



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

To: Councillors Ayre (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Crisp (Vice-Chair) and Gunnell

Non Voting Co-opted Members:

Sue Lister, York Older People's Assembly

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)

Corry Hewitt, York Interfaith Representative

Revd. Paul Wordsworth, Churches Together in York

John Bettridge, Mental Health Forum

David Brown, Access Group

Becca Cooper, York People First

Fiona Walker, Valuing People Partnership

Date: Wednesday, 2 December 2009

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Clementhorpe Room, Priory Street, 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. Minutes

(Pages 3 - 24)

To approve and sign the minutes of the last meeting of the Group held on 24 September 2009. An "easy read" version of these minutes is also attached.

3. 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 1 December 2009 at 5.00 pm.**

4. Workshop: SIWG Taking Stock and Next Steps

This workshop follows on from discussions at the SIWG Development Day in May 2009 about ways of improving SIWG. It will consider issues including the name of SIWG, objectives, membership, format and frequency of meetings and the budget.

5. Chair's Report (Pages 25 - 38)

This report presents information about recent activity in the context of the Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG). The report focuses on the following issues:

- SIWG More for York EIAs Day
- SIWG EIAs Fair 2009 (Help us to get it right day)
- Chair's activity

6. Progress Reports from 2009/10 SIWG Projects

Verbal reports will be given on the 2009/10 SIWG projects led by the following groups:

- York Older People's Assembly (YOPA)
- York Racial Equality Network (YREN)
- Children and Inclusion (CANDI)

7. SIWG - Work and Equality Impact Assessments (Pages 39 - 44) **Plan for January 2010 to March 2010**

This item seeks approval for the group's work plan for the period December 2009 to March 2010.

8. Presentation about Higher York

This item will inform SIWG about Higher York's aims, objectives and current work and identify how SIWG can become involved in these.

9. Presentation about More for York

A presentation will be given on the Council's improvement programme called **More for York**. This will provide an opportunity to identify how SIWG can influence the programme.

10. 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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Would you like to speak at this meeting?

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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Informacja może być dostępna w tłumaczeniu, jeśli dostaniemy zapotrzebowanie z wystarczającym wyprzedzeniem. Tel: (01904) 551 550

Holding the Executive to Account

The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (40 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Decision Session) 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	24 September 2009
Present	Councillors Ayre (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Crisp (Vice-Chair) and Gunnell Non-Voting Co-opted Members: David Brown - York Access Group Becca Cooper - York People First Sarah Fennell - LGBT Forum Corry Hewitt - York Interfaith Sue Lister - York Older People's Assembly Daryoush Mazloum - York Racial Equality Network Fiona Walker - Valuing People Partnership Paul Wordsworth - Churches Together in York Expert Witnesses: Sandra Gillpin - York People First Andy Pollin - Valuing People Partnership Maureen Ryan - Valuing People Partnership George Wright - Humanist
Apologies	Peter Blackburn - LGBT Forum Rita Sanderson - York Racial Equality Network John Bettridge – Mental Health Forum

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. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Group, held on 2 July 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:

- In view of the number of items on the agenda, the proposed attendance of a representative from First York had been deferred (minute 3).
- Members of the Group were pleased to note the decision of the West & City Centre Area Planning Sub-Committee not to approve plans to install barriers at York Station (minute 3). It was noted that the company could appeal against that decision.
- Feedback on the Equalities Impact Assessments for Democratic Services would be an item for the SIWG meeting on 2 December 2009 (minute 3).
- Members of the Group were asked to notify the Chair or Vice-Chair of any hate incidents. If requests for information were received from the media regarding this issue, the City of York Council's Marketing and Communications Team would be able to advise on formulating a response (minute 3).
- The SIWG Workplan would be presented to the Group at the meeting on 2 December 2009 (minute 3).
- It was proposed to hold an additional SIWG meeting to consider "More for York" equality issues. "More for York" is a project to help council services improve. Possible dates for the additional meeting were circulated and members of the Group were asked to indicate their preference (minute 4).
- With the agreement of the Chair, rather than sending a letter to the Planning Department on the issue of promoting accessibility to buildings when making planning recommendations and decisions, it was proposed to invite an officer from the Planning Department to attend a future SIWG meeting to address the Group's concerns regarding this matter (minute 4).
- It was reported that the cost of producing the Corporate Strategy leaflet was 1p per resident (minute 7).

