

# “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



If you would like a copy of this report in large print, in Braille, in another format or translation into other languages please contact Abby Thomas, Corporate Services, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell RG12 1AQ Tel. 01344 353307 [abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

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Copies of the “All of Us” Community Cohesion Strategy and our Equality Schemes are available on the Your Council/Community Cohesion and Diversity page of the Council's website [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

# 1. Introduction

This 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. "All of Us" is the Council's overarching Equality Strategy. The report also summarises the progress made during 2008-09 in promoting equality through implementing the Council's 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. Working in partnership is crucial to fostering community cohesion and reducing inequalities. The Council works with partners through the Partnership's Community Cohesion and Engagement Working Group to enable the delivery of and monitor our strategies.

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.

The Council has made considerable progress in implementing "All of Us" working with our partners. 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.
- ✓ 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". In 2008 measured by the new Place Survey, 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 demonstrates that a high level of community cohesion is being maintained while the diversity of the borough has increased significantly.

Good progress has also been made in implementing our Equality Schemes. This is demonstrated by:

- ✓ 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.

The case studies on pages 4 – 8 highlight some of the ways in which the Council has successfully implemented the Community Cohesion Strategy and Equality Schemes in 2008-09. 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.

## **2. Community Cohesion and Promoting Equality 2008-09 – Our Successes**

### **Crowthorne Carnival**

There has been a bi-annual community carnival in Crowthorne High Street since 1977. It offers the community a chance to come together and celebrate the businesses, organisations and people in the village. In 2008 Bracknell Forest Council's Arts Development team worked with the Crowthorne Carnival Committee to attract and engage the teen population in the village, a development need addressed by the Crowthorne community. To this end, we employed 'Street Processions' an established carnival arts group, for an intensive month-long project leading to the participation of a group of teens in the 2008 Carnival procession.

'Street Processions' worked with a range of students, from Edgbarrow School and Youth Centre, Young Carers and young people identified and engaged with the assistance of the local Police Community Support Officer. The group met in

June 2008 for three, two hour after school sessions with Street Processions at the Youth Centre. They created sculptural umbrellas; screen printed and customised T-shirts; and created vehicle decorations for the procession. The week before the Carnival day a full day workshop was held in the school hall. In addition to the 'Street Processions' artists, it also included workshops with a DJ, street dancer, and hairdresser. The following week thirteen teens processed in the 2008 Crowthorne Carnival and won their category.



### **The Green Machine**

A new ethical company has been launched to make the borough blooming marvellous. 'Green Machine' was officially launched on Monday, February 16 2009, and will offer a quality gardening and maintenance service to residents and businesses in the area. It also offers employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The company offers a range of services including grass cutting, weeding, shrub and hedge trimming, pruning and garden clearing at a competitive rate. The reliable service will be headed up by a professionally trained landscaper who will oversee

the team of employees some of whom have a disability but want to work and gain training.



## **Supporting New Residents and Pupils and Families with English as an Additional Language**

A 'Welcome to Bracknell Forest Guide' has been produced for anyone new to the borough to help them to access services and participate in the community. This has been translated into six languages including Urdu. An 'Induction and Support Pack for Admitting New Arrivals', was also written by the Council's English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Diversity Team and introduced in two secondary schools. Immediate results

show indications of accelerated progress in language development by pupils. A successful bid was developed to the Migration Impact Fund to deliver further training and support to teachers in using the induction and support pack. Regular monitoring by external advisers from the Department for Children Schools and Families National Strategies Team has highlighted the good support given to EAL pupils.

## **Rights Respecting Schools Award**

The 'Rights Respecting School' Award (RRS) is a scheme that places the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of a school's ethos. The UNCRC is a globally agreed and ratified 'values framework'. In working towards becoming 'Rights Respecting,' a school will follow a bespoke Action Plan format to ensure that leadership, learning and relationships support the articles of the UNCRC. Bracknell Forest became the second authority (one of five pilot authorities) in the country where it was introduced.

In 2008-09 with the programme in its second year, head teachers and school staff in our schools have seen its potential for affecting relationships, attitudes, behaviour and achievement. There has been a positive impact on children's self-esteem and it leads to greater pupil participation and pupil voice in school matters. Any school in Bracknell can sign up to the RRS award scheme and gain access to support and training. So far, 21

Primary and 2 Secondary schools have signed up to the scheme with 6 achieving the Level 1 Award.



