



**Notice of meeting of
Social Inclusion Working Group**

To: Councillors Vassie (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Gunnell and Looker (Vice-Chair)

Non Voting Co-opted Members:

Jack Archer, York Older People's Assembly (OPA)

Sue Lister, York Older People's Assembly (OPA)

Peter Blackburn, LGBT Forum

Sarah Fennell, LGBT Forum

Rita Sanderson, The BME Citizens' Open Forum (York Racial Equality Network)

Daryoush Mazloun, The BME Citizens' Open Forum (York Racial Equality Network)

Jan Jauncey, York Interfaith

Revd. Paul Wordsworth, Churches Together in York

Date: Wednesday, 19 November 2008

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Committee Room 2, The Guildhall, York

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on this agenda.

2. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the Group's remit can do so. Anyone who wishes to register or requires further information is requested to contact the Democracy Officer on the contact details listed at the foot of this agenda. The deadline for registering is **Tuesday 18 November 2008 at 5.00 pm.**

3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 22)
To approve and sign the minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 17 September 2008. An “easy read” version of these minutes is also attached for members’ consideration.

4. Matters Arising
To receive further information in relation to taxi licensing matters. The Council’s Head of Licensing and Regulatory will be in attendance to update the Group. Representatives from the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire associations have been invite to attend the meeting.

5. Chair's Report (Pages 23 - 24)
The Chair will report on the following matters:

- Updates to Forward Plan (Work Plan) (Plan attached)
- Updates about community representation on the Group

6. Community Forum Reports and Feedback (Pages 25 - 46)
To receive reports from representatives of the following groups:

- Interfaith forum – results of equality issues survey (attached)
- YREN – key issues arising from YREN Forum/Elders group
- LGBT – issues arising from forum cases
- OPA – results from survey carried out in the spring and next steps (attached)
- Steve Rouse – issues arising from work with young people
- Feedback from 5 November 2008 SIWG Equality Impact Assessment Fair (Help us to get it right day)

7. Project Proposals for SIWG budgets 2008/9 (Pages 47 - 50)

Sue Lister of the Older People’s Assembly will outline project proposals discussed at a meeting of community representatives the notes of which are attached in Annex 1. The Group is asked to consider the proposals and decide which to take forward and who will lead their development.

**8. Engaging with the Equality Strands – (Pages 51 - 64)
Group Discussion**

Small group discussion to consider the paper attached as Annex A - Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group.

9. Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972

Democracy Officer:

Name: Jayne Carr

Tel: (01904) 552030

jayne.carr@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports

Contact details set out above.

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If you would, you will need to:

- register by contacting the Democracy Officer (whose name and contact details can be found on the agenda for the meeting) **no later than 5.00 pm** on the last working day before the meeting;
- ensure that what you want to say speak relates to an item of business on the agenda or an issue which the committee has power to consider (speak to the Democracy Officer for advice on this);
- find out about the rules for public speaking from the Democracy Officer.

A leaflet on public participation is available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services by telephoning York (01904) 551088

Further information about what's being discussed at this meeting

All the reports which Members will be considering are available for viewing online on the Council's website. Alternatively, copies of individual reports or the full agenda are available from Democratic Services. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the agenda for the meeting. **Please note a small charge may be made for full copies of the agenda requested to cover administration costs.**

Access Arrangements

We will make every effort to make the meeting accessible to you. The meeting will usually be held in a wheelchair accessible venue with an induction hearing loop. We can provide the agenda or reports in large print, electronically (computer disk or by email), in Braille or on audio tape. Some formats will take longer than others so please give as much notice as possible (at least 48 hours for Braille or audio tape).

If you have any further access requirements such as parking close-by or a sign language interpreter then please let us know. Contact the Democracy Officer whose name and contact details are given on the order of business for the meeting.

Every effort will also be made to make information available in another language, either by providing translated information or an interpreter providing sufficient advance notice is given. Telephone York (01904) 551550 for this service.

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The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (38 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Advisory Panel (EMAP)) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

Scrutiny Committees

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

Who Gets Agenda and Reports for our Meetings?

- Councillors get copies of all agenda and reports for the committees to which they are appointed by the Council;
- Relevant Council Officers get copies of relevant agenda and reports for the committees which they report to;
- Public libraries get copies of **all** public agenda/reports.

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DATE	17 SEPTEMBER 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS VASSIE (CHAIR), ASPDEN, BROOKS, GUNNELL (JOINED THE MEETING AT 7.20PM) LOOKER (VICE-CHAIR) JACK ARCHER (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) SUE LISTER (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) DARYOUSH MAZLOUM (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) LYNN JEFFRIES (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) AND TRICIA CASTLE (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) <u>EXPERT WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE</u> STEVE ROUSE – CYC NICOLA BEDFORD – HIGHER YORK GEORGE WOOD – VALUING PEOPLE PARTNERSHIP SANDRA GILPIN – YORK PEOPLE FIRST BECCA COOPER – YORK PEOPLE FIRST ANDY POLLIN – YORK PEOPLE FIRST
APOLOGIES	PETER BLACKBURN, SARAH FENNELL, RITA SANDERSON, JAN JAUNCEY AND PAUL WORDSWORTH

9. 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.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

11. MINUTES

Sue Lister referred to Minute 5 (Community Forum Reports and Feedback) and to her update on the Older People's Assembly 50+ Festival. She confirmed that there would be no 50+ Games as part of this year's event.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 8 July 2008 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record and the "easy read" version be noted.

12. MATTERS ARISING

The Group were reminded that, at their last meeting, members had referred to problems they had encountered with taxis. It had been agreed that Officers would investigate and report back.

The Council's Head of Licensing and Regulation attended the meeting and reported that legislation for taxis had come into effect from 31 March 2001, which had required taxis to carry assistance dogs. The only exemption had applied to drivers who had exemption certificates related to medical conditions. At that time all drivers had been sent a letter and a copy of a government advice leaflet. This had not applied to private hire vehicles, as they were not covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Following a request from the York Access Group and York Blind and Partially Sighted Society the Council had consulted on, and introduced the same requirement for private hire vehicles, which was effective from 31 March 2004.

He reported that following feedback from the Groups last meeting the guidance notes for new applicants had been amended to include specific reference to the carriage of assistance dogs and that specific questions had been included in the knowledge test which all drivers were required to pass.

He also told the Group that drivers were encouraged to attend a BTEC course, which included a day on disability issues, which covered assistance dogs. Members of the Group offered their assistance in delivering training to drivers to make them aware of the issues involved to assist them in treating all groups fairly.

The Group were informed that earlier this year of 158 vehicles, 20 were wheelchair accessible (12%) and that in July 2008 an additional 15 vehicles had been licensed, with a further 10 due to be added by 2011 (24%).

Members of the Group referred to problems where the visually impaired had been mistaken by some drivers as drunk, to problems with the securing of wheelchairs in vehicles and of the need to book wheelchair friendly vehicles months in advance. Reference was also made to additional charges being made for the additional time taken in using ramps and securing wheelchairs.

He confirmed that the Government would shortly be undertaking consultation on regulations to be imposed by 2010 to make taxis an accessible fleet for all disabled people. He confirmed that he would report back to the Group in due course to obtain their views on the consultation.

Following further discussion it was

- RECOMMENDED:
- (i) That the Head of Licensing and Regulation report back to the next meeting of the Group on the following matters:
 - Details of what can and cannot be charged for by taxi drivers;
 - The possible creation of a complaints and accreditation scheme for taxi drivers;^{1.}
 - (ii) That a representative of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Associations be invited to the next meeting of the Group for consideration of this issue.^{2.}

Action Required

- 1. Report back to next meeting on information requested. GR
- 2. Representatives of the these two bodies to be invited to attend next meeting. GR

13. CHAIRS REPORT

- (a) Social Inclusion Working Group, Forward Plan 2008/09

Copies of the Social Inclusion Working Group's updated Forward Plan (Work Plan) 2008/09 was circulated at the meeting. This detailed the busy programme scheduled for the remainder of the 2008/09 municipal year:

SIWG Equality Impact Assessments Fair – 5 November 2008
Meeting on 19 November 2008
Meeting on 14 January 2009
SIWG Development Day – 20 February 2009
Meeting on 11 March 2009
Meeting on 13 May 2009

Members of the Group referred to the number of large strategies to be considered at future meetings and they expressed the wish that easily read versions of these documents should be available, in order to gain as many comments as possible. A request to reschedule some of the strategies proposed for the 14 January 2009 meeting was also made.

A request was made for Catherine Leonard, the Council's Ethnic Minority Co-ordinator to attend the meeting on 19 November 2008 for consideration of the community engagement strategy.^{1.}

The Group also asked Officers to consider preparing a large visual display on each of the strategies to explain how each related to one another.