11. **Public Participation**

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

12. Chair's Report

The Group noted that, following the resignation of Mr Hotchkin, York Older People's Assembly had offered to relinquish one of their places as a non-voting co-opted member of SIWG. It was proposed that Higher York would share the representation of age issues on the Social Inclusion Working Group with the York Older People's Assembly and the City of York Council Youth Service. Higher York were currently expert witnesses on SIWG. They had been invited to give an introduction to their work but unfortunately a representative from the group was not present and hence this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Social Inclusion Working Group supported the proposal that a representative from Higher York be nominated to serve as a non-voting co-opted member of SIWG¹.

Action Required

1. Higher York to be asked to nominate representative for consideration by the Executive EC
(Higher York have confirmed their representative to be Claire Newhouse)

13. Equalities Impact Assessment Workshop - New Council Headquarters and York Customer Centre Project

A presentation was given on the new Council Headquarters and York Customer Centre Project.

Officers explained that it was important that the new council headquarters met the needs of employees and of the people who used the services provided by the Council.

It had become necessary to move to new accommodation as the current buildings were outdated, had poor accessibility and did not meet modern day standards. The new building would include a York Customer Centre, which would enable services to be accessed via a single point of contact. The building would be welcoming and secure, provide a wide variety of spaces and present a unique opportunity to support a diverse community and workforce. The new accommodation would also have to be able to adapt to Council changes and customer requirements.

Two options were being considered:

- Yorkshire House on Rougier Street
- West Offices on Station Rise

Consultation had taken place with staff and with service users. Questionnaires had been circulated to all York householders and a public exhibition on the scheme had been held at the Mansion House.

The final proposals were expected in the next few weeks. This would be followed by a thorough evaluation of the schemes before a recommendation was made to the Executive at the end of the year.

Work had already started on the Equalities Impact Assessments. The views of the SIWG were sought as to the design of the building and the management of the building once it was complete. Further consultation with SIWG would continue as the project developed.

The Group formed workshops to consider and comment on the initial findings of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and to shape the final recommendations for action arising from this EIA. The key issues that were identified are attached as Annex 1 to these minutes.

RESOLVED: That the comments from SIWG (as detailed in Minute Annex 1) be taken into account by the board overseeing the project.

REASON: To inform the project board's decision-making on issues in respect of inclusion.

14. Accessible Information Workshop

The Valuing People Partnership Board – Accessible Information Task Group gave a presentation on Accessible Information (Minute Annex 2). They explained that accessible information was key to fair access to council services and employment opportunities and they talked about the way in which the task group was looking to work with the Council and other organisations to improve the information that was produced.

Examples were circulated of information that had been produced by the Council. The Group discussed how the information could be improved. A summary of the discussions is attached at Minute Annex 3. The feedback would help council services and their partners to move towards developing common approaches to providing accessible information.

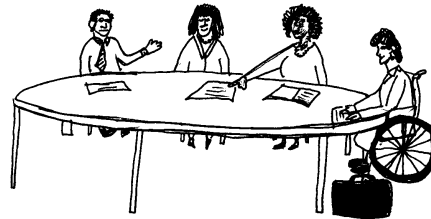
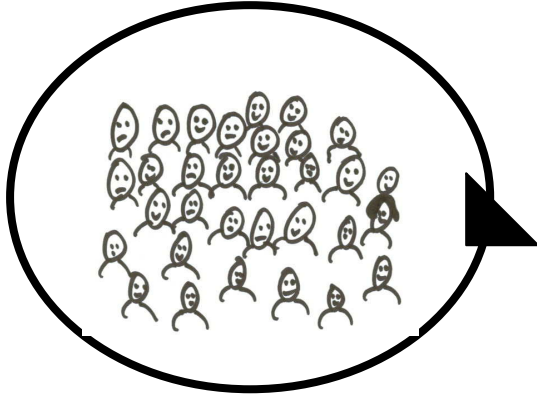
- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the Social Inclusion Working Group supported the work that the Valuing People Partnership Board Task Group were carrying out to make information accessible to all.
 - (ii) That the views of the Social Inclusion Working Group (as detailed in Minute Annex 3) be taken into account when services were advised on how information could be improved.

REASON: To help the council and its partners ensure that information offered to the public is as accessible as possible within existing resources.

Cllr Ayre, Chair

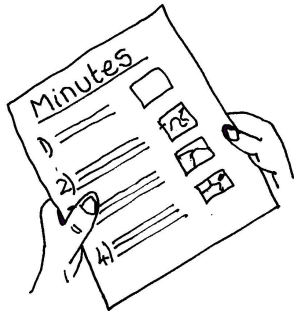
[The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.50 pm].

