

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

EQUALITIES FORUM

MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2005

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present

Councillor Elgood (Chair), Councillors Barnett, Burgess, Framroze, McCaffery, Meadows, Pidgeon, Mrs Theobald and Williams.

Community Representatives & Representatives of other organisations: Dr & Mrs Davoodi (Disabled Access Advisory Group), Valerie Mainstone (Welfare Rights Group of BUCFP), Joan Moorhouse (Older People's Council), Jane Pritchard (Spectrum), Neil Ansell (Friends, Families and Travellers), Avril Fuller (Friends, Families and Travellers Outreach), Martin Campbell (B&H Primary Care Trust), James Ledward (Gscene).

Brighton & Hove City Council: Maggie Squire (Head of Performance and Equalities), Affy Wajid (Housing and City Support), Diana Barnett (Head of Communications), Katie Ogden, Head of Human Resources Management, John Irvine (LGBT Community Safety Officer), Doug Rattray (Community Safety), David King (Corporate Services), Gwendolyn Brandon (Research and Consultation), Brigid Day (Adult Social Care), Rob Fraser Head of Performance & Equalities.

Apologies were received from Alex Bailey, Director of Strategy & Governance; Gemma Lockwood, Performance and Development Officer, Housing & City Support; Councillor Jan Young; David Harvey (Pride).

PART ONE

ACTION

39. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

39A Declarations of Substitutes

39.1 Councillor Williams attended as a substitute for Councillor Wrighton.

39B Declarations of Interest

39.3 There were none.

39C Exclusion of Press and Public

39.4 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.

39.5 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

40. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

40.1 The Chair informed the Forum of the death of Mrs Janet Turner, a member of the Disabled Access Advisory Group, who had represented the Group at many meetings of the council's committees and forums over the years. Mrs Davoodi and several councillors expressed their sorrow at the loss of a person who had worked with such dedication in spite of her own difficulties.

40.2 The Chair reported that two excellent events had been arranged for Forum members since the last meeting: one by the HIV Speakers Bureau and one arranged by the LGBT staff forum relating to LGBT History Month. He will write to both groups to thank them and follow up any matters arising.

Paul Elgood

40.3 The Head of Planning Strategy informed members that their views were sought on the South East Plan. He circulated leaflets and contact details. Details will be sent to Forum members about a briefing and consultation on the Local Development Framework on 6 April in Hove Town Hall.

Mike Holford

40.4 Further to minute 32.1, Black History Month, the Head of Performance & Equalities confirmed that Bert Williams is now working with the Head of Arts and Creative Industries Unit on events for 2005, which will have an historical focus.

41a MINUTES

41.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair.

41b FEEDBACK ISSUES FROM LAST MEETING

41.2 The Forum noted the list of feedback issues from the previous meeting.

41.3 The Head of Human Resources Management advised that Brighton & Hove Council does monitor faith in accordance with the national regulations. She stated that she would submit a monitoring report to the next meeting. It was noted that a Conference was under preparation about the contribution made to the city by faith groups. Valerie Mainstone spoke of discrimination against people who have no faith, and gave as an example children whose parents withdraw them from school assembly.

Katie Ogden

41.4 The Chair stated that he had received no reply to his letter to the Government objecting to legal changes, which would require expensive licences for outdoor events. It was agreed that the Head of Licensing should be invited to brief members at a future meeting.

Maggie Squire

41.5 The Chair informed members that Traveller representatives would be invited to attend Traveller Encampment Meetings arranged by the council in future.

41.6 Councillor Burgess summarised a meeting attended by several members of the Forum with representatives from Southern Trains. Southern Trains had already undertaken some research into the problems experienced by disabled travellers and listened to the additional points raised by the Forum members. Southern Trains are arranging a rolling programme of improving individual stations with full disabled access and signage rather than taking a piecemeal approach. Staff training on disability issues is currently taking place. It was agreed that Southern Trains should be invited to attend a future meeting of the whole Forum.

Maggie Squire

42. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

42.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

43. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

43.1 Dr Davoodi expressed regret that DAAG members were not invited to the HIV presentation. He advised that DAAG members were distressed that, despite their meetings with the architects, the toilets and lifts at the Jubilee Library were unsuitable. He also stated that The Dome needed to undertake an audit of its provision for disabled people. The Chair stated that he would request relevant officers to report back to the Forum.

Paul Elgood

43.2 Joan Moorhouse informed members that the Brighton to Watford

rail service was to be axed, which would necessitate people travelling across London in order to go up North. This would be particularly difficult for older people. Members stressed that many other groups would also be affected. The Chair stated that he would contact the council's Public Transport Officer about taking this issue forward. Mrs Davoodi suggested that the council should consider re-appointing a Disabled Access Officer.

Paul Elgood

43.3 Councillor McCaffery requested reports back on International Women's Day and Funding for the Women's Refuge. The Chair agreed to consider this.

Paul Elgood

44. TRAVELLERS

44.1 Neil Ansell, Friends Families and Travellers, and Avril Fuller, Sussex Traveller Women Health Project, made a presentation about equalities issues relating to Travellers.

44.2 Neil Ansell stated that the Horsdean site is not large enough to hold all the Travellers visiting Brighton & Hove. Most sites across East Sussex are full and have waiting lists. Many sites are unhealthy places to live. Mortality rates and stress and anxiety-related conditions are higher among Travellers than other groups. He also referred to changes in legislation.

44.3 Avril Fuller spoke about the Sussex Traveller Women Health Project and her role liaising between Traveller women and the health services. A major problem is the eviction of pregnant women or women with babies. However, placement in standard housing is not a satisfactory answer.

44.4 Mr Ansell and Ms Fuller responded to questions, accompanied by Martin Campbell of Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust. The Forum noted that the Sussex Traveller Women Health Project currently receives funding from the Department of Health but this will cease. Mr Campbell spoke about the provision provided by the PCT and confirmed that the PCT is committed to help Travellers. Best Practice models exist, however, Mr Campbell stated that the NHS should provide national guidance. Members were informed that Travellers do seek access to education and health and prefer to look after their own older and disabled people.

44.5 It was noted that the updating of the Travellers Strategy is the responsibility of the Environment Committee.

44.6 The Chair recommended that Friends Families and Travellers should be regularly represented on the Forum.

Angela Woodall

44.7 **RESOLVED** – That Neil Ansell join the Forum as a Community

Representative.

45. ELDER ABUSE

45.1 Brigid Day, Joint Head of Performance and Development, made a presentation about Elder Abuse. To a question from a member, she advised that the increase in incidents resulted from greater awareness of the issue; it was unlikely that there were more cases. Staff in registered care homes were required to report suspected cases and inspectors were trained to look for abuse. Councillor Burgess expressed concern that systems should be in place to prevent malicious accusations against staff.

45.2 Ms Day undertook to see whether the figures could be broken down to give more statistical detail. She stated that there would be an article on Elder Abuse in a forthcoming edition of City News.

Brigid Day

46. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PEOPLE

46.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance about the internationally recognised International Day of Disabled Persons which will take place annually on 3 December (see minute book). It was noted that Councillor Framroze has invited the Head of Performance and Equalities to attend a meeting of the DAAG when this will be an agenda item.

46.2 **RESOLVED** - (1) To note that the International Day of Disabled Persons will provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the issues of all disabled people, nationally, and locally for disabled residents within the City.

(2) To support activities organized by the Council to celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 December 2005.

(3) To consider specific proposals for celebrating the International Day of Disabled Persons 2005 at a future meeting.

47. PROGRESS ON EQUALITIES: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EQUALITIES FORUM 2004/05

47.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance that provided a summary of the work of the Forum during 2004-05 and an outline of its future work programme. It was noted that all results of Equality Impact Assessments will come before the Forum in due course.

47.2 **RESOLVED** - (1) To note the achievements of the Equalities Forum over the last year.

(2) To agree the outline work programme for the Forum over the coming year.

(3) That the report be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee in order to keep the Committee informed of the achievements of the Forum.

48. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: RESULTS FROM HEALTH

48.1 Martin Campbell, Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust, made a presentation informing the Forum of the results from Health obtained from the Equality Impact Assessments. He detailed the work so far and also acknowledged areas requiring improvement. A full report will be made to the PCT Board in May 2005.

48.2 Gemma Lockwood, Performance and Development Officer, sent her apologies that she was unable to attend to make her presentation.

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2005