- (b) Equality Impact Assessment's Fair - 5 November 2008

The Chair explained that there were nine Equality Impact Assessments covering the following areas on which the Council wished to receive the Groups comments:

- Leisure facilities (such as swimming pools and libraries) and information about them.
- The future of our city (documents called the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement).
- Homelessness Strategy (how we will help homeless people in York to have a home).
- Making contact with the council easy for our customers.
- The way we deal with waste and recycling.
- Plans for the future for our children and young people.
- Helping adults decide on the type of social care they need and how to access it and pay for it.
- Dealing with housing and council tax benefits abuse.
- Safeguarding adults.

He requested six volunteers from the Group, including the expert witnesses, but not Council Members, to act as critical friends to help the Equalities team and other Council staff plan the day and provide feedback. It was explained that each Assessment would be summarised in an easily read form and that the critical friends feedback would contribute to development of the assessments.

Any volunteers were asked to contact Evie Chandler, Equalities Officer, either after the meeting, by email at evie.chandler@york.gov.uk or by telephone (01904) 551704.

Action Required

1. Catherine Leonard to be invited to attend the next meeting.

GR

14. COMMUNITY FORUM REPORTS AND FEEDBACK

Sue Lister, one of the Older People's Assembly representatives, reported on their Photograph/Information Fair held in the Guildhall with 30 stands and attended by the Lord Mayor. She circulated copies of the programme booklet for the York 50+ Festival to be held from Saturday 27 September to Sunday 5 October 2008, which contained details of around 70 events to be held during the week. She also reported that Ingram's Solicitors had

chosen the Older People's Assembly as their Charity of the Month for September/October.

George Wood, of the Valuing People Partnership, reported that the partnership board had been restructured and that it was now in a position to support and bring together disabled people and develop a single strong voice for them. He confirmed that their first meeting was to be held shortly and that it was hoped to make some strong connections.

At the invitation of Lynn Jeffries Evie Chandler spoke on issues regarding the development of the Disabled Peoples Forum. She reminded the Group that last year student volunteers had assisted in developing a voice for disabled people but that they were still to report back on their findings. She confirmed that a number of the students involved in this work had now withdrawn from the project either due to study pressures or because they graduated leaving only two students. Higher York had indicated that they could possibly support the project. Lynn Jeffries and Nicola Bedford from Higher York would meet to discuss.

Nicola Bedford, representing Higher York, confirmed that their group was a partnership with University of York students to support voluntary groups and that they were discussing joint collaborative voluntary projects.

Steve Rouse, representing Young People, reported that students from Applefield's School had recently undertaken their first expedition in connection with the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. He confirmed that they had overcome a number of difficulties to successfully arrange for the expedition to take place. He also confirmed that funding had been made available to hold a young people's disabled trampolining group, which would be held on Monday evenings for 12 weeks.

Daryoush Mazloun, told the Group that the BME Citizen's Open Forum had been involved in the Early Music Festival on 22 July 2008. The BME Elders Group were examining advocacy and accessing advice together with networking with different ethnic backgrounds. He confirmed that they were encouraging the elderly to participate in new ventures and he referred to the International Shared Meal event to be held on Saturday 25 October 2008 at the Central Methodist Hall in St Saviourgate, which they were helping to organise.

Tricia Castle, representing York Interfaith Group, confirmed that their Group was also involved in the organisation of the Shared Meal. She went on to state that the information received from the questionnaires sent out requesting details of the current work and concerns of faith and belief groups in York were now being input into their database. She confirmed that part of their SIWG budget money had enabled them to arrange additional meetings of their Group in Priory Street, which allowed better access for all. She also confirmed that their calendar on the York Interfaith webpage had now been updated. Their next meeting coincided with the 50+ Festival and was to be held at Priory Street on 1 October.

Sandra Gilpin, reported that York First were involved in "The Dream Snatcher" a project in the Studio at York Theatre Royal, on 29 November

2008. She explained that the author and performers would be in attendance to answer questions after the performance. She reported that their group had been involved in a hate crime drama and had attended Police and Safer York meetings. The previous day they had been involved in a very enjoyable visit to the Call Centre at Fulford Police Station. She confirmed that the Safer York Partnership had paid for the production of a leaflet on hate crimes. Finally the group had started an Archaeology Club to introduce its members to history and archaeology.

Becca Cooper, also from York People First, circulated copies of their newly published Autumn 2008 newsletter and told the Group of work they had undertaken. She also told the Group about a meeting they had had with the Healthcare Commission about how services were commissioned.

15. POSSIBLE CROSS-STRAND PROJECTS FOR FUNDING FROM THE SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUPS BUDGET FOR 2008/09.

Consideration was given to a report, which discussed possible one year cross-strand projects for funding from the Social Inclusion Working Group budget that would commence in 2008/09.

The Group considered the following projects to decide which to take forward and which would benefit as many York people from groups protected by Equality legislation as possible:

- Project 1 – Celebrate Yorkshire Day Together (cost in excess of £1,000)
- Project 2 – Diverse York photo database (cost to discuss)
- Project 3 – Community development resources to support multi-strand working (likely to take up all the budget)
- Project 4 – BME Elders befriending project (cost to be advised).

Officers confirmed that the Group had a budget of £5,100 which would probably only be enough to finance two projects from the list above. The Group were also asked to consider who could or would lead the development of the projects that it was decided to take forward.

Members questioned the use of the City's existing festivals to obtain the widest involvement of equality stands. Reference was also made to a previous request for assistance with a women's event in connection with International Women's Week. Following further discussion it was

- RECOMMENDED:
- (i) That the following projects be pursued from the Groups budget with proposals and costings for each being brought back to the next meeting:
 - Project 1 – Explore a Day Event which Brings all Strands Together (Sue Lister);
 - Project 2 – Diverse York photo data-base (Lynn Jeffries);
 - Project 4 – BME elders befriending project (Steve Rouse/Rita Sanderson) ¹.

- (ii) That Officers report back to the next meeting with proposals for a project/event based around women's issues to take place during International Women's Week.²

REASON: To ensure that inclusion and equality activity is supported in the City.

Action Required

1. Further details of the listed projects to be brought back to the next meeting. GR
2. Report back required to next meeting on proposals for a project/event to take place during Women's Week. GR

16. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY - EQUALITY ISSUES

Martin Grainger and Claire Beech, Development Officers from City Development and Transport, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the Group on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (LDF) and the Equality Issues (copy attached to Minutes).

They told the Group that the strategy was made up of a folder of documents, which described what the Council thought York would be like to live in and look like in 20 years' time. They explained that they wanted to get this consultation right as this would serve as a template for all their future consultation exercises with Groups on similar strategies. They stated that the contents of these documents made it difficult to engage with the public and they wanted the Groups feedback on what would work well when consulting.

They also asked the Group whether there were any issues that would affect people protected by Equality legislation in a negative way and if so what should be done about these issues. They explained that the following were the main equality issues and they asked what they could do to deal with them:

- Housing
- Accessibility
- Employment
- Community Space Buildings

Members then made the following comments:

- A large document was a turn off;
- It was often felt that if a comment was made that it would not make any difference;
- An "easy read" version of such documents would be helpful to get the message across to as many people as possible;
- Consultation could be brought to the Young People's Forum and residential homes;
- Need for Officers to be trained on these issues;

- With large planning schemes it would be better to show how people could influence the proposals;
- Employment for young people was an important issue;
- affordable housing needed to be matched to peoples needs;
- Showing the outcomes for communities would gain better engagement;
- That talking was better than printed documents;
- Special needs housing provision was required in all areas;
- The possibility of providing short concise summaries of documents with a CD to provide more details;

RECOMMENDATION: That the comments of the Group be noted by Officers involved in the preparation of the Local Development Framework and Core Strategy. ¹.

REASON: To ensure that the City is inclusive and accessible as it develops in the future.

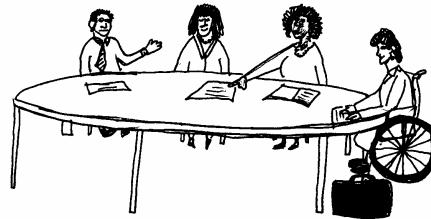
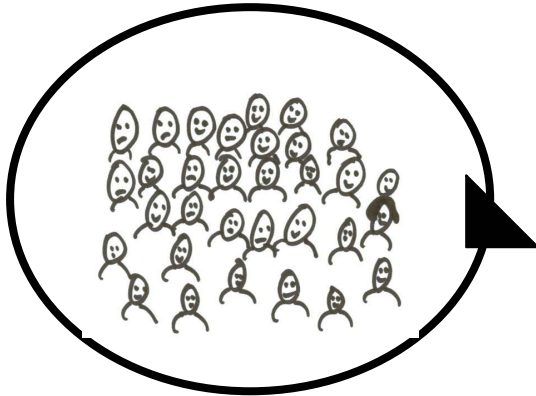
Action Required

1. Comments to be noted by Officers involved in preparing the LDF and Core Strategy.

GR

CLLR C VASSIE, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 9.40 pm].

