

Public sector

Self-assessment tool



The journey to race equality

Delivering improved services to local communities

Introducing the tool

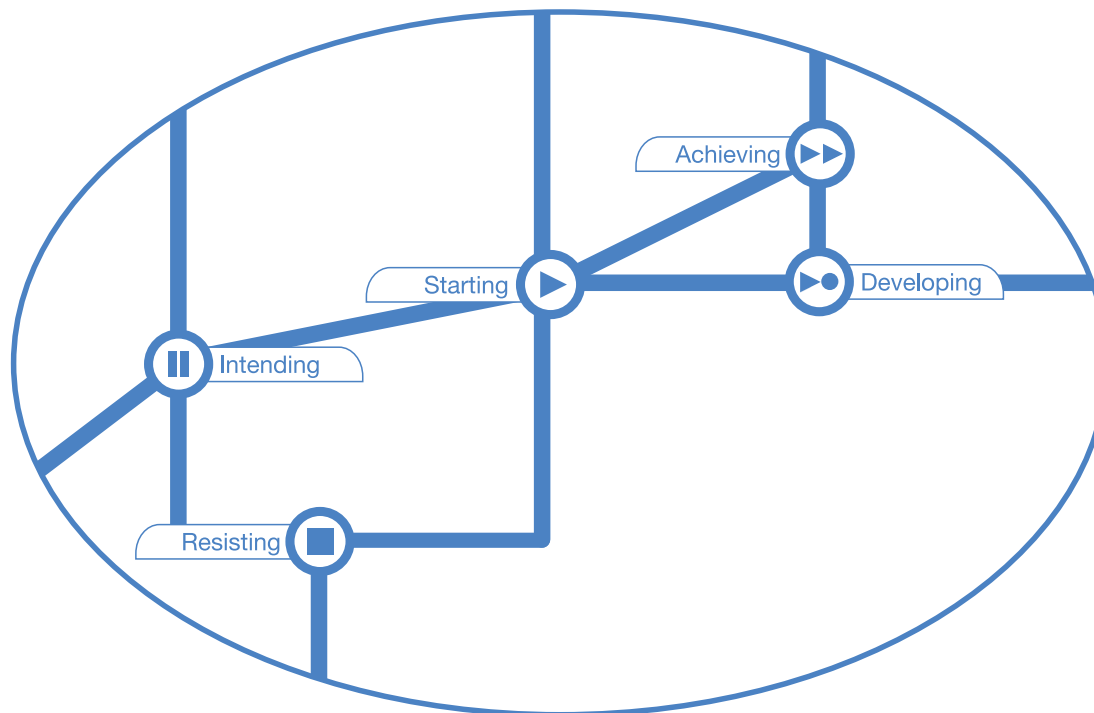
Our report, *The Journey to Race Equality*, sets out a framework for improving public services for black and minority ethnic communities. It helps public sector organisations to assess their current performance in race equality and to identify and challenge the barriers preventing progress. We have developed this self-assessment tool to help you to understand where your organisation is and what you need to do to improve.

The tool explores the five stages of the journey to race equality. It gives examples of what you might expect to see at each stage, identifies the barriers and assumptions that may be preventing progress and highlights the breakthroughs that are most likely to help your organisation move forward.

Exhibit 1

The stages of the journey to race equality

Organisations at the earlier stages must quickly improve by adopting the characteristics of those at the later stages.



Source: Audit Commission analysis

The purpose of the tool is to help you to improve race equality **outcomes**. It is a practical tool, designed to be used at any level of the organisation or across a partnership. It is not a 'tick box' assessment.

We have suggested key breakthroughs to focus on at each stage of the journey, reflecting the areas of change that are most important. Different parts of your organisation are likely to be at different stages of the journey. For example, overall, you might be at *intending* but some departments could be more advanced and be considered as *developing*.

Using the tool

The tool can be used flexibly and adapted to suit your particular needs. You might want to add details to the descriptions of each stage to make them 'live' in your organisation. You might decide to concentrate on improving one or two problem areas to help you prioritise what action to take.

You will need to think through how best to use the tool in your organisation. A good starting point might be to use it with your race equality steering group, or equivalent. We recommend that the management team and key members and non-executive directors are fully involved. This will help to ensure that they are signed up to implementing the action plan.

