



*2006-2007
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Culture and Sport for
Hard to Reach Groups*

REVISED SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

2010 - 2013

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SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME: 2008 - 2011

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BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL – REVISED SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

1. INTRODUCTION

Revised Single Equality Scheme

In order to address the varying review dates of the existing Disability, Race and Gender equality schemes and to bring these and the Single Equality Scheme into alignment with the Council's 3 year Medium Term Plans, the existing scheme and action plan have been reviewed and up-dated.

The Revised Single Equality Scheme provides a clear approach to equality and diversity across all equality groups, including age, disability, gender, religion and belief, race and sexual orientation, to minimise duplication and to set out an equality action plan (Appendix 1) showing how we will deliver our commitments to all equality groups.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Babergh District Council's Equality and Diversity Policy is a statement demonstrating that we are committed to:

- promoting equality of opportunity
- ensuring that equality and diversity are considered in our policy making, service delivery and employment

The policy has been revised in anticipation of the forthcoming changes to the equality legislation. However, our key commitments remain the same.

The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy can be found on www.babergh.gov.uk.

2. BABERGH'S PLEDGES

We will:

- Seek and listen to the views of individuals and communities and recognise their differing needs.
- Treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect.

Babergh's Strategic Plan 2008-2018 and 3 Year Medium Term Plans 2010 - 2013, which can be found on www.babergh.gov.uk, sets out 'Vibrant Places and Strong Communities' as one of its key themes. This was one of the five themes identified by seeking the views of local people, partners and stakeholders through a variety of consultation methods over the period 2006 and 2007. Under this theme, we are aiming to achieve the following outcomes by 2018:

- A reduction in the impact of rural isolation on parts of the district particularly limited access to affordable housing, transport and jobs;
- Active local villages and communities;
- Increased take-up of developmental opportunities and activities by children and young people particularly from isolated or income deprived areas;
- People have effective and convenient access to the public services they need by physical, telecommunications or other electronic means;
- Public services appropriately reflect the needs, aspirations and choices of individuals from different groups, such as older people, in their design, resourcing and delivery;
- Individuals have a sense of belonging within cohesive communities and where everyone is valued;
- Vulnerable people are supported to live in the community;
- More people are involved in local decision making and participate in democratic processes which appropriately reflect the diversity of local communities.

3. BACKGROUND

(i) THE DISTRICT

Babergh is in the southern part of Suffolk and has a long border with the County of Essex. It stretches as far east as the Shotley Peninsula, between the ports of Felixstow (Suffolk Coastal District Council) and Harwich (Tendring District Council) and borders St Edmundsbury Borough Council to the north-west and Mid-Suffolk to the north. It is mainly rural in nature, with the main population areas centred on the market towns of Hadleigh and Sudbury. Whilst it remains very rural, it is within close and convenient distance to London and the Continent. The district covers an area of 230 square miles. There are twenty-seven political wards and seventy-six parishes. The Council has no overall political control.

(ii) BABERGH'S POPULATION

The following age data is from ONS Mid-Year 2008 Population Estimates.

Total Population	87,000
Males – All ages	42,300
Females – All ages	44,600
Children – 0-15 years	16,500
Working Age – 16-64M/59F	49,400
Older people – 65M/60F	21,000

The information below has been taken from the 2001 Census. The Census information is unlikely to include Gypsies and travellers, refugees, asylum seekers or more recently, economic migrants.

People with limiting long-term illness	13,422
People without limiting long-term illness	70,039
Ethnic Group	
Asian or Asian British: All categories	212
Black British: All categories	159
Chinese: All categories	
Mixed: All categories	219
White : All categories	482
	82,389
Religion	
Christian	63,036
Buddhist	130
Hindu	59
Jewish	84
Muslim	136
Sikh	9
Other Religion	222
No Religion	13,641
Religion not stated	6,144

Sexual Orientation – Estimate
(2005 Government estimates that 6% of people in this age range are Lesbian or Gay)

Total All People Over Age 15 years (ONS at Mid-2008 published August 2009)	Estimated Lesbian or Gay People
70,500	4,200

People who are disabled
(ONS Annual Population Survey April 2008 – March 2009)

(Working age is 16 to 59 women and 16 to 64 men)

Economically Active Population of Working Age	People who are disabled (DDA, have work limiting disability or both)
43,400	5,400

NB: Further demographic information can be found on:
<http://www.suffolkobservatory.com/> and <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/>

4. DUTIES UNDER EQUALITIES LEGISLATION

The revised Single Equality Scheme covers public sector duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005) and the Equality Act 2006 (Gender Duty).

