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| 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].