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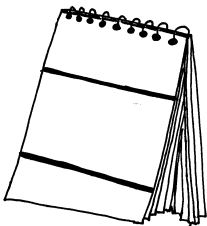


Social Inclusion Working Group

(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: 24 September 2009

Members of the Council who were at the meeting



Nigel Ayre
(Chair)

Sonja Crisp
(Vice-Chair)

Keith Aspden

Jenny Brooks

Julie Gunnell

People who were at the meeting representing community groups:



David Brown (York Access Group)

Becca Cooper (York People First)

Sarah Fennell (LGBT)

Sandra Gillpin (York People First)

Corry Hewitt (York Interfaith)

Sue Lister (York Older People's Assembly)

Daryoush Mazloun (York Racial Equality Network)

Andy Pollin (Valuing People Partnership)

Maureen Ryan (Valuing People Partnership)

Fiona Walker (Valuing People Partnership)

Paul Wordsworth (Churches Together in York)

George Wright (Humanist)

1. Minutes



It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 2 July 2009 were a correct record of what had happened.

Details were given of the actions taken following the last meeting.

2. Chair's Report



There was a vacancy on SIWG to represent the age strand. It was agreed that it would be a good idea if Higher York were invited to become a co-opted member of the group.

3. New Council Headquarters and York Customer Centre Project



The Group heard a presentation about the new Council Headquarters and York Customer Centre Project.

The buildings that were used at the moment were out of date, not accessible and did not meet modern standards.

Two options were being considered:

- Yorkshire House on Rougier Street
- West Offices on Station Rise



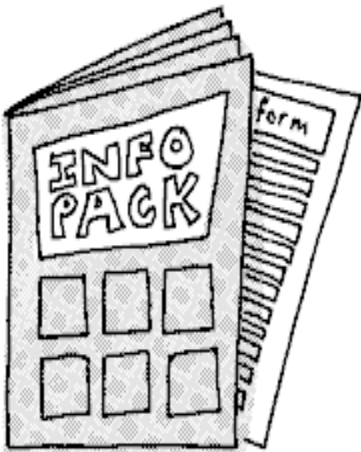
The final proposals were expected in the next few weeks. The Executive of the Council would make their decision at the end of the year.

Work had already started on the Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs). Members of the Group formed workshops to put forward their ideas. They asked the project leaders to take the following into account:

Staff and Communication



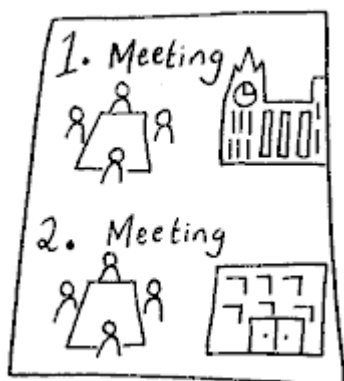
- There should be "Meet and Greet" staff in the customer centre
- The frontline contacts should make sure that customers get access to the correct department
- Interpreters should be available for deaf and hard of hearing and for people for whom English was not their first language
- There should be all types of signage (including Makaton, BSL and board widgets)
- Information provided should be accessible (easy to understand). York People First can advise on this.
- Staff should receive Disability Equality Training.
- City of York Council should become a lead employer. It should make sure that there were equal opportunities for staff as well as customers



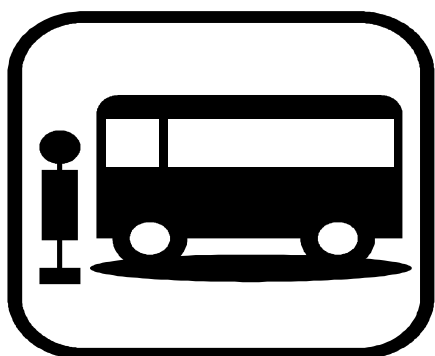
Design and Facilities



- Make sure people don't feel threatened by the mix of people in the customer centre (for example some older people may feel intimidated if there were young offenders present). The centre should be welcoming for all ages and everyone should feel safe.
- The building must be energy efficient
- Try to avoid having screens between staff and customers
- Must be autism friendly
- Feng Shui (spiritually uplifting)
- A prayer room
- Computers available for customers to use (could be loaded for the City of York Council website). Screens should be suitable for people with epilepsy.
- Gender neutral toilets and gender specific ones too (for staff and customers). Appropriate changing facilities.
- Provision should be made for young children going into the building with their parents/carers and also childcare facilities for staff (for example a crèche, drop-in and play area)



- There should be provision for guide dogs and hearing dogs
- No scary glass lifts
- Should be available out of office hours to make use of the space but must be secure. Should be available for meetings for example SIWG meetings



Location

- Will a central location attract more traffic into the city centre? - Need to get public transport right to prevent this from happening.
- The building should be on a bus route for every area of York
- For some people having access to services locally is important



Consultation

- When more detailed information is available about the building it will be easier to comment. More consultation should take place then.
- Consult the voluntary sector and other services with particular areas of expertise
- If there are problems when the building opens - the Council needs to respond and make changes. Contingencies should be in place.