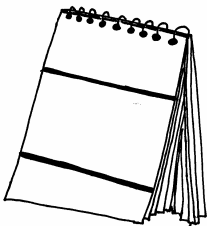


Social Inclusion Working Group

(Social inclusion means including everyone in society. The Social Inclusion Working Group has been set up to look 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: 17 September 2008

Members of the Council who were at the meeting (to be known as 'Members' in these minutes):



**Christian
Vassie
(Chair)**



Julie Gunnell



Keith Aspden



Janet Looker



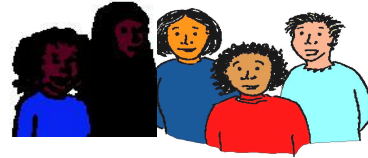
Jenny Brooks

People who were at the meeting representing community groups:

Sue Lister and Jack Archer
from the Older People's
Assembly



Daryoush Mazloum of the BME
(BME stands for Black Minority
Ethnic) Citizens Forum



Lynn Jeffries from the Disabled
People's Forum



Tricia Castle from York
Interfaith



1. Matters Arising from the Minutes



The Council's Head of Licensing and Regulation came to the meeting to talk about taxis and problems reported by members of the Group at the last meeting.

More problems were reported and so the Officer agreed to report back to the next meeting on:

- What could and could not be charged for by taxi drivers.
- The possibility of starting a scheme for taxi drivers, which registered complaints and gave them points for good service.

2. Chairs Comments

a) Forward Plan 2008/09

The Group looked at their Forward Plan for the following meetings:



SIWIG Equality Impact

Assessment's Fair - 5 November 2008

Meeting on 19 November 2008

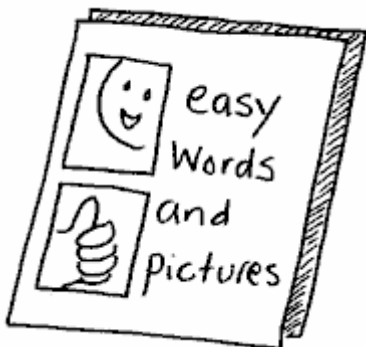
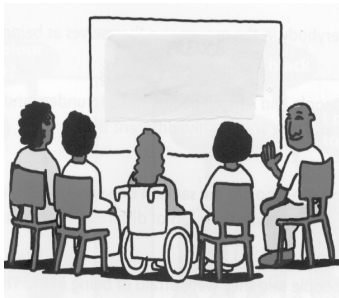
Meeting on 14 January 2009

SIWIG Development Day - 20 February 2009

Meeting on 11 March 2009

Meeting on 13 May 2009

Some of the items to be discussed included working with Ward Committees and looking at how all ages and races could be brought together in communities.



b) Equality Impact Assessment's Fair - 5 November 2008

The Chair explained that there were nine Equality Impact Assessments on which the Council wanted the Groups comments. The Assessments covered the following areas:



- Leisure facilities (such as swimming pools and libraries) and information about them.
- The future of our city (documents called the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement).
- Homelessness Strategy (how we will help homeless people in York to have a home).
- Making contact with the council easy for our customers.
- The way we deal with waste and recycling.
- Plans for the future for our children and young people.
- Helping adults decide on the type of social care they need and how to access it and pay for it.
- Dealing with housing and council tax benefits abuse.
- Safeguarding adults.

Six volunteers would help arrange an Assessment Day in November.

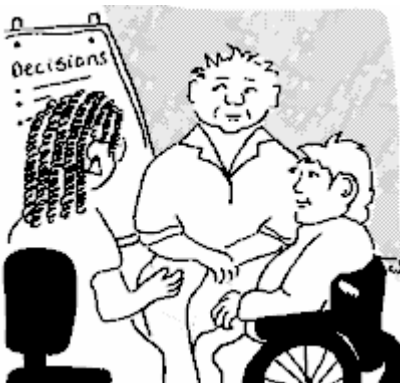
They would also give comments on the above areas to help Officers make sure that the Council provided its services in a fair way and that it was a fair and inclusive employer.

3. Community Forum Reports and Feedback

The Older People's Assembly representative spoke about their Photograph/Information Fair held in the Guildhall.

**YORK 50 +
FESTIVAL
2008**

She also gave out copies of the programme of events for the York 50+ Festival to be held from Saturday 27 September to Sunday 5 October 2008.



The Chair of the Valuing People Partnership told the Group that improvements had been made in finding a single strong voice for all disabled people in York. Disabled people would lead this.



The Group were reminded that the Disabled People's Forum was being developed with the help of students from York University. As some of the students had now left Higher York had offered to give their help to the project.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Young People's representative told the Group that students from Applefield's School had been on an expedition for their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which had gone very well.



The BME Citizen's Open Forum had taken part in the Early Music Festival on 22 July and they were helping to organise the International Shared Meal event on 25 October 2008 at the Central Methodist Hall, St Saviourgate.

York Interfaith Calendar of Events 2008

York Interfaith had updated their calendar of events on their webpage.

They had also used some of the money received from the Social



Inclusion Group to hold meetings at the Priory Street Centre, which had good access.



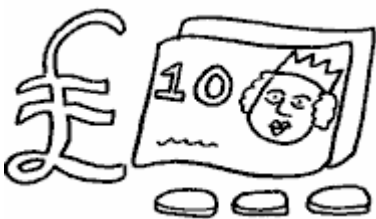
York First were involved in "The Dream Snatcher" a project in the Studio at York Theatre Royal on 29 November 2008.

The Group were told that the author and performers would answer questions after the performance.



Copies of the newly published York People First Autumn newsletter were passed round the Group.

4. Possible Cross-Strand Projects for Funding from the Social Inclusion Working Groups Budget for 2008/09



The Group discussed possible one year projects, which they could give money from their budget to help.

They wanted projects that would help as many York people as possible covered by equality legislation which

covered gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age.



International Women's
Week:
Celebrating Women -
March 1 to 31 2009

There was not enough money in the budget to do all of the projects so it was agreed that a report should be brought to the next meeting with details of how much it would cost for the following projects

- Explore a Day Event, which brings all the strands together.
- Diverse York photo database
- BME elders befriending project
- Event during International Women's Week

5. Local Development Framework Core Strategy - Equality

Officers from the Council presented a report on the Local Development Framework.

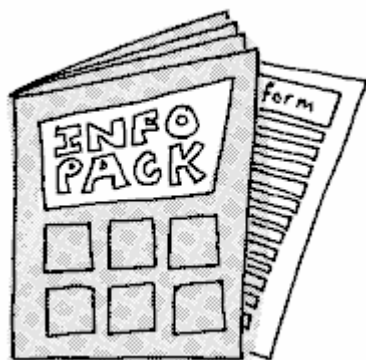


They told the Group that this document described what the Council thought York would be like to live in and look like in 20 years' time.



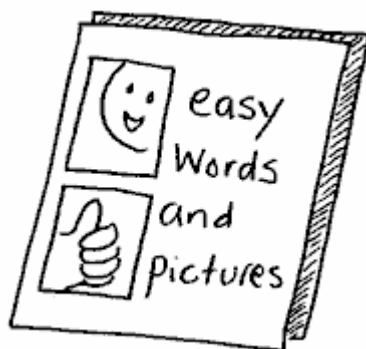
They asked how they should consult other groups. They said that the main equality issues were

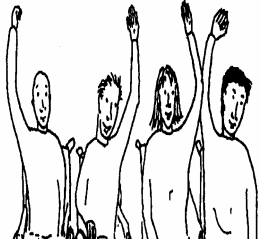
- Housing
- Accessibility
- Employment
- Community Space Buildings



The Group said that Officers should look at:

- making documents smaller and easier to read;
- talk to the Young People's forum and to people in residential homes;
- train officers on the best way to write and present reports;
- talking was better than printed documents;
- short documents and a CD to explain the subject in more detail;
- employment for young people, affordable and special needs housing were all important.





It was agreed that Officers should look at the comments of the Group when they prepared their report.

