



The Equality and Diversity Forum
Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 10th December 2009

The Committee Room

In Attendance	
Jackie Benson	BDHT
Stuart Bray	Pinke.biz
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Gill Christisson	Rep Health Improvement Manager PCT
Vikki Coley	Bromsgrove Resident
Mary Collett	Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group and Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Rebecca Dunne	Senior Policy and Performance Officer (Community Engagement) Bromsgrove District Council
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Nigel Godwin	Bromsgrove resident
Patricia Hackett - Chair	MENCAP and Bromsgrove Resident
Tim Harper	West Mercia Police
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Bal Kular-Taylor	Senior Positive Action Adviser, West Mercia Constabulary Head Quarters
Julie Moss	Administrative Assistant – Equalities Department
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Trevor Rigg	Bromsgrove Resident, Chair of Bromsgrove Black History Society
Kathleen Roche-Nagi	Approachable Coaching and Bromsgrove Resident
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Adele Simpson	Community member
Mr G Singh	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum

Jim Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line
Phil Street	Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects, Bromsgrove District Council
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network
Carol Tipping	Secretary, Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Lynn Ward	Pertemps Disability Consultancy
Julie Wright	Community Support Officer, West Mercia Police

Apologies	
Mr Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Liz Altay	Worcester County Council/ PCT
Hugh Bennett	Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Geoff Denaro	Elected Member and Executive Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Kevin Dicks	Joint Chief Executive Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council
Mark Eastwood	Bromsgrove Resident
Mandi Geens	Pertemps Disability Consultancy
Bilkis Islam	Bromsgrove Muslim Network
Ruksana Koser	Worcestershire County Council Approachable Coaching
Haseena Lockhart	Bromsgrove Muslim Network
Elaine Mortimore	Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum
Huw Moseley	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Stephen Peters	Elected Member for Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council, Diversity Champion for elected Members, Bromsgrove District Council
Nishad Searle	Bromsgrove Muslim Network
Keith Sherman	Age Concern
Sonia Spurr	Community Engagement Manager - PCT

Guest Speakers	
Cllr Maddy Bunker	Chairman Older People's Task Group
Joanne Floyd	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Margaret Porter	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies – noted as above.

2. Nominations and Elections of Forum Chair and Vice-Chair

Trevor reminded everyone that he had notified his intention some time ago to stand down as Chairman of the Forum and he handed over to Claire Felton to ask the Forum members to nominate a new Chair and Vice Chair.

Election of Chair

Patricia Hackett was nominated by Mary Collett and seconded by Mr Chaudhari

Patricia thanked Trevor for his work.

Mr Chaudhari also praised Trevor's work on the forum

Election of Vice Chair

Mary Collett was nominated by Eileen, seconded by Jim

The meeting formally acknowledged Trevor's work to establish the Forum and the contribution he has made over the last three years as Chair.

3. Minutes of Meeting 13 August 2009

Agreed.

4. Matters arising if not included on main agenda

Page 1 - Attendance

Mr Singh was present and needed to be shown as attending.

Page 3 – Item 4 Changing Places

Patricia explained that there had been a delay over the issuing of Changing Places Packs due to technical problems but the packs were now being issued.

Anyone needing a pack should ring into the Customer Service Centre who will have a supply. Otherwise they will be kept at the Depot to be sent out on request via the Customer Service Centre.

Page 7 – Item 5.3 Hate Crime

Fiona informed the group that an awareness campaign would be taking place next year. Training for Reporting Centres has already taken place.

Patricia explained that people do not know where to go to report the matter. There will be training for people with Learning Disabilities next year.

Jim said that is confusing being spread across the three districts and the hate crime might not take place where you live. The incident might not be criminal just nasty. However recent events in Leicestershire and in Redditch show that it is a really important issue and a coherent process is essential.

Patricia explained that MENCAP have an article in their current publication about the incident in Leicestershire and links to relevant websites. She will pass this to Fiona.

Trevor pointed out that co-operation between these groups will need time.

