



Equalities and Communities Theme Group

Wednesday 21st February 2007

Venue: St Peter's Community Centre- Phoenix Hall

Present: Alison Quigley, Debbie Briggs, Rob Haigh, Jenni Venn (Chair), Clive Burgess (Chief Supertintendent), Deborah Harrod (Chief Supertintendent), Fiona Scapens, Bill Hall, Fraser Murray, Sue Bent, June Jeffrey, Lisa Swift, Surindar Nagra, Sam Chakravarty, Kulwant Manku

Apologies: Alison Telford (WM Police), Sue Darling, Clare Wighman, Sheila Bates and Richard Tomlins.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jenni Venn welcomed everyone and this followed by round the table introductions.

The action notes of the last meeting 12 December were agreed as a true record and all actions completed.

2. Feedback from subs Group

Community Cohesion Sub-Group – Jenni reported to the group that guidance in regard to community cohesion will be launched soon. It has also been suggested that Coventry hosts a Community Cohesion event this summer, at the same time as the UK Schools Games. This will take the form of a community cohesion weekend, over the August Bank Holiday period. Jenni reported, that funding has been set aside for these events.

Equality Sub-Group – Surindar presented the Draft Equality Charter that was circulated prior to the meeting. The Charter makes a commitment to treating people in a considerate and courteous manner, without discrimination, while respecting individual differences and needs. The Equality Charter is supported by guidance notes, which were also circulated for comments. The commitments laid out in the Charter are as follows:

We will

- **Not accept discrimination of any kind;**
- **Provide information that is easy to read and understand;**
- **Make sure that our services are accessible to everyone;**

- **Deliver our services in a culturally sensitive manner;**
- **Provide interpretation (e.g. sign and language) where possible, to help in using our facilities and services;**
- **Treat everyone as an individual.**

Individual board members and organisations will be asked to sign up to the Charter. Each individual organisation will also need to ensure that they are implementing the commitment stated.

Wording changes were suggested and some members of the group felt that the commitments needed to be more tailored to the individual organisations, and more user-friendly. It was also suggested that the Charter should provide individuals with a clear introduction explaining what it involves. Sue Bent from the Law Centre offered to ask a lawyer to look over the Equality Charter. Any further comments to be sent to Surindar via email.

Surindar reported that Christine Trethowan had spoken to Sheila Bates about producing an Involvement Guide. This work will now be incorporated into the work that Sheila Bates is doing.

Sheila Bates had produced some standards for involvement and consultation. Furthermore, the Partnership were tendering for a consultant to carry out a piece of work to produce an effective framework for consulting and engaging with local people, and the work of the sub-group would feed into that.

It was also reported that the Inclusively survey was incorporated into the work that Carol Hayden was leading on.

Involvement Strategy – Following on from some CRES research early this year, Sheila Bates (chair of CEN) is leading on the development of a Community Involvement Strategy for the City.

A briefing paper from Sheila Bates was circulated to the group and Jenni outlined the key points. The Involvement Strategy needs to be more on a strategic level along side the Government's White Paper. It was suggested at the Partnership Board that the Government's White paper is to be considered at the next meeting.

A range of work has been taking place across the city, aiming to increase and enhance the way we consult with local people, and the way we engage them in influencing service development and delivery.

CEN (Community Empowerment Network) is Coventry Partnership's main vehicle for engaging with community groups although it is recognised there are a number of other established processes/meetings/group that operate with the same remit.

The City Council and the PIE group are developing plans for commissioning of research, consultation and evaluation projects that are needed to support delivery of the Community Plan. There has been an under spend within the Your Neighbourhood Matters Programme Budget and it is proposed that this budget is used to commission a consultant who can produce an in-depth report.

The outcome of this work will form the basis of the Community Involvement Strategy and will allow us to develop a plan of action for the future. It will also

inform the development of joint commissioning of research and evaluation being developed by the City Council and the PIE Group.

General Progress of the NRF projects - Jenni circulated a report giving detailed progress on the NRF Projects.

Current NRF projects:

- **Neighbourhood and Communities Fund**
- **Coventry Interpretation and Translation Unit**
- **Advice Service Coventry City Council CEN Neighbourhood and Networking Programme**
- **The Hillz Radio**
- **CovCool Kids**

3. **Coventry Partnership Review**

Coventry Partnership Board Self-Assessment - Sue Bent outlined the salient features of the report. The Coventry Partnership is subject to 12 monthly assessments by Government Office West Midlands. The Partnership has put in place a local assessment process to meet this requirement. The self-assessment provides an opportunity for the Partnership Board and all of its associated Theme Groups to review their current position in relation to:

- Progress towards delivery of targets and outcomes;
- Plausibility that activities are the right ones;
- Success in narrowing the gap between priority neighbourhoods and the rest of the city; and
- Impact upon communities of interest.

