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Meeting	Social Inclusion Working Group
Date	17 February 2010
Present	Councillors Ayre (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Crisp (Vice-Chair) (agenda items 30-32 and 35) and Gunnell (agenda items 30-32 and 35)  Non-Voting Co-opted Members: David Brown – York Access Group Sarah Fennell – LGBT Forum Sue Lister – York Older People’s Assembly Rita Sanderson – York Racial Equality Network Fiona Walker – Valuing People Partnership  Expert Witnesses: Maureen Ryan – Valuing People Partnership Carolyn Suckling – York Access Group George Wright – Humanist
Apologies	John Burgess – Mental Health Forum Daryoush Mazloun - YREN

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### **Mrs Corry Hewitt**

The group was saddened to hear of the death of Mrs Corry Hewitt, who had served as a representative of York Interfaith on SIWG. A card of condolence would be sent to Mrs Hewitt’s family on behalf of the group.

### **30. 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. None were declared.

### **31. Minutes and Matters Arising**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the Group held on 2 December 2009 and 28 January 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to it being noted that Fiona Walker and Maureen Ryan had

submitted their apologies for absence for the meeting on 28 January 2010 and that the meeting finished at 10.00 pm.

In accordance with the Group's request that their recommendations were tracked to ensure that they were being actioned, an update was given on matters arising from the previous minutes:

(i) SIWG Display Boards

Arrangements had been made for the SIWG display boards to be placed in the foyer at York St John University during International Women's Week. Information for inclusion on the boards should be forwarded to Sue Lister by the end of the week.

(ii) Name of the Group

Clarification was sought as to whether the suggestions regarding the name of the group were to be taken on board. It was noted that this would be considered further at the Development Day on 29 March 2010, along with issues including the SIWG budget<sup>1</sup>.

(iii) Roles and Responsibilities of Elected Members and Community Representatives

The minutes of the meeting of 28 January 2010 had made reference to the need to look at the role that Elected Members should play when future discussions took place with SIWG to examine the impact of budget proposals on the equality strands. Some Elected Members suggested that they felt that it would be appropriate for them to be present when such discussion took place but would not wish to participate. Others stated that they were happy to participate. It was agreed that further consideration would be given to this matter when the next budget round took place.

Members of the group suggested that there was a more general issue in terms of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of Elected Members and non-voting co-opted members on SIWG. Rita Sanderson offered to support the group in this matter<sup>1</sup>. Officers informed the

Group that this issue would be discussed and finalised at the Development Day on 29 March 2010.

Action Required

1. Include in programme for Development Day                      EC

**32. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

**33. Council Workforce Strategy**

A presentation was given on the council's Workforce Plan 2010-12. A copy of the presentation is attached as Annex A to these minutes.

SIWG were requested to offer feedback about diversity issues in the plan. It was noted that the council was the largest employer in the city. Consideration was given to York's population profile and how this compared to the council's workforce profile.

The Group welcomed the plan and put forward the following suggestions as to areas that needed further consideration:

- As well as encouraging disabled people to work for the council, more should be done to retain people who become disabled whilst working as an employee of the council.
- Flexible working is important.
- It is important that jobs are not "token jobs" – the level of job is also a key factor.
- Staff training is important – there needs to be a culture of tolerance. Diversity training should be a compulsory part of staff induction.
- Consideration should be given to job carving (The Blueberry Academy could advise on this)
- It was noted that there was no reference to LGBT in the plan. Officers explained that this was because they did not have this data from employees, although there was representation on the Staff Equalities Reference Group (SERG).
- It was suggested that some staff who are disabled or from a minority group may not wish for this to be known. It was

acknowledged that this made it more difficult to ascertain where there was under-representation.

