

## **Equality Forum**

**Monday, 19 October 2009**

**Present:** Councillor Greg Morgan (Chair), Councillor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Laura Lennox, Rosie Russell and Iris Smith

**Officers:** Lesley-Ann Fenton (Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)), Gary Hall (Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation)), Claire Thompson (Performance, Partnership and Equality Manager) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Partner officers:** Pam Sutton (Lancashire County Council District Partnersip Officer), Jeanette Hickey (Lancashire Constabulary), John Miller (NHS Central Lancashire / LGBT community), Mike Collinson (Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) and Rubina Bhatti (Community Outreach Development Officer, Lancshire Fire and Rescue)

**Also in attendance:** Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator), Julia Berry (Heapey Parish Council), Glynn Bretherton (CADNWA), Estelle Brown (Chorley Pensioners Association), Brain Curwen (Walking for health), Yvonne Curwen (Walking for health), Judy Daniels (Disability Forum), Clamantina Finlayson (African-Caribbean Community), Diane Gradwell (Citizens Advice Bureau), Kinga Grzeczynska (Polish Catholic Community / Lancashire Teaching Hospitals), Ginny Jones (Chorley Pensioners Association), Francis Maguire, Joyce Morris (Creative minds / Ecclestone Parish Council), Terence Reynolds (Disability Forum Chair) and Geoff Smith (Chorley and South Ribble MIND)

### **09.EF.55 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced those on the top table. Attendees were reminded to introduce themselves, state the organisation they represent and to use the microphone when addressing the meeting.

### **09.EF.56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of David Brown (Chorley Pensioners Association), Cindy Bolton (CVS), Jean

Cronshaw (Clayton Brook Together), Councillor David Dickinson, Deanna Hartley Davies (Runshaw College), Albert and Rita Jeffrey (Deaf Club), David Naden (Linkability), Sarah Palmer (LCC District Partnership Officer), Marilyn Porter (Chorley and South Ribble Crossroads), Jeannie Stirling (Homestart) and Marel Urry (Hoghton Parish Council),

## **09.EF.57 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

In response to a query it was noted that two members of Chorley Council staff were trained as British Sign Language interpreters and additional staff would also be trained.

## **09.EF.58 EQUALITY FORUM FEEDBACK**

The Chair gave a presentation outlining the result of the Equality Forum review.

The feedback showed that members liked the new format in general, with opportunities to air views on Council services and the network break.

The Forum discussed the suggestions for improvements and it was agreed to take these forward, including,

- To hold three task and finish groups per year to tackle specific equality related issues – the next one to be disabled access to the town centre.
- There was a need to retain the consultation items at the start of the agenda.
- To encourage under represented strands to attend.
- To hold informal networking before and after the meeting, rather than in the middle.
- To keep the start time as 6.30pm for the time being.

Suggestions for future agenda items included:

- Contact details and information on activities for disabled people, with contributions from LCC and the Disability Forum.

- Contact details and information on groups for older people, with contributions from LCC and Chorley Community Network.
- Information on gaps in service provision for children and how to get children engaged with Forums such as this.
- Information on activities for life.
- Information on counselling services for people who become disabled.
- Other partners, such as the Police, Fire Authority, PCT and LCC were invited to raise any consultation issues at future meetings.

An action plan for the Forum was suggested, aligned with performance indicators. This would be considered and a draft presented to a future meeting.

Estelle Brown raised a query about the possibility of car sharing or alternatively the provision of a wheel chair at the Town Hall. Estelle would lend a wheel chair for this purpose.

## **09.EF.59 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT AUDIT OF COUNCIL PREMISES**

Gary Hall gave a presentation updating the Forum on work undertaken by the Council in relation to auditing Council premises for the Disability Discrimination Act.

Gary advised that the inspections undertaken this year had reports which were in draft format only as the Council wanted to receive feedback from this Forum on the approach and process before continuing. The assets considered so far were those which have not had any money spent on them in recent years and included Chorley Cemetery public conveniences and the changing rooms at Tatton Recreation ground. The next assets to be considered were proposed to be high usage, such as the Leisure Centres, but this approach was open for discussion.

