

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES FORUM

MONDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2004

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present

Councillor Elgood (Chair), Councillors Burgess, Framroze, McCaffery, Older, Paskins, Pidgeon, Mrs Theobald and Young

Community Representatives: Sylvia Alexander-Vine (Domestic Violence Forum), Dr Davoodi (Disabled Access Advisory Group), Barbara Wiseman (The Pensioners Forum), David Harvey (Pride), Joan Moorhouse (Older People's Council), Sharon Otoo (Racial Harassment Forum) and Kevin Reeves (Youth Parliament).

Brighton & Hove City Council: Alex Bailey (Director of Strategy and Governance), Maggie Squire (Head of Performance and Equalities), Kate Ogden (Head of Human Resources Management), Mary Evans (Learning and Development Manager), Sue Westwood (Traffic Information Officer) and Lisa Johnson (Committee Administrator)

PART ONE

ACTION

11. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

11A Declarations of Substitutes

11.1	<u>Substitute Councillor</u>	<u>For Councillor</u>
	Councillor Paskins	Councillor Wrighton
	Councillor Older	Councillor Giebeler

11B Declarations of Interest

11.2 There were none.

11C Exclusion of Press and Public

11.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the

likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

11.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items

12. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

12.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

12.2 The Chair informed the Forum that the Mayor of Brighton & Hove would be holding a Mayoral Reception on 23 November 2004, for members of the Forum, Councillors, and senior officers from Brighton & Hove City Council. Full details would be sent out to all members.

12.3 The Chair confirmed that he had met, and would be meeting, with representatives from different community groups. He thanked officers for arranging the meetings but, in particular, he thanked Maggie Square and Shyree Langley for their help in arranging and attending the meetings. The Chair confirmed the following issues would be taken forward to future meetings.

12.3a The Older People's Council raised both the issues of abuse of older people, and the House of Commons review into the matter, and housing equity for older people. It was agreed that there will be a presentation on Elder Abuse at the next Forum meeting.

12.3b Both the Older People's Council and the Racial Harassment Forum raised the closure to Post Offices. The Chief Executive would be meeting a representative from the Post Office to discuss the closures. One possible solution could be to use Hove Town Hall for a Post Office. Any discussions would be discussed at the appropriate committee meetings and reported back to the Equalities Forum.

12.3c It was the intention to have a report on both the work of the Youth Parliament and the Refugee Forum at the January meeting of the Equalities Forum.

12.4 Councillor Pidgeon raised the issue of wheelchairs being allowed on buses. A resident had written to him, saying that not only had they had to wait 25 minutes for a bus to arrive, but when the bus did arrive he was not allowed on. The resident was in a wheelchair and because there were a number of buggies already on the bus, the driver said he could not get on. Councillor Pidgeon asked if the Managing Director of Brighton & Hove Buses, Mr French, could be invited to the next meeting to discuss the issue of wheelchairs on buses. The Chair said that he would make contact with Mr French

about this.

12.5 Councillor Pidgeon raised the issue of waste bins being on pavements. Residents were told that if they had nowhere to put their waste bins they could be put on the pavement. There was concern that this would increase the street clutter. The Chair agreed to meet Gillian Marston, Assistant Director of CityClean to discuss this.

12.6 Dr Davoodi asked that it be noted that he is a member of the *Disabled Access Advisory Group (DAAG)* not the *Disability Access Advisory Group* as stated on the agenda.

**Committee
Administrator**

13a MINUTES

13.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2004 be approved and signed by the Chair.

13b FEEDBACK ISSUES FROM LAST MEETING

13.2 The Committee Administrator informed the Forum that the recommendation to pay expenses for co-opted members was approved at Policy & Resources Committee on 21 July. The detail was being worked on and would mirror the Members' Allowance Scheme. It was hoped that full details of what expenses could be claimed, and a claim form, would be ready by the end of October. Co-optees were reminded to retain their travel tickets from attending this meeting if they intended to make a claim.

13.3 At the meeting of the Equalities Forum held on 12 July 2004 it was agreed that officers would prepare a response to the 'Fairness for All' White Paper. Alex Bailey, the Director of Strategy and Governance, informed the Forum that a response had been submitted.

13.4 At the last meeting of the Forum Peter Bloxham presented a report on parking policies for disabled people. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that the Council had 'promised' that disabled parking spaces on a slope in Cannon Place, near to the Churchill Centre, would be removed. Peter Bloxham wanted to confirm that this was not correct. The Forum was informed that the parking bays were relocated to Cannon Place when the Churchill Square was redeveloped. It was accepted that the position was not ideal for some people, but was satisfactory for others. As a result four additional disabled parking bays were located on level ground in Clarence Square. The Assistant Director, Sustainable Transport, Carolyn Dwyer, said that a review of all parking in central Brighton was proposed, which would include looking at the overall number and locations of disabled parking bays in the area.

