



**Notice of meeting of
Social Inclusion Working Group**

To: Councillors Vassie (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Gunnell and Looker (Vice-Chair)

Non Voting Co-opted Members:

Jack Archer, York Older People's Assembly

Sue Lister, York Older People's Assembly

Peter Blackburn, LGBT Forum

Sarah Fennell, LGBT Forum

Rita Sanderson, The BME Citizens' Open Forum (York Racial Equality Network)

Daryoush Mazloun, The BME Citizens' Open Forum (York Racial Equality Network)

Jan Jauncey, York Interfaith

Revd. Paul Wordsworth, Churches Together in York

Date: Wednesday, 14 January 2009

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Clementhorpe Room, Priory Street, York

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on this agenda.

2. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Group's remit can do so. Anyone who wishes to register or requires further information is requested to contact the Democracy Officer on the contact details listed at the foot of this agenda. The deadline for registering is Tuesday 13 January 2009 at 5.00 pm.

- 3. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 24)
To approve and sign the minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 19 November 2008. An “easy read” version of these minutes is also attached for members’ consideration.
- 4. Matters Arising**
Taxi Licensing matters: volunteers, needed to help draw-up an accreditation scheme for taxi drivers, will be invited to put their names forward at the meeting.
- 5. Chair's Report**
The Chair will give an Easy Read PowerPoint Presentation regarding SIWG activity in 2008.
- 6. Project Proposals for Funding in 2008/9** (Pages 25 - 32)
This report follows on from a report entitled “Project proposals for SIWG budgets 2008/9” considered at the meeting of 19 November 2008. It asks members to offer their support to the outline project proposals expected to be funded from the SIWG projects support budget 2008/9 for work to be done in 2009/10.
- 7. Disability Community Representation on SIWG** (Pages 33 - 38)
This report asks members to consider the representation of the disability strand on the Group, following the resignation of the single co-opted non-voting individual who had been representing disability issues whilst a Disabled People’s Forum was being formed.
- 8. Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Single Equality Scheme** (Pages 39 - 44)
This report outlines the approach to the Council’s Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Single Equality Scheme 2009-12 that follow on and update:

 - Pride In Our Communities, the Equality strategy and schemes 2005-8, and
 - The Single Corporate Equality Scheme for the period July 2008 to July 2009.

The report also outlines past and future consultation to offer the opportunity to people from the equality strands to influence the contents of the strategy and scheme 2009-12.

**9. Engaging with the Equality Strands - Small (Pages 45 - 56)
Group Discussion**

The Group is asked to form small groups to consider the discussion paper attached as Annex 1- Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group. The paper describes how people from the equality communities are engaged in SIWG at present, and asks questions about this process. Feedback from the groups will be used to draft an Engagement Strategy 2009-12 for SIWG, which is expected to be finalised at the SIWG Development Day.

**10. Any other business which the Chair considers
urgent under the Local Government Act 1972**

Please note: There will be no Community Reports for this meeting to allow time to complete the unfinished business from the previous meeting.

Democracy Officer:

Name: Jayne Carr

Tel: (01904) 552030
jayne.carr@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details set out above.

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- ensure that what you want to say speak relates to an item of business on the agenda or an issue which the committee has power to consider (speak to the Democracy Officer for advice on this);
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Further information about what's being discussed at this meeting

All the reports which Members will be considering are available for viewing online on the Council's website. Alternatively, copies of individual reports or the full agenda are available from Democratic Services. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the agenda for the meeting. **Please note a small charge may be made for full copies of the agenda requested to cover administration costs.**

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The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (38 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Advisory Panel (EMAP)) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

Scrutiny Committees

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DATE	19 NOVEMBER 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS BROOKS, GUNNELL, LOOKER (VICE-CHAIR), SUNDERLAND (SUBSTITUTE), JACK ARCHER (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), SUE LISTER (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), PETER BLACKBURN (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), SARAH FENNELL (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), RITA SANDERSON (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), DARYOUSH MAZLOUM (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) AND JAN JAUNCEY (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER)
	<u>EXPERT WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE</u> JOHN BETTRIDGE – MENTAL HEALTH FORUM DAVID BROWN – YORK ACCESS GROUP STEVE ROUSE –CYC
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS VASSIE, ASPDEN, SUE GALLOWAY AND PAUL WORDSWORTH, NICOLA BEDFORD AND GEORGE WOOD

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Ruth Thompson informed the Group that she was the parent of a disabled child and belonged to CANDI (Children and Inclusion), which was a forum for the parents/carers of children with disabilities or special needs. It was a voluntary organisation and members sat on many different committees in the health sector, council and other professional organisations to take part in decision-making about services for disabled children. The Group had been asked to train professional people in York on Disability Equality – what it means to children, how it could be improved and how it affected family life. There was no funding to pay parents to do this training. The Group was therefore requesting that SIWG funding of £500 be donated to the Group as a one-off grant to pay the parents to provide the training.

The training would require one parent per session with a payment of £50 per parent. This could then result in ten training sessions being provided.

The Chair thanked Ruth for the information provided and stated that the request would be considered when the funding of projects was considered later in the meeting.

19. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Group, held on 17 September 2008, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the word “photograph” being removed from paragraph 1 of Minute 14, and paragraph 6 of Minute 14 being amended to read “...the BME Citizens Open Forum had been held at the Early Music Centre”.

20. MATTERS ARISING

The Council’s Head of Licensing and Regulatory had been invited to attend the meeting to update the Group on taxi licensing matters. He was accompanied by the Taxi Licensing Officer and representatives from the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Associations.

The Head of Licensing and Regulatory informed the Group that it was hoped to set up an accreditation scheme to ensure that certain standards of service were achieved. He would welcome the contribution that members of the Group could make to the development of such a scheme.

He was asked if there was a list available detailing the taxi companies that provided services to wheelchair users. Cards providing contact details of vehicles with wheelchair access, were circulated to the Group. The intention was that the cards would also be issued by taxi drivers who did not themselves have vehicles with wheelchair access, to passengers who required this service. The information was also available on the council’s website and handed out with travel tokens. The Group was informed that 17% of the licensed hackney cabs had vehicles that were wheelchair accessible, and most of the larger private taxi companies had at least one taxi that was wheelchair accessible. All Hackney taxis could store a wheelchair in the boot of the vehicle. Members of the Group stated that there were often difficulties in obtaining a wheelchair accessible taxi at the start and end of the school day because they were being hired by the Council to transport children with disabilities. Many wheelchair users had to pre-book taxis to ensure their availability and were not therefore able to make unplanned journeys.

He was asked if taxi drivers were trained in how to support disabled people. He stated that there was no legal requirement for them to do so. The introduction of an accreditation scheme would be one way of addressing this issue.

Clarification was sought regarding charges. It was noted that Hackney taxis were not permitted to charge an additional sum for transporting a wheelchair. No charge could be made for carrying an assistance dog but there was a charge for other animals. Some private companies did charge for wheelchairs and it was therefore important to check. No charge could be made for assistance dogs.

