

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30TH APRIL 2008

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LABOUR MARKET ASSESSMENT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Mr R Smith
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bromsgrove District Council commissioned The Centre for Local Policy Studies, Edge Hill University to carry out and develop a labour market assessment, for Bromsgrove within the context of the Equality Standard for Local Government. This work was funded by the Capacity Building Money awarded to Bromsgrove in support of its Equalities agenda.
- 1.2 The purpose of the labour market assessment report is to provide an analysis of labour market performance in Bromsgrove and is a required element within the Equality Standard for Local Government. It is intended that this study should also support progress against the Council's wider Inclusive Equalities Scheme and equality and diversity objectives.
- 1.3 The report provides the Council with valuable information in respect of the community that it serves. This information can be used to influence policy development and service delivery. The data captured provides the Council with intelligence and data that detail the demographic context in Bromsgrove.
- 1.4 It is important for us to work within this context when delivering services to the communities that we serve and in our wider role as policy developer and preferred employer.
- 1.5 A full copy of the draft report is attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are requested to consider and approve the draft Local Labour Market Assessment report attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Members are requested to approve the proposal that this document be submitted to the LSP as an evidential tool

- 2.3 Members are requested to endorse the use of this document as baseline material that will influence service delivery and service specific outcomes moving forward.

3. **BACKGROUND**

The Equality Standard for Local Government

- 3.1 Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has made a commitment to making progress in line with the Equality Standard for Local Government. Members will recall that there are five levels within the Standard, five being the most advanced. The Council has been independently assessed as having achieved level 2 and is progressing well towards attaining Level 3.
- 3.2 The Equality Standard Guidance states that:
- ‘local authorities should use the Equality Standard to ensure that they address equality issues strategically and systematically’
- As a result there are a number of requirements built into the standard framework for engaging with and understanding the needs of the local community and stakeholders from an equalities perspective.
- 3.3 In relation to employment, the standard states:
- ‘...an authority as a minimum will need to see how its workforce (and the way jobs are allocated within it) compares with the profile of the local labour market area. It will also have to pay attention to issues of workforce profiles, job segregation and equal pay’.
- 3.4 In order to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to achieving these required elements of the Standards the Council made a firm commitment when it was at level 1 of the Standard to undertake an employment equality assessment of the local labour market area, initiate workforce profiling and to undertake an equal pay review.
- 3.5 This commitment was then endorsed within the Council’s level 2 action plan, with the Council undertaking Job Evaluation, workforce profiling and the Local Labour Market Assessment Survey that Members are considering in this report.
- 3.6 The information that the Council has obtained within the context of these activities will enable the Council to set equality objectives for employment, workforce profile, pay and service delivery.

Meeting Public Sector Duties

- 3.7 In addition to the requirements laid down within the Standard all Council's have a statutory duty under the Race Relations Act, The Sex Discrimination Act and the Disability Discrimination Act to assess employment related information and prepare action plans to eliminate any adverse impact that might be experienced by individuals on the grounds of their racial background, gender or disability.
- 3.8 For race, authorities are required to set out how they will tackle employment inequality and carry out separate monitoring; and publish the results.
- 3.9 For disability, the (Disability Equality) Scheme should include a statement on the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment.
- 3.10 For gender, authorities are required to publish their policy on developing equal pay arrangements, which should include and show what measures are being taken to ensure equal pay, fair promotion and development opportunities between women and men; and to tackle occupational segregation between women and men.
- 3.11 Members will appreciate the importance of the data captured within the Local Labour Market Assessment within this context. The Council can more effectively meet its legal obligations, if it has the benefit of baseline data in relation to employment that is secure and up to date.
- 3.12 Officers recognise the need for this data collation exercise to be on going if this is to be achieved and the Labour Market Assessment addresses the need for the information to be refreshed and updated in addition to highlighting improvements that can be made to our internal process.

Local Government improvement

- 3.13 As members are aware the local government performance management and assessment framework is currently undergoing radical change. The best value performance indicators are being replaced by a new set of National Indicators, which will be closely aligned to Public Service Agreements. Local Area Agreements (LAA's) have been placed on a statutory footing, and authorities are expected to have their renegotiated LAA's in place by June 2008. A new system of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will replace the current Comprehensive Performance Assessments, by 2009.

- 3.14 The local labour market assessment has identified some of the gaps and areas of weakness within the council's current information base that will need to be addressed in order for the council to meet the challenges of the changing improvement and assessment framework.

Headline Trends and Overview

- 3.15 The report headlines trends within the Bromsgrove District and gives the Council a regional and national benchmark in specific categories. As a result members will see that Bromsgrove has;
- Relatively low levels of unemployment
 - Higher skill levels
 - Good educational attainments across all key stages
 - Coped well with industrial decline in some areas
 - Sustained growth in population and has a high inward migration
- 3.16 The report also shows some of the challenging issues such as;
- A growth in ageing population
 - A younger ethnic minority population profile
 - An emerging migrant population (European Member States/rest of world) regionally
 - Pay rates for someone living **and** working in Bromsgrove are lower
 - Pay rates of female workers appear to be declining
 - An apparent lack of reliable detailed data in a number of areas, for example, ethnic minority populations, sexual orientation, and faith communities.
 - An apparent lack of reliable data for ethnic minority and migrant Labour.
- 3.17 The Council will need to develop target measures that address these issues within its equality objectives. The Labour Market Assessment Survey has identified these issues and provides the Council with a number of recommended actions that will enable them to overcome the data quality issues.
- 3.18 The report identifies the challenge for District Council's when relying on data from the 2001 Census and the 2004 Household Survey. It may be more appropriate for data to be captured at Ward Level if it is to accurately reflect the demographics of our District.
- 3.19 It is therefore important that the Council takes steps to address this and to supplement general data sources with much better and more focused local data. This will, in turn allow for better targeting of resources to meet

local needs. Information also needs to be updated across all equality strands.

