



Bromsgrove
District Council

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The Equality and Diversity Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 11th June 2009

In attendance	
Stuart Bray	Pinke.biz
Councillor Mrs Maddy Bunker	Older People's Task Group, elected Member for Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Victoria Coley	Bromsgrove resident
Mary Collett	Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group and Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Councillor Geoff Denaro	Elected Member and Executive Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Kevin Dicks	Acting Joint Chief Executive Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council
Rebecca Dunne	Senior Policy and Performance Officer (Community Engagement) Bromsgrove District Council
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Mandy Geens	Pertemps Disability Consultancy
Patricia Hackett	Mencap and Bromsgrove resident
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Malcolm Johnson	Sexual Health Counsellor, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust
Elaine Mortimore	Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Debra Newton	Primary Care Trust and Community/ Sexual Health Service and Bromsgrove resident
Councillor David Pardoe	Elected Member for Bromsgrove District Council

In attendance	
Councillor Stephen Peters	Elected Member for Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council, Diversity Champion for elected Members, Bromsgrove District Council
Trevor Rigg	Bromsgrove Resident and Forum Chair, Chair of Bromsgrove Black History Society
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
Bal Kular-Taylor	Senior Positive Action Adviser, West Mercia Constabulary Head Quarters
Carole Tipping	Secretary, Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Lynn Ward	Pertemps Disability Consultancy
Jo Wright	Bromsgrove resident
Julie Wright	Community Support Officer, West Mercia Police
P C Mark Townsend	West Mercia Police

Apologies	
Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Hugh Bennett	Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Tony Beirne	Executive Director - Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Nigel Godwin	Bromsgrove resident
Kathleen Roche-Nagi	Approachable Coaching and Bromsgrove resident
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network

1. Introductions and apologies

Trevor welcomed everyone to this meeting, the fourth anniversary of the inception of the Forum.

The Forum has been successful, there are members here who have been attending for most of the four years of our existence.

We have a Chief Executive who has two jobs who has made a point of joining us tonight to celebrate our fourth anniversary and the success of the council in achieving Level 3 through the Diversity Peer Challenge.

Kevin thanked **Trevor** for his perseverance and his hard work on behalf of the Forum.

Trevor thanked **Claire** without whose efforts in the early stages we wouldn't be here tonight.

Apologies – noted as above.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 12th February 2009

2.1 Page 5 – referring to **Changing Places**, **Mencap** does not manage the national website. The national network of **Changing Places** is a consortium of which **Mencap** is a member.

The minutes were proposed by **Patricia Hackett** and seconded by **Eileen Mulhall**.

Agreed.

3. Matters arising if not included on main agenda

3.1 Eileen reported that at the Sidemoor recreation ground a brand new motorbike had been set on fire. There have been two fires in recent weeks. **Mark Townsend** was already aware of this and agreed to take this issue back to **West Mercia Police**.

3.2 Page 3, under item 3 – referring to the **Primary Care Trust**, **Jackie Threshie** will be coming to the December meeting to discuss the issues of Trips and Falls.

Trevor and **Jim Smith** have recently met the Diversity lead officer for the **Primary Care Trust, Kulvinder Hira**. She is setting up a system to consult with community groups in a similar way. **Trevor** suggested this could be done through this Forum. We have also contact from **Sonia Spurr**, the Community Engagement Manager who was hoping to attend this meeting but had to send her apologies.

Trevor noted that we also need to encourage involvement of Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue. They will be attending a meeting of the Town Centre group the following Monday.

3.3 Page 6 – item 5.8 e-Equalities website

We still 3 community members signed up. **Trevor** suggested that 4-5 volunteers come forward to be briefed on how to access it the website. They will then form a core group of people who can be emailed to say that there is something on the site. This came from the request to see items they are published. Agreed.

3.3 Page 9 Item 8 - Queuing system at the Customer Service Centre

Fiona has taken this up with the Head of Service responsible for the Bromsgrove Customer Service Centre and the Disability Equality Adviser for the County Council. It was agreed that there is a training need for staff to identify when someone needs assistance and then to provide that assistance. In this case this would mean helping someone to a seat and telling them that they would be called when it was their turn.

An alternative would be for the person to phone ahead so that arrangements could be made to meet and greet the person on arrival.

It was acknowledged that some people might have difficulty using the phone.

Kevin suggested that this be taken up to the Customer Service Centre Advisory Group at County Level. Agreed.

3.4 Page 5 – reference to Disabled toilet and Changing Places

The paragraph is unclear about the access mechanism – Fiona will reword this.