The representative from the private hire association was asked at what point the meter started running when a taxi arrived to collect a passenger. He explained that the policy of his company was that if a journey was pre-booked the meter would not start prior to the agreed pick-up time. If the client was late, the meter was started after five minutes. All reasonable assistance was provided to passengers. There were issues in respect of public liability once a driver assisted a passenger outside the vehicle but some companies had taken out separate insurance cover for this purpose. Taxi drivers would welcome training being offered to enable them to better assist passengers with particular needs.

The representatives were thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

- RECOMMENDED: (i) That the Group would seek volunteers to assist in the drawing-up of an accreditation scheme for taxi drivers.
- (ii) That, as many of the groups represented at SWIG were taxi users, a request be made that the draft accreditation scheme be considered by the Group in due course.

REASON: To ensure that inclusion and equality activity is supported in the City.

Action Required

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1 Officers to seek volunteers to assist with accreditation scheme | GR |
| 2 Report to be made back to the Group when information available | GR |

21. CHAIR'S REPORT

- (a) Social Inclusion Working Group, Forward Plan 2008/09

Consideration was given to the updated Forward Plan (Work Plan) 2008/09. It was noted that the item on working with ward committees had been deferred to the meeting in January 2009. The discussion regarding Community Cohesion issues had also been deferred pending further data becoming available. Rita Sanderson asked if the Council had a Community Cohesion strategy. Officers explained that a strategy was not yet in place but this was being addressed.

(b) Community Representation on the Group

It was noted that there were two co-opted places on the Working Group for representatives of people with disabilities. As there was no umbrella group representing organisations supporting people with disabilities, consideration was given to the most appropriate way forward. It was suggested that York People First, the York Access Group and the Mental Health Forum would be able to make a worthwhile contribution to the Group. They were already engaged in SIWG work as expert witnesses. Discussion took place as to whether there were other groups who should also be considered. It was hoped that, in the future, there would be an umbrella organisation for the groups representing different strands of disability. There was, however, a need to have representation on the Working Group in the interim. Rita Sanderson offered her support in setting up a disabled people's interim forum. This offer was welcomed but it was noted that the drive for the establishing of such a group had to come from the disabled community.

It was noted that there were various opportunities for groups to have a say on issues that impacted on them as SIWG meetings were open to the public and the views of additional expert witnesses were welcomed. It was suggested that there was a need for wider consultation before appointments were made to fill the co-opted vacancies.

RECOMMENDED: That a report be prepared for the next meeting on the membership of the Group and the issues raised.

REASON: To ensure that SIWG was representative of all of the equality strands.

Action Required

1 Report prepared for next meeting on membership issues GR

22. COMMUNITY FORUM REPORTS AND FEEDBACK

The Group received the following reports:

(a) Interfaith Forum

The Group gave consideration to the survey of religions and belief groups in York that had been carried out jointly by York Interfaith and Churches Together in York. The aim had been to explore the current work, perceptions, and concerns of the main religions and belief groups in the city. Forty-five Centres of Worship and meeting places of Belief Groups were represented in the returns. Jan Jauncey went through the key issues. She explained that there were a number of points raised by the survey that would be taken forward, including raising awareness of integrated activities, an annual faith conference and a joint environmental project. Officers

informed the Group that the main findings from the survey would be included in the Council Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12.

A separate questionnaire on Equalities and Diversity had also been circulated but, of those who had responded to the survey, only 30% had completed the form.

The Group expressed their best wishes to Paul Wordsworth who was currently in hospital.

(b) York Racial Equality Network (YREN)

Rita Sanderson updated the Group on events in which YREN had been involved.

- On 1 October 2008, YREN had formally launched their Senior Citizens Ethnic Elders Social Group. The group had been pleased to welcome Jack Archer of the York Older People's Assembly, who had provided the opening introduction. Attendees had included representatives from Age Concern, the Older People's Assembly and other organisations.
- YREN had hosted and facilitated the York BME Citizens Open Forum on 18 October 2008. The theme had been based on community safety and the launch of the new YREN racial harassment information cards. Key issues had included the lack of awareness of the meaning of hate incidents and a reluctance by individuals to report incidents for fear of reprisal or because they felt the incident would not be taken seriously. Possible key themes for future Open Forums included community safety, community cohesion, inequalities with health provision, and English as an additional language support.
- Rita reminded the Group that YREN elected representatives to serve on SIWG on an annual basis. It had been agreed in 2007 that the Forum would elect one male and one female representative. She sought advice as to whether there could be some flexibility in this matter. She was informed that it would be permitted for the representatives to be of the same gender.

Concerns were expressed regarding the increasing costs of hiring community venues. It was felt that this could prevent organisations from meeting or holding events. Steve Rouse suggested that organisations might wish to consider hiring Youth Service accommodation, as the rates were competitive.

The Group were concerned to note that a member of the public had attended a YREN event who had behaved in such a way as to make other participants feel very uncomfortable. The Police had been notified and had confirmed that the person was known to them. Officers asked if other representatives had experienced similar incidents. It was noted that some of the Groups represented used

PO Boxes for correspondence and that difficulties sometimes arose in respect of promoting the support they provided or advertising particular events.

(c) Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT)

Peter Blackburn reported that their AGM had taken place and a new committee was in place. Work to develop a new website was progressing well and it was hoped that the site would be available by the end of the year. Mesmac was involved in delivering diversity training at York College and this appeared to be having a good impact. There was a growing demand for social events to be arranged and another Pride event would take place in 2009.

(d) York Older People's Assembly (YOPA)

- Consideration was given to the findings of the YOPA questionnaire. Sue Lister went through the key issues with the Group. It was noted that having a receptive Council had been considered the most important factor. Issues had also been raised in respect of staff training in all services.
- An evaluation of the 50+ Festival was circulated. It was pleasing to note that the event had bridged the generations and had been a celebration of inclusiveness.
- A paper was circulated which summarised the consultation that had taken place at the Equality and Human Rights Commission (E&HRC) event held on 17 November 2008. This had been one of a series of twelve consultations that were taking place nationally on behalf of E&HRC, with the aim of achieving grassroots input into the three-year equality scheme being prepared by the E&HRC.
- The Group's attention was drawn to a DVD entitled "Sisters on the Planet" which had been produced by Oxfam and Christian Aid. Copies were available from Oxfam.

(e) Young People

- Steve Rouse informed the Group that young people from Applefields School had been taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Three students had already completed the award and four more would have done so by Christmas. They had taken part in an expedition and had coped extremely well.
- A disability trampolining club was taking place on Monday evenings from 5.00 pm to 6.00 pm at All Saints School.
- The Law College had been asked to deliver a workshop to raise young people's awareness of their rights.
- The Children's Fund Programme Manager had met with young people as part of the consultation on the Children and Young People's Plan.
- Steve informed the Group that he had attended a Transgender Awareness Workshop. This had been extremely worthwhile and he recommended the training to others. Further sessions were due to be held at the Priory Centre in York on 15 December 2008, 18

February 2009, 16 April 2009 and 25 June 2009. (For further information contact: www.GenderShift.com or Bookings@GenderShift.com).

23. PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR SIWG BUDGETS 2008/9

The Group were asked for their views as to the projects they would recommend were funded through the SIWG budget for 2008/9.

Consideration was given to the notes from an informal meeting of SIWG representatives that had been held on 22 October 2008 at which suggested projects had been discussed. The proposals put forward were:

1. A Diversity Exhibition – each group would create its own part of a diversity display and the display boards could be used at festivals and events or split up for small events held by individual groups. They could also be displayed at libraries or put up at Council or public events.
2. A Diversity Garden – a shared garden where everyone would feel welcome. It would be fully accessible and would also be a sensory garden for people with sight impairment.
3. Diversity Fun at Festivals – putting on events, workshops, speakers, displays, presentations, performances and stalls at festivals run by partner groups eg Pride Picnic in the Park, 50+ Festival, International Women's Week, One World Week, YUMI etc.
4. Diversity Day – have a special day in York each year to celebrate diversity. This could include stalls, the diversity display, balloons, picnic, performances, crafts activities, food, games, quizzes and dancing.

A further two outline project proposals were tabled at the meeting as follows:

- An application for £500 had been put forward by the representative from CANDI (Item 2 on the agenda).
- Steve Rouse and Rita Sanderson put forward a partnership bid to enable them to engage more BME young people with the Young People's Service and assist them in accessing its services.

The Group agreed that the priority for projects as outlined in the written report circulated before the meeting should be:

- The Diversity Exhibition Boards
- The Diversity Day.

It was noted that there was a need to obtain costings for these projects before decisions could be taken. It would also be necessary to ensure that a suitable storage place could be found for the exhibition boards should the decision be taken to purchase them.

Views were put forward that the groups represented on SIWG should each receive an amount of funding to assist with costs associated with their

attendance at the meeting, eg travel, the costs of circulating information arising from the meeting and other associated expenses. It was noted that although £250 had previously been allocated to groups represented on SIWG, this had been a one-off grant to help groups hold extra events to help identify issues that community groups wanted to be considered in the drafting of the Council's Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12. The only funding that was available in relation to meetings was to meet expenses such as room hire and refreshments for SIWG meetings.

The Group were reminded that, at their meeting on 12 March 2008, principles had been agreed as a guide for the distribution of SIWG funding. It had been agreed that projects funded by SIWG project budgets should:

1. Contribute to Social Inclusion Working Group objectives and agreed yearly work plans
2. Support the engagement of the widest audience in each of the six Equality Strands i.e. Gender, Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, and Age
3. Aim to engage hard-to-reach groups within each strand
4. Explore new or emerging issues
5. Be innovative and not previously tried
6. Not be main running costs, which would not be funded
7. Receive priority when brought forward by a number of community groups and covering a number of Equality strands

RECOMMENDED: (i) That a report be prepared for the next meeting, detailing costings for the diversity display and diversity day, together with other funding options.

(ii) That those interested in putting forward application about Diversity Exhibition Boards and the Diversity Day would send costing details to the Equalities team to be incorporated into the report.

REASON: To enable the Group to make recommendations regarding project expenditure for 2008/09.

Action Required

1 Report on funding options to the next meeting

GR

24. ENGAGING WITH THE EQUALITY STRANDS

A discussion paper had been circulated on "Engaging the Equality Communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group". The paper described how people from the equality communities were engaged in SIWG at present, and asked questions about this process. It had been intended that the paper would form the basis of small group work and that feedback from the groups would be used to draft an Engagement Strategy

2009-12 for SIWG, which would be finalised at the SIWG Development Day on 27 February 2009.

- RECOMMENDED: (a) That a special meeting of SIWG be convened to consider issues in respect of engaging with the equality strands.
- (b) That members of SIWG would give consideration to the questions in the discussion paper in preparation for the special meeting.

REASON: To enable full consideration to be given to the development of the work of SIWG

Rizwana Khan informed the Group that she was working with the Equalities Team until June 2009 and was looking at issues in respect of gender engagement. She was keen to meet with representatives on an individual basis in order to find out what work was already taking place on this issue. The information received would feed into the Equality Strategy that was being prepared. Representatives were asked to notify Rizwana of their availability to meet with her.

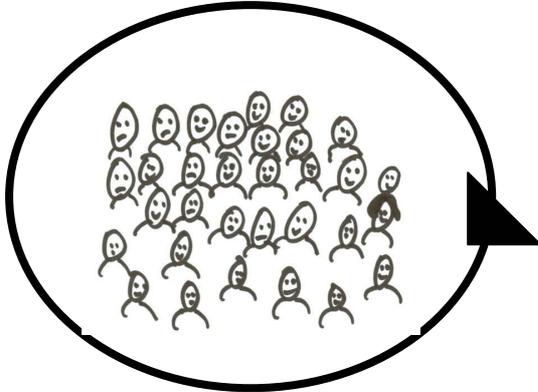
Action Required

1 Arrange a special meeting of SIWG to consider equality strand issues GR

Cllr J Looker Chair

[The meeting started at 6.35 pm and finished at 9.15 pm].

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Social Inclusion Working Group

(Social inclusion means including everyone in society. The Social Inclusion Working Group has been set up to look at how all different communities in York can be given the same chances to take part in life and be included)



MINUTES



Date of meeting: 19 November 2008

Members of the Council who were at the meeting (to be known as 'Members' in these minutes):



**Janet Looker
(in the Chair
for this
meeting)**



Julie Gunnell



Jenny Brooks



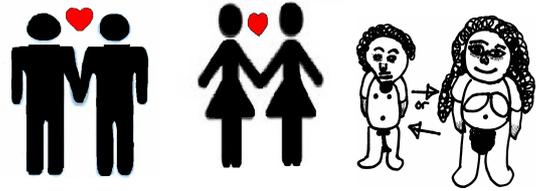
**Sue
Sunderland**

**People who were at the meeting representing
community groups:**

Sue Lister and Jack Archer
from the Older People's
Assembly



Peter Blackburn and Sarah Funnell from the LGBT Forum (LGBT stands for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender)



Daryoush Mazloum and Rita Sanderson of the BME (BME stands for Black Minority Ethnic) Citizens Forum



Jan Jauncey from York Interfaith



John Bettridge from York Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum and David Brown from York Access Group were also present at the meeting.

1. Public Participation



Ruth Thompson spoke to the Group about the work of CANDI (Children and Inclusion). This was a voluntary organisation and its members sat on many different committees to take part in decision-making about services for disabled children. She asked if it would be possible for SIWG to make a donation of £500 to CANDI to pay parents to train professional people in York on disability equality - what it means to

children, how things could be improved and how it affected family life. Ruth was thanked for the information she had given and the Chair explained that the request for a grant would be considered later in the meeting.

2. Matters Arising from Minutes - Taxis



The Council's Head of Licensing and Regulatory, the Taxi Licensing Officer and representatives from the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Associations were present at the meeting to answer the Group's questions about taxis. The following points were made:

- The Council was hoping to set up an accreditation scheme for taxi drivers. They would have to meet certain standards to be accredited such as being trained to help people with disabilities. It would be helpful for representatives from SIWG to have an input into the scheme. The Group asked if it would be possible for them to see the scheme before it came into operation.