You will get maximum benefit from the tool if you use it in an environment where everyone feels comfortable about being open and honest. It can be helpful to have a workshop session with a facilitator for this. A possible workshop format could be:

1. Explain the tool and make sure that everyone understands its purpose.
2. Start by thinking about the progress that your organisation has made in improving local outcomes using the framework on page 4.
3. As individuals, assess what stage your organisation is at, noting real behaviours and outcome improvements to support your assessment.
4. In discussion, you may be able to reach a consensus about what stage your organisation is at. Equally, there may be some important and useful differences of perspective. Exploring participants' examples and evidence openly will enhance both the quality of discussion and your eventual assessment.
5. Agree what stage you would like your organisation to get to and the key actions needed to get there. Think about the barriers and assumptions that you need to challenge and about how you can build on your existing strengths. Note the actions, who will be responsible for making them happen and when they should be done by.
6. Agree when to re-assess your organisation.

It is not necessary to have read the report *Journey to Race Equality* before using the tool, although if some participants have done so it may add depth to your self-assessment. Referring to it will also help with your action planning, for example, by seeing what other organisations have done. Additional sources of advice and guidance are listed on pages 16 and 17.

Assessing progress on outcomes

Before assessing where you are on the journey to race equality, you should check how clear you are about the outcomes that you are aiming to improve. Ask yourselves the following key questions:

Do we know where the main areas of inequality for our organisation and local community are?

Are we confident that local black and minority ethnic communities and our staff would identify the same areas?

Have we defined what race equality means for our organisation in terms of tangible outcomes?

Are we able to provide robust evidence to demonstrate how outcomes are improving?

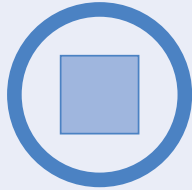
If the answer to any of these is 'no', then it would be unrealistic to assess your organisation as beyond the 'starting' stage overall. As you work through the tool, your action planning should prioritise activities that will create a picture of local inequalities and a vision for how these will improve over time. You can use the framework opposite to keep a record of the outcomes you have identified and how you will know they have changed.

A good starting point is to begin a dialogue with your staff and black and minority ethnic communities – what are biggest issues for them? If you are struggling to identify people to talk to, be imaginative in reaching the community (for example, visiting local businesses and any existing groups) and remember that staff at all levels (both those from black and minority ethnic groups and white British staff) will have relevant experiences and ideas to contribute.