## **Working with the Nepalese Community**

The Council worked with the Runnymede Trust in 2008 to support their research into the Nepalese in Britain. A number of meetings were

organised to enable local Nepalese community members to contribute to the research, which is a part of a series of studies on the growing

complexity of diversity in Britain. The Runnymede Trust research report *Soldiers, Migrants and Citizens – The Nepalese in Britain* was published in August 2008 and has helped the Council in profiling the community and strengthening relationships with the Nepalese in Sandhurst.

Early in 2009 a Nepalese Community Support worker was appointed by the Council, jointly funded by the Council, Thames Valley Police and East Berkshire Primary Care Trust, to focus on working with children and families from the Nepalese community. The aim of their work is to help further support the integration of the Nepalese community in Sandhurst and build on the existing strengths within the

community by providing information, advice and guidance to make life easier in the UK. Thus ensuring that the community has information about the Council and its partners and how to access the services we provide.



### **Information for Carers**

Bracknell Forest Council recognises that many of its employees combine work with caring responsibilities – for children, older relatives or other dependents. Many of our policies are designed to allow flexibility in the workplace which may help individuals to juggle their responsibilities at work and home.

Whilst Bracknell Forest had a number of separate policies on issues of interest to employees who were carers, it was felt that the carers would benefit from being able to access the information they might need more readily. It would also signal the Council's supportive attitude towards those who combine work with caring responsibilities.

A new document was therefore added to our Employee Support page on our intranet which signposted carers to policies that might assist them – including the right to ask for flexible working (extended this year in line with new legislation); time off for dependents; the flexitime scheme; guidance on flexible working; paternity leave; parental leave; and adoption leave.

We added information on our staff support scheme for those who might be finding their caring responsibilities stressful and contact information that would allow them to investigate childcare options for children and other useful information.

### **Dance and Older People's Project**

The project aimed to create open and accessible dance provision for older people in the Borough and to attract interested individuals, including those not accessing other services for older people. This approach was ambitious and far more challenging than running the project within an established group

setting, such as a day centre, sheltered accommodation or residential home.

The project began with the delivery of 10 taster sessions across the Borough. These sessions included targeted workshops at day centres and

nursing homes as well as open access workshops that were widely publicised through direct mailings and networks such as Age Concern; 48 older people took part. A regular class has been running since 2007 involving over 30 people aged from 50 to late 70s. In 2009 5 members felt confident enough to perform at Lift Off Dance Festival and in September 2009 the class will transfer over to South Hill Park Arts Centre and be run as part of their Do It! Programme of regular classes. This project was organised in partnership with South Hill Park Arts Centre with additional funding from Arts Council England.

When asked to expand on their reasons for joining the group, most of the participants made comments that related to a social need:



*"I needed something to cheer up my life".*

*"To get away from the house".*

*"What I most liked about the project was feeling part of a group".*

### **Library Home Service Volunteers**

Volunteers provide a home delivery service for books and other loan items for residents who cannot reach the borough's libraries. The home delivery service is available to Bracknell Forest residents who cannot visit the borough's nine libraries in person due to health or mobility problems or visual impairments.

The free service is run by 14 volunteers who discuss with customers the books or recordings they are interested in receiving, and return with specific requests or other items they think will be of interest. The customers are visited at the same time every two or three weeks. The volunteers are supported and offered training by the council to help them in their work.

### **Sandhurst Military Academy**



Close links with the Sandhurst Royal Military Academy (RMA) have been

maintained through 2008-09. Work has been undertaken with the Military Academy to support the continued integration of the Nepali community in Sandhurst and to raise awareness of the Nepali community with the wider community.

In early August 2008 the RMA hosted a Kids Combat Challenge event, when 50 children from the Sandhurst community, identified by their schools as needing additional support, took part in a variety of team building events organised by the Academy and

supported by the Council's Extended Services team. The RMA welcomed

the opportunity to further build their links with the local community.

### **Bracknell Railway Station**

A new bridge with a lift and facilities were opened in April 2009 at Bracknell railway station, enabling people with limited mobility and in wheelchairs to access platform 2.

Booking hall disability access improvements are being undertaken in the summer 2009. The Council is also currently making forecourt improvements to the station which will benefit those with limited mobility.

### **Age to Age – Storytelling and Singing Workshops**

Older people from Ladybank Residential Home were invited to work with Storyteller and reminiscence worker Janet Dowling. Janet met with individuals and asked them to tell their own stories about their past. The aim of the workshop is to create a voice for older people and to enable children to listen, learn and create out of these stories songs to sing.

