



# Equality and Diversity Forum Consultation Conference

SATURDAY  
12th APRIL 2008



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)



**Bromsgrove District Council**  
**Equality and Diversity Forum Consultation Conference**  
**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

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# 1. Introduction to the Conference Report

It is our pleasure to introduce this report of the Conference that took place on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2008. This Conference was designed as a follow up to the first Conference held in September 2006 and it dealt with the same themes – discussion and feedback on the delivery of Council Services and our Future Priorities; discussion on the progress and achievements of the Equality and Diversity Forum and the Inclusive Equalities Scheme.

The benefits of having such a Conference can be shown in a number of ways. The Conference on 12<sup>th</sup> April demonstrated that there is continued support for the Council's Improvement Programme and for our Equality and Diversity initiatives. We have generated further participation in our Equality and Diversity Forum, particularly from community members as well as our main partners in the District of Bromsgrove.

More importantly, the discussions at the Conference will be taken back to service departments for their responses and actions to address issues which will be built into service plans. This will be monitored by the Equality and Diversity Forum and the Disabled Users Group. In addition, the discussions will be factored into the current mid term review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme which will be published shortly.

I am confident that this Report will remain on record showing how we have built on the foundation stone laid in our first Conference back in 2006. It clearly demonstrates the continuity of the work we are doing and will be referred to as a benchmark to measure our progress.

As intended, this was a bigger and more actively involved event than the 2006 Conference and we are confident that when our next Conference takes place in 2009, we hope to have a further increase in the community members participating and there will be more active involvement and scrutiny of the work that Bromsgrove District Council is doing with regard to areas of diversity and equality .



**Kevin Dicks**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Bromsgrove District Council**



**Trevor Rigg**  
**Chairman**  
**Equality and Diversity Forum**

## 2. Opening Remarks

**The Conference was officially opened by Councillor Mrs Janice Boswell as the Chairman of the Council.**

“I am delighted to welcome you here today to the second Consultation Conference event held jointly with Bromsgrove District Council and the Equality and Diversity Forum.

We have a very busy programme and have set interesting and challenging discussion topics with time for everyone to feedback their views.

I would like to extend a special welcome to Chris Walters who is a Community Development Officer with the local authority of the City of Greater Bendigo, Australia.

Chris is on a European Study tour comparing good practice in the provision of services to disabled members of communities and has chosen to finish her tour here in Bromsgrove.

I would also like to welcome two people from Waterhouse Consulting. They are currently working on a County wide project to improve the delivery of services to all groups in the community and looking at the barriers that prevent people accessing services – Bromsgrove District Council is part of this project.

Both Chris and the Waterhouse Consultants will be joining in your discussions as they are very interested in what you have to say.

I hope you will be happy to share your views, opinions and experiences with them. We all need to ensure that we respect the views of others and sometimes agree to disagree.

I would also like to welcome officers from the County Council who have come along today to help us with those issues where we share responsibilities.

Lastly but by no means least, I would like to welcome those members of the Equality and Diversity Forum who have supported all the work we have been doing and in particular Trevor Rigg, the Chair of the Forum. Trevor will be chairing the Conference this afternoon and Kevin Dicks, the Council’s Chief Executive will be chairing this morning’s session.”

Chris Walters then presented Councillor Boswell with an official gift from the Council of the City of Greater Bendigo, Victoria, Australia in recognition of the time spent on her study tour in Bromsgrove. Chris thanked the officers and community members who had made her feel very welcome and provided her with information for her research project.

Councillor Boswell thanked Chris and handed over the chairing of the Conference to Kevin Dicks.

Kevin introduced the morning's discussion sessions by explaining the nature of the workshops and how each discussion group would work with set questions relevant to the topics chosen. At the end of the discussion session each group would get a chance to feedback the key points from their group.

Kevin emphasised how important it was that the Council provided this opportunity to encourage community members and partners to put forward ideas which will be used for the planning and delivery of services. This has already been demonstrated by the progress made since the first conference in 2006.

Kevin then introduced Trevor Rigg.

### **3. Celebration of the Successes of the Equality and Diversity Forum**

**Trevor Rigg, as Chairman, introduced the Equality and Diversity Forum.**

**“How did the forum come about? How did we get here?”**

The process started in July 2005 when community members met with Bromsgrove District Council officers, the Chief Executive and Councillor Stephen Peters, the Council's Diversity Champion.

After several meetings of the Forum and the appointment of a new Chief Executive there was a move towards greater partnership working between the Council and the community which subsequently developed protocols and terms of reference.

The Forum meets every two months at the Council House to discuss Council priorities in relation to Equality and Diversity and related issues introduced by community members.

The programme and record of meetings can be found on the Council's website.

The role of the Forum is to be a critical friend to Bromsgrove District Council to work towards equality and diversity in this District by

- working in partnership to identify and address issues of inequality in the District
- being a stable, long term working group involved in the review, revision and implementation of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme
- establishing working groups to support all six strands of diversity and the activities in relation to the strands
  - **Race**
  - **Disability**
  - **Gender**
  - **Religion/ Belief**
  - **Sexual orientation**
  - **Age**
- establishing and maintaining systems for monitoring responses to the recommendations of the Equality and Diversity Forum in the delivery of all services by the Council and its partners

The minutes of the meetings of the Forum go to the Corporate Management Team and the Leader's Group which consists of elected Council members. They also go to the Equality Champions Working Group – the Council's staff equality and diversity group.

## **Achievements**

The Forum is proud of its achievements over the period of 2005 to 2008. We held the first Consultation Conference in September 2006 and as a result, support has increased considerably from community members and organisations in the District.

