

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DATE	21 NOVEMBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS ASPDEN (CHAIR), ALEXANDER, SUE GALLOWAY, GUNNELL (VICE-CHAIR), HEALEY, POTTER, SUNDERLAND, JACK ARCHER (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), SUE LISTER (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), PETER BLACKBURN (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), RITA SANDERSON (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), DARYOUSH MAZLOUM (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER), JAN JAUNCEY (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER) AND LYNN JEFFRIES (NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER)

12. 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.

13. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Social Inclusion Working Group meeting held on 19 September 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION / OTHER SPEAKERS

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. However, Cllr Scott had asked to make some comments with regard to the work of the Group in general and the Young People's Update in particular (Minute 19 refers).

With the Chair's permission, Cllr Scott addressed the meeting in his capacity as Young People's Champion and Leader of the Labour Group. He expressed concern that he had not been invited to attend meetings of the Social Inclusion Working Group, despite a previous agreement that the Young People's Champion would be the contact point between young people and the Group. He also expressed surprise that the Group no longer operated on the basis of an informal 'pre-meeting' followed by the formal meeting and asked whether the Group had ever received an update on the voting rights of co-opted members, as requested at its first meeting.

In respect of the informal pre-meeting issue, the Chair explained that it had been found more effective simply to split into smaller discussion groups when dealing with issues of wider interest, rather than having a general discussion at the outset. The need for a more informal, less structured arrangement in the meeting room itself was noted.

15. CHAIR'S REPORTS - WORK MAP

The Chair introduced Evie Chandler, the Council's new Equalities Officer who would be supporting the work of the Social Inclusion Working Group.

Comments and suggestions were invited on a work map prepared for the Group, copies of which were circulated at the meeting (pages 9-14 of the re-published agenda refer). This set out the work already done to further the Group's three main objectives, the resources available for further work in the current year, work agreed for the current year and project proposals. The Chair suggested that, since the papers had only just been received, those members who represented community groups be invited to seek comments from their groups on the work map, which could then be brought back to the next meeting, in January, for further discussion.

Members commented that the information in the work plan would need to be presented in a more accessible manner to enable it to be shared and discussed with the various community groups. In particular, Council jargon and abbreviations (such as SIWG) would need to be removed. The Equalities Officer agreed to speak individually with group representatives about the particular formats they required and to facilitate these requirements with the help of the budget available to support the Group's work.

RESOLVED: (i) That the work map be brought back to the next meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group.

(ii) That community group representatives consult with their groups in the meantime on the contents of the work map, with the assistance of the Equalities Officer, the results of that consultation to be available at the next meeting.

REASON: To enable a full and informed discussion to take place on how best to further the objectives of the Group.

16. SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP BUDGETS

The Equalities Officer introduced an outline report which set out a funding framework for the budget available to support the objectives of the Social Inclusion Working Group (pages 15 to 16 of the re-published agenda refer). Copies of the funding requests received from bodies representing the six equalities strands were also circulated at the meeting, together with details of spending on the ring-fenced administration and development budget for the Group in 2007/08.

The funding framework included some proposed funding principles for project funding in the 2008/09 financial year. The Chair indicated that

these principles would be the subject of a wider discussion at the Social Inclusion Working Group planning workshop scheduled for February 2008. However, as it would be helpful to have some guidance from the Group before that date, it was suggested that the matter be considered further at the next meeting, in January.

In respect of the funding requests, it was suggested that these too be deferred to the next meeting, as time was short. It was pointed out that this could cause problems, as groups needed to have an idea of their budget in order to plan ahead. Members therefore proposed that a decision be taken now to distribute a proportion of the funding equally between the applicants.

RESOLVED: (i) That the proposed project funding principles be brought back to the next meeting of the Group for further consideration.

REASON: To enable the Group to provide a steer on these before the planning workshop in February.

(ii) That the sum of £500 be allocated from the available support budget of £5,100 to each of the following bodies:

- York CAB
- York Older People's Assembly
- York Interfaith
- Disability Forum
- YREN

REASON: To support the objectives of the Group and to assist the above bodies to plan for the future.

(iii) That a decision on the allocation of the remainder of the budget be deferred to the next meeting.

REASON: To enable a considered and informed decision to be taken.

17. USER-LED CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Group received a presentation from Keith Martin, the Council's Head of Adult Services, on options for the delivery, governance and future partnership of the user-led Centre for Independent Living (CIL).

The presentation provided a reminder of what was meant by a CIL and outlined three potential options for its provision in York. These included:

- The model set out in the Independent Report produced in 2006, with the CIL and service points separate (Option A);
- A central CIL with geographically located service points (Option B)
- A central CIL provided as one of a range of services provided within a single facility (Option C).

Copies of the slides from the presentation were circulated to Group members at the meeting.

