

Action Notes of the Equalities and Communities Theme Group

Held on Wednesday 22nd October 2008

Present:

Sue Bent, Jenni Venn, June Jeffrey, Sally Giles, Cllr Kevin Foster, Dave Reilly, Janita Wesson, Bill Hall, Charles Fotso, Jody Gordon, Joy Warren, Jancis McDonald, Debbie Briggs and Andrew Harrison

Apologies:

Alison Porter, Alison Quigley, Surindar Nagra, John Payne, Richard Tomlins, Charley Gibbons, Supt Jim Titley and Teresa Staniewicz

Action	Timescale	Who
Sue Bent welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions took place.		
1. Notes of the previous meeting		
The notes of the previous meeting were agreed and there were no matters arising.		
2. Future Work Programme for the Group and Embedding Equality and Cohesion into the LAA		
<p>Sue reminded the group that at the last meeting the Terms of Reference were discussed and people wanted there to be a greater focus and clarity about what we are trying to achieve as a group. The Terms of Reference have now been linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy so that we can see how we are contributing to these broader objectives by undertaking an annually agreed work programme. This will also enable us to measure our progress.</p> <p>Sally Giles asked that a small amendment was made under the membership section – changing Children and Young People's Partnership Board to Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.</p> <p>The group all agreed the revised Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Sue then went on to say that the next thing that we need to have in place is a draft work programme to support this. A first draft was circulated which tries to link the short term priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy to activities and measures of success for the group. Sue took the group through the draft work programme. It is important for us to be able to confidently say how cohesive Coventry is as a city and be able to measure progress against this. The development of a basket of indicators will help us to do this.</p> <p>The second action is about embedding equality and cohesion and Andrew's guidance will help us to do this. The E&CC Theme Group will have an opportunity to go through each of</p>	Oct 08	Debbie Briggs

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<p>the LAA Indicator Action Plans that are being developed to ensure that equalities and cohesion are fully embedded. We will need to agree a programme of activity and prioritise each theme.</p> <p>The group will also have an opportunity to influence the Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy. We will also continue to develop and inform ourselves about the changing demographics in the city.</p> <p>Sue asked whether the group were comfortable with the draft work programme, and whether it gives us clarity about what we are trying to do.</p> <p>Sally Giles commented that many of the activities end in March 2009. Sue said that a lot of these things will be ongoing, for example, once the basket of indicators has been developed, we will receive regular reports on this and use the information to inform future activity and we will also need to disseminate key information to the wider Partnership. The dates on the draft work programme are an indication of when we would like to get the foundations in place and will be followed by further activity.</p> <p>Bill Hall asked how these activities will bring about community engagement and what the practical steps would be. Sue said that there will be an action plan attached to the Community Cohesion Strategy. We are a cross cutting theme and need to produce things which will encourage other people to carry out activities around equality and cohesion. Everybody across the Partnership will be involved in delivering the Cohesion Strategy.</p> <p>Jenni Venn said that we could add improving mechanisms to ensure communities are engaged as part of this action. Communities need to be involved in the development of the Community Cohesion Strategy – this is about bringing people together so that they can influence decision making. The Strategy will be about how we will achieve cohesion, and will not just be nice words but about making things happen. Sue said that we will need to use Andrew's materials and ensure that we focus on practical actions which people will take on board. This needs to be part of an ongoing dialogue where we will encourage and persuade people. This group represents other networks of people who come together and there needs to be a 2-way dialogue between this group and other groups and networks. The wider reference group that we are hoping to establish will also enable us to carry out this wider dialogue.</p>		

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<p>Dave Reilly said that the work programme is excellent and ambitious. It looks at taking the Government's plans and looking at what we can do locally to improve understanding and embedding this into planning and decision making.</p> <p>Sally Giles said that the measures of success are more like outputs. It was agreed that another column would be added showing what impact we would have on the basket of indicators which will be developed.</p> <p>Andrew Harrison said that we need to be clear about who we wish to influence with the tools we are producing as this will help to clarify what the actions need to be. Sue said that we could add another column to show who we are aiming our activities at or who we are trying to engage with. It is also important to think about the role of the reference group in relation to this.</p> <p>Jody Gordon asked how this will fit in with the Council's Community Cohesion Strategy. Debbie clarified that this will be replaced by a wider Community Cohesion Strategy for the Coventry Partnership.</p> <p>Sue said that the LAA Indicator owners have been asked to think about the equality and cohesion implications of each indicator and to look at disaggregating the data in relation to this. Jenni Venn said that an action plan has been produced for each indicator, for example, there is a priority around NEETs in the LAA and an action plan has been produced demonstrating what actions will be undertaken to reduce the number of NEETs. As part of this, the indicator owner has been asked to think about the specific target groups for this indicator, such as young mums, looked after children, ex offenders, disabled young people etc. The purpose of this is to try to understand what we are trying to achieve and how these issues can be tackled. Nobody else is looking at these action plans across the piece to consider whether the proposed actions will address equality and cohesion issues. We need to be able to identify specific groups whose needs are not being addressed, for example, people experiencing mental health issues. This group has been tasked to do this by the Partnership and consider whether the action plans look at the right things and consider what we can do to tackle these issues in a more 'joined up' way.</p> <p>Sue said that we will need to set priorities around what we want to do earlier rather than later as it will take the best part of a year to cover all the themes. Discussion took place around this. It was agreed that the group would consider unemployment early on as this is an interesting theme which</p>	<p>Oct 08</p> <p>Oct 08</p>	<p>Debbie Briggs</p> <p>Debbie Briggs</p>

