

Action Notes of the Equalities and Communities Theme Group

Held on Wednesday 3rd September 2008

Present:

Sue Bent, June Jeffrey, Alison Porter, Balbir Sohal, Sally Giles, Cllr Kevin Foster, Chaman Verma, Dawn Ford, Supt Jim Titley, Debbie Briggs and Andrew Harrison

Apologies:

June Morley, John Brady, Caron Grainger, Jenni Venn, Bridget Mauldrige, Bill Hall, Janita Wesson, Teresa Staniewicz, Janice Nichols, Charley Gibbons, Jody Gordon, Richard Tomlins and Alison Quigley

Action	Timescale	Who
<p>Sue Bent welcomed everyone to the meeting and round table introductions took place. Sue also welcomed Chaman Verma to his first meeting of the Theme Group.</p>		
<p>1. New Coventry Partnership Development Manager</p>		
<p>Sue welcomed Dawn Ford to the meeting. Dawn is the new Coventry Partnership Development Manager.</p> <p>Dawn said that she has been giving a lot of thought to how she will build on a successful partnership. Dawn's role is to support the development of the Partnership, and to carry out a branch and root review of all the different groups, their Terms of Reference and how they link in with the SCS and the LAA. Dawn will also work with the Leader and the Coventry Partnership Communications Officer to promote the work of the Partnership.</p> <p>Dawn will also be looking at the performance management framework – looking at where each of the groups are going and how they all fit together. Dawn will be visiting all the partner agencies and representatives to talk find out how they see the Partnership and their suggestions for improvement.</p> <p>Dawn will be supporting the Partnership Board, Public Services Board and Theme Group Leaders and Advisors group, and she will be attending all of the Theme Groups.</p> <p>Communication is key and it is important to promote the wide variety of work that we do and to work smarter together to progress the SCS and the LAA. Dawn will also be working on the Learning to Deliver programme.</p> <p>It is a challenge to enhance what is already very good partnership working and Dawn will be working with partners to achieve this.</p>		

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<p>Sue said that the focus of the Partnership is now clearly on the LAA and it is important to capture the value that the Coventry Partnership has added to this. This is not an easy thing to do.</p> <p>Sue also said that she had attended the Business Forum that morning to talk about doing some discrimination awareness raising with small businesses. Sue said she felt it is important to embrace the business sector into the partnership. All targets around getting people into work are going to be very difficult to achieve in the current economic climate. Coventry is currently doing better than expected and the Business group was stressing how it is important to talk this up.</p>		
2. Revised Terms of Reference for the E&CC Theme Group		
<p>Sue reminded the group that the good practice guide requires all Theme Groups to carry out an annual self assessment. The E&CC Theme Group carried out a self assessment in April 2008 and as part of this the Theme Group considered whether the Terms of Reference were still relevant and amendments were suggested. Proposed new ToRs were circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>The revised ToR reflect how the group sees its role in embedding equalities and cohesion into the work of the Partnership. The way in which the functions are described has also been changed and there is a new bit in the working arrangements section to say that the Chair should be nominated on an annual basis.</p> <p>Jim Titley asked what is meant by the outcomes – are they achievable and how do we define whether we have met them. Sally Giles also said that it is important to know where we are starting from.</p> <p>Sue said she agreed that the outcomes are currently general statements and it would be helpful to have a number of points beneath them demonstrating what we would expect it to feel like if these outcomes were achieved and to link them to the work programme for the year. Jim said that it is important to be able to say what has changed in 12 months time and to link to work streams.</p> <p>Sally said that it would be more helpful to change 'Key Outcomes' to 'Key Objectives' and the bulleted list beneath this should show where we are now, where we want to be, what we are going to do and how we are going to measure it.</p> <p>Sue agreed that the objectives would be re-worded and beneath this there would be some specific outputs outlining what we are trying to achieve. We also need to show if we</p>		

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<p>are accountable in any way.</p> <p>The first paragraph under the key outcomes refers to the priorities in the SCS. It is important to be clear about what we are doing around these priorities. Balbir said that there is a Home Office Toolkit which may be useful and she agreed to forward this to Debbie for circulation to the group.</p> <p>Sue said that as the other Theme Groups develop their action plans we should look at their plans and whether they take account of equalities issues.</p> <p>Chaman said that we need to ensure that BME communities and asylum seekers are represented on the group, and also that gender based groups and Coventry's most deprived communities are given a voice. Sue said that the people on this group provide a 2-way communication with other groups and that there are lots of people performing that role. People also bring their knowledge and expertise to the table. It is likely that if we focus on community representation that we would get this wrong and the role of this group is to move the equality and cohesion agenda forward within the framework of the Partnership rather than getting all community groups round the table. At this point we are not a group which aims to bring communities together, although we have discussed having an annual wider forum meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Foster confirmed that it is not possible to have everyone represented but it is important to mainstream equality and cohesion issues and embed them throughout the partnership.</p> <p>Dawn said it would be useful to produce guidelines for other groups on good practice which could be shared with the other theme groups. Sue said that this is something that the Theme Group have been working on and this will be discussed as the next agenda item.</p> <p>It was agreed that in the membership list, as part of the ToRs it would be good to state what representatives are there for and what they bring to the table.</p> <p>It is important for the ToRs to link to a clear work programme. Part of the role of the members of this group is to champion equalities issues and to be prepared to stand up for this agenda in the wider partnership. Sally said that it would be worth considering whether we could use Outcome Based Accountability to look at this.</p>	<p>Sept 08</p>	<p>Balbir Sohal/ Debbie Briggs</p>
<p>It was agreed that Sue and Debbie would get together and make the suggested changes to the ToRs.</p>	<p>22 Oct 08</p>	<p>Sue Bent/</p>

