

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DATE	13 MAY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS ASPDEN (IN THE CHAIR ITEMS 50-54), BROOKS, GUNNELL, LOOKER (VICE-CHAIR IN THE CHAIR ITEMS 45-49)
NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS	DAVID BROWN – YORK ACCESS GROUP SARAH FENNELL – LGBT FORUM CORRY HEWITT – YORK INTERFAITH LARRY HOTCHKISS – YORK OLDER PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY SUE LISTER – YORK OLDER PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY DARYOUSH MAZLOUM – YORK RACIAL EQUALITY NETWORK RITA SANDERSON – YORK RACIAL EQUALITY NETWORK PAUL WORDSWORTH – CHURCHES TOGETHER IN YORK
EXPERT WITNESSES	NICOLA BEDFORD – HIGHER YORK STEVE ROUSE – YOUTH SERVICE EQUALITIES TEAM LEADER MAUREEN RYAN – VALUING PEOPLE PARTNERSHIP GEORGE WRIGHT – HUMANIST
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR VASSIE JOHN BETTRIDGE – MENTAL HEALTH FORUM PETER BLACKBURN – LGBT FORUM BECCA COOPER – YORK PEOPLE FIRST RALPH EDWARDS – LEARNING DISABILITIES FIONA WALKER – VALUING PEOPLE PARTNERSHIP

45. 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.

46. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

47. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Group, held on 11 March 2009, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

A letter had been received from First York confirming that they would be willing to attend a future SIWG meeting.

It was noted that the representatives of National Express had not reported back to the Group on the suggested improvements as to how the company could better improve its services to people with a hearing impairment. It was also unclear as to whether the City of York Council Private Sector Housing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment had been amended to address issues in respect of racial tension.

RESOLVED: (ii) That confirmation be sought from National Express and the City of York Housing Department that the suggestions put forward by SIWG representatives had been actioned¹.

(iii) That arrangements be made for the minutes of SIWG meetings to include a mechanism to track recommendations made at meetings to ensure that they were actioned.

Action Required

1. Confirmation to be sought that National Express and Housing Department have actioned suggestions put forward by SIWG GR

48. CHAIR'S REPORT

Consideration was given to the "Help us to Get it Right" day final report.

The following amendments to the Equalities Impact Assessments 2009-09 were suggested:

- The use of the word "seek" should be avoided and replaced with "will" to demonstrate the Council's commitment to equality (page 42).
- As well as assessing Councillors' individual needs in terms of disability upon induction, action should be taken to ensure that members of the community were aware of the support that they would receive to meet their needs if they decided to stand for election to the Council (page 45). The role of councillor should be better promoted to encourage more members of the community to stand.
- All communication from the Council should include reference as to how the documentation could be made available in a format suitable for the visually impaired or in languages other than English (page 51).
- The Procurement Strategy should also encompass ethical and moral values (page 53).

Clarification was sought as to whether the Children and Young People Plan encompassed non-traditional families and equality strands. Steve Rouse gave examples of some of the ways in which the Plan addressed these issues and offered to report back more fully at a future meeting.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the report be noted and officers be encouraged to undertake similar events in 2009/10.
 - (ii) That the suggested amendments be incorporated into the relevant Equalities Impact Assessments¹.

- (iii) That, by 2010, officers be requested to report progress on the actions identified as a result of the Equality Impact Assessments outlined in Annex 1².
- (iv) That, at a future meeting, more detailed consideration be given to ways in which the Children and Young People Plan met the needs of the equalities strands³.

Action Required

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| 1. Amendments to be incorporated into EIAs | GR |
| 2. Include in SIWG work plan | GR |
| 3. Include in SIWG work plan | GR |

49. KEY ISSUES IN THE COMMUNITY

Community representatives and expert witnesses were given the opportunity to raise issues about equality in Council services as well as reporting on recent activities.

(i) Community Cohesion

The Group's attention was drawn to the effect that the distribution of European Parliament campaign leaflets by a political party was having on some members of the community. A request was made for there to be a named contact at the City of York Council to whom incidents could be reported¹.

(ii) York and District LGBT Forum

A written report was circulated on LGBT issues and which detailed forthcoming events.

It was suggested that the Council needed to be more aware of trans equality issues in policy making. Training was available from Gendershift and other organisations.

(iii) Online Fraud

The Group's attention was drawn to the number of online financial scams. Elderly and vulnerable members of the

community were particularly at risk from this type of fraud. It was noted that www.getsafeonline.org was a source of advice on how to deal with this issue.

(iv) Higher York Students' Forum

Details were given of a project that was being carried out by the Higher York Students' Forum to find out what it was like to be a student in York and whether they felt part of the community. The project was in the form of a questionnaire and focus group. A report on the findings of the project would be presented to SIWG at a future meeting².

