

# Voluntary Sector Forum

the voice of the voluntary sector in basildon district



**BBWCVS** is taking the lead role in the development of a **Voluntary Sector Forum**. This article sets out the aims, objectives, values and membership for the Forum and some of the methods that will be applied in order to achieve these goals.

## The Forum

The Forum will be a membership-led organisation open to all voluntary / community groups in Basildon District and any individual participants who are active in the community. It will provide a space for these groups and individuals to meet and exchange information, ideas and good practice. The Forum will work to strengthen the sector within the District and to develop a cohesive and articulate voluntary sector body, in a climate of equal partnership with statutory agencies.

## Aims

- To bring together personnel from the voluntary and community sector in the district to share skills, information, experiences, good practice, and resources and to work collectively on issues of common and minority interest as identified by the members of the Forum.
- To campaign, promote and develop new ways of communicating and working with public and private sector agencies, which ensures the collective views of the voluntary and community sector are considered, influence and affect planning and policy decisions.

## Objectives

1. To enable the sharing of experiences, good practice, skills and resources and to provide a platform for groups to raise issues and gain mutual support.
2. To build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector to work together on common and minority issues, to learn from each other, and to work to ensure that the necessary policies and resources are developed to facilitate their participation.
3. To develop collect views and promote the interests of the voluntary and community sector in Basildon District.
4. Provide, disseminate and share information in accessible forms.
5. To support and develop networks within the voluntary and community sector.
6. Ensure that the strengths, needs and potential of the sector are made known to public, private and voluntary agencies.
7. Work in partnership with the public and private sectors, promoting dialogue and good relationships across the sectors.
8. To support the development and implementation of the Voluntary Sector Compact.
9. Provide representation and active participation on relevant strategic partnerships.

## **Values**

- The Forum will undertake creative positive action to improve the position of people within the voluntary and community sector who are marginalized and who experience oppression.
- The Forum will support and be accountable to the voluntary and community sector and will clearly explain the mechanisms in place.
- The Forum will work towards meeting its aims through cooperative partnership.
- The Forum will be non-party political.
- The Forum will be committed to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

## **Membership**

1. Open to any voluntary / community group working in Basildon District and any individual who is active in the local community.
2. Voting rights will be equal. Each organisation and individual will have one vote.

## **Methods**

- The Forum will work with people from the voluntary and community sector in ways which aim to help them have a greater influence over the decisions that affect their lives and to come together with others to devise solutions to common problems.
- The Forum will work on the basis that collective action is more influential than a series of single voices and that cooperation between people generates a shared strength through the pooling of energy, ideas and resources.

## **Meetings**

- Not less than 4 meetings per year, arranged to precede meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership where possible. Other meetings as necessary, or when requested by the membership.
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- Meetings of sub-groups and networks to be arranged by the Forum members
- An annual voluntary sector conference.

## **Administration**

- **BBWCVS** will provide the administration of the Forum and will prepare agendas in liaison with the members.