

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FORUM

26 June 2008 at 7.00 pm

MEMBERS: Councillor Ruth Dombey (Chair), and Councillors Margaret Ali, Abigail Lock, Pamela Picknett, Misdaq Zaidi, Shafi Chowdhury, Pam Davis, Nasser Butt, Richard Barns, Beau Fadahunsi and Sally Hill

Advisers: (*Absent)	Kevin Biggs Kate Evans Beau Fadahunsi Chief Insp David Gair Alastair Howarth Sally Hill Tim Lyth Fran Massiah	Borough Fire Commander Sutton Education Lead Adviser Sutton Minority Ethnic forum Safer Sutton Partnership HM Prison Highdown HM Prison Down View Carshalton College Sutton Housing Strategy Group
--------------------------------	--	---

Officers:	Gill Bull Ben Unsworth Linda Fisher Dennis Bartholomew Suzy Humphries Francis Newell	Executive Head of Policy and Communications Engagement and Equalities Manager Project Manager Equality Officer Take Part, Take Pride Officer PPI & Diversity Manager, Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust
------------------	---	---

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTES

There were apologies from Edwina McCarthy, Kate Evans, Chief Inspector David Gair. Pam Davis substituted for Joan Parker.

53. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2008 were approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

54. ITEMS ARISING FROM THE INFORMATION BULLETIN

Linda Fisher reminded the Forum that the Information Bulletin was an ideal way for groups to inform people of forthcoming events and issues which they thought would be of interest to others. Linda also highlighted that the Bulletin could be used to circulate minutes of the groups' meetings.

Linda requested that in the first instance items should be sent to her electronically on linda.fisher@sutton.gov.uk, following which she would speak to Ruth Dombey and Dennis Bartholomew in order to establish what should be included onto the Bulletin.

Resolved: (i) That Dennis would speak to Chief Inspector David Gair in order that trends in his crime data reports are identified and highlighted to recipients of the Bulletin.

(ii) The Information Bulletin's deadlines would be e-mailed to members of the Forum.

55. TAKE PART, TAKE PRIDE

Suzy Humphries, Project Manager for Take Part, Take Pride gave an interesting verbal presentation. Suzy explained that this is a festival of great events run by

local groups and people from Monday 7 July to Sunday 13 July and the scope had been expanded from the environmental theme in previous years.. A large amount of publicity had been organised with flyers sent to every school, posters in venues, as well as banners in the 18 wards of the borough.

Suzy explained that approximately 88 events of a wide variety had been organised to date but it was hoped to reach 100 events.

Suzy highlighted that the launch of the Sutton Centre for Independent Living and Learning café had been brought forward to coincide with Take Part, Take Pride. Ruth Dombey highly recommended this facility, which will provide members of the Centre with work experience.

Sally Hill, HM Prison Downview enquired if events such as static display of arts and workshops could be taken into the prison after the Take Part, Take Pride week had finished.

Gill Bull advised that work would be undertaken to ensure greater links and involvement with the prison so that the residents can be involved in the 2009 Take Part Take Pride.

Resolved: That Suzy and Paul Edge be thanked for all their hard work in organising Take Part, Take Pride.

56. SHADOW A COUNCILLOR - ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Ruth advised that as last year's Shadow a Councillor Scheme had been a huge success, it had been decided to repeat the formula this year focussing on young people this time. The event would run from Saturday 5 July to Sunday 13 July 2008. Twelve young people consisting mainly of 16 and 17 year olds have volunteered to take part.

The timetable consisted of the following events:

- Councillors' surgeries
- School Fair
- Hackbridge Carnival
- Excellence Awards
- House of Commons visit
- Reception in Mayor's Parlour
- Visit to a Local Committee
- Limes College Open Day
- Meet Tom Brake, MP for talk and questions and answers time
- Tour of Parliament
- Glenthorne High 50th Jubilee
- Sutton Seniors Forum
- Champagne Breakfast
- Citizenship Ceremony
- North Cheam Walk

Ruth stated that Shadowing a Councillor was a practical way of introducing people to the workings of the democratic process in Sutton and elsewhere and for them to gain a more in-depth knowledge of local democracy.

57. SUTTON'S EQUALITY SCHEME

Dennis Bartholomew, Senior Policy Manager (Equalities) gave an interesting presentation on the End of Year Report from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008 called Much Achieved, New Challenges Ahead. Dennis explained that the document contained the major equality and diversity action, including the Council's key disability action. Dennis advised that the document allows the Forum to hold the Council to account and enabled progress to be monitored.

Dennis advised that the Equality Scheme was created after looking at what the Forum have asked the Council to do. Managers were asked for their approval of the scheme, following which it was implemented and reported to the Forum.

Dennis explained what had been achieved at the various Levels of the Equality Standard.

Level 1

Launch of the Sutton Equality Scheme – bringing together Sutton’s key equality and diversity actions

Launching a corporate equalities and diversity impact assessment that identifies the effect of Sutton’s action on individuals and/or communities facing discrimination

Successful re-launch of Sutton Council’s Minority Ethnic Employees Association Membership of Stonewall’s, Diversity Champion’s Programme.

