRE will establish a number of local and sub-regional CRE offices as an alternative to REC services which are judged as patchy, variable in quality and unreliable.

Directors’ scenario choices

CHOICE	1	2	3	4	5	6
Racial Equality Council	5	1	2	2	1	1
Equalities Council	3	3	2	3	0	1
Strategic Race Equality P/ship	2	6	2	0	0	0
Minority Rights Council	0	0	3	2	4	1
Alliance for Social Cohesion	0	1	3	2	2	3
CRE Local/ Sub Regional	2	1	0	1	3	4
Total	12	12	12	10	10	10

More recent developments

Events have moved on since the scenario exercise over a year ago. The government has proposed a single Equalities Commission, combining the responsibilities of existing Race Equality, Equal Opportunities and Disability Rights Commissions, together with the other dimensions of equality – religion, sexual orientation and age – covered by the European Employment Directive. Further consideration has been given to the problems of social fragmentation highlighted by the reports on race relations in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham and the national community cohesion report.

How are these developments likely to impact on local race equality work? Is it likely that race equality councils will become equalities councils? One negative view is that the proposed Equalities Commission will concentrate on a legal enforcement role with little interest in funding race equality or ‘equalities’ councils. Any pro bono legal casework and representation is likely to be arranged as part of generic local community legal services, not through specialists focusing only on equalities legislation.

What part will race equality councils play in projects to promote community cohesion? To make any marked difference to the entrenched divisions in housing, education, leisure and employment, sizeable economic resources will need to be committed to the areas of concern. In all probability, funding will be targeted at not more than fifteen areas that are most at risk from social fragmentation and racial tension. In these areas, new well-resourced organisations committed to integration and diversity – ‘super-RECs’ – might well be established. But will this kind of initiative be developed elsewhere?

A more realistic assumption is that local race equality work will diversify to meet local conditions, with a range of race equality organisational structures developing to serve different demands. Much will depend on the availability of funding for core costs and particular project work.

7 COMMUNITY COHESION

Following the spring and early summer 2001 disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, resulting in destruction of property and attacks on the police, and involving people from different cultural backgrounds, the Home Secretary set up a Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT), chaired by Ted Cante. The CCRT sought local views on the affected towns and other parts of the country on issues that needed to be addressed to bring about what came to be termed 'community cohesion'.

The report goes to some length to explain the meaning of 'community cohesion'. It embraces common values and a civic culture, social order and social control (involving an absence of conflict and incivility and a tolerance of difference), social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities (harmonious economic and social development, common standards, redistribution of public finances and opportunities, equal access to services and welfare benefits and acknowledgement of social obligations), social networks and social capital, and place attachment and identity. Community cohesion, we are told, is about helping communities to gel or mesh into an integrated whole. Divided communities need to develop common goals and a shared vision.

While conscious of the existing physical segregation of housing estates and inner-city areas, the team were surprised at the depth of polarisation of other aspects of daily living, with separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, and social and cultural networks. This separation resulted in people living parallel lives, seeming not to touch at any point.

With so little contact between communities, it was easy to see how ignorance could be exploited by extremists. There was a widespread failure running through most institutions, including voluntary organisations and political parties, to debate the issues raised by polarisation and to find solutions to it. A plethora of community initiatives, with a baffling array of outcomes, boundaries, timescales and other conditions, contributed still further to the divisiveness and perception of unfairness. The promotion of cross-cultural contact and community cohesion was rarely valued as an end in itself.

The team concluded that there was an urgent need to promote community cohesion and a greater sense of citizenship based on common principles. There should be a well-resourced national debate influenced by younger people, leading to the development of an infrastructure that gave younger people a voice in democratic activity. A more coherent policy, linking education, housing, regeneration, employment, etc, should be based on a new concept of citizenship.

To combat fear and ignorance stemming from a lack of contact, each area should prepare a local community cohesion plan involving the promotion of cross-cultural contact, understanding and respect, and the 'busting' of myths. To ensure action ensues from the report, a new Community Cohesion Task Force is recommended to oversee the development of local community cohesion strategies and the other proposals made - 67 recommendations in all.

The attention of the press has focused on the proposal that church and faith leaders should voluntarily limit the faith intake to independent and state sector schools, by offering at least 25 per cent of places to other faith or denominations in order to ensure a better mix of cultures or ethnicities.

