

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**EQUALITIES FORUM**

**3.00 PM, MONDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2007**

**HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

Present

Councillor Meadows (Acting-Chair), Councillors Cobb, Framroze, McCaffery, Mears, Morgan, Pidgeon (OS), Simson, Williams

Community Representatives & Representatives of other organisations: Arthur Law (Spectrum), Joan Moorhouse (Older People's Council), Betty Skolnick (Racial Harassment Forum), Mary Baldock (Brighton Women's Centre), Sarah Danily (Mind), Bert Williams (Brighton & Hove Black History), Doris Ndebele (BMECP)

Brighton & Hove City Council: Maggie Squire (Head of Performance & Equalities), Katie Ogden (Head of Human Resources Strategy), Mary Evans (Human Resources), Chris Owen (Healthy Schools Team), Jon Ota (Children & Young People's Trust), Elizabeth Culbert (Legal Services), Estelle Woodcock (Committee Administrator)

Primary Care Trust: Martin Campbell

Sussex Police: DS Peter Castleton and David Tonkin

Apologies were received from: Councillor Elgood, Councillor A Norman, Councillor Burgess, Dr Sajid, Anne Marie Hines, Alex Bailey, Furrakh Mirza, Jude Tyrie and Angela Dymott

**PART ONE**

**ACTION**

**36 Chair**

36.1 Councillor Meadows informed the Forum that Councillor Elgood had resigned as Chair and that she would be the Acting-Chair until the May 2007 elections. Councillor Pidgeon stated that he supported this.

**36A Declarations of Substitutes**

36.1 <u>Councillor</u>	<u>For Councillor</u>
Cobb	Oxley

Morgan

Burgess

Simson

A Norman

### **36B Declarations of Interest**

36.2 There were none.

### **36C Exclusion of Press and Public**

36.3 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.

36.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

## **37 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

37.1 The Annual Memorial Service for the Sikh and Hindu soldiers cremated at the Chattri will be held there on 10 June. There will also be a visit on 21 February, the anniversary of the unveiling of the Chattri. Bert Williams circulated leaflets and invited members to contact him if they wished to attend.

37.2 Two weeks of events had been held to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. Richard Tuset will be writing a report evaluating the event. All individual events had been well-attended.

37.3 Councillor Pidgeon advised the Forum about the trial of 22 talking bus stops (20 in the city and 2 in East Sussex area) due to take place in the Spring. He thanked members for their support.

37.4 The International Day for Disabled Persons, arranged in consultation with the Brighton & Hove Federation for the Disabled and the Disabled Access Advisory Group, had been celebrated on 4 December. It had been an event where people of all ages felt included; Joan Moorhouse stated that a deaf companion had been impressed by the provision for the deaf.

37.5 The Acting-Chair informed the Forum that Maggie Squire would be leaving the council and this was her last meeting. She thanked her for her support to the Forum and to the Chair and wished her well in

the future. Councillor Pidgeon also expressed his gratitude to Ms Squire and wished her well.

### **38 MINUTES**

38.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2006 be approved and signed by the Chair.

### **38b FEEDBACK ISSUES FROM LAST MEETING**

38.2 The Forum noted the list of feedback issues from the previous meeting.

38.3 Martin Campbell reported on access to dental services. He stated that many dental practices are based in old buildings. The Primary Care Trust advises that all practices should improve access if possible or move to more suitable premises. Not all practices have a contract with the PCT. A new national Dental Contract has been introduced. The PCT will be considering domiciliary visits in the light of this new Contract. The Department of Health has released capital funds for dentists and the PCT prioritises bids requesting money for improvements such as ramps. The PCT's Dental Practice Advisor encourages practices to undertake a DDA audit. Mr Campbell also confirmed that interpreters are used for sign language and deaf-blind communication.

38.4 Other items on the feedback list are minuted below.

38.5 Arthur Law introduced Sarah Danily of Mind to the Forum as it was her first attendance at a meeting. He reminded the Forum that Spectrum and Mind had been due to meet the Equalities Manager to discuss mental health issues and requested that this should be a future agenda item.

