

TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
DATE: Thursday 19 November

---

**‘ALL OF US’ COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY  
AND EQUALITY SCHEMES ANNUAL REPORT 2008-09  
(Director of Corporate Services)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The *‘All of Us’ Community Cohesion Strategy and Equality Schemes Monitoring Annual Progress Report for 2008-09* reports progress against the Council’s Community Cohesion Strategy 2008/09–2011/12 during its first year of implementation and progress against our Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes in 2008/09. The report includes detailed performance monitoring information against the action plans and examples of success stories of promoting community cohesion and equality of opportunity in Bracknell Forest. The Equality Framework; the new IDeA Local Government performance framework for equalities, launched in April 2009, reinforces the important role overview and scrutiny processes have in reviewing equality impacts and objectives.

**2 SUGGESTED ACTION**

- 2.1 **The Commission is asked to note Appendix One the ‘All of Us’ Community Cohesion Strategy and Equality Schemes Monitoring Annual Progress Report for 2008-09.**

**3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Annual Report summarises the progress made during 2008-09 in implementing Bracknell Forest Council’s “All of Us” Corporate Strategy for promoting Community Cohesion 2008/09 – 2011/12; our second community cohesion strategy approved by the Executive in April 2008.
- 3.2 The report also summarises the progress made during 2008-09 in promoting equality of opportunity through implementing the Council’s Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. The Equality Schemes detail how the Council is meeting its general and specific duties under various equalities legislation to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between different people.
- 3.3 The Council works very closely with partners including; the voluntary sector, the Police, East Berkshire PCT, Bracknell Forest Homes, the Parish and Town Councils and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people in the borough. The Partnership’s Community Cohesion and Engagement Working Group oversee and monitor the delivery of the strategy.
- 3.4 The Council published its first Disability Equality Scheme in 2006. Our Disability Equality Scheme 2006 -09 is now reaching the end of its lifespan and this report is the final annual report on the scheme. The Council published its first Gender Equality Scheme in December 2007; this is the first annual report on the scheme. The Council published its second Race Equality Scheme 2008- 2011 in April 2008 and therefore this is also the first annual report on the progress made implementing

this scheme. All of the schemes were approved by the Executive and it was agreed that annual reports would be submitted to members detailing progress to date.

#### Performance results

- 3.5 The Council has made considerable progress in implementing “All of Us”. This is evident in the two key performance measures against which the success of the strategy will be judged, namely: 86 of the 88 key tasks in our action plan have been completed within their allocated timescale or are ahead of schedule during 2008-09.
- 3.6 The major performance indicator by which the Council measures its progress in Community Cohesion is “the percentage of people who feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together”. This has been measured by survey in 2003 and 2006 and those agreeing with this statement increased significantly from 66% in 2003 to 81% in 2006. In 2008, 82% of people believe people from different backgrounds get on well together; this result is significantly higher than the all England average of 76.4% and helps demonstrate that a high level of community cohesion is being maintained during the economic downturn and while the diversity of the borough has increased significantly.
- 3.7 Members’ attention is also drawn to a sample of case studies of where the Council has successfully applied the principles contained in the Community Cohesion Strategy and Equality Schemes. These case studies are outlined on pages 4 - 8 of Appendix 1
- 3.8 Good progress has also been made in implementing our Equality Schemes. All of the 75 key tasks in the Disability Equality Scheme 2006-09 have been completed, the majority ahead of schedule. All 14 of the Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10 key tasks are completed or on track for completion in their respective timescales. 25 out of the 26 key tasks in the Race Equality Scheme 2008-11 action plan are completed or on track for completion in their respective timescales.
- 3.9 In light of this progress the Council is well placed to build on its achievements and to move the Community Cohesion and Equalities agenda forward through the further implementation of the All of Us implementation plan and the Equality Scheme Action Plans in 2009-10.

#### Key Pieces of Work in the Last Twelve Months

- 3.10 During 2008-09 new Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and a training programme were delivered for staff. Equality Impact Assessments were completed on the Council’s major services and functions. Equality and Diversity Training was delivered to members and staff. The Council’s Equality Group made significant progress in moving the Council to Level Three of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

#### Where do we go in the future?

- 3.11 In developing our community cohesion and equalities work there are a number of opportunities and challenges for future years. The demographics of the borough continue to change, increasing diversity. The recession is placing financial and other pressures on our communities and has the potential to threaten good relations and increase tensions between people. To date, we have not witnessed any increase in community tension but we must continue to monitor this carefully.

- 3.12 During 2009-10 the Council will be migrating from working on the Equality Standard over to working on the new Equality Framework for Local Government; which provides the opportunity for increased partnership working on tackling inequalities. Forthcoming changes in equality legislation proposed in the Equality Bill present opportunities in relation to streamlining equality legislation and enabling the Council to work more flexibly to reduce inequality locally.
- 3.13 The Council will be working on developing a Single Equality Scheme in 2010-11 to respond to the legislative changes, which will replace our existing Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes. The scheme will outline our priorities and action to promote equality of opportunity across the six equality strands; age, gender, religion and belief, disability, race and sexual orientation, as well as for any other new protected groups. In developing the scheme we will need to ensure that we engage effectively with all parts of our community and focus our limited resources carefully.

#### Background Papers

'All of Us' in Bracknell Forest – A Corporate Strategy for Promoting Community Cohesion 2008/09- 2010/11 and Equality Schemes Monitoring Annual Progress Report Autumn 2009.

Detailed Action Plans with annotated progress are available on the following page:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/your-council/yc-community-cohesion.htm>

#### Contact for further information

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services  
01344 355603  
alison.sanders@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Abby Thomas, Principal Policy Officer Community Engagement and Equalities  
01344 353307  
abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk