

# Minutes of Voscur Equalities Network At the Black Development Agency

**Date:** Tuesday 23 March 2010

## **Attending:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Helen Mott	Bristol Women's Forum and Bristol Fawcett
Gloria Morris	Golden Agers
Hermione Samuels	Golden Agers
Sarah Howard	The Listening Partnership / DICE
Gillian Douglas	Bristol City Council
Marvin Rees	The Bristol Partnership
Emma Rice	Voscur
Ruth Pitter	Voscur

## **Apologies:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Jonathan Charlesworth	EACH
Sami Chugg	
Dawnecia Palmer	Peacemakers
Hazel Stark	Refugee Women of Bristol
Alex Raikes	SARI
Sarah-Louise Minter	Bristol LBG Forum
Sauda Kyalambuka	Full Circle

1. **Introductions:** Ruth Pitter (RP) thanked everyone for coming and ran through the agenda for the day. The focus of this meeting will be the 20:20 Plan and RP asked how many delegates had heard of the Plan? The Plan is the Bristol Partnership's (BP) vision for Bristol and Marvin Rees (MR) will talk more about it.

Another key element for the Network is to look at the Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) and how they will fit into equalities issues. Gillian Douglas (GD) to talk more about this.

Sarah Howard from the Listening Partnership and DICE will talk about her work and show a DVD made by Disable young people.

Housekeeping.

Round of introductions.

2. **20:20 Plan and meaningful avenues of engagement, Marvin Rees, Manager, the Bristol Partnership.**

The idea of the 20:20 Plan is to create vision for Bristol. There is an old

proverb that states “without a vision, people perish”. The BP are eager that people are pro-active in saying this is the story that we want our City to live out. To get a good understanding of where we are as a City and where we are going.

MR gave out handouts that gave a brief summary of the 20:20 Plan.

MR explained the background of the BP and discussed its shared vision to improve Bristol; which can only be achieved by working in partnership, e.g. criminal justice system can not be tackle issues without involving (mental) health issues and education issues. The partnership is trying to discover a way of working in which key organisations from across the city can work together. We are still learning how this joint working can, and is, taking place. Coherence and vision across the city needs to be pinned down; the BP has pulled together the 20:20 Plan, which is Bristol’s Sustainable City Strategy.

The Plan is broken up into eight headings and the overarching idea is that Bristol will be one of Europe’s top 20 cities.

The BP wants to see **four outcomes**:

- Reduce health and wealth inequalities
- Higher aspirations for children, young people and families  
Children need to be talked about in the context of families and there needs to be aspirations for the City – what do we want to be?
- Stronger, safer communities, i.e., we need to talk wider than issues on housing estates. It is important to create interaction between communities.
- Sustainable prosperity

In addition to the outcomes there are **three main challenges** to overcome:

- Climate change (the Council have released a report entitled ‘Peak Oil’)
- Regeneration and affordable housing (we need to provide affordable housing in a creative way.)
- Connectivity (How do we move around our city? What stops us? Is the transport system adequate? This also involves digital inclusion. It has been reported that people who are not online pay an average of £560 more a year in bills because they do not access online discounts.0

There is also an **opportunity** to overcome these challenges and reach the outcomes tapping in to Bristol’s culture and creativity to put us on the world stage; there is far more to the city than the Suspension Bridge and hot air balloons!

Under the heading of: outcomes, challenges and opportunity, there are 31 identified areas of action. The challenge is to flesh out these actions and say how they can be achieved. The fact they are not yet fiercely defined gives people the opportunity to come to the table and contribute ideas.

A full copy of the Plan is available on the Bristol Partnership Website at: <http://bristolpartnership.org>

Questions Invited:

**Ruth Pitter (RP), Voscur:** These are very big aspirations and a lot to achieve in 10 years. Thinking back 10 years, not that much has fundamentally changed in Bristol. How do we make the next 10 years different? Where do we start?

**MR:** We have to enter into this with a heavy sense of humility. Not all the answers are known. Aspirations cannot remain separate from the process and we need to do something to make these aspirations a reality. We need to be really organised and be clear about what it is we want. The BP is set up with an Executive Board and 5 sub boards to deal with all the issues.

In December a workshop was held with the Executive Board to see what would be the priorities as we cannot cover all 31 areas at once. Amongst the priorities that were identified were the effects of the recession and equalities issues, stronger neighbourhoods and climate change.