4. Accessible Information Workshop

The Valuing People Partnership Board had set up a task group to work with the council and other groups to improve the information that they sent out.



They gave a presentation about how important it is to make information easy to understand. A copy of the presentation is included at the end of these minutes.

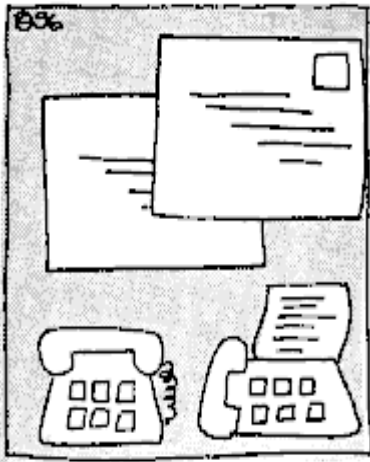
The Group looked at examples of a letter and a leaflet that the Council had sent out. They said that the following things should be done to improve information:



- Think about how you give out information
- Think about what has to be included and what doesn't
- Make sure information is plain-simple-brief and to the point
- Avoid jargon - explain things



- Remember that English may not be the reader's first language
- Use simple language/words
- Use pictures but make sure they relate to the text
- If asking customers to provide documents - explain what they are
- The other formats/language panel on council information needs to be changed



- Give telephone numbers and details of how and when you can contact people
- Avoid using tables
- If writing continues onto the next page - say so
- If you use light print on dark print then it should be in bold
- Should be size 16 font at least
- Use bold type



- Produce DVDs as an option
- Try to avoid folding leaflets
- People don't want to be singled out - the same information should be accessible to everyone
- There needs to be consistency across all of the council and with partners and voluntary groups



- Staff should receive training about how to improve information. They should understand more about people's needs.
- Work with the task group and seek their advice

Presentation by Valuing People Partnership

By making Council information accessible



Clear Language



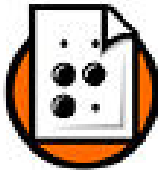
Easy Read



Website



Large Print



Braille



Audio



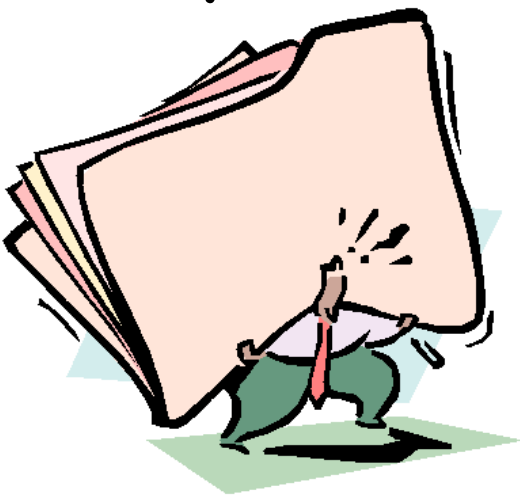
You can :

- deliver better services by providing clearer and accessible information.
- meet your legal duties
- make it easier for customers and the public to be involved.
- Make better use of resources.

Why is providing accessible information important?



Access to information and good communication is a basic human right. It is the means by which we are valued by ourselves and society.



The Council produces a lot of information, for example, letters, leaflets and documents.

Accessible information can empower staff, customers and the general public.

It means they can :



- Participate



- Claim their rights as users of your services
- Take responsibility for the quality of their own lives.

Public bodies, like the National Health Service and Local Authorities, now have responsibilities to recognise and provide services to diverse communities.



The Law in relation to disability, race, and gender aim to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. Action needs to be taken to revise policies and procedures and the way services are provided.



There are lots of things that stop people from being able to understand information. These include using :

- long words
- abbreviations
- jargon

- more words than needed
- small writing (using a little font size)
- curly writing (using a serif font like Times New Roman or Script)
- glossy paper
- colours that make reading more difficult
- no pictures
- pictures without knowing what they mean
- English only

These barriers affect lots of people, including people with low level literacy skills, people with visual impairments, people who are colour blind, people with learning difficulties, and people from black and ethnic minority communities, and people who don't use English as their first language.



