

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES FORUM

MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2005

JUBILEE LIBRARY, BRIGHTON

MINUTES

Present

Councillor Elgood (Chair), Councillors Barnett, Burgess, Framroze, Meadows, Pennington, Pidgeon, Simson, Wrighton and Young.

Community Representatives & Representatives of other organisations: Dr and Mrs Davoodi (Disabled Access Advisory Group), Emma Nuttall (Friends, Families and Travellers), Martin Campbell, PCT, Joan Moorhouse (Older People's Council), Imam Sajid (Interfaith Contact Group), Arthur Law (Spectrum), Sylvia Alexander Vine (Domestic Violence Forum), Doris N Debele (BMECP), Karen Moore (Brighton Women's Centre), David Weaver (Freeman Oliver)

Brighton & Hove City Council: Maggie Squire (Head of Performance and Equalities), Furrakh Mirza (Equalities Manager), Alex Bailey (Director of Strategy & Governance), Gordon Allan (Environment), Sally McMahon (Libraries), Pat Foster (Assistant Director Quality of Life), Linda Beanlands (Head of Community Safety), Rob Fraser (Environment), Estelle Woodcock (Committee Administrator), Nara Miranda (Members Services).

PART ONE

ACTION

12. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

12A Declarations of Substitutes

- 12.1 Councillor Simson substituted for Councillor C Theobald.
Councillor Pennington substituted for Councillor McCaffery.

12B Declarations of Interest

- 12.2 There were none.

12C Exclusion of Press and Public

- 12.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 12.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

13. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 13.1 The Chair informed the Forum that the team undertaking the Equalities Review would soon hold its first meeting. It would comprise Councillors Elgood, Burgess, Wrighton, Ann Norman and Bennett. Community representatives and members of the public would be invited to attend one of the review meetings to give their comments.
- 13.2 The Chair welcomed Furrakh Mirza, the council's new Equalities Manager, to the Forum.
- 13.3 Councillor Pidgeon stated that an action group had previously been set up in 2002/3 to consider deaf, blind and deaf/blind issues. The group had produced a report for the Equalities & Social justice Forum and one of its recommendations had been for the council to reduce street clutter. However, he stated that matters had worsened since the report had been written, in particular with respect to the obstruction of pavements, from various forms of street clutter. He suggested that the Equalities Forum should refer the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee asking that it consider whether to review the situation, and primarily the implementation of the recommendations 5 and 6 of the report.
- 13.4 Councillor Meadows advised that the Environment Committee already had policies in place, so it was advisable to inform that committee of the intention to refer the matter for scrutiny.
- 13.5 **RESOLVED** –

(1) To refer the report of the Action Group to the Overview and Scrutiny Organisation Committee for it to consider whether a scrutiny review of the implementation of recommendations 5 and

Estelle
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6 contained in the report should be undertaken.

(2) To inform the Environment Committee of the referral to Scrutiny.

Estelle
Woodcock

(3) To ensure that members of the Equalities Forum receive the 2002/3 report.

Estelle
Woodcock

14a MINUTES

14.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair.

14b FEEDBACK ISSUES FROM LAST MEETING

14.2 The Forum noted the list of feedback issues (see minute book). The Head of Performance & Equalities informed the Forum that the International Day of Disabled Persons will be celebrated by a civic reception in Hove Town Hall on 3 December. Speakers will be the Mayor, Councillor Framroze (Chair of the Disabled Access Advisory Group), Dr Davoodi and Alison Lapper. This year the event will be 'invitation only' but it is hoped to extend it in future years. Dr Davoodi thanked the Head of Performance & Equalities and added that he had designed a logo, which he had requested the Chief Executive to send to the United Nations. The design was circulated.

Maggie
Squire

15. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

15.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

16. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

16.1 Sylvia Alexander Vine expressed concern about accessibility to the library during the interim period when the library is open but the rest of the square is a building site. She stated that the disabled parking spaces are some distance away. Once inside, the signage is poor. Dr Davoodi agreed that, although the council liaised with the DAAG, there are outstanding issues. The Head of Libraries stated that there will be six disabled parking spaces in the finished development. The Access Audit has identified changes which are needed to internal signage, the stairs and the entrance. She confirmed that the library has 28 toilets of which 8 are accessible and 4 (one on each floor) take larger wheelchairs. Measures are taken to prevent people taking drugs in them.

16.2 Karen Moore informed members that the Women's Centre faces closure because of funding problems. The Forum fully supported

- the continuation of the Women's Centre but noted that the council could not promise to provide any resources. The council's Grants Team would consider the matter and the Chair, Director of Strategy and Governance and Councillor Burgess would meet Ms Moore in the hope that a solution could be found. The Head of Community Safety said she was investigating the level of resources needed for victims of domestic violence and that the loss of the Women's Centre would have implications for this work.
- Alex Bailey
- Linda Beanlands
- 16.3 Arthur Law stated that Spectrum receives many queries about the implications of civil partnerships. Councillor Burgess considered that there is cause for concern and suggested that Spectrum convene a working group. The Director of Strategy & Governance stated that the focus has been on ceremonies; not on issues relating to pensions, employment and tenancies. However, awareness among advice agencies and solicitors is growing.
- 16.4 Imam Sajid referred to the massive earthquake, which affected parts of India and Pakistan, to those who lost relatives and to the rescue mission. The Chair agreed to ask the council's Press Office to issue a statement of support for the faith communities and to write to the Prime Minister asking him to do everything possible.
- Paul Elgood

