

Equality Forum

Wednesday, 19 November 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)), Ishbel Murray (Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods)), Claire Thompson (Performance Advisor (Partnership)), Julian Jackson, Sara Cooper and Ruth Hawes (Assistant Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: Eileen Bee, Julia Berry, Rev John Cree, Judy Daniels, Clamantina Finlayson, Kinga Grzeczynska (Polish Catholic Community), Alison Hansford, Teresa Harty (Anchor Staying Put South Lancashire), Rita Jeffrey, Albert Jeffrey, Harry Kelly (Villages in Partnership), Zafar Khan (Lord Street), Francis Maguire, Bhikhu Patel, Terence Reynolds, Geoff Smith (MIND), Jeannie Stirling, Salma Suleman (Asian Womens Forum) and Marel Urry (Hoghton Parish Council)

08.EF.16 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the people on the top table. People were reminded to say their name, the organisation they represent and to use the microphone when speaking.

It was noted that the start time of the meeting had been brought forward during the winter months after consultation with the Chair.

08.EF.17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Max Allam (Muslim Welfare Society), Police Sergeant Adrian Beardmore (Lancashire Constabulary), Nancy Banks (Deaf & Hard of Hearing Club), Yvonne & Brian Curwen, Jean Cronshaw, Deanna Hartley-Davies (Runshaw College), Mick Duffy (Lancashire County Council Older People Services), Liz Easterbrook (NHS Central Lancashire), Gary Finlayson, Diane Gradwell (Citizens Advice Bureaux), Agnes Gwillam (Young People's Service), Fiona Hilton (Young People's Service), John

Miller (Public Health Associate (Vulnerable Groups), NHS Central Lancashire), Joyce Morris, Ayuub Patel (Dosti Mens Forum), Naveed Shariff (Lancashire Fire and Rescue), Rachel Skinner (Victim Support).

08.EF.18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

(a) Neighbourhood Working - update

The Chair advised that information collected during the neighbourhood working item at the last meeting had been enclosed with the agenda for information. Liz Morey, Neighbourhoods Co-ordinator, would be invited to attend a future meeting to give a progress update.

08.EF.19 INFORMATION ON FUNDING STREAMS

The Chair welcomed Sara Cooper, External Funding Officer, who found funding for the Council and external organisations.

Sara gave a presentation to the Forum on “Grassroots grants”, funding aiming to help small groups.

The application form would be available on www.chorley.gov.uk shortly and copies were available for Forum members to take away. Sara confirmed that although schools could not apply for the funding parents, friends associations, guides, scouts etc could. Organisations could apply more than once, but the maximum granted per organisation would be £5,000.

Sara can be contacted on sara.cooper@chorley.gov.uk by calling 01257 515109 or faxing 01257 515150.

08.EF.20 CHORLEY TRANSPORT AND SERVICES ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Chair welcomed Julian Jackson, Planning Policy Manager, who gave a brief presentation on the transport and services accessibility plan.

Work undertaken showed that the best access areas were Chorley and Euxton with the worst being smaller villages, Adlington area and Clayton – le – Woods.

Julian advised that there were successes to report, such as, a better bus service to Adlington, LCC have agreed to concessionary travel for carers, a website for accessing training and more local provision of leisure and training services. There was more work to be done over the 3 year period and an action plan had been produced to monitor this.

In response to a query Julian confirmed that disabilities were considered in relation to accessibility of buses, the network Chorley modern buses have better facilities for disabled people than older buses.

It was noted that some children in rural areas were not able to attend after school clubs and sessions as they depend on a school bus to get home. A lot of the villages, in particular Hoghton, have little or no public transport or direct transport to Chorley. A suggestion was made that buses should be run from Chorley hospital to Preston hospital, this might reduce the pressure on ambulances for non-emergency work.

Julian suggested the Business Link website <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk> for information on training opportunities in rural areas; what is available and how to apply.

Julian thanked the Forum for their comments and advised that queries and comments would be considered and responded to.

A query was raised in relation to concessionary travel for carers. It was agreed that officers would find out about this and enclose information with the minutes of the meeting.