4. Items from the Forum Chair

In discussions outside of the Forum meetings, **Trevor** and **Fiona** have highlighted that some of the six strands of diversity have not yet been actively pursued. In particular, LGB (Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual) and older adults. For this reason, it is a pleasure to see Councillor Maddy Bunker at this meeting to talk about the Older People's Task Group.

Age is also about younger people. Although traditionally we don't see many young people at these meetings, it's good to see **Elaine Mortimore** of the Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum. Elaine reported that a Youth Forum has been set up and this can be used to feed issues into this Forum.

A success that we should celebrate is the group of young people who succeeded with a bid for £80,000 from Worcestershire County Council for projects in Bromsgrove which includes a multi use games area in Sanders park. This means that many young people are actively involved for their own and other people's benefit.

We are responding to Forum members' requests and the issues raised at the February and April 2009 meetings, hence we have **Malcolm Johnson** here to talk about LGBT issues and the way that these issues are reflected across all the other strands of diversity.

For all these issues we will have a chance to discuss them in more detail at the 18 monthly Consultation conference on 26th September 2009.

5. **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-sexual community issues – Malcolm Johnson, Sexual Health Counsellor, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust**

Malcolm introduced his presentation with information about the world famous Housman family from Bromsgrove. AE Housman was gay, Lawrence Housman (brother) was gay and Clemence Housman (sister) was a lesbian. There are many websites about the Housmans, not all of them accurate and some denying the facts of the private lives of the family members.

LGBT – the definitions are as follows :-

L is Lesbian
G is Gay
B is Bisexual
T is for trans-issues – this refers to gender, not sexuality

Focusing on AE Housman – when he died his brother released some unknown poems one of which was written about Oscar Wilde's trials (see slide number 5).

LGBT issues are not new, but **Malcolm** would rather live now than in previous times.

LGBT identities apply to any age group, both genders, all cultural and ethnic backgrounds, disabled people.

We need to raise awareness of LGBT hate crime and how to report it whether as witnesses or victims. We need to make it know what services there are for victims. It is the case, especially for older LGBT people that there is a fear of discrimination.

Malcolm's various roles include staff training around sexual health issues and relationships – this is mainly aimed at young people.

This work encompasses various concepts in relation to sexuality and sexual behaviour as follows :-

- **Gender** - being masculine or feminine, as they are understood within society.
- **Sexuality** - everyone has a sexuality, it is made up of many facets of our personality, sensitivities and preferences. Our gender and sexual orientation are part of our sexuality.
- **Sexual Orientation** - we can be sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender; i.e. Heterosexual (straight), attracted to people of the same gender; i.e. Homosexual (Gay / Lesbian).
Attracted to people of both genders; i.e Bisexual - For some people their Sexual Orientation can change at different stages in their life:
- **Sexism** - when a person believes that one gender is naturally superior to the other and believes that this justifies the right to dominance. The term sexism usually applies to men imposing their gender prejudices onto women but can also be vice-versa.
- **Heterosexism** - when a person believes that heterosexuals and bisexuals are naturally superior to homosexuals and bisexuals and believes that this justifies the right to dominance and the imposition of assumed power and / or discrimination.
- **Homophobia** - an irrational fear and dislike for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. This fear usually results in judgemental, discriminatory and verbal or physical acts of hatred or aggression.

Sexual orientation defines who you are in the light of who you are attracted to. Sexuality changes often for young people and for older people. There are LBG issues in nursing and care homes and staff often don't know how to handle this.

- **Transgender**
Transgender is generally used as a catch-all umbrella term for a variety of individuals, behaviours, and groups centered around the full or partial reversal of gender roles; however, broadly speaking, transgender people are individuals whose gender expression and /or gender identity differs from 'conventional expectations' based on the physical sex / gender they were born into.

- **Transsexual**

An individual whose gender identity does not match the sex that was assigned to them at birth. Usually, transsexual people will seek hormonal and/or surgical treatment in order to bring their body into alignment with their gender identity.

- **Transvestite or Cross-dresser**

Transvestite: someone who adopts the dress or manner or sexual role of the opposite sex.

Other definitions of Gender or Sexuality: -

- **Gender Identity Disorder**

(G.I.D): A condition identified by psychologists and medical doctors wherein a person who has been assigned one gender at birth identifies as belonging to another gender

- **Gender Dysphoria (also known as Body Dysphoria)**

(G.D) The state of discomfort felt by transsexuals and some transgender people caused by the incongruity between one's physical sex and one's gender-identity.