- There is an elected Member, Councillor Stephen Peters who champions Diversity issues within the Council
- We have implemented a Hate Incident Reporting Procedure the development of which was supported by the Forum.
- 22 Reporting Centres have been established in the District and their staff trained to take reports and refer victims to appropriate sources of help

- Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership ( BHIP ) was successfully launched in July 2007
- There is a Gender Equality Working Group which is a sub group of the Forum which was set up to review and rewrite The Gender Equality Scheme. The revised Gender Equality scheme will be published later this year
- An Easy Read Version of the Disability Equality Scheme was published in August 2007 and the Disabled Users Group was established in December 2007
- Rhyan Berrigan joined us for a six month secondment from Scope to establish further information about what disabled people in Bromsgrove needed and wanted the Council to provide.
- Her report, “Achieving Disability Equality in the Bromsgrove District” was published in November 2007 and has been highly successful in helping with the consultation for the installation of a Personal Care Suite in the town centre
- In 2007, Bromsgrove Black History Society ran their third year of events in the Bromsgrove District to celebrate Black History Month. Membership of the Society has increased to over 25 members
- In 2007 the Council offered the Community the chance to make bids for projects that would benefit the Community. Three bids were supported by the full Council for completion in the year 2008/2009
  - “Us and Our Education” – drama project by Padstone Day Centre service users
  - Bromsgrove Black History Society
  - Diwali
- The Council has also provided training for Forum Members
  - Hate Crime Reporting Training for Community based reporting centres
  - Two training sessions for Forum members on the Equality Impact Assessment process
  - Follow up Workshops planned for scrutinising completed Equality Impact Assessments

- The Forum has been involved in consultation on the Council's initiatives
  - Public Transport Task Group ( Buses )
  - Choice Based Lettings
  - BDHT Equality and Diversity Strategy 2007 – 2009
  - Electronic Reference Panel - under development
  - Community Transport
  - Disability Awareness Training for Taxi Drivers
  - North Worcestershire DIAL ( Disability Information Advice Line )
  
- The Forum and the Council are now successfully working in partnership with
  - Bromsgrove Housing Trust
  - West Mercia Police
  - Worcestershire Association of Service Users
  - Disability Information Advice Line
  - Worcestershire Mental Health Network
  - Mencap
  - Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum
  - Age Concern
  - Bromsgrove And Redditch Network
  - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
  - The Gender Trust
  - Bromsgrove and District Action Group for Older People

### **What are the next steps?**

Today's conference is about ensuring that we build on the activities that we have undertaken over the last three years and continue to build positive working relationships with all members of the community and our partners.

Trevor thanked every for attending and handed back to Kevin

Kevin introduced the four workshops for the morning discussion sessions. He explained that these were the same themes that we had discussed at the first Conference in September 2006 and that although we have made significant progress since then, we still need to develop and improve the delivery of services.

Unlike the 2006, on this occasion we welcome the involvement of County Council officers.

## **4. Council Priorities – Feedback from Workshops**

### **4.1 Housing – Workshop facilitated by Tony Lowry and Andy Coel**

#### **4.1 (a) What type of Housing would you like to see in Bromsgrove?**

- An open market with housing for the general population and for people special needs
- Affordable Housing for the general population and for those with special needs
- People are looking for more affordable housing as young people are moving away because of lack of affordability
- We need more properties which are part mortgage/ part buy and part rent
- Birmingham residents are moving into Bromsgrove and pushing up the prices which is forcing Bromsgrove to become an older persons city
- Executive homes are being built but not there is not enough building of affordable housing at the same time
- This is out of balance and we need more affordable housing
- Bromsgrove District Housing trust is searching for suitable sites
  - The college site – was sold for a higher price to developers
  - How are Worcestershire County Council selling their properties?
  - Advance planners need to give timelines to developers
  - Look at Green belt land and decide which bits of this land could be built on
- We should develop partnerships between landowners and developers to release sites for affordable housing

- The Council secured funding to look at the following problems
  - What resources are currently being under utilized?
  - This then determines how to make the best decisions with what we have got
- Shared ownership facilities
  - This is difficult as older persons are being supported in their homes and are not down sizing
  - Building accommodation for people who can and cannot support themselves
  - Making housing convertible to change with needs
  - Old schools can be converted into affordable housing and are usually good locations

**4.1 (b) Do you feel there is enough accessible and affordable housing in Bromsgrove particularly thinking of life time homes?**

- Develop more two bedroom places with small gardens with other people around within the community
- Other suggestions are one bedroom properties - when developing units build spare units for family members to visit
- Purpose built accommodation which meets residents needs
- More encouragement with the private sector to maximise affordable housing on public sites
- There are some properties sold by Worcester County Council for a reasonable price

**4.1 (c) Do you know how to access services for housing?**

- Making services known to residents
- Computer barriers for older and disabled residents who cannot access the internet
- Traditional methods should continue

## 4.2 Town Centre – Workshop facilitated by Phil Street and Jon Fraser

### 4.2 (a) What is your opinion of Bromsgrove Town Centre?

- It is not very appealing and rather dismal
- Going through difficult times
- Like many market town centres it has declined
- The costs of units are so high
- It is bordering on a ghost town
- There are empty buildings above the shops
- Some enjoy being in Bromsgrove
- We need to develop plans for the future
- There are a lot of negative news and is affecting morale
- We need to attract people into the town
- Some people feel vulnerable
- The physical appearance of the Town Centre is:
  - Very poor
  - There is competition from other nearby towns
  - These have the same sort of attractions
  - We need greater investment from the County Council
  - Bromsgrove is seen as being ‘ out in the sticks’ by the County
- Bromsgrove is a nice Town
- The pedestrianised area was attractive for 20 years
- Deliveries are allowed in the High Street which often means large vehicles are accessing the pedestrianised area and blocking the pavement, they also pull up the tarmac
- We know the pubs and banks
- There are too many take away shops
- We need to develop a unique blend of independent shops
- We need to publicise the town centre more
- We need to encourage people to return back to Bromsgrove
- Flats above the shops lie empty
- There are beautiful impressive buildings in the high street
- Improvements need to happen straightaway
- The alleyways should be exciting and should be seen as an interesting feature
- The town needs to find an identity of its own as we can’t compete with other nearby developments