Jim had not been aware there was going to be a merged group. This demonstrates the need to tie up loose ends.

Tim emphasised that Hate Crime was anti-social behaviour and a key item on police agenda for the New Year.

Patricia suggested that people are still confused over what constitutes Hate Crime. It is how the incident is perceived.

Tim pointed out that it is the follow up to the incident that is important and not whether it is actually an incident or a crime.

Patricia – explained that people do not know where to go to report the matter. They do not always want to go to the police but have to because it is a crime.

Page 8 – Item 5.4 BURT

Mary thought that it is excellent and that the Council should be proud of what they have achieved. The drivers are excellent.

Eileen praised it too explaining that it is nice to travel with other people and much cheaper. She has been advertising it locally by word of mouth.

Page 9 – Item 7 Equality Standard for Local Government

John wanted to know if there is more work still to be done.

There is a new system called The Equality Framework for Local Government. Work will start in the New Year to move across our evidence from the Standard. It is still bureaucratic and we need to see how we fit the model.

5. Minutes of meeting 8 October 2009

Agreed

Matters arising if not included on main agenda

Page 1 Attendance and Apologies

Mary and Trevor asked that their names be added to the apologies. Mr Singh needs to be added to the attendees.

The Executive Cabinet meet to discuss community bids in the context of the budget situation at their meeting on 6 January 2010. This meeting is open to the public and anyone from the Forum can attend and listen to the discussions. Funding for Bromsgrove Black History Society and Diwali are now in the financial plan. It is the new bids that will be discussed.

7. Items from the Forum Chair

Patricia emphasised that the group needs to be aware of the Council Budget. Ann Sowton (Chief Officer) of Bromsgrove and Redditch Networking (BARN) will be addressing the February meeting of the Forum to explain how to put bids together and other sources of funding that is available to organisations and groups.

Patricia pointed out that people are still confused about what constitutes the Council's areas of responsibilities and which ones belong to the County. She also felt that people need to be aware of the needs of all the strands of diversity and not just of interest in those of their own area.

8. Jackie Benson – Bromsgrove District Housing Trust – Supported Housing – Facts

Jackie explained that other forums may be more appropriate for certain issues. Joanne Floyd and Margaret Porter were present as they are more knowledgeable in this particular area. Factsheets had already been distributed

Patricia referred back to the issues brought up in the August meeting regarding meals.

Carol explained that this had now been resolved as Crabtree Court has its own service and the residents are happy with it.

Joanne added that details of the Lunch Club were on the leaflet which also explains why BDHT's own providers withdrew and that it did not only affect Crabtree Court. CP catering are now using Crabtree Court's kitchen and they have also addressed Shenstone's Court needs.

Jim remembered that at the conference, several older people were concerned about changes to the warden service which has led to confusion about who is responsible and unhappiness about the possibility of bogus callers. The residents do not like new system. He wanted to know what working practices could be adopted to ensure continuity and to make the residents happier.

Joanne explained that there is now one support officer per customer. Also many more residents are being supported, including those with special needs and in private housing. Those in Sheltered Housing get a better service now.

Margaret added that the support service makes appointments with clients and will rearrange them to suit the client's convenience.

Jackie suggested that a mail shot saying that wardens do not just knock on the door might be useful.

Claire pointed out that when change occurs there is a period of disruption and a few unforeseen problems along the way. The majority of people are happy and further concerns can be taken up with the Customer Service Centre.

Patricia asked that any information is written in plain English.

Jackie confirmed that this is the case and it has pictures to help further.

Trevor wanted it to be noted that a lot of information about issues is made known by the local newspapers. He felt that it would be better to start with the Forum

Jackie wondered whether there should be another outlet for their concerns. She felt that housing issues could take over the Forum. If another Forum is needed, BDHT will be happy to set one up.

