



**The Equality and Diversity Forum**  
**Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 11 February 2009**  
**In the Committee Room at the Council House**

<b>In attendance</b>	
Mr Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Nuala Dalton	Bromsgrove Resident
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
Rebecca Dunne	Senior Policy and Performance Officer ( Community Engagement ) Bromsgrove District Council
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Nigel Godwin	Bromsgrove Resident
Patricia Hackett (Chair)	Mencap and Bromsgrove Resident
Sgt Tim Harper	West Mercia Police
Tracey Hodges	Padstone Day Centre
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Bal Kular-Taylor	Senior Positive Action Adviser, West Mercia Constabulary Head Quarters
Julie Moss	Administrative Assistant – Equalities
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Jackie Murrall	Droitwich CVS
Cllr Stephen Peters	Elected Member for Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council, Diversity Champion for elected Members, Bromsgrove District Council
Jayne Pickering	Executive Director of Finance – Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils
Kathleen Roche-Nagi	Approachable Coaching and Bromsgrove resident
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Nishad Searle	Bromsgrove Muslim Network
Rauf Shah	Oakley Road Residents Association

Mr G Singh	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Ivan Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line
Ann Sowton	BARN
Sonia Spurr	Community Engagement Manager - PCT
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network
Jo Wright	Bromsgrove Resident
Julie Wright	Community Support Officer, West Mercia Police

<b>Apologies</b>	
Jackie Benson	BDHT
Stuart Bray	Pinke.biz
Gill Christison	Worcestershire PCT
Sonia Hambridge	Citizen's Advice Bureau
Ruksana Koser	Worcestershire County Council Approachable Coaching
Art Lavelle	Bromsgrove Resident
Hazel Robinson	Worcestershire County Council
Carol Tipping	Secretary, Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Lynn Ward	Pertemps Disability Consultancy

<b>Attending as Guest Speakers</b>	
Councillor Margaret Sherry	Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People
Alyson Livesey	Out Central

## 1. Introductions and apologies

New members were welcomed including **Jackie Murrall** and **Ivan Smith** and **Alyson Livesey** as a guest speaker.

**Patricia** recorded the thanks of The Forum to **Phil Street** for all his work with us. He has now left Bromsgrove District Council and is shortly about to begin working with the voluntary sector.

**Apologies** – as above.

## **2. Minutes of meeting held 10 December 2010**

### **Page 6 - Item 8 BDHT Supported Housing – Facts**

**Paragraph 5** – This should read “CP Catering are now working out of Shenstone Court’s Kitchen. Crabtree Court has it’s own private arrangement for meals. “

**The minutes were agreed.**

## **3. Matters arising if not included on main agenda**

### **Minutes of meeting held 13 August 2009**

#### **Page 3 - Attendance**

The attendance record has been corrected.

**Patricia** informed the group that from now on the attendance sheet for meetings will be kept with the minutes for future reference. She therefore requested that everyone ensure that they sign the attendance sheet.

#### **Page 4 Item 4: Changing Places**

This will be dealt with under the Equality Highlight Report.

#### **Page 4 (Page 7) Item 5.3: Hate Crime**

This will be put forward as an item for a future meeting to get an update on the merged partnerships and the publicity campaign. We have noted that people do not know about Reporting Centres/ where to report hate incidents.

#### **Page 5 - BURT**

It has now been agreed that BURT will take people to Webbs as it is just over the border.

#### **Page 5 – (Page 9) Item 7: Equality Standard for Local Government**

Fiona is to cover this under the Equality Highlight Report.

## **Minutes of meeting held 8 October 2009**

### **Page 5 - Attendance**

The attendance record has been altered.

Community bidders have been informed of the outcome.

## **Minutes of Meeting held 10 December 2009**

### **Pages 6-7 – Item 8: BDHT Supported Housing**

The issues have been raised with BDHT and we are looking for a response. **Jackie Benson** will attend a future meeting and be bringing some forms to give out to address the need for people to have a process to raise the issues directly with BDHT.

### **Pages 7-9 – Item 9: Older People's task group**

Forum members will want follow up/ further information on this. **Fiona** to establish who will take the lead.

This is also part of the council scrutiny function and will be an item on the agenda of a future meeting.

**Jim** commented that Supporting People funding is being reviewed and is currently under consultation. Jim has an electronic copy of the documentation and invited members to comment on it. **Jim** will forward it to **Fiona** so that she can circulate it to interested parties.