What is prejudice and discrimination?

- Prejudice is an opinion or attitude, formed before hand without evidence, thought or reason.
- Influencing factors towards prejudices are: -
- Cultural, Environment, Religion, Family & Education and others.

The Four Main Components are: -

- Negative attitudes and beliefs
- Pre-judgements
- Judgements based on stereotypical assumptions
- Judgements based on individual behaviour

Malcolm explained “**Allport’s Scale of Prejudice**” (see slides 17-20)

Level 1 – anti-locution or “bad mouthing”

Level 2 – avoidance

Level 3 – power to discriminate

Level 4 – physical attacks

Level 5 – extermination including genocide and murder

Recent examples include Rees Jones, Stephen Lawrence; genocides based on persecution include Rwanda, Yugoslavia, Ireland, Iraq. The scale of prejudice is still there and can start at any point including Level 4, murder. Or it can start with the milder forms and progress up the levels.

Within Worcestershire, Bromsgrove has LGBT issues and there is hate crime based on LGBT issues. This is so even where the victim is not necessarily a member of the LGBT community, it may be that it is assumed that they are when they are targeted.

There is a Worcestershire LGBT (Police) Forum who meet once a month – the venues alternate between Worcester and other venues in Worcestershire. Each meeting looks at the previous four weeks of LGBT hate crimes reported to the police. Then we look at all the agencies involved and what services they are providing. West Mercia are one of the best forces in dealing with this issue. Individuals can come and bring their issues to the meeting.

Worcestershire has four hate incident partnerships which have had a degree of success. A lot of areas outside of Worcestershire don’t have these structures.

Schools and colleges need support to help them deal with hate crime issues.

Mr Chaudhari asked whether different groups within the community attend these meetings?

There are two Detective Inspectors involved one each representing the North and South of Worcestershire. There are sections of the community that are not friendly, in fact very hostile and help is needed break down these barriers through these meetings with the support of various agencies.

Mr Chaudhari asked whether any Muslims attend the meetings? At least one Muslim individual has attended. It was agreed that efforts should be made to encourage a wide range of people to come that would help remove some of the misunderstanding.

Mr Chaudhari agreed that there is homophobia in Bromsgrove but not as far as the Asian community. **Malcolm** explained that the level of homophobic reports has been as high for Bromsgrove as for Redditch. A lot of the time the incident relate to neighbours.

The influx of East European migrants has made a difference to the numbers of hate incidents.

It was agreed that the Forum would ask someone from the Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership to come to a future meetings and share the facts and figures about Bromsgrove incidents. It is important to know about the statistics as this establishes the need for the reporting system.

Jo Wright said that she would feel supported if she had to report a hate crime. This is about promoting a sense of belonging and inclusion. “Bad mouthing” and avoidance happens a lot of the time.

Jo asked what strategies do the County Council have for dealing with this sort low level “harassment”/ intolerance?

Malcolm has been involved in five events which focused on young people looking at all forms of bullying. Various agencies present the morning session and the afternoon is for people on the ground, to help them get to know what services are available.

Some success are that Kidderminster ran a gay pride event for the first time this year and Worcester are planning an event for next year.

This is not the end – this is just the start of getting to know more about other agencies and activities.

6. Older People's Task Group – Councillor Mrs M Bunker

Trevor welcomed this item on the Agenda as the Equality and Diversity Forum had already identified that other equality strands have had attention and specific initiatives but that “age” as a subject has not yet been specifically addressed.

Mrs Bunker explained the rationale behind the establishment of a Task Group specifically to look at the needs and requirement of the older age groups in the Bromsgrove District taking into account the mental and physical well being and the ageing profile of the population.

People are living longer but more likely to be living with poor health as they age.

The Terms of Reference of the Task Group are to include Health and Wellbeing, Community Facilities and Activities, Housing and Cost of Living.

Other areas such as transport have already been looked at taking into account the needs of older people, so will not be looked at again.

The possible key outcomes are to develop and strategic plan for older people in the Bromsgrove District to ensure that the services provided by the Council and its partners are responsive to the emerging challenges of the changing demographics.

This is because all Councils need to understand their older communities and shape both universal and targeted services accordingly. Increase awareness, better engagement and innovation could help many older people without significant expenditure.

