

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES FORUM

3.00 PM, MONDAY, 26 MARCH 2007

HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present

Councillor Meadows (Acting-Chair), Councillors Burgess, McCaffery, Mears, A Norman, Pidgeon (OS), Simson

Community Representatives & Representatives of other organisations: Julie Nichols (Spectrum), Joan Moorhouse (Older People's Council), Sylvia Alexander-Vine (Domestic Violence Forum), Mary Baldock (Brighton Women's Centre), Bert Williams (Brighton & Hove Black History), Neil Ansell (Friends, Families & Travellers), Linda Freedman (Interfaith Contact Group), PJ Aldred (Pride)

Brighton & Hove City Council: Alex Bailey (Director of Strategy & Governance), Mary Evans (Human Resources), Furrakh Mirza (Equalities Manager), Estelle Woodcock (Committee Administrator), Nick Antjoule (LGBT Workers Forum), John Irvine (LGBT Community Safety Officer), Peter Huntbach (Older People's Housing Manager), Peter Matthews (Planned Maintenance Manager), Petra Davis (Housing Policy Officer), Scott Marshall (Acting-Director of Cultural Services), Paula Murray (Head of Arts and Creative Industries), David King (ICT), Martin Seymour (Hackney Carriage Officer)

Primary Care Trust: Martin Campbell

Apologies were received from: Councillor Elgood, Councillor Framroze, Councillor Williams, Dr Sajid, Jude Tyrie, Betty Skolnick, John Ota, Julie O'Hara, Sarah Danily, Patrick Saintas & Doris Ndebele

PART ONE

ACTION

52A Declarations of Substitutes

52.1	<u>Councillor</u>	<u>For Councillor</u>
	Simson	Oxley

52B Declarations of Interest

52.2 During consideration of item 61, Councillor Mears declared a personal interest, stating that her son drives a London taxi.

52C Exclusion of Press and Public

52.3 The Forum 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.

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

53 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

53.1 The Acting-Chair stated that a meeting of the Equalities Policy Review Group would be arranged to discuss the council's Whistleblowing Policy before it was finally agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee.

53A SHELTERED HOUSING

53.2 The Forum considered a letter from Councillor Pidgeon concerning the recent delay in repairing the Jasmine Court lift (see minute book). Councillor Pidgeon deplored the situation, which had adversely affected elderly people with difficulty in walking for a whole month. Peter Huntbach (Older People's Housing Manager) and Peter Matthews (Planned Maintenance Manager) apologized for the delay. They promised that this would not happen again; a full audit had been undertaken and procedures put in place to ensure appropriate lines of communication. Several Forum members remained concerned as to whether there were other lifts where the guarantee or contract had expired and whether the new procedures would be adequate. The Acting-Chair stated that the Housing Management Sub-Committee should be requested to consider the matter.

53.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Housing Management Sub-Committee be requested to consider the matter.

Estelle
Woodcock

54 MINUTES

54.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February be approved and signed by the Chair.

54b FEEDBACK ISSUES FROM LAST MEETING

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

54.3 The Equalities Manager stated that the meeting on Mental Health had not yet taken place due to sickness but would take place soon.

54.4 Councillor Pidgeon stated that the Leader of the Conservative Group intended to refer the information relating to the cost of employing the Access Consultant to the Policy & Resources Committee.

55 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

55.1 There were none.

56 COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES' ISSUES

56.1 Neil Ansell drew attention to the activities of the BNP Party in the run up to the local elections. They were targeting households in East Brighton with inflammatory literature against travellers. He advised that Friends, Families & Travellers had already contacted the Commission for Racial Equality about mainstream parties in other parts of the country using such literature. He requested a zero tolerance campaign in Brighton & Hove.

57 GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME UPDATE

57.1 The Equalities Manager updated the Forum on the preparation of the council's Gender Equality Scheme. The first draft was circulated and the Forum was advised that the final report would come to the next meeting. Neil Ansell asked whether the information on page 4, which stated that 12 of the 26 wards in the city were among the most deprived in the country, was accurate and Councillor Burgess requested clarification about the protection for Transsexual/Transgender people.

Furrakh
Mirza

57.2 Martin Campbell informed the meeting that the PCT was undergoing the same process as the council and would be publishing its scheme in accordance with legislation.