#### **4.2 (b) What would you like to see in the New Town centre?**

- We need proper access to the town in terms of public transport
- Accessible public transport is needed
- The Personal Care Suite ( formerly known as the High Dependency Unit ) location needs to be in the town Centre near public transport
- This has come about as a result of forum members raising the issue
- Currently have to access a busy road by Asda to get to Town Centre
- The bus route could be adapted to improve access to the town centre
- Other towns have accessible buses but we don't!
- How do we influence the bus service providers?
- Are we having another multi – storey car park?
- Bromsgrove's personality as a market town should not be disturbed
- We don't want to over modernise and want to retain the character of the town
- Have more events
- Consider villages and hamlets as these people's needs should be considered too
- Redesign the town centre somewhere else?
- The redevelopment of the railway centre means that we have to think about how it fits in with all other plans
- Roads – can we knock down some buildings and re-route the roads?
- Bromsgrove is attractive because of its links to other places via of the motorway network
- Bookshops and stationery shops could be made a into pleasant places to eat
- In the evening there is trouble with a small minority of young people – we would like to lose this
- The redevelopment plans need to think of something that they can go to in the evening
- Historic Buildings are vacant and they could be converted into apartments

#### **4.2 (c) What is your view of the cleanliness of the Town Centre?**

- It is cleaned regularly
- Those take away food should be made more responsible for cleaning up the take away boxes outside their shops
- McDonalds have a corporate policy on keeping the front of the street clean
- Even where bins are provided people still drop rubbish
- There is the potential to fine people under legislation
- Beyond this we need to create pride
- Looking at the scruffy aspect of the town we want to improve the appearance to the streets – the High Street looks cluttered with street furniture
- We need more high quality eateries
- We need to resurface the high street and keep all traffic out
- Only two shops haven't got rear access
- Vans are allowed to deliver to the front of shops at the worst possible times
- New entrants to the town – their mind set needs to be changed
- Affluent residents appear not to engage in local issues
- The state of the road surface makes it difficult for people with mobility problems
- Bicycles are ridden up and down and this is a danger for pedestrians

#### **4.3 Transport – Workshop facilitated by Mike Bell**

##### **4.3 (a) What do you think the district could do to improve Community Transport?**

- The Council could provide storage of personal mobility vehicles whilst the owner uses public transport
- Access to transport for wheelchairs and/ or mobility scooter users via low platforms
- Users need personal safety and security whilst using transport
- We need specific community transport such as Dial – a – Ride similar to the council run service in Redditch
- The Redditch service has limited opening times and routes
- We need a County wide solution
- There is a Bromsgrove minibus for the elderly – it is one minibus run by volunteers similar to rural rides

- Is there any possibility of Council staff undertaking voluntary work?
- There are capacity issues with vehicles and time constraints which apply to vehicles used
- There should be an 80% target of accessible vehicles
- There is a need for unification of county's services
- Bromsgrove is behind with services, schemes are already in place in other areas
- All public transport should be easily accessible and assistance services should be given by staff

#### **4.3 (b) What is your view on parking in Bromsgrove?**

- It is discriminatory - £30 for a Badge/ pass is unfair. To withdraw the pass is making use of car parks difficult for the elderly and disabled
- Bromsgrove is the only the District Council who charge for the disabled ( Blue Badge holders ) to park
- Removal of £30 pass disagreeable
- There is a mis-use of designated car park spaces for disabled people
- Disabled users and general shoppers from Bromsgrove are going elsewhere to shop
- The money raised from the car parking charges from Blue Badge holders, where it is being spent?
- The demonstration of Equality and Diversity principles is not being shown in the treatment of certain Groups
- If the cost of the parking permit was reduced by 37%, this would enable the Council to reduce the cost over one year to someone who works in Bromsgrove and has to pay for parking during working hours
- There should be reasonable costs of parking permits with blue badge holders in mind
- We need a greater number of disabled spaces and in better locations
- One view is that disabled users are not willing to pay
- The point is that the idea of a pass is to save having to go to a ticket machine

#### **4.3 (c) Are you aware of Shopmobility – what is your view?**

- We should use the money earned from the Disabled car parking charges to help fund Shopmobility
- Review the opening hours of Shopmobility, especially on a Saturday as the service is insufficient
- Review the number of vehicles and location of Shopmobility
- Have a greater awareness of disabled users needs
- Consider relocating shopmobility as more space is needed
- Provide the free use of a toilet
- Volunteers could be used to run the scheme – this is successful in other areas
- Wyre Forest have a mobile Shopmobility
- This provides access to and around shops.