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**CYC Social Inclusion Working Group
Updated Forward Plan (Work Plan) 2008/9**

Meeting on 19 November 2008

- A community engagement strategy for SIWG
- Working with Ward Committees - **January 2009**
- Discussion regarding Community Cohesion issues arising from: - **Defer until data is collected**
 - Demographic changes in York's BME profile
 - Intergenerational issues

Meeting on 14 January 2009

- Working with ward committees
- Council Engagement Strategy - Equality Implications
- Council Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Schemes 2009-2012 - Discuss strategy outline

27 February 2009 - SIWG Development Day

Meeting on 11 March 2009

- Council Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Schemes 2009-2012 - First draft
- Council Corporate Strategy- Equality issues.
- Equality in the corporate procurements strategy

Meeting on 13 May 2009

- The changing profile of the six Equality strands in York
- Forward Plan (Work Plan) 2009/2010
- Council Equality and Inclusion Strategy and Schemes - Second Draft

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York Interfaith and Churches Together in York

Survey Results
of Religions and Belief
Groups in the City
2008



**Sponsored by
CYC Social Inclusion
Working Group**

A Survey of Religions and Belief Groups in the City; 2008

Background to the Survey

In the light of the changing diversity of the population of the city, York Interfaith and Churches Together in York were jointly asked to develop a questionnaire to be sent out to those on their network lists and databases. The survey's aim would be to explore the current work, perceptions, and concerns of the main Religions and belief groups present in the city.

The results would then be reported back to the Social Inclusion Working Group.

It should be noted that within the City there are representatives of the nine main World Faiths. These are named as *Baha'i: Buddhist; Christian: Hindu: Jains; Jewish; Muslim: Sikh; Taoist.*

There are also meetings of Spiritualists, Pagans, and Unitarians. Within the range of the 'Religion and Belief' remit, Humanists also organise and meet together. They are in no way a religion, but they do have beliefs to explore and affirm. Additionally, there are practicing members of other belief groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Christadelphians, to name but three of many.

The Questionnaire was conducted between June and August 2008.

A note on the Responses

45 Centres of Worship and Meeting places of Belief groups were represented in the returns. Replies cover a range of mainstream Christian churches together with other religion and belief groups meeting in schools, Community Centres, their own premises, pubs, worship centres, Mosques, Universities, hospitals, and homes in a range of locations right across the city.

The list of Places of Worship and meeting places referred to in the questionnaire as being used by their own group for meetings and worship is provided in [Appendix A](#).

In 3 returns, the answers reflect responses from group meetings held to discuss the questionnaire. In total, the 3 responses represent the views of 42 people.

Equalities and Diversity; Findings produced in [Appendix B](#)

In addition to the questions on issues relating to the Religion and Belief groups, a separate paper on Equalities and Diversity was circulated to those on the mailing list. The questions asked were stated as optional and returned forms were to be anonymous. It was felt that information supplied by individuals would help the City of York Council create a clearer picture of the people who belong to the wide range of Belief networks. A reasonable response would also assist CYC plans for meeting identified and emerging needs and priorities especially around issues of equality and diversity.

The results were collated separately from the main survey, in order to guarantee that individuals could not be identified. One major factor to be borne in mind is that of those who responded, only 30% completed the form on Equalities and Diversity. It therefore represents a much smaller sample than is to be found in the main questionnaire.

Paul Wordsworth

(On behalf of the joint working party that devised, ran and collated the questionnaire.)

Result of Questionnaire

Question 1: *Which place/space in the City of York is used by your faith community for your own meetings?*

The complete list of replies is reproduced in Appendix A.

Question 2: *Do you know of any places/spaces in the City of York which are used for Inter Faith meetings?*

Replies giving examples:	as %
None Known	25
Unitarian Chapel	15
York St. John University	14
Priory Street Centre	11
Some known (not specific)	8
Friends Meeting House (Friargate)	8
Bull Lane Mosque	5
Spurriergate Centre	2
York District Hospital Interfaith Reference Group	2
St Bede's Pastoral Centre	2
St. Leonard's Hospice	2
Holy Trinity Church, Micklegate	2
York University Sacred Space	2
SACRE – Educational	2

Comment

The significant factor here is that a quarter of all replies are unaware of any Interfaith meeting places. Additionally, some answers claim to know of places, but are unable to offer any examples.

Question 3: *How could the availability of these places/ spaces be improved?*

Replies	as %
No answer given	50%
Replies with comments	28%
More publicity of meetings and locations	22%

Some of the comments:

'A request should be made to all interested Faith Groups to appoint a link person who will attend regular interfaith meetings and report back to their own group.'

'Does the City of York Council have a full list of Faith and Belief Groups? '

'Don't need any more spaces or places to be made available'.

'Interfaith gatherings should take place in neutral areas like schools and Community centres.'

'We need a free venue'

'Our need is lower costs for hiring, and better advance booking systems in place for booking centres'

Comment

A great deal more publicity of events and meetings is clearly needed. For some smaller groups there is a struggle to locate suitable venues, to meet the costs of hiring halls, and to access larger venues for celebrating festivals when greater numbers are anticipated.

***Question 4: What opportunities are there for you to meet and develop understanding of people with different faiths and beliefs living in your local area?
Please give examples.***

<i>Replies given:</i>	<i>as %</i>
No opportunities known	40
<i>Examples given:</i>	
Specific activities identified	36
<i>In particular, mentioned</i>	
York Interfaith Group meetings	12
'City of Faiths' Initiative	6
Open Day at Bull Lane Mosque	6

Amongst those activities specifically named are:

'Mothers and children from ethnic groups attend weekly Toddler Service in local church. Those with children at local school attend school events and services. The development of understanding is one way- they begin to understand our culture; we do not really develop knowledge of theirs.'

'We have attended Baha'i Festivals.'

'Evening courses at University of York Centre for Lifelong Learning'

'Meeting others through the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign '

'The Hospice is a Christian foundation, but occasionally we do have Muslim patients.'

'The Interfaith representatives group meets at the York District Hospital'

'York Racial Equality Council'

And rather less specifically:

'Someone came to talk to our house group once'

'A Halal shop may provide a meeting place for the few Muslims living in this part of York.'

'Deanery meetings'

Comment

The survey reveals a large number of people who have no knowledge of opportunities for meeting people from other religions and beliefs in their own area of the city. Thereafter, because the survey included the York Interfaith membership in its mailing, there are a variety of events which are specifically known and mentioned.

For those who seek, there are already clear opportunities in York for engagement and interaction with those of different religions and beliefs. However, the information about where these things are happening is apparently not widely known by the leaders within the religion and belief communities, and even less so by their members.

More widespread publicity and the issue of communication are matters that need to be imaginatively addressed.

Question 5: *How could opportunities for learning about different faiths and beliefs be improved in the city?*

In addition to large numbers of 'Not sure' or 'no answer' there were the following suggestions:

'The Open Day at the Mosque is a good idea, and more people should be encouraged to go along. Saturday might be a better day to hold the event.'

'A day of workshops enabling growth of understanding'

'A series of interactive sessions by various religions and belief groups, for those who want to explore and discover what each has to offer.'

'An annual event / Festival which is a city-wide initiative'

'Create a list of knowledgeable local people from various belief and faith groups, prepared to give talks in schools. Provide them with conveniently timed training on how best to meet the needs of schools. This could be linked to the new agreed syllabus for RE in York schools.'

'Religious slots hosted by various faith and belief representatives on local radio to describe and discuss different paths. A section in local newspapers devoted to religion and belief – written by members from a range of backgrounds.'

'Invitations to one another to participate in the different festivals of the religious groups. Well informed speakers who believe in promoting dialogue and understanding between the religions and belief groups could be invited to address widely publicised gatherings at a central city venue. These could be a series of talks.'

'Activities could be improved by adopting a more inclusive language to cover the range of people who might become involved. Instead of having 'Interfaith meeting,' why not have 'Belief Network'?

'Communication is the key: running events of common concern for those who want to learn about different faiths and beliefs depends on good publicity through good channels of communication. The local radio and Press should be used more widely.'

A lone voice suggested:

'Things are gradually improving and there are increased opportunities for learning, compared to five years ago.'

Comment

The replies can largely be summarised in the action: 'by setting up situations of dialogue'.

It would clearly be helpful to expand and make more of existing opportunities, such as the Mosque Open Day. There are opportunities provided by the variety of festivals now held in the increasingly multi-cultural city of York, organised and celebrated by the different religion and belief communities. These provide the framework for a complete annual programme that would lead to greater understanding and learning about each other. Whatever is developed will need good publicity.

Question 6a: Are there opportunities for you to work locally with

different faith groups on a common project for the benefit of your community?

Replies	as %
None	66
Some	17
No reply given	17

Examples of existing work

'The International Meal in One World Week is a happy event, and fosters friendship-but it does not go further.'