Furrakh Mirza

### **39 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

39.1 There were none.

### **40 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES' ISSUES**

40.1 Arthur Law requested that there should be a report to a future meeting updating members on the impact of the Equalities Act 2006. In particular Mr Law wished to know what work is being done by the Council in preparation for the implementation of this legislation, what progress has been made around impact assessments and the anticipated impact of the new Equalities Unit in London commencing its work.

Furrakh Mirza

40.2 Bert Williams also reported (later in the meeting) that he had

been requested to lend his Black History exhibition for display in France for 6 weeks in the summer. He had been invited to talk to Asian children in Hounslow on the Indian contribution to the First World War and to black children in Streatham on the Chinese African and West Indian contribution to the war. Mr Williams also reported that it was hoped to extend the wreath laying at the Royal Pavilion Indian Gate to more people in October this year.

#### **41 'DISABLED GO' FUNDING**

41.1 The Forum considered a letter from Councillor Pennington requesting that the Forum should consider the funding of 'Disabled Go' (see minute book). Councillor Pennington attended the meeting in support of his letter.

41.2 The Head of Performance and Equalities advised that the council had subscribed to the web-based information service, Disabled Go, for several years. An officer working group had considered a new project for local disabled people to receive training to provide a higher quality service for Brighton & Hove. The decision not to fund Disabled Go had been made because it was believed that the new service could be introduced quickly, but a key director had gone sick. Since Councillor Pennington had submitted his letter, the council had agreed to continue to subscribe to Disabled Go for a further two years. The Head of Tourism confirmed that his Team would continue to refer people to Disabled Go during that period.

#### **42 HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING IN SCHOOLS**

42.1 The Forum considered a letter from Councillors Oxley and Pidgeon requesting that Brighton & Hove should have a strategy to tackle homophobic bullying in schools, together with a report of the Director of Children's Services (see minute book). Jon Ota, Assistant Director Health Care Management, and Chris Owen, Healthy School Team Manager, presented the report, advising on action being taken in Brighton & Hove to address homophobic bullying in schools.

42.2 Councillor Cobb spoke in support of the councillors' letter, stating that they felt that Barnet might be providing a better service in some respects, for example, in networking with Domestic Violence and Housing. She welcomed the fact that a new anti-LGBT bullying action plan is being drafted by the council but felt there should be specific deadlines for actions in the plan to be achieved. Chris Owen responded to questions. He advised that the working party focussed on the use of materials and activities to support a positive view of different sexual identities. He confirmed that Housing would be approached to join the working party. He advised that school governors were offered training on issues of sexual identity and

addressing homophobic bullying. He described a confidential survey on bullying that had taken place in local schools and added that his team would support school staff and peer support groups to report and handle bullying incidents. Children often reflect attitudes learned at home, and the working party would consider how best to educate parents.

42.3 Sarah Danily advised that research undertaken by MindOut and the University of Brighton had considered ways of taking anti-bullying work forward. She offered to bring this research to a future meeting. Arthur Law felt that the city was involving the community to a greater extent than Barnet by including mental health groups. He confirmed that there was a Domestic Violence working group. He suggested work on biphobia in future. There was a need to work with perpetrators and victims. Doris Ndebele requested more work to raise awareness among children, who often did not understand what the issues were.

42.4 The Acting-Chair thanked officers for the report and requested an update report to a future meeting.

42.5 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

#### **43 NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR LGBT WORK**

43.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance informing the Forum of the council's recent achievement of recognition for its LGBT work (see minute book). Mary Evans, Diversity Manager, reported that future work would involve trans- and bi-inclusion.

43.2 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Forum notes the recognition received from our placing within the Stonewall Equality Index and the Pink Paper Readers Awards and in particular recognises the contribution made by the council's LGBT Workers Forum.

(2) That staff be congratulated on this achievement.

#### **44 TRANS INCLUSION IN BRIGHTON & HOVE**

44.1 The Forum received a paper by Spectrum "Trans Inclusion in Brighton & Hove: A position paper: January 2007" and agreed that this should be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting.

Estelle  
Woodcock

#### **45 TOURISM & DISABILITY**

45.1 The Head of Tourism made a presentation updating the Forum on disability issues that his Team had recently addressed. He also reported on disabled access and toilets in restaurants on behalf of

Planning Policy Team. A briefing paper outlined these issues (see minute book). The Head of Tourism stated that he would welcome comments from Forum members on the work of his Team including its information service.