9. Councillor Maddy Bunker – Report back from Older People’s Task Group

Councillor Maddy Bunker explained that decisions in the Council are made by the Cabinet. Other councillors scrutinise these decisions. Scrutiny has been involved with issue of older people in Bromsgrove as it is a growing sector of the population and this is especially true in Bromsgrove.

The District Council has a role to play as older people use services even though the County Council is responsible for Social Care. The District Council wishes to integrate into the final version of the Worcestershire Older People’s Strategy and have already reflected on their involvement at the first two levels.

The current provision is for free swimming sessions for those 60 or over, not free swimming lessons. The Council needs to find a way of ensuring that free swimming is only for Bromsgrove residents.

Jim explained to the group that many people live and work in different parts of the county and provision needs to be made to ensure that they are able to use a convenient pool. He can use the pool at Wyre Forest even though he lives in Redditch. It is part of a national scheme.

Phil informed the group that payment becomes an issue when the national scheme runs out in 2011.

Trevor did not know about the Falls Prevention Course. How widely is this information available?

Gill added that a Postural Stability Instruction Course (a course for preventing falls) is taking place after Easter. The first one is at Gilbert Court, then another one in Aston Fields

Jim suggested that the title of the course needs to be in plainer English as people will not know what it is.

Maddy explained that it is all about getting people moving. The Council really want to address the needs of older people and although the TRUNK (resource centre) is located in Charford, it deals with people across the district. The information is in Together Bromsgrove and they also run drop-ins with an open event at their luncheon club on 18 December.

Jim thought that Age Concern have expertise which could be utilised by the TRUNK. This is especially important when there are resource issues

Maddy said that the TRUNK needs to utilise other buildings etc, to see what else can be done. The TRUNK needs to show what is out there, perhaps there could be a database for the Hub

Jim informed the group that the County Council have brought out a data base of shared knowledge on the My Place site.

Maddy would investigate.

Patricia referred to an issue with BURT which came up at the Disabled Users Group. People were keen to travel to some places outside the District.

Maddy explained that BURT is unable to travel outside the District because of the licence. An issue has arisen because Webbs is in Wychavon. The Council is looking into it. She also added that the Council want to continue with the Mystery Shopper exercise and are keen on the idea of Older People's Champions who come in to council and feed back into their communities. This has been effective in Gloucestershire.

**10. Gender Equality Awareness Campaign –
Joan King, the Gender Trust and Fiona Scott, Equality Officer,
Bromsgrove District Council**

Fiona explained that this follows on from the presentation by Malcolm Johnson to the June meeting. The Gender Awareness Campaign is now underway and a new policy document for access to Sports and Leisure Services for Facilities for Trans People has been added for the purposes of the campaign. In addition, Joan has been at the Customer Service Centre for 5 weekly drop in sessions to raise awareness.

Phil suggested that we should make this the main item at the next meeting as there were technical problems with the presentation.

Joan explained that Trans People are like everyone else and just want to be treated the same. They need to get their bodies changed because their mental and physical states do not match. Trans Gender people have had hormonal treatment but do not want gender reassignment surgery. Transvestites just dress in the clothes of the opposite sex. "Trans sexual" is not a popular term because it implies it is to do with sexuality.

Trans Gender People have the highest rate of suicide attempts and self harming in any community.

It is a mental condition not an illness. Post mortem tests have shown that people are born with Gender Dysphoria, they do not develop it.

They face many challenges and barriers. First they have to accept themselves, then, when diagnosed have to decide if they want to go forward. There are also problems of buying buy clothes while transitioning.

A big problem is knowing where to go to the toilet and which changing facilities to use as the disabled toilets are not always suitable. Agreements need to be made with the other parties involved. There can also be problems at work where they can be seen as perverts and face particular challenges on the phone. Proof is needed that they have lived in the role for 2 years and they must go and see a psychiatrist.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows the obtaining of a new birth certificate provided a Gender Recognition Certificate is first obtained. Trans People can then marry someone from the opposite sex but previous any marriage or civil partnership needs to be first annulled.