'The Chaplaincy at the University meets with local Muslims on a regular basis.'

'Examples known in Leeds'

'North Yorkshire Humanist Group has been active in promoting good relations and improved understanding with 'religion and belief' groups holding a series of talks by covering Islam, Roman Catholicism, Unitarianism, and the Quakers. We have not been given the opportunity to speak to those or another group in return.'

Comment

Given the weight of answers which indicate that a reply is not possible (17%) or that there are not any opportunities (66%) - this suggests that 4 out of 5 of those looking at this question had a negative response.

Question 6b: Give an example of a project you would like to see developed.

'Joint fund raising for disaster relief '

'More street clean ups and graffiti removal' (an idea mentioned by 3 other respondents)

'Survey needs of local area, and then use faith community premises for community meetings to explore how those needs can be met'

'More support for One World Week from Faith Groups'

'Involvement from other Faith groups in LEAF (Leeman Road Environment Action Force) would be appreciated by local Christians already at work on this project.'

'Some humanists would like to be more involved in civic ceremonies such as Remembrance Day and the Holocaust Memorial Day'

'An annual local conference of religions and beliefs'

'Celebration together of special days or weeks designated by the United Nations.'

'An Environmental project such as tree planting.'

'Muslim and Christian co-operation on social improvement events'

'Make more of celebrating major Faith community Festivals in the city'

'Create an active 'Faiths Forum' dedicated to helping growth of understanding, friendship, and mutual trust and support.'

'Don't actually see any signs of other faith communities in the local area with whom a local project could be developed. Does anyone have information that would help us to make contact with different groups, with a view to creating a project?'

Comment

The number of responses to this section (6b) suggests that there is no shortage of ideas for ways in which action and events could be set up for joint working together. Sharing in humanitarian action such as fund raising for disaster relief, or supporting a particular aspect of the United Nations agenda are mentioned in a number of replies.

Seeking to improve the local environment by working together in practical ways is also a popular concept for developing dialogue with those of other religions and beliefs. It would also serve as a demonstration to the wider public of the ways in which groups can co-operate together for the greater good of the community. The right project handled properly would certainly capture media attention.

Question 7: *What challenges (if any) do you see facing your religion or belief group in the next few years in the City of York?*

A recurring theme in responses was a perception of increasing intolerance towards religions and those who have belief- from those identified as having 'no faith', or more colourfully described by one respondent as *'lipstick atheists'*. The increasingly secular society is identified as one cause of hostility. Another is the negative image of religions portrayed in the UK media.

Among other general challenges mentioned, not in any significant order:

- *declining membership and financial problems;*
- *lack of Government support for upkeep of historic places of worship;*
- *apathy and unwillingness by believers to engage constructively with issues that affect the future of society;*
- *the rapid growth in the number of different religions and belief groups in the city;*
- *the increasing number of people with no belief or religious affiliation;*
- *finding ways of being Christian church which are accessible and attractive to others;*

And finally, for one respondent it was –

- *'too many challenges to list!'*

Specific issues were also mentioned, in particular;

- *shortage of priests in the Christian churches of the city*
- *finding a proper place of worship for the Hindu community*
- *recognition as a bona-fide religion (Pagans)*
- *lack of adequate human resources to enable the Baha'i community as it seeks to offer a response to the demands of social change*
- *the need to widen public awareness of humanism*
- *developing interaction with the growing Muslim population in the city*

In relation to developments taking place within the city, the following challenges were identified;

- *changing age profiles in the residential areas around the University campuses as the student population continues to expand*
- *embracing the changes that the proposed development of the York Central scheme will bring to the Leeman Road area when (or if) it happens*

Another concern was the difficulty experienced by religions and belief groups when applying for grants to support their community work in the local area.

It was felt by some that applications were liable to be marginalized or ignored. Neighbourhood ward meetings were perceived to be less responsive to receiving funding applications from such groups than from other charities and secular organisations.

This particular concern should be read alongside the replies in which the challenge of increased intolerance towards religions and belief groups is mentioned. If that is indeed the reality as well as the perception, then that ought to be measurable within the Neighbourhood Wards and other bodies. It would be reflected in the high percentage of grant applications turned down from religions and belief groups which seek help in expanding work to aid the local community. If the proposed work is clearly laudable and unthreatening, and not solely aimed for the internal benefit of the group, then it ought to receive a fair and equal hearing.

If investigation reveals that religions and belief groups are being unfairly denied access to public money designated for the benefit of the local community of which they are part, and that they are being excluded as a result of increased intolerance towards them, then that becomes a challenge for the City of York Council in seeking to ensure that its commitment to Social Inclusion is not being undermined by people of prejudice. Definitive evidence was not asked for in the questionnaire. This issue is no larger than a cloud the size of a man's hand at the moment. However, it will be monitored, to ensure that it does not grow into a larger and more threatening storm.

Comment

This question provoked more wide-ranging replies than any other in the questionnaire. Here is something that the majority of respondents speak about with some degree of confidence- the future of their own group or community. A cluster of

challenges lie ahead and responses ranged from the optimistic *'we must be faithful to our highest values and insights'* to the slightly gloomy *'too many to mention!'* There also arises a perception of a changing social climate, in which the practicing of religion and the meeting together of belief groups is not viewed by non believers with mere indifference, but with an increasingly aggressive hostility. That suggests developing dialogue between religions and belief groups is essential to ensure that any definitive intolerance, prejudice and bigotry experienced by any such group is monitored and collectively opposed.

Question 8: What challenges, if any, do you see facing Inter faith relations in the City of York over the next few years?

Around 25% of replies had no comment to make on this question. Of the many who did respond, only one stated *'I am not aware of any challenges in this area.'* Others ranged in scope from the local to the global.

There was a view that not to be proactive in working on relationships between the religions and belief groups would present a serious challenge and should not be regarded as an option.

The thought of belief groups and religious meetings not connecting with others in the city, and leading totally separate existences without a link into the local society was a deeply uncomfortable thought to some respondents.

There were other less than optimistic words used in looking into the future.

'I see opposition to the interfaith ethos, a resurgence of fanaticism, tension in race relations, and the challenge of mixing politics and religion'

'The challenges centre around xenophobia and religious intolerance'

'We face the rise of militant atheism'

'Currently, there are misunderstandings or more probably a lack of understanding of the culture and belief of others. There is also an emphasis on political correctness, affecting how one may robustly stand up for one's faith without being misinterpreted.'

'The increase in the number of York residents who have recently come from overseas may cause tension, more for those with no belief commitment. Other challenges likely to arise in the relationships may be in response to what happens globally, and these events cannot be predicted'

More than one reply spoke of the need to overcome lethargy and apathy in the various congregations and gatherings. Relationships between the religions and belief groups in the city are not high on the agenda of many of those who meet for worship or to share their beliefs. The challenge is also to ensure that programmes and activities do not revolve around one religion which takes the lead and dominates the process, nor to leave the future in the hands of a few *'enthusiasts'* who lack the resources to meet the growing needs across the city.

Some ways forward are proposed. These mainly centre on the issues of how to

- *raise awareness of the variety and diversity of religion and belief groups*
- *improve knowledge of each belief represented in the city*
- *bring people together to engage in dialogue, support, and trust building*
- *Publicise information about gatherings and meetings*

A further clue to the approach required in facing the challenges of our relationships in York is offered by a by a Muslim who replied to this question with the following thought:

'Answering a question at a church, where I was giving a talk on Islam, I suggested that on the basis of recent headlines, that just as Muslims are often stereotyped as violent terrorists, Christians tend to be identified in media stories as child-abusers and homophobes.

It continues to be seen as clever by some secular consumerists to ridicule faith and belief, and like Governments, claim that whatever is 'good' is 'ours', and whatever is 'bad' is 'theirs'. Such injustice is not solved by legislation, but by those who have belief persevering to 'let their light so shine before others, that they may see their good works.....'

The quotation makes a telling point that words and actions must walk hand in hand. The challenge has to be faced of ensuring that the many religions and belief groups now represented in York can live peaceably, with mutual trust and understanding of each other. They must also have the freedom to continue practicing their religions and beliefs without being subject to harassment or threatening prejudice.

There are some in the city who glimpse a vision of how things should be, and have already shown the desire to grow in understanding through meeting and listening to each other. The City of York Council is to be commended for taking initiatives on the Social Inclusion agenda, and showing its willingness to be a partner in the process.

It is not an impossible dream that we should learn to acknowledge one another's differences and insights. In so doing, we shall come to understand ourselves more completely and appreciate how our lives can be enhanced by diversity of culture, religion and belief.

