



Breckland

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

December 2006 – December 2009



Breckland Council

Celebrating Diversity

“Breckland Council will work in partnership with others to deliver quality services in a manner which is fair for all sectors of the community it serves.”



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the Policy Team on 01362 656 870 or on email at equalities@breckland.gov.uk and we will do our best to help.

CONTENTS

Section		Page Nos
1	Introduction	1
2	Where we are now	2
3	Involving disabled people	2
4	Impact assessment	3
5	Action plan	3
6	Monitoring and review	3
	<i>Appendix 1: Feedback form</i>	4
	<i>Appendix 2: Action Plan</i>	5 - 12

Section One: Introduction

This Disability Equality Scheme (DES) sets out Breckland Council's priorities and key actions for the next three years to demonstrate how we intend to fulfil our statutory duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. It complements the Norfolk Partnership Disability Equality Scheme.

Breckland Council will work in partnership with others to deliver quality services in a manner which is fair for all sectors of the community we serve. We are committed to equality of opportunity and value diversity in both the provision of services and in our role as a major employer in the Breckland district. This DES is one of a series of documents that form part of the Council's comprehensive Equality Strategy, which includes the Race Equality Scheme, and has the following aims:

- E1 To improve service provision which reflects the needs of our diverse district resulting in improved satisfaction across all areas and a decrease in complaints;
- E2 To provide better access to service and more accessible services;
- E3 To meet all of our legal duties in relation to equal opportunities;
- E4 To have a workforce that is representative of the district;
- E5 To address social, economic and geographical disadvantage; and
- E6 To work in partnership to ensure equalities issues are dealt with effectively across the district.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) has been amended so that it now places a duty on all public authorities to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. The Specific Duty requires us to publish a Disability Equality Scheme and to involve disabled people in its development. The General Duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

The DDA's definition of a disabled person includes people with a sensory impairment, a physical impairment, a learning disability, a mental health difficulty, a person with cancer, and people with HIV or Aids.

Section Two: Where we are now

Some people may experience discrimination and prejudice due to their disability. As a local authority, we are aware that there are many different needs to be considered regarding the way we deliver our services and carry out our role as a major employer. Along with the other partners, we recognise the Social Model of Disability, which focuses on the ability of disabled people, not their disabilities. (*The Social Model approach states that people with impairments are disabled by physical and social barriers, as opposed to the Medical Model approach which states that disabled people are unable to participate in society as a direct result of their impairment.*)

There is a lack of current data about exactly how many people in Breckland have a disability. However, information from the 2001 Census show us that 18.58% of Breckland residents have a limiting long-term illness (compared to 19.36% in Norfolk as a whole, 16.21% for the region and 17.93% nationally). 34.08% of Breckland households have one or more person with a limiting long-term illness.

As at 30 June 2006, 4.55% of the total workforce at Breckland Council declared themselves as having a disability under the Act.

To address disability issues, we have developed a number of initiatives working with internal, external, statutory and voluntary organisations, and individual members of the public (e.g. the Breckland Disability Forum) to remove the barriers that prevent access to our services, information, employment opportunities, and buildings used by the public.

Section Three: Involving disabled people

The overarching Norfolk Partnership Disability Scheme (Appendix A) sets out the partnership approach to produce this Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and the programme of work for involving disabled people using various methods and Section Three of Appendix A summarises the results.

To address those issues relating specifically to disabled people from the district, the Breckland Disability Forum (BDF) was formed in May 2006 and was actively engaged in the development the Breckland DES and its associated Action Plan. The BDF's steering group will meet regularly to monitor and affirm the Action Plan's desired outcomes. In August 2006, staff at Breckland Council completed a survey to ascertain their perception of the Council as an employer in relation to equalities' issues; the results of which contributed to the development of the DES and Action Plan.

Section Four: Impact assessment

Breckland Council has implemented a programme for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for assessing the impact, or the likely impact, of its proposed and current policies and practices on equality for disabled persons. EIAs will include the promotion of equality of opportunity, including consideration for where the different parts of the Disability Equality Duty, such as promoting positive attitudes, might be built into those policies and practices. The findings of these EIAs will be used to develop this Scheme and Action Plan. EIAs apply not only to new policies, functions and practices, but also established ones.

Section Five: Action Plan

This three-year Action Plan (Appendix 2) sets out key actions Breckland Council will take to promote disability equality as both a service provider and as an employer. The Action Plan is divided into distinct outcome areas of development:

- Improving employment attitudes
- Improving staff attitudes
- Improving communication
- Providing information
- Public involvement
- Improving housing provision

Section 6: Monitoring and Review

Progress towards the desired outcomes will be monitored by the Breckland Disability Forum on an annual basis.

Breckland Council will also review on a regular basis the effectiveness of the steps set out in the Action Plan and will review the Scheme every three years. Each year, Breckland Council will publish on the Council's website, a report containing:

- a summary of the Action Plan's progress;
- the results of any evidence gathered in relation to disability equality; and
- actions to be taken as a result of the evidence gathered.

APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK FORM

Breckland Council welcomes your feedback on its Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. Please use this form for any comments/suggestions you have and return it to:

The Policy Team (Mitch Kerry or Peter Dinsmore)
Breckland Council
Elizabeth House, Wapole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE

email: equalities@breckland.gov.uk tel: (01362) 656870



Thank you.

APPENDIX 2: Disability Scheme for Breckland – Action Plan 2006 – 2009

Outcome area for development: Providing employment opportunities

Portfolio Service Service Head Service Area	Lead Officer/Group	Action + Desired outcome	Timescale/ Milestones/ Benchmarks	Link to BDC Equality Aims
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Human Resources <i>Service Head:</i> Peter Jermy <i>Service Area:</i> Recruitment	Naomi Russell	Action: Improve advertising procedures for the recruitment of disabled people. Outcome: More disabled people will apply for and be successful in gaining employment with the Council.	Advertising procedures to be reviewed annually (September 2007 onwards).	E4, E5
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Human Resources <i>Service Head:</i> Peter Jermy <i>Service Area:</i> Recruitment	Naomi Russell	Action: Improve short-listing procedures to ensure disabled applicants who meet the essential requirements are guaranteed an interview. Outcome: More disabled people will be interviewed for appropriate vacancies.	New procedures to be incorporated into training for officers who carry out recruitment – January 2007 onwards.	E4, E5
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Human Resources <i>Service Head:</i> Peter Jermy <i>Service Area:</i> Recruitment	Naomi Russell	Action: Employment procedures to be reviewed and updated in-line with legislation. Outcome: There will be no barriers to employment within the Council.	Rolling basis – in line with legislation.	E4, E5, E6

<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Human Resources <i>Service Head:</i> Peter Jermy <i>Service Area:</i> Recruitment	Naomi Russell	Action: Review the use of the 'two ticks' disability symbol. Outcome: To ascertain whether this is still required in addition to our equalities policy ('celebrating diversity'.)	September 2007.	E3, E4
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Human Resources <i>Service Head:</i> Peter Jermy <i>Service Area:</i> Recruitment and Retention	Peter Dinsmore Peter Jermy	Action: Establish a realistic central budget for workplace aids, adaptations and equipment. Outcome: Central budget for workplace aids, adaptations and equipment will enable staff who require such services to receive them quickly, ideally prior to starting/returning to work.	September 2007.	E4, E5
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Human Resources <i>Service Head:</i> Peter Jermy <i>Service Area:</i> Recruitment	Naomi Russell	Action: Develop a positive action strategy for the recruitment of disabled people. Outcome: Staff who acquire disabilities during employment will be supported back into employment within the authority.	Sickness procedure to be reviewed – September 2007.	E3, E4, E5

Outcome area for development: Improving staff attitudes

Portfolio Service Service Head Service Area	Lead Officer/Group	Action + Desired outcome	Timescale/ Milestones/ Benchmarks	Link to BDC Equality Aims
<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i>	Peter Dinsmore	Action: Provide training for all staff in disability issues to enable them to give appropriate service to disabled people. Outcome: All staff will have awareness/understanding/in-depth knowledge of disabilities to the level needed to carry out the duties of their post.	Annual assessment and reporting (September).	E1, E2, E3, E5

Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy				
<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy	Peter Dinsmore and Lisa Hilton	Action: Provide mandatory training on disability issues for all staff involved in the recruitment process. Outcome: All staff involved in recruitment will be aware of disability issues and able to support candidates/new employees with disabilities.	December 2006 - ongoing	E4, E5
<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy	Peter Dinsmore	Action: Provide appropriate training and support for new employees and their colleagues on disability issues. Outcome: New employees and their colleagues will have a greater understanding of the needs of disabled people and know how to access support within the Council.	Corporate equalities training programme - 31 March 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5

Outcome area for development: Improving communication

Portfolio Service Service Head Service Area	Lead Officer/Group	Action + Desired outcome	Timescale/ Milestones/ Benchmarks	Link to BDC Equality Aims
<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy	Peter Dinsmore + Mary Palmer	Action: Ensure that all staff know how and where to access communication in a range of formats. Outcome: Staff will be able to respond to customer requests for information in various methods quickly and easily.	December 2006 – ongoing.	E1 E2, E3, E5

<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy	Peter Dinsmore + Mary Palmer + Service Managers	Action: Ensure that provision is made for effective communication in meetings, training events etc. Outcome: Members of the public and staff with disabilities will be able to take a full and active part in all meetings/events organised by the Council.	December 2006 – ongoing.	E1, E2, E3, E5
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy	Peter Dinsmore + Consultation Group	Action: Become a model of good practice in consulting disabled people. Outcome: An audit trail is produced to demonstrate that the Council uses best practice when consulting disabled people.	Draft good practice toolkit – December 2006. Final toolkit June 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6

Outcome area for development: Providing information

Portfolio Service Area Service Head Service Area	Lead Officer/Group	Action + Desired outcome	Timescale/ Milestones/ Benchmarks	Link to BDC Equality Aims
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Marketing & Communications <i>Service Head:</i> Mary Palmer <i>Service Area:</i> Communications	Mary Palmer	Action: Ensure that disabled people are able to take up services and benefits available to them through the accessibility of information in a range of appropriate formats. Outcome: All information will be available in appropriate format on request.	Investigate available formats with INTRAN and Pearl Linguistics. All communications (including website) to advertise availability of information in alternative formats on request – March 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5

<p><i>Portfolio:</i> People First</p> <p><i>Service:</i> Marketing & Communications</p> <p><i>Service Head:</i> Mary Palmer</p> <p><i>Service Area:</i> Communications</p>	Mary Palmer	<p>Action: Ensure that all forms produced by the Council are clear and concise and only ask for information which is essential for the service or benefits applied for.</p> <p>Outcome: All information will be easily read and understood by all residents, visitors and those who work in the district.</p>	As above.	E1, E2, E3, E5
<p><i>Portfolio:</i> People First</p> <p><i>Service:</i> Marketing & Communications</p> <p><i>Service Head:</i> Mary Palmer</p> <p><i>Service Area:</i> Communications</p>	Mary Palmer	<p>Action: Ensure that information regarding how our services can be delivered to suit different needs use an appropriate media to send out the message, e.g. talking news, newspapers, e-mail, radio, tapes, BSL, other languages.</p> <p>Outcome: All service areas are aware of and understand the use of various formats.</p>	Compilation of existing information available within the Council - April 2007 and production of up-to-date guidelines made available on the intranet – ongoing.	E1, E2, E3, E5
<p><i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet</p> <p><i>Service:</i> Policy</p> <p><i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis</p> <p><i>Service Area:</i> Policy</p>	Mitch Kerry	<p>Action: Develop and circulate reliable information on disabled people within Breckland.</p> <p>Outcome: Accurate information on the numbers of disabled people in the district, including a summary of the range of disabilities and ideas on best practice for catering for the needs of disabled people.</p>	December 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6
<p><i>Portfolio:</i> Commercial and Community</p> <p><i>Service:</i> Community Services</p> <p><i>Service Head:</i> Gill Tavender</p> <p><i>Service Area:</i> Community Development</p>	Gill Tavender	<p>Action: All appropriate services within the Council will encourage, provide information to, and facilitate access to funding, to enable disabled people to develop community projects.</p> <p>Outcome: Available funding streams and other advice on how to develop community projects will be provided on request.</p>	Complete EIA by 31 March 2007. Action planning April 2007 onwards.	E1, E2, E5, E6