- 3.20 In some cases this work is already happening within the Council in the form of service user profile, consultation exercises, citizen's panels, focus groups and the LSP. This report will enable the Council to ensure that all of these activities are 'equality proofed' and analysed and that the results can be shared across the Council.
- 3.21 In addition, it should be noted that collaborating and/or working in partnership with other authorities and local and regional organisations would be beneficial to improving data quality at a local and regional level.
- 3.22 The report provides an over-view of employment and employment trends for the Bromsgrove District. It highlights areas where the authority will need to concentrate in order to develop meaningful targets for employment and economic growth both in relation to its own obligations and to that of its partners and the regional development agencies.

Service Specific Outcomes

- 3.23 Members will be aware that as an organisation striving towards the provision of excellent services, the 'who our customer isn't' challenge remains critical for us as a Council.
- 3.24 In making service improvements and developing service based outcomes for our community the Council is reliant on the information that it obtains through service specific data that is collated as a consequence of us asking the people who use or take advantage of the services that we provide.
- 3.25 The data captured in this report will enable Heads of Service to critically analyse service delivery on the basis of the community breakdown and who the Council is responsible for in respect of Service Delivery, in addition to the more traditional analysis that is based on footfall.
- 3.26 Members will note that some of the data has been captured on a Ward specific basis and this will assist the Council when determining some of the challenging issues that face a Council that exists within a large geographical spread.
- 3.27 Members are aware that Heads of Service determine service business plan projections within an evidence based context. This includes financial and human resources, Council specific priorities, results from consultation exercises and Impact assessments results. The data contained in this

report will enable Heads of Service to be better informed when identifying areas within their services areas for improvement.

- 3.28 Members are therefore being asked to endorse this document as a source of information that can be used to influence Service Specific Improvements and as an information base that will be referred to at the CMT/Cabinet Priority/Budget setting meetings

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The establishing of targets will be achieved within existing resources. The financial implications of further work will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet before any proposals are finalised.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Statutory requirements for the Public Sector Duties set out in the Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The report is consistent with the Council's Inclusive Equalities Scheme and for making improvements to customer service and service delivery outcomes.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The main risk associated with the details included in this report is an inability for the Council to meet the requirements of;

- (i) level 3 of the Local Government Standard for Equality
- (ii) the Council's duties within the Equality legislation framework
- (iii) the national indicators and CAA

- 7.2 These risks are being managed as follow;

Risk Register: *Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services*

Key Objective Ref No. 9.2

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The recommendations of the report if followed will improve our working relationships with District and County based partners thus improving joint working outcomes for residents within the District

- 8.2 It is intended that the report be shared with District and County based partners, the Bromsgrove LSP and published widely in the public domain.
- 8.3 The Report will go to Equality Champions who will be briefed on the content of the report which will subsequently be used to inform the Equality Impact Assessment process, performance management and business planning processes.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The report is concerned with improving outcomes of the Council's Inclusive Equalities Scheme and wider Equalities agenda.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In order to demonstrate that the Council is achieving Value for Money within the Services that it provides it is critical that it provides services that are accessible to the community that we serve. The Council must therefore be confident that the services provided meet the needs and requirements of the community. The LLMA will help the Council to achieve this.
- 10.2 In using the information presented in the report the Council will be able to target a number of its services to customers within the District. In doing this we will be able to utilise our resources more effectively and provide improved customer service with the current funds we have available. This may include:
- Targeted benefit take up campaigns
 - Targeted direct debit payment methods
 - Focus on joint approach with the pension service to residents eligible for benefit
 - Improve recruitment campaigns to support equality and diversity
 - Develop relationships with our partners to improve service delivery to our customers
 - Improved economic development activity within the District

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement - The Council will use the report data to influence the delivery of procurement clinics to minority groups within the District
Personnel Implications – The Council will revisit its Recruitment and Selection and policy and employment targets will be influenced by the findings of the report

Governance/Performance Management – BDC must ensure that policies are ‘equality’ proofed through it’s performance management and other corporate/service delivery processes
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – the report highlights issues relating to higher incidences of reported crime in 3 wards which includes 3 prison populations
Policy – The Council must undertake a policy review, as appropriate, to ensure that it complies with equality opportunity requirements
Environmental - none

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	Yes
Executive Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Local Labour Market (Area) Assessment and Analysis for Bromsgrove District Council: Supporting the Development of Floor Targets for Making Equality and Diversity Improvements

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A full list of the background information and sources used to compile the report is contained in the references section of the document attached as Appendix 1.

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