

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY FORUM HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE BROMSGROVE ON THURSDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2006 FROM 6.30 P.M. TO 8.15 P.M.

PRESENT

Trevor Rigg (Chairman)	Bromsgrove Black History Group
Cllr. Caroline Spencer	Bromsgrove District Council
Claire Felton	Head of Legal Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Fiona Scott	Equalities Assistant, Bromsgrove District Council
Phil Street	Corporate Director (Services), Bromsgrove District Council
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire DIAL
Andy Hall	Hall Solutions
Rauf Shah	
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove and District Action Group for Older People and Redditch and Bromsgrove Retirement Fellowship
Keith Sherman	Age Concern Bromsgrove
Sarah Kelsey	Worcester REC
Patricia Hackett	MENCAP
Jo Wright	
Nuala Dalton	Worcestershire Lifestyles
Joe Scott	
Mary Collett	North Worcestershire SPIN

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Hugh Bennett (Bromsgrove District Council), Phil Street (Bromsgrove District Council), Huw Moseley (Bromsgrove District Council), Sandra Hill (Padstone Day Centre), Sonia Hambidge (Bromsgrove CAB), Nick Lewis (NEW College), Elaine Mortimore (Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum), Logan Mailvaganam, Rukhsana Koser (Worcestershire County Council), Iris Martins (Across Consultancy), Kathleen Roche-Nagi, Mike Brown (Bromsgrove District Housing Trust), Tony Lowry (Bromsgrove District Housing Trust), Kam Ohri and Alf Clay.

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the Meeting and referred to the pleasing and gradually increasing levels of attendance. It was felt that significant progress had been made since the first Meeting of the Forum approximately one year ago.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19th October 2006 were noted.

Reference was made to item 7 on the minutes which referred to the setting up of a process to facilitate the reporting and monitoring of incidents relating to racial and other hate crimes. Sarah Kelsey gave an update on the current position and explained that an initial meeting of various agencies had taken place a few days

previously and arrangements were being made to set up suitable “reporting centres” at which hate crimes could be reported and initial assistance provided. It was acknowledged that once the process was finalised and the arrangements were in place, there would need to be a publicity campaign within the relevant area of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Kidderminster. It was hoped to arrange a community event in each area to launch the scheme. In addition use was to be made of local press and publications circulating in the areas such as Council Chat, BDHT Newsletter etc. Clearly the training of staff at the reporting centres which would be a variety of locations would be an essential element of the scheme.

It was agreed that it would be very helpful to receive a report on the operation and progress of the scheme in the course of the following year.

3. Terms of Reference of the Forum

There was a detailed discussion on the draft Terms of Reference for the Forum which had been circulated.

A number of amendments were suggested and considered. Trevor Rigg was of the opinion that whatever Terms resulted from the Meeting, should be the subject of an initial review in six months time and then should be reviewed on an annual basis. The members of the forum were in agreement with this approach.

It was agreed that the wording be amended as finally agreed and then circulated to members of the Forum. Formal adoption of the Terms of Reference could then take place at the next meeting.

It was noted that the Minutes from the previous Forum had been included on the agenda of the Council’s Corporate Management Team which comprised the Chief Executive, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Corporate Director (Services) together with all Heads of Service. It was intended that this would be a regular method of feeding information from the Forum into the decision making process. Where appropriate, reports would also be made to Members of the Council.

4. The Inclusive Equalities Scheme

Fiona Scott, the Council’s Equalities Assistant, gave a brief presentation on the background to the Inclusive Equalities Scheme and reminded the Forum of the steps taken to consult as widely as possible on the proposals, particularly at the successful event held at the Council House in September 2006. The closing date for comments on the Scheme had recently passed.

It was stressed that whilst amendments had been made to the Scheme as a result of the input received, the document now entitled “Working Draft Version December 2006” was still very much a work in progress and required a great deal more input. It was also intended to produce an “easy read” more accessible version early in 2007.

In order to further progress and improve the Scheme there was a need for the various sections to be reviewed in more detail. It was suggested that a small Working Group be established for each Equality strand within the Scheme. This would enable members of the Forum with a particular interest in a certain area or

areas to get involved in more detail and to work closely with officers and other partners in reviewing and refining particular areas of the document.

This approach was welcomed and the members of the Forum were requested to complete the forms distributed detailing their particular areas of interest. This would enable Fiona Scott to begin to compile a timetable for meetings of Working Groups. It was accepted that the whole process would be likely to take twelve months but it was felt to be important that a thorough and detailed consideration took place.

It was also reported that it was intended to organise some training for Forum members in terms of the legal framework, terminology used etc. It was felt to be important that Members had ownership of the Scheme rather than it being produced by Council Officers or Consultants. It was agreed that whilst the programme of Working Group meetings was on going, meetings of the Forum could take place at two monthly intervals.

5. Diversity and Cultural Activities 2007

The Chairman explained it was intended to look at a programme of forthcoming events linked to Cultural and Diversity issues. Throughout the year it would be useful to publicise various events to raise awareness locally. For example, in June 2007 Learning Disability Week would take place with the theme of addressing bullying.

It was agreed that this issue be considered again at a future meeting.

6. Any Other Business

This item was to be deleted from future agendas.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next Meeting would take place on Thursday, 1st February 2007 at 6.30pm.

Trevor Rigg
Chairman