

Meeting Social Inclusion Working Group
Date 28 January 2010
Present Councillors Ayre (Chair), Aspden, Brooks, Crisp (Vice-Chair) and Gunnell

Non-voting Co-opted Members:
Nicola Bedford - Higher York
Sue Lister - York Older People's Assembly
Sarah Fennell - LGBT Forum
Daryoush Mazloum - York Racial Equality Network
Corry Hewitt - York Interfaith
Paul Wordsworth - Churches Together in York
Carolyn Suckling - York Access Group

Apologies Rita Sanderson – York Racial Equality Network
David Brown – York Access Group
Steve Rouse – Equalities Team Leader – Youth Service
Fiona Walker and Maureen Ryan – Valuing People Partnership (as amended at meeting of 17 February 2010)

26. 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. None were declared.

27. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 2 December 2009 be presented at the next meeting.

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:

(i) Display Boards

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of using the SIWG display boards during International Women's Week. Possible venues put forward included Energise or the foyer at York St John University.¹

(ii) Hate Incidents

The Group's recommendations that the Hate Incident Reporting Strategy be reviewed as a matter of urgency and that the council work with partner organisations to ensure that a Community Cohesion Strategy was put in place as soon as possible, had been considered by the Executive at their meeting on 19 January 2010. The Director of Neighbourhood Services informed SIWG that she had been asked by the Chief Executive to put together an action plan to move these issues forward. The action plan would be presented to SIWG for consideration.²

Action Required

1. Evie Chandler to discuss with Sue Lister before the next meeting EC
2. Include as an item on SIWG Workplan EC

28. Public Participation

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

29. Workshop: Council Revenue Budget 2010-11 - Equality Issues

Officers gave a presentation on the Council Revenue Budget. They explained how the council received its revenue and the main areas of expenditure. Details were also given of additional expenditure that would be needed over the next three years and of the ways in which the council consulted with the community regarding the budget.

Officers outlined how the budget EIA process worked and noted that it was developing. They explained that they had examined the revenue savings proposals taken forward to Executive Member Decision Sessions and had identified those that they

thought were likely to have a negative impact on people from the equality strands. They then invited members of SIWG to look at these proposals and consider their impact on people and groups from the equality strands.

Officers summarised each of the service areas concerned, focusing on what they currently do, who their clients are and what could happen if these services were changed as a result of suggested efficiencies. After each summary the Group was asked:

1. What are the effects on the equality strands if this action is taken?
2. What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects?

The group then worked in small groups, recording their comments on post-it notes. Comments from the post-it notes are summarised below.

Reducing the Mediation Service for private tenants

What are the effects on the equality strands, if this action is taken?

- Will place increased demands on neighbourhood policing and environmental services.
- Could lead to increased criminal damage, due to unresolved neighbour disputes.
- Could have implications for students, as they occupy mainly privately rented properties.
- LGBT people who are subject to harassment, would lose support from this service
- What happens if the issue is with a council tenant and a private tenant – can the service still help?
- Impacts on community cohesion

What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects?

- Raise awareness of the issue – particularly [amongst] trans and gay men
- Regarding disputes involving students in private accommodation, explore partnership with York St John
- Put the service out to the voluntary sector

- Explore Housing Association links
- Could the police and environment officers help?
- Can voluntary organisations help e.g. a service level agreement with YREN?

Reducing the availability of respite care

What are the effects on the equality strands, if this action is taken?

- Will put more pressure on the voluntary sector, which is also being squeezed, possibly leaving vulnerable people unsupported (see next point)
- Less respite care (especially as it is means tested), may impact on vulnerable people by having a negative impact on the mental health of their carers - as they in turn will have access to less time away from their charges.
- It will impact on all carers, as they will have less time away from their charges. The ability of the carer to care will diminish and therefore vulnerable people that need the care are likely to suffer.
- Means testing – this will affect civil partnerships/marriage
- Will force people who cannot afford it, into the private sector.
- Will lead to deterioration in people's quality of life
- For people with multiple disabilities, support from the council is a key resource.

What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects?

- Use of individual budgets
- Use of voluntary sectors
- Make cuts elsewhere instead
- Use specific charities for respite care e.g. MENCAP
- Explore other funding sources e.g. funds available from the government for children and young people.
- Council needs to speak to individuals affected and guide them to find solutions - by signposting to respite services offered by the private sector for example.