- Cards had been produced to help people find a taxi that had wheelchair access. The cards should be available from taxi drivers. The information was also handed out when travel tokens were issued and could be found on the Council's website.
- Hackney taxis are not allowed to charge extra for transporting a wheelchair.
- No charge can be made for carrying an assistance dog.

3. Forward Plan



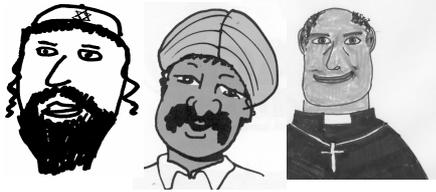
The Group agreed the plan of the work that they would be carrying out over the next year.

4. Community Representation on the Group



There are two vacancies on SIWG for co-opted members representing people with disabilities. The Group suggested that there should be wider consultation before the vacancies were filled.

5. Community Reports and Feedback



York Interfaith and Churches Together in York had carried out a survey to find out about current work, perceptions and concerns of the main religions and belief groups in the city. A number of points raised by the survey would be taken forward, including raising awareness of joint projects, an annual faith conference and a joint environmental project.



YREN had been launched their Senior Citizens Ethnic Elders Social Group and had also hosted the York BME Citizens Open Forum. The theme of the Open Forum had been community safety.



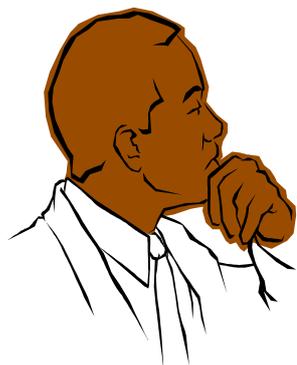
The group were updated on the work that LGBT were carrying out. A new website was being developed and should be ready by the end of the year. There was a growing demand for social events and another Pride event would take place in 2009.



50+ Festival 2008

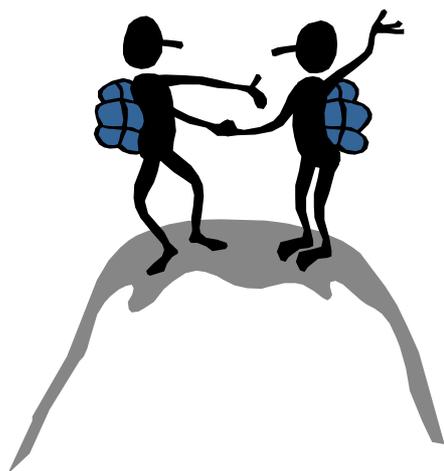
YOPA had carried out a survey. The findings had shown that having a receptive Council was very important to people.

The 50+ Festival had been very successful. People of all ages had taken part.



The Equality and Human Rights Commission had held a consultation event in York in November. The event was one of a series of twelve that were taking place nationally with the aim of encouraging people to have a

say in the three-year equality scheme which was being prepared by the E&HRC.



Young people from Applefields School had taken part in the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. They had taken part in an expedition and had coped extremely well.

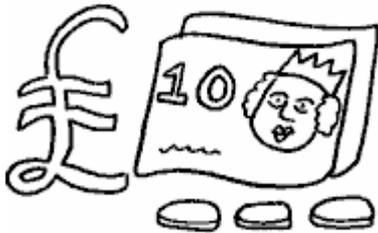
A disability trampolining club was taking place on Monday evenings at All Saints School at 5.00 pm.

Young people had been involved in the consultation on the new Children and Young People's Plan.



Details were given of Transgender Awareness Workshops that were taking place in York. Further details could be found on www.GenderShift.com

6. Project Proposals for SIWG Budgets 2008/9



The Group were asked for their views as to how the SIWG budget for 2008/2009 should be spent.

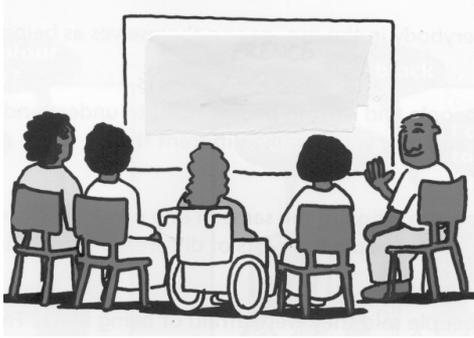
It was agreed that further consideration should be given to the following projects:



A grant of £500 to CANDI



Funding to enable the Young People's Service and YREN to work together to encourage more BME young people to access the Young People's Service.



A diversity exhibition - purchasing boards which could be used to display information about each group and which could be used at festivals and events.



A diversity day - a special day in York each year to celebrate diversity. This could include stalls, a diversity display, performances and activities.



The Group asked if it would also be possible for them to each receive an amount to cover the costs involved in them attending SIWG meetings.



It was decided to consider the budget proposals again at the next meeting when the costs of some of the projects had been confirmed.

7. Engaging with the Equality Strands



A paper had been circulated on "Engaging the Equality Communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group". Unfortunately there was not enough time left to discuss how people from the equality communities were engaged with SIWG at present and how this could be improved in the future. It was agreed that this was an important topic and therefore a special meeting of the Group should be arranged to discuss these issues.

The Group were informed of the work that the Equalities Team was carrying out in respect of gender engagement.

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Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group**14 January 2009**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Project proposals for funding in 2008/9**Summary**

1. This report follows on from a report entitled “Project proposals for SIWG budgets 2008/9” considered at the meeting of 19 November 2008.
2. It asks members to offer their support to the outline project proposals expected to be funded from the SIWG projects support budget 2008/9 for work to be done in 2009/10. Detailed project application forms will then be filled in by project leads and sent to the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Manager for final approval.

Background

3. At its first meeting in July 2006 SIWG was advised by officers that there was a budget available for “social inclusion issues” and that according to the Council constitution “the Group had no powers to co-opt members or incur expenditure.... Technically, the Group could not make budgetary decisions and the Equalities Officer had control of the budget allocation. However, his decisions would be guided by the Group’s advice”.
4. At the first SIWG Development Day on 25 February 2008, the Group developed a set of funding principles to help the officer and guide budget allocation for financial year 2008/9 and beyond. The principles were arrived at so as to ensure that the budget available for social inclusion activity/projects directly contributes to the three SIWG objectives as outlined in the Council Constitution.
5. The principles discussed at the Development Day 2008 and approved at the meeting on 12 March 2008 are as follows:

“Projects requesting support from this budget should:

- a. Contribute to Social Inclusion Working Group objectives and agreed yearly work plans
- b. Support the engagement of the widest audience in each of the six Equality strands i.e. Gender, Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, and Age
- c. Aim to engage hard-to-reach groups within each strand
- d. Explore new or emerging issues
- e. Be innovative and not previously tried
- f. Not be main running costs, which will not be funded
- g. Receive priority when brought forward by a number of community groups and covering a number of Equality strands”

These factors will also be taken into account to prioritise projects when there are more project proposals than budget available.