The Task Group is made up of six elected Members

- Councillor Mrs M Bunker
- Councillor Mr D McGrath
- Councillor Mr D Pardoe
- Councillor Mr J Tidmarsh
- Councillor Mr L Turner
- Councillor Mr S Colella

and one co-opted external member

- Ann Sowton from Bromsgrove and Redditch Network

In addition there will be senior officer support from the Assistant Chief Executive's team, the Council's Strategic Housing team and the Health Improvement Practitioner (Primary Care Trust member of staff based at the Council House).

External witnesses who will be asked to give evidence include Age Concern, Worcestershire County Council, the Primary Care Trust, the Bromsgrove Older People's Forum and, of course, this Equality and Diversity Forum.

The Task Group are interested in using the opportunity of the International Day of Older Person on 1st October. The United Nations has designated the 1st of October as an annual day in recognition of the world's rapidly ageing population and the growing importance of older people in society.

The members of the Forum expressed a view that they would like to know more about national and international equality and diversity event enable campaigns and activities to be focused around recognised dates to give and extra impetus to local campaigns.

Fiona will investigate what information is available for use by the Forum and various subgroups and interest groups.

Trevor thanked **Councillor Bunker** for her input and on behalf of the Forum expressed the hope that the findings of the Task Group will be presented back to the Forum at an appropriate point in the future. Agreed

7. Questions from floor for the Chief Executive – Kevin Dicks, Acting Chief Executive for Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council

There were no specific questions from the floor for Kevin.

Kevin acknowledged the role of the Equality and Diversity Forum in the Diversity Peer Challenge and their contribution to the successful result. This means that we are classed as an “Achieving” authority but it doesn’t mean that we’ve done everything yet.

Regarding questions that have been asked as to where we go from here, this is not the end of the process, it merely established Bromsgrove at the middle of the journey towards “Excellent” in Equality and Diversity.

The assessment is valid for two years and at the end of that time we either have to be re-assessed at the same level, which is “Achieving” to prove that we have maintained the work, or we have to have moved up to the next level which is “Excellent”. This is what we are going to aspire to.

This means that we will be looking to be assessed as “Excellent” in April-June 2011. This will co-incide with the republication of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme – we agreed with the Forum members that we would extend the lifetime of our existing scheme by a further 18 months to line up our 3 three cycles with the County Council’s Single Equality Scheme.

This will also co-incide with the implementation of the Equality Bill currently going through Parliament and the next 18th monthly Community Consultation Conference. This is a very big commitment and it will be a lot of work to get that the level of Excellence and we can’t do this without the support and involvement of the Forum.

8. Future agenda items

Diversity Peer Challenge Results – feedback and proposed way forward – August meeting

Arrangements for the September Community Consultation Conference – August meeting

Speaker from the Primary Care Trust to talk about “trips and falls” – December meeting

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Time, date and place of next meeting –

6.30 pm Thursday 13th August 2009

The Committee Room





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The Equality and Diversity Forum – 11th June 2009

Equality Highlight Report

1. The Gender Equality Scheme

There has been no specific response to the publishing of the Gender Equality Scheme in March 2009. The Forum needs to decide whether to reconvene the Gender Equality Working Group and if so, with what remit?

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. These have been published on the Internet.

Two members of the Forum recently took part in a Communications Focus Group organised by the Street Scene and Community Department. Another two members of the Forum (and one member of the Disabled Users Group took part in a hastily organised consultation on new wooden signs for Sanders Park.

3. The 2009 Consultation Conference – 26th September 2009

Invitations will go out in early August and the invitation list is currently being drawn up.

A list of County Council representatives has been submitted to Rukhsana Koser who will arrange for appropriate people to attend. These are

- Rukhsana Koser and/ or Sandy Bannister
- Jon Fraser from Highways department
- Public Transport
- Customer Services
- Supporting People

The Conference will be advertised in the next edition of Together Bromsgrove and we invite people to make friends and colleagues aware. An online enrolment facility is not proposed this time. A limit of 100 delegates is proposed.

The discussion workshop facilitators have not yet been identified.

4. The Disabled Users Group

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April have been circulated.

The minutes of the Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group meeting held on 6th April and the reply from the council dated 21st May have also been circulated.

The meeting on the 3rd April had a very productive discussion with Jon Fraser who took away a list of items that need attention including pot holes and dropped kerbs.

The group has a list of topics and guest speakers that it wants to cover in the next 6 to 12 months. It has been agreed that there will be an open meeting in June 2010 for any disabled people, organisations and support networks to attend to discuss and review the achievements of the Disabled Users Group.