### **Pages 9-10 Gender Equality Awareness Campaign**

**Joan King** was not able to give her full presentation to the December meeting. She will come to the June meeting after the consultation on the Access to Sports and Leisure Services and Facilities Policy has been completed.

### **Pages 11-12 Item 12: Equality Highlight Report**

The recent bad weather has brought issues discussed at the December 2008 and April 2009 meetings concerning trips and falls. **Fiona** will try to arrange for **Jackie Threshie** to attend a meeting of the Forum in the future to give further information on this.

## Page 13 – Agenda items for future meetings

**Patricia** urged member to help themselves to the information leaflets at the back of the room which may not necessarily be about Equality and Diversity e.g. the PCT (now NHS) “expert patients” programme”. It is up to the members of the Forum to take any information they are interested in.

The PCT (now NHS) have a Health Improvement Manager based at Bromsgrove District Council on a full time basis – **Emma Barton**. She is currently on maternity leave but came to the Forum to explain her role in October 2008. Her maternity leave cover, **Gillian Christison** will give the Forum appropriate support and we will continue to work with the PCT and try to increase their involvement.

### 4. Items from the Forum Chair

**Patricia** demonstrated coloured cards which are used as an aid to protocol in other meetings which she attends.

Red	Stop, I want to speak
Green	Yes, I agree
Amber	Slow down, please explain that again

These are going to be used in the Disabled Users Group meetings. They are being put into Braille for members with sight impairment.

**Patricia** referred back to the discussion at the last meeting concerning the incident of Fiona Pilkington. An article was circulated on this with the papers for tonight’s meeting. On the 15 March there is a free Hate Crime Conference at Worcester Rugby Club about people with learning disabilities and valuing them, organised by various partners. Forms were available at the back of the room if people were interested.

The costs of meetings have been discussed with the Disabled Users group who have agreed to reduce costs to a minimum in the light of the economic climate. Bromsgrove District Council is grateful that DUG members have agreed to reduce refreshments and to pay their own transport costs as BURT is available in the daytime.

## 5. “Finding a voice” – Jo Wright Community Member including “Out Central”- DVD

**Patricia** reminded the group that February is LGBT History Month and that last February this had been the first item in the Equality Highlight Report. Subsequently, Malcolm Johnson from the Worcestershire PCT (now NHS) came to speak in more detail about the subject in response to requests for more information to further understanding.

The Forum is delighted that we had the first ever official public event in Bromsgrove last week and there has been much positive feedback from this. **Patricia** thanked everyone for their support for all strands of equality and diversity interest.

**Jo** thanked **Fiona** and the Forum for allowing her to speak. She also thanked **Fiona** and **Julie** for their hard work concerning last week’s event. She introduced **Alyson Livesey** from Out Central, a LGBT youth group in Birmingham which had made the DVD.

**Alyson** explained that last summer her group achieved the funding to make a DVD about homophobic bullying and how it affects young people. The young people worked enthusiastically with Loud Mouth Theatre Company, both writing and starring in the production. They are very proud of what they have produced and it has been shown to various groups including youth workers, teachers and professionals. **Alyson** had previously been a member of the group before she worked for them and had found it of great benefit.

**Jo** explained that she hopes to make contact with youth organisations in Bromsgrove and arrange for Out Central to talk to them. Out Central could be a model for a similar youth group of our own.

**Nishad** wanted to know if the group normally went to schools.

**Alyson** explained that at present the DVD was only shown to professionals as there can be resistance to it. Teachers are intending integrate the topic into other lessons to make it less of an issue.

**Jim** reminded the group that people with disabilities are also in institutional settings and these should be considered too.

**Fiona** explained that Worcestershire County Council were offering a free play for children in high schools. We found out about this too late to include in our LGBT History Month plans. We hope for better partnership working next year so that such events can be integrated into next year's programme.

**Eileen** asked what would have happened to the young people if they had not had such a group. **Alyson** said that she herself had left school when very young because she couldn't cope.

**Claire** wanted to know if educational policies were not wide enough to cover issues correctly or were they being ignored.

**Jo** explained that the policies exist but schools feel more comfortable dealing with the other strands of equality. The Stonewall School Report had made it easier for teachers to confront homophobic bullying although this remains difficult and it is up to Forum members to support and encourage schools in this type of work.

