



Bromsgrove
District Council
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The Equality and Diversity Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 9th April 2009

In attendance	
Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Stuart Bray	Pinke.biz
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Mary Collett	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Anne Marie Darroch	Communications Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Nigel Godwin	Bromsgrove resident
Patricia Hackett	Mencap
Tracey Hodges	Day Services Manager, Padstone Day Centre, Worcestershire County Council
Sue Mould	Electoral Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Councillor David Pardoe	Independent Councillor for Sidemoor Ward
Councillor Stephen Peters	Diversity Champion for elected Members, Bromsgrove District Council
Trevor Rigg	Bromsgrove Resident and Forum Chair
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line
Phil Street	Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects, Bromsgrove District Council
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network
Carol Tipping	Secretary, Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Julie Wright	Community Support Officer, West Mercia Police
P C Mark Townsend	West Mercia Police

Apologies	
Hugh Bennett	Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Tony Beirne	Executive Director - Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Kevin Dicks	Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council and Acting Chief Executive Redditch Borough Council
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove Older People's Forum, Bromsgrove and District NHS Retirement Fellowship
Balbinder Kular-Taylor	Senior Positive Action Adviser, West Mercia Constabulary Head Quarters
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Kathleen Roche-Nagi	Approachable Coaching
	Primary Care Trust

1. Introductions and apologies

As Chair, **Trevor** welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He asked everyone to introduce themselves and for those members who were attending for the first time, to say a bit about themselves.

Apologies – noted as above.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 12th February 2009

The minutes were proposed for acceptance by as a true and accurate record by **Councillor Stephen Peters** and seconded by **Sat Aggarwal**. Agreed.

3. Matters arising if not included on main agenda

Patricia Hackett asked for confirmation that the arrangements are being made for temporary toilet facilities in anticipation of the closure of the Town Centre toilet block for refurbishment. **Phil Street** confirmed. Arrangements are being made.

Stuart Bray asked whether the minutes could indicate what would be printed and available at the meeting and what would not to save paper. **Fiona Scott** agreed that this would be done in future.

Trevor Rigg raised the issue regarding gritting and falls.

Fiona reported that she had tried hard to obtain information from the **Primary Care Trust (PCT)** and had received some statistical information which was distributed to the meeting. This information required a representative from the **Primary Care Trust** to explain the detail but despite best efforts no-one was available for tonight's meeting.

Jim Smith advised that there was a countywide group meeting to discuss falls and health and well being and that this was part of the **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)**. He suggested that a request be made for them to debate the issues in respect of gritting and falls.

Trevor expressed his concerns and asked **Fiona** to continue her pursuit of the **Primary Care Trust** for details but also to pass on the request that the **Local Strategic Partnership** look into the matter as an agenda item on their existing countywide health and well being group.

Mr Chaudhari expressed his concern at the extent of the issue in Bromsgrove.

Trevor advised that he had attended a Town Centre regeneration meeting and that he will be asking **Richard Savory** to attend a future meeting to advise on progress – this was welcomed by those attending the meeting.

Trevor advised that a discussion and presentation on Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-sexual issues is scheduled for the June meeting with guest speaker **Malcolm Johnson** from the Sexual Health Team of the **Primary Care Trust**. He suggested that the whole meeting be set aside for those issues. This was agreed.

4. Items from the Forum Chair

The Vice Chair of Forum previously was **Joe Scott**. **Joe** wrote a letter on 23rd February offering his resignation as Vice Chair and member of the Forum. **Trevor** read out the letter and the reply sent to **Joe** from **Trevor** and **Kevin Dicks**.

His grounds were that because he is employed by **Bromsgrove District Housing Trust** he felt that he may not be perceived to be independent in the eyes of other members of the Forum. Thanks for **Joe's** support and participation were duly noted by the meeting.

Trevor expressed his concern that age has not as yet been addressed as an equality issue in meetings of the Forum.

Claire Felton will inform the Overview exercise on older people.

5. Equality Highlight Report

Full copy of the report is appended at the end of these minutes.