5. Bromsgrove Black History Society

The write up of events for 2008 was issued with the papers at the meeting of the Society in April. A draft action plan was adopted at that meeting. An update on progress will be given verbally at the meeting on 11th June.

6. 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.

A draft item for Together Bromsgrove was posted by Fiona on 27th May. This item was about the success of the Diversity Peer Challenge and announcement of the Conference.

7. Being Different Together

The report about Worcestershire communities was accepted by all seven partner Councils in March and they are currently considering the recommendations. These will go through each council's Corporate Management Team and Executive Cabinet for approval and, when everyone is in agreement about which recommendations to take forward, the full report will be published. This is likely to be in the Autumn of this year at the earliest.

8. Diversity Peer Challenge

In accordance with the objectives of Being Different Together, Bromsgrove District Council invited a "Peer Challenge" to the claim to have reached Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The Challenge took place on 23rd and 24th April at the end of which the result was that Bromsgrove was approved Level 3.

This means that Bromsgrove is the only District in Worcestershire to have achieved this level and one of only approximately 23 District Councils (out of 238)* in England (*it should be noted that numbers of Councils have changed since these figures were published. It also should be noted that there were two District Councils at Level 4, the rest being at Levels 1 or 2 with a few at Level 0).

This means that Bromsgrove has proved the following :-

- That we have implemented a strategy for participation of designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in setting objectives of employment and service delivery
- That we have set equality objectives across the authority for race, gender and disability for employment, pay and service delivery
- That by March 2009 we have set equality objectives across the authority for sexual orientation, age, religion or belief for employment, pay and service delivery based on impact assessment and participation strategy
- That equality objectives have been translated into action plans with specific targets
- That we are developing information and monitoring systems that will allow us to assess progress in achieving targets
- That action on achieving targets has started
- Progress has been verified through self-assessment and scrutiny and has been validated externally through an accredited assessor

The Equality and Standard for Local Government was replaced by the Equality Framework for Local Government at the beginning of April 2009. The five level system for which Bromsgrove has achieved Level 3, has been replaced by a three level system – Emerging (Level 1), Achieving (Level 2) and Excellent (Level 3).

Bromsgrove automatically transfers across to the new Level 2, Achieving which confers the right to use the Achieving logo on all publications.

The Peer Team assessed our work in the four main areas of the Equality Standard for Local Government which are :-

- Leadership and Corporate Commitment
- Community Engagement and Accountability
- Service Delivery and Customer Care
- Employment and Training

They found overwhelmingly on the strengths side in each of these four areas although they also saw the need for some improvement in each. Their draft report is attached at the end of this section – they will issue a final version of their report in due course and the Council will incorporate their recommendations into the review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme.

9. Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme

Now that the Diversity Peer Challenge this can be progressed into a written report including the Peer Challenge recommendations and an action plan to achieve Excellent under Equality Framework for Local Government.

The review will be published and issued with the papers for the September Conference. The discussion topics on the six strands of diversity will be based on the content of the Review.

10. Community Bids

The monies have been issued to

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

The community members leading on those projects will be asked to report back on their achievements at a later date. Further details to be provided to those individuals in due course.

The Community bids meeting for 2009 is planned for 10th September. The date for submission of bids is yet to be agreed.

11. Community Transport

Four members of the Equality and Diversity Forum have been co-opted onto the working group – Mary Collett, Ann Crossland, Jeff Edwards and John Tempest. It is expected that a service will start running in September 2009.

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

The building works have started and temporary toilet facilities are available. Patricia and Fiona are involved in a short term working group to agree the details of the application, assessment and training process. Meetings with key partners have been held on 30th April and 3rd June to agree the application for access process.

Various issues have been routinely brought to the Disabled Users Group for their input and ad hoc consultations have been carried out with some of the members of the Group between meetings. There will be an event in the town centre to mark the opening of the refurbished followed by a Key Stakeholders meeting at the Council House on 22nd July.

13. Interpreting and Translation services

Bromsgrove District Council has agreed to join with Worcestershire County Council in an interpreting and translation service provision agreement. We have also agreed to adopt an Interpreting and Translation policy devised by the County Council. This policy is currently still under development.

There is a temporary Interpreting and Translation service in operation for all front line service provided through the Hub. However, there is currently no agreed service provider for Bromsgrove District Council “back office” services although this does not affect the Council’s ability to meet an individual’s language needs.

It does however mean that currently the access information sheet which should go out with all letters, and the statement that goes on the back of all our publications is suspended at the moment.

We can still provide alternative formats (such as large print, Braille, audio CD or tape) on request.