Groups will present end-of-year reports outlining project outcomes and final costs.”

6. It should be noted that the budget is available to any organisation and group that promotes projects/activity that support social inclusion, not only to the community groups that are invited to send co-opted non-voting representatives or any other representatives to SIWG. Nevertheless, the existence of this budget is not widely known and to date mostly groups that send representatives to SIWG have benefited from it, with the exception of the Citizens Advice Bureau which was given £1,500 in 2007/8 to go towards the coordination of a York Smart Card in support of the York Anti-Poverty Strategy.
7. In 2008/9, the SIWG budget available for activity related to social inclusion issues is £5,100.

Consultation

8. Community representatives and Members jointly considered and agreed project funding principles during the Development Day in

February 2008. Members formally approved the funding principles in March 2008.

9. Community representatives, expert witnesses and Members jointly considered the issues that form the contents of this report at the meeting on 19 November 2008.

Options

10. Option 1: To support the projects as outlined in Annex 1 to be led by community groups as indicated
11. Option 2: Not to support any of the projects in Annex 1 and seek new project ideas
12. Option 3: To support some of the projects in Annex 1

Analysis

13. **Option 1 is recommended.** The project proposals contribute to SIWG objectives and also meet all or the majority of the funding principles (please see Annex 1 for details).
14. Option 2 is not recommended because project proposals currently put forward contribute to SIWG objectives and also meet all or the majority of the funding principles (please see Annex 1 for details). In addition there is not enough time to seek new projects before year end when the budget available should be allocated.
15. Option 3 is not recommended. All project proposals currently put forward contribute to SIWG objectives and also meet all or the majority of the funding principles (please see Annex 1 for details).

Corporate Priorities

16. Projects put forward contribute to making York an inclusive city and also contribute to the Council's Equality objectives and Corporate Priorities.

Implications

17. These are as follows:
 - **Financial** – Projects 1-3 in Annex 1 can be funded from the approved budget. This would leave £1,160 available from the original budget of £5,100. Although payments in advance are

not normal practice, due to the nature of the projects requiring funding, it is proposed that grants will be paid in advance of the work being completed. As each of the payments is below £5k, a waiver from the Chief Financial Officer is not required.

- **Human Resources (HR)** – None
- **Equalities - Projects** suggested contribute to making York an inclusive city and also contribute to the Council's Equality objectives as well as to SIWG objectives.
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** - None
- **Other** - None

Risk Management

18. N/A

Recommendations

19. To support the outline project proposals as in Annex 1

Reason: To ensure that SIWG budgets promote equality and inclusion.

Contact Details

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the
report:
Heather Rice
Director of People and Improvement
Report** **Date** 5-1-09
Approved

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Outline projects to be funded by SIWG budgets in 2008/9

Annex 1 – Outline projects to be funded by SIWG budgets in 2008/9**Project 1: SIWG Diversity Mobile Exhibition**

Activity funded: To put in place a mobile exhibition made up of display boards showing material about the experiences of and issues faced by people from each of the 6 Equality strands living in York. It is expected that material will be provided by all community groups currently involved in SIWG, including groups that provide expert witnesses. The 11 community groups currently engaged in SIWG will be given £60 each to produce and assemble material to go on stands. The groups are: YOPA, MESMAC, YREN, Interfaith Forum, ACCESS group, York Humanists, Valuing People Partnership, York People First, Higher York, Travellers Trust, York Mental Health Forum

Total cost: £ 1,940

6 display boards (one per strand)	
at £180 each	£ 1,080
£200 to YOPA for co-ordination	£ 200
£ 60 to each the 11 SIWG community groups to help them gather material to be exhibited from within their membership	<u>£ 660</u>
Total	£ 1,940

Leading group: YOPA to procure the stands and co-ordinate the collection and presentation of material that will be on exhibition.

SIWG Objectives met * : Objectives 2 and 3

Funding principles met ** : a, b, e, f, g

Expected outcomes: Each group will be expected to create its own part of a diversity display involving and engaging their membership. The display boards could be used at community engagement and consultation events, festivals etc or be split up for small events held by individual groups. They could also be displayed in libraries or put up at Council meetings and events including Ward Committee meetings as well as be used as teaching support material for school, colleges and the universities in York to help promote diversity awareness amongst young people and students.

Project 2: SIWG Diversity Day

Activity funded: An outdoor event to celebrate diversity in York. The event will cover all six Equality strands including gender. In this respect it will meet the resolution made at the SIWG meeting in January 2008 “that priority consideration be given to applications from community groups relating to gender issues from the 2008/09 budget”. The event is expected to include community group stalls, the diversity exhibition, international food, performances by community groups, culture crafts, awareness activities, games, equality issues quizzes etc. External sponsorship can be sought to supplement costs. Public, private and CVS organisations in York will be invited to attend and contribute to the day in kind or by adding to the “seed” money made available through SIWG.

Total Cost: £1,500

Item	Cost
Publicity materials	£300
Gazebo(s)	£ 100
International Food	£ 500
Transportation	£100
Performing groups costs	£ 500
Total:	£1,500

Leading group: It is suggested that an organising committee should be drawn from groups currently engaged in SIWG. They should then choose the leading group from amongst them.

SIWG Objectives met *: Objective 2

Funding principles met **: All

Expected outcomes: This event is expected to engage people from all strands to attend and celebrate diversity together. This will be the first time that gender issues concerning women, men and trans-gendered people will be celebrated in the city. With respect to celebrating gender issues, the International Women’s Day is currently the main city-wide gender-related event but celebrates women’s issues only. In addition the event will add to community cohesion and will give SIWG members the opportunity to gather informal views about the current status of equality and diversity in the city.

Project 3: Supporting CANDI parents to offer disability training

Activity funded: Payments to enable parents with disabled/special needs children from the York Children and Inclusion Group (CANDI) to meet personal costs associated with offering training to professional people in York about the needs of disabled children/special needs children.

Total cost: £ 500

10 training sessions x £50 per session x 1 (different) parent per session
= £ 500

Leading organisation: CANDI

SIWG Objectives met *: Objective 2

Funding principles met **: All

Expected outcomes: Parents involved are the main carers of children often with complex disabilities. They are one of the hardest groups to reach and engage in service delivery and planning. Supporting them to offer training to professionals will enable them to gain confidence in dealing with professionals and advocating for their children's inclusion and wellbeing. In the majority they are women therefore supporting this application will help meet the resolution made at the SIWG meeting in January 2008 "that priority consideration be given to applications from community groups relating to gender issues from the 2008/09 budget".