5.1 The Gender Equality Scheme

The revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme was distributed to the meeting. The events held on International Women's Day were very popular with very positive comments on the evaluation forms. The books and information display received a lower level of interest but a number of people stopped to discuss some of the women and the issues of equality featured in the display.

5.2 The Equality and Diversity Forum

The revised Protocols showing the new closing time of the meeting are attached at the end of the Equality Highlight Report.

5.3 The 2009 Consultation Conference

Fiona and **Trevor** investigated various venues and considered whether a week day or Saturday would be best. The availability of other venues wasn't very good so they jointly made the decision to use the Council House facilities and choose a Saturday date – **26th September 2009** - for the benefit of those in work who other wise might not be able to attend.

Mencap has been added to the list of partners who will be invited.

5.4 The Disabled Users Group

The March meeting had a very productive discussion with **Jon Fraser** of the Highways Department, Worcestershire County Council going through a list of items submitted by the Group. Approximately £4-5 million was spent in Bromsgrove last year. This work included resurfacing of roads in Charford, Rubery, Hagley and Alvechurch. This year they are changing focus, subject to approval by the County Council's Executive Cabinet, to spend £3m on improvements to footways.

Jon Fraser was strongly urged to help with the road signage issues for the Changing Places facility in the refurbished town centre toilet block as the initial response from the Highways Department was that further traffic into Bromsgrove should be discouraged. He promised to take this back to his department for reconsideration.

The new facilities will be designated as “Changing Places” and this will be advertised as part of a national network on the Mencap website for those planning a long journey and want to know where they can stop if they have this need.

There will be some publicity in National Learning Disability Week which is 22nd to 28th June 2009. In early July there will be an opening ceremony and a Stakeholder’s meeting at the Council House with as many interested parties and users groups as possible attending. The facilities will be fully open by mid July. **Fiona** and **Patricia** are in a short term working group planning these arrangements.

There is a meeting of Key Partners on 30th April to agree roles and responsibilities in relation to the Changing Places facility. At this meeting we will establish the process for access to the facility as it is not open to everyone and will be accessed by a Key Code not a Radar Key. There will be an application and assessment process which will include the provision of training if needed.

Two car parking spaces will be designated for Changing Places in the Recreation Road car park and normal car parking charges will apply. A Changing Places badge will be issued to be displayed alongside the Blue Badge.

For anyone who needs to use the facility on a journey there will be contact details on the national Mencap website and details will be made available from Shopmobility.

It has been agreed that the preferred access to “disabled” toilet is a push button with automatic opening but there will be a handle as well in case of emergencies. There was some discussion about the needs of people changing a colostomy bag. This has been resolved with advice from the Colostomy and Ileostomy Associations. A shelf will be provided in all cubicles and a sanitary disposal bin will be provided in the men’s, women’s and disabled toilets.

5.5 The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group

The group was due to meet in April - agreed to defer this until May. **Fiona** will send out the latest list of completed Equality Impact Assessments to the members of the working group and find a date in May that suits as many people as possible.

5.6 Bromsgrove Black History Society

The action plan was agreed by the Society's supporters and partners at the first meeting of the Society on 6th April. The general principle is that all partners will take their actions away and work on them outside of meetings and report progress at the bi-monthly meetings of the Society.

5.7 Diwali

Fiona will arrange a meeting with the organisers as soon as possible.

5.8 Equalities e-consultation website

This was demonstrated to the meeting. So far only 3 community members and partners had accepted the invitation to join. A further electronic invitation was sent out on 8th April and it was agreed that everyone present would accept the invitation as, without at least 20 people the “Quick Reference Panel” would not have much success as a consultation method.

5.9 Being Different Together

The draft report is waiting to be signed off. Details will be made available to the June meeting.

The Peer Diversity Challenge to the Council’s Level 3 claim is going ahead on 23rd and 24th April and a group of volunteers offered to attend to meet as a Focus Group for the Equality and Diversity Forum. The result of the Challenge will be known at the end of the day on 24th April.

Trevor thanked the Forum for their support for this process.

5.10 Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme

As agreed a summary report will be produced in time for the Consultation Conference.