- A suggestion was put forward that people might be reluctant to provide information regarding their sexuality but that if questionnaires were reworded to ask for “partnership preference” this may seem less intrusive.
- Officers were asked how robust the council’s arrangements were in ensuring that young people were represented in the workforce. Attention was drawn to the government funding that was available to support apprenticeships. Officers confirmed that the employment of more young people was a priority, as the number of 16-24 year old employees was very low. It was proposed to take a more directive approach to address this matter, for example the Corporate Management Team were to be asked to consider whether posts should be designated as apprenticeships up to a certain level unless there was a proven business case for alternative arrangements to be put in place.

Resolved: That it be requested that the comments put forward by SIWG be taken into account when the Workforce Plan is developed.

Reason: To help officers put in place a fair and inclusive Workforce Plan.

#### **34. Progress with the new Council Headquarters Project and related Equality Impact Assessments**

The Group received a presentation on the council’s Accommodation Project.

Copies of the comments made by SIWG when they were consulted on the project on 24 September 2009 were circulated, along with the response that had been made to each recommendation. This document is attached as Annex B to these minutes.

The Group was informed that the contract would be formally awarded to York Investors LLP the following Monday. The company would provide the council’s new headquarters and York Customer Centre at West Offices on Station Rise by 2012. The Group were shown diagrams illustrating the location of the new headquarters and initial design proposals. 70% of the

building would be new-build. The building would be very efficient in terms of the use of non-renewable resources and would have a BREEAM rating of “excellent”.

The Group made the following comments regarding the proposals:

- Whilst it was pleasing to note that the building would be accessible due to its central location and excellent public transport links, concerns were expressed that the appropriate use of the disabled parking bays may not be enforced. Officers stated that there would be a 24-hour presence on the site and therefore the use of the bays would be monitored.
- Because of the open-plan nature of the design, concerns were expressed regarding possible noise levels and the impact that this may have on those with autism. It was suggested that the acoustic specialist employed by the developer should be requested to consult with disabled people regarding this matter.
- It was important that appropriate consideration was given to the interior of the building, including the impact of colour and soft furnishings on behaviour. Meditation rooms should also be available.
- The Valuing People Partnership had been working on “Your Journey to Hospital” and would be pleased to assist the council in preparing similar accessible information on “Your Journey to York Council Headquarters”.
- The Group was informed that rationalisation from sixteen administrative offices to four would achieve significant long-term savings and fund the cost of the new headquarters. The Group stated that it was important that employees and members of the community were aware of this, as the project was taking place at a time when jobs were being cut at the council and some members of the community were losing valued services. It was important to make clear that the project was about delivering excellent services to the community as well as providing appropriate facilities for staff.

Details were given of the next stages in the process. The developers would be holding a pre-planning event at the Mansion House on Friday 5 March 2010 and Saturday 6 March 2010 to seek views on their latest design proposals. Invitations would be circulated to SIWG members, along with

details of how to access further information on the website<sup>1</sup>.

SIWG would continue to be consulted on developments regarding the council's new headquarters.

#### Action Required

1. Circulate details of consultation event and website link JC

### **35. Community Cohesion - Approach and Plans**

The Group received a report about the council's approach and plans for community cohesion. Officers explained that community cohesion was about respect, fairness and inclusion for everyone who lives York. The council's Fairness and Inclusion Strategy made a commitment to develop a Community Cohesion Strategy/Action Plan by July 2010. A government-funded postholder would be working with the council until the end of May to support the work that was being carried out.

Work had started to explore some objectives and to find out what activities were already taking place that promoted cohesion. Inclusive York had been consulted about the work that was taking place and had emphasised the need to involve all partners. It was noted that many groups already had action plans in place, for example most schools had implemented community action plans.

Members of SIWG stated that YREN had considerable expertise in this issue and it was important to involve them in the work that was taking place. Officers explained that it was the intention to involve community groups but that the current focus was an audit of council activities. It was noted that if community groups were to be involved this had resource implications for them. It was therefore important that the work was appropriately resourced. YREN had previously carried out a considerable amount of work as the lead body of a Local Area Agreement (LAA) partnership bid, and whilst the application had been unsuccessful, the content and work should be acknowledged.

Members of the group stressed the importance of ensuring that that the community cohesion strategy also took into account the need to have in place effective hate incident reporting arrangements.