These reminiscences were turned by Janet into stories to be told to children from St Margaret Clitherow School and Birch Hill School. Musician, Roger Watson worked with the pupils during their lunch break and after school to help the children select stories to turn into songs and lyrics. After just 6 sessions, the children had produced 4 original songs which were performed back to the residents at Ladybank in November 2008. A CD was produced of the recording and given to all those who participated and is now on the Heritage On Line website. The project

was supported by the Council's Extended Services Team.



Age to Age also recently took place with Harmans Water School pupils and older residents who use Downside Resource Centre, many of whom are in their 90s. During autumn 2009 the project is running in Crowthorne, working with the Crowthorne Reminiscence Group.

### **3. A Quick Guide to Community Cohesion and Equality**

#### **What is Community Cohesion**

'Community cohesion' put simply is the way in which groups of people get on with one another and support each other. Community cohesion is strongest when everyone has the opportunity, the resources and the motivation to participate in society as fully as they wish and on an equal basis with others. So a lack of community cohesion occurs when people are prevented from participating or feel alienated. We acknowledge that everyone is different, with differing needs; however everyone should have the same or similar opportunities. Community cohesion as a term and concept arose from the Cattle Report following the riots in Oldham and Burnley in summer 2001.

#### **Why is Community Cohesion important?**

Because community cohesion is about recognising four important principles:

- Opportunity: everyone in Bracknell Forest is provided with the similar opportunities
- Accessibility: everyone is able to access opportunities, services and facilities
- Inclusion: no one is excluded from accessing services, facilities or opportunities
- Difference: different groups in the community and different people have different needs and need different levels of services and support in order to have the same opportunities, accessibility and to be included.

Carrying out our business with these four principles in mind is what the Council is there to do. Community Cohesion therefore is a critical part of all that we do, because community cohesion is about understanding and addressing the needs of all of our customers in what is an increasingly diverse population, with different risk factors related to different communities. In doing so the Council and its partners approach to community cohesion will be both meaningful and proportionate.

#### **Equalities Legislation**

In Bracknell Forest, particularly for the Council there are many pieces of legislation around community cohesion issues. Over the last couple of years a number of pieces of equality related legislation came into force. These are the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, and the Equality Act 2006.

All of these pieces of legislation have differing, specific requirements for the Council and have resulted in the production of three Equality Schemes with detailed action plans to coordinate the Council promotion of disability, race and gender equality. However, the Council considers it appropriate and sensible to group these documents together as a 'family' under the umbrella of "All of Us" the overarching Corporate Equality Scheme. In this way we can coordinate our activities and monitor our action to achieve the varying objectives.

## **4. The “All of Us” Community Cohesion Strategy 2008-09-2010-11 – An Executive Summary**

### **4.1 All of Us**

The Council working with its partners published its first “All of Us” corporate community cohesion strategy in 2004, a strategy for achieving community cohesion and ensuring that there is equality of opportunity throughout Bracknell Forest. Community cohesion is already good in Bracknell Forest, as our performance indicators show. In 2003 66% of the public surveyed agreed that Bracknell Forest was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, which rose to 81% in 2006. However if this is to be sustained in the long-term, we cannot afford to be complacent. Following the successful implementation of our first strategy the Council developed “All of Us” 2008/09 – 2011/12, our second corporate strategy for promoting community cohesion. The strategy details exactly what the Council and its partners need to do, with the help of local people, to ensure that community cohesion is strengthened and promoted and to ensure that equality for all in Bracknell Forest.

### **4.2 Objectives**

The strategy has four overall objectives, which are ensuring:

- Everyone has similar life opportunities
- The diversity of people, their circumstances and their communities is respected and valued
- There are positive relationships between people
- Work with people and partners to assist with building and strengthening communities.

### **4.3 Actions**

The strategy is delivered through a detailed three year implementation plan and monitored by Bracknell Forest Partnerships’ Community Cohesion and Engagement Working Group, see Appendix A.

### **4.4 Measures**

We will monitor the success of this strategy by:

- Firstly, monitoring the delivery of our implementation plan
- Secondly, the extent to which our performance improves against a number of national measures of achievement called performance indicators (see Community Cohesion Performance Indicators)
- Thirdly by celebrating some of the improvements and initiatives that have taken place in the community (see Our Successes).

The key indicators we will measure success by will be:

- The proportion of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- The percentage of people that feel they belong to their neighbourhood, a new national indicator

These are both measured nationally by the Place Survey.