(i) RACE RELATIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 2000

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, we are required to undertake certain actions within the general and specific duties.

The **General Duties** under this act require us have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between different racial groups

The specific duties require all listed public bodies to publish a race equality scheme (this Single Equality Scheme) that identifies all functions/policies that are relevant to race equality. The scheme should be a timetabled and realistic plan, setting out the public body's arrangements for meeting the general and specific duties. They must also set out arrangements to:

- Assess and consult on the likely impact proposed policies will have on the promotion of race equality found in our race equality impact assessment guidance
- Monitor policies for adverse impact
- Publish the results of the impact assessments, consultation and monitoring
- Make sure the public have access to information and services
- Train staff on both the general and specific duties
- Review the list of functions/policies at least every three years

Under the race equality duty, all listed public bodies must monitor their staff by racial group (using the categories of the 2001 census) for: staff in post and applications for employment, and promotion and training. Employers with over 150 staff must also monitor for training, performance appraisals, grievances, disciplinary action and reasons for leaving their employment. These monitoring findings must be published annually.

(ii) DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 2005

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, we are required to undertake certain actions within the general and specific duties.

The **General Duties** under this act require us to:

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under this act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life

The specific duties require all listed public bodies to publish a disability equality scheme (this Single Equality Scheme), demonstrating how they intend to fulfill their general and specific duties. Public bodies should involve disabled people in the development of the scheme, implement the action plan set out in the scheme, and review and revise the scheme every three years.

The scheme should include:

- Information about how disabled people have been involved in its development
- The authority's methods for undertaking impact assessments
- An action plan setting out the steps it will take to meet the general duty
- Arrangements for gathering information on the effect of the authority's policies and practices on disabled people
- Arrangements for using this information, including reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan and preparing subsequent disability equality schemes

Public bodies should report annually on: the steps taken in the action plan, the results of their information gathering and how this information has been used.

(iii) GENDER EQUALITY DUTY

The Gender Equality Duty [GED] is a legal obligation which came into force in April 2007. It was introduced by the Equality Act 2006, which in turn amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. We are required to undertake certain actions within the general and specific duties.

The **General Duty** requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination
- Eliminate unlawful harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The specific duties require all listed public bodies to produce a gender equality scheme (this Single Equality Scheme) showing how it intends to fulfill the general and specific duties. It should also set out the gender equality objectives that the authority has identified for meeting the duty.

In preparing a scheme, public bodies should:

- Consult employees, service users and others (including trade unions)
- Take into account any information it has gathered on how its policies and practices affect gender equality in employment and the delivery of services
- In formulating its gender equality objectives, consider the need to have objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.

The scheme should:

- Set out how the authority will gather information on the gender equality in employment, services and performance of its functions
- Use this information to review the implementation of the scheme's objectives
- Assess the impact of its current and future policies and practices on gender equality
- Consult relevant employees, service users and others (including trade unions)
- Ensure implementation of the scheme objectives.

5. OTHER EQUALITY LEGISLATION

In addition to the Acts noted above there are other relevant pieces of legislation which impact on our work on equality and diversity.

(i) AGE

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 outlaw age discrimination against employees (including applicants for jobs). We cannot discriminate against people in relation to recruitment and selection, access to training and development, promotion opportunities, and retirement.

(ii) RELIGION AND BELIEF

The European Union's Equality Framework Directive 2000 became law in December 2003, making it illegal to discriminate either directly or indirectly against anyone on the grounds of religion or belief.

The Employment Equality Regulations 2003 offer protection against discrimination in religion or belief in the workplace. With the addition of the new powers granted by the Equality Act 2006 it is unlawful (with exemptions) to discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief in the following areas:

- The provision of goods, facilities and services
- The disposal and management of premises
- Education

The Equality Act 2006 offers additional protection to people who do not have a faith. The legislation also covers discrimination on the grounds of perceived as well as actual religion or belief and the religion or belief of someone with whom the person associates

(iii) SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation is defined as an orientation to the same sex, the opposite sex, or the same and opposite sex.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment. Additional powers were introduced by the Equality Act 2006, and it became unlawful (with exemptions) to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the following areas:

- The provision of goods, facilities and services
- The disposal and management of premises
- Education

The law also covers discrimination against someone because of a perception about their sexual orientation, even if that perception is not correct.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 gave same-sex couples the same rights as married heterosexual couples.

6. EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Bill was introduced in the House of Commons in April 2009 and received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010, formally becoming the Equality Act 2010. The Act reduces nine major pieces of legislation and approximately one-hundred statutory instruments into a single Act in order to make the law more accessible and easier to understand.

The single equality duty in the act requires public bodies to consider the diverse needs and requirements of their workforce and the communities they serve, when developing employment policies and planning services.

The Act:

1. Introduces a new public sector duty to consider **reducing socio-economic inequalities**;
2. Puts a new integrated **Equality Duty** on public bodies;
3. Uses **public procurement** to improve equality;
4. Bans **age discrimination** outside the workplace;
5. Requires **gender pay** and employment equality publishing;
6. Extends the scope to use **positive action**;
7. Strengthens the **powers of employment tribunals**;
8. Protects **carers** from discrimination;
9. Clarifies the protection for **breastfeeding mothers**;
10. Bans discrimination in **private members' clubs**;
11. Strengthens protection from discrimination for **disabled people**; and
12. Protects people from **dual discrimination** - direct discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics.

What the Act means for different people

People from disadvantaged backgrounds

The new duty set out in clause one of the Equality Act will require Government departments, local authorities and key health bodies to consider, in all the strategic decisions they make, how they will tackle the disadvantage some people face because of socio-economic disadvantage.

Women

- Tackles the pay gap between men and women. Women are on average paid around 22 per cent less than men. The Equality Bill will:
 - **In the public sector** - require public bodies with 150 or more staff to publish their gender pay gap.
 - **In the private sector** - require private and voluntary sector employers with at least 250 employees to publish details of their gender pay gap. (This will be done from 2013 if insufficient voluntary progress has been made.)
- Bans pay secrecy clauses, which conceal inequality.
- Protects pregnant women and new mothers from discrimination.
- Increases the diversity of Parliament.
- Protects carers from discrimination.

People from ethnic minorities

- Makes the workplace more diverse.
- The power to ban caste discrimination.
- Increases the diversity of Parliament.

Disabled People

- Makes life easier for disabled people at home.
- Helps disabled children at school.
- Protects disabled people from discrimination in the recruitment process
- **Increases the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis.** The number of wheelchair-accessible taxis is set to increase, as the Bill means a local authority that doesn't have enough wheelchair-accessible taxis in its area cannot refuse a licence to such a vehicle simply because it has a policy of controlling the overall number of taxis.
- Protect carers from discrimination.

People with religious or philosophical beliefs

- **Puts a new duty on public bodies.** The Equality Bill puts a duty on public bodies to consider the needs of people with different religious and philosophical beliefs when designing and delivering services. Protect people from discrimination.

People of all ages

- Outlaws unjustifiable age discrimination.
- **Places a new duty on public bodies to take account of peoples' age.** The Bill places a legal duty on public bodies to consider the needs of people of all ages when designing and delivering services. This will ensure that public bodies consider the needs of children, teenagers and younger and older adults.

Lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people

- Removes the prohibition preventing civil partnership registrations taking place on religious premises.
- **Introduces a new duty to take account of the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people.** The new Equality Duty means that public bodies will need to think about the needs of LGB people when designing and delivering services.

Transsexual people

- **Extends the Equality Duty on public bodies.** The new Equality Duty will require public bodies to advance equality of opportunity for transsexual people.
- Revises the definition of 'gender reassignment'.
- Protects people who face discrimination because of their association with transsexual people.

- Extends protection against gender reassignment discrimination to cover schools.

Everyone

- Provides new protection from discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics (dual discrimination).
- **Requires public bodies to consider using public procurement as a way to improve equality**, for example, by including requirements about apprenticeships or traineeships being offered to people from under-represented groups as part of the contract conditions.
- Provides new protection if you experience discrimination because you are wrongly thought to have a protected characteristic.
- Extends the power of employment tribunals.
- Makes it unlawful for private clubs to discriminate.
- Increasing transparency about the diversity of political candidates.

Source: Government Equalities Office – for more information go to www.equalities.gov.uk

NB: The Equality Act will replace the existing legislative framework. Until that occurs, the existing duties and responsibilities are fully in force and remain a legal requirement until the new Act takes effect in October 2010.

7. EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) builds on and recognises the work that councils have already undertaken under the old Equality Standard for Local Government. It is based on three levels of achievement, 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent', rather than the five levels of the old Standard.

Babergh reached Level 2 (Achieving Level) under the old Standard and is now classified as a 'Developing' authority under the EFLG. Babergh is working towards the 'Achieving' level.