Should race equality councils and partnerships be concerned about their local community's cohesion? The issue is, at least, worthy of consideration. Community cohesion is not an absolute, but a matter of degree, with inter-communal relations always capable of review and reaffirmation.

Race equality councils and partnerships have an important role to play in any local plan to improve community cohesion, and in the preparation of a communication strategy to enable the plan to be articulated, updated and translated into action. They are well placed to analyse the separation of ethnic communities, to tackle the problem of mono-cultural community facilities, and to develop new means of access to culturally-exclusive institutions.

8 RACE EQUALITY COUNCILS AND THE STATUTORY DUTY TO PROMOTE RACE EQUALITY

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires public authorities to promote race equality in relation to their policy, service delivery and employment practices. This legislation has the potential to make a fundamental and lasting contribution to race relations.

The public authorities (listed in a schedule to the Act) are expected to fulfil both general and specific duties. The general duty is to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. Specific duties are also placed on many authorities to make special arrangements to help them meet their general duty.

The CRE has produced a draft code of practice with statutory force. This means that it is accepted as evidence in legal action and taken into account in courts and tribunals, although on its own, it does not impose legal obligations.

Various practical steps need to be taken to meet the general duty. Race equality will be more relevant to the performance of some public functions (eg raising educational standards) than to others (eg highway maintenance). Public authorities need to identify which functions are relevant to the duty, set priorities based on the relevance to race equality of the functions, assess how the relevant functions affect race equality and consider how policies might be changed, where necessary, to meet the general duty.

A requirement is placed on public authorities under the Race Relations Act (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 to produce a Race Equality Scheme (RES). Public Authorities must set out:

- the functions, policies and proposals that are relevant to the performance of their general duty to promote race equality,
- their arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of their proposed policies,
- their arrangements for monitoring their policies for any adverse impact on race equality,
- their arrangements for publishing the results of any assessments, and the consultations and monitoring that they do to identify any adverse impact on race equality,
- their arrangements for making sure that the public has access to the information and services they provide,
- their arrangements for training their staff in connection with general and specific duties.

Most public authorities have to meet specific duties in relation to employment, although education institutions have their own separate employment responsibilities.

Public authorities must monitor by racial group the number of staff in post and applications for employment, training and promotion. Where more than 150 full-time staff are employed, training, performance assessment procedures, and cases of grievance, discipline, and of staff leaving employment, must also be monitored. Monitoring outcomes have to be published on an annual basis.

The Commission for Racial Equality has the legal responsibility for enforcing the specific duty, while race equality councils and partnerships have an important role to play in making these measures effective. They may offer advice and guidance to public authorities operating in their area of benefit. They should expect to be consulted on the impact of authorities' functions and policies. They have a function in scrutinising and monitoring race equality schemes for any adverse impact on race equality. But they have no statutory power to enforce the act's provisions and should avoid publicly validating or legitimising the schemes of others. Should public authorities feel the need for advice on preparing their Race Equality Scheme, they should contact their local race equality council.

REWM, for its part, has a role to play in relation to regional and subregional public authorities. REWM should help local race equality councils undertake the monitoring of race equality schemes, for example, by developing a checklist or template for identifying strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it should undertake research on the effectiveness of the drive to promote racial equality and in an effort to highlight successful practice.

9 SUPPORTING CORE STANDARDS

From 1999 to 2002, West Midland race equality councils and partnerships worked to implement the Commission for Racial Equality's core standards. In 1997, the KPMG's report *A Fundamental Review of the Public Service Role of Racial Equality Councils* recommended that national standards be developed to underpin the funding relationship between the CRE and the race equality councils.

The CRE initially chose PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations) as the basis for its standard. It had been designed to enable agencies to assess their own development and to decide which of three levels of achievement they wished to work towards. The first edition of the CRE core standards was very closely based on the first edition of PQASSO, which had 16 quality areas. To these were added a further four standards relating to race equality councils' four modes of operation: race-specific casework, policy, community development and public awareness.

For small voluntary organisations the process of achieving compliance with the standards was a formidable challenge, particularly as the standards had yet to be customised to the councils' specific functions which had been treated simply as an add-on element. Nevertheless, by April 2001, the majority of West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships had achieved full compliance to second level with the CRE-designated first tranche of standards; namely, user centred services, the executive committee, management, financial management, administration, staffing and equal opportunities (seven standards in all).