This report suggests actions which could be taken, and steps which are recommended as a way forward. The group responsible for preparing the questionnaire do not have authority to implement these actions on behalf of all or any religion or belief group in the city.

However, representatives from York Interfaith Forum and Churches Together in York worked together in partnership on the survey, and those involved will seek to encourage both organisations to circulate the report as widely as possible.

They will also commend the practical outcomes and recommended steps to their respective members, supporters, and associates. The adoption of such actions by the combined network of both groups would be a very positive contribution to the growth of mutual understanding and trust between the religions and belief groups in the city in years to come.

Further copies of the report are available by ordering from:

Survey of Religions and Belief Groups:

10 Burniston Grove, York: YO 10 3RP

email: paul.wordsworth@homecall.co.uk

and the report can be sent to you by attachment.

APPENDIX A

List of 45 Meeting places and Worship Centres represented in Questionnaire

St.Leonard's Hospice
Tang Hall Community Centre
Osbalwick Primary School
Priory Street Centre
York St. John University Chaplaincy Prayer Room
'The Black Swan' Peaseholme Green

Bull Lane Mosque
Friends Meeting House, New Earswick
4th Avenue Mosque
Friends Meeting House, Friargate
York Spiritualist Church
Poor Clares Convent, Lawrence Street

St.Paulinus RC Church, Monkton Road
St.Bede's Pastoral Centre
English Martyrs RC Church, York
St.George's RC Church, Peel Street
Haxby and Wigginton Methodist Church
Central Methodist Church, St.Saviourgate

Clifton Moor LEP Church
Heslington LEP Church
Holy Redeemer CE Church – Boroughbridge Road
St. Barnabas CE Church – Jubilee Terrace, Leeman Road
St.Edward the Confessor CE Church, Dringhouses
St.Michael –le-belfry CE Church

St.Philip and St.James CE Church- Clifton
St.Mark's CE Church, Rawcliffe
St.Hilda CE Church, Tang Hall
St.Chad's CE Church, South Bank

A response came from City Centre Churches- a consortium of churches and centres open for worship and also encouraging local community engagement and heritage aspects of their buildings and facilities. Those which are not listed above include:

York Minster
Salvation Army Citadel-Gillygate
St.Olave's CE Church- Marygate
St.Wilfrid's RC Church
St.Denys CE Church
All Saints CE church, Pavement

St.Mary CE Church, Bishophill
The Rock Church, Priory Street
St.Columba URC Church, Priory Street
York Baptist Church
Holy Trinity CE Church. Micklegate
All Saints CE Church, North Street

St.Martin CE Church. Coney Street
St.Helen's CE Church
Elim Pentecostal Church- c/o St Lawrence Primary School
The Bar Convent, Blossom Street
St.Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel

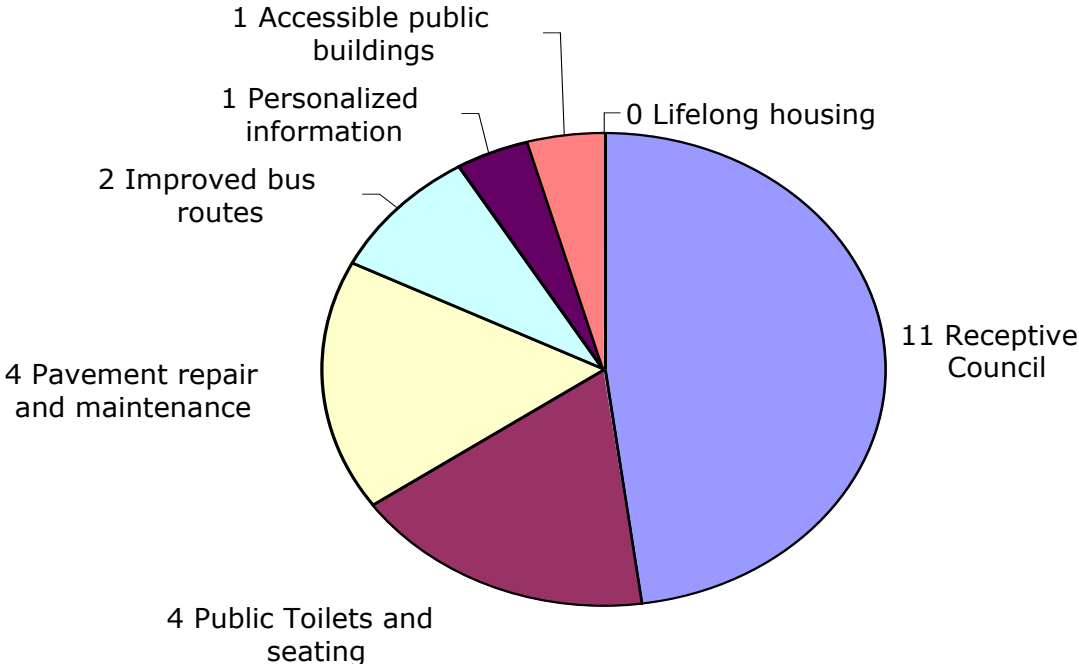
SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP QUESTION

**YOPA Public Meeting Mon 19 May 2008
Central Methodist Church**

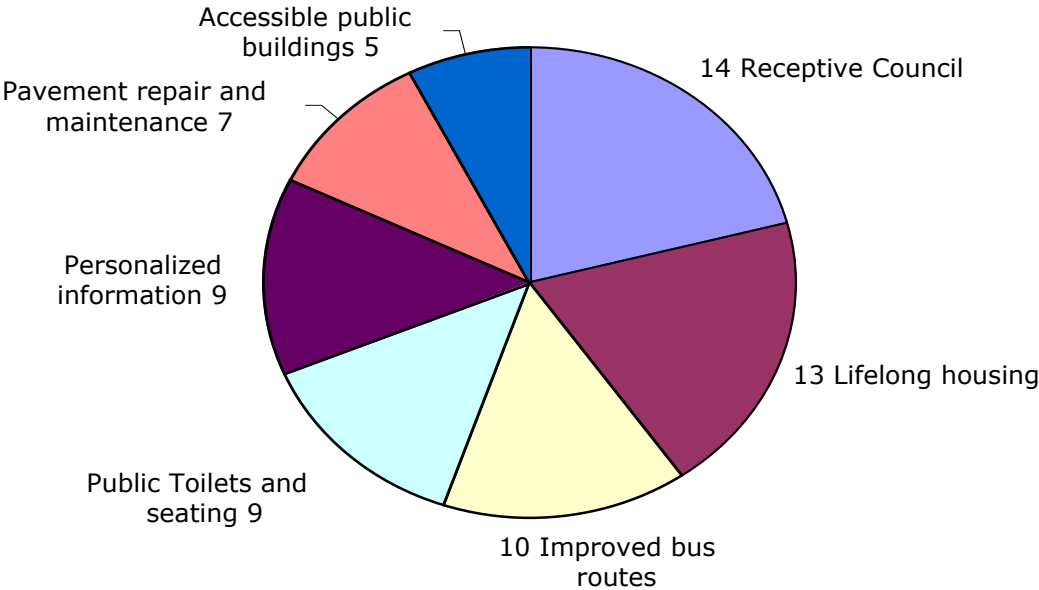
**Priority votes in small group discussion based on the Age-Friendly
York proposal
submitted to the Council by YOPA earlier this year.**

21 returns

First Choices



Top three choices



FIGURES on which the pie charts are based

	1st CHOICE	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	TOP 3	BOTTOM 4
Pavement repair and maintenance; gully and drain cleaning; clearing of footpaths in icy weather	4	2	1	4	4	5	0	7	13
Accessible public buildings; shopkeepers to take responsibility for interior access (Braille on lifts, etc)	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	5	10
Improved bus routes and driver consideration	2	3	5	2	4	2	1	10	9
Lifelong housing	0	8	5	4	0	2	0	13	6

Increase in the number of public toilets (& attended ones) and public seating; shops to make toilets available	4	3	2	2	1	5	3	9	11
Friendly and personalized information - not automated systems	1	4	4	1	4	1	5	9	11
A Council that seeks and respects older people's opinions and puts them into policy and practice	11	3	0	1	3	2	0	14	6

Questions, small group discussions, and results put together by Sue Lister, YOPA
 Pie charts and advice gratefully received from Darren Reed, Sociology Dept, University of York

<p style="text-align: center;">THE FOLLOWING WERE ADDED BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (not ranked with the other issues)</p>		
1. Staff training in how "disabling" policies and services affect older people with disabilities	2. Staff training in awareness of diverse racial customs and traditions and what that means for older people in today's multi-ethnic community	3. Gay friendly staff training across all Council services especially in nursing homes, day care, etc
4. Staff training in awareness of diverse faiths, beliefs and religious customs across all Council services especially those dealing with older people	5. Policy consultation which always automatically includes representatives from the 6 strands	6. Special Needs Housing
7. Leaflets & written information, not web-based	8. Interchangeable bus tickets for those under 60	9. Street parking
10. Alternative access to services for service users - video links, home visits, more publicity	11. Outer, circular, bus routes	12. Air quality - limit lorries in city centre to after 6 pm and before 8 am
13. Ticket system in banks & post offices, and more seating (to avoid standing in queues)	14. A place to worship for Hindu and Sikh communities in York (weekly prayer + social gatherings)	

NOTES

1. The issues were put in **rank order** and not rated according to how important they were on a scale of 1 – 5
2. There were 21 participants but the figures vary due to the additional issues raised and because some people put issues as a tie
3. We have included charts of the 1st choice and also the top 3 choices in order to give a more useful and balanced picture of what people considered important eg Lifelong Housing didn't register as a first choice, but it was rated highly in the top 3 choices
4. We have no idea where the additional issues fit into the ranking as they were added in group discussions

CONCLUSION Having a receptive Council is considered the most important factor.....in obtaining action on all the other issues!

