
Social Inclusion Working Group

21st March 2007

Report of the Head of Performance Improvement

Involving Young People in the Social Inclusion Working Group

1. Summary

- 1.1 In November 2006 the Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) considered options for developing the effective involvement of young people in the Group and the various community forums that send representatives to it. This report outlines what steps have been taken to implement the recommendations of this Group since the November meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 The SIWG was established to consider issues of equality and social inclusion and to advise the Council's Executive on these issues accordingly. A key aim was to ensure that those sections of the community who experience disadvantage and exclusion should be able to contribute to the work of the Group and have a real say in its decisions. The Group has therefore invited the main community forums which represent each of the equality strands to send two representatives to sit on the Group.
- 2.2 The November meeting considered a number of options for involving young people both directly in the Group itself and also in the various community forums that send representatives to the Group. These were discussed in detail by the Group and the following measures were agreed:
- 2.3 A - The Children and Young Persons Champion will attend meetings to advocate on behalf of young people. Their role would only be to articulate the views of young people as have already been expressed through consultation and involvement activity, as recorded on the consultation database.
- 2.4 B - Include issues that are important to young people are placed on the forward plan and with the advice and support of the Youth Service relevant young people are invited to attend those particular meetings.
- 2.5 C - Hold a once-yearly social inclusion event for young people – a Social Inclusion Youth Forum. This could ascertain the views of young people on a number of social inclusion and equality issues and may lead to the identification of two younger people interested in attending the SIWG on a regular basis. Representation on this would be drawn from within the BME forum and Disabled People's Forum as well as other appropriate groups across the City.

- 2.6 D - The relevant Community Forums involved in the SIWG work to better involve young people in their activities and by so doing identify a young person who would be interested in representing the views of young people from that community at the SIWG. These young people's representatives would be offered an extra place on the SIWG.
- 2.7 The Group also agreed that more pro-active work was needed to ensure that the involvement of young people was effective. This work should be developed in consultation with the community forums and with the Youth Council.

3. Update on work to enhance young people's involvement in the SIWG.

- 3.1 The Council's Equalities Officer and officers from the Youth Service and Children's Trust have had initial discussions with the appropriate community forums involved with the SIWG to agree a way forward on the involvement of young people. All the groups were keen to see greater involvement of young people in their forums however there were concerns raised about capacity and ensuring the right policies and procedures were in place to support this work. Nonetheless a common approach was agreed.
- 3.2 The intention is to develop a network of young people from each of the relevant communities (ie BME young people, disabled young people, and LGBT young people) which could then develop close links with the forum itself, and maybe if wished send a young person's representative along to the SIWG meetings. These networks once established could also feed into events organised for the schools councils in the autumn ensuring these have a strong emphasis on social inclusion and equalities. If resources are found for example the groups could work with a Forum Theatre company to develop a performance on social inclusion for young people at this autumn event.
- 3.3 It is however recognised that to establish such groups requires time, resources and ongoing commitment if it is to be successful. Hence it is suggested that:
- ❑ This work begin by building on the current networks and groups that exist in these areas.
 - ❑ The Youth Service recruit sessional workers to provide the development support needed for this work, rather than this becoming an extra burden on the community forums.
 - ❑ The pace of the development work may vary according to the capacity of the current groups and forums, and the needs / priorities of the young people themselves.
- 3.4 This can be funded through the funds left in the Equalities Team budget for Social Inclusion which is spent according to the priorities established by this Group (currently £3280). Assuming a minimum of 5 hours per week will be needed for the sessional work, between April and the autumn, allowing for school holidays this should provide for about 18 weeks sessional work (at £25 per hour) whilst leaving £1030 towards the cost of ensuring the schools council event can engage with equality and social inclusion issues effectively (eg through a forum theatre event).

4. Corporate Priorities

4.1 The emphasis of the SIWG is to improve the effectiveness of the organisation in meeting the diverse needs of its customers. The applications for funding from the community forums participating in the Group are designed to enhance the wider community's engagement. Hence the main corporate priority that this paper addresses is:

- Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services.

5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1 The Equalities Team's existing budgets will be used to support the work associated with the proposals in this report.

Equalities Implications

5.2 The report addresses the effective involvement of young people in the SIWG. This would support the council's work to implement the Equality Standard for Local Government and the embedding of the Council's Equality Strategy - "Pride in our Communities".

6. Risk Management

6.1 In compliance with the Councils risk management strategy. There are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Social Inclusion Working Group are recommended to:

7.2 Note the proposal for a way forward on the effective involvement of young people in the SIWG outlined in this report.

7.3 Ask that the officers concerned report on progress made with this work in September 2007.

Reason: To develop a more comprehensive and inclusive means of involving young people in issues of social inclusion and equality.

Contact Details

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Report Approved



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12 March 2007

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