5.11 Community bids

Fiona will contact the accepted bidders and arrange to issue the money to them.

5.12 Community Transport

As stated.

5.13 Refurbishment of Town Centre Toilet Block including “Changing Places” facilities

As discussed above in **5.4 The Disabled Users Group**.

5.14 Interpreting and translation services

As stated. **Fiona** will report back to this group when the new service provider has been agreed in partnership with County Council.

6. Public perception safety in relation to equality – P C Mark Townsend, West Mercia Police

Mark gave a presentation on Community Safety and distributed Information Packs.

The context is the statement by the Home Office that

“ everybody has the right to feel safe as they go about their daily lives”

Mark answered various questions raised in the meeting

- **Jim Smith** asked why the Police booklet did not refer to the Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership (**BHIP**)? **Mark** agreed to take this back to the Police organisation.
- **Eileen Mulhall** asked about issues in King George Close, Sidemoor and the recreation grounds where problems arise with young people drinking and using motorbikes.
- **Nigel Godwin** asked whether the recreation ground could be made into an alcohol free zone.
- **Jim** suggested that **Partners and Communities Together** (**PACT**) meetings be held in the daytime
- **Councillor Pardoe** advised of the availability of advice surgeries in Sidemoor
- **Stuart Bray** said that he felt that the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-sexual community is not safe – **Mark Townsend** agreed to meet with **Stuart** to discuss this separately
- **Trevor** advised **Mark** that Race and Religion are still issues
- **Mr. Chaudhari** disagreed and felt that it was not a serious problem.

7. June elections – survey of voter experience – Sue Mould, Electoral Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

Sue Mould did a presentation on Electoral arrangements and the combined County Council and European elections on Thursday 4th June. She gave out an elections calendar and leaflet explaining postal voting and arrangements for the day.

Jim Smith asked about the accessibility of portable buildings for disabled people.

They are only ever used as a last resort and wherever possible we try to make all polling stations accessible. There is always a postal vote option for anyone who prefers this method.

Sue will be carrying out a voter experience survey to get feedback on whether voters have had their needs understood and met when attending polling stations to vote.

8. Council Communications - Anne Marie Darroch, Communications and Customer First Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

Anne Marie Darroch explained the nature of Council Communications.

Trevor thanked Anne Marie for her presentation and thanked **John Tempest** for making the request for the information regarding communications to be brought to the forum.

Nigel and **Eileen** had found that there is an issue of inaccessibility in the ticket number queuing system at the HUB for people with sight impairment.

Fiona will take this up with E Gov and Customer Services

9. Items from the Chief Executive – Phil Street, Executive Director of Services on behalf of Kevin Dicks

Phil gave a short message regarding the budget position during the credit crunch and the way in which the Council are attempting to make savings by sharing service with other Councils.

The improvement to the railway station has now got over all the obstacles subject to a formal sign off in the summer.

There was an Economic Recovery event held by Council in March in relation to any assistance or partnership working the Council can provide in current economic climate.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was formally announced on 1st April – the Council received an overall rating of “Fair”. The Government Monitoring Board under whose guidance the Council has been operating has said that it no longer needs to meet and it is likely that the Council will be finally coming out of voluntary engagement.

The new fitness suite has been opened and is accessible to all.

Market Hall not resident on High Street.

Green waste is now being collected and being charged for with more than 13,000 households having signed up for it.

Play areas have been upgraded through a £1 million spend and young people made bids securing £80,000 for projects developing in Bromsgrove.

Sponsorship signage on road islands has been agreed to draw in money to support service delivery.

The Town Centre regeneration continues throughout the prevailing economic climate and Richard Savory will give talk to the Forum at a later date.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Time, date and place of next meeting –

6.30 pm Thursday 11th June 2009

The Committee Room



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The Equality and Diversity Forum

Equality Highlight Report – 9th April 2009

1. The Gender Equality Scheme

The revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme was published on 6th March 2009 at the International Women's Day event in the Spadesbourne Suite. However, it has not yet been widely circulated due to the need to include language access information on the back cover. See item 14.

The Scheme commits the Council to a programme of Gender Equality awareness for staff during 2009 which will include Trans-issues.

At the International Women's Day event there was a small display of information about Council services and policies, including information and support services for women and men experiencing domestic violence.

There was a display of books with supplementary information by or about women of historical and international interest including lesbian and bisexual women. There was a general display about news items in relation to gender equality and equal pay.

The day time event was attended by about 100 people and the evening by 200 people and the evaluation shows that it was enjoyed by everyone who attended most of whom would recommend this event to friends.

2. The Equality and Diversity Forum

The 2009 programme of meetings and the operating Protocols have both been amended to show the new closing time of 8.30 pm

3. The 2009 Consultation Conference

The Conference will be on Saturday 26th September 2009 in the Civic Suite of Rooms at the Council House (The Council Chamber and associated rooms).

This will replace the October meetings of both the Forum (8th October) and the Disabled Users Group (2nd October).

Those who will be invited include

- Bromsgrove District Council – Senior Management Team, all Heads of Service and Equality Champions
- Representatives of all the political groups elected to the Council
- Parish Councillors
- County Council officers for
 - Highways
 - Transport
 - Customer Services
 - Supporting People
 - Equality and Diversity
- Main partners
 - The Equality and Diversity Forum
 - The Disabled Users Group
 - The Gender Equality Working Group
 - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
 - Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
 - Bromsgrove Black History Society
 - Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
 - Age Concern
 - North Worcestershire DIAL
 - Padstone Day Centre and Greenscope
 - West Mercia Police
 - BARN
 - Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue
 - Primary Care Trust
 - Mencap

There will be four main themes in the morning session :

- Town Centre including transport and parking
- Housing
- Sense of community including customer service
- Clean streets and climate change

The afternoon sessions will have six workshops themes based on the six strands of diversity.

- Race
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Disability

4. The Disabled Users Group

The minutes of their meetings are included for the December and March (re-arranged from February) meetings. The Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group minutes and the Council's reply are also included with the papers for the Equality and Diversity Forum.

The Disabled Users Group has had discussion on access to leisure services which resulted in the prospect of a disabled swimmers/ exercise session in the near future.

The Group has drawn up the list of Highways issues for their April meeting with Jon Fraser from the Highways Department, Worcestershire County Council.

Members of the groups have been involved in access needs discussions on the Railway Station redevelopment and Community Transport.

5. The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group

The Group is due to reconvene in April. The most recent list of completed Equality Impact Assessments will be sent to the Working Group members in due course to select their next set of Assessments.

6. Bromsgrove Black History Society

The overall write up of event for 2008 will be issued with the papers for the first meeting of the Society this year on 6th April 2009 at 6.00 pm in the Conference Room. The papers will be circulated on 1st April including a detailed action plan for discussion on the 6th.

7. Diwali

Diwali falls on Saturday 17th October 2009. The celebratory event will take place in the Spadesbourne Suite on Sunday 18th October. The working group overseeing the arrangements has yet to meet. A write up of 2008 was provided in the Equality Highlight report for 12th February 2009.

8. Equalities e-consultation website

The new version of this website is now in use but so far only 6 people have joined. A new invitation will be sent out just before the 9th April to those who have responded so far. The address of the website is

www.bdc-e-equalities.blogspot.com/

This website won't support attachments and documents but will allow an online discussion about items posted in the spaces available on the website pages.

9. Being Different Together

The draft report about Worcestershire Communities was ready at the end of March.

In accordance with the objectives of this project Bromsgrove District Council will be undergoing a "Peer Challenge" to our claim that we have reached Level 3 of the Equality Standard Local Government. There is a pre-site visit on 9th April when the Peers meet for the first time and make a provisional assessment of our evidence. They will decide on the day whether the Council is ready for the full challenge.

If so, the Challenge will take place on 23rd and 24th April and we will need a group of 8-10 community members to meet the Peers and be interviewed by them.