#### **4.4 Customer Service – Workshop facilitated by Karen Shakespeare-Jones and Val Jarvis**

##### **4.4 (a) What is your experience of accessing the Customer Service Centre and how can we improve it?**

- The Hub is a great Service and we would just like to see a greater awareness of the services offered by the Council
- The Hub would benefit from having a better understanding of the organisations to which they can signpost residents
- Surgeries are held in the service centre by voluntary and advocacy organisations
- There could be signs to encourage residents to complete in feedback cards of their experience at the centre
- Develop some satellite Hubs in the more rural areas
- Establish a feedback board which shows ongoing comments and feedback from service users
- Ask Mary Pryce to put the new Hub poster in “Together Bromsgrove”
- Raise awareness of the email service for enquiries
- Investigate having an 0844 number so that all Worcestershire Hubs can be contacted on the same number

**4.4 (b) Are you aware of the range of services offered by the District Council?**

- There should be more promotion in relation to the services for which you can contact the Customer Service Centre
- There should be more promotion through local newspapers
- Posters advertising services could be displayed at local libraries and schools
- Have a newsletter
- The Customer Service Centre is just in the process of developing a Type Talk service for hearing impaired and deaf service users.
- Once this is operational it would be beneficial to have mystery shoppers use the system

**4.4 (c) Are you aware of the Customer Feedback system and how to access the system?**

- There is a lack of understanding of the Customer feedback system - it would be good to have greater promotion of the system
- Develop a standard article about this which goes in all the Local newsletter
- Link in with local voluntary organisations by acting as guest speakers
- Approach local organisations to act as a representative group for the Hub
- Develop a more joined up partnership approach to better use the resource of each others organisations
- The training for Customer Service staff is very robust and is delivered from a District and a County level as well as linking in with local programmes such as the Hate Crime Reporting process

#### **4.5 Sense of Community and Street Scene and Recycling**

The following questions were answered in writing during the day of the Conference.

**(a) Do you feel part of your local community? If not, why not?**

“Yes”

“Speaking on behalf of Padstone Day Centre – sometimes, as access is a big issue in the centre.”

“Yes”

**(b) What can the Council do to increase the sense of community spirit?**

“More group events would encourage the feeling.”

“Community Centre for all people and their needs in the Centre.”

**(c) Do you feel safe in your community? If not, what could the Council and its partners do to make you feel safer?**

“Yes”

“Part of the day. Night time “No” and on transport “No”.”

“Yes”

**(d) Do you think the District has less litter than 12 months ago?**

“Yes but still has hot spots”

“Yes”

“No. The area by the Spadesbourne in the Town Centre needs more regular attention as it the first thing that a visitor will see after parking near Asda.”

**(e) What improvements would you like to see to street cleansing?**

“Follow on after refuse collection.”

“Regular attention to litter hotspots to improve appearance.”

**(f) Would you like to see an improved recycling service? If yes, what improvements would you like to see?**

“Ability to accept all dry recyclables in a co-mingled format ( boxes are too heavy to carry ).”

“Yes. More recycling bins for flats and community homes.”  
“Encourage all supermarkets/ shops to recycle packaging and through them to encourage manufacturers and producers to use less packaging.”

## **5. The Inclusive Equalities Scheme – Feedback from Workshops**

**Trevor Rigg introduced this session.**

“The Inclusive Equalities Scheme was developed through consultation at the September 2006 Conference. It was published on 4th December 2006 and is currently undergoing a mid term review.

It includes the Council’s

- Race Equality Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme

For this next part of the Conference, discussion questions have been set for each of the six equality strands. The outcome of the discussions will then feed into the review of the Scheme.

The Inclusive Equalities Scheme will be updated and re-issued in December 2009 for a further 3 year period. In this discussion session on the six strands of equality please think about

- Priorities for the Equality and Diversity Forum for the next 18 months
- Outcomes we would like to see in 18 months time
- Outcomes we would like to see in 3 years time”

## **5.1 The Race Equality Scheme and the Equality Policy on Religion or Belief – Workshop facilitated by Trevor Rigg and Mr B K Chaudhari**

### **5.1(a) How should we promote good relations between persons of different racial groups?**

- We need to identify groups as in the census as a starting point
- Use the living library concept to promote good relations
- Ascertain whether there is any evidence of examples of conflict that have developed within the Bromsgrove District and how we can resolve these conflicts
- Provide information stalls at the Bromsgrove District Council and in local schools
- We need to make ourselves more accessible to gypsies and travellers
- We need to use a common language and tolerance

### **5.1 (b) How can the Council improve race equality in the way its delivers its services?**

- The Council uses Ethnic Access Link for interpreting services
- They also provide a teaching of English as a second language service
- Use the Customer Service Centres + interpreter services
- The Council should have a policy that the best person for the job gets the job
- The current image of Bromsgrove District Council is that are few ethnic minority people in professional positions
- Why is it that the Council is not visible in employing people of diverse backgrounds?
- There is a lack of opportunity for employment and a low turnover of employees
- We need statistical information to be able to comment on this question

### **5.1 (c) How can the Council meet the needs of people in relation to their religion or belief in the way it delivers its services and how it offers employment?**

- We need more facts published
- We cannot make assumptions of what people's needs/wants are
- Give people the opportunity to express their needs and desires
- Explore the needs of the growing Polish community in Bromsgrove

## **5.2 Disability and Age – Group One - Workshop facilitated by Patricia Hackett and Peter Hewitt**

### **5.2 (a) How should we promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons?**

- The question is too broad – it is easier to answer when you have a specific inequality to discuss
- In the world of work many employers are welcoming
- There is acceptance of disabled people by other employees
- Employers need to ensure that there are no structural barriers
- Employers should not make token gestures
- Equality does not mean “ to treat everyone the same” – does not work when being inclusive of different people for example Aspergers/ Autism
- It is important to see the person behind the disability – not just the disability
- Offering the same treatment does not mean equal and inclusive
- It is about having the same opportunities
- Bromsgrove does not have a large deaf or hearing impaired community
- There is a lack of translation services for those whose primary language is British Sign Language and not English.
- Improved awareness is needed of sensory impairment
- Bromsgrove District Council need to train or employ a ‘pool’ of BSL interpreters
- Initiatives tend to be tokenistic and insufficient
- Inequalities are exposed in most basic aspects – i.e. forms/ letters for all residents
- Awareness of staff would be a huge step forward