Julian reported that the Local Development Framework, the new big plan for the borough, was currently in draft for consultation. Julian can be contacted on julian.jackson@chorley.gov.uk by calling 01257 515280 or faxing 01257 515150.

08.EF.21 STREETSCENE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY

The Chair welcomed Ishbel Murray, Corporate Director (Neighbourhoods), who outlined the services provided by her Directorate.

In the growing season around every 3 weeks 200 hectares of grass is cut, along with hedge cutting and strimming. The health and safety of the team is of the utmost importance and to keep the flowers in full bloom along the A6 (in the town centre) the team water them at 5am! The hard work has paid off though as Chorley has received recognition of it's North West excellence by winning a number of awards.

Chorley sweep the streets more frequently in comparison with other local authorities as the main roads are swept every 4 weeks, with minor roads swept every 6 weeks. The town centre is swept daily.

An audit had recently been undertaken of litterbins, which were emptied every 2 to 3 days. Trials were underway with litterbins, split into sections, to enable recycling.

The following points were raised by Forum members:

- older people might slip on grass left on pavements,
- in Clayton-le-Woods there are a lot of leaves falling on the footpaths which are also a slip hazard.

Ishbel undertook to report this to Lancashire County Council to take this forward.

Additional and more frequent emptying of dog waste bins were requested in Rivington, in particular, around the barns.

Ishbel can be contacted on ishbel.murray@chorley.gov.uk by calling 01257 515720 or faxing 01257 515150.

08.EF.22 FORWARD PLAN OF AGENDA ITEMS

The Forum considered the enclosed forward plan of agenda items and noted that the transport and service accessibility item had been put on the agenda tonight as a direct result of the feedback received at the last meeting.

It was undertaken to have a maximum of two presentations at future meetings. If there were any items Forum members would like please contact Ruth Hawes on 01257 515118 or ruth.hawes@chorley.gov.uk.

08.EF.23 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Chair advised that a task and finish group on rurality would be held on Wednesday, 10 December at 5.30pm in Committee Room 1 at the Town Hall.

Volunteers were requested to give their names to officers at the break. (Volunteers were Councillor Hasina Khan, David Dickinson, Julia Berry, Harry Kelly, Alison Hansford, Councillor Iris Smith, Marel Urry).

The findings from this group would be presented to a future Forum meeting.

08.EF.24 NETWORKING BREAK

The Forum members took a short break.

08.EF.25 OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES FOR EACH EQUALITY STRAND

Responses to queries will be presented as a schedule to the minutes on the next agenda.

(a) Age

No issues were raised.

(b) Disability

The pavement in the area of Henry Tate, Ladbrooks and the shops down to Iceland has too much clutter, poles, bollards, telephone boxes and advertising boards. People who guide dogs have found it difficult to get back to the train station.

(c) Ethnicity

It was reported that a conference on forced marriages would be held on Friday, 5 December at Ewood Park from 9.30am. Jack Straw would be keynote speaker, places need to be booked.

(d) Faith

The problem of additional water bills was discussed for churches and charities. A meeting with United Utilities would be held at St Peter's Church, Harpers Lane on 4 December at 7.30pm. All organisations were welcome to attend.

(e) Gender

The Forum discussed issues surrounding domestic abuse locally. Meetings were ongoing with the Police and NHS Central Lancashire to consider this, including how to access funding. Central gateway was suggested as an opportunity for funding. Several forum members offered help and advice with this serious issue.

(f) Rurality

It was noted that the Council have identified a potential site for additional allotments. There were long waiting lists for allotments.

(g) Sexuality

Lesley-Ann read out an email from John Miller, who was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments. If any organisations would like to speak to John on how to advertise themselves as welcoming to members of the LGBT community, for example by applying for the Navajo LGBT Friendly Charter Mark.

John can be contacted on john.miller@centrallancashire.nhs.uk by calling 01257 515720.

08.EF.26 NOTICES / FEEDBACK / PUBLICITY

No notices or publicity were reported.

08.EF.27 ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES IS/ARE URGENT

Lesley-Ann advised that there had recently been a consultation on unmet taxi demand which some forum members would have been aware of. There would be a consultation on the conditions placed on taxis in the New Year.

Chair