

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CONSULTATION FORUM

Monday 13 October 2003

4.00 PM

Room 3, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

Community Representatives: Valerie Mainstone (Welfare Rights Centre), Joan Moorhouse (Chair, Older People's Council).

Officers/ guests: Steve Chapman (Social Justice Manager), Katie Ogden, Alex Bailey (Director of Strategy & Governance), Claire Debenham (Joint Head of Community Cohesion), Manal Ahmed (Joint Head of Community Cohesion), Sue Drummond (Head of Leisure & Events), Diana Barnett (Head of Communication), Gillian Cunliffe (Head of Social Inclusion), Kathryn Gorse (Committee Administrator).

Apologies had been received from: Councillors Framroze, Watkins, Young, Dr Davoodi and Betty Davoodi, Sheila MacWattie (Women's Centre), Sylvia Alexander-Vine.

- 1. Welcome** **Action**
The Chair welcomed members present.
- 2. Procedural Business**
2a DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTES
Councillor Hazelgrove for Councillor Framroze
Councillor Older for Councillor Young
- 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.
- 3. Apologies**
3.1 As per cover sheet
- 4. Chair's Communications**
4.1 The Chair reported that the Black History event at the Old Market was a success and that the planners were hoping to expand on the event for next year.
- The Chair recently attended the first Conference for Supported Employment for People with Learning Disabilities.
- 5a. Minutes of the last meeting- 14 July 2003**
5a.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July were approved.
- 5b. Feedback issues from the last meeting- 14 July 2003**
5b.1 Census Data
The Forum noted the information at Appendix A to the minutes.
- 5b.2 Taxi services for disabled people**
The Director of Strategy and Governance told the Forum that a report went to the Policy & Resources Committee on 17 September 2003 and amongst the recommendations the Council

has agreed to immediately increase by 19 the number of taxi licenses to be issued (all of which are to be wheelchair accessible) with a further 5 (all wheelchair accessible) per annum thereafter.

Tim Nichols, the Environmental Health & Licensing Manager, will be invited to the next ESJCF meeting to explain the decision making and the valuable contribution of the ESJCF Action Group that worked on the issue.

5b.3 Recruitment Sub-Group

The Forum was told that a meeting of the Recruitment Sub-Group is to be set up. Further consultation on the Council as an employer will be carried out on 29 November 2003 at the 'Equal to the Challenge? Diverse Communities Shaping Local Services' event at Hove Centre.

Mark Lamb

5b.4 BME and disabled staff

The Forum noted the information circulated separately regarding staff profiles for each directorate.

5b.5 Anti-Bullying initiatives

Councillor Tonks confirmed he had received the information on the Anti-bullying project.

5b.6 Access to services for deaf, blind and deafblind people

The Director for Strategy & Governance explained that there was no formal response to the recommendations put forward in the Summer but many of them had already been implemented. The next ESJCF meeting would get a substantive report on actions taken. Once that report was ready it would be sent to members of the Forum.

Alex Bailey

6. Community Representatives Issues and Questions

6.1 Valerie Mainstone

Valerie Mainstone thanked Steve Chapman and the Social Justice Team for the invaluable training that they have delivered to the Welfare Rights Centre. She recognised that the Social Justice Team was understaffed and that the help they had given the Centre was central to the work of the organisation.

6.2 Dr Davoodi

Dr Davoodi submitted an Open Letter to the Chair of the Forum (see Appendix A).

Members thought that an Access Officer in the Council could **Sue**

deal with a lot of the issues mentioned in Dr Davoodi's letter. **Drummond**
Members asked to be kept up to date on the appointment.

7. Progress Report on the Access Audit Working Group

7.1 The Forum considered a report by Martin Hilson, Surveying and Maintenance Manager, which outlined how the Access Audit Working Group is assisting the council in working towards meeting its duties to comply with the final phase of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 that comes into effect in October 2004.

7.2 The Access Audit Group included members of the Disabled Access Advisory Group (DAAG).

7.3 The Forum noted the progress of the group and also noted that a corporate bid will be made to the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) to undertake remedial works identified by the access audits.

7.4 Martin Hilson informed members that although the total cost of the remedial works was unknown, the changes to improve access would not automatically be made to buildings necessarily as the delivery of services would be reviewed as well.

7.5 Councillor Older asked if the Access Audit had been carried out at Hove Library. The Surveying and Maintenance Manager announced that the first phase fieldwork is to be undertaken in the next five days.

7.6 **RESOLVED:** 1) That the Forum note the progress report and the corporate bid to the SIF.

2) That the Forum acknowledge the work carried out by members of the Disabled Access Advisory Group for the Access Audit Working Group.

8. Equalities Developments: working with other public sector partners

8.1 The Director of Strategy and Governance presented a report which sought the views of members on options to expand the scope of the Forum and working with other public sector partners.