**5.2 (b) How can we effectively involve Disabled people in the development and implementation of our Disability Equality Scheme?**

- The Disabled Users Group has a diverse group of members but it could be broader
- It needs to involve people from other groups e.g. the hearing impaired and the sight impaired

**5.2 (c) How can we improve Disability Equality in the way we deliver our services?**

- Awareness for all appropriate staff and officers not just one Member
- Recognise that impairments can be caused by industrial injuries or can be from birth
- There should be broadening of training to include sensory impairment awareness
- Avoid medical model stereotypes and apply the social model

**5.2 (d) How can we improve Disability Equality in the way we offer employment?**

- The Council should be aware of Learning Disabilities and the ability of people to work when given suitable work
- The employment of people from the strands of diversity is purely to tick a box or raise the numbers of Black Minority Ethnic members
- More resources are needed and a greater understanding of actual service needs
- 'Knowing your community and having the ability to adapt as the community changes' is important
- Due to vast variations in NEED make sure that the employer can meet these needs
- There is an ability for disabled people to contribute equally through support/ representation
- There is a lack of facilities and things to do for younger people
- More engagement needed
- More diversity is needed in employment based on actual ability
- Consider how small businesses and other employers can offer more opportunities
- The District Council and the County Council need to lead by example

**5.2 (e) How can we meet the needs of people in relation to their age in the way we deliver our services?**

**5.2 (f) How can we meet the needs of people in relation to their age in the way we offer employment?**

- Age is not a disability
- Acceptance is still apparently based on age
- Disclosure of age not necessary on an application to achieve equality of opportunity
- Experience or demonstration of experience is sometimes lost. It is sometimes necessary to display this
- Bromsgrove District Council should demonstrate the Equal Impact Assessments on policy/ procedure and the training of staff
- Publish the results of the Equality Impact Assessment and the reasons for choices
- Knowledge of community is needed and the ability to adapt this
- Information publication in different areas – to access smaller groups
- Difference in style of communication leading to misconceptions/ misunderstanding
- Workshops/ training of employers should be provided to embrace
  - Sensory Impairment
  - Learning Difficulties

**5.3 Disability and Age Group Two – Workshop facilitated by Beverly Wood and Keith Sherman**

**5.3 (a) How should we promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons?**

- Show more consideration towards each other
- Raise greater awareness around body language and tone of voice
- Overcome communication difficulties
- Start to change attitudes from an early age
- Try and break down physical barriers

**5.3 (b) How can we effectively involve Disabled people in the development and implementation of our Disability Equality Scheme?**

- Project the importance of how invaluable the ideas are of disabled people
- Back to the floor i.e. officers to use a wheelchair to try and get around, as well as increased training
- Try and promote the success of what the council has achieved
- Greater success with the process if you involve the relevant service users

**5.3 (c) How can we improve Disability Equality in the way we deliver our services?**

- Better Disabled access to shops and community based organisations
- When using bells to gain attention make sure they are placed in an accessible place for wheel chair users
- All policies should be produced in an easy read version

**5.3 (d) How can we improve Disability Equality in the way we offer employment?**

- Employment can be difficult as it may effect the benefits which you are entitled to
- Developing inventive ideas to encourage people back into employment
- Make sure we make the working environment accessible
- To make links with a disability employment advisory officer at the Job Centre
- Maybe this could be the role of the economic development officer?
- The Council is currently working with Scope and Chadsgrove School to offer work experience and employment

**5.3 (e) How can we meet the needs of people in relation to their age in the way we deliver our services?**

- Run more Focus groups
- Develop different ways to allow different age groups to express themselves in their own ways
- Recognise there is no standardised way of delivering services and the approach needs to be continually changing, do not stereotype

### **5.3 (f) How can we meet the needs of people in relation to their age in the way we offer employment?**

- Flexible Working
- Do not make assumptions about people's capabilities in relation to their age
- Offer re-training where required
- Engage with the voluntary sector to encourage volunteers back into paid employment

### **5.4 Gender Equality Scheme and Equality Policy on Sexual Orientation – Workshop facilitated by Joan King**

#### **5.4 (a) How should we promote equality between men and women?**

- Make sure that everyone gets the same opportunities whether they are male or female
- People should be offered employment based on their abilities
- We need role models to encourage men or women to come forward for jobs that have traditionally been done by the opposite sex
- The 1st page of application forms are removed so this should reduce the incidence of discrimination based on sex
- Employers should make sure that the way they recruit and the working environment is sympathetic to both sexes – there is a need term time contracts and flexible working
- There are exceptions where the job is best done by a man or a woman – e.g. women's refuges, carers

#### **5.4 (b) What should the Council's gender equality aims and objectives be?**

- Monitor who is coming forward for jobs – is it always men or women?
- Is there flexibility in the job role or does the environment make it difficult for one sex or the other to do the job?
- BDHT - when advertising for a 'handy person' found that the majority of applicants were white males
- The media influence influences and controls our perceptions.
- Local councils need to take this much more seriously
- Consider advertising in specialist journals e.g. the "Pink Paper" and "Equality Britain"

