

Equality Forum

Wednesday, 10 September 2008

Present: Councillor Hasina Khan (Chair), Councillor David Dickinson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Terry Brown, Pat Case, Rosie Russell and Iris Smith

Officers: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)), Gary Hall (Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation)), Liz Morey (Neighbourhoods Co-ordinator), Naveed Shariff (Community Outreach Development Officer, Lancashire Fire and Rescue), Dawn Clarke (Programme Manager Equality and Diversity, NHS Central Lancashire), Alan Capstick (LCC Highways), Colin Everett (LCC District Partnership Officer) and Pam Sutton (LCC District Partnership Officer)

Also in attendance: Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator), Julia Berry (Heapey Parish Council), Cindy Bolton (Chorley & South Ribble CVS), Glynn Bretherton (CADNWA), Rev John Cree (Faith Community), Judy Daniels (Disability Forum), Diane Gradwell (Citizens Advice Bureau), Kinga Grzeczynska (Polish Catholic Community), Alison Hansford (Withnell Parish Council / Chorley Wildcats), Teresa Harty (Anchor Staying Put South Lancashire), Deanna Hartley-Davis (Runshaw College), Albert Jeffrey (Deaf Forum), Rita Jeffrey (Deaf Forum), Namita Jetley (Lord Street), Harry Kelly (Villages in Partnership), Zara Khan (Lord Street), Aneesa Malek (Asian Womens Forum), Joyce Morris (Villages in Partnership/Creative Minds), Bhikhu Patel (Racial Equality Council), David Ryder (Chorley and South Ribble MIND), Jeannie Stirling (Homestart), Marel Urry (Hoghton Parish Council) and Tom Watson (PAICE)

08.EF.07 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted some housekeeping issues.

Members of the Forum were requested to use the microphone when speaking and question cards were available on each table for those who didn't wish to speak.

08.EF.08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Adrian Beardmore (Lancashire Constabulary), Ray Chadwick (Lancashire Constabulary), Liz Easterbrook (Central Lancashire PCT), Gary Finlayson, George Guye, Jeanette Hickey (Lancashire Constabulary), Mike Naylor and Ayuub Patel.

08.EF.09 MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Julia Berry in the attendees list and the amendment of Central Lancashire PCT.

08.EF.10 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORUM

The terms of reference for the Forum were outlined.

The Chair explained that there would be a learning curve for the Forum, with a commitment to make the meeting work positively for Forum members. Chorley was one of the few authorities establishing an Equality Forum, which would need to keep developing and adapting over time. Lesley-Ann explained that the Forum would be the main consultative body for equality issues. Already there were very good relationships with partners which the Forum would build on.

It was noted that fourteen responses to the consultation had been received, mainly regarding the proposal to appoint three representatives per strand. In response, it had been agreed to operate an open membership format with no exclusions.

Later in the agenda there was an opportunity for the Forum to put forward items for future agendas. Partners who have issues raised within their remit would be expected to respond and report back. A commitment was made for task and finish groups to be established where appropriate to consider specific issues and report back to the main Forum. Forum members would also be able to publicise and promote events etc at the end of each meeting.

08.EF.11 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING PRESENTATION

The Chair introduced Liz Morey, the Council's Neighbourhood Working Co-Coordinator.

Liz outlined the background to the Council's Neighbourhood Working agenda and explained the way forward. Forum members were provided with maps of the seven Neighbourhoods for their information.

Liz highlighted the importance of feedback from Forum members in addition to various consultation events. Ward walks with Council Members were being undertaken to draw up action plans for each neighbourhood, which would take account of community and faith groups active in areas, transport issues, leisure facilities etc.

It was highlighted that BSL interpreters were required at events with deaf people in attendance.

The Chair thanked Liz for her presentation and requested Forum members supply information to be fed into the action plans by completing the sheets provided.

08.EF.12 NETWORKING BREAK

The Forum members took a short break.

08.EF.13 DISCUSSION TO CONSIDER FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair invited all Forum members to identify potential items for future agendas and forward plans to be drawn up on the flip chart paper provided.

The completed sheets were collected in and would be presented to the next meeting.

08.EF.14 OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES FOR EACH EQUALITY STRAND

(a) Age

An issue was raised relating to funding for people over 65 with mental issues moving between facilities. Councillor Case advised that this issue, affecting both young and older people, would be taken forward through the Lancashire Locals. Further information would be forwarded to the gentleman who raised the query.

In response to a query it was confirmed that organisations for young people, including the Youth Council had been invited to attend.

A suggestion was made to create a directory with information for people of different ages. It was noted that a great deal of information would be available through the Help Direct Gateway.

(b) Disability

A query was raised with regard to the maximum 3 hours short stay car parking in Chorley town centre including blue badge holders. It was noted that this matter was currently being considered by a working group of Members and development would be reported back to a future meeting of the Forum.

The issue of inviting disabled people who were not a member of any group was highlighted. Officers reported there was an open and inclusive policy in relation to the attendees and to forward details of anyone who would like a copy of the agenda. There had also been information in the press about the Forum.

Alan Capstick invited anyone experiencing problems of access on the highways to contact him on Alan.Capstick@lancashire.gov.uk or 01772 530167.

(c) Ethnicity

It was noted that the Council has a responsibility to include all strands of diversity in the equality scheme. A suggestion was made that a conference be held to consider the problems of equality and diversity, poverty and health. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with South Ribble Borough Council on this.

The importance of supporting existing groups was highlighted, with consistent involvement and sharing of information between groups. The Chair advised that herself, with the Vice-Chair, would be visiting other organisations for all strands in between Forum meetings when invited.

(d) Faith

The Forum were reminded that numerous community and cohesion activities were ongoing through sports and community groups and that support for current activities should be continued.

A query was raised in relation to the provision of a British Sign Language interpreter in churches. Reverend Cree advised that all churches should conform to the requirements of the DDA, and that if requested BSL interpreter would be provided, along with Braille and large print information.

(e) Gender

No issues were raised.

(f) Rurality

Assistance on certain issues, such as funding, community facilities, securing services, taster activities, transport and allotments would be helpful. Councillor Case advised that Lancashire College provide taster sessions and that money was available through the Lancashire Locals. The External Funding Officer at the Council and CVS might be able to assist. Signposting information would be provided where possible.

A query was raised as to which wards were considered rural, this would be outlined in the schedule presented to the next meeting.

It was noted that children in rural areas were not able to stay late to attend after school groups due to a lack of public transport home. This would be considered as part of Neighbourhood Working and it was noted that the Youth Service were planning some work on this issue.

The need for pelican crossings in rural areas was highlighted. Further information was requested on how to apply for a pelican crossing.

(g) Sexuality

A query was raised in relation to raising awareness of the Forum to little known groups. Councillor Brown advised that the information he had gained throughout his Mayoral year visiting groups would be passed on to officers for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Working agenda and that also Chorley Partnership were working on information networks.

08.EF.15 NOTICES / FEEDBACK / PUBLICITY

It was noted that there were no representatives from Lancashire Constabulary and the Chair explained the circumstances for the Police being unable to attend

The Chair advised that publicity for an equality and diversity event was available on each table for Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and Lancashire Constabulary Community Equality and Diversity consultation event called Opportunity Knocks. The event would be held on Wednesday 1 October from 9am until 4pm at Lancaster University Conference Centre and repeated on Monday 6 October from 9am until 4pm at Jan's Conference Centre, Blackburn. The booking information was available on each table.

Bhikhu Patel advised there would be a 40 years celebration event for the Racial Equality Council. Further information would be publicised.

It was requested that copies of the Local Strategic Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy be available at the next meeting.

Chair