Recognising that race equality councils were experiencing difficulties in applying the PQASSO-derived standards directly to their work, the CRE commissioned the Resolve Consortium to work with the RECs to revise the package so that it was tailored more closely to REC needs. Race Equality West Midlands met with Resolve and worked closely with its officers on measures to implement and customise the core standards in the REC context.

The second edition of the standards took into account new legislation and the Government's Best Value framework and was designed to help users know what level of service they could expect from a REC. There are now 17 core standards in all, with three of the former standards merged and certain detail reallocated to eliminate duplication. The second edition was launched in October 2001, following extensive consultation with a new CRE/REC Joint Consultative Forum, now Joint Working Group, on which Race Equality West Midlands is represented.

Councils reviewed and revised the initial seven standards and introduced a second tranche which had to be in place as a condition for continued CRE funding by 31 March 2002.

Race Equality West Midlands has produced policies, procedures and evidence required to support the three standards scheduled for installation by March 2002. These were: Commitment to Quality, Monitoring, Evaluation and Complaints and Planning Service Provision.

The next deadline is September 2002, when RECs will have to demonstrate that they have achieved all the changes to the first and second tranches proposed in the second edition (that is: (1) commitment to quality; (2) equal opportunities; (3) user-centred services; (4) monitoring evaluation and complaints; (16) the governing body; (7) management; (8) staffing; (10) financial planning and management; (11) administration; (13) planning service provision). In addition, the following two standards relating to race equality council core work: (14) race-specific casework and (17) policy development must be implemented. Race Equality West Midlands has prepared a handbook of specimen procedures which RECs can customise to their own local needs.

In the case of race specific casework, the achievement of this standard should enable councils to comply with the Legal Services Commission kite mark at the same time as meeting the CRE requirement. The kite mark will be important if councils wish to deliver a high quality of legal representation. Where policy development is concerned, the standard will demonstrate a council's preparedness to help public authorities with their new duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.

The remaining third and final tranche of standards has to be implemented by September 2003. These are: (5) training and development; (9) managing resources; (12) volunteers; (15) community development and (16) public awareness and education.

**WEST MIDLAND RACE EQUALITY FORUM MEMBERS
AT PROJECT INCEPTION, 1999**

Mr Waqar Azmi, Worcester Racial Equality Council
Mr Praveen Bedi, Coventry Racial Equality Council
Mr Inderjit Dehal, Birmingham All Different All Equal Race Equality Partnership
Mrs Rajvinder Dhindsa, Telford and Shropshire Race Equality Forum
Mr Arvind Jansari, Rugby Racial Equality Council
Mr Amir Kabal, East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Ms Anita Kumari, Warwick District Racial Equality Council
Mrs Avril Sinclair, Stafford Racial Equality Council
Mr Shaeedul Syed, Sandwell Ethnic Minority Umbrella Forum
Mr Mohammed Tufail, North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Mr Earlston Warner, Wolverhampton Racial Equality Council
(Vacancy), Dudley Racial Equality Council
(Vacancy), Walsall Strategic Race Equality Partnership

AT PROJECT COMPLETION, 2002

Mr Mohammed Aslam, Worcestershire Racial Equality Council
Mr Praveen Bedi, Coventry Racial Equality Council
Mr Amir Kabal, East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Ms Anita Kumari, Warwick District Racial Equality Council
Mr Neville Meredith, Herefordshire Race Equality Partnership
Mr Kenneth Rodney, Dudley Racial Equality Council
Mr William Stevens, Walsall Strategic Race Equality Partnership
Mr Mohammed Tufail, North Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Ms Joy Warmington, Birmingham Race Action Partnership
Ms Joy Warren, Telford and Shropshire Racial Equality Council
Mrs Patricia Wright, Sandwell Ethnic Minority Umbrella Forum
(Vacancy), Rugby Racial Equality Council
(Vacancy), Stafford Racial Equality Council
(Vacancy), Wolverhampton Racial Equality Council

OTHER FORUM MEMBERS AT VARIOUS TIMES

Mr Stuart Anthony, Walsall Strategic Race Equality Partnership
Mr Mohammed Aslam, Rugby Racial Equality Council
Ms Barbara Gardener, Walsall Strategic Race Equality Partnership
Ms Rosie Qureshi, Herefordshire Race Equality Partnership

HONORARY OFFICERS AND PROJECT EMPLOYEES

1999 – 2000

Honorary officers

Chair: Mr Amir Kabal, JP, Director, East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Vice-chair: Mr Earlston Warner, Director, Wolverhampton Racial Equality Council
Secretary: Ms Anita Kumari, Director, Warwick District Racial Equality Council

