

**Action Notes of the Equalities and Communities Theme Group held on  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**Present:**

Sue Bent, Bill Hall, Alison Quigley, John Payne, Laura Slegg, Balbir Sohal, Eniiwaju Etomi, Lora Morris, Surindar Nagra, Paul Wells, Sheila Bates, Charles Fotso and Debbie Briggs

**In Attendance:**

Helen Shankster and Dawn Ford (agenda item 4); Sara Roach (agenda item 8)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Kevin Foster, Jim Titley, Richard Tomlins, June Morley, Alison Porter, Chaman Verma, Jenni Venn, Dave Reilly, Joy Warren, Jody Gordon, Charley Gibbons, Sarah Perry, Teresa Staniewicz, Janita Wesson, Barbara Hay, June Jeffrey and John Brady

Sue Bent opened the meeting and welcomed the new members to the group - Eniiwaju Etomi attended the group on behalf of CEMAP; Lora Morris represented Warwick University and Paul Wells who is seconded to the Council from the Police as the Cohesion Co-ordinator and will be a member of the group in this role. Round the table introductions took place.

Apologies were noted and Sue Bent reminded the group that if anyone is in a situation where they are not able to attend a meeting, it would be really helpful if a substitute could attend to ensure continuity of dialogue and enable reporting back into organisations.

**1. Notes of the previous meeting**

Debbie Briggs reported that she has spoken to Rebecca Young following the last meeting and that Rebecca is working with Myles Mackie in the new Corporate Research, Information and Consultation Team to break down the data relating to NI 152. This will then be reported back to the group.

John Payne reported that he has received a response from Jenni Venn regarding Refugee Week. There will be more engagement with the new Communities Forum this year and the focus will be about supporting the New Communities Forum to organise events themselves. Surindar asked whether Refugee Week links to Positive Images and John confirmed that Refugee Week is usually the launch event at the start of Positive Images. However, Culture, Leisure and Libraries have been hit by budget cuts this year.

Laura Slegg said that there is also a refugee Sub Group of the Children and Young people's Strategic Partnership chaired by June Morley and links should also be made to this group. June Morley is also looking at setting up a group focusing on adults. Balbir Sohal asked what has happened with the City of Sanctuary work and Laura confirmed that a sub group continues to meet in relation to this.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Who</b>
It was agreed that John Payne would talk to June Morley about longer term integration between Refugee Week and the work she is undertaking.	To report back at next meeting – 20 May 2009.	John Payne, June Morley
Alison Quigley reported that she will be ready to report back on her trip to Auschwitz in the next couple of months. A film was also currently being produced. It was agreed that Alison would let Debbie know when this was ready to come back to the group.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Who</b>
Alison Quigley to contact Debbie when she is ready to report back to the group on her recent trip to Auschwitz.	When film is available.	Alison Quigley

## 2. Coventry Partnership Involvement and Consultation

Sue welcomed Helen Shankster and Dawn Ford to the group. Helen had circulated a draft of Coventry City Council's Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy in advance of the meeting. Helen explained that from April 2009 the Council will need to adhere to a new duty to Inform, Consult and Involve and demonstrate that there are effective mechanisms in place to consider whether the Council should be telling people about things, consulting with them or involving them in a more detailed way. There is currently some good practice across the city but also some not so good practice and it is important to understand how we do things from now and what we can put in place to make improvements. We also need to work with our partners to demonstrate that we are working in a co-ordinated way across the city. An example of this is to think about how we can make better use of each other's mechanisms such as Ward Forums, Citivision, etc. This Theme Group has responsibility for ensuring that this happens under the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Helen asked the group whether the current draft Council strategy currently had enough 'hooks' in it which will enable us to go on and develop a partnership wide strategy.

Helen took the group through the draft strategy and went through the definitions the Government has given. This was not just about going out to people but about reducing duplication and using the information we already have. The Strategic Objectives and Priorities for the next 3 years are set out in the draft document. It is important to share findings with our partners and map out the regular ways we inform, consult and involve local people, for example, through Ward Forums, the annual Budget Setting consultation, etc, and to evaluate how effective this was. There are lots of equalities issues built into this and the Council needs to consider whether it is reaching the right groups and whether anything is missing that would enable us to access different groups. A system will also be set up to publicise consultation and check for duplications. This group and the PIE group will be responsible for better co-ordinating activities. This is about making best use of expert practice, improving access to information and making better use of our findings. One way to achieve this may be to work through Compact,

Sheila Bates asked about the relationship with the Compact Group. Sheila said that this group had not necessarily had the profile it needs to achieve this, and that acknowledgement was also needed that people on this group would be doing this in addition to their 'day jobs'.

Balbir Sohal said that the diagram on page 3 and the accompanying definitions are really useful. Balbir also said that she would like to see more reference to children and young people. Helen said that there will be a Duty to Promote Democracy later in the year which overlaps with this and we will need to understand what equipment we have got and make it easier to access this.

Balbir also asked whether the peer training will involve young people. Helen said that there is lots of capacity building across the Council and it is important to look at what we can learn from each other and what the gaps are.

