
Meeting	Social Inclusion Working Group
Date	2 July 2009
Present	Councillors Ayre (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Crisp (Vice-Chair) and Gunnell Non-Voting Co-Opted Members: Peter Blackburn – LGBT Forum David Brown – York Access Group Corry Hewitt – York Interfaith Rita Sanderson – York Racial Equality Network Expert Witness: Maureen Ryan – Valuing People Partnership
Apologies	John Bettridge – Mental Health Forum Becca Cooper – York People First Sue Lister - York Older People's Assembly Sarah Fennell - LBGT Forum Daryoush Mazloun - York Racial Equality Network Fiona Walker - Valuing People Partnership

1. **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.

2. **Public Participation**

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

3. **Minutes And Matters Arising**

RESOLVED: (i) That the minutes of the meeting of the Group, held on 13 May 2009, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

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:

- First York had agreed to send a representative to the next meeting (minute 47)
- National Express had confirmed that, in response to concerns expressed by the SIWG, the Station Management Team had been briefed that when a platform change occurred, a member of staff would approach passengers waiting on the platform to advise them in person that the platform change had occurred and would direct them to the altered platform. This would be in addition to the visual displaying flashing to indicate a platform change. It was hoped that the additional face-to-face interaction would help overcome any difficulties experienced by passengers with hearing difficulties or for whom English was not their first language (minute 47).
- The application in respect of the barriers at the railway station was due to be considered by the West and City Centre Area Planning Sub-Committee at their meeting on 16 July 2009 (minute 47).
- The Democratic Services Manager would be meeting with the Equality and Inclusion Manager in August to give further consideration as to how the Equalities Impact Assessments for Democratic Services could best incorporate the suggestions put forward by the SIWG (minute 48).
- In response to the request by SIWG representatives that there be a named contact at the City of York Council to whom incidents of a racial nature could be reported, it had been agreed that the same arrangements should be in place as for the reporting of hate incidents (telephone 01904 551552). The Group suggested that it was also important to have a contact who would deal with media enquiries regarding incidents of this nature (minute 49).
- Following the meeting, the Interfaith Group had contacted the Equality and Inclusion Manager regarding the proposed collecting of information on the needs and views of people from the equality strands. It had been suggested that it was important that the forms made clear the reasons why the information was being requested. The Equalities and Inclusion Manager informed the Group that she would welcome their views as to appropriate wording (minute 51). Concerns were expressed regarding the length of the questionnaire and the feasibility of including it with all consultation exercises carried out by the Council. It was noted that the questionnaire was based on a model recommended by the Government.

- RESOLVED: (ii) That, at the next meeting, further consideration be given to the proposed questionnaire.
- (iii) That the advice of the Marketing and Communications Team and the Valuing People Partnership be sought on issues in respect of accessibility of information¹.
- (iv) That samples of questionnaires used by other councils be obtained to identify examples of good practice².

Action Required

1. Seek advice of Marketing & Communications Team and Valuing People Partnership EC
EC
2. Obtain examples from other Councils

4. Chair's Report

Councillor Ayre and Councillor Crisp were welcomed to their first meeting as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

Community Groups gave an introduction to their work and brought the following matters to the attention of the Group:

(i) Ethnic Elders Group

The SIWG had provided support in the setting up of an Ethnic Elders Group in the city. The group was flourishing and an increasing number of people were attending its events. The project was helping to eliminate isolation. YREN was now hoping to work with the Youth Service Equalities Team Leader to develop a project targeted at young people.

(ii) Valuing People Partnership

An update was given on the work of the Valuing People Partnership, including the "Making it Happen" project. The Group's attention was also drawn to the impact of the Welfare Reform Bill and events that were being arranged to make the Bill more accessible to carers and to people with learning disabilities.

(iii) Pride in the Park

Details were circulated of the Pride in the Park Picnic that was to take place on Sunday 16 August 2009. The theme was "Maskerade". Further details were available from www.yorklgbtforum.com

(iv) Access

Concerns were expressed that the Council did not appear to be doing enough to ensure that access issues were given appropriate consideration by the planning and building regulations departments. An example was cited of the re-opening of the Odeon cinema which had been welcomed by the Council but which was not accessible beyond the ground floor. The Group suggested that the Council should be doing more to encourage businesses to improve accessibility to buildings.

(v) “Bridging the Gap”

Information was circulated on “Bridging the Gap” – a day of diversity and inclusion arranged by York Older People’s Assembly in association with SIWG. The event would take place on Saturday 26 September 2009. Further information was available on www.yorkassembly.org.uk. Community Groups were requested to complete the form to indicate how their organisation could contribute to the event by holding a workshop, a display, a talk or a performance. It was noted that the SIWG display board, led by YREN, was expected to be available for the event.

(vi) Efficiency Savings

Members of the community groups expressed concern at the impact of proposed council efficiency savings on service users. Confirmation was sought that Equality Impact Assessments would be carried out when recommendations on savings were being considered. The Group was informed that this would be the case.

(vii) Sharing of Information

Clarification was sought as to why it was not possible for different Council departments to share information to avoid service users having to provide the same information on more than one occasion. The present arrangements were a barrier to accessing services for some people. The Group was informed that this was one of the issues that would be considered under the efficiency review but that data protection implications also had to be taken into account.

RESOLVED: (i) That, at the next meeting, a brief presentation be given on how to make information accessible carried out by the Valuing People Partnership.

