

# Equality Forum

**Tuesday, 19 January 2010**

**Present:** Councillor Greg Morgan (Chair), Councillor David Dickinson (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Catherine Hoyle, Rosemary Russell and Iris Smith

**Officers:** Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Partnership, Planning and Policy), Sarah James (Performance, Partnership and Equality Manager), Martin Sample (Private Sector Housing Officer), Lee Boyer (Sport, Play & Physical Activity Manager), Adam Broomhead (Inclusion in Sport Activator) and Cathryn Barrett (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

**Partner officers:** Pam Sutton (Lancashire County Council District Partnersip Officer), John Miller (NHS Central Lancashire / LGBT community) and Rubina Bhatti (Community Outreach Development Officer, Lancshire Fire and Rescue)

**Also in attendance:** Julia Berry (Heapey Parish Council), Cindy Bolton (Chorley & South Ribble CVS), Judy Daniels (Disability Forum), Mr G Finlayson, Clamantina Finlayson (African-Carribean Community), Matthew Gregory (Youth Council), Hall (Youth Council), Alison Hansford (Withnell Parish Council / Chorley Wildcats), Deanna Hartley-Davis (Runshaw College), Teresa Harty (Anchor Staying Put South Lancashire), Rita Jeffrey (Deaf Forum), Albert Jeffrey (Deaf Forum), Ginny Jones (Chorley Pensioners Association), Joyce Morris (Creative Minds / Eccleston Parish Council), Val Lawson (Chorley Youth Council), Marilyn Porter (Crossroads), Terence Reynolds (Disability Forum Chair), Jeannie Stirling, Marel Urry (Hoghton Parish Council) and Bethany Robinson (Chorley Youth Council)

## **10.EF.63 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.

## 10.EF.64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Laura Lennox, Eileen Bee (Disability Forum), Diane Gradwell (Chorley Citizens Advice Bureau), Ronnie and Maureen Kay (Deaf Forum), Jeanette Hicky (Police), Kinga Greczynska (Polish Catholic Community / Lancashire Teaching Hospitals), Victoria Hansford (Youth Parliament), and Estelle Brown (Chorley Pensioners Association).

## 10.EF.65 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

### Minute 09.EF.61 Open Forum to discuss any issues for each Equality Strand

- a) Age – Councillor Iris Smith had requested the installation of play equipment at Astley Park suitable for disabled children aged 6 and above.

In response the Chair reported that the existing play equipment in the park was DDA compliant but the Council was keen to expand on the play equipment if funds were available. Officers undertook to look in to this issue and report back at the next meeting.

- b) Disability – Councillor Iris Smith asked for a change to allow wheelchair ramp access of 6 feet with a further 3 feet in order to get the wheelchair out of the car.

The Chair reported that the Council felt the number of disabled parking bays had been deemed to be sufficient at the moment, and there were no plans to extend any bays to accommodate Councillor Smith's request. After further discussion, the Chair asked officers to look in to the feasibility of extending the disabled parking bay at Farrington Street.

## 10.EF.66 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

Martin Sample, Private Sector Housing Officer, gave a presentation on the revised Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy for consultation purposes.

The proposed changes to the current policy were:

- Prioritising Disabled Facilities Grant applications - the mandatory grants intended to provide specialist adaptations to meet the care and mobility needs of disabled persons;
- Examine Loan option for Decent Homes Assistance – a discretionary form of assistance aimed at helping vulnerable households on low income to undertake repairs and improvements to bring their home up to the Decent Homes Standard;
- Energy Efficiency Assistance – the eligibility criteria is to be adjusted to ensure that the grant assistance is targeted to the maximum number of households in greatest need within priority areas.

Feedback from the consultation would be reviewed by the end of February, and a final report would be presented to Executive Cabinet in March prior to implementation in April 2010.

Following the presentation, Martin received suggestions and observations from members of the Forum on the revised policy.

In line with the Compact agreement, Cindy Bolton, supported by Councillor Cath Hoyle, asked that the consultation period be extended. In response Lesley-Ann Fenton accepted the Compact agreement required a 12 week consultation period but felt that a pragmatic approach should be taken as the policy was not new, but a review of an existing policy. After further discussion the Chair asked that an extension to the consultation period be considered.

In response to questions raised by members of the Forum, Martin reiterated that the feasibility of the loan option was only being considered at the present time. If the loan option was approved, it was intended that the loans would be repayable on the disposal of the property or if the house was passed to relatives. Members of the Forum asked that should the loan

scheme be approved, that the cost of the valuation of the property be absorbed by the Council.

Jeannie Stirling enquired who would be responsible for prioritising the Disabled Facility Grant applications. In response Martin advised that there would be a panel of professionals with responsibilities in that area including Occupational Therapists, Housing Services and Social Services. However, suggestions for panel members would be gratefully received.

Joyce Morris suggested that the proposed changes be publicised in Parish/Town Councils newsletters and that Martin could attend Parish/Town Council meetings where he would be able to answer questions and receive feedback.

Martin reported that the Strategic Housing Partnership which included members from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Help the Homeless, NHS, Social Services, private landlords and voluntary services, have also be consulted on the revised policy.

Martin ended his presentation by thanking members of the meeting for their views and suggestions and that the issues raised would be reported in the feedback.

The Chair thanked Martin for his presentation and invited members of the Forum to contact Martin at [martin.sample@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:martin.sample@chorley.gov.uk) with any further suggestions or comments.

## **10.EF.67 AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN**

In response to a previous request from members of the Equality Forum, Lee Boyer gave a presentation on the Aiming High programme for Disabled Children, which was introduced by the Government in 2007 to transform services in England for disabled children.