Laura Slegg said that it is important to embed monitoring in terms of who will be involved. Helen said that we will need to ensure that people are appropriately targeted and ensure that there are no barriers – an Equality Impact Assessment will also be undertaken for this Strategy which will help with this.

Sheila Bates said that we will need to think about what difference is being made through this. Helen confirmed that the information will be proactively examined to track what happens to the information and to ensure that the views and findings are fairly fed in. Thorough evaluation will be carried out.

Sue Bent said that it will be really good to track who we were reaching and this would help us to evaluate how well equalities and cohesion are being embedded via the SCS.

Dawn Ford thanked Helen for putting the draft together and welcomed the opportunity to carry out the mapping exercise so that we can see what messages are being sent out to our communities and also track what messages are coming in. This is closely linked to the Cohesion Strategy and something the Partnership can build upon. NI4 is about the percentage of people who feel they are able to influence decision making, and we need to think about how we can influence this. This is about understanding our partners and understanding our communities. The PIE Group also has a role to play in monitoring this, and this group is the way to ensure the message gets out and is embedded effectively.

Bill Hall said there is lots of cynicism about consultation and Dawn said that it is important to look at the impact and ensure we feed back to people we have consulted with. Helen said that it is a long process to overcome cynicism. Sheila Bates said that it is important to involve organisations such as CEN and CEMAP at an early stage.

Balbir said that when the Communities that Care Survey was first done a couple of years ago, Heads were not on board but now the LEA work with them and young people are involved right from the beginning and have developed their own assembly presentations and video and as a result if this there is far more engagement. This process is very important, particularly for groups that are vulnerable. Balbir also said that she is really pleased that this piece of work is happening.

Sue thanked Helen and Dawn for attending the meeting.

Action	Timescale	Who
It was agreed that Sue and Dawn would meet separately to agree how to take this forward as a Partnership.	April 2009	Sue Bent, Dawn Ford
If anyone else would like to be involved in this meeting, please let Sue or Debbie know.	31 March 2009	ALL
Any comments on the draft Strategy to be emailed to Helen Shankster ( <a href="mailto:helen.shankster@coventry.gov.uk">helen.shankster@coventry.gov.uk</a> )	10.00am on 23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2009.	ALL

### 3. Destitution Conference

This conference is being organised by the Asylum and Refugee Sub Group of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. June Morley is leading on this.

The conference will take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 and Sue has been asked to Chair the day. Sue asked the group if they were happy to receive and take forward any outputs or actions arising from the day.

Surindar said that if another group was being established looking at adult asylum seekers and refugees, this should also be tied together. Sue confirmed that the adult group would also report into the E&CC Theme Group.

Action	Timescale	Who
It was agreed that any actions arising from the Destitution Conference would feed back into this group.	June 2009	Sue Bent/ June Morley

### 4. Community Cohesion Strategy - Update

Surindar reminded the group that she had previously asked members of this group to come forward to sit on a Community Cohesion Strategy Steering Group. A Task and Finish Group has now been set up to look at this, and the steering group has agreed the definition of Community Cohesion that will be used.

Work is now being undertaken to look at what cohesion issues have come out of consultation over the last 12-18 months, in an attempt to identify areas where consultation has not taken place. One such area appears to be older people.

Surindar and Sue attended Theme Group Leaders and Advisors on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2009 to look at the best mechanism to enable the other Theme Groups to feed into this and will also be attending the Partnership Communications Group on Friday. The next Steering Group is also taking place this week and will consider what needs to go into the Strategy,

**5. "Making Coventry a More Equal and Cohesive City" - Update**

Sue reported that a final version of the guidance will be with us by the end of the week. Sue will be taking this to the Communications group on Friday, and will then go to the next Theme Group Leaders and Advisors Meeting to talk about how best to roll this out to the wider Partnership.

Action	Timescale	Who
It was agreed that Debbie would circulate the final draft guidance along with the notes of this meeting.	March 2009	Debbie Briggs

**6. Embedding Equalities and Cohesion into the LAA – Community Safety Theme**

Sue Bent said that this is about ensuring that equalities and cohesion are embedded into the LAA themes and LAA target owners are being invited along to this group to tell us about what they are doing so that we can support that process and challenge whether equalities and cohesion are being embedded.

Sue welcomed Sara Roach along to talk to the group about the Community Safety Theme.

Sara took the group through the current operating structures for the Community Safety Partnership. Sara explained that the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership focuses on Victims, Offenders and Locations – if one of these elements is taken away there would be no crime. Therefore issues around victims, offenders and locations are broken down and dealt with individually.

The AIMS Group is a multi agency group that meets every 2 weeks and focuses on crime hot spots in the city. Actions will come out of this – for example, if there is an issue with the theft of sat nav's from cars a publicity campaign will be undertaken around this issue. 30% of burglaries are insecure breaks so there is a lot that can be done around raising public awareness. AIMS focuses on victims and location. Uniformed, visible people are positioned in areas where we have higher crime rates and the principle is about people feeling safer.