**Jo** thanked **Alyson** for coming to speak to members and **Patricia** added her thanks.

**Jo** reminded the Forum that **Finding a Voice** had been given funding of £500 to research level of interest and to gauge the level of need. It was to raise awareness and to canvass interest in certain types of activities. They have canvassed friends and have contacted a parent's group in Bromsgrove. They are developing contacts with "Rainbow Redditch". In future they hope to use their funds to mutually cooperate with Out Central. They have also been involved in planning the recent LGBT History Month Event in partnership with Council and other organisations. **Jo** read a very positive comment which had been received.

"The LGBT History month event was a really good opportunity for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to be recognised as part of the Bromsgrove community. I hoped that the event would be a success, and I was not disappointed. My husband and children joined me for the first part of the event, and we were able to celebrate as a family – we felt safe, and we felt for the first time since we moved here 8 years ago that we were part of a Bromsgrove 'gay' community and in fact part of the wider community. This did not mean that only LGBT people attended, it meant that everyone present, regardless of sexual orientation were supportive and accepting of inclusiveness. For many towns this would be a small step, for Bromsgrove this certainly was a large step forward, and I look forward to supporting Bromsgrove DC to help the hidden LGBT community feel accepted and included. I personally would like to thank Bromsgrove DC and everyone else that made this possible."

**Fiona** felt that credit should also be given to the Forum for supporting the event and she appreciated their feedback in the questionnaire.

**Jo** added that Finding a Voice had provided prizes for the event and made a financial contribution towards the costs of the buffet.

Recent initiatives included the provision of a mobile number for evening contact and the setting up of a page on Facebook. They hope to involve more volunteers in the future and to visit youth organisations. A suggested activity group is now up and running. They are also going to Worcester Pride this summer and she hopes that representatives of the Forum and Council will accompany them. She also hopes to gain the support of more elected Members.

**Jo** said farewell to the Forum on behalf of herself and **Nuala** as they are leaving the area. She thanked the Forum for its support.

## **6. Finding funds for Community Activities – Ann Sowton, Chief Executive of Bromsgrove and Redditch Network BARN**

Due to a technical problem, it was not possible to show the presentation but handouts and further information were available.

**Ann** encouraged the group by suggesting that just a small amount of money can get you started. Worcestershire County Council bidding round is about to be launched at the beginning of March and they will run three information sessions in various locations.

The Fundfinder database is available via BARN although some of the funds are currently empty. However the lottery has quite a lot of money at present and they have a current project to improve communities and people's lives.

In 2009/2010 Bromsgrove applied for 53 awards and were granted 28, actually getting more money than they had requested. The region as a whole got £162,437 after an original allocation of £152,871.

BIG Lottery Funding is to be announced in the spring and will grant smaller sums of money with a simpler application process. The decision making process will also be simplified. The Lottery is coming to BARN soon to explain the bidding process. There is also to be a new allocation of money for veterans of recent conflicts.

Supermarkets a great source of funding e.g. Tesco offer 2/3 strands a year. However these strands change so you need to check the website regularly.

Donations can be requested from various businesses for money, equipment etc.

Fund Raising is another avenue to explore and information booklets are available on request. However you must consider legal issues e.g. the need for licences, gaming rules. The Council is able to give advice on such matters. Insurance is also needed.

Obtaining funds can be complicated and take time. You need to know exactly what the money is needed for and tap into other bodies e.g. A social/ disabled group might need money for arts, cultural, or leisure activities. One such appropriate body might be the Arts Council

**Ann** is willing to talk to the Forum again and **Jackie Murrall** who is based at The Trunk will also come if needed. Her number is available from **Ann** and on the literature.

**Ann** would welcome feedback on what funding members of the Forum get and how they did it. It would also be useful for the Council to know this.

## **7. Councillor Margaret Sherrey – Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable (across all age groups) and Older People (including Lifeline)**

**Councillor Margaret Sherrey** explained that the recent budget allowed for the production of a directory which will allow people to access the services they need as individuals best know their own requirements. It will be produced with partners and other agencies and will be reviewed and updated. The report by the Older People's Task Group has been very useful in the production of this directory as it has provided a good source of information about what is needed. Some of the ideas are already in progress e.g. the directory.

