

Equality Forum

Thursday, 8 July 2010

Present: Councillor Greg Morgan (Chair), and Councillors Anthony Gee, Alison Hansford and Rosie Russell

Officers: Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy), Sarah James (Performance, Partnership and Equality Manager) and Cathryn Barrett (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Partner officers: Pam Sutton (Lancashire County Council District Partnership Officer)

Also in attendance: Julia Berry (Heapey Parish Council), Katie Byrne (Chorley Youth Council), Brain Curwen (Walking for health), Clementina Finlayson (African-Caribbean Community), Gary Finlayson (Black British Community), Matthew Gregory (Chorley Youth Council), Paige Hall (Chorley Youth Council), Albert Jeffrey (Deaf Forum), Rita Jeffrey (Deaf Forum), Maureen Kay (Deaf Forum), Ronnie Kay (Deaf Forum), Val Lawson (Chorley Youth Council), Joyce Morris (Creative Minds / Eccleston Parish Council), Terence Reynolds (Disability Forum Chair), Charlotte Rudd (Help Direct), Geoff Smith (Chorley and South Ribble MIND), Lucy Sunderland (Chorley Youth Council) and Marel Urry (Hoghton Parish Council)

10.EF.80 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.

In response to a question raised, members of the Forum were reminded that during the review of the Equality Forum last year, it had been agreed the start time of the meetings held in the summer months would fall in line with the start time for those meetings held in the winter months.

10.EF.81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor David Dickinson, Councillor Beverley Murray, Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-ordinator), Estelle Brown (Chorley

Pensioners Association), Mike Collinson (Lancashire Teaching Hospitals), Jean Cronshaw (Clayton Brook Together/Chorley Older Peoples Forum), Yvonne Curewen (Walking for Life), Judith Daniels (Disability Forum), Colin Everett (District Partnership Officer), Diane Gradwell (Chorley Citizens Advice Bureau), Victoria Hansford (Chorley Youth Council), Deanna Hartley-Davis (Runshaw College), Ginny Jones (Chorley Pensioners Association), David Naden (Link-Ability), and Jeannie Stirling (Homestart).

10.EF.82 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2010 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Victoria Hansford's apologies for absence (minute 10.EF.72).

10.EF.83 EQUALITY ACT - AN OVERVIEW OF NEW LEGISLATION

Sarah James delivered a presentation on the new Equality Act 2010 and what that means to members of the Forum.

Members of the Forum were informed that the Act replaces the existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it.

Under the new Act the following groups will be protected:

- Disability (definition changed)
- Gender Reassignment (definition changed)
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (this included ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The law will prohibit:

- Direct Discrimination
 - by association
 - by perception
- Indirect Discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Direct discrimination rising from a disability

Other changes include breastfeeding and 'positive action' (which is where a person with a protected characteristic can be encouraged and assisted to overcome or minimise their disadvantage).

Changes planned for the future include:

- Dual Discrimination
- Extended Public Sector Duty
- Prohibition in age discrimination in services and public functions

The Act will apply to all organisations that provide a service to the public, anyone who sells goods or provides facilities, private clubs and other associations with twenty-five or more members and employees.

It was essential that all voluntary and community groups informed their staff of the new provisions; review their equalities policies and consider whether staff required further training.

Parts of the Act will be implemented from October 2010, with the remainder being introduced gradually, up until 2013.

Members of the Forum were invited to ask questions.

In response to a question posed by Mathew Gregory, Chris Sinnott advised that Government's age discrimination policy relates to those over the age of eighteen but particularly focused on the upper age range. However, the Council's own policy relating to age does cover young people under the age of eighteen and well as those over eighteen.

Marel Urry asked the Council for comments on the closure of the trailer library which served Hoghton, Croston and Bretherton. The service was considered popular with residents, and in particular with younger people as it had a very full children's section. The trailer has now been replaced, in the short term, with a mobile library service which will operate in the area for two hours every two weeks, and will operate during school hours; therefore no children would get the opportunity to use the service.

Officers from Lancashire County Council undertook to look into this issue and will report back.

Terence Reynolds asked for more opportunities to bring those with hearing difficulties, and those without, together to improve better cohesion. However, to do this would require training. In support of Mr Reynolds comments there was a request for training in schools as there was concern that deaf children are routinely being placed in mainstream education without the necessary help and assistance they require, which can have a serious detrimental effect leaving the child feeling isolated and excluded.