Level 2

Launch of the Older People’s Strategy

Launch, together with Age Concern of The Sutton Handbook – a free directory of older people’s services

Sutton has asked customers for equality and diversity information at the point of service

The percentage of disabled employees has increased from 1.3% in 2003/4 to 5% in 2007/8.

Sutton remains a Mencap Champion for its recruitment of people with physical and learning disabilities

Level 3

In July 2007 Sutton signed the Skills Pledge – committing it to actively encourage and support employees to acquire literacy and numeric skills.

Continuation of pay equality issues.

All of which contributed to higher customer care results than any other London Borough – measured by the 2007 MORI survey, and enabled Level 3 of the Equality Standard to be achieved.

Dennis said that the challenges to the Forum would be:

- The invitation of presentations on equality and diversity activities.
- Ensure priorities reflected in the Equality Scheme.
- Officers to be requested to add or amend the Scheme’s actions.
- The Council to be held to account.

Dennis advised that Report on Sutton’s Level 3 Assessment was a precis of a 20 page document which stated that Sutton Council continued to mainstream equality and diversity into all aspects of its work as part of a continuous process of service improvement. This process is underpinned by the Equality and Diversity Policy, in which its commitment is spelt out:

“Sutton will treat all people with dignity and respect, valuing the diversity of all. Sutton will promote equality of opportunity and diversity. Sutton will eliminate all forms of discrimination in service delivery, employment, and in working with Sutton partners, including on grounds of race, gender, caring responsibilities, disability, gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion or belief. Sutton will tackle social exclusion, inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

For Sutton's policy to be successful, it is essential that everyone is committed to, and involved in its delivery. Sutton's goal is to work towards a just society, free from discrimination, harassment and prejudice. Its aim is to embed this in all Sutton policies, procedures, day-to-day practices and external relationship.

A copy of the 2007/8 Scheme, which currently covers race, disability, age and sex equality, can be found on the Sutton's website under the Community and Living Section. The 2008/9 Scheme will be amended to include the additional equality strands of sexual orientation and faith and belief.

Using the guidance provided by the Standard and the results of the Tracker Sutton has self-assessed progress on equality and diversity as being at Level 3 of the Standard. Dennis explained that in some areas Levels 4/5 have been achieved.

Ben Unsworth advised that the Council were trying to break down barriers for job interviews with "job carving" where a small piece of a job, maybe 1 or 2 hours per week, is used to change someone's life.

58. EQUALITY MONITORING

Dennis explained that all organisations, including Sutton Council, monitor users and usage of their services and that the information was key to improving services and identifying potential or actual inequalities.

Guidance on monitoring users and usage of services is currently being developed for Sutton's managers in order to bring about consistency across the Council. Dennis advised that this guidance, when effectively used to collect and analyse the data collected will result in improvements to and efficiencies in service delivery. A number of issues, including the question of user sensitivity over the collection of such information, would also be addressed.

Dennis requested the Forum to liaise with local organisations, their Executive Committees and others on the monitoring form and suggested that they complete the form as much as they could, in order to demonstrate some of the issues that a user may encounter. Further copies of the form and guidance notes are available from Dennis Bartholomew, Senior Policy Manager (Equalities) on 020 8770 5141 including in Braille or other alternative formats, on request.

Resolved: The information provided by the Forum would be fed into the development of the guidance and the monitoring form template.

59. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Dennis Bartholomew advised that the Forum is required to undertake a yearly review of its terms of reference.

Dennis asked that the amendments to the terms of reference be noted and comments on these changes, considering whether they reflect, meet and enable the wishes of the Forum. Any proposals for new amendments should be sent to him.

Resolved: The terms of reference would be resubmitted to the next Forum meeting on the 15 October 2008 for approval, with inclusion of relevant parts of the Community Engagement Strategy.

60. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

A discussion took place regarding the possibility of holding thematic future meetings,. One suggestion was that every other meeting could be themed.

Linda requested the Forum to let her know what they thought important to the groups that they represented in the borough, and asked if items of a broad interest

could be sent to her by e-mail on linda.fisher@sutton.gov.uk, telephone 020 8770 5091 or by post at Democratic Services, 2nd Floor, Civic Offices, Sutton SM1 1EA.

The following three themes were put forward:

- Positive action in service delivery
- Health related issues equalities
- Hate incidents/crime
- A report on the work of HMP Downview.

Any suggestions/ideas would be looked at in more depth to see how they could enhance the good work that had been carried out previously and enable the organisation of lively and interesting future meetings. Linda advised that if anyone wished to discuss a suggested themed item for a future meeting of the Forum, they should contact Dennis Bartholomew direct.

Resolved: That the possibility of themed meetings would be looked at.

61. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to discuss.

62. DATES OF NEXT MEETING AND FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2008/9

The dates for future meetings were agreed as follows:

Wednesday 15 October 2008 – 7.00 pm – Room 5, Civic Offices **(please note change of date)**

Wednesday 10 December 2008 – 7.00 pm – Room 5, Civic Offices **(please note change of date)**

Thursday 12 February 2009 – 7.00 pm – Room 5, Civic Offices

Thursday 14 May 2009 – 7.00 pm – Room 5, Civic Offices

Resolved: The note the above dates.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chair:

Date: