

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

MEETING	SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP
DATE	17 JANUARY 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS CUTHBERTSON (CHAIR), FAIRCLOUGH, SUE GALLOWAY, KING, POTTER AND SCOTT
	NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS: JACK ARCHER – OLDER PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY SUE LISTER – OLDER PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY RITA SANDERSON – BME CITIZENS OPEN FORUM (YREN) DARYOUSH MAZLOUM – BME CITIZENS OPEN FORUM (YREN) GLYNIS GARNER – DISABLED PEOPLE’S FORUM KAREN WILSON – DISABLED PEOPLE’S FORUM
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR JAMIESON-BALL

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited Members to declare at this point any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda, in addition to the standing declarations below:

Cllr King – as a member of the Access Group
Cllr Potter – as Older People’s Champion
Cllr Scott – as Young People’s Champion

No further interests were declared.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Social Inclusion Working Group held on 22 November 2006 be signed as a correct record and the “easy read” version, be noted.

Arising out of consideration of Minute 16 (Involving Young People in the Social Inclusion Working Group) Officers updated that Jules Horsler had met with officers from the youth service to develop a proposal for the involvement of young people based on the recommendations of the SIWG. This proposal required development with the appropriate forums and although progress had been made, further discussions were needed (and a meeting had been arranged with YREN for later in the month) before a formal paper could be brought to the meeting. This would be done in March. It was likely that this will

involve a request for resources (approx £2,000) to pay for sessional work with groups of young people.

The Chair also reported that further consideration would be given at the next meeting to the participation and inclusion of young people from the BME group.

In relation to Minute 15 (The Feasibility of a Centre for Independent Living (CIL) for York) Cllr S Galloway updated that a meeting was to be held shortly to progress the setting up of a CIL in York and that a further update would be brought to the next meeting.

In relation to the Forward Plan item, Members indicated that there was a need for a formal forward plan to be agreed for future meetings to assist both Members and Officers and to help with the planning of future meetings.

22. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

23. AGE DISCRIMINATION

Members considered a report, which summarised the forthcoming Employment (Age) Regulations 2006 and outlined the amendments made to the Council's HR processes in order to comply.

In summary the Regulations:

- Set a default retirement age of 65;
- Allowed employers to have a retirement age below 65 as long as they can demonstrate that it is appropriate and necessary;
- Give employees the right to request to work beyond their retirement age;
- Make it compulsory for employers to consider any such request.

The regulations make it unlawful on the grounds of age to:

- discriminate directly against anyone, unless objectively justified;
- discriminate indirectly against anyone unless objectively justified;
- subject someone to harassment;
- victimise someone because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination on grounds of age;
- discriminate against someone after the working relationship has ended.

It was reported that prior to the introduction of the regulations the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Policy already included the aim:

“to ensure that no one who deals with the Council receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age.”

It was reported that from September 2006 guidance on age discrimination had been included in the relevant HR process and that changes were also required to other policies and practises elsewhere in the Council.

In addition to the legal implications of the Regulations, work had been undertaken through the Council's Equality in Employment Improvement Plan (EEIP) to analyse the Council's age profile and to consider what, if any, action needed to be taken in this area.

During the informal session, prior to the meeting, presentations had been made to the Group from Tracey Carter, Programme Director easy@york and James Drury on “Improving Customer Service with [Easy@York](http://www.easy@york)” and from Chris Tissiman of the HR Corporate Development Team on the forthcoming Employment (Age) Regulations 2006.

Arising out of the earlier session the main points raised were

- How could the age profile be altered throughout the council's workforce?
- Consideration should be given to where job adverts were placed e.g. young peoples journals.
- Need to feedback details of the Groups discussion on “Improving the Diversity of the Council's Workforce” from the 20 September 2006 meeting to Chris Tissiman.
- Examine how we promote careers in local government and target the audience e.g. Older Peoples Assembly, School Citizenship lessons, Universities/Colleges
- Use exit interviews to ascertain any problems to assist with future recruitment.
- Promotion of work placements within the authority.
- Need to make the Council a more attractive place to work for all age groups.
- Concerns raised regarding Annex 1 to the report, which set out the “Criteria to be used when selecting employees to be dismissed by reason of redundancy” which included
 - a. Could discriminate against young people e.g. length of work experience and women who may have had career breaks.
 - b. Caution should be exercised in relation to the Sickness Absence criteria as this should be considered in conjunction with the Disabled Discrimination Act and disabled people in general.
- The need to amend Annex 2, in particular
 - a. Page 19, paragraph 6.1 to replace the word “between” in the third line with “in excess of “.
 - b. Concerns at tone of letter in Annex 2, Appendix B (Standard letter informing an employee of a meeting to discuss a request not to retire)

- c. Questioned reference to the word “dismissal” in paragraph 9.3. and suggested its replacement with “when the employment will end”

- RESOLVED:** i) That the Social Inclusion Working Group note the action taken by the Council in respect of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- ii) That Officers be requested to consider rewording the letter in Annex 2, Appendix B in a less formal manner, in line with the Groups comments, and report back to a future meeting.

REASON: To comply with statutory requirements, to protect the Council from risk and to further support the Council’s approach to equalities and social cohesion and inclusion.

24. APPLICATION FOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Members considered a report, which detailed an application received from the York Racial Equality Network (YREN) who hosted a regular community forum that sent representatives to the Social Inclusion Working Group.

Their application was made up as follows:

	Amount Requested £	Purpose	Summary of what funding would pay for
	480	A - Making meetings accessible and inclusive	Child care, transportation and interpretation costs
	500	B - To support engagement with wider community	Research, development, design and hosting of website (one year)
Total	980		

Officers confirmed that the application met the criteria established by Group in July for receipt of financial support.

Rita Sanderson, representing YREN, outlined further details in relation to the application.

RESOLVED: That the funding application made by the York Racial Equality Network (YREN) in the sum of £980 be granted in full by the Equality Officer, in accordance with his budgetary authority.

REASON: The funding application meets the criteria established by the SIWG and the budget to support this work for 2006/07 has sufficient resources to meet this expenditure.

25. COMMUNITY FORUMS REPORTS AND FEEDBACK

i) Older Peoples Assembly

Sue Lister, circulated a copy of the York Older People's Assembly 50+ newsletter (Volume 1, Issue 11) and referred to the need to change many people's perceptions of old people. She pointed out that older people should be considered a "vital resource" as referred to in a Times article published last year. She also referred to the 50+ Festival and events when mental health and physical fitness had been promoted.

ii) Disabled People's Forum

Glynis Garner, reported that a meeting had been set up in October 2006 when a Steering Group had been formed which met in December. She confirmed that permanent representatives from the Forum would be elected in February to attend future SIWG meetings.

Karen Wilson pointed out that the Forum was a genuine user led group which ensured that it was representative of disabled people's views.

iii) BME Citizen's Open Forum (YREN)

Rita Sanderson, confirmed that YREN were now looking at their work plan for next year and she asked Group members if they had anything to include on the plan. Members confirmed that [Easy@York](#) would be contacting the Forum direct regarding consultation on improving customer service in the Council. Rita also confirmed that the Forum was considering translating some of their leaflets into Polish in response to the increase in the Polish population in the York area.

Following the updates, Members felt that it would be useful if they received dates of the various forums meetings to enable them to attend, if at all possible, as observers.

RESOLVED: That the representatives be thanked for their updates.

REASON: To updated Members on the work of the various community groups involved with the SIWG.

26. FORWARD PLAN

Members considered business for future meetings of the Group.

RESOLVED: That the Social Inclusion Working Group examine the following at future meetings:

March 2007 -

- The Gender Equality Duty – due to come into force April 2007
- To receive input from the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual Transgender Forum (LGBT) on the most appropriate ways of collecting data about sexuality.
- Involving young people – update.
- Centre for Independent Living (CIL) – update

Future Meetings -

- Promotion of [Easy@York](#) initiative and follow up consultation feedback.
- Age Discrimination – feedback.

REASON: To focus the future work of the Social Inclusion Working Group.

Cllr I Cuthbertson
Chair

[The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 8.00 pm].