Lifeline covers all residents of Bromsgrove. It allows independence for the individual and peace of mind for relatives. The fall detector is worn on the waist like a pager and works on vibrations There is also a panic button eg if strangers are at the door. Other features include a temperature sensor, a smoke detector and a flood sensor.

The centre holds the details of carers, friends, family etc. It also offers privacy, mobility. It can be operated by the touch of a button on pendant and provides 24 hour cover, 365 days a year. The operator stays on the line until help arrives. Everything is treated as an emergency. All clients are treated with respect. The operator listens to the person's needs and checks information. The cost varies according to need and the service required.

**Mr Chaudhari** wanted to know how they reach the vulnerable who would benefit from this service but do not know who to approach or, those who have social problems (e.g. domestic violence) but do not wish to admit them.

**Councillor Sherrey** explained that if it is a case of domestic violence the police could be informed who would in turn alert Lifeline.

**Fiona** suggested that such people could be referred to services other than the police. However the police have do experience handling this issue which would be useful.

**Tim** informed the group that at the moment police are compiling a Care Plan to identify vulnerable people in the local community who are likely to be affected by anti social behaviour. The Signposting Scheme forwards their details to appropriate agencies who could look at the provision of Lifeline as one option so the two schemes could dovetail.

**Councillor Sherrey** suggested that Signposting is put on the agenda for a future meeting.

**Jim** told the group that the Information Guide launched by DIAL had been well-received so that people can get the things which are available. The County Council have a scheme coming soon which will harmonise with this.

**Councillor Sherrey** felt that more information is needed to make the directory as inclusive as possible.

Registration for Lifeline is through the Customer Service Centre.

## **8. Questions from floor for the Chief Executive – Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils**

**Eileen** asked about shared services.

**Kevin** explained things are progressing well although the last couple of months had been stressful due to recruiting to Senior Management Team even though it is the right thing to do financially. All but 2 places have now filled. The management's role is now to support staff in the sharing of services and make them more efficient and effective. It has given us a stronger voice at regional level and people are noticing us for the right reasons.

**Ann** felt that a structural map would be useful to see who has what post and their responsibilities.

**Kevin** will send a copy to **Fiona** to attach to the minutes of today's meeting.

**John** praised BURT and pointed out that this was done in co-operation with Redditch who had already got a bus and shared their expertise.

**Kevin** offered this as an example of how we can work together and acknowledged that a lot of work had been done on **BURT** by the Forum and the Disabled Users Groups.

**Jim** welcomed the sharing of resources and energy and felt that the initiative that has been taken here has had a positive effect.

**Ann** suggested that the Forum works with the voluntary sector in Bromsgrove as this has benefited Redditch Council who have contacted her about it this week.

## **9. Equality Highlight Report – Fiona Scott – Equality Officer**

### **9.1 Gender Awareness Campaign**

This continues in its aim of raising awareness and includes the consultation on access needs for men and women who are "transitioning". Several training workshop are still to be run. The vast majority of responses have been positive. **Joan** will give her full presentation when the consultation period and subsequent management processes are complete.

## 9.2 LGBT History Month 2010

There was an initial issue with assembling partners but then all worked well together. The event was a success and we were pleased that we were supported by the community and the Forum. Those offering financial and/ or practical support included West Mercia Police, BDHT, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue, NASUWT, Out Central, Worcester Pride, Pinke.biz, PCT. We were also pleased to have the support of Bromsgrove Black History Society, Bromsgrove Muslim Network and Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum. We have learnt a lot and there will be a follow up meeting to review and plan further events.

**Patricia** thanked **Jo** and **Nuala** for all their work on the project.

**Mr Chaudhari** agreed that we need to acknowledge all areas of the wider community and exploit all channels to enlighten them.

**Eileen** felt that the Forum has helped in the understanding of unfamiliar issues.

## 9.3 The Equality and Diversity Forum

The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group may reconvene in May if the original group are willing. Please see **Fiona** if you would like to join.

It was originally felt that The Inclusive Equalities Scheme needed to be redrafted but the current one should be satisfactory for now so that the group can focus on practical areas. **Fiona** suggested that diversity working groups should only convened when there is an activity to focus on. **Fiona** will start working on the replacement document for the Inclusive Equalities Scheme later this year so that it can be ready to publish in June 2011.

## 9.4 The 2009 Community Consultation Conference – Saturday 26 September 2009

**Fiona** only has 9 priorities at the moment and she proposes that there is a workshop in a future meeting to give the Forum a chance to discuss them fully.

