
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, *Hotchkiss* 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. [as amended at meeting of 2 December 2009]

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 (Higher York have confirmed their representative to be Claire Newhouse) EC

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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Annex 1**Feedback on the proposed New Council Headquarters****Staff and Communication**

- There should be “Meet and Greet” Staff in the customer centre
- The frontline contacts should ensure that customers get access to the correct department
- Interpreters should be available for deaf and hard of hearing and for people for whom English is not their first language
- There should be all types of signage (including Makaton, BSL and board widgets)
- Information provided should be accessible – York People First can advise on this.
- Staff should receive Disability Equality Training.
- City of York Council should become a lead employer – it should follow through EIA issues to staff and not only 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

- Leeds have “The Information Store” and have to share it with other councils for free.
- 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.

By making Council information accessible



Clear Language



Easy Read



Website



Large Print



Braille



Audio



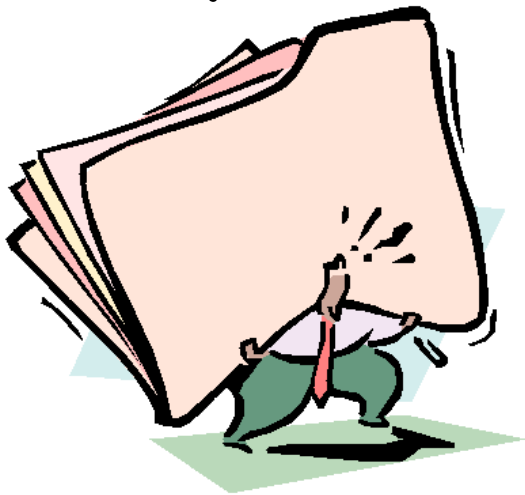
You can :

- 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'
September 2009

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Making Information More Accessible

- 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
- People don't want to be singled out – the same information should be accessible to everyone
- Should be size 16 font at least
- Use bold type
- Simple language/words
- Use pictures
- Remember that English may not be the reader's first language
- Avoid using tables
- Explain – don't use jargon
- If writing continues onto the next page – say so
- If you use light print on dark print then it should be in bold
- If you use pictures then they should relate to the words
- Leaflets – don't fold them
- The other formats/language panel needs to change
- If asking customers to provide documents – explain what they are
- Give telephone numbers and details of how and when you can contact people
- Produce DVDs as an option
- Staff understanding and training
- There needs to be consistency across all of the council and with partners and voluntary groups
- Work with the task group and seek their advice

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