The Partnership Board Self Assessment commenced on the 9th January for half a day. The Partnership Board looked at the roles of the Partnership and of the Operations Group. It identified some confusion on which roles fit into the structure of the Partnership. The Partnership Board also identified that the Government White Paper should be high on the Agenda as this includes a number of points that could provide opportunities and choices in relation to how Coventry Partnership wants to position itself. (See circulated report Outcome of Coventry Partnership Board Self Assessment 9th January outlining the points).

Equalities and Communities Self Assessment, the next steps

All theme groups are different and this should be acknowledged. It was suggested that each theme group should not have identical terms of reference. Some theme groups should be seen as operational 'driving things forward' and some theme group should be seen as think tanks 'working to put together ideas'. Theme groups are to ensure that they are achieving and addressing their own targets.

The Equalities and Communities Theme Group should use their role to strengthen links with communities of interest. (See circulated report Outcome of Coventry Partnership Board Self Assessment).

4. **Update on the Advice Strategy Review** – Sue Bent briefed the group on the Face-to-Face Advice Project and reported on its progress.

The Advice Strategy for Coventry was produced last year. The outcome of the strategy resulted in NRF funding for new face-to-face advice surgeries in 10 priority neighbourhoods. There were some initial recruitment difficulties, and problems in finding suitable venues in each area, but all the surgeries are now established, and we now have more of an even spread of advice services across the city.

Because of these delays, outputs in terms of clients are lower than expected, but the project is successfully reaching the target groups for NRF. Over 250 people have been assisted and surgeries are now operating in Holbrooks, Radford, Bell Green, Henley Green, Stoke Aldermoor, Stoke Heath, Hillfields, Tile Hill and Canley. The new services were formally launched on 26th November by Cllr O'Neill and Cllr Chater who spoke about his support for the project. Media coverage was given to the launch in both the papers and BBC CWR.

There is a need to ensure that the new surgeries work seamlessly with the rest of the partnership in offering opportunities to change working practices in the advice sector, and to mainstream good practice. Evaluation of the project is underway.

NRF will also fund the creation of a directory of services, which will be available to all agencies and to the public. This will not be commissioned until the new financial year, but work has begun, and the group has identified that it wants to widen the scope and create a website. This will enable more communication between agencies in the partnership and allow some of the referral processes for clients to be done electronically.

Advice Services Coventry has also used the work being done under NRF to further develop the Advice Strategy, and has now made a Lottery bid to take the work on a further stage.

Progress report in relation to the Translation and interpretation Review – Sam Chakravarty

5. Jenni welcomed Sam Chakravarty and Kulwant Manku from the Coventry Translation and Interpretation Unit. A copy of the presentation was handed out to the group and Sam outlined the salient features. Sam is based in Community Services at Vine Street. The service provides interpreters and translators for a variety of languages including Hindu, Punjabi and also Chinese. Sam identified a need for partnership working to provide better access for the non-english speaking people of Coventry to services provided by CCC and PCT and to increase accessibility for practitioners and services under one roof.

Surindar reported that 18 months ago the Equalities and Communities Theme Group commissioned Isobel Ford from Teampo to carry out a review of Interpreting and translation Services in the city. The main outcome of the review was to have a more joined up service with the tPCT and City Council services being located in one building, with one number and common standards to work to.

Sam said that NRF played a major part in providing additional service to the unit, including:

- Access to wider service,

- Creating employment,
- Lang serve software creating reports and inputting staff and workers on to the system
- Training

The Coventry Interpreting and Translation Unit was launched on 14th December and is under one roof at 35 Vine Street. Cllr Hazel Noonan and Cllr Andy Matchet attended the launch along with Alison Gingell, chairperson from the PCT.

The new structure of the unit consists of, two managers (Strategic and operational), 7 admin staff, 4 in house interpreters and translators and a pool of more than 120 session interpreters and translators. The unit services hospitals, community services, children's services, other city council departments etc.

Finally, Sam talked about the Way forward. The unit has set specific targets to achieve as follows:

- To make sure that no one suffers in silence because of the language barrier
- To achieve 65% qualified interpreters for the first year 80% for the future
- More job opportunities for bilingual immigrants
- Stepping stone for new immigrants
- Access to wider area of job opportunities
- Integration in community
- Training to build better understanding between professionals
- Sign language – getting the service under CITU umbrella

6. Any other business

Surindar reported to the group the City Council's Draft Gender Equality Scheme was out for consultation. A joint public meeting with the tPCT and UHCW Nhs Trust took place on 25th January. The Equalities and Communities Theme Group has also been sent a copy of the report to comment on.

Alison Quigley reported that the Council of Disabled People will be launching their Hate Crime Reporting Centre on 5th March. She also organised Anti-Racism training within the NDC area targeted at front line staff. The police and other agencies participated in this event. An ex-organiser of the BNP in Bradford attended and gave an insight into the tactics and organisation of the BNP. Alison also reported that funding has been secured to tackle hate crime in the NDC area. A key part of the project has been the employment of a Victim Support Hate Crime Case Worker

Next meeting of the Equalities and Communities Theme will be on 20th June St Peter's Community Centre.