17. UPDATE ON THE DRAFT RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

- 17.1 David Weaver of Freeman Oliver stated that the revised Draft Race Equality Scheme would come to the next Forum meeting and to Policy & Resources Committee in January. The scheme covered wider equalities issues and not just race. Key issues were for the council to have the right structures in place, for performance management to address race and equality and for relevant and appropriate consultation with black and minority ethnic communities. Mr Weaver stated that the council must avoid a sense of complacency that Brighton & Hove is regarded as progressive in respect of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender issues because there are other areas to be addressed.
- Maggie Squire
- 17.2 Imam Sajid added that it was essential to ensure that the scheme was implemented. To address cultural racism it will be necessary to include faith groups in consultation.

18. BLACK HISTORY MONTH

- 18.1 A paper on Brighton & Hove Black History was circulated with the agenda (see minute book). Bert Williams distributed leaflets concerning black history month, October 2005. He explained that there would be an exhibition and public events.
- 18.2 Mr Williams also pointed out that 26 October 2006 would be the

85th anniversary of the presentation of the Indian Gate to Brighton for hospital treatment to soldiers in the First World War. The Royal Pavilion, Dome and Corn Exchange had been used as wards. He felt it was an appropriate time to celebrate this gift. The Chair agreed saying that he would take this up with officers. Joan Moorhouse undertook to mention it in The Pensioner magazine. Martin Campbell of the PCT stated that he might be able to find a source of funding, in view of the links to healthcare.

Paula
Murray
J
Moorhouse
e
M
Campbell

19. SPECTRUM

19.1 Arthur Law, Co-ordinator for Spectrum Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Community Forum made a presentation about the organisation's work. He detailed the findings of the Count Me In survey undertaken in 2000, which had helped in the review of the LGBT Community Strategy. He said the aims of Spectrum are to be seen as a community development organisation, to promote inclusion & involvement, networking & partnerships, and best practice including consultation.

19.2 Joan Moorhouse spoke of the difficulties for older people brought up in a different era. She supported the idea of GPs based at a health centre for LGBT people.

19.3 There was debate on HIV and Aids. Doris N Debele asked the Forum to be aware that although there are strategies in place to help the LGBT community there is a need to help Africans and the BME community.

19.4 Councillor Young enquired whether a new survey could be undertaken to ascertain whether the results had changed over 5 years. The Forum noted that Spectrum was currently consulting excluded groups to find out which areas remain to be addressed; in particular, the mental health statistics had come as a shock.

19.5 The Chair undertook to circulate the presentation to all Councillors.

Paul
Elgood

20. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

20.1 Sylvia Alexander Vine showed a video produced by the Penny Beale Memorial Fund. She stated that little had changed since she first became involved in helping women affected by Domestic Violence 25 years ago. The video showed a case study and named the services available to those affected.

20.2 Councillor Young considered that the video showed the importance of continued funding for the Women's Centre. Councillor Simson stated that she had recently learned that

domestic violence was widespread in her ward. The Chair requested a report on ward-related statistics to a future meeting. Linda Beanlands

20.3 The Head of Community Safety stated that domestic violence was a priority area in the Community Strategy. It was not just confined to couples of the opposite sex but same-sex couples and families. The Children, Families and Schools Department dealt with cases affecting children.

20.4 Arthur Law reminded the Forum that violence can be psychological as well as physical.

20.5 The Chair requested that statistics on domestic violence be presented to a future Forum meeting.

21. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

21.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Environment concerning progress to date on the production of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Local Development Framework (LDF) (see minute book). Members also received a copy of the draft SCI as part of the formal public consultation process.

21.2 The Chair reminded members of the Forum to respond by 21 November. Helen Gregory

21.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted as part of the six week formal consultation process.

22. TRAVELLERS ISSUES GROUP

22.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance about setting up a Travellers sub-group of the Equalities Forum (see minute book).

22.2 Emma Nuttall of Friends, Families and Travellers stated that travellers had the highest mortality rate of any group.

22.3 It was agreed that Martin Campbell be invited to join the group to advise on health issues.

22.4 Referring to recommendation 2, Councillor Elgood advised that another member could chair the group if they wished. Councillor McCaffery was nominated as the Labour group representative. Other groups would send the Head of Performance & Equalities the name of their representative.

22.5 **RESOLVED** –

(1) That approval be given to the setting-up of a sub-group of the Forum to consider how the Equalities Forum can be better informed about traveller issues and play an active role in promoting a greater understanding of traveller issues in the city.

(2) That the group comprise a maximum of four Councillors and four Community Representatives of the Equalities Forum and that it be chaired by Councillor Paul Elgood, the Chair of the Equalities Forum.

(3) That the sub-group make recommendations to the Equalities Forum on 5 December about how Forum members could be informed through a training workshop on traveller issues, supported by council officers from the Environment directorate.

(4) That the sub-group should complete its work in time to report to the Equalities Forum in March 2006.

(5) That the sub-group recognises that it is the council's Environment Committee that has responsibility for policies on site provision.

The meeting concluded at 6.40 pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2005