#### **46 GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME**

46.1 The Director of Environment introduced Brian Pote-Hunt and Kerstin James, Ottoway Strategic Management, who are collecting information to assist the council in drafting its Gender Equality Scheme. Mr Pote-Hunt and Ms James made a presentation on the work, giving the context of the scheme, describing the duties of the authority and setting out the timetable until the scheme is published on 30 April. Mr Pote-Hunt invited members of the Forum to send him their comments by the end of February. There will be a further report to the next meeting of the Forum, when a draft should be available.

Jenny  
Rowlands

46.2 It was suggested that consultation on the PCT and Police Gender Equality Schemes take place at the same time as consultation on the council's.

#### **47 PRIMARY CARE TRUST DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

47.1 The Forum considered the Primary Care Trust's Disability Equality Scheme (see minute book). Martin Campbell made a presentation, giving an overview and the background. He invited any comments from individual members by the end of February 2007. He responded to questions; he confirmed that Sussex Partnership Trust is a member of the Steering Group.

47.2 Mr Campbell confirmed that during consultation the PCT is seeking comments regarding mental health. Councillor Williams stated that the council's Disabled Access Advisory Group should widen its remit to cover access issues for people with mental health disability. The Forum was concerned that more attention should be given to the fact that mental illness and HIV are covered under the Disability Discrimination Act and to the difficulties faced by people with these conditions in accessing services and employment.

47.3 Betty Skolnick stated that the two Disability Equality Schemes on the agenda were weighty documents and it would have been useful for members to have received written guidance with the agenda as to what was expected of them and an overview of the schemes. The Chair felt that there should be a standard format for all Disability Equality Schemes and it was suggested that the council, PCT and police should devise a standard format for their Gender Equality Schemes.

47.4 **RESOLVED** – That the Primary Care Trust's Disability Equality Scheme be noted.

#### **48 SUSSEX POLICE DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME**

48.1 The Forum considered the Sussex Police Disability Equality Scheme (see minute book). David Tonkin, Diversity Manager for Sussex Police and DS Peter Castleton presented this item. They explained that the Community Safety Forum at its meeting on 8 January had recommended that the Equalities Forum should consider the Police scheme.

48.2 It was recommended that the local authority, Police and PCT should work together as the schemes evolve. It was hoped that the Police would join in the discussions to include mental health in their scheme. This may prove more difficult as the Police are a Sussex-wide force, while the council and PCT cover Brighton & Hove.

48.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Sussex Police Disability Equality Scheme be noted.

#### **49 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT – UPDATE ON PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO COUNCIL OWNED BUILDINGS**

49.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Finance & Property concerning the corporate programme of rolling access works being carried out under the DDA 1995 requirements (see minute book).

49.2 The Assistant Director, Property & Design, sent her apologies as she was too unwell to present the report. Bob Dumbrell, Senior Maintenance Surveyor, responded to members questions. He confirmed that no overall figure was available for the works mentioned in paragraph 3.3; some works would be prioritised and separate costings done for individual buildings. The council did not own all the buildings and obtaining landlord consents could be a lengthy process. Councillor Pidgeon asked for the Forum to be informed of the cost of employing consultants.

Angela  
Dymott

49.3 **RESOLVED** – That the progress of access works being undertaken corporately to council owned properties or those from which the council provides a service in a rolling programme, helping the council to meet the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act, be noted.

#### **50 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

50.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning revisions to the council's Whistleblowing

Policy (see minute book). Katie Ogden, Head of Human Resources Strategy, stated that she had consulted the LGBT Workers Forum, who had approved the revisions, and after today's meeting the report would go to Policy & Resources and Standards Committees and full Council. She advised that the council had policies on bullying and grievance as well as the Whistleblowing Policy.

50.2 Members discussed the suggested route for raising an issue; saying that it would be inappropriate in many cases for staff to speak to a line manager or senior manager, and that a mentor or a contact in a staff forum would be better. Councillor McCaffery felt that an entirely independent officer should be the contact, and that the policy should not encourage staff to reveal their identity. She also asked whether it was acceptable for staff to approach councillors with concerns and Ms Ogden replied that she knew no reason why they should not.

