

**Action Notes of the Equalities and Communities Theme Group held on  
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

**Present:**

Sue Bent, Jenni Venn, Laura Slegg, Barbara Hay, June Jeffrey, Phil Dunn, Jody Gordon, Suzanne Denley, Angela Foran, Robbie Etherington, Gary Osbourne, Joanne Adams and Debbie Briggs

**In Attendance:**

Marc Harder, Kevin Coughlan (for Children and Young People's item)  
Kim Fawcett, Liam Nagle (for Housing item)  
Simon Batten (for Hillfields item)

**Apologies:**

Cllr Kevin Foster, Jim Titley, Charley Gibbons, Lora Morris, Leonie Walls, John Payne, Bill Hall, Balbir Sohal, Surindar Nagra, Moirah Priestley, Alison Quigley, Steph Keeble, Sarah Perry, Janita Wesson, Grace Forrester, Alison Porter, Paul Wells, Teresa Staniewicz, Richard Tomlins, Rajo Saira and June Morley

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Sue Bent opened the meeting and round the table introductions took place.

As there were lots of people representing their colleagues who had not been to a meeting before, Sue explained that one of the group's key roles is to embed equalities and cohesion into the work of the wider Partnership through the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. The group has therefore invited people from the other theme groups to come along and share what they are doing to deliver their theme and what they are doing to address equalities and cohesion. This Theme Group is accountable to the Partnership Board in its undertaking of this role.

It was agreed that the group would move straight to the agenda item about embedding equalities and cohesion into the Children and Young People's theme as Marc Harder and Kevin Coughlan had another meeting to go to.

**2. Embedding Equalities and Cohesion into the LAA – Children and Young People's Theme**

Sue thanked Marc Harder and Kevin Coughlan for coming back to the group. Marc and Kevin had attended the last meeting and given a very interesting presentation about how equalities and cohesion are being embedded into the Children and Young People's theme. As there was not enough time to have any meaningful discussion about this, they had agreed to come back to this meeting.

Marc started off by re-capping the presentation given at the last meeting where he had talked about the key demographics affecting children and young people in Coventry; the inequalities linked to deprivation and the attainment levels by ward. This information was then mapped against the index of multiple deprivation and clear links were shown between deprivation and achievement at age 16. The results of the Communities that Care Survey were also looked at. Marc took the group through the LAA targets that had equality issues including the attainment of Looked After Children (LAC), Special Educational Need, gender, age and ethnicity. The group then looked at the changing demographics of the city and how this affects school cohorts. NI 108 shows the attainment of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups at Key Stage 4 (GCSE level) and in Summer 2008, there was a huge increase in attainment levels for this group meaning that BME groups performed better than the city average. Kevin Coughlan went on to explain that the definition for this measure is now being changed to look at which minority groups are 10 points below the local authority average and this will

determine the priorities which will be closely monitored on a year on year basis – the current priorities are the Black African; White Black African; Any Other Mixed Background; Caribbean; Pakistani and White and Black Caribbean backgrounds. Marc finally recapped on Feinstein's research and the impact that Social Class can have on attainment.

Marc then moved on and took the group through a further analysis of the 2008 results. There has been a continued reduction in the number of schools where less than 30% of students achieve 5 A\* - C grades at GCSE, including English and maths, and in Coventry, 6 schools fell below this threshold in 2008. However, the percentage of students achieving A\* - C in English fell and the attainment of Black African; Pakistani; Asian Other; Black Caribbean; Mixed White/Black Caribbean backgrounds and White British students achieved below the City average, which continues to be a concern.

Students with a Special Educational Need (SEN) showed more progress than other groups and there were significant increases in attainment, due to the curriculum broadening out and the introduction of work based learning and meeting the needs of pupils who are less academically capable.

The group then looked at some of the interventions that have been put in place to raise the attainment of BME groups in Coventry, which are outlined in the slides attached to these notes.

Marc and Kevin then welcomed a discussion with the group in relation to the issues that had been presented.

Barbara Hay asked what the point of expectation would be for each group. Kevin explained that this is based on a statistical estimate using a national model, however, a professional judgement of the individual child is also taken into account. Barbara said that it is important to recognise the contribution of other external agencies delivering projects such as 'Black Boys Can' and the positive impacts that this can have.

Robbie Etherington said that the 'Stepping Stones' framework that it used in nurseries is used to set expectations for Reception staff and actions are put in place for each individual child. This is then tracked ahead and checked at the end of the Reception year and at KS1 and KS2.

Jody Gordon asked about the Extended Schools Programme and how this was funded and how the decision is taken about which schools should offer Extended Schools provision. Marc said that this is a pilot and has been grant funded. There are two full service extended schools in Coventry which are the Grace Academy and Barrs Hill and by 2010 all schools will have a range of accessible services out of usual school hours. All schools will provide a 'core offer' and some schools will provide an 'extended offer'. Marc confirmed that the Grace Academy and Barrs Hill had been chosen for the pilot partly because they are in deprived areas of the city.