Resolved: That a progress report on the Community Cohesion Strategy be presented at the next meeting<sup>1</sup>.

Reason: To help officers put in place a fair and inclusive community cohesion plan and to give SIWG the opportunity to influence the plan.

Action Required

1. Include as agenda item for next meeting EC

**36. Progress with More for York Equality Impact Assessments and Next Steps**

A report was received that outlined progress with More for York Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) in 2009/10. It was noted that, as part of the More for York Initiative, a staff suggestion scheme was being set up.

The Group was updated on some of the ways in which the suggestions that they had put forward had been actioned:

- Parking arrangements at St Leonard's were being reviewed
- Consideration was being given to voice recognition software
- The council had signed up to the Plain English Standard and a Style Guide was in place<sup>1</sup>
- Suggestions regarding debt collection had been incorporated into the policy
- New recycling containers would have holes in the bottom to prevent water from collecting. The Chair informed the Group that he had also requested that the possibility of supplying tactile containers be explored.

Attention was drawn to the work streams in the report that had been considered by the staff equalities group.

The Group was informed of forthcoming EIAs on which their views would be sought. These included:

- The teams forming part of the Chief Executive's Office
- Fleet management (including minibuses for home to school transport)
- Taxi services/pool cars

- Property management and facility management
- Housing
- Children's social care
- Policy review for recruitment and selection
- City Strategy – planning
- Mobile working

Community representatives suggested that the council should consider whether it would be appropriate to reimburse community groups for the time and expertise that they gave to the council when considering EIAs. It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the Development Day<sup>2</sup>.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To inform SIWG on progress with More for York EIAs and to present next steps as the programme progresses.

Action Required

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|---|----|
| 1. At request of Group, circulate copies of Council's Style Guide to SIWG members | JC |
| 2. Include as issue to be considered at Development Day                           | EC |

**37. SIWG Development Day**

Copies of a report on the purpose and content of the next group Development Day had been circulated. SIWG members were encouraged to attend the event.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To help the Group finalise the improvement work it started in 2009/10 and put in place a work programme for 2010-11.

**38. Any Other Business - Hate Incidents**

The Group was informed that YREN had been successful in its tender to help the Police Independent Advisory Group for York and Selby better understand Hate Crime. The work would enable the Police to improve its service to the victims of Hate Crime and the community. Copies of the proposed questionnaire were circulated. SIWG's support was sought in preparing an easy-read version of the questionnaire.



Resolved: That arrangements be made for an easy-read version of the questionnaire to be prepared<sup>1</sup>.

Reason: To support the process in ensuring that all members of the SIWG had the opportunity to be involved in the consultation.

Action Required

1. Prepare easy-read version of questionnaire

JC

Annex A – Council Workforce Strategy Presentation

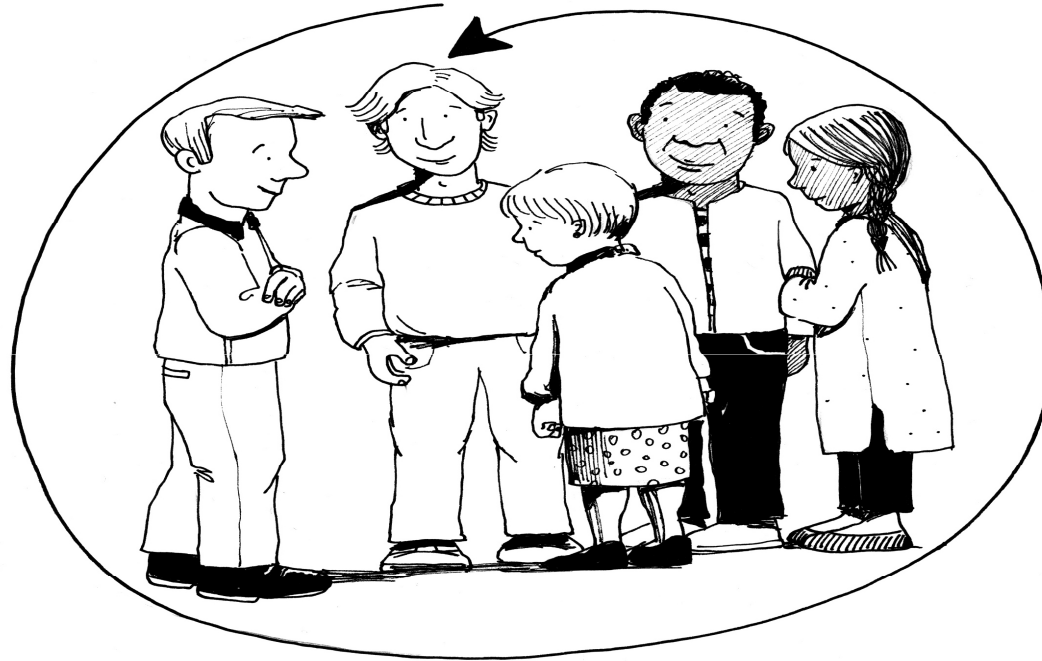
Annex B – Council Headquarters: Response to Feedback from SIWG

