

**TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COUNCIL STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY
COHESION
19 NOVEMBER 2014**

**EQUALITY SCHEME 2012-16
IMPACT REPORT 2013-14
Director of Corporate Services**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve for publication the Bracknell Forest “All of Us” Equality Scheme 2012-16 Making a difference: assessing the scheme’s impact 2013-14.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Equality Scheme Impact Report 2013-14 and Action Plan attached at Annex A and Annex B respectively be approved for publication**
- 2.2 **That progress in implementing the Council’s “All of Us” Equality Scheme 2012-16 be noted.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Council is committed to reviewing its performance on implementing its Equality Scheme annually. This impact report highlights and reviews progress made implementing the second year of the scheme during 2013-14.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations between people. Therefore no alternative options have been considered.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 5.1 Bracknell Forest Council is required in the Coalition Government’s Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty regulations to publish equality objectives. In order to meet these duties the Council developed a Single Equality Scheme in 2012, which replaced the existing three Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes and the Council’s ‘All of Us’ Community Cohesion Strategy; moving from having four action plans to one. The scheme which was published in April 2012 highlights our equality objectives, including those to promote good community relations. Through the development of an action plan the Council ensures that the objectives are achievable, measurable and outcome focussed; particularly given the current financial climate and there being no additional resources to implement the Equality Scheme.

Equality Scheme 2012-16

- 5.2 The scheme is a result of extensive consultation with our partners and communities and highlights the key inequality issues that Bracknell Forest is likely to face over the four years. The scheme has a set of objectives which sets out how we will go about tackling these issues. Its action plan describes in detail how we have delivered these objectives in practice – and how we know and show we have done so.

- 5.3 The Impact Report and Action Plan, attached at Annex A and B respectively, summarise the action we have taken to address our equality objectives and the impact we have made during 2013-14. Much of this work has been carried out in partnership and we acknowledge how important working with our partners is to addressing the objectives in the equality scheme.
- 5.4 The Council has been successful in implementing the strategy during its lifespan, working with our partners and achieved its aims. This is clear from the key performance measures against which the success of the strategy is being judged, namely:
- 73 of the 103 key actions in the Equality Scheme action plan have been started and are on schedule
 - 25 have been completed within the allocated timescale
 - 3 actions have been identified as amber (may fall behind schedule) and
 - 2 actions have been identified as red (action behind schedule).
- 5.5 Annex B details the progress to date on each key task in the action plan but a detailed explanation of the background behind the two red actions are set out below.

5.1 Work with partners to reduce overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse:

There has been a rise in the repeats rate from last year due to work done by the Domestic Abuse Service Coordination (DASC) project to encourage reporting. Work has been done to reduce reporting in a small number of persistent cases it is hoped will have a positive effect on future numbers.

5.2 Increase the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults with injury.

The target rate of 50% has not been met although the TVP target of 45% has been reached (46.8%). Difficulties in encouraging witnesses to give evidence in court are part of the reason and the number of violent assaults has reduced substantially over the year. The Community Safety Partnership is committed to achieving the target of 50%.

- 5.6 The Council's performance is also measured through testing residents' perceptions and the findings of the 2012 Residents Survey should be noted:
- 87% of Bracknell Forest residents surveyed believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the borough, a significant improvement on the findings of the 2008 Place Survey which was 82%.
 - The majority of residents 78% felt that there was little problem with people not treating each other with respect within their local area; a minority of residents 14% considered this to be a problem. This was a significant improvement over the 30% who found this to be a problem in the 2008 Place Survey.

The outcomes of the 2014 Residents' survey are not available at the time of writing this report but updated data will be available for next year's report.

Conclusion

- 5.6 The Council has been very successful implementing the strategy as can be seen from the attached impact report highlighting successes. In March 2014 the Council was successfully re-accredited by the Local Government Association (LGA) to confirm that it continues to meet the achieving level of the Equality Framework, which helps local authorities improve their performance on equality and diversity. An action plan has now been developed to respond to a number of recommendations made within the Peer Report to consolidate the Council's "achieving" status and confirms that the Council continues to work towards reducing inequality.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Nothing to add.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The action plan is being delivered from existing budgets.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 The Council's Equalities Group

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 By email and in meetings

Representations Received

- 7.3 Included in this report

Background Papers

Annex A – 'All of Us' Equality Scheme Making a difference: assessing the scheme's impact 2013-14

Annex B - 'All of Us' Equality Scheme 2012–2016 Action Plan Monitoring 2013 - 14

Contact for further information

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