Employees

Executive director, Mr Waqar Azmi, OBE, Director, Worcestershire Racial Equality Council (until October 2001)
Project director, Dr Tahir Abbas (until January 2001)
Project officer, Dr Frank Reeves
Administrators, Ms Tracey Smith/Mrs Debee Hack
Finance Officer, Mrs Yvonne Parker (part-time)

2001 – 2002

Honorary officers

Chair: Mr Amir Kabal, JP, Director, East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council
Vice-chair: Mr Kenneth Rodney, Director, Dudley Racial Equality Council
Secretary: Mrs Patricia Wright, Director, Sandwell Ethnic Minority Umbrella Forum

Employees

Project director: Dr Frank Reeves
Project officer : Mr Gerald Nembhard (from November 2001)
Administrators: Mrs Debee Hack (until March 2002)
Mrs Margaret Ogden (from May 2002)
Finance Officer: Mrs Yvonne Parker (part-time)

12 WHO'S WHO OF RACE EQUALITY WEST MIDLANDS OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Dr Tahir Abbas was Project Director of Race Equality West Midlands from September 1999 to January 2001 when he left to take up post as a senior research officer at the Home Office. He was actively engaged in research into ethnic minority groups carrying out independent studies for the BBC, Runnymede Trust, Operation Black Vote, the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, and East Birmingham College. From April 1996 to July 1998, he was secretary of the Kashmiri and Pakistani Professionals' Association. From January 1998 to September 1999, he was Research Fellow at the University of Central England Business School, researching ethnic minority businesses and 'break out'. He has degrees from the Universities of London, Birmingham and Warwick. His doctoral thesis was on the educational achievement of South Asians.

Mr Waqar Azmi OBE was the Executive Director of Race Equality West Midlands and of Worcestershire Racial Equality Council until October 2001, when he took up post as National Head of Equality and Diversity, Advertising and Communications, at TMP Worldwide. In 1996, he was awarded an honorary research fellowship by the University College, Worcester and in the 2002 Birthday honours received an OBE for his services to community relations. He was previously head of the Urdu Language Programme Unit at the University of Central Lancashire and lecturer in Southampton Institute, where he was also chair of the Comparative Ethnic Studies Unit. He holds a BA (Hons) and a diploma and has published widely on race and ethnic relations in Britain.

Mrs Debee Hack was Race Equality West Midlands Administrator until March 2002 when she left to pursue a career as a lecturer in business studies. She has an HNC in business studies and possesses a broad range of administrative and management skills, and previously ran her own childcare business. She was educated at Droitwich High School, Worcester Sixth Form College and Worcester College of Technology.

Mr Amir Kabal, JP, has been Honorary Chair of the West Midland Race Equality Forum and Race Equality West Midlands project since 1998. He is also the Director of East Staffordshire Racial Equality Council, a post he has held since June 1993. He is a member of the boards of Staffordshire Careers Service, Burton Community Partnership, and a governor of Burton College of Further Education and of de Ferrers High School, the largest secondary high school in Burton. He has extensive experience of community involvement and of developing and sustaining good working relationships with statutory and voluntary organisations. His astute political advice has been invaluable in sustaining and developing the regional race equality project. He has a Diploma in Race and Community Relations from the University of Liverpool.

Ms Anita Kumari was, until recently, the Honorary Secretary of Race Equality West Midlands. She is a committed anti-racist who has worked in the area of race equality for the last seventeen years. She is Director of Warwick District Racial Equality Council. Previously she worked as Black Women's Adviser to the Inner London Education Authority, as Senior Women's Adviser to the London Borough of Newham and as Director of Hackney Racial Equality Council. She has served on local, regional and national management committees and think-tanks. She is also a free-lance trainer and has undertaken numerous consultancies in the area of equal opportunities and race. She has a degree in Biochemistry and a Diploma in Youth and Community Work.

Mr Gerald Nembhard is Project Officer for REWM and has an extensive background in the voluntary sector. He has previously occupied roles as a Community Development Worker, Regional Fundraiser, Public Relations Manager and Company Secretarial Assistant. Such roles have given him a broad range of skills and experiences to draw on in assisting RECs/REPs. He has chaired and helped to manage organisations as diverse as the West Midlands Charity Trustees Forum and a local residents' association. He has helped a large number of voluntary and community organisations through many issues including charity registration, governance matters and funding.