Reduction in Adult Social Care Assessment posts

What are the effects on the equality strands, if this action is taken?

- It could cost more in the long run if people are not assessed quickly enough.
- Longer waiting lists may mean services/funding is delayed for vulnerable people.
- It will affect LGBT people who are disproportionately likely to have mental health issues (see Stonewall website for statistics) that need speedy support.

What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects?

- Can other staff/volunteers be trained to support/assist to speed the process?
- Prioritise people who are referred as having urgent mental health needs or ones that GPs or schools ask to be prioritised.
- Have triage assessment of needs when referred and then prioritise based on that – like they do in A&E or CAB.
- Some level of self- assessment?
- Community assessment?

Increase in Warden Call charges

What are the effects on the equality strands, if we take this action?

- This is unlikely to be an increase that makes people stop using the service
- Seems reasonable – only a slight increase
- 5p is negligible

What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects? None were put forward

Increase in Residential Care charges

What are the effects on the equality strands, if this action is taken?

- £4 a week rise may not work for people already struggling with a limited personal budget

What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects? None offered

Whilst discussing Residential care, community representatives noted that there is a risk of homophobia and transphobia in current residential care arrangements, as care is organised based on assumed straightness. For example, a trans person may wish to live on a male wing if they identify as male but may have female bodied health issues e.g. cervical cancer. It is important to ensure that LGBT issues are part of regular training, both in terms of health and also diversity.

Reducing support for Community Arts

What are the effects on the equality strands, if this action is taken?

- Will have a disproportionate effect on young people and people from BME groups
- There would be less arts and cultural provision for young people – the community arts service currently offer a huge number of projects
- Would impact on community cohesion and hence impact on prejudice and crime
- It will adversely affect people with mental health and disability issues, who access community arts for therapeutic issues

What do you see as possible solutions to deal with any negative effects?

- More volunteering opportunities for students (students are seeking volunteering opportunities to enhance their CVs etc)
- Look at other sources of funding – schools or voluntary groups?

Views were put forward by community representatives that the proposals would have the greatest impact on the sick, the disabled and the poor and that these were the people who may be least able to make representation about the proposals. Community representatives suggested that, if implemented, the

proposals would be a lessening of investment in care and compassion in the city.

It was noted that the information that had been presented to the group had focussed only on proposed savings and therefore members of the group may not be aware of areas of investment, for example in children's social care.

The group was informed that the consultation with SIWG formed part of the wider consultation that the council had carried out, which included a budget questionnaire sent to residents and meetings with businesses and the public. Findings from all consultation would inform the budget EIA.

Concerns were expressed regarding the way in which the consultation with SIWG had taken place. The following recommendations were identified for future consultation with SIWG on the council budget:

- Consultation should take place at an earlier stage in the budget setting process. The short timescale from specific proposals entering the public domain to the time at which decisions were taken made meaningful consultation very difficult.
- More detailed information on the proposals was required – in writing as well as verbally. The proposals should be circulated before the meeting to enable full consideration of the issues.
- An overall picture of the budget was needed (including areas of proposed investment as well as cuts to expenditure).
- A representative from each of the services affected should be present at the meeting to provide more information and answer questions.
- Different options should be put to the group to enable them to comment on which of the proposals would have the most severe impact and to enable them to suggest priorities for expenditure.
- Consideration should be given to holding two meetings – one in the daytime and one in the evening. This would enable greater representation from SIWG members.
- Consideration should be given as to whether it would be more appropriate for Members not to be present when the consultation took place, in view of the restrictions placed

upon them when issues in respect of the budget were discussed.

- RESOLVED:
- (i) That the feedback from the workshop be circulated to members of SIWG for further and final comment, before it is passed to the Executive.
 - (ii) That the findings from the workshop be forwarded to the Executive when they meet on 16 February 2010 to consider the budget.
 - (iii) That the recommendations made regarding improvements to the consultation process be taken on board when future consultations on the budget take place.

- REASONS:
- (i) To consider issues arising from the Equality Impact Assessment of the Council draft revenue budget for 2010-11, and to assist officers in completing the relevant Equality Impact Assessment.
 - (ii) To ensure effective and informed consultation on the budget.

Councillor N Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 7.45 pm and finished at 10.00 pm]