## **5. Disability Equality Scheme 2006-09 – An Executive Summary**

### **5.1 The Duty to Promote Disability Equality**

Bracknell Forest Council welcomes the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 with the legal obligation for public authorities to promote disability equality. The Council has adopted the social model of disability as a fundamental principle. It recognises that people are not disadvantaged by their impairments but by the way in which they are discriminated against.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 made it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of his or her disability. It also required organisations to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that a disabled person could take a job, continue to work for an organisation or access services. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the 1995 legislation. It introduced the duty to promote disability equality. The duty to promote disability equality contains two elements – a general duty for all public bodies and a specific duty, which applies to a more limited number of specified public authorities, including Bracknell Forest Council.

The Code of Practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) states that the “overarching goal of the duty is to promote equality of opportunity”. In many cases the disadvantage and discrimination that disabled people experience arise from attitudinal and environmental barriers. The duty to promote disability equality aims to overcome these barriers.

#### **General Duty**

The general duty to promote disability equality places a duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

#### **Specific Duty**

The specific duty requires a designated public authority to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES), setting out how it will fulfil its general and specific duties to promote disability equality. Disabled people must be involved in the development of the Scheme. Bracknell Forest Council published its first Disability Equality Scheme in October 2006,

### **5.2 Aims**

#### **Discrimination Disabled People Face**

Disabled people are discriminated against in a number of different ways. These include:

- Discriminatory attitudes
- A lack of accessible information
- Inaccessible environments

- Employment and services that have not been designed to take account of the needs of disabled people.

A key aim of the Disability Equality Scheme is therefore to ensure that disabled services users and employees do not face discrimination in any of the above capacities.

## **Promoting Disability Equality**

Promoting equality of opportunity for people with disabilities and other people is key to ensuring the success of the Disability Equality Scheme. It is also an essential element of the Council's Community Cohesion Strategy "All of Us". The actions outlined in the Disability Equality Scheme therefore aim to both eliminate negative discrimination towards and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

### **Who Do We Mean by "Disabled People"?**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition of a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disabled people include people with physical and sensory impairments, people with learning difficulties, people experiencing mental and emotional distress.

People with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis (MS) are also covered by this definition of a disabled person from the point of diagnosis, rather than from the point when the condition has some adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The number of people in the Borough who declared themselves as having a limiting long-term illness in the 2001 census was:

12,864 or 12% of the total Borough population.  
6,152 or 9% of the Borough population that are of working age

## **5.3 Goals**

The goals of the Disability Equality Scheme were developed through extensive consultation with disabled service users and employees of the Council. The broad goals of the scheme are to:

1. Adopt the Social Model of Disability
2. Improve the information it has about disabled people and their needs and use this to plan and implement services
3. Improve the ways in which disabled people are involved on its main partnerships and advisory bodies
4. Improve the ways in which disabled people are involved in the designing, planning and running of its services
5. Improve the information it provides about its services in formats that are accessible for disabled people

6. Influence the improvement of the provision of accessible public transport to enable disabled people to use its services
7. Improve internal liaison between departments to provide a consistent, 'joined-up' approach to its services
8. Improve its support for organisations run by and that work with disabled people
9. Improve recruitment and training opportunities for disabled job applicants and employees
10. Identify ways in which the costs of using services can be reduced to increase the participation of disabled people

#### **5.4 Actions and Measurement of Progress**

We turned these ten goals into action through the delivery of a three year Action Plan, see Appendix B. The action plan is monitored by Bracknell Forest Partnerships' Community Cohesion and Engagement Working Group.

We measure the success of this scheme in two ways:

- Firstly, the extent to which we achieved the key tasks and outcomes in the three-year Action Plan.
- Secondly, by celebrating some of the tangible improvements that have been made in the community (see 'Our Successes').

## **6. Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10 – An Executive Summary**

### **6.1 Promoting Gender Equality**

The Council published its first Gender Equality Scheme in April 2007. The Scheme was produced using priorities set by the Council's strategic plans. The Equality Act 2006 created the Gender Equality Duty for the public sector. The Gender Equality Duty has two parts to it, the general duty and the specific duty.