Mrs Margaret Ogden is Administrator for REWM. From January 1995 to August 1999 she had worked for Worcestershire Racial Equality Council, making the practical arrangements for the appointment of staff to the newly-funded West Midland Race Equality Development Project. She had gone on to work for Worcestershire Social Services Department before returning in May 2002 to the Project. On completion of her high school education in Glasgow, she studied at Hamilton College of Education, gaining a Diploma in Primary Teaching. She taught for four years before relocating to the south and worked in the private sector as an IT trainer for a number of years.

Mrs Yvonne Parker has served as Finance Officer to the Race Equality West Midlands project since inception in September 1999. In Spring 2000 she obtained a Diploma in Computerised Book-keeping to process the Sage Accounts. She runs her own self-employed payroll and accounts business for small voluntary organisations.

Dr Frank Reeves is Project Director of Race Equality West Midlands. He has wide-ranging professional knowledge and experience of community and race relations, business and people development, adult education and training and academic and applied research. He has worked as a Vice-Principal of a large college of further education (where he implemented an equal opportunity policy which raised the proportion of ethnic minority staff to 30 per cent of the work force), as lecturer at the Wolverhampton, Aston and Open Universities, and as research fellow at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick. He has an honours degree in philosophy, a post-graduate teacher certificate, masters degree in education, sociology and business administration and a PhD in race relations.

He has researched and published on race and ethnic relations including *Race and Borough Politics*, *British Racial Discourse* and *West Indians in Business in Britain*.

Mr Kenneth Rodney is Honorary Vice-Chair of Race Equality West Midlands and Director of Dudley Racial Equality Council. He graduated in government and politics from the University of Central England in 1996, has a Certificate in Management Studies, and is currently studying for an MBA. He has spent most of his working life employed in the voluntary sector. He has wide experience of developing community-related projects and of financial management. He has been a school governor for over ten years and is an active member of SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) in Birmingham.

Ms Tracey Smith is Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive and Senior Administrative Officer at Worcestershire Racial Equality Council. Previously she was employed as administrator at Race Equality West Midlands. She has held a supervisory position at W H Smith and was educated at the John Masefield High School, Ledbury, and gained vocational qualifications in business administration with the Herefordshire Group Training Association.

Mr Earlston Warner was Honorary Vice-Chair of Race Equality West Midlands and Director of Wolverhampton Race Equality Council until his retirement in 2001. He has served on the Board of the Wolverhampton Training and Enterprise Council, as governor of two secondary schools, and on the Wolverhampton Council Voluntary Sector sub-committee of the Policy and Resources Committee. He developed what was at that time the largest racial equality council in the West Midlands. He has a BSc (Econ), MSc, and MA, is a member of the Institute of Management and studied at Leeds Polytechnic, Sheffield City Polytechnic and the University of Bath.

Mrs Patricia Wright is Honorary Secretary of Race Equality West Midlands and Director of Sandwell Ethnic Minority Umbrella Forum. She is a member of Regional Action West Midlands, Sandwell Local Strategic Partnership, Sandwell Community Legal Services Forum, and the Sandwell Racial Harassment Interagency Response Group. She graduated with honours in housing studies from the University of Central England, has gained a Certificate in Management Studies and is currently studying for an MBA.

13 PROJECT BUDGET

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	TOTAL
Refurbishment	2,000			2,000
Office Equipment	6,500			6,500
Total Capital Costs	8,500			8,500
Salaries, NI and pension costs	61,612	63,462	65,368	190,422
General running expenses (telephone, post, room hire, insurances etc)	8,000	8,500	9,000	25,500
Producing information, education and promotional materials	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000
Training for staff and volunteers	1,500	1,500	1,500	4,500
Training for beneficiaries	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000
Consultancy and advice	nil	nil	nil	nil
Travel	1,500	2,000	2,500	6,000
Rent	3,000	3,200	3,400	9,600
Heating and lighting	1,000	1,200	1,400	3,600
Recruitment costs	2,500			2,500
Project management	2,500	3,000	3,500	9,000
Annual car allowance	1,500	1,545	1,590	4,635
Total Revenue Costs	90,112	91,407	95,258	276,777
TOTAL CAPITAL AND REVENUE COSTS	98,612	91,407	95,258	285,277

In addition, with the support of the Government Office for the West Midlands, Race Equality West Midlands Project received **£8,250** from the Home Office's Connecting Communities Race Equality Support Programme.