The vision behind Aiming High for Disabled Children was for all families with disabled children, including young people with learning and behavioural difficulties, to have the support they needed to live ordinary family lives. The programme targeted young people between the ages of 5-19, although activities could be arranged for those below the age of 5.

The programme aimed to offer access and empowerment by providing:

- Information – good, clear information
- Transparency – consistent, criteria, understandable
- Participation – users to have a say in design and delivery
- Assessment – Common Assessment Framework
- Feedback – clear procedure, compliments and complaints, help to get put right quickly
- Responsive Services and Support – the services needed and how professionals responsible plan.
- Improving quality and capacity – new funding to want and need, short break services, complex needs from feedback of parents.

A number of groups were currently looking to deliver activities in the area including:

- Mosaic Community Care
- Rainbow Trust
- Local Schools
- Scope (Beech Tree)
- Twinkle House
- PIP Play inclusion project

Mayfield School was also in discussion with the Council about delivery activities in the areas of sport and play.

At the end of the presentation Lee received suggestions and observations from members of the Forum.

In response to questions raised by the Forum, Lee acknowledged that funding for the programme was only available for one year (April 2010 – March 2011) and that work needed to be done to publicise the activities to encourage young people's participation. However, it was felt that for the programme to be successful it would be essential that all interested groups work in partnership to promote, target and deliver the range of activities in order to secure further funding in the future.

Lee added that further information could be found on the following websites:

[www.lancashire.gov.uk/aiminghigh](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/aiminghigh) - a Lancashire County Council website which provided up to date information on the Aiming High project.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk) – the Department for Children, School and Families.

[www.chorley.gov.uk/getupandgo](http://www.chorley.gov.uk/getupandgo) - the Chorley Council website which provides information on activities that the Council intended to stage over the next year.

At the end of the presentation the Chair thanked Lee for his presentation and invited members of the meeting to contact Lee at [lee.boyer@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:lee.boyer@chorley.gov.uk) should they require further information.

## **10.EF.68 OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES FOR EACH EQUALITY STRAND**

### **(a) Age**

- Joyce Morris praised Michael Rushe, the Council's Active Generation Officer for his work in organising a day of dance event for older people on Saturday, January 23, 2010 in the Lancastrian. Mr Rushe had also helped arrange a number of intergenerational events. Councillor Rosemary Russell supported those comments adding that there had been a lot of intergenerational projects planned with the help of partners such as Albany School.
- Councillor Rosemary Russell announced that there would be a talk and slide show on the lives of some of Lancashire's most famous historic residents in Chorley Library on January 30, 2010.
- Councillor Rosemary Russell reported that the Library Service was due to launch a 'Living Libraries in Lancashire' scheme in February. The living books, who are volunteers, would give a fascinating insight into their lives sharing tales and inspirational stories. For further information about Living Libraries contact Chorley Library on 01257 277 222.
- Ginny Jones reported that due to the recent icy conditions various support services such as the hospital and Social

Services had been stretched trying to cope with the number of injuries caused by people slipping on icy pavements and roads, and wanted to know what contingency plans had Chorley Council put in place to ensure that it does not happen again.

In reply, Councillor Iris Smith reported that an Overview and Scrutiny Task Group had been formed which looked at highway issues in Chorley, and from its findings several recommendations had been proposed. If the recommendations were accepted by Executive Cabinet, and subject to agreement with Lancashire County Council, the Council would be better placed to deal with any similar weather conditions in the future.

**(b) Disability**

No issues were raised.

**(c) Ethnicity**

Cindy Bolton asked if it would be possible for members of the Umeed Domestic Violence Steering Group which supported those people who had no recourse to public funds, to give a presentation to a future meeting on their work during the last 12 months.

**(d) Faith**

No issues were raised.

**(e) Gender**

No issues were raised.

**(f) Rurality**

No issues were raised.

**(g) Sexuality**

- John Miller met with a Council officer over 12 months ago and discussed the possibility of the Council applying for the LGBT friendly Charter Mark and wanted a progress report on the application.

- Young people from Chorley struggle to get transport to attend the POUT meetings in Leyland, John Miller wondered if the Council could help find a way forward to assist young members from Chorley, and asked if funds could be made available to help these young people occasionally with transport.
- A number of events had been planned to coincide with the LGBT History Month which runs throughout February.

On February 26, 2010 from 6pm to 9pm would see the launch of the Lancashire NUT Prevalence of Homophobia in Schools Survey, hosted by Lancashire County Council, County Hall, Preston. Those who wished to attend would receive a presentation, participate in workshops and would be able to join education professionals, governors, county councillors, union representatives and young people for an evening of awareness raising, sharing and reflection.

An event was also planned at the Harris Library on February 22, 2010 but the details had yet to be finalised.

## **10.EF.69 NOTICES / FEEDBACK / PUBLICITY**

Councillor Iris Smith reported that there would be a service at the Cenotaph to commemorate the Holocaust on Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 11am.

Councillor Smith also announced that the Mayor's Charity Ball would take place Friday, February 5, 2010 from 7.30pm in the Lancastrian, Town Hall, Chorley tickets are £30 per person and could be obtained through the Mayors Secretary.

Marilyn Porter reported that Chorley and South Ribble Crossroads hold monthly meetings/activities and outings for carers who cared for someone with Dementia. The cared for would be looked after by Crossroads experienced carer support workers. The service is fully funded by Lloyds TSB Foundation Grant and there was no cost to the carer. For further information contact Marie or Joanne on 01257 230698.

## **10.EF.70 NETWORKING BREAK**

At the conclusion of the meeting members were encouraged to take part in the networking session.

Chair