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Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group **19 November 2008**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Project proposals for SIWG budgets 2008/9

Summary

1. This verbal report by Sue Lister of the Older People's Assembly will outline project proposals discussed at a meeting of community representatives the notes from which are attached in Annex 1- Notes From the Informal Meeting of SIWG Reps
2. The Group is asked to consider the proposals and decide which to take forward and who will lead their development. Project proposal forms will then be filled in and brought back to the Group for final approval at the meeting in January.

Consultation

3. This report is part of the consultation for the allocation of SIWG project budgets 2008/9

Options

4. N/A

Analysis

5. N/A.

Corporate Priorities

6. Projects suggested will contribute to making York an inclusive city and will contribute to the Council's Equality objectives.

Implications

7. These are as follows:

- **Financial** – None.
- **Human Resources (HR)** – None
- **Equalities** - As above
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - None
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** - None
- **Other** - None

Risk Management

8. N/A

Recommendations

9. To consider the proposals and decide which to take forward and who will lead their development

Reason: To ensure that SIWG budgets promote equality and inclusion.

Contact Details

**Author: Evie Chandler
Equalities Team
Tel: 551704**

**Chief Officer Responsible for the
report:
Heather Rice
Director of People and Improvements**

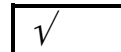
**Report
Approved**



Date 10/11/08

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Notes From the Informal Meeting of SIWG Reps
Wed 22 Oct 08, Kings Manor

**Notes From the Informal Meeting of SIWG Reps
Wed 22 Oct 08, Kings Manor, 6-7 pm**

Present: Pete Blackburn, Sue Lister (notes), Daryoush Mazloum

Apologies: Lynn Jeffries, Janet Looker

Invited but no reply: Becca, Tricia Castle, Stephen Rouse

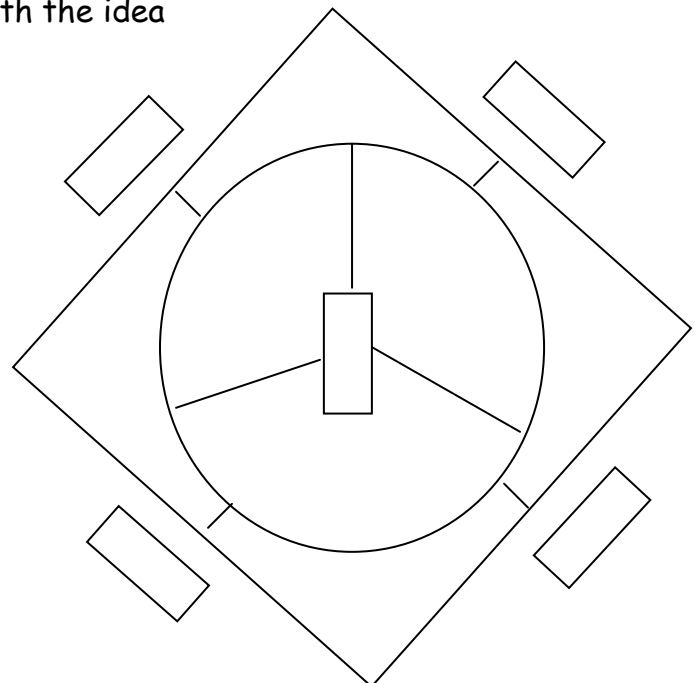
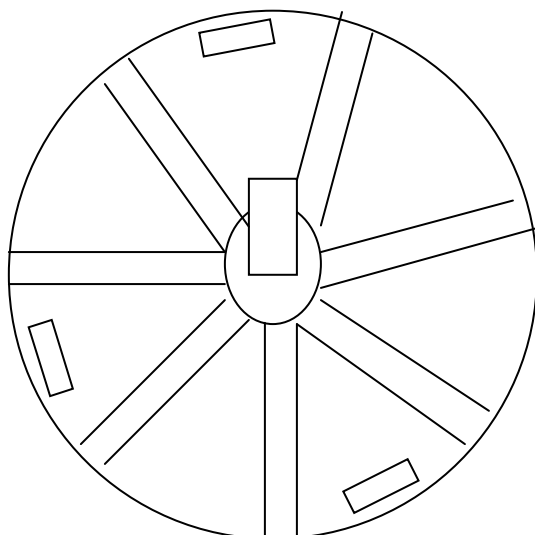
**Suggestions for projects with our groups working together
with funding from the SIWG budget 08-09**

1. Diversity Exhibition

- a) Each group to create its own part of a diversity display
- b) Buy display boards big enough to mount a display from each of our groups and strong enough to last for years
- c) Provide money to each group, say £200, to put together its display, showcasing its activities and putting across a clear message about the value of its work
- d) The exhibition could travel to festivals, or be split up for small events put on by the individual groups; it could travel round libraries, or be put up for Council or public events, etc.

2. Diversity Garden

- a) The groups design their part of a shared garden which would be a place where everyone would feel welcome - fully accessible, a sensory garden for people with sight impairment, lovely to visit at all times of the year
- b) A focal point for locals and visitors. Something different for York to be proud of
- c) A plaque or central feature explaining what we are trying to achieve through social inclusion
- d) Work together with council experts to find the right spot, design and create the garden
- e) Could the groups continue to be involved in caring for their section?
- f) The key is to inspire people to run with the idea



g) We thought of dividing it into 7 sections to include women.

3. Diversity Fun at Festivals

- a) Put on events, workshops, speakers, displays, presentations, performances, stalls at festivals run by our partner groups eg Pride Picnic in the Park, 50+ Festival, International Women's Week, One World Week, YUMI, etc
- b) Show we are an inclusive community and when we celebrate, we celebrate together
- c) Issue invitations through our networks and encourage participation
- d) We could do a joint presentation of poetry, song, music, drama, dance and tour this to other venues, festivals, towns
- e) Have vision, will travel!

4. Diversity Day

- a) Have a special day in York each year to celebrate diversity
- b) In the summer, outside, somewhere like Tower Gardens by the river
- c) Stalls, our Diversity Display, balloons, picnic, performances, crafts activities, food, games, quizzes, circle dancing for all to join in
- d) Or in the autumn as part of, say, One World Week (last Saturday of October), and hold it in the Guildhall, or the Early Music Centre, or.....
- e) Form a working party from each of the groups, led by a paid City Council Coordinator. Offer honorariums to the working party members.
- f) Would the SIWG budget continue to be invested in such an annual event, or would it have to find its own budget in subsequent years? Would the City Council want to take it on as part of its inclusive community responsibilities?



Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group **19 November 2008**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Small Groups Discussion: Engaging with the Equality Strands

Summary

1. The Group is expected to form small groups to consider the discussion paper attached as **Annex A - Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group**
2. The paper describes how people from the equality communities are engaged in SIWG at present, and asks questions about this process to be considered in the small groups. Feedback from the groups will be used to draft an Engagement Strategy 2009-12 for SIWG, which is expected to be finalised at the SIWG Development Day on 27 February 2009.

Consultation

3. The discussion paper is part of the consultation that will inform the SIWG Engagement Strategy 2009-12.

4. Options

5. N/A

Analysis

6. N/A.

Corporate Priorities

7. The discussion and subsequent strategy contribute to the promotion of inclusive and cohesive communities, the Council Equalities aims and objectives, and the aims and objectives of the Council's developing Engagement Strategy.