It was agreed that a task and finish group be established with Eileen Bee, Judy Daniels and Estelle Brown. Some members of the Disability Forum had received training on how to conduct access audits. The Group would revisit the audits undertaken, review the work programme and the approach. If any other Forum members would like to be involved please contact Gary Hall on 01257 515480 or email [gary.hall@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:gary.hall@chorley.gov.uk)

In response to a query Lesley-Ann confirmed that the Council would make every effort to hold public meetings in accessible meeting venues. If there were instances where this did not happen please contact Lesley-Ann on 01257 515406 or email [lesley-ann.fenton@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:lesley-ann.fenton@chorley.gov.uk)

It was confirmed that the asset audit would take into account the needs of children. The Council did not have a designated access officer, although Gary Hall held these responsibilities. Gary undertook to speak to planning officers on how best to ensure that new planning applications granted adhered to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Estelle Brown offered to take a Councillor or officer round in a wheel chair to show difficulties faced. Gary would arrange this and undertook to tackle partner and other organisations on any problems which arose.

## **09.EF.60 NETWORKING BREAK**

The Forum members decided to have the networking break at the end of the meeting.

## **09.EF.61 OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES FOR EACH EQUALITY STRAND**

### **(a) Age**

Councillor Rosie Russell reported that a rumour was circulating regarding Shop Mobility possibly having to close.

Ginny Jones advised that Red Rose Runners were looking for some funding, she highlighted how important this services was to Chorley pensioners and the need to ensure the service continued.

Councillor Iris Smith requested play facilities in Astley Park for children aged 6, it appeared there was a gap in provision for this age group.

Joyce Morris reported that "Central Lancashire Arts Health Network, (Chorley district, Preston City, South Ribble Borough

and West Lancashire District Councils working in partnership with Lancashire County Council, Arts Council England NW and Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust - PCT) have commissioned a research project into current practice and provision to inform the development of an arts health initiative across the four boroughs. JAG Consultancy has been appointed to carry out this project. A series of workshops is being held to gather information and views from partners and stakeholders across public, private and voluntary sectors with a commitment to / interest in, arts health activity." Forms are being distributed to establish a databases and a questionnaire was distributed to this effect. About 12 people attended this particular meeting in the Lancastrian Room including Chris Bryan, Borough Arts Officer, who is helping establish the database.

There had also been a change in thinking relating to Adult Learning. The June cabinet re-shuffle saw the demise, after just two years, of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) whose functions would be taken over by Lord Mandelson's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. However, the £20 million transformation fund, designed to offer grants to start informal adult learning projects, will be set up nonetheless.

A meeting was scheduled on 23 November at St Mary's Parish Centre, Ecclestone at 10am till 12noon on intergenerational activities.

## **(b) Disability**

Councillor Iris Smith advised that drivers who were wheel chairs users encountered difficulties in getting out of their vehicle in town centre car parks as the wheel chair ramp required 6 metres followed by 3 metres to get the wheelchair out of the car. It was suggested that a space on Farrington Street, Mealhouse Lane or Dole lane be converted in to an extended disabled space. Lesley-Ann requested any information on how these could be policed: it was thought there was such a space in Manchester.

Francis Maguire queried whether seminars could be held in Chorley, for example, a mental health seminar. It was noted that there were several meeting venues in Chorley.

**(c) Ethnicity**

No issues were raised.

**(d) Faith**

Jeanette Hickey reported that the street pastors were being launched on 30 October. The pastors would be in teams of 4.

**(e) Gender**

No issues were raised.

**(f) Rurality**

No issues were raised.

**(g) Sexuality**

John Miller advised that 1 December was World Aids Day. If any organisations would like to contact John for some red ribbons his email address was [john.miller@disabilityforum.freemove.co.uk](mailto:john.miller@disabilityforum.freemove.co.uk)

**09.EF.62 NOTICES / FEEDBACK / PUBLICITY**

Councillor Iris Smith advised that an excellent production of RENT was currently being presented at Chorley Little Theatre.

Kinga Grzeczynska reported that Holocaust Memorial Day would be held on 27 January. The parade would be held on 23 January commencing at 11 am.

Joyce Morris highlighted an English Apple Day would be held on 7 November in Eccleston. This was the 6<sup>th</sup> annual event.

She also advised there would be a day of dance for elderly people, featuring dance styles from Asia, Egypt, clog and cabaret dancing on 23 January from 9am till 4pm in the Lancastrian, Town Hall, Chorley.

Diane Gradwell highlighted a service dedicated to access difficulties, including home visits and GP surgeries. Diane would forward further information on this to Lesley-Ann.

Francis Maguire raised a query on allotments. It was agreed that a report on allotment provision be presented to a future meeting. Joyce Morris advised there was a land share website where older people could invite people to use their gardens to grow fruit and vegetables.

Eileen Bee thanked Claire Thompson for all her work and assistance to the Equality Forum. Claire was leaving the Authority to relocate to London. The Forum members also thanked Claire and wished her all the best for the future.

Chair