The new Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG):

- provides a simpler framework, reduces the amount of process and introduces a more outcome-focused approach
- encourages the use of the Framework so that it is proportional and relevant to the needs and circumstances of the authority
- simplifies the self-assessment process backed by peer challenge
- integrates the public duties on race, disability and gender and provides a common performance framework for compliance
- enables local authorities and their Local Strategic Partners to identify and analyse equality priorities for inclusion in their Local Area

Agreements (LAAs) and complements the new performance assessment framework, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which took effect in April 2009

- allows authorities to 'migrate' their achievements under the original Equality Standard.

8. REVISED SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

We have developed and revised our Single Equality Scheme action plan which addresses the six equality groups: age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation governed by existing legislation. The Action Plan which is a 'live' document and therefore subject to review, sets out how we will implement our Equality and Diversity Policy. It brings together the work which is currently being done across the Council, together with setting out priority areas where further work needs to be done.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

An Equality Impact Assessment is a method that enables local authorities to examine proposed or existing policies, procedures and functions in order to identify and eliminate (or minimise) any negative impact these may have on a particular group or groups of people. Equality Impact Assessments also help to identify any unmet needs.

Local Authorities have a legal responsibility under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty to assess the impact of current and proposed, policies, procedures and functions in relation to each of these groups.

To reflect Babergh's commitment to equality for everyone, we assess all six equality groups when undertaking EqlAs and ensure that the procedure is easier to use and more effective in the assessment of the likely impact of our policies, procedures and functions on all our clients, staff, suppliers and/or stakeholders. Service managers and relevant officers have undertaken Equality Impact Assessment training. The results of our Equality Impact Assessments can be found on our website.

10. MANAGING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT BABERGH

The Chairman of the Council and Chief Executive provide leadership and promotion of equality throughout the Council.

The Member Champion for Equalities helps raise the profile of equalities and diversity among the other members of the Council, and acts as a political 'sounding board' for the work of the Equalities and Diversity Steering Group.

The Deputy Chief Executive provides strategic leadership on the equalities' agenda and chairs the Fairness and Equal Access Group.

Fairness and Equal Access Group (FEAG) was set up to manage the Council's equality and diversity agenda and to oversee the progress of the Equality Framework for Local Government action plans. The group includes members of staff from all the Council's divisions, a representative from Unison and the Member Champion for Equalities.

FEAG's primary purpose is to oversee and monitor all Council functions to ensure no-one who comes into contact with the council, whether they are customers, staff, partners or stakeholders, is discriminated against because of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief. The Fairness and Equal Access Group underpins the corporate commitment to equality within the district.

The Fairness and Equal Access Group meets quarterly to:

- Identify and prioritise key issues affecting the Council in relation to equality and diversity
- Review, monitor and report progress on dealing with equality and diversity issues
- Influence and ensure equality and diversity are embedded into the culture of the organisation
- Steer and advise divisions in relation to the implementation of our duties under equality legislation
- Oversee action plans in relation to the statutory Single Equality Scheme and Equality Framework for Local Government.
- Monitor the progress of equality action plans and report annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Equality Framework for Local Government Five Theme Groups develop and progress the action plans for each of the five themes under the EFLG. These are as follows:

- Knowing Your Community and Equality Mapping;
- Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment;
- Community Engagement and Satisfaction;
- Responsive Services and Customer Care;
- A Modern and Diverse Workforce.

Progress on the action plans is reported back to the Fairness and Equal Access Group by each theme group lead officer.

Heads of Services and Managers implement Equality Impact Assessments and equality schemes in their respective service areas and support staff enabling them to contribute towards the delivery of key objectives in the schemes.

Policy and Performance Team co-ordinates the Fairness and Equal Access Group, updates equalities policies to reflect current legislation and monitors relevant performance indicators.

Human Resources Team ensures HR policies reflect current legislation and best practice and provides appropriate training and development to Members and employees.

Staff uphold and put into operation the aims of the schemes and act as a 'consultative group'.

Unions are consulted on equality issues and have the responsibility of representing the views and concerns of staff on equality issues and supporting the continuous improvement of equalities procedures and policies.

Community Groups and Partner Organisations offer a means of consultation feedback to support the development of equalities policies.

Babergh's Equality Panel offers a means of consultation feedback to support the development of equalities policies.