The general duty places a legal duty on the Council to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

To help meet its general duty, the Council has a specific duty to:

- Produce a Gender Equality Scheme - identifying its gender equality goals and actions to meet them, in consultation with employers and other stakeholders
- Monitor and review progress
- Review the Scheme every three years
- Develop, publish and regularly review an equal pay policy, including measures to address promotion, development and occupational segregation
- Conduct and publish gender equality impact assessments of all major policy developments, and publish its criteria for conducting such impact assessments

### **6.2 Aims**

The purpose of the scheme is therefore to:

- Show how the Council will mainstream gender equality in all areas of its work
- Meet and go beyond our legal duties to make gender equality a reality
- Set out our priorities on how we intend to tackle gender inequality, eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

In summary in addition to equal pay our gender equality scheme focuses on:

- Reducing domestic violence and hate crime
- Eliminating sexual and sexist harassment
- Supporting people who have caring responsibilities in the workplace
- Providing services in a way that ensures gender equality and access for all.

### **6.3 Objectives**

While within the borough the proportion of males and females within the population is evenly balanced, a significant majority of the Council's workforce is female 78% compared to male 22%. This pattern has remained stable for a number of years and reflects typical Local Government patterns across the Country. The Council has specific gender equality objectives as an employer and also as a service provider.

These objectives include:

1. Carrying out periodically an equal pay audit and developing an equal pay action plan
2. Reviewing and increasing the number of part time and job share opportunities
3. Reviewing arrangements for providing support and information to carers
4. Reviewing our harassment and bullying procedure to ensure that sexual harassment is fully addressed
5. Further developing processes for recording internal and external gender related hate crime or incidents
6. Building confidence amongst victims of domestic violence to report incidents; providing victims with support; and working with perpetrators to reduce repeat offences
7. Ensuring that all service areas produce equality impact assessments with gender equality as a integral part of them and that identified actions are implemented
8. Ensuring that gender equality is integrated into the delivery of the equality and diversity training strategy.

#### **6.4 Actions and Measurement of Progress**

These goals are laid out in a detailed action plan; see Appendix C. The action plan is monitored by Bracknell Forest Partnerships' Community Cohesion and Engagement Working Group.

We measure the success of this scheme in two ways:

- Firstly, the extent to which we achieved the key tasks and outcomes in the three-year Action Plan.
- Secondly, by celebrating some of the tangible improvements that have been made in the community (see 'Our Successes').

## **7. Race Equality Scheme 2008-11 – An Executive Summary**

### **7.1 The Duty to Promote Race Equality**

#### **The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A 2000) came into force on 2 April 2001 following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report, published in February 1999.

#### **General Duty**

It placed a general duty on a wide range of public authorities to promote race equality. This duty means that such authorities must have due regard to the need to:

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

The Guidance issued by the Commission for Racial Equality (the CRE) to complement the RR(A)A 2000 suggested that public authorities should consider the following four steps to meet the general duty:

- Identify which of their functions and policies are relevant to the duty, or, in other words, affect most people
- Put the functions and policies in order of priority, based on how relevant they are to race equality.
- Assess whether the way these 'relevant' functions and policies are being carried out meets the three parts of the duty.
- Consider whether any changes need to be made to meet the duty, and make the changes.

(Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality, CRE 2002)

#### **Specific Duty**

In addition, specific duties were placed on some public authorities responsible for delivering important public services including local councils, hospital trusts and police authorities. These specific duties included:

- Preparing and publishing a race equality scheme (RES). This scheme should set out the functions or policies that were relevant to meeting the general duty, and how the relevant public body was going to meet the duty in the areas of policy and service delivery.
- Monitoring employment procedures and practice. The CRE guidance indicated that these public bodies might find it useful to include the arrangements they were making to meet their employment duties in their race equality schemes.

- The third specific duty covered the preparation of a race equality policy and arrangements for meeting specific duties on policy and employment in education institutions.

The RR(A)A 2000 made it clear that it was no longer enough for public bodies just to ensure that they did not discriminate unfairly. There was also a clear obligation on them to take positive steps to promote race equality in everything that they did. The guidance issued by the CRE also made it clear that when a public body looked at the impact which all their activities might have on promoting race equality that the weight given to race equality should be proportionate to its relevance to a particular function. This approach means giving greater consideration and resources to functions or policies that have most effect on the public, or on the authority's employees.

## **7.2 Promoting Race Equality**

Bracknell Forest Council took these new duties on board with enthusiasm and commitment and published its first Race Equality Scheme (RES) in February 2003. Part of the work in drawing up this first RES was to set out how we would carry out the assessment of which of our functions had the most impact on the public or on our staff in terms of race equality.