50.3 The Acting-Chair requested that the Head of Human Resources Strategy note the Forum's concern that staff should have the option of speaking to a staff forum contact (paragraph 5 of the report). She added that the policy should be reviewed from time to time.

**Katie Ogden**

50.4 **RESOLVED** – That the revised Whistleblowing Policy, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be forwarded to the Policy & Resources Committee as part of the consultation process and then to Standards Committee and Council for approval.

## **51 CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL GRANTS IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND EXTERNAL FUNDING UNIT 2006/2007**

51.1 The Forum received a report of the Director of Cultural Services concerning the administration of the Corporate Annual Grants Programme 2006/07 and the Global Grants Programme 2006 with regard to grants given to communities of interest groups (see minute book).

51.2 The Manager, Voluntary Sector and External Funding Unit, had sent her apologies as she was too unwell to attend the meeting and it was agreed to forward the following questions for her response when she recovered. The questions are shown below underlined, together with her answers which have been supplied since the meeting:

Why are the 3-year grants not mentioned; will there be a separate report on these?

Answer: I understood the report requested by the Review Group was for the annual grants programme as it was to cover grants allocated in that financial year.

The 3 year grants report goes to P & R Committee and pre allocates funding for three years. The Report for 2007/10 Grants was received at the P & R Committee on 2nd November 2006. Funding for these years will remain the same as no inflation allowance is included.

However, for the Forum's information, in comparing the 2004/07 programme with the 2007/10 programme:

- Funding specifically for LGBT services increased by 56.41% to £61,000 p.a.
- Funding specifically for Disabled People's services increased by 7.5% to £43,000 p.a.
- Funding specifically for BME organisations increased by 45.21% to £106,000

In addition funding for Women's Services increased by 19.64%, Mental Health by 33.33% and Older People by 30.43%.

Please note that these percentages do not reflect double counting. For example: organisations supporting women's mental health, e.g. Threshold, will only be counted once under "women's services" and do not appear under "mental health" totals

In addition all organisations funded are required to have an equal opportunities policy and be open to all (unless targeted to specific client / gender group) and are required to demonstrate this as part of the annual monitoring and evaluation process.

The report shows the percentage awarded to organisations working with Bme residents, it would be useful to have the overall proportion for all groups.

Answer: The funding award percentages for BME, LGBT and Disabled people are shown at the beginning of each section of the report. Consideration will be given to the lay out in future years to ensure clarity.

Who are the "Sons of Sudan" and are women excluded by this organisation?

Answer: Sons of Sudan is a small community group of Sudanese, Egyptian, Ghanaian, Tunisian, Moroccan and Nigerian residents providing a programme of sports activities for BME residents of both genders and all ages

Joan Moorhouse felt that more information had been requested at the last meeting (see minute 35.6 20 November 2007), particularly

about the applicants who had been unsuccessful and what help had been given to applicants.

Answer: The report contains details of all applicants and the results of their applications. All applicants are offered support through telephone calls, plus visits to a venue of their choice or meetings at King's House. Applications can be made in a variety of formats and interpreters can be made available. Applicants that find the process for the annual grants programme daunting, and only require a small amount of funding, are transferred to The Hedgcock Bequest which has a simpler application process. Applications are usually deferred to allow support to be given to enable a successful outcome rather than rejected. Applicants are sent information and contacts eg on writing constitutions, Health & Safety, obtaining quotes for equipment, CRB checks etc to assist in completing their applications. They may also be referred to other voluntary sector organisations eg The Working Together Project (training), The Resource Centre (fundraising, governance, equipment) or the Scarman Trust (development) plus they are advised of the Community & Voluntary Sector Forum's role in the city and any relevant organisation eg BMECP, Federation of Disabled People and Spectrum.

51.3 **RESOLVED** – That the report and the ongoing support given to communities of interest within the Voluntary Sector and External Funding Unit be noted.

## **APPRECIATION**

The Acting-Chair concluded the meeting by expressing her thanks to Paul Elgood for the excellent job he had done during his time as Chair of the Forum.

The Acting-Chair also thanked Maggie Squire, who confirmed her strong commitment to equalities work and added that she hoped to remain in Brighton & Hove working on equalities issues.

The meeting concluded at 5.35 pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2007