Project 4: YREN/youth service collaboration regarding BME youth inclusion

Details of activity and costs to be provided at the meeting

Notes

*** SIWG Objectives are:**

Objective 1

Advise the Executive on Equality issues in general and in relation to CYC projects and initiatives

Objective 2

Extend and build contacts with groups and individuals involved in Equality issues in York to facilitate equality related input into CYC policy and plans and to provide opportunities for all citizens to influence CYC equalities policy and practice

Objective 3

To provide a link with Ward Committees so that Equality issues which are raised there can be taken further

**** SIWG funding principles are:**

- a. Contribute to Social Inclusion Working Group objectives and agreed yearly work plans
- b. Support the engagement of the widest audience in each of the six Equality strands i.e. Gender, Race, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion and Belief, and Age
- c. Aim to engage hard-to-reach groups within each strand
- d. Explore new or emerging issues
- e. Be innovative and not previously tried
- f. Not be main running costs, which will not be funded
- g. Receive priority when brought forward by a number of community groups and covering a number of Equality strands



Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group

14 January 2009

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Disability community representation on SIWG

Summary

1. This report asks members to consider the representation of the disability strand on the Group, following the resignation of the single co-opted non-voting individual who had been representing disability issues whilst a Disabled People's Forum was being formed.
2. Members are requested to recommend to Council the appointment of people from groups that are currently providing "expert witnesses"¹ on disability matters to SIWG, to serve as co-opted non-voting disability community representatives until such time as a single organisation led by and representing disabled people is formed in York.

Background

3. At the first meeting in July 2006 SIWG members decided that:

"..the Equalities Officer [should] write to the following community groups inviting them to nominate representatives to attend future meetings of the Group, with a view to these representatives being appointed by Council as the co-opted members of the Group:

 - The Disabled People's Forum (**once it has been set up**);
 - The BME Citizens' Open Forum (ethnicity);

¹ According to the minutes of the SIWG meeting in March 2008: "*The role of "expert witnesses" is to provide information and [personal] knowledge about specific issues. Expert witnesses will be invited at meetings in 2008/9 at the discretion of the Chair, for relevant agenda items.*"

- The Older People's Assembly;
 - The LGBT Forum (sexual orientation);
 - The Inter-Faith Forum (faith groups)”
4. It should be noted that these community groups are deemed to be the co-ordinated “voice” of the majority of people in the equality strands they cover. They are sometimes referred to as “umbrella groups”.
 5. In 2006, pending the setting up of the Disabled People's Forum, one person (involved in a group of community volunteers meeting with a view to setting up a Disabled People's Forum) came forward and was invited to represent the disability strand on SIWG. There was no disability community consultation or election about this appointment. The invited non-voting co-optee resigned from the SIWG in October 2008.
 6. There is currently no “umbrella group” from which disability community representatives can be drawn. Despite efforts from within the community and by the Council and other organisations, it has not been possible to set up a Disabled People's Forum in York so far. The latest York Citizens Guide lists 45 community groups active in disability issues in York. There are probably other groups in existence not listed in the Guide - like CANDI mentioned in the previous agenda item.
 7. Currently the Council's Housing and Adult Social Services Directorate and York CVS are working together to facilitate the setting up of a Centre for Independent Living (CIL) in York. In line with government recommendations, the CIL should be managed by disabled people to provide services and support for disabled people. Once the Centre is in place and a managing board has been constituted to run it, SIWG will have the opportunity to seek two co-opted non-voting representatives from amongst disabled people members of the CIL management board.
 8. Presently there are disability groups engaged in SIWG. These groups were invited to send expert witnesses to SIWG after the first Development Day in February 2008. This invitation was issued with the agreement of SIWG non-voting co-opted representatives and in some cases because they asked that these particular groups should be invited.

9. Disabled people's groups that currently are invited to provide disability expert witnesses to SIWG are:
 - a. Access Group (physical and sensory disabilities)
 - b. York People First and Valuing People Partnership (learning disabilities)
 - c. York Mental Health Forum (mental health)

It should be noted that each of the 4 disability equality sub-strands (physical, sensory, mental, learning) is represented via these groups.

Consultation

10. Community representatives and SIWG councillors jointly considered and agreed to invite the groups mentioned above to provide expert witnesses, during the SIWG Development Day 2008 and the during the meeting of the Group in March 2008.
11. This issue was discussed at the last SIWG meeting on 19 November 2008.

Options

12. Option 1: To invite the community groups listed in paragraph 9 above to provide one co-opted non-voting representative each (i.e. 4 representatives in total plus personal assistants where needed) to serve on SIWG until such time as a CIL management board has been put in place.
13. Option 2: Not to appoint disability community co-opted non-voting representatives on SIWG until the CIL management board is in place, drawing on the advice of current disabled expert witnesses in the meantime.
14. Option 3: To seek two co-opted non-voting representatives from amongst the 45 disability community groups currently listed in the York Citizen's Guide.

Analysis

15. **Option 1 is recommended.** This option will allow for continuity and will bring a common voice for each of the disability sub-strands (physical, sensory, mental health, learning disabilities) to

the Group, until such time as the CIL management board is formed.

16. Option 2 is not recommended. It is important that disability is represented on SIWG by co-opted non-voting disabled people. The difference between an expert witness and a non-voting co-opted representative is that there is an expectation on representatives to attend all SIWG meetings and bring representative views to the table. On the other hand, expert witnesses are not expected to attend every meeting and are expected to bring personal rather than group views and experiences to the table.
17. Option 3 is not recommended. It is unlikely that we shall find two representatives that will be acceptable to the membership of 45 different groups before the CIL board is formed. Some of these groups concentrate on very specific disability issues such as epilepsy or encephalitis so cannot be deemed to represent broader disability issues.

Corporate Priorities

18. Community representation and engagement in SIWG helps the Council ensure that its corporate priorities are appropriate.

Implications

19. These are as follows:

Financial – None

Human Resources (HR) – None

Equalities - Community representation on SIWG contributes to making York an inclusive city and also contribute to the Council's Equality objectives as well as to SIEG objectives.

Legal - Disability community engagement in service planning and delivery is a requirement under equality legislation.

Crime and Disorder - None

Information Technology (IT) - None

Property - None

Other - None

Risk Management

20. N/A

Recommendations

21. To invite the community groups listed in paragraph 8 above to provide co-opted non-voting representatives to serve on SIWG until such time as a CIL management board has been put in place.

Reason: To ensure that there is appropriate disability community representation on SIWG.

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the
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Report Date 5-1-09
Approved**

Wards Affected:

All

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Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group**14 January 2009**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Single Equality Scheme 2009-12 - Approach and consultation**Summary**

1. This report outlines the approach to the Council's Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Single Equality Scheme 2009-12 that follow on and update:
 - a. Pride In Our Communities, the Equality strategy and schemes 2005-8, and
 - b. the Single Corporate Equality Scheme for the period July 2008 to July 2009.
2. The report also outlines past and future consultation to offer the opportunity to people from the equality strands to influence the contents of the strategy and scheme 2009-12.
3. The report is for information and offers an opportunity for members to become familiar with the approach and contents of the strategy.
4. The first draft of the strategy and single equality scheme 2009-12 will be brought to SIWG for consideration and comments in spring 2009, before it is submitted to the appropriate Council decision making meeting for approval by summer 2009.