The RES details both the general and the specific parts of the Race Equality Duty for the Council, covers how the Council will assess the impact of its current and future policies and proposes an implementation plan setting out how the Council will fulfil its general duty to promote race equality. Our second RES 2008/09 – 2011/12 was published in April 2008.

The Council recognises that the borough is becoming increasingly diverse. The 2006 Office of National Statistics mid year estimates show the minority ethnic population as 14% in the borough compared to 9% in 2001 census. Since 2001 the number of school pupils from minority ethnic groups has grown from 6.1% to 14.6% in 2009. There are 76 different home languages of pupils in Bracknell Forest schools with small number of pupils speaking many of these languages. 7.7% of pupils have a language other than English as their first language. Some of the largest ethnic minorities in the borough are the Nepalese, Filipino, Indian, Polish and Portuguese communities.

## **7.3 Objectives**

The following are the key objectives for the Council contained within our second Race Equality Scheme 2008/09 – 2011/12:

1. Review functions that are relevant to the general duty - all functions considered as being relevant to meeting the general duty to promote race equality, must be assessed for their likely impact on racial equality. Actions arising from Equality Impact Assessments must then be implemented.
2. Assessing and monitoring of services and policies – including reviewing ethnic origin data, accurately profiling the Borough's ethnic minority communities and improving performance management of race equality objectives.

3. Reporting racist issues – ensuring that the Council does all it can to encourage the reporting of racist incidents in Bracknell Forest.
4. Consultation - ensuring that each department that engages in consultation produces a consultation plan including arrangements to consult BME communities.
5. Arrangements for publishing of race equality work - ensuring that the Council publishes all race work including the results of impact assessments, consultation and monitoring in departmental race equality action plans and workforce monitoring data.
6. Arrangements to ensure access to information and services - ensuring that everyone, whatever their background, can get information about Bracknell Forest Council and the services it provides.
7. Arrangements for ensuring all our staff understand their responsibilities - ensuring all staff have the skills and knowledge to help them to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and promote equal opportunities and good race relations.
8. Implementing the Specific Employment Duties - making the Council workforce representative of the communities it serves and continuing to meet the monitoring requirements set out in Article 5 of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001.
9. Promoting civic participation diversity - drawing on the skills and experience of as wide a range of people as possible for positions in public life and ensuring that the composition of the Council reflects all sections of the community which it serves.

#### **7.4 Action Plan and Measurement of Progress**

These objectives are laid out in a detailed action plan; see Appendix D. The action plan is monitored by Bracknell Forest Partnerships' Community Cohesion and Engagement Working Group.

We measure the success of this scheme in two ways:

- Firstly, the extent to which we achieved the key tasks and outcomes in the three-year Action Plan.
- Secondly, by celebrating some of the tangible improvements that have been made in the community (see 'Our Successes').

## **8. The Council's Progress to Date**

### **8.1 "All of Us" Community Cohesion Strategy 2008-09/2011-12**

The Council has made considerable progress in implementing the strategy during 2008-09 working with our partners. This is clear from the key performance measures against which the success of the strategy is being judged, namely:

- ✓ 86 of the 88 key tasks in our action plan have been completed within their allocated timescale or are ahead of schedule. Please see Appendix A which highlights the progress to date on each key task in the action plan.
- ✓ The major performance indicator by which the Partnership 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 the result for this indicator continued to increase, measured by the new Place Survey, to 82%; this result is significantly higher than the all England average of 76.4% and demonstrates that a high level of community cohesion is being maintained while the diversity of the borough has increased significantly.
- ✓ The second key performance indicator on which progress is measured is the "% of people that feel they belong to their neighbourhood", this is a brand new Indicator in the Place Survey 2008 and therefore we can not measure trends in our progress against this yet. The 2008 result for Bracknell Forest was 51.9%. The all England average for this was 58.7%. However, this needs to be considered against a background of a very good performance result in the Place Survey for overall/general satisfaction of local people with the area, which is significantly higher than the all England average and the high level of agreement that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

### **8.2 Equality Action 2008-09**

During 2008-09 the Council created a new Community Engagement and Equalities Team to coordinate the Councils work on Community Cohesion, Community Engagement and Equalities. New Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and a training programme were delivered for staff. Equality Impact Assessments were completed on the Councils 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.

### **8.3 Disability Equality Scheme 2006 - 2009**

The Council has made excellent progress in implementing the Disability Equality Scheme action plan which was launched in October 2006 and comes to an end in October 2009 as illustrated by Appendix B.