Implications

8. These are as follows:
- **Financial** – None.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – None
 - **Equalities - As** above
 - **Legal** - None
 - **Crime and Disorder** - None
 - **Information Technology (IT)** - None
 - **Property** - None
 - **Other** - None

Risk Management

9. N/A

Recommendations

10. To discuss the report in annex 1

Reason: To ensure that SIWG includes as many people from equality strands as possible in its work.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the
report:
Heather Rice
Director of People and Improvement

Report
Approved



Date 10/11/08

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background papers – None

Annexes

Annex A - Engaging the equality communities in the Social Inclusion Working Group

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**Social Inclusion Working Group
19 November 2008**

Discussion paper

**Engaging the equality communities in the Social
Inclusion Working Group**

As required by its own policies and national legislation, the Council aims to make sure that local people have a say in the planning and delivery of public services and become engaged in local decision making.

The Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) provides a mechanism for people from the equality communities (also known as "the equality strands") to do just that, but needs to improve so that it can engage with as many people as possible in a fair inclusive and sustainable way.

This paper aims to help the Group begin its discussions about how to improve engagement. It explains the current national definition of "engagement" and the duties that the Council will have in this area from April 2009.

The paper also describes how people from the equality communities are engaged in SIWG at present, and asks questions about this process to be looked at in small groups. Feedback from the groups will be considered when drafting an Engagement Strategy 2009-12 for SIWG, which is expected to be finalized at the SIWG Development Day on 27 February 2009.

1. What is "engagement"?

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health (LGPIH) Act which comes into force in April 2009, introduces a new duty for local authorities "to inform, consult and involve representatives of local persons' across all authority functions".

The Act offers a definition of engagement and says that it is made up of:

- **Provision of information**, to support communities to have their say and get involved 'where appropriate'. This needs to go beyond standard information on services and must be provided in a way that can be easily accessed and understood.
- **Consultation**, to allow people to have a say about the decisions and services that affect them. Consultation needs to provide genuine opportunities for people to be involved.
- **Involvement**, which is the most interactive form of engagement, giving people greater influence over decisions or delivery, through:
 - influence or direct participation in decision making (for example budget consultations, the EIAs Fair of the Social Inclusion Working Group and ward committee meetings)
 - feedback on decisions, services, policies and outcomes (such as exit surveys, resident's surveys)
 - working with Council services to design policies and services
 - carrying out some aspects of services for themselves (for example owning, running and maintaining a community centre)

ANNEX A

- working with Council to assess services (for example through co-opted members of Overview and Scrutiny committees, or as mystery shoppers)

SIWG has for sometime now been doing a lot of what the Act is asking, but needs to consider how to do this better in the future.

2. Community engagement in SIWG currently

It is very important that community representation on SIWG is as strong as possible. This will help the Council meet its legal duties, but more importantly it will make sure that people protected by equality legislation have a strong voice and are able to influence decision making in the Council, as was the intention when SIWG was set up.

Since July 2006 when SIWG was set up, the involvement of people from the equality communities has developed to include:

- **Co-opted representatives,**
- **Expert Witnesses, and**
- **SIWG community participation and engagement events,** like the recent Equality Impact Assessments Fair.

Below we look at each of the ways that people are involved in SIWG now, and ask some questions to help us think how to improve community representation and engagement on SIWG.

Co-opted representatives

Following its first meeting in July 2006, the organisations below were invited to send two co-opted representatives to serve on SIWG:

- the Inter-Faith Forum
- the BME Citizens' Open Forum ,
- the Older People's Assembly,
- the LGBT Forum

To date, there are two representatives from each of these organisations serving on SIWG. Most of these are elected annually by their groups and the same individuals have served since July 2006.

The "Disabled People's Forum once set up", was also invited to send two people. At the time and pending the creation of the Forum, one person involved in setting up the Forum came forward to represent the Disability strand on SIWG. Despite efforts, it has not been possible to set up a York Disabled People's Forum so far. The person resigned from the SIWG in October 2008. However, there are disabled expert witnesses from different groups who are currently engaged in SIWG.

Finally, as in July 2006 there was no single organisation representing gender issues in the city, the groups above were asked to send a male and female representative each to cover

ANNEX A

gender issues. To date, *SIWG* agendas and minutes show that few if any gender issues have been raised for discussion. This needs to be addressed, because since April 2007 the Council and other public bodies have a legal duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote and bring about gender equality, working with representatives from this strand including trans-gendered people.

There is an implicit expectation that people appointed as co-opted representatives attend *SIWG* meetings regularly. They are also expected to actively contribute to the objectives of the Group, for example by bringing forward project proposals that support and promote equality inclusion and engagement and can be funded by *SIWG* project budgets.

Last year the number of Councillors who sit on the *SIWG* was reduced. One of the main reasons was to make room for more community representatives to be engaged in the Group.

Issues to consider

1. What is the role of a co-opted representative? What should they be asked to do?
2. How does one become a co-opted representative? Elected? Appointed? Self-appointed?
3. What skills and personal qualities does a person need to have to be a co-opted representative?
4. How do we know that representatives are "representative"? How do we make sure that they bring all voices to the table - even ones they personally do not agree with?
5. How long should a co-opted representative serve on *SIWG*?
6. Once on *SIWG*, what support does a co-opted representative need to be effective?

Expert witnesses

At its first Development Day in February 2008, members of the Group considered how to widen community representation on SIWG. The concept of Expert Witness was brought up and explored during the day.

At the meeting in March 2008, SIWG Members decided that:

"The role of "expert witnesses" is to provide information and knowledge about specific issues. Expert witnesses will be invited at meetings in 2008/9 at the discretion of the Chair, for relevant agenda items."

Witnesses currently invited and reasons for inviting them are as follows:

- √ York Travellers Trust, to inform traveller issues
- √ York Humanists, to inform non religion/belief issues
- √ Young people invited in consultation with and supported by Steve Rouse, the youth worker who is currently commissioned by SIWG to work with young people, to inform specific issues such as intergenerational projects.
- √ User representatives from Valuing People Partnership and York People First to inform learning disabilities and mental health issues
- √ People from York Access Group to inform mobility issues
- √ Representatives from Higher York to progress higher education student inclusion

ANNEX A

- √ Following investigation to identify relevant groups in the City, representatives from women's groups, men's groups and transgender groups to assist with gender issues.
- √ Representatives from the Primary Care Trust and Education services to assist with and inform equality in service issues arising in these areas.

The current Chair of SIWG has issued a standing invitation to all the witnesses to attend and feel free to speak at all meetings. Agendas and minutes are distributed to the invited witnesses.

With the exception of people from gender groups, all of the witnesses have attended:

- √ the induction lunch in June 2008,
- √ some of the main meetings, and/or
- √ the SIWG Equality Impact Assessments Fair on 5 November 2008.

There is no requirement for expert witnesses to attend all SIWG meetings.

Issues to consider

1. Is the current definition of expert witness adequate?
2. Can a person representing their own views/experience be an expert witness, or should it only be a person representing the views of a specific group?
3. What skills and personal qualities does a person need to be an expert witness?
4. Should there be a time limit for the same individual to serve as an expert witness on SIWG? What should it be?
5. What support do expert witnesses need to be effective?

Community participation and engagement events

These events provide an opportunity for large numbers of people from the equality communities to come together, share their experiences and voice their opinion about matters that SIWG deals with.

Current SIWG community events are as informal and inclusive as possible. Attendees tell us that they like them because they are relaxed and informal and make no particular demands on their time (for example by requiring attendance at frequent meetings).

To date, there have been a number of events organized in the context of SIWG:

- √ The “**Disabled People Together**” event in March 2008, to launch a project by higher education student-volunteers to support the development of a Disabled People’s Forum in York
- √ The “**Help us to get it Right Day**” (SIWG Equality Impact Assessments Fair) on 5 November 2008, where Council officer from 9 key Council service areas discussed equality issues about these areas with community representatives. Feedback from the sessions will be used to formulate service plans in 2009/10.

Both of these attracted between 40 to 50 people and feedback has been very positive with more events of this nature being asked for.

Some community groups currently involved in SIWG, also hold their own community forums (YREN, OPA, Interfaith forum).

Although these are not organized to contribute to SIWG business only, they too help get representative views to the table.

Issues to consider

1. Are SIWG community events the right way to bring more voices to the table?
2. How often should we have them?
3. What are their costs and benefits?
4. How can we improve them?
5. Who should organise them and run them? Why?

3. Other issues we need to think about to make SIWG work better

Below is a list of other issues that we need to consider in our journey to improve SIWG:

- √ Format of meetings
- √ Frequency and length of meetings
- √ Who makes decisions and how
- √ Communication

The list is not exhaustive and SIWG members are invited to put additional issues forward by contacting Evie Chandler in the Equality and Inclusion Team. These will then be discussed in detail at the Development Day on 27 February 2009

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