The policy on access for trans people is now out for consultation until 31st March 2010. There has been some training for staff and elected Members which has received good feedback so far.

Jim wanted to know if the new policy had had an impact assessment yet? This is for completion for when the policy goes forward to the Executive Cabinet for their approval next April.

Jeff wanted to know whether the pension age still had to be the same as on the original birth certificate.

Joan explained that this is not the case if a new birth certificate has been obtained because the person had a gender recognition certificate. People are able to claim at the age applicable to the new gender.

Joan added that she had cards for people to take away for further contact and Patricia urged the group to help themselves to any information that was available on the table at the back of the room.

11. Questions from floor for Phil Street acting on behalf of Chief Executive – Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive for Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council.

Timing did not permit this discussion at this meeting.

12. Equality Highlight Report: Fiona Scott – Equality Officer

LGBT History Month

There will be an official public LGBT history month in February 2010. This is a great partnership opportunity and already involves Fire & Rescue, West Mercia Police, BDHT and The Artrix. Fiona is working on a flyer which will go on the council's website and be distributed next week.

“My Beautiful Laundrette” is being shown at The Artrix – a landmark film because it deals with people trying to establish identities. There will be a social networking afterwards to help to break down barriers and reduce the isolation that is experienced by the LGBT community in Bromsgrove. They are aiming to raise their public profile and gain recognition. The event will be open to all.

2010 Meetings of the Equality and Diversity Forum

Agreed to move the April meeting to 15 April.

Conference Report

The transcript gave us a lot more information from the open debates than we've had for previous Conferences but made it more difficult to produce a manageable report as there was much duplication. A lot of work was put into editing whilst striving to keep the flavour of the discussions. The report will now be distributed and available on the Council's website.

Hugh Bennett has requested 10 key points to form key priorities for the next Council plan. Fiona will compile these and bring the list back to Forum in February.

Tactile Map

This was passed round together with a printed version. These are expensive and so free copies will be restricted to those who need them. Further copies will be available if people wish to purchase them. Jeff pointed that the Tactile Map does not mention the Charford Buses (93/99). Fiona will arrange to correct this before the Tactile Map is finalised.

Mr Chaudhari said that there were still problems with the buses to The Oakalls. Fiona felt that this issue could not be addressed here but it would be addressed in 10 Key Items from Conference Report.

Bromsgrove Black History Society

The AGM was positive although the minutes are not yet out. The Council will continue to build on the links that were established this year for the highly successful event for Council staff with local partner organisations. This is a blueprint for future working as it will be necessary to share costs and workloads.

Trevor reported that the Black History Society will work with the carnival committee next year so that it reflects the aspirations of the town rather than in working in isolation.

13. Agenda items for future meetings:

Trevor hoped for Jackie Threshie to come to a meeting to discuss “Trips and Falls” before the weather gets bad.

Fiona explained that Jackie had cancelled for the December meeting but BDHT were available and this made sense in order for BDHT to follow up the discussion that was held at the August meeting. Fiona will try to rearrange with Jackie Threshie.

Trevor had seen the PCT leaflet asking for people to consult with them on a range of health issues stating that he felt that this was the role of this Forum.

The meeting closed at: 8.30p.m

Time, date and place of next meeting – 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm

Thursday 11th February 2010 in the Committee Room





The Equality and Diversity Forum – 10th December 2009

Equality Highlight Report

1. Gender Equality Awareness Campaign

The revised Draft Scheme published in March 2009 committed the Council to a Gender Equality Awareness Campaign in late 2009. This is currently underway in partnership with the Gender Trust and runs up until 31st March 2010.

It involves including training for elected Members, Equality Impact Assessment Workshops for employees and drop in events for the public and Council staff at the Hub, Bromsgrove.

The campaign also includes a public consultation on a new policy for access to facilities and services for individuals under going gender re-assignment. The policy is out for consultation until 31st March 2010.

2. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual History Month 2010

A meeting was held in late November to discuss activities for next year's LGBT History Month. It was agreed that the main event will be at the Artrix on Thursday 4th February 2010. There will be a showing of the film "My Beautiful Laundrette" and a social networking event will be put on in the early evening before the film.

3. The Equality and Diversity Forum

The dates for 2010 are :-

11th February	8th April
10th June	12th August
7th October	9th December

The usual arrangements apply – 5.30 pm for refreshments and 6.30 pm for the meeting.

The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group has not yet reconvened. Selected Assessments still to be reviewed are

Bromsgrove District Council Website
Electoral Services
Code of Practice on CCTV
Lifeline
Shopmobility and Car Parking

4. The 2009 Community Consultation Conference - Saturday 26th September 2009

The Conference was run on 26th September and was very successful with very positive feedback from those who attended. Over 60 people attended including community members, Council officers and partnership organisations. The report of the Conference will be circulated shortly which includes the many very favourable comments that were received on the day.

5. The Disabled Users Group

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th August have been circulated.

The group has agreed to work with the Council to improve the Shop Mobility map next year.

The Tactile Map has been received and is with a community member to conduct a practical trial. Once this has been successfully tested there will be some publicity and marketing to various organisations and partners to promote the availability of the Map. There will be an ongoing exercise to update the contents of the map in time for the next edition.

6. The Customer Satisfaction Survey for the Equality and Diversity Forum and the Disabled Users Group

The council received 15 completed questionnaires. The vast majority either “always” or “usually” attended the Forum or Disabled Users Group.

Council Initiatives

The vast majority felt that they had influenced

community bids
community transport
redevelopment of the town centre including the refurbishment of the toilet block and the bus station
access to leisure services to a great or some extent
highways issues including dropped kerbs

either to some extent or to a great extent.

There was less satisfaction with the ability to influence policy on concessions, including parking with the most feeling that they had not influenced the policy at all and some feeling that they had been able to influence to some extent.

Council’s Plans and Policies

All respondents felt that they had been able to influence the Council’s plans and policies to some extent or more.

Council’s Priorities

Most people were satisfied with the Council’s initiatives on Clean Streets and Climate Change. On the Town Centre, Housing and Sense of Community, the majority were either “fairly satisfied” or “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”.

What could the council have done differently to help people influence its plans and policies?

The greatest number of respondents felt that the Council could have attended the Equality and Diversity Forum or Disabled Users Group to canvass views

A couple of people pointed out that in their opinion the Council already did this. Holding more public meetings and consulting more widely were also high on people's suggestions for improvement. Two thirds of respondents thought either that it should be easier for people to get in touch with the council or the council should send out information in more user friendly formats. The highest praise was from the person who thought the Council did everything well

What could the Council have done better?

Car parking is a continuing source of dissatisfaction as it was felt that the council should listen to more disabled people and other car park users.
The removal of the annual car parking permit caused hardship for older and disabled people.
The pathways needed to be kept free from weeds.
The council needs to have more influence on fair and efficient public transport.
The police would like more notice of questions likely to be raised at meetings so that they are able to answer questions fully.
Progress in developing the Town Centre is too slow.

What has the Council done well?

People were very pleased with the new toilet block and Changing Places.
The bus station has improved.
Community Spirit is good.
The Council has a better understanding of the needs of disabled people.
The free provision of mobility scooters has enhanced the lives of many disabled people.
The Council has listened well and improved the opening hours of the shopmobility service.
It is felt that this is largely due to the influence of the Equality and Diversity Forum and the Disabled Users Group.
The Council is also sensitive to ethnic minorities and other community based groups.
The consultation over the Town Centre and its partial improvement
The introduction of BURT (Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport).

The roads have improved, especially dropped kerbs, zebra crossing and lights.
Litter is cleaned up faster.
The Dolphin Centre has really improved and the Hub works well.
The Council has good customer care.
The movement of the market to the High Street.
Forum members are given an easier way to influence policing in Bromsgrove especially those in “harder to reach” sectors of the population.
The Council have consulted with people who are interested in issues that affect disabled people.
The Street Theatre and programme around the bandstand seems to give entertainment to all ages.
The customer satisfaction survey will be repeated in Autumn 2010.