There are also 21 Safer Neighbourhood Groups which run monthly in 2 parts. Part 1 provides an opportunity for a broad group of people to share information and intelligence. This includes residents but is not an open meeting and is for invited parties to represent a wider group. Part 2 is about case management and involves a more select group dealing with issues. The Safer Neighbourhoods Groups are regularly reviewed with an aim to achieving more consistency across the city. The Community Safety Partnership is also working closely with CEN to develop an induction pack and a buddying/mentoring scheme for new members. This is one mechanism to involve local people.

Offender management is a key issue and we know that there is a lot of repeat crime in the city, for example substance misusers who are going in and out of prison leading to acquisitive crime. It is important to get these people into treatment and remaining in treatment.

A Strategic Assessment of Community Safety Partnerships was carried out last year for the first time based on intelligence around victim/offender/location and considering the impact of crime. The priorities arising from this are violent crimes including Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA); Vehicle Crime and Burglary and Damage and Anti-Social Behaviour.

A priority crime group has been created to look at violent crime. We know that most of the top locations are around public houses and it is important to break crime down and examine how to deal with it, for example, by getting employers to tell their employees that they may be in breach of their contract if they get arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

Sara also took the group through the LAA indicators the Community Safety Partnership is responsible for. Sara explained that the Community Safety Partnership is a very structured organisation and does delve down into the detail on a day to day basis.

Sue thanked Sara for her presentation and opened this item up for discussion.

Balbir Sohal asked where the Prevent agenda fitted in with this approach. Paul Wells confirmed that the Prevent Plan for Coventry was ratified in January. Paul is an Inspector for West Midlands Police and has been seconded as the Cohesion Co-ordinator within Coventry City Council with a focus on Preventing Violent Extremism. This is about engaging with communities and building resilience. Sara said that the AIMS process is being developed to include robust tension monitoring processes.

Sara said that lots of good work has been done locally around encouraging the reporting of hate crime. Religiously aggravated crime has been identified as a high area but this is due to the work we have done around building confidence.

We know that fear of crime has not reduced at the rate crime has reduced. There is a fine balance between making people scared and making them vigilant.

Balbir asked how we fare in terms of partnerships and Sara confirmed that Coventry is very well regarded in this area nationally.

Sue asked about the impact on communities, how this is measured, what the geographical spread is, which communities are particularly vulnerable and how strategies have been put in place to help this. Paul Wells gave an example of a city centre focus on older people, particularly in Hertford Street. This was reduced by having a high visibility presence in this area involving Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSOs outside the Post Office and the use of CVOne video cameras. The use of 'purse bells' can also help with this. These things help to break down the Victim/Offender/Location triangle.

John Payne said that young people drinking in the city centre at night was also a problem. Sara confirmed that the Partnership knew that Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights were when the most problems occur in the city centre.

The only way to measure impact on individuals is through the use of focus groups; customer call backs and visits to victims. Sue said that there is clearly a massive amount of measures to help us to understand the factors that make crime happen. Cohesion is addressed by everything the Community Safety Partnership does. Sue asked whether there are any patterns of offender or victim groups from an equalities perspective. Sara said that we know some of this; for example the higher proportion of DVA offenders are male. The AIMS process identified that a group of people jumping out and cleaning car windscreens (known as squeegees) and it was established that many of the people doing this were from Romania and may not understand that this activity would cause offence and be intimidating in this country – it is therefore an issue to communicate this clearly.

The Strategic Assessment has highlighted the most likely victims and the most likely offenders and also highlights hotspots in the calendar year. Equalities and cohesion is embedded within this through understanding victim/offender/location. Each group is

facilitated and led by somebody from Sara's team and this provides opportunities for cross-fertilisation and working in a joined up way. Following the Strategic Assessment it is important to ensure that Delivery Groups have action plans in place that will deliver on the priorities that have been identified.

Within each of the emerging priorities it is possible to break down which groups the victim and offender are from and where the location is. It was agreed that this information would be extracted from the Strategic Assessment and fed back to this group. It was agreed that this group would then choose 1 priority to focus on.

Sue thanked Sara for attending the group.

Action	Timescale	Who
It was agreed that the information relating to which groups victims/offenders are from and where geographically crime is taking place. This information will be fed back to this group.	June 2009	Sara Roach/Debbie Briggs
Once this information has been broken down it will be presented back to this group and one priority will be identified for further analysis. This will need to relate to a priority in the LAA.	June 2009	Sara Roach/ALL

### 7. Sharing Good Practice

Balbir reported that a Year 9 conference took place in November 2008 with a theme "Stand Up To Hatred". A showcase event took place on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009 to follow on from this conference and there was excellent feedback from 1 school who had undertaken a major project around challenging homophobia. This will be available on the Learning Gateway after Easter.

There was also a project in Canley around Community Cohesion being planned for the Summer. Balbir suggested that Steve Connor-Hemming, Assistant Head teacher, Community of Westwood School, could be invited along to talk about this project.

Balbir also reported that a Big Book Project is taking place involving the production of the Biggest Book in the World which will go into the Guinness Book of Records, involving Coventry people. Balbir agreed to tell the group more about this project at a later meeting.

### 8. Any Other Business

There was no further business to be discussed.

### Future Meetings

The next meeting will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009 and Marc Harder will be joining us to talk about the Children, Learning and Young people theme.