The Strategy

5. The Equality and Inclusion Strategy outlines the reasons behind and the way in which Council intends to use resources available to promote and embed equality and inclusion in its business and employment practice. The approach is substantially influenced by

legislation, inspection requirements and public sector quality standards.

6. The contents of the strategy are expected to cover:
 - a. Brief details of the national regional and local context within which the strategy and schemes will be developed including:
 1. The equality profile of our residents, service users and staff as available at the time of writing the strategy
 2. A statement of intent outlining Council strategic aims and objectives for equality and inclusion
 - b. Progress with equality and inclusion work in the Council for the period July 2005 to July 2009, including the work of SIWG
 - c. Involvement and consultation in developing the Single Equality Scheme, including identifying main issues that residents and staff from the Equality strands think the Council needs to focus on
 - d. Governance groups that will plan and deliver the strategy and single equality scheme by:
 1. Identifying and assessing Council functions and policies for relevance to equality and inclusion
 2. Conducting equality and diversity impact assessments and consultation on proposed policies
 3. Monitoring policies and practices for adverse impact on equality and inclusion
 4. Publishing the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring
 5. Making arrangements to ensure public access to information and services
 6. Ensuring Equality in employment and procurement practice
 7. Gathering evidence to measure performance based on an agreed performance management framework with targets and outcomes

The Single Equality Scheme

7. The Single Equality Scheme will list the actions that Council will take between July 2009 and July 2012 to ensure that gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion and belief equality and inclusion is promoted in its business and employment practices.
8. The Scheme will identify senior managers or groups of managers who will lead each action and the date by which the action should be completed. Its contents will be based on community engagement and consultation, the findings of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of key Council policies and practices and the contents of plans of action that each Directorate will put in place a result of consultation, engagement and EIAs
9. There is a legal requirement for the Council to put in place and publish Equality scheme(s) for gender, race and disability. However, Council has a policy and is required by the bodies that inspect it and the Local Government Framework (the standard by which Equality and Inclusion work is evaluated in the public sector), to also have schemes in place for age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

Consultation

10. Consultation and engagement that will inform the strategy and scheme includes:

Done

- Consultation and engagement undertaken to inform key Council policies and strategies that promote Equality and Inclusion and complement the Equality and Inclusion strategy -such as the Young People's Plan, Homelessness Strategy, Physical and Sensory Impairment Strategy
- Disability and Ethnicity conferences – June 2007
- The Changing Population of York Conference – Oct 2007
- SIWG Chair and Vice Chair community “surgeries” - Oct 2007 to March 2008
- SIWG Development Day– Feb 2008
- The Disabled People Together Day – March 2008
- SIWG/OPA survey – June 2008
- SIWG/Interfaith Forum survey – August 2008
- YREN Open Forums – On going
- York College students 1-2-1 with Equality and Inclusion Manager – May 2008

- Feedback from staff: International Women's Day 2008; Dead Ernest June 2008
- SIWG Disabled People Together Day – March 2008
- Meeting with the CVS Chair and CEO – October 2008
- SIWG EIAs Fair: Help us to get it right Day – Nov 2008
- The Place Survey – January 2009

In progress

- Gender groups community research undertaken by the National Management Trainee placed with the Equality and Inclusion Team – by early summer 2009
- Staff Equality reference groups – the first group will meet in January 2009
- Staff survey 2009 – March 2009
- SIWG Development Day – February 2009
- Profiled Equalities data will be available from a number of recent and upcoming surveys, i.e. Place Survey, Housing Tenants Survey, Cycle Survey, etc.

To do

- 1-2-1s with groups which are engaged in the SIWG but have not undertaken membership surveys funded by SIWG – by early spring 2009
- A targeted Residents Survey (depending on staff capacity and costs) - asap
- SIWG to consider and comment on draft strategy and scheme – May 2009

Corporate Priorities

11. The strategy and schemes will contribute to all corporate priorities including service and organisational development and improvement and SIWG objectives.

Implications

12. These are as follows:
 - **Financial** – None
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – None

- **Equalities** - The strategy and single equality scheme will help the Council achieve its equality and inclusion aims and objectives
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** - None
- **Other** - None

Risk Management

13. N/A

Recommendations

14. To note the report

Reason: To inform members about the development of the equality and inclusion strategy and schemes 2009-12.

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Report** **Date** 5-01-09
Approved

Wards Affected:

All

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Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group**14 January 2009**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Small Groups Discussion: Engaging with the Equality Strands**Summary**

1. The Group is expected to form small groups to consider the discussion paper attached as **Annex 1- Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group**
2. The paper describes how people from the equality communities are engaged in SIWG at present, and asks questions about this process to be considered in small groups at the SIWG meeting on 19 November. Feedback from the groups will be used to draft an Engagement Strategy 2009-12 for SIWG, which is expected to be finalized at the SIWG Development Day on 20 February 2009.

Consultation

3. The discussion paper is part of the consultation that will inform the SIWG Engagement Strategy 2009-12.

Options

4. N/A

Analysis

5. N/A.

Corporate Priorities

6. The discussion and subsequent strategy contribute to the promotion of inclusive and cohesive communities, the Council

Equalities aims and objectives, and the aims and objectives of the Council's developing Engagement Strategy.

Implications

7. These are as follows:
- **Financial** – None.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – None
 - **Equalities - As** above
 - **Legal** - None
 - **Crime and Disorder** - None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** - None
 - **Property** - None
 - **Other** - None

Risk Management

8. N/A

Recommendations

9. To discuss the report in annex 1

Reason: To ensure that SIWG includes as many people from equality strands as possible in its work.

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Report** **Date** 5-01-09
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All

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Background papers – None

Annexes

Annex 1- Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group

Annex 1 - Discussion paper

<p style="text-align: center;">Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group</p>

National legislation and its own policies mean that the Council should aim to make sure that local people have a say in the planning and delivery of public services and become engaged in local decision making.

The Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) provides a mechanism for people from the equality communities (also known as "the equality strands") to do just that, but needs to improve so that it can engage with as many people as possible in a fair inclusive and sustainable way.

This paper aims to help the Group begin its discussions about how to improve engagement.

It explains the current national definition of "engagement" and the duties that the Council will have in this area from April 2009.

The paper also describes how people from the equality communities are engaged in SIWG at present, and asks questions about this process to be considered in small groups at the SIWG meeting on 14 January 2009. Feedback from the groups will be used to draft an Engagement Strategy for SIWG, which is expected to be finalized at the SIWG Development Day on 27 February 2009.

1. What is "engagement"?

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act which comes into force in April 2009, introduces a new duty for local authorities "to inform, consult and involve representatives of local persons' across all authority functions".