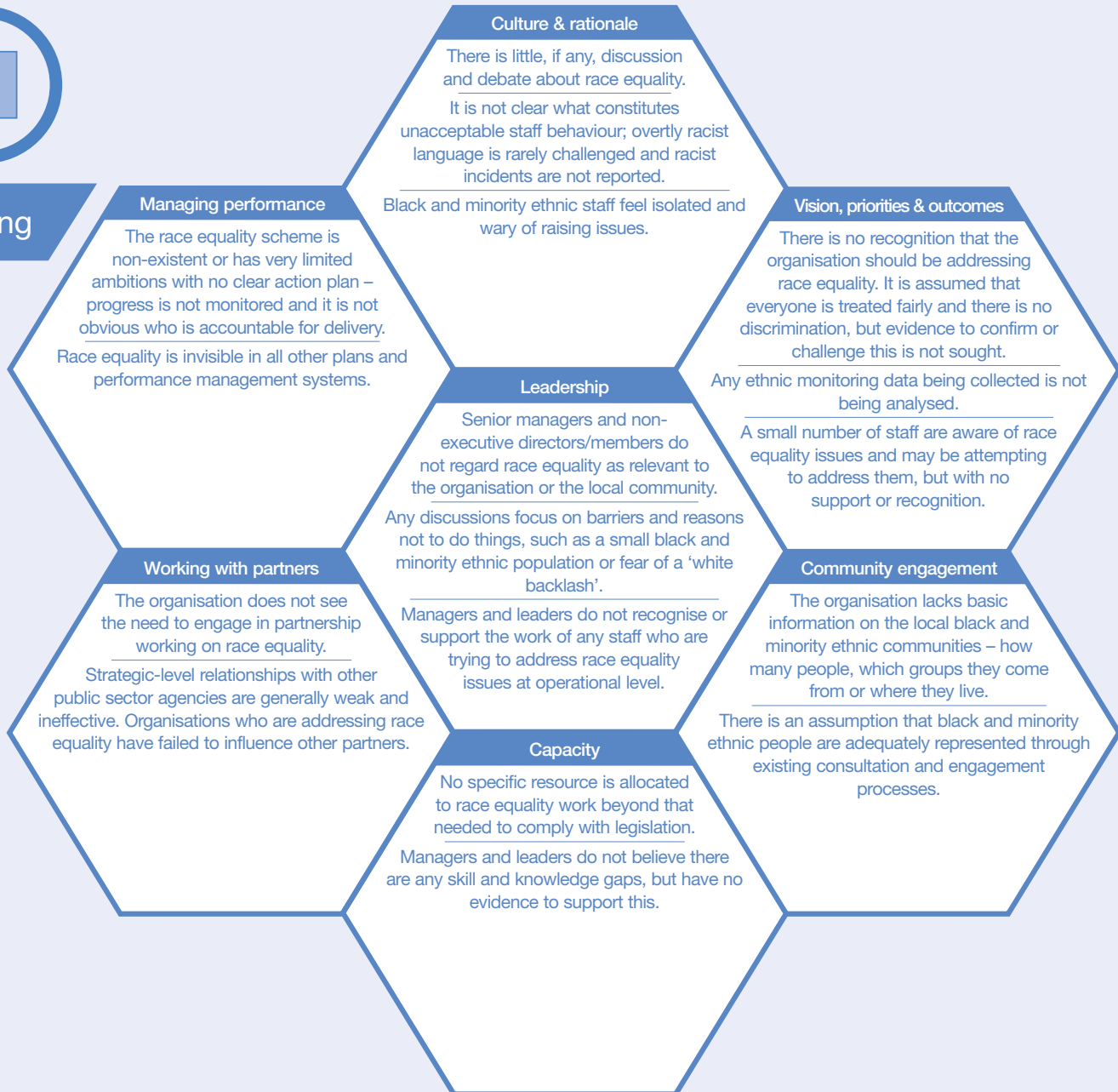
Once you have started to identify and improve outcomes, you can use the framework to map them to the key outcome areas and use any gaps to help you to focus further activity.

Wherever you are on the journey, it is vital to focus on improving outcomes. Objectives do not have to be set in stone and can be revised as you gather more information. It is usually wise not to try changing everything at once; taking action on one or two issues will get the ball rolling and have a knock-on effect.

	Local objective/s	How do we know this is an issue? How will we know we've improved?
Service outcomes		
Community-wide trust and confidence		
Positive community relations		
Access to services and information		
Influence over decision making		
Employment		



Resisting



Barriers to watch out for

- The assumption that race equality has little significance to the organisation's staff or to the community it serves.
- Fears that it will be difficult and uncomfortable to talk to staff about race equality – those from black and minority ethnic communities might not want to be singled out and there might be a 'backlash' from others.

Breakthrough points

- **Culture & rationale:** Think about how and why race equality is relevant to the organisation. Think about the ways in which addressing race equality issues will improve services overall. Use this 'rationale' to start challenging assumptions that race equality is unimportant.
- **Leadership:** Talk to staff, members and non-executive directors – what issues are they aware of and how would they tackle them? Provide a safe environment for black and minority ethnic groups to discuss issues.

Strengths to build on:

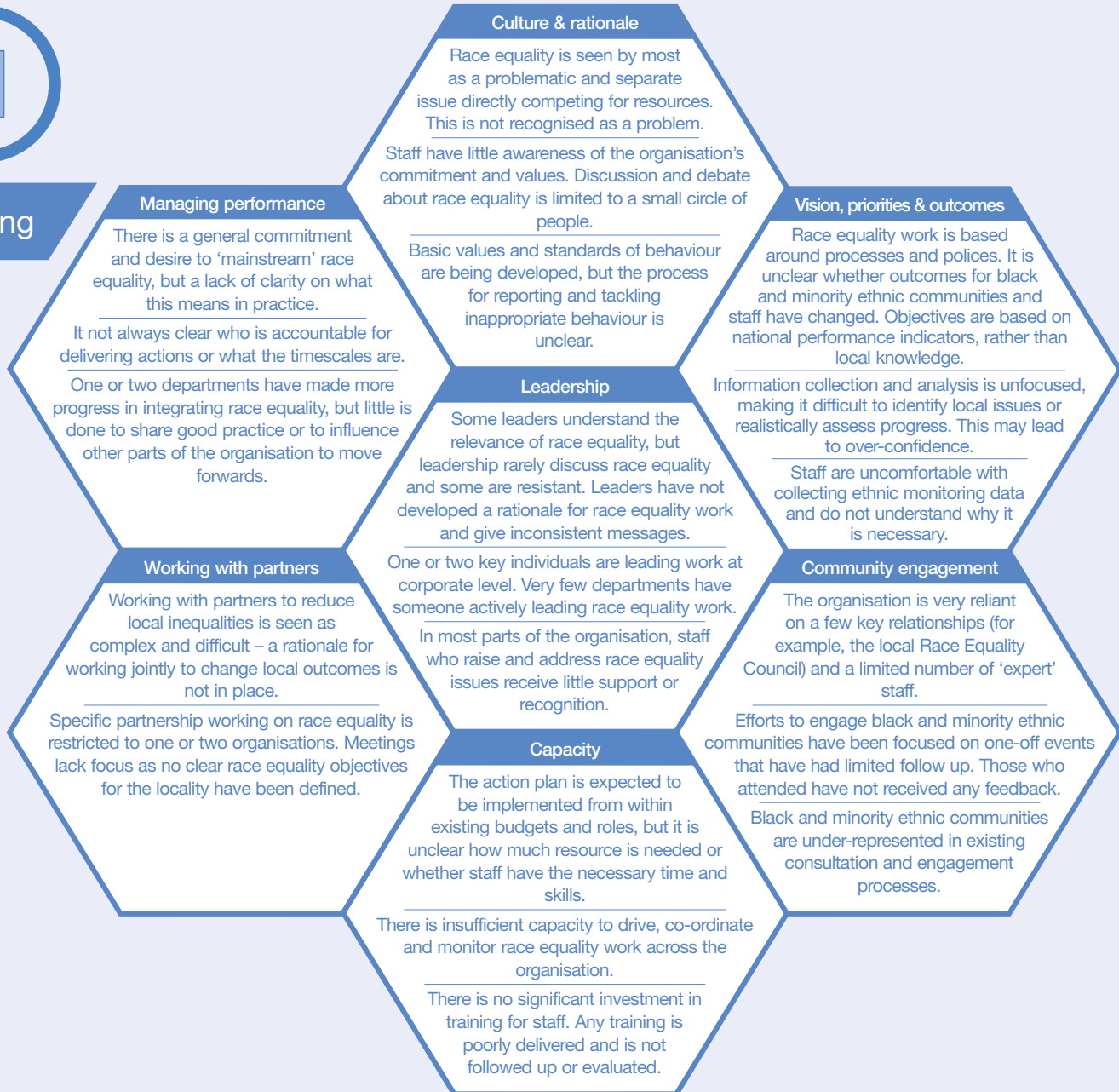
Areas to develop:

Over the next six months we will:

Action	Who	By when
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Intending



Barriers to watch out for

- Race equality being regarded as a low priority that does not merit significant resources. The need to meet national targets is used as a rationale for avoiding activity.
- Discomfort in engaging black and minority ethnic communities based on fears about alienating those who are 'missed', having to deal with racist remarks and fear of a 'white backlash'.

Breakthrough points

- **Vision, priorities & outcomes:** Create an early vision that is based on existing information, even if it's not perfect. Start talking with staff, members and non-executive directors and the local community about what needs to change.
- **Leadership:** Demonstrate the senior management, member and non-executive director commitment to staff and local communities (and other, less committed leaders) by communicating the message that delivering race equality benefits everyone.

Strengths to build on:

Areas to develop:

Over the next six months we will:

Action

Who

By when



Starting



Barriers to watch out for

- Confusion about what mainstreaming means, leading to a reluctance to allocate specific resources to race equality work, limiting capacity and progress.
- Difficulty engaging beyond community 'leaders' and reaching all black and minority ethnic communities.

