

# **BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

## **EQUALITIES FORUM**

**4.00PM MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2007**

### **HOVE TOWN HALL**

#### **MINUTES**

Present: Councillor Oxley (Chairman); Councillors Cobb, Duncan, Lainchbury, Lepper, McCaffery (OS), A Norman, Pidgeon (Deputy Chairman), Turton and Wakefield-Jarrett

Representing Communities : Mary Baldock (The Women's Centre), Dr Davoodi (Disabled Access Advisory Group), Geraldine Des Moulins (Federation of Disabled People), Arthur Law (Spectrum), Doris Ndebele (Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership), Judy Richards (Communities of Interest Network), Dr Sajid (Interfaith Contact Group), Betty Skolnick (Racial Harassment Forum), Baldev Soni (Mosaic), Francis Tonks (Older People's Council), Bert Williams (Brighton & Hove Black History), Jake Penny and Caitlin Stubbs (Youth Council).

Apologies were received from: Neil Ansell (Friends, Families & Travellers), Jim Baker (Age Concern), Nic Brown (Sussex Traveller Action Group)

#### **PART ONE**

#### **ACTION**

#### **19 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

#### **19A Declarations of Substitutes**

19.1 Councillor Cobb was substituting for Councillor Fallon-Khan

#### **19B Declarations of Interest**

19.2 There were none.

#### **19C Exclusion of Press and Public**

19.3 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 Schedule 12A, Part 5A, Section 100A(4) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

- 19.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

## 20. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 20.1 The Chairman, Councillor Oxley, welcomed Baldev Soni to the meeting. He will be replacing Ann-Maire Hines in representing Mosaic.

- 20.2 The Chairman informed the Forum that Brighton & Hove Unemployed Centre Families Project Welfare Rights Group, had resigned from the Forum as due to pressure of work they were no longer able to attend the meetings.

- 20.3 The Chairman informed the Forum of two events which he thought they would be interested in.

On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2007 the Hindu Women's Group organised an event to celebrate Diwali. The event included Rangoli workshops, Indian dancing, trying Indian food, playing traditional Indian board games, trying on Saris and having your hands hennaed. The event was very successful and was attended by over 1500 people.

During Black History Month, an event was held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2007 called All Different All Equal. The event was held to celebrate the diversity of two city centre neighbourhoods, Tarnar and the Eastern Road areas. The event was a huge success with hundreds participating in workshops and discussion groups and enjoying food and music from around the world.

- 20.4 Councillor Pidgeon (Deputy Chairman) advised the Forum that Brighton & Hove City Council have been nominated for the e-Government national awards. The council has been nominated in the 'Building a Fairer Society with e-Government: Targeted or Localised Services' category, for its Talking Bus Stops for the Blind & Visually Impaired. The winner will be announced on 22 January 2008 at an event at the Dorchester Hotel in London. Councillor Pidgeon and Councillor G Theobald (Chairman of the Environment Committee), will attend the event along with Sue Westwood

and Kevin Kingston of the City Council.

- 20.5 Councillor Pidgeon (Deputy Chairman) stated that he had received a letter from Jonathon Mud, who works with visually impaired people, concerning New Road in Brighton. New Road had been pedestrianised, but the way it has been finished made it very difficult for visually impaired people and guide dogs. At the moment it was very difficult to know when New Road meets the two roads at either end, and a tactile difference is needed to make the distinction. There should be a distinct edge for both the pavement and at the end of the road. There was currently an area where there was some tactile pavement, but that was cluttered with benches and tables and chairs and so could not be used for visually impaired to walk on. It was an unsafe and dangerous situation and something needed to be done.

Councillor Oxley noted what Councillor Pidgeon had said.

## **21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2007**

- 21.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

## **22. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

- 22.1 **RESOLVED** - No questions were received.

## **23. LETTER FROM COUNCILLOR DUNCAN – HOUSING TRANSFER CRITERIA FOR VICTIM HARASSMENT**

- 23.1 Councillor Duncan presented a letter to the Forum (see Minute Book). The letter asked whether the Council should change its policy so that tenants suffering from harassment because of their race, sexuality, age or disabilities could be placed in Band A for being moved urgently, and that they were not moved to an area where there were already high incidents of prejudice linked harassment.

- 23.2 The Forum were advised that those suffering harassment could currently be placed in Band B. The Forum were further advised that the current strategy was being reviewed, and a new one being developed.

- 23.3 **RESOLVED** – That the letter be noted.

## **24. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES' ISSUES**

- 24.1 Dr Davoodi was concerned that disabled issues were not being addressed and that the Disabled Access Advisory

Group (DAAG) was not given sufficient weight and tended to be ignored. The International Day of Disabled was first celebrated in Brighton & Hove in 2005 on a very limited budget, although the Council was involved in arranging events for this year Dr Davoodi was concerned that DAAG had not been fully included/involved in the events planned. Mary Evans responded and said that the Council were now involved in celebrating the International Day of Disabled, and apologised if it appeared that DAAG were being excluded which wasn't intentional. The Council's Disability and Diversity Access officer would provide information about the events arranged for the International Day of Disabled.

