

## **Bracknell Forest Council Equality Scheme 2012-16 Selection of Equality Objectives**

### **Summary**

Bracknell Forest is a thriving, active and caring community. Bracknell Forest Council works closely with partners to support and engage our different communities, groups and organisations. As our community grows and changes, we are committed to ensuring that no-one is left behind, isolated or disadvantaged. We take great pride in our support for vulnerable groups and individuals. Members and staff are committed to ensuring that Bracknell Forest is a borough of opportunity for everyone.

Bracknell Forest Council is developing an Equality Scheme which will highlight its objectives for reducing inequalities in the Borough for the period 2012-16. The Equality Scheme will replace the Council's three Disability, Race and Gender Equality Schemes and the 'All of Us' Community Cohesion Strategy. The scheme which will be published by April 2012 will highlight our equality objectives, including those to promote good community relations, and the action we will take to achieve these objectives with our partners where relevant. The objectives will need to be achievable, measurable and outcome focussed; given the current financial climate and there being no extra resources to implement the Equality Scheme.

A long list of possible equality objectives has been produced. The list is based on a review of evidence and existing strategies which highlight the key equality issues facing the borough, as well as consideration of the objectives that the Council has already set through the development of the Council's Medium Term Objectives for 2011-15.

The strategies considered in forming the long list of equality objectives, such as the Council's Older People's Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and the 2011 Institute of Community Cohesion Faith and Belief Community Research, have been developed with extensive and recent consultation with equality groups, so the long list of objectives has been informed by the communities' priorities already identified.

In developing the equality scheme we will be consulting the Council's managers, staff, members; as well as partners, voluntary and community groups, particularly equality groups and those representing people protected by the Equality Act 2010, as well as our residents.

This community engagement will take place in two stages:

- involvement in selecting the objectives
- consultation on the draft equality scheme.

The Council is involving people in selecting the objectives from the long list through a series of targeted scoping workshops and meetings in late October and early November and then consulting on the draft equality scheme which builds on the selected objectives using a questionnaire which will be sent to groups and made available on the Council's website with the draft equality scheme from 5 December 2011 for 8 weeks. Please see the Equality Scheme consultation plan attached.

Many of the objectives within the Council's previous Equality Schemes and the Community Cohesion Strategy have now become a part of mainstream business, for example delivering equality and diversity training to staff and members is integrated into the Member Development Strategy and Workforce Development Plan, and this will be highlighted in a section of the Equality Scheme.