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		Debbie Briggs
3. Making Coventry a More Equal and Cohesive City – Progress Update		
<p>Sue reminded the group that one of our key tasks for this year is to produce a good practice guide. Andrew Harrison circulated a paper outlining his thoughts so far.</p> <p>Andrew said that the biggest question was around how the group wanted to use the evidence of practice we are gathering and whether a written guide was the most helpful way to present this, or if a series of powerpoint slides and some good practice examples would be more helpful to promote discussion. The group needs to think about how we want this to look and who we want to use it.</p> <p>Andrew said that since early June he has been leading on this project on behalf of the theme group. A guide will be produced which will look at how to promote best practice in terms of equalities and cohesion into the LAA, the Coventry Partnership and mainstream service delivery. The following steps have been taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gathering information based on what has already been done in Coventry and to some extent elsewhere to encourage good and effective practice – partly through desk research and partly through discussion. 2. Workshop sessions with a range of people to consider the key features of promoting equalities/cohesion and examples of good practice. A session has also been planned with the PIE group to look at how issues around equalities and cohesion are baselined, and also a session with Theme Group Leaders and Advisors. <p>By mid October this will be written up and a draft will be presented to the next meeting of this group.</p> <p>Andrew took the group through his paper and explained that the guiding principles have emerged from the workshop sessions. Confidence levels were low in terms of tackling the equality/cohesion agenda and there is uncertainty about how to make progress – guidance is needed to help people to begin to do this.</p> <p>Debbie said that a process has commenced to look at the equality impact of each of the LAA indicators. Sally said that we need to recognise that this will be easy for some indicators but very patchy for others.</p> <p>Debbie said that she would like to feed back some comments on behalf of Jenni Venn who was unable to attend the</p>		

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<p>meeting. The guidance needs to be aimed at people who do not understand much about cohesion. It is important to structure the guidance in such a way that would help a service deliverer to make sense of it – for example, to group the guidance by service type.</p> <p>Sue said that there are 3 parts to this, the first is about the guiding principles, the second is about using examples which will shine a light on that and give inspiration and the third is to think about who we want to influence and how we can best structure the guidance.</p> <p>Balbir said that there are many case studies around schools that are available on the internet – it is useful for us to look at these and see what is happening elsewhere but the quality is difficult to rate. It is important to have common themes, approaches and processes to help us translate the learning back. It is important to look at case studies that provide us with common principles but also one off ideas. It was agreed that it would be helpful to structure the case studies around the guiding principles.</p> <p>Sue said that it would also be good to understand what specific things people did to make their activity successful. Andrew said that he will go on to collect the evidence about why certain activities were successful once we are clear about what we wish to use this for.</p> <p>Sue said that because cohesion is difficult to measure, people are not carrying out cohesion impact assessments. The guidance needs to address this and add value to what people have to do anyway in terms of considering equalities at the point of designing a service. We have missed opportunities to deliver cohesion as a spin off to delivering a service for another purpose. The guiding principles enable us to add another layer of analysis and we need to ensure that we can add value.</p> <p>Andrew said that we need to find examples of where baseline is done in a valuable way and distance travelled is understood. We need to be able to confidently share with people examples of where this has been tackled.</p> <p>Sue said that we need to be looking at practical things that we can do to ensure that this agenda is embedded – as described by Andrew as 'conditions which foster cohesion' – we need to agree how to describe this and get this message across to people that if they are able to create these conditions in the way in which they plan their business they will have a positive effect. Our role could then be to measure</p>		

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<p>whether people are applying these guiding principles which would foster those conditions.</p> <p>Andrew said that there are a series of ways in which we can influence people, including planning visits for people from different theme groups. The guidance will need to be adapted to meet different needs.</p> <p>Balbir said that the guidance needs to compliment what we have already got and ideally it should be 5 – 6 sides of paper.</p> <p>Sally said that the guiding principles are very helpful and it will be a great achievement to embed this into the other theme groups. It is important to set ourselves some goals and targets to drive this.</p> <p>Sue said that we need to think about how best to get our message across.</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do want a guidance document with a longer life. • The group like the guiding principles and would like the case studies to be linked to them • As a theme group we will need to think about how to launch this. • Andrew will need more examples of more managerial aspects of this. Sally agreed to look for some examples in CLYP <p>Debbie agreed to set up a sub group meeting to move this forward involving Sue, Jenni, Sally, June and Andrew.</p> <p>Andrew will bring the draft guidance to the next meeting on 22 October 2008.</p>	<p>Sept/Oct 08</p> <p>Sept/Oct 08</p> <p>22 Oct 08</p>	<p>Sally Giles</p> <p>Debbie Briggs</p> <p>Andrew Harrison</p>
4. Sharing Good Practice		
<p>It was agreed that if anyone has any good practice examples they will let Debbie know so that they can be put on the agenda for the next meeting.</p>	<p>8 Oct 08</p>	<p>ALL</p>
5. Date of Next Meeting		
<p>22 October 2008</p>		