7. Bromsgrove Black History Society

The 5th annual programme was delivered successfully in October this year with nine schools having the Blue Sky puppet theatre show. An event for employees was held in partnership with the District Council, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust and West Mercia Police. The event was also supported by Bromsgrove library, the Gambian Link, Redditch Borough Council, The TRUNK and North Bromsgrove High School.

A report of the feedback of the event on 14th October will be circulated to partners in due course. A written review of the various activities is currently being prepared and will be circulated to partners and Society members in due course. 2010 Next year’s meeting dates are 1st February, 5th April, 7th June, 2nd August, 6th September, 4th October, 6th December 2010 – all meetings except 6th December to be held at the Council House.

8. Diwali

The second Diwali event organised in partnership with the Bromsgrove Indian Community was held in the Spadesbourne Suite on Sunday 18th October. Approximately 150 people attended this year’s event. The evaluation shows that there is increasing interest from other sections of the community in Diwali as an annual event. A third event is planned for October 2010.

9. Being Different Together

The community based projects have mostly been delivered and are currently being evaluated.

The Community Consultation Conference was held on 26th September - the Conference report shows evaluation.

Training and support for the Hate Crime Partnership and Reporting Centres (Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership in conjunction with Redditch Anti Harassment Partnership) – a training programme was undertaken in October for Reporting Centres and Hate Crime Partners.

Further training packages are being developed to help support reporting centres and a renewed publicity/ awareness raising campaign is being planned for sometime next year
A democracy magazine for young people is being produced in partnership with Bromsgrove South High School

The Gender Equality Awareness Campaign started in early November and runs through to March 2010

This includes the consultation on the Sports and Leisure Services and Facilities access policy for trans people

10. Diversity Peer Challenge

An action plan has been drawn up to address the recommendations of the Diversity Peer Challenge Report.

Equality objectives for the strands of Sexual Orientation, Religion/ Belief and Age have been included in the Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme. Further planning will take place for moving towards the next level of the Equality Framework in the new year when the new Corporate Management Team has been established.

11. Community Bids

Feedback on this year's bids was received at the meeting on 8th October. The "Just Us" network is going well and the reclamation of the allotment is also going well but proved to be a bigger challenge than was first thought.

Six new bids have been forwarded for further consideration by the full council

Bromsgrove Muslim Network – a family friendly event
Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum – British Indian Friendship Day
"Just Us"
Girl Guiding – International event next October
Fair Trade
Computer access awareness training for blind and partially sighted Bromsgrove residents

An update on this will be on the agenda for the February 2010 meeting.

12. Community Transport

Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT) was launched in late September and has been very successful so far. There has been a great deal of very positive feedback. The Community Transport Working Group which was set up to oversee the project has now completed it's work and a service user group will be established in due course.

13. Changing Places Toilet

The final opening was delayed due to a couple of minor technical problems which have now been solved. The application process has been finalised and packs are being issued to the main care organisations in Bromsgrove and community members. Padstone Day Centre have access on a daily basis.

14. Interpreting and Translation services

In partnership with the County Council and other District Councils an approved supplier list drawn up through a formal tendering process.

A policy for interpreting and translation has been agreed within this partnership. A separate policy is being developed for alternative formats.

15. Wheelchair Charlie

David Hughes, also known as Wheelchair Charlie 39, called into the Council House in Bromsgrove asking for information about various things including equality topics especially disability access.

Wheelchair Charlie 39 is the title adopted by David for his community based campaign to test and improve access for disabled people.

He is particularly interested in parking, Changing Places Toilet, Hate Crime, the RADAR Annual Dialogue for MPs, and European Diversity Grant Scheme amongst other things.

I have followed up most of the suggestions made but have been unable to confirm firmly some of the information provided by David due to time constraints.

