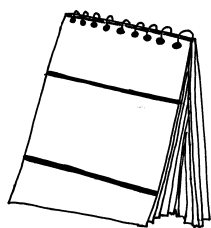


Equality Advisory Group

(This group looks at how all different communities in York can be given the same chances to take part in life and be included)



MINUTES



Date of meeting: 24 November 2011

Members of the Council who were at the meeting



**Sonja Crisp
(Chair)**



**Tony Richardson
(Vice-Chair)**



Neil Barnes



Lynn Jeffries

People who were at the meeting representing community groups and as expert witnesses:



Marije Davidson (York Independent Living Network)

Christopher Edmondson (York Independent Living Network)

Sue Lister (York Older People's Assembly)

Tony Martin (York Older People's Assembly)

Claire Newhouse - Higher York

Sarah Nicholson (Youth Council)

Ella (Youth Council Member)

Rita Sanderson (York Racial Equality Network)

Dan Sidley (LGBT Forum)

Paul Wordsworth (Churches Together in York)

1. Public Participation



A member of the public had asked to speak at the meeting. He said that the Council should make sure that the groups that it gave money to offered services that everyone could access.

2. Minutes



The Group went through the minutes of the meeting of 18 July 2011.

3. Actions since last meeting



Details were given of the action taken after the last meeting:



Taxi Card Scheme

Officers said they were sorry about the delays at the start of the Taxi Card Scheme. There were some problems to do with training drivers. More training would be held.

The Group said that they wanted more information about the scheme at a future meeting.



Poverty Awareness Raising Project

The Group heard about the plans for the poverty awareness project. Student volunteers were going to arrange some events for older people who were feeling isolated.



Disabled Parking

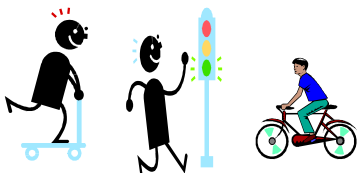
Parking spaces had been marked in Blake Street. A review of footstreets would also look at parking issues in this area.



York Carers Forum

York Carers Forum had been asked if they wanted to become involved with EAG. An idea was put forward that the Carers Centre should also be invited.

The Group talked about the number of members of EAG. They said that there might be problems if it got too big. The Chair said that there would be a look at how the Group was working. When that happened the membership would also be looked at.



Footstreets Review

The Cabinet Member for City Strategy was going to look at a report on the Footstreets Review at a meeting on 1 December 2011. After that time there would be consultation with groups and the public.



Police Diversity Unit

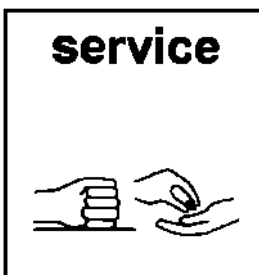
Officers from North Yorkshire Police were at the meeting. They spoke about how the Police was making sure that it was treating people fairly. They had changed how they were doing things but this was to make things better. There wouldn't be a separate group dealing with diversity - everyone had to be part of this.

4. Equalities Framework for Local Government



The Group heard how the Council had been judged under the Equalities Framework for Local Government. This is a set of actions and standards that helps the Council to meet equality law. The Council had been classed as "achieving". Within two years the Council wanted to be "excellent". A plan was in place to help it work towards this. There was still a lot of work to do!

5. Procurement Strategy



The Group heard about the Council's new Procurement Strategy. Procurement is about obtaining goods and services.

The Council is the biggest employer in the area. It also buys a lot of goods and services. It's important that it gets good value for money. The Council also wants to:

- Support local people and the local economy
- Protect the environment
- Protect vulnerable people

- Work with other groups (including the voluntary sector)
- Employ apprentices
- Make sure good Equality Impact Assessments are in place

The Group was invited to attend a workshop to hear more.

6.Meeting with Council Management Team

Management Team

The Group were invited to meet with the Council's managers. The meeting would be held at the Priory Street Centre on 19 December 2011.



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Bill Woolley
Director of City Strategy
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The Group was asked about what they would like to see happen at the meeting. They put forward their ideas. They said that it was important that the managers listened to what they had to say and agreed learning points. EAG members and managers could share ideas about how things could be done better.

7. Mystery Shoppers

Members of the Group were asked if they wanted to become "mystery shoppers". One of the mystery shoppers talked about what they did.



Mystery shoppers telephoned the council with different types of questions. They did this to find out what type of service they received. The council used this information to improve its services.

More information about this would be sent to EAG members after the meeting.

8. Closure of Acomb Office



The Group was asked for their views about what should happen when the Acomb Housing Office closed at the start of 2012.

The Council was looking at ways of providing housing services out in the community. The Group heard about possible places where this could happen. The Council was also considering how it could offer benefits services.

The Group was invited to attend consultation events that were planned.

8. Community Say

Community Groups talked about the following issues:

York Older People's Assembly



- YOPA wanted to be involved in the Footstreets Review.
- Problems caused by people not being trained before they used mobility scooters.
- Choice Based Lettings Scheme - YOPA was concerned that the scheme was unfair on people who did not have a computer. It was agreed that this would be looked at again at the next meeting.
- As there was no longer an Older People's Champion, YOPA wanted to know who to contact to raise issues. The Chair explained that no decision had been taken about whether to have Champions in the future. People could contact the relevant Cabinet Member if they had problems.
- Noisy neighbours caused some people real problems. It was important that council houses had good soundproofing in place.

LGBT Forum



- Concerns were expressed regarding the fact that hate crime was not always reported to the Police. More needed to be done to encourage people to report incidents.
- The LGBT Forum was keen for the rainbow flag to fly from the Mansion House during LGBT Pride Week.



YREN

- Details were given of events that had taken place since the last EAG meeting. These included an Open Forum and a Hate Crime Workshop.
- There needed to be more site provision for travellers.
- Lots of people were using YREN's services and there needed to be more resources to deal with this.
- It was important that there was a safe place for the Hindu and Sikh communities to worship.
- It was important that refugees and asylum seekers were able to get free legal advice.
- There was a need for some race-equality and human rights awareness training to be held in York. Racism had to be challenged in everyday life.