Sue Bent said that there is clearly a wealth of information available and it is fantastic that this is being made available to people that can use it to make a real difference. There is a real opportunity for other areas which may not have such robust data to use this as a proxy and there is an opportunity for the wider Partnership to facilitate more 2-way dialogue around this.

Jenni Venn said that there are things that can happen in the wider community that can have a huge impact on children and young people. We need to think about ways of getting the wider community involved in practical things such as hearing children read and playing a part as the 'wider family'. Phil Dunn said that there are positive things happening in Hillfields which Phil will be talking to the group about later on.

Marc said that children respond to different people in different ways. Whitley Abbey school identified 50 children most at risk of not achieving good grades at school and school staff were identified to buddy these children and a huge change in results was achieved.

Gary Osbourne asked what projects are underway in the Holbrooks and Foleshill area to reduce deprivation. Marc said that it is part of the remit of the wider Partnership to narrow the gap in terms of deprivation and that this is a joined up piece of work. In terms of Children's Services, there is targeted work in those areas covering a range of issues such as Parenting skills, Extended schools, resources are being targeted at NDC areas and Surestart Children's Centres are targeted at the most deprived areas of the city. Considerable targeting of resources is taking place but this is not always understood strategically and there is a need to track what difference has been made as a result of this. Sue said that this is what the Sustainable Community Strategy is all about and we need to address this through all the themes and work together to narrow the gap. The wealth of data is there and we need to think about how to get this information out to other people so that they can use it to inform their thinking.

Jenni said that we are currently investing in a Partnership Data Management System which will enable us to do much more geographical analysis. All partners have been involved in working together on this and it will bring together data on a broad range of areas including health and education. A Child Poverty Strategy will also be produced and this will be a statutory requirement for the local authority. This will help us to focus and look at this issue in a more joined up way. Marc said that we need to remember that this is more about family poverty and we need to look at it in a wider context.

Marc said that generally, Coventry does know what its priorities are in terms of Children and Young People – but this does not mean that we have all the answers and there is still plenty of work to be done. Marc said that he would welcome any suggestions about actions that could be put as even if it could help to improve the life of 1 child then it would be worth doing.

Angela Foran said that it is important to remember the involvement of the third sector and that there are lots of projects being done through external funding. It is important to carry out research into the impact of these projects as they are often at risk when funding runs out and we therefore need to understand what is making a difference.

A discussion then took place about free school meals. It is now no longer necessary to go to the main offices in the city centre to apply for free school meals and this can now be done at individual schools. It is important to ensure that parents are aware of this change.

Sue thanked Marc and Kevin for their time and it was agreed that if anyone has any suggestions about other activities that would help to narrow the gap then they should be passed on to Marc and Debbie.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Who</b>
A copy of the presentation will be circulated to the group with these notes.	August 2009	Debbie Briggs
It was agreed that Marc would provide further information to the group about the provision of Extended Schools in the city.	To be circulated with the notes of the meeting	Marc Harder/ Debbie Briggs
Marc agreed to make links with Angela Foran to ensure that information is disseminated to third sector organisations.	August 2009	Marc Harder/Angela Foran
Any suggestions for other activities to help to narrow	Ongoing	ALL

the gap for disadvantaged children and young people in the city to be passed on to Marc Harder and Debbie Briggs.		
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### 3. Embedding Equalities and Cohesion into the LAA – Housing Theme

Sue welcomed Kim Fawcett and Liam Nagle to the meeting.

Kim took the group through a presentation showing how equality and cohesion are being embedded into the LAA target around developing more affordable housing in the city. A local sub target has also been set in Coventry, that 10% of all new affordable housing would be suitable for special needs. Both targets were exceeded in 2008/09, and Kim took the group through the developments which took place in 2008/09 and also the developments that are planned for 2009/10.

A discussion then took place about the Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Under the old system people would be required to complete a form and state what their needs were and also where they wanted to live. Under Choice Based Lettings information is still collected relating to an individual's needs but we do not know about a person's preference in terms of where they want to live. This has meant that in 1 or 2 cases, adapted properties had been let to people with no need for an adapted property, as no bids had been received from people who had been assessed as needing an adapted property. Sue asked whether there is a register of adapted properties in the city. Kim said that properties are categorised when they are put onto the CBL system but there is no register of adapted properties in the city, and sometimes there are also issues around information not being inputted into the CBL system properly. Sue asked whether people with special needs are offered support to bid for properties, and it was recognised that this can be an issue.

Liam said that we could build 20 – 30 new properties suitable for people with special needs and we could fill all of them directly through Social Services. However, not everyone with special needs is known to Social Services and it is important not to exclude these people. Kim said that an analysis is being carried out of those people on the Coventry Homefinder system. Sue asked whether this will include an analysis of how people bid, and Kim confirmed that this will only show us who is and is not bidding and we can break this down to specifically look at those people who have said that they require an adapted property.