## 9.5 The Disabled Users Group

**Jim** told the group that Redditch had launched their guide to shops this week. **Sarah Kelsey** has the details. **Fiona** felt that it would be useful to run the schemes in tandem.

## **9.6 Customer Satisfaction Survey**

The Customer Satisfaction Survey is to be repeated later this year.

## **9.7 Bromsgrove Black History Society**

This year they are to be involved with the carnival. Feedback on last years events were circulated to all partners.

## **9.8 Diwali**

The event this year will be on 24 October.

## **9.9 Being Different Together**

The project finishes on 31 March. **Fiona** will report back to the Forum when it is complete.

## **9.10 Diversity Peer Challenge- Equality Framework for Local Government**

We were awarded "Achieving" ( Level 2 ) last April. Recently Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council have also reached Level 2. We have until April 2011 undergo a further Diversity Peer Challenge to establish that we are still "Achieving".

## **9.11 Community Bids.**

People have been informed of the outcomes.

**Claire** explained that the Council had to take into account financial constraints. Therefore they put the emphasis on where financial support could be given by the council and where funding could be found elsewhere. In many cases they could not offer financial support but they can offer help in other ways e.g. Sports and Leisure can help with Guiding Event in Sanders Park or offering practical IT support with partners for Braille. The Interfaith Event could be achieved by working together with other churches.

**Mr Chaudhari** was disappointed that The Indian Community Forum did not get it's bid but would have liked fuller minutes of the proceeding as the contents of the project do not appear. People of all faiths from the Indian Community work in Bromsgrove. **Claire** offered to consult with Mr Chaudhari on future bids.

**Eileen** thanked the Council on behalf of **Just Us**.

The dates of Interfaith Week this year are not yet known, it may not go ahead this year. Funds are available and partners will be involved if possible. **Fiona** is currently making links and getting partners together.

### **9.12 Community Transport**

BURT is going to feature in a DVD being made by Wychavon District Council as part of Being Different Together. Members of the Disabled Users Group will feature using BURT and going to the town centre to visit Shopmobility, use Changing Places and trying out the Tactile Map.

### **9.13 Changing Places**

There was a disappointing response to the original mail shot. This has been followed up and further packs have been sent out.

## **10. Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

Scrutiny Function of the Council – specifically “Community Involvement in the Democratic Process”

**Claire** explained that in the run up to the local elections of 2011, the Council is hoping to raise awareness of what we are doing and to get people involved in the Democratic process. Therefore it is important that the Forum is involved so that all residents know what is going on. **Fiona** had attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Task Group earlier in the day. **Patricia** and **Mr Chaudhari** are invited to provide information to a meeting on 23 February. There will be a further meeting on 2 March when anyone can give their views. Those who are interested should speak to **Fiona**. You can also give your views by email or phone. Youth groups and The Older People’s Forum are being invited and further details can be found in The Bromsgrove Advertiser – see page 8 February 10<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Hate Crime – merged Partnership, Bromsgrove and Redditch.

Inter Faith Week 2010

Feed back on Gender Awareness Campaign – presentation by **Joan King**.

Gypsy Traveller Roma History - this will be on the agenda for the June meeting which is Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month. We have been strengthening our links with this community and have recently recruited a representative to the Forum.

Toolkit for Community Engagement - **Rebecca** explained that she is currently rewriting the Community Engagement Strategy to take Scrutiny into account so that she will be able to use it to better engage the community. She will bring it to a future meeting of The Forum.

## **AOB**

International Women's Day 2010 - there will be an event on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March, evening only. There will be an equality display in partnership with Pinke.biz and The Gender Trust.

**Joan** reminded the group that the Gender Trust are holding drop in sessions in conjunction with Redditch Council in Room 5 at Redditch Town Hall. The dates are 1st March, 15th March, 29th March.