(ii) That further information be sought from the Planning Department regarding the issue of promoting accessibility to buildings when making planning recommendations and decisions¹.

Action Required

1. Letter to be sent to Planning Department

EC

5. Report From SIWG Development Day May 2009

Consideration was given to a report that summarised the findings from the SIWG Development Day. The Development Day had been very well attended and the Group expressed their appreciation of the work carried out by the Equalities and Inclusion Manager in arranging the event.

The report requested that the findings be agreed as a correct record to enable them to form the basis of a SIWG Development Plan. The Development Plan would be prepared by the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Equalities and Inclusion Manager and presented for consideration at a future meeting.

The following suggestions were put forward for inclusion in the Development Plan:

- The Group needed to be involved in discussions about the impact of sport and leisure on community cohesion/quality of life in the city. (It was noted that it was intended to seek the Group's views on the EIA for the new community sports stadium).
- When considering the age strand it was important that the needs and perceptions of teenagers were also given due consideration.
- The issue of the spread of student accommodation within the city was more complex than indicated in the report.

The Group stressed the importance of ensuring that there was an evidence base to demonstrate that their views were being actioned. Effective mechanisms also had to be in place to enable the SIWG to evaluate its work.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the report be noted and the contents confirmed as a correct record of the SIWG Development Day.
- (ii) That a draft Development Plan, incorporating the views put forward at the meeting and at the Development Day, be brought to the Group for consideration at a future meeting¹.

REASON: To summarise findings from the day and agree them so that a SIWG Development Plan can be put in place.

Action Required

1. Include on SIWG workplan

EC

6. **Draft Council Fairness And Inclusion Strategy And Single Corporate Equality Scheme 2009/12**

Consideration was given to a report on the draft Fairness and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12. The Group were invited to comment on the draft strategy and their views would then be taken on board before the draft was finalised and approved by Councillors in Autumn 2009.

The following suggestions were put forward:

- The word "faith" should be replaced with "religion and belief" and the Corporate Strategy should also incorporate this amendment when next updated. (page 53)

- More also needs to be done to address under-representation by women when promoting civic and public participation opportunities (Action 5 page 66).
- More information needs to be obtained regarding the increase in segregation of ethnic minorities and to ascertain if the segregation is self-imposed (page 74).
- Clarification was sought as to the accuracy of the first sentence on page 76.
- Information should be included to ascertain whether the Council was doing enough to address issues in respect of domestic violence.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of having good recruitment, retention and training provision in place to ensure equality in employment. It was noted that the Fire Service had recently approved an Equality Scheme and had stated that they would welcome the views of the Social Inclusion Group regarding the scheme.

Details were given of the Equality Framework for Local Government. It was noted that a self-assessment had indicated that the Council was nearly meeting all of the requirements to be designated as “developing” and was moving towards “achieving”. Once the actions in the Single Equality Scheme had been met, the Council would be at the “achieving” level.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the draft Fairness and Inclusion Strategy 2009-12 be received.
 - (ii) That the suggestions put forward by the Social Inclusion Working Group be taken into account in developing the strategy¹.
 - (iii) That the Fire Service Equality Scheme/recruitment targets be included on the work plan for the Social Inclusion Working Group to enable consideration at a future meeting².

REASON: To ensure that SIWG receives the full draft of the Council's Fairness and Inclusion Strategy that they had helped to put in place in the past year.

Action Required

- 1. Incorporate suggestions into strategy. EC
- 2. Include in SIWG Workplan. EC

7. Equality Impact Assessment: City Of York Corporate Strategy 2009/12

Consideration was given to a report that offered the opportunity for

advise officers about fairness and inclusion issues in the Council's Corporate Strategy.

Officers went through the Corporate Strategy with the Group and invited them to comment on the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment. Information was circulated on the three-year plan.

The Group were also asked if they wished to be involved in workshops that were due to take place later in the year.

The Group expressed their concern that the examples of the Council's commitment to make York an Inclusive City (page 11) appeared to be focussed solely on housing and poverty and did not make reference to the strands referred to in the preamble. Inclusion should be inherent in every aspect of the Council's work.

Concerns were expressed that the cost of producing the Corporate Strategy booklet had not been specified on the booklet.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the Social Inclusion Working Group requested that their comments regarding the Corporate Strategy and the Equality Impact Assessment be taken on board¹.
- (ii) That the Group be informed of the costs of producing the Corporate Strategy booklet².
- (iii) That further consideration would be given as to whether the SIWG would wish to be involved in the workshops once the arrangements for these were confirmed.

REASON: To ensure that SIWG had the opportunity to comment on the findings of the EIA and suggest any changes needed.

Action Required

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Incorporate comments into EIA and future updates to Corporate Strategy | EC |
| 2. Ascertain costs of producing the booklet | EC |
| 3. SIWG Members to be notified of details of workshops once finalised. | EC |

8. Holocaust Memorial Day

Details were given of events that would be taking place in January 2010 to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. The Group were asked to consider how they could contribute to the planned events. It was noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair served on the planning committee for the events.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the SIWG would have staffed display boards at the event.

- (ii) That further details of the Holocaust Memorial Day be forwarded to members of the SIWG.

REASON: To ensure community groups have the opportunity to participate in the events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

Action Required

1. Forward details to SIWG Members

EC

Cllr N Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.40 pm and finished at 8.50 pm].