Barbara Hay said that this has been discussed at the Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership and many people do not understand the bidding system and how it works. There is an assumption that people know how to use the system. The group agreed that it would be worth Kim contacting Alison Poster, who is also a member of this group, to talk about what the issues are and how they can be resolved. There is currently a list of vulnerable people who are on the Homefinder system and are given assistance to bid. Kim said that she will also feed any issues back to the Homefinder Team.

Kim said that it is important to remember that there are not any more properties available under the new system; however, what it does do is enable you to see what is available each week. We are now beginning to see more availability of adapted properties.

Jody Gordon asked if the Homefinder system to look at what future needs will be and to look at which areas have more bids. Kim confirmed that some of this analysis has been done and there is a better idea about what people need.

Sue said that there is a wealth of information available which can inform the work we are doing with developers. There is still a need for large family homes, and adapted properties.

June Jeffrey said that she would like to include information about the Housing Fair on the CEN website and Kim agreed to send some information to June in relation to this. The

Housing Fair will be held in the Lower Precinct shopping area on Friday 14th August 2009 from 10.00am to 4.00pm. There will be a wide range of organisations giving information and advice to people. The Housing Fair is supported by the Coventry Partnership Housing Theme Group.

Liam said that social housing is often built to a higher specification than standard housing and there are different building regulations and room sizes are usually bigger. For these reasons it is not always possible to create social housing from un-sold private housing stock.

Jenni said that the allocation of housing is a critical issue in creating cohesion and also a lack of cohesion. There is a perception that people can jump the housing list and we have a myth busting leaflet in place to counteract this. The Government is saying that social housing should now be available to people moving across the country but also that they should be available to local people and it is difficult to balance this.

It is important for younger people to have a sense of realism in terms of what properties are likely to become available and over 90% of the people on the Homefinder system are in band 3 which is the lowest category of need. Around 55% of people on the register have never made a bid.

Kim said that we did not meet our target for NI 154 which is the net number of new homes provided. Jenni said that it is important to keep on building new homes as otherwise as soon as the market begins to pick up young people will not be able to afford to rent or buy housing in the city, which is a real equality issue.

Sue thanked Kim and Liam for their very interesting presentation.

Action	Timescale	Who
A copy of the presentation will be circulated to the group with these notes.	August 2009	Debbie Briggs
It was agreed that Kim Fawcett would speak to Alison Porter to find out about the issues raised at the Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership and how they can be resolved. Alison may also feel it appropriate to invite Kim along to a PSI Partnership meeting.	August 2009	Kim Fawcett, Alison Porter
Kim agreed to send some information about the Housing Fair to June Jeffrey for inclusion on the CEN web site	July 2009	Kim Fawcett, June Jeffrey

#### 5. Sharing Good Practice – Disaggregation of Data in Hillfields – Phil Dunn

Unfortunately, there was not sufficient time to go through Phil's presentation about the work he is doing in Hillfields to look at what is happening in the Hillfields in order to make sense of how we work in local neighbourhoods in the context of the SCS and the LAA.

It was agreed that this would be the first agenda item for our next meeting in September. In the meantime, if anyone has any questions in relation to this, please let Debbie know so that they can be passed on to Phil in advance.

Phil also said that the new Hillfields web site will be launched on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009 and can be found at [www.hillfields.org.uk](http://www.hillfields.org.uk) a text time is also available – by texting better hillfields to 60777. A focus group is also taking place at St Peter's on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009.

Action	Timescale	Who
It was agreed that this would be the first agenda item at our next meeting.	9 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	Phil Dunn, Debbie Briggs

Any questions relating to this work should be passed on to Debbie.	August 2009	ALL
<b>8. Any Other Business</b>		
<b>Cohesion Awards</b>		
Balbir Sohal had sent a message via Robbie Etherington to say that 12 schools have signed up and a further 8 have indicated an interest but are yet to confirm.		
<b>Homophobic Bullying in Schools</b>		
Robbie Etherington said that an education pack called 'Everybody's Welcome' is being rolled out to all primary schools in Coventry. A Terrence Higgins Trust Resource, 'Schools Out' has also been sent to 20 secondary schools and will be disseminated further. Both resources look at tackling homophobic bullying in schools.		
<b>Coventry Partnership Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy</b>		
Debbie brought the note that Helen Shankster had circulated regarding the development of a Coventry Partnership Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy to the group's attention. If anybody is interested in being further involved in the development of this strategy, please let Debbie know.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Who</b>
If anybody is interested in being further involved in the development of the Coventry Partnership Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy, please let Debbie know.	August 2009	ALL

**The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 9th September 2009 at St Peter's Community Centre.**