

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY FORUM HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BROMSGROVE ON THURSDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER 2007 FROM 6.30 P.M. TO 8.00 P.M.

#### PRESENT

Trevor Rigg (Chair)	Bromsgrove Black History Group
Rhyan Berrigan	Disability Equality Project Worker BDC
Lorraine Caswell	Equalities Champion BDC
Mary Collett	North Worcestershire S. P. I. N.
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services BDC
Patricia Hackett	Mencap
Andrew Hall	Hall Solutions
Sarah Kelsey	Equalities Assistant BDC
Joan King	Gender Trust
Tony Lowry	Operations Director BDHT
Peter MacDonald	Bromsgrove District Councillor
Elaine Mortimore	Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum
Theresa Morton	Interpreter
Huw Moseley	Arts Development and Events Officer BDC
Eileen Mulhall	North Worcestershire S. P. I. N.
Veronica Nugent	BDHT
Fiona Scott	Equalities Officer BDC
Joe Scott	Bromsgrove Resident
Dave Shaw	West Mercia Police
Keith Sherman	Age Concern Bromsgrove and District
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire D. I. A. L
Roger Smith	Bromsgrove District Councillor
Phil Street	Executive Director Projects and Partnerships BDC
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network
Iain Tretheway	North Worcestershire D. I. A. L
Doug Turland	West Mercia Police

#### 1. Introduction and Apologies

At the start of the meeting, each member introduced themselves and the Chair welcomed everyone, particularly those attending the Forum for the first time.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Liz Altez	Primary Care Trust
Kevin Dicks	Chief Executive BDC
Tony Love	West Mercia Police
Rauf Shah	Oakley Road Residents Association
Anne Sowton	Bromsgrove and Redditch Network

## **2. Minutes**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 13th September 2007 were approved as a correct record.

## **3. Matters Arising not on the Agenda**

### **Taxi Ranks**

Claire Felton gave an update on this item as Kevin Dicks was not present.

The progress made was noted and it was agreed this item should be considered as completed.

### **Annual Event**

Patricia Hackett reported on progress made with regard to organisation the Consultation Conference Event. It was likely the event would take place on 12th April 2008 (subject to the availability of relevant Forum members and partner organisations) and it was proposed it would take a similar form as the event held in September 2006. It was intended to give an update at the meeting of the Forum in December following discussions at the next meeting of the Annual Event Project Group which would be held on 21st November 2007. Further progress report will be given at the next forum meeting in December.

The Chair stated that the Annual Event celebrate the success of the Forum, consult and plans for the coming year and also encourages new membership of the Forum and whilst the contribution of the Voluntary and Stakeholder Partners is fully recognised and valued, it would be desirable to see a growth in membership from the wider community.

Sarah Kelsey expressed appreciation for the help and support received to date from members in the setting up of the Consultation Conference event.

## **4. Items from the Chair**

### **Electronic Voting**

At the invitation of the Chair, Fiona Scott gave a short presentation relating to the principles of introducing electronic voting to enable the views of residents to be taken into account on a variety of issues. It would be appropriate to pilot the process through the establishment of a small panel of volunteers and it was requested that relevant information be emailed to Forum members and that protocols be established to determine timescales for receipt of responses.

It was felt that the use of the Council's website would enable the process to be further developed and that it could be linked into the new customer feedback system.

Members of the Forum with experience of use of a similar system elsewhere felt that whilst the amount of time demanded to participate was not usually extensive, the success of the system depended on the levels of commitment forthcoming from

those people forming part of the user group. Fiona Scott referred to the Council's recently established Internal Communications Group and undertook to feedback the views of the Forum to that Group and to subsequently to report back to the Forum on progress made.

### Black History Society

At the invitation of the Chair, Huw Moseley reported on the events which had taken place in October to celebrate Black History Month. The programme of events had been successful and enjoyable. It was confirmed that the events would be evaluated over the next few weeks.

Trevor Rigg thanked those who had participated in this year's events and invited anyone who was interested to become involved in the planning process for next year's events at an early stage.