Officers will raise the issues highlighted with the Children and Young People's Services.

Key sources of information can also be found on the following websites:

- <http://www.equalities.gov.uk>
- www.equalityhumanrights.com
- <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>
- www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
- www.acas.org.uk

For more information on this presentation contact Sarah James on (01257) 515348 or email sarah.james@chorley.gov.uk.

10.EF.84 CONSULTATION - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Sarah James gave a presentation on the review of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Chorley.

The strategy, first written in 2005, was designed to improve the quality of life for people of Chorley over the next 20 years. However, since the strategy was refreshed in 2007 much had been achieved against the original priorities and there are more new and different challenges including climate change and dealing with the after effects of the recession. To ensure the strategy was still fit for purpose it had therefore been decided that strategy should be reviewed.

To ensure as many people as possible could express their opinion, a 12 week consultation period had commenced in June 2010, to which the Equality Forum was only one of many consultation opportunities planned.

Members were invited to take part in a workshop which allowed them to review the importance of the new priorities proposed and suggest other priorities that they felt should be considered for inclusion. Members were then asked for their comments on the possible impact that that proposed new priorities would have on their particular equality strand.

At the end of the workshop Sarah James thanked members for taking part in the workshop the results of which will be included in the wider consultation which was due to close in September 2010.

Members of the Forum were also encourage to complete the survey which can be accessed through the Council's website <http://www.chorley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3403>

Sarah James can be contacted on (01257) 515348 or email sarah.james@chorley.gov.uk.

10.EF.85 OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES FOR EACH EQUALITY STRAND

(a) Age

- Councillor Russell reported that she had spoken to the Director of People and Places, Jamie Carson in regards to her request for a seat being placed outside Civic Offices for those people who needed somewhere to rest while about their business in Chorley.
- Councillor Russell had also expressed her disappointment with the Governments decision to stop free swimming admission, and asked Members of the Forum if they had any ideas for activities for older people.
- Marel Urry reiterated her comments made during the Equality Act item asking for the Council for comments on the closure of the trailer library which served Hoghton, Croston and Bretherton.

Officers from Lancashire County Council undertook to look into this issue.

(b) Disability

- A member of the Forum raised concern about the barrier on Chorley Hospital's car park. Those users who have a disabled badge are entitled to free parking. However, to exit the car park the user is required to use the intercom system at the barrier to ask the attendant to lift the barrier. Those users of the car park that are deaf found it extremely difficult to use.
- Another Member of the Forum drew concern to people parking in disabled parking bays in general and using them to load and unload deliveries.
- Councillor Russell asked for a crossing outside the Chorley Hospital near its entrance on Euxton Road. Councillor Russell reported that not all buses drive on to the hospital grounds, but instead drop patients off at the side of the road leaving them to cross a very busy road without assistance.

Officers undertook to liaise with both Chorley Hospital and Lancashire County Council on the issues raised.

- Councillor Hansford asked that in future editions of the Chorley Smile magazine could contact details be included for those people who wished to receive the magazine in larger print or different language.
- A member of the Forum raised concern about the Lancashire County Council website and its suitability for those people who are deaf.

Officers undertook to liaise with Lancashire County Council on this issue.

(c) Ethnicity

No issues were raised.

(d) Faith

No issues were raised.

(e) Gender

No issues were raised.

(f) Rurality

- Members of the Forum raised issues relating to transport in rural areas following the announcement of the cancellation of a bus service which served Hoghton and Brindle.

A number of the issues raised by the Forum relating to transport had previously been reviewed by the Rurality Task and Finish Group which had taken place last year. At its last meeting a number of recommendations/suggestions were made.

Chris Sinnott will report the action taken on the recommendations/suggestions to a future meeting.

- Councillor Hansford reported that she had secured a three month trial bus service which covered Hoghton/Withnell Fold/Brindle/Wheelton and Chorley.

(g) Sexuality

No issues were raised.

10.EF.86 NOTICES / FEEDBACK / PUBLICITY

- Joyce Morris advised that the Time Steps event on June 13, 2010 had been very successful with 40 over 50's attended.
- Pam Sutton reported that REACH's Wheel's For All event would not now be taking place. However, the REACH Information Days, based in Chorley Town Centre, would still be taking place 13 and 14 August, and everyone was encouraged to attend.

10.EF.87 NETWORKING BREAK

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

Chair