- ✓ All of the 75 key tasks have been completed in the three years of the scheme, the majority ahead of schedule.
- ✓ Some of the tasks that have seen excellent progress include:
  - A new bridge with a lift and facilities were opened in April 2009 at Bracknell railway station, enabling people with limited mobility and in wheelchairs to access platform 2.
  - Currently of the 81 hackney carriage vehicles, 71 are fully wheelchair accessible and 9 are swivel seat vehicles.
- ✓ The three key tasks that had fallen behind schedule at the time of the last progress report in spring 2008 have been implemented. All new bus shelters now have a perch seat (task 6.5); Members diversity training was delivered in July 2008 with further training planned (task 1.5); and the Library Service will be consulting on disability issues through the Access Advisory Panel (task 4.7).

## 8.4 Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10

The Council has made considerable progress in implementing the Gender Equality Scheme and this is evident in the performance monitoring of the action plan, see Appendix C.

- ✓ All 14 of the key tasks in the action plan are completed or on track for completion in their respective timescales.
- ✓ Some tasks that have seen particularly good progress include:
  - The production of support information for Council staff who are carers
  - The reporting of domestic violence incidents rose in 2008-09
  - The *Changing Ways* programme continues to be run for repeat offenders committing domestic violence offences at full capacity with additional funding being sought to expand the programme.

## 8.5 Race Equality Scheme 2008-11

The Council has made significant progress in the first year of implementing the Race Equality Scheme action plan; see Appendix D.

- ✓ 25 out of the 26 key tasks in the action plan are completed or on track for completion in their respective timescales.
- ✓ The one task which has not been implemented is 5.2 'Each department to publish a detailed Race Equality Scheme'. Due to the forthcoming changes in Equality Legislation proposed in the Equality Bill it has been decided that this is no longer appropriate and that departments should be addressing equalities issues holistically across all six equality strands through the production of equality impact assessments and implementation of the actions agreed in these.

- ✓ Some tasks that have seen particularly good progress include:
- A programme of Equality Impact Assessment completions have been carried out on relevant functions, these have been published. A three year schedule for Impact Assessment completions is being developed.
  - Guidance, training and support have been given to schools to induct, assess and meet the educational needs of English as an Additional Language pupils. Priority languages have been identified. Guidance has been issued to each school.
  - Experian consultants completed research using mosaic origins to map the ethnicity of communities in the borough; this included an analysis of take up of library services by different ethnic groups. Schools Census data and DWP NI Registrations data is used to update this profile annually. This information has been shared with and promoted to departments.

## 9. Community Cohesion Performance Indicators: Progress to Date

### Introduction

Since the development of the first Community Cohesion Strategy, the Government has introduced a new National Indicator Set, made up of 198 performance indicators. Out of this indicator set, the two main indicators chosen to measure our community cohesion strategy performance are NI1 “percentage of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together” and NI2 “percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood”. These indicators are supported by a series of other indicators linked to community cohesion and equalities.

### Results

Table One summarises the Partnership’s performance at the end of 2008-09 on the indicators that we have chosen to measure the success of our Community Cohesion Strategy. The new indicator set differs from the old Best Value indicators used previously to measure the performance of our first community cohesion strategy. In particular, a high proportion of the new indicators are not reported by local authorities but by central government departments and agencies, on which local authorities are dependent for acquiring data. In many cases, fail-safe systems for collecting and publishing this data have not yet been put in place by these departments and agencies. In addition, a high proportion of the indicators are brand new measures, so there are no historical datasets. Because most of the new indicators have complex methodologies designed to measure high-level outcomes rather than to count processes, it is difficult for local authorities to design proxy measures or to estimate outturns. Therefore at the present time we do not have performance data for a number of these indicators and where these are new indicators we can not analyse our comparative performance over previous years.

The major performance indicator by which the Partnership 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 the result for this indicator continued to increase, measured by the new Place Survey, to 82%; this result is significantly higher than the all England average of 76.4% and it is estimated that this would put the Council in the best quartile nationally compared to other Local Authorities although national quartile position information is not yet available.

The Place Survey result for our second key performance indicator on which progress is measured is the “% of people that feel they belong to their neighbourhood”, this is a brand new Indicator in the Place Survey 2008 and therefore we can not measure trends in our progress against this yet. The 2008 result for Bracknell Forest was 51.9%. The all England average for this was 58.7%. This suggests that Bracknell Forest is

in the worst quartile nationally; however this can not yet be confirmed. Possible reasons for this result are the high proportion of commuters living in Bracknell Forest, coupled with the good transport links and relatively low property prices which encourage people to use the borough as a dormitory. However, our performance indicators show that respondents to the Place Survey feel that people do get on well together and there is also a high level of general satisfaction with the local area; significantly above the all England average. The Bracknell Forest Partnership along with its Community Cohesion & Engagement Working Group will be ensuring that an action plan is put in place to address this result.