<i>Portfolio:</i> Economic <i>Service:</i> Economic Development <i>Service Head:</i> Mark Stanton <i>Service Area:</i> Business start-up	Mark Stanton	Action: All appropriate services within the Council will encourage, provide information to, and facilitate access to funding, to enable disabled people to start up in business. Outcome: Available funding streams and other advice on how to start up a business will be provided on request.	As above.	E1, E2, E5, E6
<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Anglia Revenues Partnership <i>Service Head:</i> Steve Knights <i>Service Area:</i> Benefits	Sharon Jones	Action: Provide 4 advice sessions to promote and encourage take up of benefit for hard to reach groups. Outcome: Increase take up and improve understanding of Housing and Council Tax benefits.	Annually (December).	E1, E3, E5, E6

Outcome area for development: Public involvement

Portfolio Service Area Service Head Service Area	Lead Officer/Group	Action + Desired outcome	Timescale/ Milestones/ Benchmarks	Link to BDC Equality Aims
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Democratic Services <i>Service Head:</i> Ian Vargeson <i>Service Area:</i> Standards	Sue Allen + Peter Dinsmore	Action: Enhance the corporate compliments and complaints procedure to ensure that it monitors by a range of diversity categories, including disability. Outcome: Monitoring of complaints will enable the Council to identify issues/barriers to access by disabled people.	Review compliments and complaints system by 31 March 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5

<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Marketing & Communications <i>Service Head:</i> Mary Palmer <i>Service Area:</i> Communications	Alison Sawyer	Action: Ensure best practice guidance in 'Accessibility Matters 3: making public involvement accessible' is followed by all staff. Outcome: Consultation fatigue will be avoided.	January 2007 onwards.	E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6
<i>Portfolio:</i> Cabinet <i>Service:</i> Policy & Performance <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Policy	Peter Dinsmore	Action: Ensure that the Breckland Disability Forum is actively engaged and consulted on services provided by the Council that may have an impact on disabled people. Outcome: Ensure better engagement with disabled people when reviewing/monitoring services.	January 2007 onwards.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6
<i>Portfolio:</i> People First <i>Service:</i> Democratic Services <i>Service Head:</i> Keith Davis <i>Service Area:</i> Elections	Sue Wright	Action: Review polling stations for 100% accessibility at all stations. Outcome: 100% accessible polling stations – increased voting opportunities for disabled people.	Review to be completed by May 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5

Outcome area for development: Improving housing provision

Portfolio Service Area Service Head Service Area	Lead Officer/Group	Action + Desired outcome	Timescale/ Milestones/ Benchmarks	Link to BDC Equality Aims
<i>Portfolio:</i> Environment <i>Service:</i> Strategic Housing <i>Service Head:</i> Anita Brennan <i>Service Area:</i>	Anita Brennan	Action: Full consultation with disabled people on the drafting of the Choice Based Letting Scheme. Outcome: The needs of disabled people taken into consideration in the allocation of social housing.	June 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6

Housing Advice and Homelessness				
<i>Portfolio:</i> Environment Services <i>Service:</i> Strategic Housing <i>Service Head:</i> Anita Brennan <i>Service Area:</i> Strategy and Enabling	Anita Brennan	Action: Incorporate results of consultation with the Physical and Sensory Disability Client Group under Supporting People in the development of a housing and housing support strategy for new and existing housing services. Outcome: A housing and housing support strategy incorporating the needs of the physical and sensory disability client group.	Draft Strategy – June 2007. Final Strategy – July 2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6
<i>Portfolio:</i> Environment Services <i>Service:</i> Strategic Housing <i>Service Head:</i> Anita Brennan <i>Service Area:</i> Strategy and Enabling	Anita Brennan	Action: For all new housing schemes in the market towns (of a suitable size and nature to trigger an affordable housing contribution), the Council will seek at least 1 wheelchair bungalow as new provision. Outcome: Increased accessible affordable housing for disabled people.	January 2007 onwards.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6
<i>Portfolio:</i> Environment Services <i>Service:</i> Strategic Housing <i>Service Head:</i> Anita Brennan <i>Service Area:</i> Private Housing Sector	Anita Brennan	Action: Increase percentage of priority 1 and 2 Disabled Facilities Grants approved within 60 days from receipt of completed documentation. Outcome: Increased accessible affordable housing for disabled people.	Target of 90% for priority 1 2006/2007.	E1, E2, E3, E5, E6

Produced by the Policy Team, Breckland Council, December 2006
To be reviewed December 2008
G:\Policy and Equalities\worddata\Equalities\Disabilities\FINAL Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2008.doc