- It is important to take small steps in the right direction
- People don't know whether they've got to hide their sexuality at work and this means that they can't be themselves
- In male dominated work areas there are sometimes attitudes that could make it difficult for women to work there
- Regarding the mix of elected Councillors they are generally white elderly men
- This is partly the responsibility of the political parties, partly the responsibility of the council
- Councillors duties need to be flexible and more convenient for women and men with caring responsibilities
- Where there are different needs for female service users we may need to employ female staff
- There might also be special requirements, e.g., for someone to be accompanied when carrying out house repairs – these needs are already recognised and met by BDHT

#### **5.4 (c) How can we improve gender equality in the way we deliver our services?**

- Look at the different requirements of the individual
- Try not to pre-judge
- Not being afraid to ask the question of what the clients needs actually are
- Ensuring the right equipment is available means that services do not necessarily need only be provided by men
- Dealing the public – same sensitivities apply
- Educate staff to be aware of assumptions e.g., single man could have female or male partner – when contractors in are a person's home they should be sensitive to all domestic arrangements and it should not be acceptable for unpleasant comments to be made or passed around amongst work colleagues
- Consider that people may have diverse types of relationships
- Consider the value of sharing the costs and the deliver of training between different employers

#### **5.4 (d) How can we improve gender equality in the way we offer employment?**

- Consider issues of occupational segregation where they occur in the Council
- Some jobs are still predominantly done by men or women
- There can be under representation of men or women at different levels of organisations as well as in certain types of jobs
- Make sure that the policy of equal treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation policy is indicated in job adverts
- Where there is a sexual orientation equality policy make sure it has been subject to consultation
- Listen to the point of view of outside community groups
- Bromsgrove District Housing Trust focus group will help with Bromsgrove District Council's gender equality policy
- For those with caring responsibilities, make sure there are facilities e.g. crèche's
- Consider what other services an employee may need if they live and work in an area. For example, if someone has a partner with HIV they need to be able to they feel safe if there is a need to seek services for that partner
- They need to be able to easily access information on services from sympathetic businesses e.g. Doctors, funeral directors
- Contractors need to be compliant with the council's policies – they should not necessarily seen as something separate

#### **Open Forum**

There was a general, wide ranging debate covering all the topics from the Conference and matters of interest to the community such as planning, provision of utility services in new housing developments.

Kevin then handed over to Cllr Boswell to close the Conference.

## **6. Closing remarks**

**Councillor Mrs Janice Boswell said**

“I sincerely hope that you have all had a very interesting and enjoyable day and that you think it has been worth your while.

I would like to thank

the Workshops facilitators

the Events Working Group who have put in a lot of time and effort to make this event come together

all the helpers here today, those at the door, those doing the teas and coffees and dealing with queries

I also want to thank everyone who has given up their time to attend this event.

If you would like to be kept informed of future activities please let us have your contact details – forms available at the back of the room.

Thank you and we hope to see you again soon.”

## 7. Evaluation of the Conference

Delegates completed an evaluation form at the end of the Conference which asked them to rate a series of statements questions on a scale of 1 to 5.

1 Disagree Strongly	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Agree Strongly
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6.1 The Overall content and structure of the Conference was satisfactory

65 %      Agreed  
35%      Strongly Agreed

6.2 All sessions were relevant ( If you do not agree please state which sessions)

17%      Neutral  
39%      Agreed  
44%      Strongly Agreed

An additional comment was made “Not all sessions including or covered people with learning disabilities It was mainly physical disabilities”.

6.3 The information provided was appropriate

6%      Neutral  
59%      Agreed  
35%      Strongly Agreed

6.4 Discussion sessions were of the right length

11%      Disagree  
17%      Neutral  
44%      Agree  
28%      Strongly Agree

6.5 Enough time was allowed for questions

6%	Disagree
11%	Neutral
48%	Agree
35%	Strongly Agree

6.6 The venue and the access arrangements were satisfactory

6%	Disagree
50%	Agree
44%	Strongly Agree

6.6 The catering arrangement were satisfactory and my dietary needs were met

37%	Agree
63%	Strongly Agree

6.7 The reception and helpfulness of staff was satisfactory

32%	Agree
68%	Strongly Agree

Additional comments concerning the Bromsgrove District Council Equality and Diversity Consultation Conference were made as follows.

“Such emotive issues; there could never be enough time. It is a pity our society feels compelled to group and segregate after all it is the able bodied who have created a society to meet the needs of able bodied.

Caveat: - Know your community and its needs, evolve to meet and sustain those needs and Bromsgrove will inevitably step towards achieving an all embracing community rather than a Council and its people”.

“Well organised and gave everyone an opportunity to take part in the discussions.”

“Overall – A very rewarding and fulfilling conference please make this an annual conference – so much is learnt from the day.”

“It was good to meet other groups involved with Bromsgrove Council and be allowed to ask those questions that needed to be asked.”

“Very informative, well worth attending – Food for thought.”

“Forms and information in larger or easier versions to read for people with learning disabilities. My service user ( Padstone Day Centre ) is unable to read this form but if it was simplified she would be able to complete most of it herself.”

“In the Conference Report perhaps more prominence could be given to the action points arising from the discussion and where possible an indication of when action will be taken – even if this means inclusion in a rolling programme to be included in future years budgetary plans.”

“Better than expected, Kevin’s control of meeting excellent. Acoustics not very good, shields around discussion groups would have helped.”

In addition the following comments were received after the event.

“Congratulations to you and the staff at Bromsgrove for such a good event on Saturday, it was really interesting to hear the views of those there.”

Carmel Kerr, Equality & Diversity Director, West Midlands Regional Assembly

“I thought the conference went well on Saturday, I thought it was a good atmosphere and well organised”

Phil Street, Corporate Director, Projects and Partnerships – Bromsgrove District Council

“On behalf of BDHT, I thought Saturday was great – and much of that was down to you two who had done so much preparation towards a hugely successful day. Massive well done”

Tony Lowry, Executive Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

"I'll add my thanks to Saturday's organisers, it was very well run."