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<p>will be affected by the current economic situation. Children and young people would also be discussed early on as this data has been 'diced and sliced' in every way and we may therefore be able to learn from this.</p> <p>Sue clarified that this will need to be part of an ongoing conversation with the Indicator owners with an emphasis on how we can support them. Whichever theme we take first will be our 'test case' and they will need to work with us to improve this process.</p> <p>Dave Reilly said that we could look at Community Safety first and use this as a test case.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debbie/Sue would speak to Dave outside the meeting about looking at the Community Safety Theme first. • Jobs and Economy, Children and Young People and Health would then be programmed in • A discussion about establishing a wider Reference Group would be discussed at the next meeting. 		
<p>3. Making Coventry a More Equal and Cohesive City</p>		
<p>Sue said that following our last meeting, Sally Giles, June Jeffrey, Helen Shankster, Debbie, Jenni and herself met with Andrew to talk about the format of the guidance. Sue thanked Sally and June for their involvement in this meeting.</p> <p>The draft guidance was circulated to the group and Andrew talked the group through the pack. Andrew then talked the group through some powerpoint slides which could be used to help the group's discussions with the LAA Indicator owners.</p> <p>Andrew had also produced 4 different versions of a briefing note to be used for discussions with different groups.</p> <p>The draft guidance is in 2 parts. The first part is a distillation of key messages from the discussions about what people have said are the key issues in terms of equality and cohesion and suggestions about the strong practical links between equality and cohesion. This has led us to look at how we can create the conditions under which cohesion is more likely to flourish. The second part is a practice gallery which gives a series of snap shots of practical projects which made a difference to equalities and cohesion or both. This section is easy to add to and bring up to date. The guiding principles could also be lifted out of the guidance to set the scene for the LAA Indicator leads.</p>		

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<p>Sue said that we want the guidance to be read by everyone in the Partnership family. There will be discussions with Indicator owners and also discussions with other groups of people. It is important to think about how to get the message out to people. With regard to the practice gallery – in order to keep this up to date we would like to launch a Coventry Partnership annual Cohesion Awards. This would encourage people to tell us about good practice so that the guide will remain fresh and current.</p> <p>Sally said that Andrew's presentation would work if we were to take it out to the other theme groups. It was recognised that it is important to try and influence people in lots of different ways. Our aim is to raise awareness, capacity and confidence to improve equality and cohesion outputs from their action plans.</p> <p>Sally said that there is a very clear evidence base and we need to be careful that we are not 'teaching Grandma to suck eggs'.</p> <p>Bill Hall said that we need to think about the long term impact, for example, getting people off benefits – where there is a secure benefit system and there may be real long term implications that are difficult to measure.</p> <p>June Jeffrey said that the real challenge for this group is to convince people to spend time thinking about this. Janita Wesson said that it would be more efficient to invite other theme groups along to a half day event rather than doing the same presentation many times.</p> <p>Sue said that we would do a session at Theme Group Leaders and Advisors and we could think about asking each theme group to have an equality and diversity champion with whom we could have an ongoing dialogue and seek their advice about the best way to influence their groups.</p> <p>Coventry Partnership has asked us to look at the LAA action plans. We could send out questions to LAA Indicator owners in advance of our discussions with them.</p>		
<p>It was agreed that Sue would ask Theme Group Leaders and Advisors what they think would be the best approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i – Theme Group Leaders and Advisors could deliver a presentation to their own groups; ii – We could deliver a presentation to each Theme Group iii – We could host a workshop session 	December 2008	Sue Bent

Action	Timescale	Who
<p>Sue thanked Andrew for his work so far.</p> <p>It was agreed that Debbie would circulate the draft guidance to the group and that comments would be fed back to Debbie.</p>	<p>14 Nov 2008</p>	<p>Debbie Briggs/ ALL</p>
4. Any Other Business		
Carrier Bag of Hope		
<p>The Refugee Centre and Coventry Peace House are collecting toiletries and food items which will be distributed to people who need them at Christmas time. If anyone would like to contribute to this, or if you would like further information, please contact Tracey Gourley from the Council's Children, Learning and Young People directorate on 024 7683 1591, or alternatively:</p> <p>The Refugee Centre on 024 7652 7102 Coventry Peace House – 311 Stoney Stanton Road</p> <p>Midlands Cohesion Project</p> <p>Richard Tomlins would like to extend an invitation to all Theme Group members to the fifth annual presentation of projects and awards as part of the Midlands Cohesion Project. This will take place on the afternoon of 1st December at the Council House. If anyone is interested in attending please contact Richard directly on 07941 129409 or email richard_cohesia@tomlins97.fsnet.co.uk</p>		
5. Date of Next Meeting		
<p>26th November 2008</p>		