

SIWG 2 December 2009

Information note about progress with actions arising from the Democratic Services Equality Impact Assessment, considered by SIWG in March 2009

Written and Verbal Information

1. Comic sans is the preferred font for many users. Font size 14 is preferred.

We are working to do this with colleagues who are completing the corporate communications equality impact assessment, because we know it is an important matter for all council communications. We expect this work to be completed by February and we shall let you know of the outcome around then.

2. Improvements need to be made to the Council website as information is not easily accessible. **We have made some temporary improvements. It is now easier to find help with changing the size of text, getting information in other languages etc. We are currently updating our site and we hope to make it much more inclusive in the future.**

3. Sometimes organisations prepare written documents in different languages but this tends to get stockpiled and go out of date. It is better for the information to be available electronically and produced on demand. It would be better for documents to be personalised on request in order to meet the specific needs of individuals e.g. large font size, easy-read version or in another language. When documents are emailed the format can be amended by the reader to meet

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their needs e.g. increasing font size. This is not possible for PDF documents.

We have shared this information with colleagues looking at corporate communications as in item 1 above.

4. Although agenda papers give information about access arrangements this needs to be better promoted.

We have recognised that access to our current buildings is an issue. This will be resolved as soon as we move to new council headquarters. Meanwhile, we have placed extra signs giving information about access to our buildings and are working to make other improvements until we move to the new headquarters. These will soon include: an A-frame outside the Mansion House advising the public how to access the House without having to use the stairs at the main entrance; a bell by the lift that gives level access to the Mansion House so people who need it can let the custodian know that they are waiting at the back.

Procedures ·

5. Council procedures should be modernised and made easier to understand.

All procedures will be put in plain English and revised accordingly as we revise the Council constitution.

SIWG 2 December 2009

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Members Support and Training ·

6. It needs to be made clear to the public that all strands of the equalities are encouraged to stand for election and that if they have specific needs appropriate support will be in place. · More action needs be taken to raise the profile of the work that councillors carry out. Information should be available in places like the library. The role of the councillor should be more prominent on the Council website. · Careful consideration should be given to the timings of meetings. ·

We had a " Me a councillor? !" event at Mansion House in October 2009. Community groups that represent different communities were invited. This event was intended to demonstrate that everyone can consider becoming a councillor. After Christmas we propose to visit equality community groups to actively promote being a councillor. We shall also put a booklet about how to become a councillor in our public library, in good time for the next Council election.

Mayoralty ·

7. The Group welcomes the proposal that the Lord Mayor's engagements diary will be more formally monitored to ensure that it supports engagements

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and visits to groups representative of the equality strands.

This year the Mayor has visited or plans to visit the following equality community groups and events.:

- **YREN International Meal**
- **Holocaust Memorial Day**
- **Mosque in Bull Lane, Tang Hall**
- **Indian Literary Festival**
- **Festival of Light**
- **Pensioners Civic Event**

More events will be added to the list as the year unfolds.

8. Consideration should be given to The Lord Mayor hosting a reception for representatives of the equality strands on an annual basis.

We shall encourage Mayors who take over after May 2010, to host a reception on an annual basis.

Mansion House and Guildhall Facilities ·

9. Praying/contemplation facilities should be available.

Given the nature of the buildings and the number of people who work there at the moment, we are finding it difficult to find suitable rooms. However, we shall prioritise this as soon as space becomes available.

SIWG 2 December 2009

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10. The situation in respect of the bell at the Mansion House should be addressed as soon as possible.

Please see item 4 above

11. The refurbishment of the toilet for disabled people that is adjacent to Committee Room 2 should be treated as a priority to ensure that it is fully accessible.

We have looked at this and the costs are prohibitive for any major refurbishment work, especially given the plan to move to the new headquarters in two years' time. However, the disabled toilet is currently being updated to provide baby changing facilities.

Performance Management

12. Whilst the Group welcomes the proposal to collect data to help understand how effective the measures outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment have been, there are concerns that some people may find the questionnaires to be intrusive. The Group would not wish such arrangements to deter members of the community from attending or participating in council meetings or from using facilities such as the Mansion House and Guildhall. The Group was informed that the questionnaire would be brought to the Group for consideration in due course.

The questionnaire was considered by the SIWG in May 2009