Iain Tretheway, North Worcestershire Disability, Information and Advice Line

"Dear All

Just a quick note to say well done, it was an excellent day last Saturday in the Spadesbourne Suite. It was good to see so many representatives from the different Groups and also more Councillors in attendance than last year. Speaking with the representatives from the Groups during the day, the work done by you all has been so very much appreciated and I just had to let you know – credit for all your dedication and hard work.

Kind regards, Cllr. Caroline Spencer"

## 8. List of attenders and apologies

### Attending

Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove resident
Rohail Aslam	Waterhouse Consulting
Sandy Bannister	Worcester County Council
Ann Batchelor	Bromsgrove resident
Mike Bell	Head of Street Scene and Community
Councillor Mrs M Bunker	Bromsgrove District Council
Councillor Mrs J Boswell	Chairman, Bromsgrove District Council
Mike Carrick	Bromsgrove resident
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove resident
Janet Dean	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Andy Coel	Strategic Housing Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
Kevin Dicks	Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Mark Eastwood	The Artrix
Kim Edmunds	Sensory Impairment Team Worcester County Council
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove and District Older People's Forum
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic
Joanne Floyd	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Adrian Fowler	Wythall resident
Patricia Fowler	Wythall resident
Jon Fraser	Community and Response Manager, Highways Department, Worcester County Council
Patricia Hackett	Mencap
Mr W Halligan	Bromsgrove resident
Peter Hewitt	Mencap service user
Councillor Mr D Hancox	Bromsgrove District Council
Sandra Hill	Day Services Manager, Bromsgrove and Redditch, Worcester County Council
Kaz Izmajilowicz	Ethnic Access Link
Sarah Kelsey	Equalities Assistant, Bromsgrove District Council
Carmel Kerr	Equality & Diversity Director West Midlands Regional Assembly

Val Jarvis	Customer Service Centre, Bromsgrove District Council
Karen Shakespeare–Jones	Worcester County Council
Carmel Kerr	West Midlands Regional Assembly
Trevor Jones	Belbroughton Parish Council
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Janice King	The Gender Trust
Lisa Kite	Red Kite Health Foods, Bromsgrove
Jenny Lammas	Padstone Day Centre service user
P A Lammas	North Worcestershire Disability and Advice Information Line
Sally Langley	Advocacy Team, Bromsgrove and Redditch
Patricia Louche	Not known
Janine Lowe	Communications Plus BSL Interpreter
Tony Lowry	Executive Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Tony Love	Chief Inspector West Mercia Police
Lynda Maus	Support Worker
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association Service Users
Councillor Mr E Murray	Bromsgrove District Council
Margaret Norton	Bromsgrove resident
Jayne Oakes	Communications Plus BSL interpreter
Ajoke Ojikulum	Waterhouse Consulting
Jayne Pickering	Head of Financial Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Jo Pitman	Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development, Bromsgrove District Council
Trevor Rigg	Chairman of the Equality and Diversity Forum
Joe Scott	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Fiona Scott	Bromsgrove District Council
Councillor Mr S Shannon	Bromsgrove District Council
Keith Sherman	Chief Officer, Age Concern Bromsgrove and District
Councillor Mrs M Sherrey	Bromsgrove District Council
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire Disability and Advice Information Line

Councillor Mrs C Spencer	Bromsgrove District Council
Phil Street	Corporate Director of Projects and Partnerships, Bromsgrove District Council
Councillor Mr J Tidmarsh	Bromsgrove District Council
Iain Trethewey	North Worcestershire Disability and Advice Information Line
Annette Trow	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Anjela Tsang	Padstone Day Centre, support worker
Doug Turland	West Mercia Police
Chris Walters	Rural access project worker, City of Greater Bendigo, Australia
PC Julie Wright	West Mercia Police
Beverley Wood	Disability, Diversity and Equalities Trainer

## Apologies

Mr Baker	Alvechurch resident
Tony Beirne	Director of Services
Hugh Bennett	Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Mary Collett	Worcestershire Association Service Users
Mr and Miss Crossland	Bromsgrove residents
Councillor Mr J Duddy	Bromsgrove District Council
John Godwin	Head of Culture and Leisure Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Councillor G Denaro	Bromsgrove District Council
Andy Hall	Hall Solutions
Dave Hammond	Head of Planning and Environmental Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Sofia Jabeen	Worcester County Council
Wayne Knighton	Bromsgrove resident
Peter Michael	Economic Development and Town Centre Manager
Deb Poole	Head of Customer Service and e-Government, Bromsgrove District Council
Ann Sowton	Bromsgrove and Redditch Network
Paul Whitehouse	Bromsgrove resident
Beth Williams	The Basement Project
Andy Woods	The Artrix

## 9. Acknowledgements

We would especially like to thank the Events Working Group for their time and effort in helping to plan and organise this Conference. The Events Working Group were

Jeff Edwards  
Joan King  
Joe Scott  
Patricia Hackett  
Sarah Kelsey ( on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council )

On the day we were especially grateful for the support and assistance of helpers, speakers and facilitators

Mr B K Chaudhari	Andy Coel
Janet Dean	Jeff Edwards
Jon Fraser	Joanne Floyd
Peter Hewitt	Patricia Hackett
Val Jarvis	Karen Shakespeare-Jones
Joan King	Trevor Rigg
Joe Scott	Keith Sherman
Phil Street	Annette Trow
Chris Walters	Beverly Wood

## **10. Biographical background of speakers and workshop facilitators**

### **Beverley Wood - Disability, Diversity and Equalities Trainer**

Beverley has worked extensively in the fields of disability, diversity and equalities for over 12 years.