Breakthrough points

- **Vision, priorities & outcomes:** Develop a more detailed vision that is based on changing specific outcomes and set local targets for these.
- **Leadership:** Recognise and support potential 'champions' within the organisation to drive the work and share their expertise (among members and non-executive directors, as well as staff).
- **Community engagement:** Develop the trust and confidence of community groups and contribute to building their capacity.

Strengths to build on:

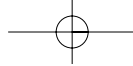
Areas to develop:

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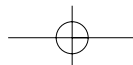
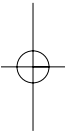
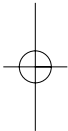
Action

Who

By when



Developing



Barriers to watch out for

- Local partnerships not working effectively enough to significantly reduce inequalities, which all partners have an influence over.
- Insufficient capacity to achieve race equality objectives – perhaps because it is seen to compete with other priorities, or the benefit of investing is not fully understood throughout the organisation (for example, the relationship between achieving race equality objectives and meeting other targets).

Breakthrough points

- **Capacity:** Ensure that there is sufficient capacity to achieve race equality objectives by:
 - identifying the skills and knowledge needed by staff and non-executive directors and members; and
 - accurately costing race equality work, drawing out benefits of investing in it.
- **Leadership:** Give race equality sufficient priority and allocate the necessary resources.
- **Working with partners:** Jointly develop a strategic vision for the whole community. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner in achieving it.

Strengths to build on:

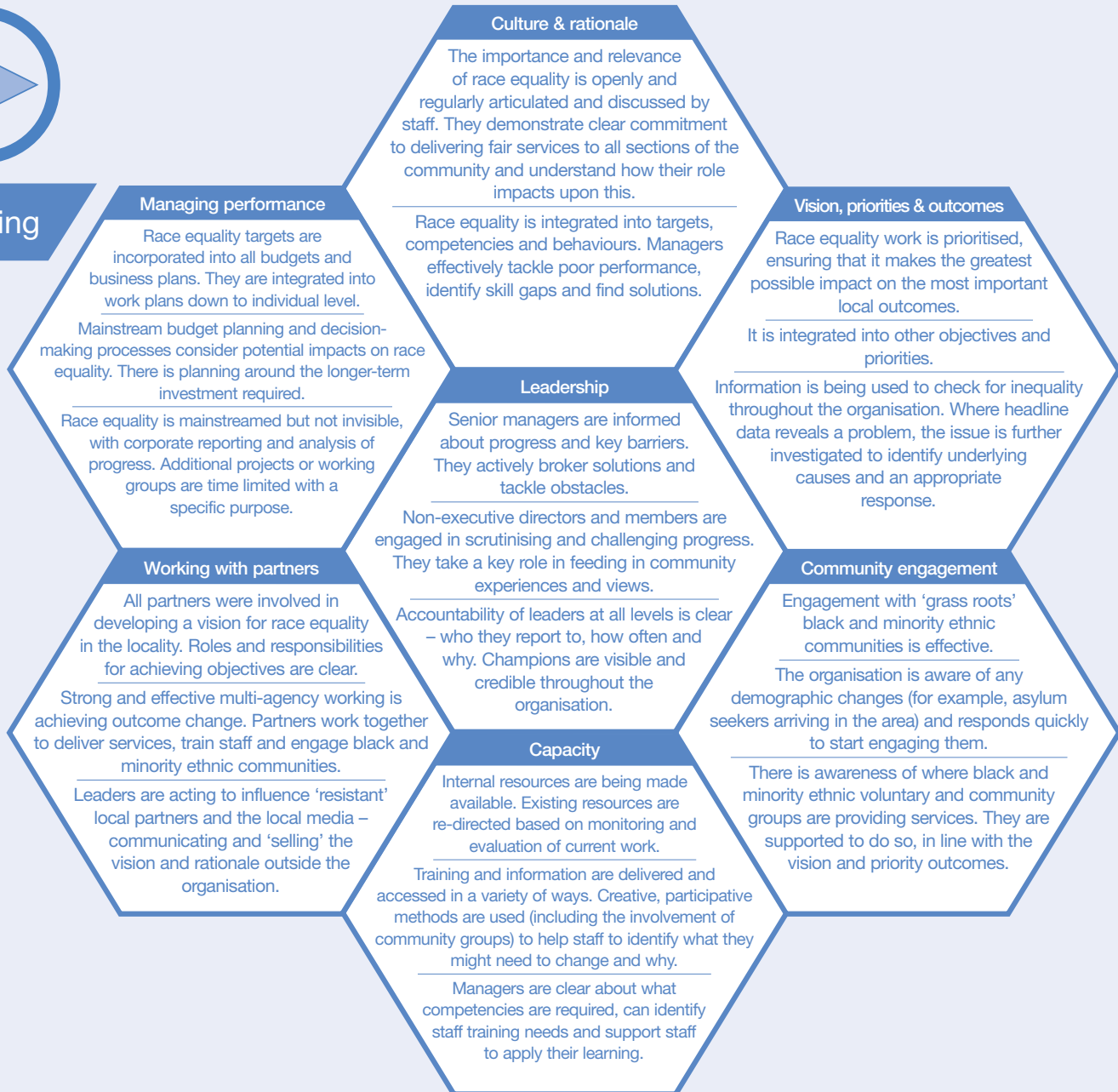
Areas to develop:

Over the next six months we will:

Action	Who	By when
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Achieving



Barriers to watch out for

- There is no need to explicitly address race equality or review progress because it is fully mainstreamed.

Breakthrough points

- **Vision, priorities & outcomes:** Use the reviewing and reporting process to ensure that priorities and objectives continue to reflect local issues.
- **Managing performance:** Ensure that race equality work is not 'buried' by regularly reviewing progress on changing outcomes.
- **Leadership:** Act as a 'thought leader' for the local area and beyond, sharing the organisation's knowledge and experience to influence other public sector organisations, the media and wider community.

Strengths to build on:

Areas to develop:

Over the next six months we will:

Action	Who	By when
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Further advice and guidance

This is not an exhaustive list, but provides some good starting points.

Audit Commission reports (available at www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

The Journey to Race Equality: Delivering Improved Services to Local Communities
(www.audit-commission.gov.uk/raceequality)

Equality and Diversity: Learning from Audit, Inspection and Research

Directions in Diversity: Current Opinion and Good Practice
(summarises current opinion on diversity)

Connecting with Users and Citizens

Change Here! Managing to Improve Local Services

Performance Breakthroughs: Improving Performance in Public Sector Organisations
(approaches to managing performance)

General

Commission for Racial Equality
(www.cre.gov.uk)

Home Office: community and race
(www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace)

National Statistics – race and ethnicity data for your area
(www.statistics.gov.uk)

RaceActionNet – network bringing together expertise and experience in tackling racial harassment and racist attacks – membership required for full access
(www.raceactionnet.co.uk)

BMESpark – network bringing together expertise and experience in responding to the needs and concerns of black and minority ethnic communities – membership required for full access
(www.bmespark.org.uk)

Health

Department of Health race equality page
(www.doh.gov.uk/race_equality)

Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees Portal – resources for healthcare staff working with refugees and asylum seekers
(www.harpweb.org.uk)

Local government

Local Government Association
(www.lga.gov.uk)

Welsh Local Government Association
(www.wlga.gov.uk)

Improvement and Development Agency
(www.idea.gov.uk)

Employers Organisation – DIALOG (Diversity in Action in Local Government)
(www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity)

Library of local performance indicators
(www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance)

Police

Association of Police Authorities
(www.apa.police.uk)

Association of Chief Police Officers
(www.acpo.police.uk)

Voluntary sector

Ourpartnership.org.uk – focuses on partnership working between voluntary groups and public sector organisations
(www.ourpartnership.org.uk)

Refugee Council – advice and guidance for refugees and asylum seekers and those working with them
(www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

Runnymede Trust – policy research and advice on how best to promote the value of diversity
(www.runnymedetrust.org)

To order further copies of this **self-assessment tool** (priced £10 for a pack of five), or the accompanying **national report** (priced £15), please contact:

Audit Commission Publications,
PO Box 99, Wetherby,
LS23 7JA
Tel: 0800 502030.

In addition you can order a four-page **briefing** and a one-page **summary**, both of which are free.

These are also available on our website at:
www.audit-commission.gov.uk

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