Performance in 2008-09 was particularly strong on NI7; this indicator is measured by a new survey of voluntary sector organisations run by the Cabinet Office which asks about the positive or negative influence of the Local Authority on the third sector. The outturn of 21.8% positive responses is among the second best in the country; the national figure is 16.2%. Bracknell Forest is also in joint-first place nationally for "very positive" responses (4%).

**Table One**

NI Ref	Title	Latest performance at year end 2008-09	Reporting method/period	Approx quartile position (compared to Berkshire unitaries)	Approx Quartile position (compared to all English LAs)	Local Area Agreement target
1	Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	82.1	Place Survey 2008.	Best	Best	Yes
2	Percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	51.9	Place Survey 2008.	Worst	Worst	No
3	Civic participation in the local area	9.0	Place Survey 2008.	Worst	Worst	No
4	Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	28.0	Place Survey 2008.	Second	Third	No
6	Participation in regular volunteering	20.6	Place Survey 2008.	Third	Third	Yes
7	Environment for a thriving third sector	21.8	Cabinet Office Third Sector survey 2008.	Best	Best	No
44	Ethnic composition of offenders on Youth Justice System disposals	No data	No data and no target due to small size of cohort.	N/A	N/A	No

69	Children who have experienced bullying	52.6	"Tell Us 3" Survey 2008.	N/A	Worse than median	Yes
81	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19	No data	No data currently available on this new indicator.	N/A	N/A	No
82	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19	No data	No data currently available on this new indicator.	N/A	N/A	No
92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	30.6	Summer 2008 exams.	N/A	N/A	Yes
114	Rate of permanent exclusions from school	0.18	Academic year 2007/08.	N/A	N/A	No
124	People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition	No data	No data currently available on this new indicator.	N/A	N/A	No
127	Self reported experience of social care users	No data	No data currently available on this new indicator.	N/A	N/A	No
128	User reported measure of respect and dignity in their treatment	No data	No data currently available on this new indicator.	N/A	N/A	No
129	End of life care -- access to appropriate care enabling people to be able to choose to die at home	No data	No data currently available on this new indicator.	N/A	N/A	No
130	Social Care clients receiving Self Directed Support per 100,000 population	351.8	Financial year 2008/09.	N/A	N/A	Yes
136	People supported to live independently through social services (all adults)	3,000	Financial year 2008/09.	N/A	N/A	Yes
139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home	24.5	Place Survey 2008.	Worst	Worst	No
140	Fair treatment by local services	74.3	Place Survey 2008.	Second	Third	No
151	Overall employment rate (working-age)	84.9	Figures relate to September-October 2008 (latest available data).	Best	Best	No
152	Working age people on out of work benefits	2.4	Figures relate to September-October 2008 (latest available data).	N/A	N/A	No
166	Median earnings of employees in the area	£538.50	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (March 2009).	N/A	N/A	No

## 10. Conclusion and Challenges for the future

Considerable progress has been made in implementing “All of Us” in 2008-09, the first year of implementing our second corporate community cohesion strategy.

- ✓ 86 of the 88 key tasks in our action plan have been completed within their allocated timescale or are ahead of schedule.
- ✓ We are maintaining high levels of community cohesion in the borough against a backdrop of increased diversity within the borough and an economic downturn.

Progress implementing our Disability Equality Scheme 2006-09 has been excellent:

- ✓ All of the 75 key tasks have been completed in the three years of the scheme, the majority ahead of schedule.

Considerable progress has also been made in implementing our Race and Gender Equality Schemes. In light of this the Council with its partners is well placed to continue to develop its community cohesion and equalities work in the light of continued changes to the demographics and make up of our communities and national policy developments.

However, we are not complacent and recognise that there will always be more that we can do to ensure that the Council improves the quality of its service delivery; ensuring services are provided fairly and appropriately to all its residents; as well as making sure that the Council's staff are appropriately supported to give of their best; and that our workforce is drawn from the widest pool of talent.

### Opportunities and Challenges

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.

During 2009-10 the Council will be migrating from 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. 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.