**The meeting closed at 8.20p.m.**

**Time, date and place of next meeting –**

**6.30 pm Thursday 15 April 2010  
Venue to be advised**





## **The Equality and Diversity Forum – 11 February 2010**

### **Equality Highlight Report**

#### **1. Gender Equality Awareness Campaign**

The Campaign runs up to the end of March 2010 when the consultation on the transgender Access to Sports and Leisure Services and Facilities closes. So far, the campaign has included

- 3 training sessions for elected Members. 11 have attended with 4 sending apologies. The training sessions were well received and the feedback was very positive.
- Another session will be specifically held for the Executive Cabinet.
- 4 in house Equality Impact Assessment Workshops have been held for staff incorporating a presentation on gender equality issues and including a discussion on the Access Policy. All sessions were very well received and the feedback from staff has been excellent. There are four more sessions to be run in mid March.
- There was also a presentation to the Equality Champions Working Group and the Draft policy for consultation has been brought to the attention of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Hate Incident partnerships and the Worcestershire LGBT Police Forum.
- There have been approximately 20 responses so far ( including a few verbal comments ), the vast majority positive or very positive. One detailed verbal comment was that the policy should include a written commitment to training as the policy will not work in practice if the people who have to operate it haven't been given the training and support to do so.
- There have been six drop in sessions for the public at the Bromsgrove Hub with no response. These were advertised in the local press and on the Council's website.

At the end of the consultation period a final version of the policy, taking account of comments and responses received will be submitted to the Executive Cabinet of the Council in a formal report. This will have a written Equality Impact Assessment to support the recommendations. Following approval by Cabinet, there will be a further necessary strand of work for each service department affected by the policy to produce a practical memorandum of application of the policy in their service area. This means any service area which has changing facilities and toilets.

The final version of the policy will also go to the Council's Trade Union Liaison Committee who have already indicated their support.

## **2. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans History Month 2010**

An event is being held on the 4 February for which publicity and financial support has been provided by the Council, "Finding A Voice", West Mercia Police, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust, Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue, the Gender Trust, Pinke.biz, Worcester Pride and Unison West Midlands. A verbal report will be provided at the meeting.

## **3. The Equality and Diversity Forum**

Meetings for the rest of the year have been notified and agreed.

For all meetings light refreshments are provided from 5.30 pm onwards and the meeting starts at 6.30 pm to finish at 8.30 pm. The April meeting may be held at another venue because of the General Election.

The minutes of the Forum from December 2009 onwards will go to the Local Strategic Partnership as well as to the Corporate Management Team and the Executive Cabinet.

The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group has still not reconvened but it is hoped to find a suitable date in the near future. Selected Assessments still to be reviewed are

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

The setting up of diversity working groups to cover the race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion belief still needs to be addressed. It is suggested that the groups are convened when there is a

specific event or project to work on e.g. Multi-faith week, LGBT History Month, International Older Person's Day and so on.

At the moment we have various working groups and activities which cover most of the six areas

- **Race** – working with Bromsgrove Black History Society and Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum to organise joint events
- **Disability** – have Disabled Users Group and work closely with the Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
- **Gender** – the Gender Equality Working Group rewrote the Gender Equality Scheme and devised/ been involved in the Gender Equality Awareness Campaign
- **Sexual Orientation** – small working group of interested individual and partner organisations have met to focus on LGBT History Month and Pride events
- **Age** – no specific group has been set up under the auspices of the Equality and Diversity Forum, Older Person's Task Group has reported
- **Religion Belief** – currently identifying contacts with a view to partnership working around Inter Faith Week

#### 4. **The 2009 Community Consultation Conference - Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

The Conference report was issued in December. Discuss up to ten priorities that the Forum would like to see incorporated in the Council Plan.

- Town centre redevelopment – ensure accessibility for all
- Road and pavement surfaces to be improved/ dropped kerbs
- Public transport – provide services where needed/ lobby for accessible transport
- Parking – improve enforcement against abuse of Blue Badges
- Housing – housing taking account of needs of all age groups and abilities/ housing schemes to enable residents to have choices/ retain independence
- Community engagement – continue with Forum, Disabled Users Group, Black History, Diwali - develop links with/ recognition for LGBT community, Religion/ Belief Faith groups, migrants especially the Polish community.
- Age – ensure that services for younger and older people are provided/ services are designed to recognise the needs of those in the “middle” ( people of working age )
- Directory of services and facilities for disabled people and older people

- Climate Change and environment – consider positive local initiatives in partnership with the community and business recognising urban and rural issues

## **5. The Disabled Users Group**

The minutes of the meeting held in December will be circulated with the papers for the April Forum meeting along with the minutes of the Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group minutes and the Council's response to those minutes.

The group has now taken on a project to design of a shops access awards system. This will take some time to agree and implement. They will be tackling a project to improve the Shopmobility map.