8.2 Members agreed that it would be a good idea to invite a representative from the Primary Care Trust. Members discussed and agreed extending the invitation to the Police also.

8.3 Members pointed out that the Forum should also encourage representation from the Black and Minority ethnic groups, the LGBT community and young people's groups (possibly Coalition

for Youth) pointing out that it would be an ideal opportunity to build bridges with some key groups in the city.

The Chair agreed that the Forum needed to strengthen links with other strategic bodies in the Council.

- 8.3 **RESOLVED:** That the comments made by the Forum be used to inform further work on Partnerships and the Council's Constitution and that in the interim the Primary Care Trust and Police should be invited to attend as observers.
- Manal
Ahmed/
Claire
Debenham**

9. Update on RES Consultation

- 9.1 The Head of Community Cohesion presented a report updating members on the progress of the Race Equality Scheme. A community consultation event entitled 'Equal to the Challenge? Diverse Communities Shaping Local Services' is to be held on Saturday 29 November 2003 between 10.00am and 4.00pm at Hove Centre. Members of the Forum were invited to attend and take part in the event that will be examining the following themes:

1. Equalities/inclusion policies
2. Adult care assessments
3. Consultation (whether this is the right way to talk to people)

- 9.2 Councillor Pidgeon asked how the event would be advertised. There will be references made in City News (which is sent to the Talking Newspaper for wider distribution) and on local radio.

- 9.3 **RESOLVED:** 1) That the update on the RES be noted.

10. "The Inclusive Council": an equalities and social inclusion policy and programme (2003/07)

- 10.1 The Director of Strategy & Governance presented a report that informed members of the approach to developing a broader equalities policy and programme for the City Council 2003/07.

- 10.2 Work started on the Inclusive Council policy a few months ago when consultation data was reviewed and the practises of other Local Authorities were considered.

- 10.3 The draft policy should cover the following areas:

1. The 'business case' for creating an 'inclusive council'
2. How the new policy and programme will be used
3. Fundamental principles
4. Community Leadership
5. Service delivery (and commissioning)

- 6. The council as a Model employer
- 7. Monitoring and Review

10.4 **RESOLVED:** 1) That the Forum noted the report.

2) That comments on the policy be forwarded to the Head of Equalities and Community Cohesion. **Claire Debenham**

3) That the Forum receives the substantive policy for comment and referral to Policy & Resources Committee at their next meeting (Monday 12 January 2003). **Alex Bailey**

11. Verbal update on the report of the Sub-Group to review access to taxi services for disabled people.

11.1 See paragraph 5b.2

12. Verbal update on the report of the Sub-Group to review access to services for deaf, blind and deafblind people

12.1 See paragraph 5b.6.

13. Letter to the Chief Executive from Councillor Simon Williams – Review of flying community flats from municipal buildings

13.1 The Forum considered a letter to the Chief Executive concerning the flying of community flags from municipal buildings.

13.2 This item was raised in reference to the decision by the Policy & Resources Committee not to fly the 'rainbow' flag from Brighton Town Hall during the Pride week in August 2003. Councillor Williams stated that he felt the council would need to establish fair and clear guidelines and that the symbolic gesture of flying community flags should be embraced.

13.3 Councillor Pidgeon stated that very strict rules would need to be put in place, although he felt that there should only be two flags on municipal buildings- the Union Jack and the St George's Cross flag.

13.4 Councillor Hazelgrove added that setting up a committee to look at the merits of flying different flags would be a 'municipal nightmare'.

Joan Moorhouse, Chair of the Older People's Council, commented that whilst community flags would add colour to the

city, political/ Political flags should be excluded.

- 13.5 The Chair pointed out that the issue of flying community flags from municipal buildings could be considered under the wider project of 'Dressing the City', which was being lead by the Director of Communications & Democratic Services, Tony Miller. The project will be looking at what public displays are put in place when major events take place in Brighton & Hove.

The Director of Strategy & Governance explained that a group of officers from Tourism, events and our public appearance services were considering a range of issues under the heading of "Dressing the City". Recognition of special events for communities of interest would be better picked up within that work than handled separately.

- 13.6 Councillor Williams acknowledged that the approach was probably the best one but stated that he was anxious that the issue did not get lost in the broader agenda and that the voices of the communities of interest were heard.

- 13.7 **RESOLVED:** That the letter from Councillor Williams be noted and that the issue be addressed within the "Dressing the City" work. **Tony Miller**

Date of next meeting:

Monday 12 January 2003

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

Taxi services for disabled people

Tim Nichols

Inclusive Council

Alex Bailey

Verbal update on RES (following consultation day)

**Claire
Debenham**

The meeting concluded at 5.45p.m.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2004