



Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Paper

Report of: Lucy Bennett, Equality and Diversity Officer
Date: Thursday, 15th April 2010
Open

Equality and Diversity Update - April 2010

1. Summary

1.1 The report provides an update on Equality and Diversity work currently taking place as part of the Being Different Together project and proposals for continued partnership working following the end of the project.

2. Background

2.1 The Council is working in partnership with the 5 other districts and the County Council to deliver a unified Equality and Diversity plan for Worcestershire in the form of the 'Being Different Together project'.

2.2 The Council is represented on the project as follows:
Project Steering Group – John Campion, Leader of the Council and Rachael Simpson, HR Officer.
Project Management Group – Lucy Bennett, Equality and Diversity Officer.

2.3 The project was successfully awarded £232,000 of funding from the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The aim of the project is to improve collaborative working and avoid duplication across the seven councils as well as supporting capacity to engage and deliver services to our diverse communities.

2.4 The project has now come to an end (as of 31st March 2010) which was marked by a closing conference on the 31st March 2010

3. Key Issues

Work being progressed for delivery of the Council's current Equality Action Plan includes:

3.1 Partnership Single Equality Scheme This is being undertaken in partnership with a number of other organisations in the county and will mirror schemes in Shropshire, Dorset and Lewisham which have been noted as areas of best practice. Many organisations in the area have shown an interest in joining including charities and public sector

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organisations. Worcester City Council is coordinating the meetings and although the partnership is currently in the early stages it is hoped that we could have a new scheme in place by the summer.

- 3.2 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). All screenings have now been completed. A timetable is currently being put in place for full assessments of those policies which need further investigation and the first wave of full assessments will take place in May 2010. The assessments will be prioritised based on perceived impact.
- 3.3 End of project conference. A conference took place on the 31st March 2010 at Sixways Rugby Club in Worcester to mark the end of the 'Being Different Together' project and celebrate the achievements of the project.
- 3.4 Equality and Diversity Training for employees has now kicked off and the Hub employees have completed their training. Initially operational employees will complete their training first and this will be conducted at their place of work and will be delivered around shift patterns to ensure all employees can attend. Officers and managers will attend Worcestershire-wide training which will take place here in Wyre Forest and around the county, should those venues be more convenient employees are welcome to book onto training in another district. The training has been devised in partnership with the other district councils and the county council and therefore we will share delivery of the training. Members are welcome to attend should they so wish and dates will be publicised via the Intranet when confirmed. This training will commence in May 2010.
- 3.5 Community Engagement. The second Wyre Forest Community Engagement Forum took place in February and involved some lengthy discussion around taxi licensing which had been requested as an agenda item at the previous meeting. At the next meeting younger members have requested items on transport links and we have representation from Worcestershire County Council and First Bus who we will receive confirmation from on the 21st April. One of the aims of the forum is to reduce duplication in consultation. One possibility is to join with Wyre Forest Matters and aim for one forum for all consultation which needs to be undertaken. This will need to be explored further and updates will be provided within the next quarterly update. The next Wyre Forest Community Engagement Forum will take place on 16th June 2010 at the Town Hall in Kidderminster at 6:00 pm.
- 3.6 The Mike Oborski 'No Barriers' Awards. The 2010 awards will be launched during the summer and preliminary meetings have already taken place in order to identify the awards panel and ensure the terms of reference are up to date and suitably robust. The venue for the awards ceremony will again be Wyre Forest Community Housing HQ on Foley Grove and the ceremony itself will take place on Friday the 22nd October 2010.

4. Options

- 4.1 To continue to work closely with Worcestershire County Council and the other members of the Being Different Together project group in order to continue the sharing of good practice and resources following the end of the formal project.
- 4.2 To create a Single Equalities Scheme in partnership with other organisations from Worcestershire in order to show how we are working together to reduce inequalities across the county.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 N/A

6. Related Decisions

- 6.1 N/A

7. Relevant Council Policies/Strategies

- 7.1 N/A

8. Implications

- 8.1 Proposals refer to more collaborative working which will lead to cost savings, increased resilience and more effective delivery.

9. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

- 9.1 N/A

10. Wards affected

- 10.1 All

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 None

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