

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

7th OCTOBER 2009

BEING DIFFERENT TOGETHER

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Claire Felton
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bromsgrove District Council along with the other Districts and County Council of Worcestershire have been working together to deliver a consistent and streamlined approach to the Equality and Diversity agenda. This report outlines the Being Different Together project that hopes to deliver this and updates Cabinet in relation to how this impacts and affects Bromsgrove.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the Waterhouse report and accept the recommendations therein (to be found on pages 4 to 7 of the document in the attached link to the Intranet.

<http://connect.bromsgrove.gov.uk/departments/equalities/Being%20Different%20Together/default.aspx>

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Worcestershire County Council and six Districts are committed to ensuring that equalities and diversity is an integral part of every day business and recognise that fact that this leads to benefits for the communities that we serve.
- 3.2 All Councils recognise the need to respond to the different needs within the community through quality based, accessible and responsive services and the need to set Equality standards and become an employer of choice. Members are aware that the method for evaluating an authority's progress towards the provision of an inclusive agenda was historically measured through the Local Government Standard for Equality and Diversity and that this migrated onto a new structure in the Spring on 2009 and is now measured within the Local Government Framework for Equality.

- 3.3 A long term joint project was undertaken between five of the District Councils (excluding Bromsgrove DC initially) and Worcestershire County Council. Bromsgrove District Council subsequently formally joined the project after the main planning and design processes had taken place. The project was initially referred to as "Tailoring Equality and Diversity for Worcestershire" ("TEDS") and subsequently became known as "Being Different Together".
- 3.4 The aim of the project, with Worcestershire County Council as the project managers, was for all councils in Worcestershire to work together to achieve positive outcomes in relation to equality and diversity including achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government at the same time.
- 3.5 A large part of the project has been to engage external consultants to deliver a report on detailing the current status of all County authorities in relation to the Equality Standard and the gaps that exist that when filled would enable them to reach a comparable level.
- 3.6 In practice due to a variety of reasons including a delay in the production of this report and changes in key project personnel, the original outcome for all authorities within the County to reach level 3 simultaneously has not proved achievable. Only Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Council have achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, and it is fair to say that in the case of Bromsgrove the achievement was entirely unrelated to its involvement in this project.
- 3.7 In reality, the Council has already implemented most of the report recommendations and now leads the other Districts in Worcestershire by example. It is however fair to say that Bromsgrove District Council entered into partnership with other Councils to ensure a consistency of approach across the County to the delivery of an Equality and Diversity agenda. It agreed targets and objectives that would benefit residents across the County and Bromsgrove needs to retain its position as a supportive member of the project. This then enables the Council to ensure firstly that these outcomes are achieved in other areas of the County recognising that this will inevitably impact on our residents, and secondly in recognition of our role as community leader.
- 3.8 In support of this Cabinet is being asked to acknowledge the findings in the report and the resulting recommendations recognising that although Bromsgrove has largely achieved them it is important that it remains committed to supporting the remainder of the Districts to ensure that as a County our approach to equality and diversity is consistent and the needs for us to lead and assist with the benefit of the experience that we now have as a Council that has been accredited as an achieving Council within the Equality Framework.
- 3.9 Finally Cabinet is advised that the project was awarded approximately £250,000.00 of Capacity Building funding from the West Midlands Regional

Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and it was a requirement of the funding grant that it be spend by the end of December 2009. A proportion of this money has been made available for the Districts to make bids for equality projects.

- 3.10 The Districts have all made their respective bids for funding and Bromsgrove submitted a bid for support with its annual Equality and Diversity Conference, support to establish a Lesbian Gay and Bi-sexual training and development programme in accordance with the recommendations that were made as part of the Diversity Peer Challenge together with a programme for managing transsexual issues, a youth democracy event and support for the hate crime reporting centres that underpin the BHIP process that we successfully launched last year.
- 3.11 All of these bids were successful and work has already begun to deliver these projects this year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 £8K of Capacity Building Fund money is being awarded to Bromsgrove District Council to fund the overarching Being Different Together project and the individual local projects that have been outline within this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council operates within a statutory framework that places many duties on the organisation to positively promote equality in relation to its policies, functions, services and employment practices.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The work under the Being Different Together project supports the Councils Corporate Improvement and Sense of Community Objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are that the equality projects funded by Being Different Together won't be completed on time in order to claim the funding granted through this project.

- 7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: *Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services*
Key Objective Ref No: 1
Key Objective: *Effective Equalities Culture*

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council is committed to meeting the needs of its customers through the provision of its services. It is essential that the Council develops and maintains strong links with community groups and community members from all minority groups in order to ensure that this is achieved.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 All the recommendations and the funding for the community projects are compatible with the Council's equality and diversity policies and objectives.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 When evaluating the quality and value of service delivery it is always necessary to establish the need of the customer if the authority is to ensure that the service provision is adequate and appropriate and therefore providing value for money.
- 10.2 Within the Council's use of resources assessment there are clear targets and objectives in relation to the provision of inclusive service and the need to acknowledge the needs of customers from minority groups.
- 10.3 When managing the Councils resources within a controlled procurement environment there are duties in relation to the provision and procurement of services and how these are administered and the Council has a legal duty to ensure that they are followed and adhered to.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 None
Policy None
Environmental None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
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 Being Different Together report link to the intranet

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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