Mrs Davoodi noted that there was no representation on the Forum for carers of disabled people and requested whether the membership of the Forum could be expanded to include a carers representative. One particular issue which was of concern was the low salaries and high pressured jobs of carers which led to a high turnover of staff. Councillor Norman, who was Deputy Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee, confirmed that this issue could be something which that committee would look into.

The Chairman informed the Forum that the membership was being looked at generally and that the possibility of new representatives would be considered.

- 24.2 Bert Williams informed the Forum that a new plaque had been unveiled on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007 on the Gateway at the Pavilion.

## **25. REDUCING INEQUALITY REVIEW PHASE 1**

- 25.1 The Forum received a presentation from Mr D Johnstone of Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OSCI) on the report on Inequality in Brighton and Hove (see Minute book for the report). The report introduced the results of the first phase of the Reducing Inequalities Review, which is being undertaken to evaluate the approaches taken in Brighton & Hove to addressing social exclusion and deprivation in neighbourhoods and among groups facing disadvantage.

The findings from this evaluation would assist the development of future strategies and arrangements for the city including the Inclusive Council Policy and the 2008-11 Local Area Agreement. A further report would be brought to the Forum when phase 2 was completed.

25.2 **RESOLVED** – That the matter be noted.

## **26. EQUALITIES & INCLUSION POLICY UPDATE**

26.1 The Forum considered an early draft version of the Council's new Equalities & Inclusion Policy for 2008-2011, which was being prepared to replace the Council's existing policy which was due to expire at the end of 2007. The Forum members were advised that the next draft version would be available at the end of December and there would then be a consultation period with a provisional deadline of 11 January 2008.

Some Members indicated that they would like a clear distinction between economic and social inequality and discrimination.

26.2 The Forum members were concerned that the consultation period was relatively short and covered the Christmas holiday period. It was therefore agreed that the consultation period would run until the next scheduled meeting of the Forum in February.

26.3 **RESOLVED** – That the matter be noted.

## **27. BRIGHTON & HOVE PRIMARY CARE TRUST GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME (2007-2010)**

27.1 The Forum received a presentation on the Primary Care Trust's Gender Equality Scheme for 2007-2010, and proposals about the Gender Equality Scheme Steering Group.

27.2 The Forum were informed that the Primary Care Trust had a legislative duty to deliver a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) under the Equality Bill 2006. Some of the key points of the GES were Equal Pay, monitoring of harassment and bullying in the workplace, employees from excluded groups supported at work, all services to meet the needs of men, women and transgender people, the involvement of men women and transgender people in the development of services, and training for all staff on gender equality.

27.3 The Forum were informed how a Steering Group was set up from members of the local community. Representatives were from Citizen Panel Focus groups, members of the community and voluntary sector, NHS Trusts, the Council, the Police and other statutory sector groups. This group would look at a large range of Gender Equality issues and would provided information to future meetings of the Forum.

27.4 **RESOLVED** – That the matter be noted.

**28. PART REVIEW OF THE SOUTH EAST PLAN: MEETING THE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS OF GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS**

28.1 The Forum received a report which informed members of the work being undertaken in accordance with the Partial Review of the South East Plan and the Regional Assembly's Brief to all local authorities in the region requesting advice regarding the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. It was confirmed that New Travellers were not included in the survey.

28.2 The report was generally welcomed, but there was some concern over the methodology used to collect the data. The Forum were advised that there was a set method used, but when the next review was taken (in three or four years), it would be looked at again.

28.3 **RESOLVED** – (1) The Forum noted the Local Authorities joint advice to SEERA regarding the provision and distribution of permanent caravan pitches for gypsies and travellers for the period 2006-2016. For the City of Brighton & Hove this was 14 permanent pitches under Option A or 11 pitches under Option B (see Minute Book for two options).

(2) The Forum noted the Local Authorities joint advice to SEERA regarding the current provision of and demand for transit accommodation and advice regarding a range of implementation and delivery issues.

**29. HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING AND RESPONSE TO THE "SCHOOL REPORT"**

29.1 As the meeting was running late the Chairman decided that this matter should be referred to the next meeting of the Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

**30. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED - 3 DECEMBER 2007**

30.1 The International Day of Disabled was being held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007.

The Forum was informed of an event which was being held at Hove Town Hall during the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007. The event was being held to observe and celebrate the day, to recognise the achievements of disabled people and the positive contribution they make to the community and life in the city. Disabled people and the organisations they represented would be invited to participate. The event would

