

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONSULTATION FORUM

Monday 14 July 2003

4.00 PM

Council Chamber, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: Councillor Meadows (Chair), Framroze, McCaffery, Older, Pidgeon (OS), Mrs Theobald, Tonks, Williams, Young.

Community Representatives: Valerie Mainstone (Welfare Rights Group of BUFCP), Dr Davoodi & Mrs Davoodi (DAAG), Sylvia Alexander-Vine (Domestic Violence Forum)

Officers/ guests:

Alex Bailey (Director of Strategy & Governance), Kathryn Gorse (Committee Administrator), Manal Ahmed (**Joint Head of Equality and Community Cohesion**), Claire Debenham, (**Joint Head of Equality and Community Cohesion**), Katie Ogden (Head of HR Policy), Diana Barnett (Head of Communications), Jugal Sharma (Assistant Director Housing), Sue Drummond (Acting Assistant Director Environment), Steve Chapman (Social Justice Manager), Gillian Cunliffe (Head of Social Inclusion),

Apologies had been received from: Barbara Wiseman (The Pensioners Forum)

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| 1. | Welcome
The Chair welcomed members present. | Action |
| 2. | Procedural Business | |
| 2a | DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTES
Councillor Older for Councillor Giebeler | |
| 2b. | 2b DECLARATION OF INTERESTS
None. | |
| 2c. | EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC | |
| 2c.1 | The Forum considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during 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 100I of the Local Government Act 1972. | |
| 2c.2 | RESOLVED – a) That the press and public not be excluded from any items on the agenda.
b) That agenda item 9 (a late item) be considered by the Forum. | |
| 3. | Apologies | |
| 3.1 | As per cover sheet | |
| 4. | Chair's Communications | |
| 4.1 | There was none. | |
| 5a. | Minutes of the last meeting- 24 March 2003 | |
| 5a.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March were approved. | |
| 5b. | Feedback issues from the last meeting- 24 March 2003 | |
| 5b.1 | Alex Bailey informed members that with regard to census information on the student population, both Universities had been contacted and a report will be presented to Councillor Framroze shortly. | Alex Bailey |
| 5b.2 | In addition, by October 2003 data should be available whereby census information for Brighton & Hove can be compared to that of similar sized conurbations. | Alex Bailey |
| 5b.3 | The report of the Action Group to review taxi services for disabled | Tim Nichols |

people had fed into a Policy document to be considered by Policy & resources Committee and the Licensing & regulatory Functions Sub-Committee. A progress report will be available in October 2003. Members of the Forum will be supplied with a copy of the report drawn up by the Taxi Action Group.

**Kathryn
Gorse**

5b.4 Katie Ogden, Head of HR Policy, updated members on the Recruitment Sub-Group, stating it had not met recently due to the Local Elections. Councillor Pidgeon was nominated to take part in the Sub-Group that looks at recruitment and retention issues within the Council. Councillor Tonks asked if the ESJCF could receive a report on the number of Disabled and BME staff working for the Authority.

**Katie
Ogden**

5b.5 Councillor Meadows updated members on the report of the ESJCF Action Group to review access to services for deaf, blind and deafblind people. The recommendations arising from the Group had been discussed at the Adult Social Care & Health Sub-Committee recently. Officers had been instructed to find out the cost of implementing all the recommendations and report back to the Sub-Committee. It is expected that there will be more news on this at the October meeting of the Forum.

5b.6 Gillian Cunliffe, Head of Social Inclusion, responded to the feedback item regarding carers from the BME community. A copy of this response is at Appendix A.

6. Community Representatives Issues and Questions

6.1 Dr Davoodi

Dr Davoodi presented a letter to the Forum (see Appendix B) that questioned the progress being made on enabling disabled people to gain access to education, employment and transport (taxis).

Councillor Meadows expressed a wish for the Environmental Health & Licensing Officer to attend the next ESJCF meeting to address the Forum on the issue of taxis for disabled people.

6.2 Valerie Mainstone

Valerie Mainstone informed members of the need for the Unemployed Centre to restrict the number of DLA (Disability Living Allowance) applications it deals with each week. Each application requires a 2 hour of one-to-one consultation and involves a lot of paperwork and form filling. However, there have been increased rates of success for applicants when they have been assisted in the application process by the staff at the Centre.

6.3 **Sylvia Alexander-Vine**

Sylvia Alexander-Vine informed members that Community Base had produced a video illustrating all the work that is being done at the venue.