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

This will be repeated in October/ November this year and will ask new questions based on the topics that have come before the Equality and Diversity Forum and the Disabled Users Group in the preceding 12 months.

## **7. Bromsgrove Black History Society**

The first meeting of 2010 will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> February where ideas to partner with Bromsgrove Carnival will be discussed. Generally the agreement with the members and supporters of the society is to continue with the same range of activities as in previous years. Verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

The report of the feedback of the event held on 14<sup>th</sup> October was circulated to partners. A written review of all the activities held in 2009 is currently being prepared and will be circulated in due course.

The dates of meetings for the rest of the year are 12<sup>th</sup> April, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2010 – all meetings except 6<sup>th</sup> December to be held in the Conference Room at the Council House. The AGM and celebratory event is planned 6<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

## 8. Diwali

An early meeting was held in early February with representatives of the Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum in February to plan the 2010 event. A verbal update will be given to the meeting.

## 9. Being Different Together

This project is formally concludes on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. More details of the overall achievements of the project will be reported to the Forum at the April meeting.

Wychavon District Council has been awarded “Achieving” under the Equality Framework for Local Government under the umbrella of the Being Different Together project.

## 10. Diversity Peer Challenge – Equality Framework for Local Government

An action plan is in force to address the recommendations of the Diversity Peer Challenge Report. Equality objectives for Sexual Orientation, Religion/ Belief and Age have been included in the Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme (published on the internet on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009 ).

A re-assessment of our current position (“Achieving”) under the Framework will be conducted in due course with an external consultant to assess what we need to do to reach the next level – “Excellent”. Bromsgrove has to be re-assessed in the operational year 2011-12 to either retain “Achieving” or be upgraded to “Excellent”.

## 11. Community Bids

The Executive Cabinet of the Council screened the six bids submitted through the Forum and rated them as “High” or “Low”. These recommendations went to the Full Council meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January and the recommendations were supported. All bidders have been informed and will be contacted in due course to make arrangements accordingly.

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| • Bromsgrove Muslim Network  | High                       |
| • “Just Us”  | High                       |
| • Computer Access for blind and partially sighted Bromsgrove residents | High                       |
| • Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum                                    | Low                        |
| • Girl Guiding   | Low                        |
| • Fair Trade   | further information needed |

## **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 has now concluded its work. The setting up of a customer/ user group is under consideration.

## **13. Changing Places Toilet**

The final opening was delayed due to minor technical problems which have now been solved. The registration process was finalised and packs were issued to the main care organisations in Bromsgrove and community members just before Christmas.

The response to the mailshot was much less than expected; therefore several actions have been taken to generate more registrations.

- all those on the original mailing list will be contacted to ensure that the registration pack was received. New packs will be sent if needed.
- Details will be on the Council's website with registration forms which can either be downloaded or completed on line.
- The Bromsgrove entry on the national Changing Places website was not showing so this is being followed up with the Changing Places Consortium.
- Padstone Day Centre will work with Amber Support Services as the first registrant to go through the full process of assessment and training and generate a positive news story.
- A short two page advertising "flyer" is under development to publicise the Changing Places toilet and will be distributed to all customer contact points in Bromsgrove.
- A credit card size laminated card will be available showing the PIN that is being issued to individuals and organisations. Padstone Day Centre will issue the PIN after carrying out the assessment and training for where required.
- Worcestershire Association of Service Users will put a news item in their next newsletter and Patricia will try to get an item in the MENCAP newsletter.

## **14. Interpreting and Translation services**

A partnership agreement has been entered with the County Council and other District Councils and an approved supplier list drawn up through a formal tendering process. These suppliers will be set up in due course to offer services in Bromsgrove for any interpreting needs.

Interpretation will be the preferred method of support for those whose first language is not English. Immediate telephone interpreting will be available should it be required.

As a matter of policy, translation of documents will not usually be provided. It is expected that requests will continue to be at a low level.

### **15. Hate Crime Reporting – Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership**

As reported at the last meeting the Bromsgrove Partnership has now merged with the Redditch Partnership and is managed by Redditch Borough Council.

Refresher training for reporting centres will be provided for reporting centres and this is open to any potential new reporting centres. New promotional material is under development and there will be a new awareness campaign about the reporting procedure later this year.

There will be an item on the main Agenda for the Forum either April or June this year.

