

**Draft Winchester's Economic Strategy**  
**Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment – 14 January 2010**

This document summarises the equality issues identified in the draft economic strategy, as at 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The assessment was undertaken by the Economic Development Manager and two members of the Council's Equality Working Group with assistance from the Council's Equality & Inclusion Consultant.

The team undertaking the assessment agreed that, whilst the strategy does not actively discriminate against any one group, it does not always make clear how some of the equality groups' needs will be addressed and how they will benefit from the proposed actions.

The assessment team considered

- (i) the focus of the whole strategy and the information given in the main text
- (ii) the proposed actions, and
- (iii) the consultation process

This report briefly summarises the main issues that emerged.

### **1. Background information**

The strategy was felt to be focussed on the higher skilled, higher paid jobs and employees, to the exclusion of lower skilled, lower paid people. It should be recognised that this group may need extra help in order to contribute to the local economy more effectively. The strategy should recognise the value of having a diverse economy that is able to provide employment opportunities for all sections of the community.

The effects of an ageing population were not made clear. This will affect the health and care sector of the economy, and cause some people to work longer, potentially restricting the number of jobs available for young people entering the workforce.

The universities present in Winchester attract overseas students. This population should be considered within the strategy.

The BME community is more diverse than the strategy suggests. Information about the BME population and BME-run businesses should be included where available.

The voluntary and not-for-profit sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy. This should be recognised in the strategy.

The assessment team suggests that a further section on equality be included in 3.6 on page 9. This should include mention of all those facing recognised barriers to work (disabled, women, young people, BME people) including statistical data where available.

The team also noted that:

- page 17 includes a section about lifelong development.
- page 24 includes a section devoted to reducing inequalities in rural areas. It was suggested that the Strategy could be subject to 'rural proofing' using one of the established methodologies.

Other areas to consider adding to the strategy could include;

- food security
- recognising the achievement of businesses run by women, the BME community and disabled people.

## **2. Action plan**

**The team suggested a number of clarifications and amendments:**

- 1d(iv) Clarify the age of 'young people' this project aims to assist
- 1e(iv) Include reference to access for disabled people
- 1f(i)&(iii) Consider a project/award recognising BME and disabled people's contribution to the business community. Possible link with a project encouraging accessibility audits of local businesses by a local disability group.
- 3 Note that women and BME groups will benefit from this.
- 3c Link with the Inclusive Society Outcome Group objectives (currently under review). Link with volunteering as a method of returning to work.

## **3. Consultation**

In addition to the proposed list of consultees, the team considered that the following groups should be involved in the consultation process;

- Over 55s fora
- Youth Council
- Churches Together and the Inter-faith network
- Winchester Area Community Action (and via them disability groups)
- Community Action Hampshire (and Migrant Workers Working Party)
- Women in Business group
- Women's Institute
- Inclusive Society Outcome Group (and via them Culturenet)
- Footsteps multicultural arts group

Following the consultation and prior to finalising the strategy, the team will meet again to complete the Equality Impact Assessment process.