Councillor N Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 9.00 pm].

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# City of York Council Workforce Plan



2010-12

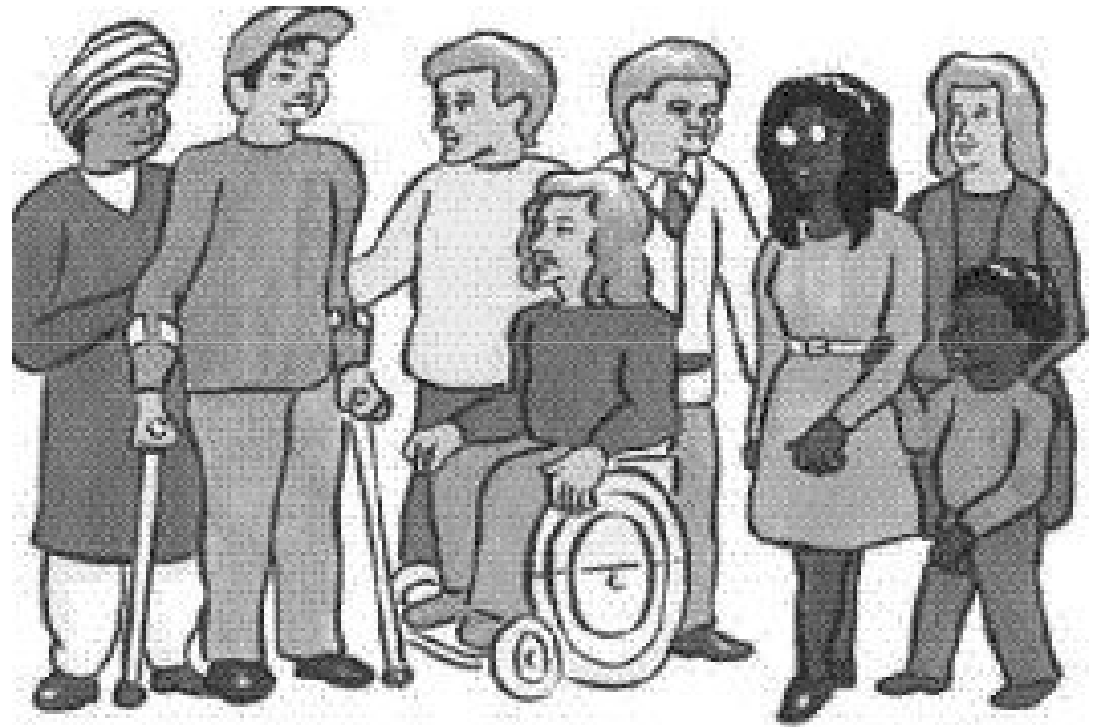
# What is a Workforce Plan?

