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MEETING	SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DATE	19 NOVEMBER 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS BROOKS, GUNNELL, LOOKER (VICE-CHAIR IN THE 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 AND SUE GALLOWAY AND PAUL WORDSWORTH (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), NICOLA BEDFORD AND GEORGE WOOD (EXPERT WITNESSES)

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## 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

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| 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](http://www.GenderShift.com) or [Bookings@GenderShift.com](mailto: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].