Feedback on the options was sought from Group Members and community groups, for communication to the Healthy City Board, which would take the governance role in the CIL. Members were invited to make preliminary comments at this stage, and the following comments were made:

- Any user-led organisation would need to encompass the social model of disability. This would require a cultural change within the organisations providing the services and it might be appropriate for the Group to have further discussions on how it could be achieved.
- The Disability Discrimination Act duty to promote equality specifically called for the *involvement* of disabled people, not just consultation.
- The current lack of a link between Health and Social Services was frustrating. It would be useful to work more closely with Health on this project.
- The location of any central CIL building was important – it should be accessible, with good public transport links.

RESOLVED: That the above comments be noted and that any further comments from Members and / or community groups be fed back to Keith Martin or Evie Chandler before the next meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group.

REASON: To inform further discussions on the CIL and to ensure that the views of community groups are taken into account during the development process.

18. REPORTS FROM GROUPS

The Group received an update report from the York and Districts LGBT Forum (page 21 of the re-published agenda refers). This set out details of the Forum's use of a recent grant for the purchase of IT equipment, the election of new officers and committee members at the first Annual General Meeting and a work programme for the coming year.

Representatives of the York Older People's Assembly circulated a press release reporting on the success of this year's York 50+ Festival.

The Chair provided an update on progress in supporting the Disabled People's Forum, as discussed at the Group's last meeting, on 19 September (Minute 10 of that meeting refers). As agreed, he had met with Cllr Gunnell and Lynn Jeffries to discuss a way forward. The Equalities Officer drew attention to the information circulated to the Group on the York Cares initiative (pages 27 to 28 of the re-published agenda refer). It was suggested that York Cares might be commissioned to provide some additional capacity for the Forum.

RESOLVED: (i) That the reports from the York and Districts LGBT Forum and the York Older People's Assembly be noted.

REASON: So that the Social Inclusion Working Group is kept informed of the activities of community groups.

(ii) That the Chair, Cllr Gunnell and Lynn Jefferies (together with any other Group Members who wish to join them) meet again before the next meeting of the Group, to discuss a way forward for the Disabled People's Forum and the possibility of involving York Cares.

REASON: In order to support the Forum, as previously agreed.

19. YOUNG PEOPLE'S UPDATE

The Group received an update from Steve Rouse, Equalities Team Leader with the Council's Youth Service, on work being carried out to involve young people in the City in decisions on matters affecting them. Bob Purrington, the Central Youth Work Manager, was also in attendance.

Steve explained that the most effective way of involving young people was to go out and discuss the issues with them directly, rather than inviting them to formal meetings where the environment was not 'young person friendly', or using methods such as questionnaires which tended to draw a low response. His aim therefore would be to use effective methods to promote these discussions before bringing back information to the Group on a regular basis, on behalf of young people. Bob Purrington explained that his was a new role, which focused more on a generic youth service and aimed to establish networks and integrate services where possible.

In response to questions from Group Members, it was confirmed that the Youth Service would be linking in to existing consultation work between the Council and young people and would ensure that a dialogue was established with the Young People's Champion in future.

Members queried whether there was any reason why the Young People's Champion could not be a member of the Social Inclusion Working Group. The Chair suggested that membership issues be further discussed at the workshop in February and that in the meantime Group Leaders be asked to reconsider a previous proposal that the overall City of York Council membership of the Group be reduced. Some Members expressed concern that political issues were being raised and that this meeting was an inappropriate forum for such issues.

RESOLVED: (i) That the involvement of the Young People's Champion, and the other membership issues raised, be further considered at the workshop in February.

(ii) That Group Leaders be asked to consider the proposal that the City of York Council membership of the Group be reduced.

REASON: In order to address concerns about membership and ensure that the Group was fully representative and not biased towards Council priorities.

20. POVERTY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Group received an update from Colin Stroud, of York CVS, on the Anti-Poverty Strategy developed by Without Walls, York's local strategic partnership. A copy of the draft Strategy had been circulated (pages 29-39 of the re-published agenda refer).

The aim of the Strategy was to outline an agreed way forward for ensuring that poverty in the City was minimised and the gap between rich and poor narrowed. It had been drawn up on the basis that one in five people in York lived in relative poverty.

It was agreed that the various proposals in the Strategy needed to be considered in more depth at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the draft strategy be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Group, with Members dividing into small groups to discuss key areas for action.

REASON: In order to give proper consideration to action to be taken in response to the Strategy and make recommendations to the Executive.

21. FEEDBACK FROM BME (BLACK MINORITY ETHNIC) CONFERENCE AND NEXT STEPS

The Group received an update from Colin Stroud on the recent BME (Black Minority Ethnic) Conference.

He reported that the Conference had been a success, with over 70 delegates attending. The outcome was a set of 15 key messages, currently still in draft form, that would be distributed to various bodies across the City. There was a need for more data and information, in order to plan services more effectively, and for more resources for organisations providing support and advice to BME groups.

RESOLVED: That the key messages from the BME Conference be brought to the Group for discussion at the meeting on 16 January 2008.

REASON: So that the Group can give proper consideration to the key messages from the Conference once these have been finalised and circulated.

Cllr K Aspden
Chair

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