- Making sure the council has:
- the right people
- with the right skills
- to deliver services



# York's profile

- 195,000+
- Aging
- 17% disabled
- 9% BME
- 8% are aged 60-65



# CYC's workforce profile



- 8000+
- 137 Disabled
- 253 BME
- 337 under 24
- 505 over 60

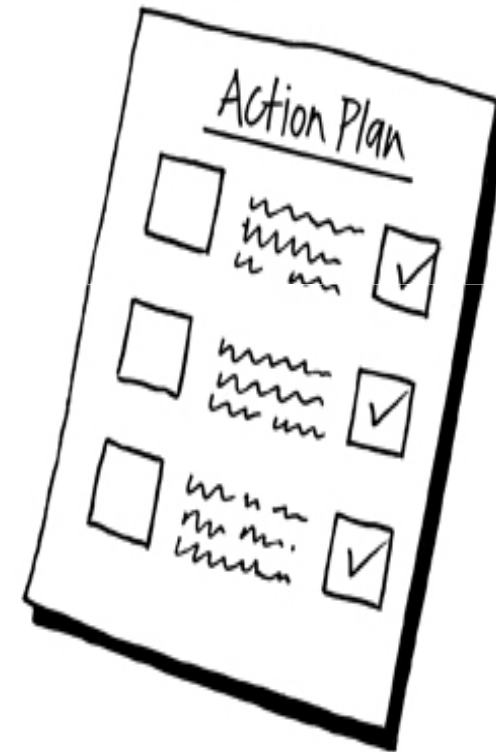
# 5 Objectives

- Transformation & culture change
- Efficiency
- Customers
- Diversity
- Partnerships



# The Diversity Objective

- Job opportunities for all
- More disabled, young and BME people in council jobs
- Fair and inclusive culture
- All staff to have diversity training





# The SERG suggested:

- Diversity training
- Targeted recruitment
- Flexible working



# What do you think?

## How can the council

- Offer job opportunities for all?
- Ensure more BME, disabled and young people in council jobs?
- Create a more inclusive culture?



**Social Inclusion Working Group - 24 September 2009****Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters**

<b>What You Said</b>	<b>Our Response</b>
<p><b>Staff and Communication</b></p> <p>1. There should be “Meet and Greet” Staff in the customer centre.</p>	<p>Provision of “meet and greeter” / floorwalkers (first point of contacts) are in the customer centre access requirements specification.</p>
<p>2. The frontline contacts should ensure that customers get access to the correct department</p>	<p>The first points of contacts will signpost customers to the correct department, service or area of the customer centre.</p>
<p>3. Interpreters should be available for deaf and hard of hearing and for people for whom English is not their first language</p>	<p>The timely provision of British Sign Language interpreters has been identified in the customer services EIA, and the corporate accessible information EIA.</p>
<p>4. There should be all types of signage (including Makaton, BSL and board widgets)</p>	<p>The need for different types of signage has been identified in the EIAs for customer services and corporate accessible information (which covers documents, communication, signposting, interpretation, translation, website, intranet, etc). Suggestions for improvements will be taken forward in further consultation during the final design stage of the project.</p>
<p>5. Information provided should be accessible – York People First can advise on this.</p>	<p>Through ongoing consultation with SIWG and the Communication EIA. Any advice offered will be taken on board through the SIWG consultation process.</p>
<p>6. Staff should receive Disability Equality Training.</p>	<p>There is an existing Equalities Awareness Training course provided through the Training</p>

## Social Inclusion Working Group - 24 September 2009

### Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters

	and Development Centre that all staff are entitled to attend. The customer services project has also identified the need to include more in-depth equalities training for frontline staff (this will cover all strands). Staff should apply for training through their directorates.
7. City of York Council should become a lead employer – it should follow through EIA issues to staff and not only customers	The EIA process has covered all issues identified by both staff and customers across the four EIAs currently in place for the accommodation project.
<b>Design and Facilities</b>	
8. Make sure people don't feel threatened by the mix of people in the customer centre (for example some older people may feel intimidated if there were young offenders present). The centre should be welcoming for all ages and everyone should feel safe.	The design and layout of the customer centre continues to be worked on taking account of ongoing customer and staff comments and feedback. At this stage in the project, we have identified the need to provide safe and secure environments for both customers and staff in the EIAs for both FM stream and Customer Services.
9. The building must be energy efficient	The building is being designed to BREEAM Excellent standards and will have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of 28 - equivalent to the top grade A – No other existing building in the council meets this level presently.