How many people does this affect?

- There are about 12 million people in employment with literacy skills at level one or below. This is the same as the levels of 11 year olds or lower. One study puts the average reading age for people in the UK at nine years old.
- 15 per cent of the UK population describe themselves as disabled people.
- Four per cent of the population is severely affected by dyslexia. A further ten per cent show some signs of dyslexia.
- Eight per cent of men and one per cent of women are affected by colour blindness
- Nearly eight per cent of the UK population are from ethnic minorities. York has one of the fastest growing Black and Minority Ethnic populations in the UK.



The Benefits

By providing accessible information, you can remove some of the barriers people experience..

Customers and the public can:

- Find and understand the information they need
- be involved in decisions about their own care
- Get involved in service design and delivery

Council staff can:

- benefit from clear, accessible information
- more easily understand formal documents, and respond quickly to customers.
- Have more confidence when working with customers

City of York Council Managers:



- can be confident that they are meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act

There is a huge cost in producing information that a large proportion of the population cannot read.

The Plain English Campaign state that they have saved the British Government an estimated £500 million in the last 20 years. Poor customer services is expensive - Royal Mail saved £500,000 in nine months by changing one of their most used forms into plain English.



York Valuing People Partnership Board for People with Learning Disabilities 'Accessible Information Task Group'



Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group **2 December 2009**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Chair's Report

Summary

1. The report offers information about recent activity in the context of Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG).
2. The group are requested to note the report.

SIWG "More for York" Equality Impact Assessments meeting, 12 October 2009

3. A report from the meeting is attached as Annex A
4. The Council Executive met on 20 October to consider the next steps with the More for York project. During the meeting Cllr Nigel Ayre (Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Social Inclusion and Chair of SIWG) asked the Executive to approve officers' recommendations, "subject to changes which may be necessary as soon as the relevant Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been completed". As a result, the Executive resolved amongst others, that decisions about More for York projects are subject to "a full Equality Impact Assessment being undertaken" where they affect people from the equality strands.
5. In addition, almost all of the suggestions made by the SIWG at the meeting on 12 October have been taken on board in the corporate debt policy which was approved by the Executive on 17 November 2009. Please see Annex B.

SIWG Equality Impact Assessments Fair (Help us to get it Right Day), 5 November 2009

6. A detailed report about the day is currently being drafted. The day was attended by a good number of representatives from groups

involved in the SIWG. All attendees (but one) who filled in feedback forms, gave positive feedback and wanted more fairs in the future. Suggestions were made about opening future fairs to other umbrella equality and inclusion community groups in the city that do not currently engage with SIWG. This will be taken on board for the next Fair scheduled for 1 February 2010.

Chair and Vice Chair activity

7. Both the SIWG Chair and Vice Chair have been instrumental in the successful delivery of the EIA Fair and the More for York EIAs meeting, where they have actively participated in workshops and supported community representatives in putting forward their views and experiences to officers.

8. The Chair is a member of the Inclusive York Forum of the local strategic partnership and the Valuing People partnership. Issues recently discussed at Inclusive York Forum include dealing with health inequality in York, progress with partnership working to deliver with social inclusion in localities, and the development of the Local Development Plan. In addition the Chair attended the "Bridging the (generation) Gap" day on Saturday 26 September sponsored by SIWG as part of the Over 50s Festival. He has also set up meetings or has already met with various SIWG community groups including York Racial Equality Network, the York ACCESS group, and Valuing People partnership.

Recommendations

9. SIWG is requested to note the report and Annex 1

Reason: To inform the group about recent activity.

Contact Details

Author: Evie Chandler
Corporate Equality and
Inclusion Manager
Tel: 551704

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Heather Rice
Tel: 551000

Report Approved Date 23.11.09

Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A - Notes from “More for York” Equality Impact Assessments meeting, 12 October 2009

Annex B – Section from the City of York Council Corporate Debt Policy approved by the Executive on 17.11.2009

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Notes from SIWG More for York Equality Impact Assessments meeting

12 October 2009, Mansion House

About the meeting

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Nigel Ayre and attended by Councillor Sonja Crisp, York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) (Age), York Racial Equality Network (YREN) (Race), York Valuing People Partnership (Learning Disabilities), York ACCESS group (physical/sensory disabilities), York Humanists and York Interfaith Forum (Religion and Belief).

Officers made a presentation about More for York and explained the approach to EIAs for the project. Below is a summary of what they said:

- More for York is a three-year programme of change. Currently the council is only looking at "year 0" which covers the period between now and March 2010.
- Council needs to examine everything it does and the way in which it does it, so that in future it spends less without affecting the quality of services delivered.
- Before making any changes to the way council services work, officers are trying to identify issues that may affect people from the equality strands in a negative way. Seeking SIWG advice about the issues and what

can be done to avoid affecting people from the equality strands negatively but still help the council to spend less, is very important.

- Officers have examined areas of council work in which they need to make changes between now and March 2010. They focused on those that affect current and future service users from the equality strands, most.
- Officers then looked at current practices likely to change in these work areas and considered whether there would be any negative effects on people from the equality strands. They now want to discuss their findings with SIWG.

Comments made by SIWG members

Below are comments made by SIWG members present at the meeting. Where reasonable and practical, officers will use these comments to improve what they propose to do. They will also report these comments at the meeting of the Council Executive on 20 October 2009, for councillors to consider as they make decisions about the project.

1. More for York overview

- Staff expertise needs to be listened to and used alongside expertise brought in by external consultants.
- Channel money, where it is needed the most.

- Consultation like today costs, so you should use the results in your decision-making.
- Efficiencies should not lead to losing administrators unnecessarily. Good administration is important to the effective working of CYC.
- Thanks should be conveyed to back-office staff who support the organisation and are there to answer questions and deal with customers, when other officers are busy or not available.

2. Customer services: Bringing city centre receptions together

- Think about parking facilities when reception is located at St Leonard's/Finance Centre. Increase parking spaces for the disabled; increase the amount of time one can stay when visiting Council; increase parking spaces for all; control the use of such spaces by people not visiting the Council.
- Where are your staff going to park? What if they are disabled?
- At customer centre we need more personal greeting/welcome, less automation.
- The current automated voice recognition system when people call the council is not working too well. The system is having trouble recognising even simple surnames like "Walsh".
- People with speech impediments and people who do not have English at all or as their first language or have

regional accents, find voice recognition telephony very frustrating to use. You need to look at options like allowing callers to spell out the name of the person they need.

- Phone contact is very difficult for people from ethnic minorities - older people in particular. In most cases they prefer to come in and have a face to face conversations, bringing English-speaking relatives with them to help them. If absolutely necessary, they have to ask family and friends to make calls on their behalf. This is undesirable and more support and access to translation and interpretation facilities is needed both on the phone and face to face.
- Older people take time to absorb the information, which needs to be offered slowly and clearly, using plain English.
- Use a local hard-of-hearing group to help you understand the best way to communicate with hard-of-hearing, people both face to face as well as on the phone. Same for visually impaired people.
- Phone entry systems are very difficult for hard-of-hearing customers and staff.
- You should not use phone and card entry systems for wheelchair users unless you are certain they can access them without having to get off the wheelchair.
- Having different service-access cards costs a lot. Why not have one single card that a person can use - for example, the over 60's bus pass can be used as a swimming card as well.

- If you keep our records on databases to be used for service access cards, you need to store them safely but also to share them with other public services so that users eventually carry one card for most/all public services.
- Important to have BSL translators on hand at reception points when needed. This is difficult at present.
- Use TeleTalk (for example webcams at home or in booths) to talk to staff, for use by people who cannot get into a reception area.
- Look at what personal details really need to be kept on record and seen by staff. It is important to keep records properly and access needs to be controlled, but staff need to see all relevant customer information.
- Use admin staff and tap into their knowledge.
- You need a culture change, putting the customer first.
- Invest in plain-English training for staff.
- Web and e-mail communication that contains lengthy and complicated attachments (like planning applications), should have a summary attached and give a contact person for more information.
- To communicate the changes to reception areas use:
 - Through-the-door info like ward newsletters, Your City etc
 - Ward meetings
 - Communication to parents via schools mailings
 - Stickers on refuse bins and recycling boxes

- GP receptions
- Libraries

3. Debt collection policy and practice

- Liaise better with agencies like CAB and appreciate that they have long waiting lists when you send clients to them for debt management help. This will affect how soon you can collect money from people in debt.
- Should have regular liaison meetings with CAB. Can CAB manage debt on behalf of clients gratis, like Christians Against Poverty does?
- When reviewing staff job roles, consider inserting debt counselling as a required skill. Offer debt counseling training to current staff.
- Work with the Credit Union to offer debt management advice.
- Use a focus group to include CAB (again acronyms in full) Credit Union, CAP, and other free money-management groups to help you reshape your service.
- Have open days and advice points at reception areas.
- Use "buffer" organizations to recover debt from older people and people with mental health problems.
- Use SIWG community reps to help you produce easy-read leaflets and letters .
- When you send out Council Tax bills, say "thank you" for paying last year's bill and include simple and non-alarmist info about the consequences of not paying

monies owed to Council, how to manage debt and where to find info about it.

- Try to build a relationship with vulnerable customers before they fall into debt. Visiting officers are very important to help you do this.
- Reminder letters: Recent research shows that 50% of people in debt suffer from anxiety and other mental health issues. Make sure you give enough time to customers to pay. Use clear non-threatening language. Don't use jargon. Steer customers to help and support available. Use big size font, (not sure this document is in the font agreed by SIWG?) use plain English. Work with SIWG to help you draft the letters.

4. Improving kerb-side recycling

- Given that you collect from 7:00 to 15:00, bins and boxes out on narrow pavements create problems for wheelchair users, older/infirm people, people with visual impairment and carers pushing buggies/wheelchairs etc. This problem will be made worse now, that there may be more recycling boxes.
- Boxes left out on pavement after collection fill up with water. Give boxes with holes. [Officers confirmed that boxes with holes are now available and all boxes are being changed to ones with holes incrementally.]
- Partially sighted residents find dealing with recycling bags after collection difficult. Boxes are better for them [Officers confirmed that this has been one of

reasons for doing away with bags and replacing them with boxes].

- Review qualification criteria for assisted collections. Consider that there may be able-bodied people in households who are not be able to lift and carry heavy boxes (if they are older, living alone and of slight built, for example).
- Provide boxes on wheels, but they should be light enough to push easily.
- The colour of recycling boxes may be a problem for people with visual impairment. If you cannot change the colour, identify the different boxes through tactile means.
- Please stop council services putting leaflets through the door unless absolutely necessary.
- You must try harder to explain recycling to people from different cultural background who do not understand it. Consider going where they meet to explain face-to-face (e.g. YREN open forums, Polish community meetings etc).

**Section from the City of York Council Corporate Debt Policy
approved by the Executive on 17.11.2009**

Communicating with the Customer

14. We will use plain English and language that is clear and easy to understand in all correspondence. We will explain any complex terminology that we are required to use by law and avoid the use of jargon *where possible*.

We will include where relevant:

- a) Details of the amount payable;
- b) How the charge has been calculated;
- c) A description of the charge (if this is not shown in the calculation of the charge);
- d) The payment methods available;
- e) A contact *single* number for enquiries or disputes *and for discussing payment arrangements and difficulties*;
- f) E-mail address where appropriate.

15. In meeting individual needs the council will, where practical and possible, ensure that individual preferences are documented so that ongoing and future communication can be provided in an accessible, preferred format using non-threatening language. We will review customer feedback to help identify service improvements.

16. All information can be made available or presented in a format that the customer can understand, for example other languages, large print, audiotape and Braille.

17 We *will* arrange where practical and possible to use accredited translators or interpreters if the customer uses British sign language or if English is not their first language.

18 Correspondence with customers will refer to and deal with all / or similar accounts outstanding wherever possible.

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Meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group **2 December 2009**

Report of the Director of People and Improvement

Social Inclusion Working Group (SIWG) - Work and Equality Impact Assessments Plan for January 2010 to March 2010

Summary

1. The report is for information and outlines the SIWG work plan for the period January 2010 to March 2010. The group are requested to note the report.
2. The work plan in [Annex 1](#), includes advance notice of equality impact assessments to be considered by the group for the first time.

Background

3. One of the three objectives of SIWG is to “advise the Executive on equality issues in general or in relation to major CYC projects and initiatives”. At the last Development Day in May 2009, the group decided that the objectives were still appropriate.
4. Until a year ago, SIWG discussions focused almost exclusively on general equality issues brought up during meetings by the groups that make up SIWG.
5. A year ago, SIWG started to consider equality impact assessments (EIAs) of key council projects and initiatives. The EIA process requires officers to consider the issue, discuss it with groups on SIWG (or other relevant groups such as the Valuing People Partnership, YorOK board etc), make planned improvements and track them so that they can report progress back to SIWG. Since December 2008, SIWG and its community groups have considered 34 EIAs (14 in 2008/9, 20 in 2009/10 so far). These EIAs have helped councillors and officers develop their understanding of equality and inclusion, so as to plan and deliver increasingly inclusive services as needed by people from the

equality strands. Feedback from community groups about meetings that have focussed on EIAs, has been overwhelmingly supportive with most participants stating that they wish to see more of this work mainstreamed in the SIWG work plan.