The Peers are

- Councillor Ian Ward – Birmingham City Council
- Kirsty Hopkins – Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council
- Suranjana Lall – Warwickshire County Council
- Gill Elliot – Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government

If Bromsgrove achieves this objective of Level 3, our role under Being Different Together will be to help other District Councils in Worcestershire to move forward learning from the Bromsgrove experience.

10. Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme

The review is still in progress. The main points were included in the Equality Highlight report for the 12th February Forum meeting. It is intended that the full review be published in advance of the October Consultation Conference and that the main achievements for each equality grouping are given in handout format for use in the discussion groups.

11. Community Bids

The money will be available from 1st April 2009 – those groups concerned contact Fiona at the end of the meeting to arrange the handover of the monies. As discussed at previous meetings some feedback will be expected to this Forum over the next 12 months.

- Finding a Voice
- Support Network for Disabled People
- Padstone/ Greenscope allotment project

The Community bids meeting for 2009 is planned for 10th September and next year's bids will need to be submitted by (date to be agreed).

12. Community Transport

There was a consultation event on 19th February which was attended by over 50 people and included individuals and groups with transport needs. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what vehicle to buy, which routes would be used and how much the fares would be. This information has all been taken back to the project manager (Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive). It was agreed that one second hand, wheelchair accessible mini bus will be purchased in the first instance and that weekly or fortnightly routes would be used, e.g. for shopping clubs. Individuals will be picked up on route if there is capacity in the minibus. It is expected that a service will start running in September 2009.

13. Refurbishment of Town Centre Toilet Block including “Changing Places” facilities

This project is now close to the start of the building works. A specification has been drawn up and expressions of interest received. Patricia Hackett on behalf of Mencap has agreed to help with some consultancy time on the finer details of access arrangements, training, risk assessments, signage and so on and the linking the Bromsgrove facilities to Mencap's national “Changing Places” network advertised on the Mencap website. County Council will be approached to arrange for the “Changing Places” logo to be on road network road signs.

It is intended that the new facilities will be open by mid to late June and publicity and marketing will be organised with various partners in the County and the District. We are looking to carry out an opening event perhaps with a celebrity and will be entering into the “Loo of the Year” competition.

14. Interpreting and Translation services

From 2006 to the end of March 2009, an interpreting service has been provided under contract by Worcester based Ethnic Access Link whose information appears on the back of all our publications. This service enabled the Council to meet its legal requirements and provide a route for accessing our services for those who need help with the English language.

The service provided by Ethnic Access Link included community support at grass roots level – befriending schemes, home tutoring in English, English as a second language courses, Polish clinics and Polish language classes.

Ethnic Access Link originally were due to close altogether on 31st December but have now gone into a partnership with another local organisation.

Bromsgrove District Council had to make a decision in mid December when Ethnic Access Link announced that they intended to shut down on 31st December. It was decided that the District Council would link with the arrangements of the County Council which will come into effect from 1st April onwards. However, the full details are not yet available and, will only be temporary for 6 months during which time the County will conduct a formal tendering and procurement exercise for interpreting and translation services for the County and probably for most, if not all of the Districts in Worcestershire.

Ethnic Access Link subsequently rescinded their notice of closure and their service continued under the current contract with them until the end of March 2009.





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Bromsgrove District Council Equality and Diversity Forum

Protocols

To be effective the Forum agrees the following Protocols :-

- **The Forum will meet on Thursday evenings at bi-monthly intervals unless varied by agreement with the members of the Forum**
- **The Agenda, invitation and any associated papers for each meeting will be sent out 14 days before the date of the meeting**
- **The Agenda will refer by date to the minutes of the previous meeting**
- **The minutes of each meeting will be signed by the Chair at the following meeting**
- **The minutes of each meeting will be issued to members with the invitation for the following meeting**
- **The minutes of each meeting will be published on the Bromsgrove District Council's website after they have been accepted at the following meeting**
- **Agenda items for will be notified to the Chair or the Equality Officer by the Monday before the Invitation and papers are issued for that meeting**
- **The meetings will start at 6.30 pm with light refreshments served from 5.30 pm onwards**
- **The meetings will close at 8.30 pm**