Working across the private, public, voluntary and not-for-profit business sectors she has worked with wide variety of organisations with differing needs and levels of awareness of disability, diversity and equalities. Clients include: British Gas, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Birmingham City Council, Bromsgrove District Council, Relate, Age Concern, Voluntary Support Organisations and Social Enterprises across the West Midlands.

Beverley has worked with executive management and front line staff, and has designed tailor made courses for clients to ensure they receive appropriate and effective training. She also works with clients to develop strategic solutions using diversity for successful organisations, strategies for change within organisations, and coaches one-to-one on disability issues.

Beverley has conducted research into diversity, working with large, private sector UK and US organisations in order to establish why organisations engaged in diversity do well and how they do it. In so doing she has produced a toolkit which has been used widely throughout the Not-for-Profit sector. She has also commissioned research which opened a wide debate around the ethics of some social firms for the benefit of grant providers for social inclusion.

She has been a director of the Birmingham Independent Living Project, which promoted independent living for Disabled People in Birmingham, and a chair and chief executive of the West Midlands Disability Arts Forum, which supports and lobbies on behalf of disabled artists in the West Midlands.

Beverley identifies as a Disabled Person.

## **Patricia Hackett          Mencap**

I have worked in the Learning Disability field for nearly 25 years.

I worked firstly in a Social Education Centre in Bromsgrove (Social Services) for over 6 years in the clerical office. During this time there I was also involved in leisure and holiday activities outside my area of work.

Started work with Royal Mencap Society in 1989 firstly as a support worker in Residential Care.

In 1994 started work within Royal Mencap Society as a Leisure Development Officer. Due to reorganisation and restructure over the years the job changed to District Officer and now Community Development Officer covering Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

I have been Involved in working with voluntary, community and statutory authorities throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire including Learning Disability Partnership Boards.

I Work with the local Mencap affiliated groups, as well as a director of BARN (Bromsgrove and Redditch Networking). I am also a member of Bromsgrove District Council Equality and Diversity Forum, Disabled Users Group, Compact Group and Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership Board, and a member of the West Mercia Police Disability Independent Advisory Group.

## **Joan King - Gender Trust**

Professionally I have worked for both National and International organisations coordinating procurement and sales within the Engineering and logistical industries. I have also worked for two gender charities, the first as Sales coordinator selling diversity training to organisations and companies. I then joined The Gender Trust which is based in Brighton, first as a regional representative, moving on to becoming a member of the Board of Trustees, being responsible for Regional Representatives and the National Helpline Volunteers. The Gender Trust was formed to help and support the many people diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria. Within the session I will try to clear some of the myths and misunderstandings that surround Gender Dysphoria, giving an overview of the trials and problems a person has to face during the transition period and future life.

## **Keith Sherman -Chief Officer, Age Concern Bromsgrove & District**

### Profile

“Having spent much of my working life in ‘education’ undertaking a variety of rolls including teacher, youth worker and careers advisor, and positions of responsibility including parent Governor, I moved into the not for profit/Community and Voluntary Sector ten years ago.

Initially I worked in Gloucestershire, where I completed a project for Gloucester City Council supporting Community and Voluntary Sector groups offering continuing education opportunities and advice, and was then offered the opportunity to established and develop the City’s Home Improvement Agency, Care & Repair Gloucester.

In 2002 I moved to Worcestershire as Chief Officer of AGE Concern Bromsgrove & District and have progressively increased my involvement locally, regionally and nationally both within the Age Concern federation and within the Community and Voluntary Sector. In the recent past I was privileged to be one of the Sector’s ‘Voices’ on the County Council’s Best Value Review of their relationship with the Sector, and now, in addition to being the Regional Representative on Age Concerns national ‘Health & Social Care Partnership’, I am a Director/Trustee of both BARN [the Bromsgrove & Redditch Network] and WAVOCC [the Worcestershire Association of Voluntary Organisations in Community Care], and an advisor to the Bromsgrove Action Group for Older People.

Age Concern is a federation of some 360 local, sub-regional and national charities whose shared mission is to promote the well-being of all older people, helping to make later life a more fulfilling and enjoyable experience. There are a number of values and principles that underpin and guide how members of the federation work to achieve that mission on behalf of older people, which I fully endorse. These include the beliefs that:

- Ageism is unacceptable: all forms of unfair discrimination, and/or unfair treatment on grounds of age should be challenged
- All people have the right to make informed decisions about their lives: at every stage in their life people should be provided with appropriate help to discover and exercise that right

- All people have the right to live their lives with dignity: any person of any age less able to help them self should be offered appropriate support to do so
- Diversity is valuable and valued in all that society does: the diversity of people at every stage of their life and their differing needs, choices, cultures and values should be equally recognised

It is only through working together that we can use our local, regional and national presence to the greatest effect to implement these beliefs.”

## **12. Glossary**

<b>BARN</b>	<b>Bromsgrove and Redditch Network</b>
<b>BDC</b>	<b>Bromsgrove District Council</b>
<b>BDHT</b>	<b>Bromsgrove District Housing Trust</b>
<b>BSL</b>	<b>British Sign Language</b>
<b>EAL</b>	<b>Ethnic Access Link</b>
<b>NWDIAL</b>	<b>North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line</b>



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### **Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services**

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

Telephone: (01527) 881288, Fax: (01527) 881414, DX: 17279 Bromsgrove

e-mail: [equalities@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@bromsgrove.gov.uk)