The Executive Board needs to have some sort of credibility and encourage participation so we can consider how to deliver on the outcomes.

**Gillian Douglas (GD), Bristol City Council:** 10 years ago a lot less people were involved than now, but the meetings held recently and the numbers of attendees shows that people want change around areas such as poverty and deprivation.

**RP:** How do organisations get involved?

**MR:** There is a clear opportunity to engage via the Neighbourhood Partnerships. The BP is holding a meeting with Faith groups on 26 March to discuss how people can make an impact in their neighbourhoods. It is also important for people to get involved in the Big Vision stuff. We need to allow people to meaningfully shape what we mean by the areas of challenge.

Outside of having an actual process, which we will address in April, we are just getting out there and talking to people and inviting them to get in touch. We will take guidance on what has worked well and what has not worked well in the past. If the plan does not touch on integrity then it will be a waste of time.

**Sarah Howard (SH), The Listening Partnership / DICE:** Is there also a need to have a creative approach to money? Is there extra money to fund this? How can we have a vision when we are struggling to keep organisations funded and people's jobs?

**MR:** The BP is funded through the key member organisations that have money; this is put into a pot which funds jobs. BP administrative work can be kept small so we can focus on the real job of getting people to work together and bounce off each other.

As regards the question of money more generally, this is a perpetual question, especially, as we go into cut backs, partnership working becomes more and more important. There are difficulties in how we evidence this and how we demonstrate things work better when there is joint working. If we can bring coherence in the way in which organisations are working this could result in a cost saving exercise.

**Gloria Morris (GM), The Golden Agers:** As the new stage and this Plan go forward, how happy are you with what has happened in the last 10 years in Bristol? We must realise the past to be able to move on.

**MR:** The story of Bristol is a city that has had great potential and there lies the frustration. Frustration is born out of having so much hope and seeing so much potential in a city. We need to crack down on many things if Bristol is to reach its potential. There are many reports about Bristol being a divided city etc. There is a need to face and deal with the failures of the past, the failures of the present and the potential failures of the future.

**RP:** In terms of the VCSE a lot of groups are doing things in their own way but are not connecting up with the 20:20 Plan. How does this work get recognised? How can groups promote what they can do to help the BP reach its targets?

**MR:** Publicity is important, groups do pieces of work and after it finishes ask how they can tell others about it? Groups need to be proactive and start to tell the story from day one, e.g. media training for groups has been provided in the past and can be provided again in the future.

The BP is launching a radio show on 12<sup>th</sup> April on Ujima Radio, the show will ask people to come forward and tell their stories.

**Helen Mott, Bristol Women's Forum and Bristol Fawcett:** For International Women's Day, corporate organisations were tasked with publicising the day but they did nothing! This just shows information goes through a filter of what people consider to be important. The media has a resistance and will only tell the stories that they want to. Also groups need support around how to set websites up and how to get their information out there.

**GD:** This must be part of the connectivity part of the Plan, to help groups learn how to set up websites.

**MR:** If the show is well received and proves there is an appetite for these issues then this will change opinions and change attitudes towards such stories. There is a need to bend the resilience and get a story heard. The radio show needs to be invested in and then the stories will bend the mainstream media.

**RP asked what experience the groups here had had of using radio and other media and their thoughts on doing so?**

**SH:** Has used BBC Radio, which was good coverage in a way but disappointed by the way disabled people were portrayed. People with learning disabilities were spoken to in a patronising tone. Bristol Community Radio was brilliant and young people got a lot out of it! They were given real ownership by being allowed to choose the music played and got to spend an hour in the studio. They really, really enjoyed this and it empowered those who were involved.

**Gloria Morris:** The Golden Agers do not often use other outlets as already have good avenues to get information out, such as word of mouth.

RP suggested the BP could have a space on their website for groups to flag up good practice.

**MR:** The BP radio show will be podcast and left on the website for about a year after being broadcast.

A further discussion took place around how a radio show could work for the VCSE, this was general positive; it was felt that Voscur and BDA could pursue this avenue.

**3. Neighbourhood Partnerships – how can equalities be represented**

**across the City? What mechanisms need to be established? – Gillian Douglas, Head of Equalities, Bristol City Council**

GD gave out the Voscur Guide to Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs).

Since the onset of the year there has been a more definite move to devolve budgets to NPs. The Liberal Democrat leadership is totally committed to this and if they remain in power will devolve more budgets.