### Budget Bidding Process

Trevor Rigg gave an update following the meeting held on 30th October 2007 to discuss budget bids to be submitted for inclusion in the District Council's budget cycle. It was explained that five budget bids had been selected to be included as part of the Council's budget process.

It was agreed that the exercise had been positive and it was felt to be an acknowledgement that the Forum was being recognised as an influential leader within the community.

Claire Felton added that the Town Centre item, together with the report from last year's Conference had been included as evidence of feeling within the community to support the internal bid.

### Future Forum Meeting Dates

It was agreed that in future the Forum would meet every eight weeks rather than on a six week cycle, to allow more time for officers and partners to undertake work arising from the meetings.

### Police Information Sharing

Sarah Kelsey referred to discussion at the last meeting and the decision to send a consent form to all members to enable their contact details to be released to the Police should an emergency situation arise. The members were advised the forms could be left with Sarah at the end of the meeting or should be forwarded to her as soon as possible.

### Items for Consideration by the Forum

Trevor Rigg reported that following the previous meeting he had discussed with Kevin Dicks the need to ensure the Forum had the opportunity to discuss items arising from the Council in a timely and appropriate manner and that the agenda was balanced where possible with items arising from the community. Kevin had agreed that this was the approach to be taken.

## **5. Report of the Equality Officer**

### Impact Assessment Training

Fiona Scott confirmed that the Impact Assessment training would take place on 20th November 2007. The training was important as it would enable the Forum members to impact assess the delivery of Council services. The relevant papers in respect of the training session had been despatched earlier in the day.

### Disability User Group

It was reported that three dates had now been identified for the Disability User Group, these being the morning of 4th, 17th or 18th December 2007. Fiona apologised for the delay and stated that she would be in contact with the members of the Group over the next week to confirm the date.

### Gender Equality Working Group

It was reported that the Gender Equality Working Group would be meeting on 21st November 2007. The work to be undertaken by the Group would enable the Gender Equality Scheme to be rewritten and would shape the structure and appearance of the other sections of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme. It was intended to launch the revised Gender Equalities Scheme in March 2008 to coincide with the Gender Awareness Month.

### BHIP

There was nothing to report in relation to this item.

## **6. Disability Equality Research Report**

Rhyan Berrigan presented her final Research Report to the Forum. It was reported that the report covered four main areas which were:

- High Dependency Unit (In Town Centre)
- Transport
- Public Understanding and Tolerance of Disabled Users
- Housing

It was stated that the report had already been influential to some extent in the development of Council Priorities, in particular in relation to the Town Centre project.

It was agreed that members review the report outside the meeting and that any comments and questions be fed back directly to Rhyan.

The Chair thanked Rhyan for her excellent research report and added that her findings and observations will be addressed at the future meetings.

## 7. **BDHT Equality and Diversity Strategy 2007-2009**

Tony Lowry Operations Director at BDHT presented the Trust's Equality and Diversity Strategy 2007-2009. Issues highlighted included

- The provision of adaptable accommodation for three residents with learning difficulties each year.
- The need for BDHT to ensure that any alterations or adaptations requested are carried out with the needs of the particular individual in mind rather than a "one size fits all" approach.
- The intention to reduce waiting times for undertaking adaptations requested by residents with a disability.

In addition, Tony Lowry raised the possibility of a representative from this Forum becoming part of the BDHT Diversity Forum. The Chair welcomed the positive approach and suggestion but felt that discussion was required outside the meeting.

## 8. **Any Other Business**

On behalf of residents, Joe Scott

- (a) raised the issue of the non availability of the Bromsgrove Shopmobility facility on Saturdays;and
- (b) queried whether car park tickets were transferable across different car parks.

Fiona Scott undertook to follow up these issues and to report back at the next meeting.

Jim Smith requested a ten minute slot on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss D. I. A. L.

The Chair thanked those present for their attendance and participation.

- Trevor Rigg



Chair