Community Cohesion – Babergh has a Member and senior officer on the county-wide Community Cohesion and Inclusion Delivery Partnership and supports the implementation of the county-wide Community Cohesion and Inclusion Delivery Plan which has been agreed by all members of the partnership board. Progress of the three year plan is monitored and managed on a regular basis.

The Community Cohesion and Inclusion Delivery Partnership is helping to deliver improved outcomes on the following National Indicators (NI):

- NI1 - percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI 2 - percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood
- NI 3 - civic participation in the local area
- NI 4 - percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- NI 6 - participation in regular volunteering
- NI 7 - environment for a thriving third sector
- NI 23 - perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration
- NI 35 - building resilience to violent extremism
- NI 140 - fair treatment by local services

NIs 2 and 4 are Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2) targets. In addition there is the volunteering local target (LT 1) which is also an LAA2 target (increased numbers of people volunteering in:

- Black and minority ethnic communities
- Supported volunteering
- Young people
- Older age groups
- Culture and sport)

11. PROCUREMENT

We ensure that nationally accepted social considerations are taken into account in the way that we procure, as well as considering the impact of what we procure has on the community in respect of equalities. We are committed to equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, colour, religion, ethnicity, gender, family status, sexuality, disability or age. The Council will promote equalities in the procurement of goods, works and services. The Council will offer equal opportunities in contract selection to businesses owned by all members of the business community.

Further advertising routes have been investigated to ensure all equality groups are captured and to encourage applications for inclusion in the tendering process. Therefore applications for inclusion in the tendering process are more representative.

In specifying for goods and services, regard is given when appointing contractors that their practices and service delivery methods comply with the Council's specific provisions relating to equality and diversity. Pre-qualification questionnaires (PQQs) are completed and these provide information on contractors' compliance with various acts in relation to equality and diversity and if a company has been prosecuted under unlawful/racial discrimination. Contractors on our 'standing list of contractors' complete business questionnaires and these are similar to a PQQ, asking about their equal opportunities policy.

12. MONITORING

Babergh District Council has a legal duty to ensure that its services and employment are provided fairly, but without effective equality monitoring the council will not know whether its equal opportunities policy is working. Equality monitoring can help all services to ensure that they are reaching and offering equality of opportunity to all individuals and groups, and can help us to make changes based on facts and not assumptions.

(i) REVISED SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN

The Fairness and Equal Access Group will monitor the overall progress of actions and report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis, where recommendations for amendments and up-dating will be presented to Members.

(ii) SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Government requires local authorities to deliver services to a clear standard. Performance indicators measure the achievement of these standards. Performance indicators also allow us to see how we compare with others and identify areas that require improvement.

Equalities related performance indicators are reported quarterly in line with the performance management framework to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

(iii) EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Issues arising from Equality Impact Assessments feed into the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan and are monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

(iv) HR PANEL

Human Resources (HR) performance indicators are reported to the Council's HR Panel.

13. COMPLAINTS

The Council takes all complaints seriously. If any one feels that the Council has failed to implement the Equality and Diversity Policy in the service they receive, a complaints procedure is available and can be obtained by contacting the Council.

A grievance procedure for employment complaints and a procedure for harassment and bullying for those employees who feel they face discrimination in the workplace are available.

14. CONSULTATION

In line with our Strategic Plan 2008-2018 and Medium Term Plan (2010-13) we undertake a number of initiatives to consult with our local communities. These initiatives include:

- State of the District Event
- Suffolk Speaks Partnership
- Parish and Town Council Meetings

- Place Survey (biennial)
- Public speaking at Development Control Committee
- Youth Conference
- Tenants' Participation Compact
- Various consultation exercises both as part of the formal democratic process (Public Notices) and one-off campaigns
- Group of one-hundred consultation forum
- Babergh's Equality Panel

These initiatives ensure that our existing inclusive approach to consultation which seeks to involve all groups in the community, regardless of their race, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, is integrated into the process of delivering the Council's strategic priorities.

The consultation methodology we use is appropriate to the individual, group or communities being consulted. By tailoring our approach, we aim to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to express their views on the council's policies and practices.

The draft Revised Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan are living documents, and will be subject to consultation by relevant stakeholders and as such, we are inviting you to take part in our consultation of the scheme and to let us know what you think.

Any comments you have should be forwarded either:

- by email to: denise.revell@babergh.gov.uk
- by post to: Revised Single Equality Scheme Consultation
c/o Denise Revell, Policy and Performance Officer
Corporate Services
Babergh District Council
Corks Lane
Hadleigh
IP7 6SJ