7. Progress on the Race Equality Scheme (RES).

7.1 Claire Debenham and Manal Ahmed (Joint Heads of Equality and Community Cohesion) updated members on the scheme that was published in November 2002.

Toolkits have been produced to enable staff to carry out impact assessments and all assessors have now received training. Not all impact assessments that were planned to take place in the first year have been carried out. The aim is to have four consultation events with the communities of interest in the forthcoming year.

7.2 The Chair requested a further update on the scheme, following the first RES event in January 2004.

**Claire
Debenham
and Manal
Ahmed**

7.3 **RESOLVED:** That the progress report be noted and that the Forum receive a further update at the meeting in January 2004.

8. Departmental Development Plans

8a. Housing & City Support

8a.1 Jugal Sharma, Assistant Director Housing, informed members that the department of Housing & City Support had increased its partnership working and had successfully integrated Adult Social Care & Health across the rest of the department. One tangible example of this success was the enhanced service of disabled people accessing disabled adapted properties in the city.

In addition, all staff in the directorate attend monthly meetings on implementing equalities and the Excellence in Equalities model was being piloted in the department. This had previously been piloted by Hampshire County Council.

8a.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

8b. Corporate Services.

8b.1 The Joint Head of Equality and Community Cohesion presented the Corporate Services Departmental Development Plan explaining that the department had emphasised the Council's priority of a "customer focussed city". Recent improvements that had taken place are within the corporate complaints service, recruitment and retention of staff, workforce strategies and

procedures, neighbourhood renewal and procurement. An area that still required further work was Single Status.

8b.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

8c. **Environment**

8c.1 Sue Drummond, (Acting Assistant Director Environment), highlighted areas the directorate were going to focus on in 2003/4. They include traffic and transport planning, parking, planning and street design.

With regard to parking, the department had developed a unique way of partnership working regarding equalities training of NCP staff and in-house staff. This awareness training is also going to rolled out to staff working in City Clean.

Street Design is going to improve for disabled residents as reflective strips are being placed on street furniture such as litterbins. Radar keys were being installed and toilet opening times were being extended.

With regard to Leisure, sport was now being developed as a tool to promote social inclusion.

Councillor Older asked if Ward Councillors could be informed of when streets, for example, George street, was going to be tested for access.

A tactile map of bus routes was being investigated, but it was felt that a pocket-sized map could compromise the information being displayed.

8c.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

8d. **Children, Families and Schools**

8d.1 Gillian Cunliffe, Head of Social Inclusion, presented a separate Equalities Action Plan that had drawn out specific areas the directorate were focussing on in 2003/04.

In particular, the department is concerned with implanting the Race Relations Amendment Act and it is intended that 22 assessments be carried out by April 2004.

Councillor Tonks requested information on what is currently being done regarding bullying in schools. A written answer will be supplied.

8d.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

8e. Communications & Democratic Services

8e.1 Diana Barnett, Head of Communications, informed members that a lot of the work of Communications & Democratic Services was concerned with improving access to services and information through the City Direct Project. Constant performance monitoring of City Direct, which was launched in early 2003 was due to take place over the next twelve months. So far, work has been done to improve signage and accessibility in the City Direct 'hubs'.

The work of the Council in City News, which has one page in every edition specifically for equalities issues, is enhanced through close links with the Talking Newspaper.

Councillor Williams requested that profiles of groups such as the LGBT community are specifically mentioned in City News as a recent leaflet publicising businesses in St James's Street had omitted references of the areas' strong links with LGBT community.

8e.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

9. Inclusive City Partnership

9.1 Alex Bailey, Director of Strategy & Governance, presented the Forum with a discussion paper that sought views on a proposal that the Council's Equalities & Social Justice Consultation Forum be replaced by an Inclusive City Partnership. The paper stated that the Inclusive City Partnership would have a broader remit on social inclusivity and stronger reporting and influencing lines into the City Council, the Local Strategic Partnership and the underlying family of partnerships.

9.2 Valerie Mainstone suggested that the report produced by the Working Group to improve the ESJCF feed into the plans to replace the Forum.

9.3 **RESOLVED:** That the Forum receive a further report on the proposal at its next meeting (Monday 13 October 2003).

Date of next meeting:

Monday 13 October 2003, 4.00pm-6.00pm

Items to be carried forward (13/10/03):

Student Population
Census conurbation comparison
Action on Deafblind report
Result of taxi policy report

Items to be carried forward (12/1/04):

Update on the Race Equality Scheme

The meeting concluded at 6.45 p.m.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2003

Appendix A- Gillian's email/ text
Appendix B- Dr Davoodi's letter