6. Currently there is an ever-growing number of requests for the group to consider EIAs. Whilst this is an excellent development, SIWG needs a planned approach to considering EIAs, otherwise the group will not be able to meet the other objectives it has, particularly “extending and building contact with groups and individuals involved in equality issues in York” .
7. To date there have been several ways for SIWG to consider EIAs:
 - SIWG scheduled evening meetings (open to the public), where big issues affecting all or most of the strands are considered. In the past these included the council corporate strategy, council communications, the housing strategy, or issues that the council was involved in and had attracted the interest of many equality strand groups (like the proposed ticket barriers at York railway station).
 - SIWG Development Days (not open to the public). Only one EIA (the council fairness and inclusion strategy and scheme 2009-12) has so far been discussed at a development day (May 2009).
 - SIWG Equality Impact Assessment Fairs (not open to the public). To date these have been open only to groups that are engaged with SIWG and on occasions other community groups they have recommended. Each group is invited to bring no more than 6 people so that the discussion can be in depth. There are usually nine EIAs considered at each Fair.
 - Additional EIA meetings (not open to the public). The first one ever, took place on 12 October 2009 and considered four EIAs from the More for York programme.
 - Officers attending one of the regular meetings of the groups that participate in SIWG, to discuss EIAs that affect specific strands only.
 - Officers organising city-wide consultations and inviting SIWG groups to attend e.g. the consultations organised for the

development of the Community Sustainable Strategy and the Local Development Framework

8. [Annex 1](#), outlines a list of EIAs to be considered by SIWG between now and end of March 2010. It is suggested that a similar programme should be put in place for the period April 2010 to June 2010 and for every three month period thereafter.

Consultation

9. Most of the areas covered in the work plan were suggested at the SIWG Development Day in May 2009.

Options

10. N/A

Analysis

11. N/A

Corporate Priorities

12. The work of SIWG contributes to actions that support the Inclusive City and Effective Organisation priorities of the Corporate Strategy.

Implications

13. **Financial** – None
14. **Human Resources (HR)** – None
15. **Equalities** – The council's fairness and inclusion objectives as well as SIWG objectives, require the council to engage with the equality community in a planned way to ensure that it works in an inclusive way.
16. **Legal** - Community engagement in planning and delivering council services (i.e. EIAs) is a requirement under equality legislation.
17. **Crime and Disorder** - None
18. **Information Technology (IT)** - None
19. **Property** - None

20. **Other** - None

Risk Management

21. As in paragraphs 4 and 6 above.

Recommendations

22. SIWG is requested to note the work plan in Annex 1

Reason: To provide information about the work of the group for the period December 2009 to March 2010.

Contact Details

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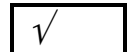
**Report
Approved**



Date

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 - SIWG work plan December 2009 to March 2010

Annex 1 - SIWG work plan December 2009 to March 2010

Scheduled evening meeting 28 January 2010

- Hour long workshop: EIA of council budget 2010-11
- Report from SIWG workshop on 2/12/09
- Projects to be funded by the SIWG budget 2009/10 and 2010/11
- Progress with More for York EIAs

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Fair, 1 February 2010, 10:00 to 15:00, Priory Street centre

Officers are working on a large number of EIAs at any one time. The ones listed here need to be finalised by March 2009 and are expected to affect large numbers of people from all or most of the strands. There is time for up to 9 EIAs maximum at the Fair. The list below might change, if the timescales for each project on the list change. If this happens, it is likely that EIAs for projects arising from the More for York programme will be considered instead.

1. Adult Social Services process for customers and carers, from first contact to after the service is delivered.
2. Adult Social Services improving customer contact and access.
3. Adult day services modernisation.
4. Carers' strategy.
5. Residents' parking scheme.
6. PREVENT action plan. The PREVENT initiative aims to prevent potential extremist behaviour.
7. City festivals and events 2010/11.
8. Council income collection policy and process.
9. Capable guardian scheme rolled out. This scheme is about training and supporting community volunteers

Annex 1 - SIWG work plan December 2009 to March 2010

to promote community safety in neighbourhoods, including tackling antisocial behaviour.

Scheduled evening meeting 17 February 2010

- **Hour long workshop: Inclusive town planning development and control**
- Inclusive procurement and commissioning EIA
- Council workforce strategy EIA
- Progress with the new Council Headquarters project and related EIAs

Development day - March 2010 (date and times to be finalised)

- **Workshop: Including people from the equality strands in public and democratic life**
- **Getting to Know us:** Short presentations about the work, opportunities and challenges of each SIWG community group
- Appraising council action taken to date as a result of EIAs
- Progress with the single corporate equality scheme 2009-12
- Planning SIWG work 2010/11

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