(v) 50+ Festival

The SIWG Diversity Day project would take place as part of the 50+ Festival. A "Bridging the Generation Gap" event would be held at the Friends Meeting House during the 50+ Festival week – the date and venue would be confirmed soon. It was hoped that all of the groups involved in the SIWG would organise a display or activity during the day.

The Group were also encouraged to participate in the following activities:

- A food and drink festival to be held on Tuesday 22 September 2009.
- The "Fit as a Fiddle" activities arranged by Leisure Services and Age Concern.

As part of the 50+ Festival it was proposed to encourage care homes to open their doors to the community to demonstrate the type of activities and provision that they arranged for their residents. Members of the Group suggested that there was also a need to involve members of the community who lived independently and who may sometimes feel isolated.

(vi) Access Group Directory

Details were given of the guide that was being produced by the Access Group and which would incorporate useful contact details.

(vii) York Humanists

The Group was informed that the York Humanists would wish to see all members of the community having the same impact on policy and decision-making regardless of their beliefs or views.

(viii) Valuing People Partnership

Details were given of the “Valuing People Now” strategy. It was suggested that this could form the basis of a future presentation to SIWG. Consideration was also being given to complaints processes.

The Group’s attention was drawn to a “Hate Crime Conference” that was being held in Harrogate on 13 July 2009.

(ix) City of Faith

A “City of Faith” survey was currently being carried out and was available on the council website www.york.gov.uk. The results were due to be published in October.

Action Required

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| 1. Notify groups of the appropriate contact number to report incidents | GR |
| 2. Include in SIWG work plan | GR |

50. GENDER ISSUES AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP (SIWG)

A report was received detailing findings of the project carried out to explore key gender equality issues in the city, including trans issues. The report also considered how the Social Inclusion Working Group could engage with groups that were concerned with and promoted gender issues. Interviews had been carried out with people and groups who were seen as leading gender issues in the city.

Consideration was given to the project summary (Annex 1 of the report).

Discussion took place regarding issues in respect of domestic violence and the work of the Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS). The organisation has previously been known as Women's Aid but now offered services to both men and women, although the majority of their clients were female. It was recommended that IDAS be invited to become involved in SIWG. The Group suggested that consideration could also be given to inviting a representative from the Centre for Women's Studies to serve on SIWG.

A further recommendation in the report was that the City of York Council should take the lead in promoting child and women-friendly policies. Members of the Group suggested that it would be more appropriate to refer to these as "family friendly" or "child friendly" policies rather than "women-friendly" policies to acknowledge that women were not the only carers of children. It was suggested that the Inclusive York Forum should be asked for their views on the report and the promotion of family friendly policies and that further consideration should be given to this matter at the SIWG Development Day.

RESOLVED: That, at the SIWG Development Day, further consideration be given to the membership of SIWG, including the recommendation that IDAS be invited to be become involved in the work of the Group¹.

Action Required

1. Include in programme for SIWG Development Day GR

51. **COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEEDS AND VIEWS OF PEOPLE FROM THE EQUALITY STRANDS**

A report was received explaining why, when and how the Council proposed to collect information about the gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion and belief of communities and individuals the Council serves and employs. The views of SIWG members were sought about the proposed questions.

Some concerns were expressed regarding the length of the questionnaire and its format. It was noted that some of the requested data was not statutory but was necessary to meet the

requirements of audit and inspection, the Audit Commission in particular. Members of the Group who already collected this type of data explained how useful the information was proving to be in assessing services and improving accessibility to provision.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the report be noted.
 - (ii) That SIWG members notify the Equality and Inclusion Manager of any comments on the proposals by 5.00 pm on 30 June 2009.

52. COUNCIL EQUALITY STRATEGY AND SCHEMES 2009/12

Information was circulated outlining the plans and actions that the Council proposed to undertake in the period July 2009 to July 2012, to ensure that it was a fair and inclusive service provider and employer. Feedback from SIWG would help shape the Council Equality Strategy and Schemes 2009/12.

- RESOLVED: That, at the SIWG Development Day, further consideration be given to the Council's plans and actions for the period July 2009 to July 2012¹.

Action Required

1. Include in programme for SIWG Development Day GR

53. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of forthcoming meetings as follows:

- Thursday 2 July 2009
- Thursday 24 September 2009
- Wednesday 2 December 2009
- Thursday 28 January 2009
- Wednesday 17 February 2010
- Tuesday 20 April 2010

Meetings would be held at the Priory Street Centre and would start at 6.30 pm.

Members were reminded that the SIWG Development Day would be held at York St John's on Wednesday 20 May 2009 from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

54. CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The Group were informed that Councillor Ayre and Councillor Crisp would be taking over from Councillor Vassie and Councillor Looker as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively, subject to full Council approval expected the following week.

Tribute was paid to the contribution that Councillor Vassie and Councillor Looker had made to the Social Inclusion Working Group and thanks were expressed for the work that they had carried out.

Chair

[The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 9.15 pm].