## Social Inclusion Working Group - 24 September 2009

### Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters

10. Try to avoid having screens between staff and customers	The customer centre design has taken account of not putting barriers in place that are not needed for security and confidentiality needs. Sight lines are being designed to give an open and friendly customer environment.
11. Must be autism friendly	The design and layout of the customer centre continues to be worked on taking account of ongoing customer and staff comments and feedback. Customer services staff will be trained in “equalities awareness” including multiple needs to ensure we can provide support to customers with a range of different needs.
12. Feng Shui (spiritually uplifting)	We will not be investing in Feng Shui consultation.
13. A prayer room	Advice is that this is now referred to as the ‘Contemplation Room’. How it will be used in practice will need to be consulted on further through SERG and SIWG – however the need for this type of space in the building for both customers/staff to use has been identified and allocated in the initial plans. It may be that, dependent on advice through consultation, numerous rooms may be suitable.
14. Computers available for customers to use (could be loaded for the City of York Council website). Screens	The design of the customer centre includes the requirement for a “self service zone” which will include access to computers

## Social Inclusion Working Group - 24 September 2009

### Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters

	should be suitable for people with epilepsy	for customers to either self-serve, or be supported by staff to use. These will be made accessible for all users e.g. at different heights. The need for suitable screens, computer equipment etc will be within the IT strategy for the new HQ.
15.	Leeds have "The Information Store" and have to share it with other councils for free.	We will contact them at the appropriate stage of the project.
16.	Gender neutral toilets and gender specific ones too (for staff and customers). Appropriate changing facilities.	Design team to respond. Shower and changing facilities will be provided in a specific area as part of the design brief for staff.
17.	Provision should be made for young children going into the building with their parents/carers and also childcare facilities for staff (for example a crèche, drop-in and play area)	There is no crèche in the design brief for the new building for staff to use. In the customer centre there will be provision made for ensuring that young children are occupied.
18.	There should be provision for guide dogs and hearing dogs	The customer centre design includes the need for dog facilities within the external environment (this includes fixed leads, water and excrement disposal units).
19.	No scary glass lifts	There will be no glass lifts. "Evacuation" lifts to current standards will be provided.
20.	Should be available out of office hours to make use of the space but must be secure. Should be available for meetings for example SIWG meetings	This is being addressed through flexible working policies discussions which will determine the operational hours of the building and what spaces within it can be accessed by non-

## Social Inclusion Working Group - 24 September 2009

### Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters

	council staff / groups within agreed parameters.
<b>Location</b>	
21. Will a central location attract more traffic into the city centre? – Need to get public transport right to prevent this from happening.	The chosen site is near to all public transport links and will be signposted within the streetscape to direct people to the new HQ building.
22. The building should be on a bus route for every area of York	The new HQ building has proximity to public transports links.
23. For some people having access to services locally is important	The customer services project is exploring access to customer services in the community through existing buildings, e.g. Libraries and also sharing spaces with partners e.g. DWP, HMRC etc
<b>Consultation</b>	
24. When more detailed information is available about the building it will be easier to comment. More consultation should take place then.	Ongoing consultation will be undertaken throughout the project life using a variety of different methods and formats.
25. Consult the voluntary sector and other services with particular areas of expertise	Ongoing consultation will be done with all stakeholders.

**Social Inclusion Working Group - 24 September 2009****Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters**

26. If there are problems when the building opens – the Council needs to respond and make changes. Contingencies should be in place.	There will be phased transfer from existing buildings and testing as part of the Property Exit Strategy, which is being developed. This will allow issues to be picked up gradually that may require some change management by directorates.
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