13.5 The Chair confirmed that he had written to the Manager of the Churchill Centre concerning the issue of the lifts not working. The Manager had confirmed that all the lifts were now working. Dr Davoodi said that there are other issues relating to the lifts and the Chair agreed to look into this.

13.6 Councillor Pidgeon raised the issue of 'talking' bus stops and the 'real time information system'. It was confirmed that local authorities were to set up study groups. The Traffic Information Officer would like to set up a study group to find out what is required by people with visual impairment.

13.7 **RESOLVED** – That the points be noted.

14. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

14.1 No public questions had been received prior to the meeting. However, at the meeting a member of the public, Mr Scott, raised the issue of 'A' boards on Western Road/Church Road. He said that there were numerous 'A' boards in this area which were cluttering up the pavements. The Council had written to traders asking them to obtain a licence to display such boards. These licences cost £50. Mr Scott asked by officers were selling off pavement space and why had Councillors not been consulted?

14.2 The Chair confirmed that a written response would be prepared for Mr Scott.

**Assistant
Director Public
Safety**

15. PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL

15.1 A draft protocol had been prepared (see minute book for copy of protocol). There was general consensus with the protocol. However, Councillor Burgess said that there should be some flexibility on the requirement to submit a question, comment or suggestion in writing.

15.2 **RESOLVED** - That the draft protocol be accepted, with the provision that although advance notice of public speaking should be made, the requirement to put this request in writing could be waived if appropriate.

16. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

16.1 Dr Davoodi (DAAG) provided a written report on the Disability Discrimination Act. The final part of which came into force on 1st October. Alex Bailey read out this report to the Forum. The report will be circulated with the minutes from the meeting.

**Committee
Administrator**

16.2 Joan Moorhouse (Older People's Council) informed the Forum

Older People's

Council

about an Emergency Medical Card which had recently been launched. Some older people were concerned that if they were taken ill, the people caring for them would not know what medication they were taking. A card had been launched which could be completed with details of a person's allergies and medication they were taking. These cards would be available at a number of outlets including pharmacies and surgeries. The Forum welcomed these cards. The Chair asked that some of these cards could be provided and supplied to members of the Forum for their information.

16.3 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report from Dr Davoodi and information provided from Joan Moorhouse be noted.

17. PRIDE FEEDBACK

17.1 David Harvey, Chair of Pride, gave a presentation to the Forum on Pride.

17.2 David Harvey informed the Forum that from 2002 Pride has achieved charitable status, adopted a new constitution and is now an organisation involved with year-round events. As well as holding the festival in the summer, it held a number of different events, such as Winter Pride in February. Pride was also involved in a number of campaigns offering advice and help on a variety of issues including, sexual health, alcohol, drugs and personal safety.

17.3 Pride raised funds from a number of sources. These included donations, council grants, sponsorship, as well as money raised from holding different events. The turnover for Pride during the year 2003/04 was £203,162. Pride was previously in debt, but during 2003/04 it produced a profit of almost £13,000.

17.4 A number of different groups and organisations are involved with Pride, these include the City Council, Sussex Police, Sussex Ambulance Service as well as contractors such as Eventra Limited, A-Tec Security and Arena Sound.

17.5 Councillor Theobald asked whether Pride still needed grants if it had charitable status. David Harvey confirmed it did as it helped with obtaining sponsorship. Councillor McCaffery raised concern over the rubbish in Preston Park after the Summer Pride had been held. Mr Harvey confirmed that last year the park had not been cleaned until the main equipment had been removed. Next year the park would have an initial clean and then a second clean after the equipment had been moved. Mr Harvey also confirmed that next year the council would provide recycling points in Preston Park during Pride.

17.6 Chair thanked David Harvey for his presentation, and suggested

that it would be useful to have an annual feedback on Pride.

17.7 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of presentation be noted.

18 RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

18.1 The Forum considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Corporate Services informing of the progress in implementing the Council's Race Equality Scheme (see minute book).

18.2 A representative from the Primary Care Trust (PCT), Martin Campbell, confirmed that the PCT was working closely with the city council to have a citywide approach. Both organisations had talked to different groups and it seemed sensible to use this Forum to get feedback. The Chair welcomed this.

18.3 Councillor McCaffery welcomed the Race Equality Scheme and wanted to congratulate those who wrote the booklet. Councillor McCaffery also thought it would be useful for the Forum to note reports covering the health and educational inequalities suffered by gypsies and travellers. The Chair agreed that such reports would be circulated to Forum members.