NPs are a collective of 2 or 3 wards – each ward has 2 Councillors. The councillors lead the NPs. As constitutionally Councillors have to make final decisions but do so with the NP involving the local agencies and people. This puts a neighbourhood slant on what the Council does and is a bigger opportunity to get neighbourhood weighting on how resources are needed. This also needs to be evidenced, what is there a need for? Has there been noticeable change in deprivation?

NPs are a mix of about 20 people including, local residents, Councillors and local agencies. Meetings are public so anyone can attend to observe proceedings but only those on the Partnership will be able to contribute. However, other people will have a chance to contribute at Neighbourhood Forums (NF) which are open to any resident or person with an interest in the area; the Forums will feed in to the NPs.

The devolved budgets are quite limited at the moment. A £10,000 budget has been allocated per ward for use on the Well-Being project. This is completely flexible so each NP can decide what it is used on, e.g. making a grant to a VCSE organisation doing good work, or to make a purchase for the area.

Even in such times of financial pressures there is still an opportunity for NPs to have a say on how they would like money spent; it is recognised though that some NP have not yet spent their money.

One Equalities Forum Rep and one Young Person's Rep will sit on each NF and will signpost their NP to where they can seek expertise on certain issues. Reps will also keep a check on the representation on the NPs and the NFs.

Nine Area Co-ordinators (some wards will share but the particularly deprived wards will have a dedicated Co-ordinator) will work on engaging people and local communities. These Co-ordinators will also hold agencies to account to provide services for the community.

**Question – RP:** How will support be given at all neighbourhood levels; where do the references come from to form the links to all the equalities

groups in the area and to find out what the issues are?

**GD:** The Area Co-ordinators are a completely new resource to help in this. The Community Development Team at the Council will still exist so perhaps they will slot in under the Area Co-ordinators and provide reference and support. Community Development is still a City-wide resource that can be used to support people to participate meaningfully.

In the beginning the Area Co-ordinators will be based together to get the message from the leadership and then they will probably be based on their own patch.

**Gloria Morris (GM):** I live in Horfield but work in Easton and so would want to represent Easton at NPs.

**GD:** This is fair enough as people who work in an area still have a stake in it. There is a need for community intelligence and for people who know what is happening on the ground.

**Helen Mott (HM):** Equalities consortiums do not work for women's issues, so it is difficult to see how NPs will support or represent women.

**GD:** People in areas of deprivation sometimes feel that they can influence decisions although this does not necessarily mean that these are the areas where equalities are best served.

**RP:** In terms of equalities champions, if attendees of this meeting would be interested in doing this what support would be available for them to do so?

**Sarah Howard (SH):** There is always an issue with access in terms of the jargon and language that is used; this means that sometimes people do not understand what the meetings are about!

Discussion around language and how a culture change is needed in terms of the language used.

Suggestions about other difficulties and solutions to attending meetings:

**Gloria Morris (GM):** Transport for getting to and from meetings. Older people are unlikely to want to attend evening meetings.

**Helen Mott (HM):** Real time webcasting of meetings, so people can watch at home.

3. **Perspectives from a Project, Sarah Howard, Youth Participation**

## **Worker, the Listening Partnership (LP), DICE Project, WECIL (West of England Inclusive Living)**

Sarah Howard (SH) introduced the project she works for and showed the DVD 'In Our Own Words' a film made by disabled young people about bullying and harassment of disabled people. The LP sits on the Safer Bristol Partnership which tackles Hate Crime.

**RP:** Asked if there is information collated on whether the DVD is raising awareness and encouraging young people to report bullying?

**SH:** When the DVD came out, all the schools and colleges in the area were written to. I offered to run a workshop and distribute free copies of the DVD. The response has been slow. Meanwhile peer support is very strong and has grown.

Discussion around how to increase reporting of bullying, especially in schools.

### **4. Equalities Action Group – Who's representing equalities on the Bristol Partnership and how?**

**RP:** The Equalities Action Group (EAG) is having an event on 20 May 2010 for people who want to come forward as equalities Reps.

The EAG is a sub-group of the BP; its role is to scrutinise the work of the BP. Reps are being sought to represent each of the 7 equalities strands.

There will be some Bristol City Council Officer time to support the EAG. MR will take resources concerns to the BP Executive Board to see if partners wish to make a financial contribution for access costs, etc.

### **6. Update and information share**

### **7. Lunch and Close**