The Act offers a definition of engagement and says that it is made up of:

- **Provision of information**, to support communities to have their say and get involved 'where appropriate'. This needs to go beyond standard information on services and must be provided in a way that can be easily accessed and understood.
- **Consultation**, to allow people to have a say about the decisions and services that affect them. Consultation needs to provide genuine opportunities for people to be involved.
- **Involvement**, which is the most interactive form of engagement, giving people greater influence over decisions or delivery, through:
 - influence or direct participation in decision making (for example budget consultations, the EIAs Fair of the Social Inclusion Working Group and ward committee meetings)
 - feedback on decisions, services, policies and outcomes (such as exit surveys, residents' surveys)
 - working with Council services to design policies and services
 - carrying out some aspects of services for themselves (for example owning, running and maintaining a community centre)
 - working with Council to assess services (for example through co-opted members of Overview and Scrutiny committees, or as mystery shoppers)

SIWG has for sometime now been doing a lot of what the Act is asking, but needs to consider how to do this better in the future.

2. Community engagement in SIWG currently

It is very important that community representation on SIWG is as strong as possible. This will help the Council meet its legal duties,

but more importantly it will make sure that people protected by equality legislation have a strong voice and are able to influence decision making in the Council, as was the intention of Councillors when they set up SIWG.

Since July 2006 when SIWG was set up, the involvement of people from the equality communities has developed to include:

- Co-opted non-voting representatives,
- Expert Witnesses, and
- SIWG community participation and engagement events, like the recent Equality Impact Assessments Fair.

Below we look at each of the ways that people are involved in SIWG now, and ask some questions to help us think how to improve community representation and engagement on SIWG.

Co-opted non-voting representatives

Following its first meeting in July 2006, the organisations below were invited to send two co-opted representatives to serve on SIWG:

- the Inter-Faith Forum
- the BME Citizens' Open Forum
- the Older People's Assembly
- the LGBT Forum

To date, there are two representatives from each of these organisations serving on SIWG. Most of these are elected annually

by their groups and the same individuals have served since July 2006.

The "Disabled People's Forum once set up", was also invited to send two people. At the time and pending the creation of the Forum, one person involved in setting up the Forum came forward to represent the Disability strand on SIWG. Despite efforts, it has not been possible to set up a York Disabled People's Forum so far. The person resigned from the SIWG in October 2008. However, there are disabled expert witnesses from different groups who are currently engaged in SIWG.

Finally, as in July 2006 there was no single organisation representing gender issues in the city, the groups above were asked to send a male and female representative each to cover gender issues. To date, SIWG agendas and minutes show that few if any gender issues have been raised for discussion. This needs to be addressed, because since April 2007 the Council and other public bodies have a legal duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote and bring about gender equality, working with representatives from this strand including trans-gendered people. A National Management Trainee has been placed in the Equality and Inclusion Team to help gather the views and experiences of community groups active in gender issues in the city.

There is an implicit expectation that people appointed as co-opted representatives attend SIWG meetings regularly. They are also expected to actively contribute to the objectives of the Group, for example by surveying their group members to find out issues that need to be dealt with and bringing forward project proposals that support and promote equality inclusion and engagement to be funded by SIWG budgets.

Last year the number of Councillors who sit on the SIWG was reduced. One of the main reasons was to make room for more community representatives to be engaged in the Group.

Issues to consider

1. What is the role of a co-opted representative? What should they be asked to do?
2. How does one become a co-opted representative? Elected? Appointed? Self-appointed?
3. What skills and personal qualities does a person need to have to be a co-opted representative?
4. How do we know that representatives are "representative"? How do we make sure that they bring all voices to the table - even ones they personally do not agree with?
5. How long should a co-opted representative serve on SIWG?
6. Once on SIWG, what support does a co-opted representative need to be effective?

Expert witnesses

At its first Development Day in February 2008, members of the Group considered how to widen community representation on SIWG. The concept of Expert Witness was brought up and explored during the day. There was agreement that several groups needed to be invited to send expert witnesses to support co-opted representatives and share their personal experiences with the Group.

At the meeting in March 2008, SIWG members decided that:

"The role of "expert witnesses" is to provide information and [personal] knowledge about specific issues. Expert witnesses will be invited at meetings in 2008/9 at the discretion of the Chair, for relevant agenda items."

Witnesses currently invited and reasons for inviting them are as follows:

- √ York Travellers Trust, to inform traveller issues
- √ York Humanists, to inform non religion/belief issues
- √ Young people invited in consultation with and supported by Steve Rouse, the youth worker who is currently commissioned by SIWG to work with young people, to inform specific issues such as intergenerational projects.
- √ User representatives from Valuing People Partnership and York People First to inform learning disabilities and mental health issues
- √ People from York Access Group to inform mobility issues
- √ Representatives from Higher York to progress higher education student inclusion
- √ Following investigation to identify relevant groups in the City, representatives from women's groups, men's groups and transgender groups to assist with gender issues.
- √ Representatives from the Primary Care Trust and Education services to assist with and inform equality in service issues arising in these areas.

The current Chair of SIWG has issued a standing invitation to all the witnesses to attend and feel free to speak at all meetings. Agendas and minutes are distributed to invited witnesses.

With the exception of people from gender groups and York Travellers Trust, all of the witnesses have attended:

- √ the induction lunch in June 2008,
- √ some of the main meetings, and/or

- √ the SIWG Equality Impact Assessments Fair on 5 November 2008.

There is no requirement for expert witnesses to attend all SIWG meetings.

Issues to consider

1. Is the current definition of expert witness adequate?
2. Can a person representing their own views/experience be an expert witness, or should it only be a person representing the views of a specific group?
3. What skills and personal qualities does a person need to be an expert witness?
4. Should there be a time limit for the same individual to serve as an expert witness on SIWG? What should it be?
5. What support do expert witnesses need to be effective?

Community participation and engagement events

These events provide an opportunity for large numbers of people from the equality communities to come together, share their experiences and voice their opinion about matters that SIWG deals with.

Current SIWG community events are as informal and inclusive as possible. Attendees tell us that they like them because they are relaxed and informal and make no particular demands on their time (for example by requiring attendance at frequent meetings).

To date, the following events have been organised in the context of SIWG:

- √ The **"Disabled People Together"** event in March 2008, to launch a project by higher education student-volunteers to support the development of a Disabled People's Forum in York

- √ The **"Help us to get it Right Day"** (SIWG Equality Impact Assessments Fair) on 5 November 2008, where Council officer from 9 key Council service areas discussed equality issues about these areas with community representatives. Feedback from the sessions will be used to formulate service plans in 2009/10.

Both of these attracted between 40 to 50 people and feedback has been very positive with more events of this nature being asked for by those who have attended them.

Some community groups currently involved in SIWG also hold their own community forums (YREN, OPA, Interfaith forum). Although these are not organized to contribute to SIWG business only, they too help get representative views to the table.

Issues to consider

1. Are SIWG community events the right way to bring more voices to the table?
2. How often should we have them?
3. What are their costs and benefits?
4. How can we improve them?
5. Who should organise them and run them? Why?

3. Other issues we need to think about to make SIWG work better

Below is a list of other issues that we need to consider in our journey to improve SIWG:

- √ Format of meetings
- √ Frequency and length of meetings
- √ Who makes decisions and how

√ Communication

The list is not exhaustive and SIWG members are invited to put additional issues forward by contacting Evie Chandler in the Equality and Inclusion Team. These will then be discussed in detail at the Development Day on 27 February 2009.