18.4 Councillor Paskins informed the Forum that a new code of practice for contractors would be launched later this year. It would be important to monitor all contractors to ensure they were following equality issues.

18.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) To note that the RES includes a commitment to ensuring that issues of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and faith were considered as well as race when the Council is carrying out its equalities impact assessments (EQIA).

(2) To note the progress the Council has made in implementing the RES since its publication at the end of 2002.

(3) To note the Council's approach to consulting communities of interest as a part of the equalities impact assessment work and approves future plans for further consultation exercises in the city.

(4) To agree to receive presentations on the key findings of completed EQIAs at the Forum's meetings in January and March 2005.

(5) To recognise the joint work between the council and the local health economy on consultation with communities of interest and agrees to receive occasional reports on the progress being made in the area of health and inequalities.

19. HUMAN RESOURCES EQUALITY MONITORING

19.1 The Forum considered a report from the Head of Human Resources Management on the recruitment monitoring statistics for 2004 in relation to agenda item 18 above.

19.2 Public authorities were required to monitor by ethnic group, applicants for jobs, promotion, training and staff who work for the authority who are the subject of grievances, disciplinary action, or who are dismissed or leave. The results of the monitoring are published on the Council's web site. The results would also be presented to the Equalities Forum on an annual basis.

19.3 The Human Resources department had had a system in place since the end of 1999 to monitor recruitment activity by race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age. This system had been refined and since January 2004 applicants had also been monitored by their faith and, whether they were an internal or external applicant.

19.4 Since 1999 the percentage of black and ethnic minority and disabled applicants applying, being shortlisted for positions and obtaining posts had increased. The monitoring had also shown that the largest source of applicants was from the internet. The internet was also the most successful media for attracting ethnic minority candidates.

19.5 Brighton & Hove City Council currently had a campaign called 'Jobs as Diverse as You Are'. The Council also planned to run at least three minority job fairs this year, as well as having had stands at a number of events including Pride in August. A monthly advertisement is placed in the Guardian's diversity supplement with the aim of promoting the Council as an attractive employer for staff from minority groups.

19.6 The Human Resources Equalities Group is held quarterly and reviews monitoring data, discussed issues from the staff fora and discusses proposals for new and revised policies and procedures.

19.7 The Forum discussed the issues raised in the presentation. Councillor Theobald asked whether it was more important to get the best people for the jobs rather than targeting a particular group. It was agreed that it was important to get the best person for the job, but it was equally important to ensure that everyone had equal access to positions within the Council. Dr Davoodi asked whether it would be possible for disabled people to work at home. It was confirmed that the Council does have a flexible working policy and is currently undertaking a pilot study on home working.

19.8 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the presentation be noted, and that the monitoring information be reported to the Equalities Forum on

an annual basis.

20. WORK OF THE RACIAL HARASSMENT FORUM

20.1 The Racial Policy Co-ordinator gave a presentation on the work of the Racial Harassment Forum (see minute book).

20.2 The Forum were provided with a copy of the leaflet 'safe in the city', an invitation to attend the Racial Harassment Forum AGM on 14th October 2004 and a copy of the Pan Sussex Racist Incident Report Form. These forms were also available on the Council's web site.

20.3 Completed Racist Incident Report Forms were used to obtain statistics of racial incidents. These assisted the relevant bodies in targeting funding and resources in areas where it was most needed.

20.4 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the presentation be noted.

21. BLACK HISTORY MONTH

21.1 The Forum were informed that the Brighton & Hove Black History Month was being held during October. Members of the Forum were provided with leaflets detailing the events being held.

22. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION BILL

22.1 The Forum considered a report from the Director of Strategy and Governance setting out the provisions of the draft Disability Discrimination Bill and highlighting the key new responsibilities for local authorities (see minute book).

22.2 **RESOLVED** - (1) To note the proposed additional duties to be placed on public authorities under the draft Disability Discrimination Bill and in particular the new duty to promote disability equality.

(2) To note the Council's approach of including disability issues in the ongoing programme of Equality Impact Assessments.

(3) To request the Director of Strategy and Governance to respond to Government consultation to highlight the specific concern that the new requirement to produce a Disability Equality Scheme should not duplicate work already underway.

(4) To agree to receive an update on the progress of the Bill once the Parliamentary timetable has been fixed.

23. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY : PROGRESS ON EVENTS

23.1 The Director of Strategy and Governance reported on the progress on events for Holocaust Day, to be a joint event between the City Council and the Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group on 27th January 2005 in Hove Town Hall. All Forum members would receive invitations.

The meeting concluded at 6.25 pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2004