58 INCLUSIVE COUNCIL POLICY UPDATE

58.1 Mary Evans advised that the Inclusive Council policy was due to be revised. Since it was published in 2004, the council had published three equality schemes and undertaken an Equalities Policy Review. The new document would consolidate all policies and action plans.

59 TRANS INCLUSION IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

59.1 The Forum received a paper by Spectrum "Trans Inclusion in Brighton & Hove: A position paper" (see minute book). Julie Nichols

made a presentation in which she advised what an inclusive model should look like, the new duties under recent legislation, the workplace environment, monitoring inclusivity and national best practice models.

59.2 Councillor Burgess recommended that all councillors should see the presentation; he congratulated Arthur Law, Julie Nichols and Petra Davis on the work that had gone into the report, which would improve the council's level of understanding of the issues involved. Councillor Pidgeon seconded this and Councillor Meadows requested that the Forum should receive an update in a year's time.

59.3 The Director of Strategy & Governance had met with Spectrum. He advised that so far they had discussed how the council could improve as an employer and were moving towards looking at the council as a service provider. He thanked the report authors and stated that other local authorities had already made enquiries about this work.

60 CULTURAL SERVICES ANNUAL EQUALITIES REPORT

60.1 The Forum considered the annual report of the Acting-Director of Cultural Services (see minute book) concerning: progress made against the equality standard for local government; the equalities action plan for the coming year; the monitoring of customer satisfaction in terms of equalities; documentation of equality impact assessments and the directorate's equalities achievements for the previous year. The Acting-Director attended the meeting and made a presentation. He was supported by colleagues from Creative Arts, ICT and Economic Development.

60.2 Sylvia Alexander-Vine asked about the "Women in the Media" project. The Acting-Director replied that this initiative had been dealt with by the Economic Development team and local business organisations using funding from SEEDA's Area Investment Framework.

60.3 Bert Williams enquired why the Chattri memorial service had been omitted from the list of memorial services. Paula Murray replied that the council would not wish to claim credit for events arranged by other organisations and the Acting-Chair requested that this be mentioned with due credits in future reports. Mr Williams added that various organisations had contacted him expressing concern that invitations to the Indian Gateway Re-dedication Service, where wreaths had been laid to commemorate the 85th anniversary year of the installation, had been restricted to a few dignitaries.

[NOTE: Following the meeting the suggestion that other groups should be invited to the future memorials at the Indian Gateway has been passed to Chattri Memorial Group by the Mayoral Secretary.]

60.4 Mr Williams congratulated Jenni Lewin-Turner on her hard work towards the Abolition of Slavery celebrations, which had involved local children. Neil Ansell seconded this.

60.5 Councillor Pidgeon enquired whether there was an audio tour of Preston Manor.

Janita
Bagshawe

60.6 Joan Moorhouse enquired whether there was a good selection of audio and large print library books. The Acting-Director undertook to refer this to the Head of Libraries. It was noted that items could be ordered, if a branch did not have a particular item.

Sally
McMahon

60.7 Councillor McCaffery recommended that the city should consider ways of presenting Travellers' Culture in a positive way to the general public. The Acting-Director undertook to discuss this with colleagues in the Environment Department.

Scott
Marshall

60.8 **RESOLVED** –That the report, the achievements and the equalities action plan for the coming year be noted as detailed at Appendix 1.

61 “NOT JUST A RAMP”

61.1 The Forum considered an extract from the Licensing Committee of 8 February 2007 (see minute book). Martin Seymour, Hackney Carriage Officer showed a video, which had been made to demonstrate transportation issues which make it difficult for wheelchair users, blind & deaf people, and people with conditions like arthritis, to use trains and taxis.

61.2 Councillors Simson and McCaffery had been members of the Access working group that had considered disabled users' needs. They considered that the city had progressed a long way since that time. The Forum noted that the DVD was available to all taxi companies for training purposes and that the council's Licensing Team offered an induction course to new taxi drivers, which covers the issues involved.

61.3 PJ Aldred requested help from the council in providing a taxi service for disabled people needing to reach Preston Park during the Pride celebrations.

Martin
Seymour

61.4 **RESOLVED** – That the extract be noted.

FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that meetings had been scheduled for Mondays 18 June,

24 September and 19 November, starting at 4 pm.

The meeting concluded at 4.45 pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2007