
Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 19th February 2003
in the Town Hall, Barnsley

Present:

Stephen Houghton	Barnsley MBC (Chair)
John Penney	Barnsley Development Agency
Sam Tarff	Community Development Advisory Group
Derek Stafford	Barnsley Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Tom Sheard*	Barnsley Primary Care Trust
Terry Dixon	Barnsley MBC
Sylvia Yates*	Objective 1
John Korzeniewski	South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council
David Kennedy	Environment, Housing and Accessibility Goal Group
Trenton Wiggan	Barnsley Black and Ethnic Minority Initiative
Denise Casbolt	Barnsley Community Safety Partnership
Ailsa Claire	Barnsley Primary Care Trust
Bob Dyson	South Yorkshire Police
Joe West	Barnsley College
Pat Howarth	Barnsley Learning Partnership
Graham Gatehouse*	Safer and Healthier Communities Goal Group

** Denotes attended for part of meeting only*

Supporting

John Woodside	Barnsley MBC, Community Planning and Regeneration
Graeme Johnson	Environment, Housing and Accessibility Goal Group
Rachel Roylance	Barnsley MBC, Community Planning and Regeneration
Sarah Wainwright	Barnsley MBC, Community Planning and Regeneration
Brian Pitts	Barnsley MBC, Cabinet Support Unit

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Jean Potter, Frank Carter and Graham Sadler.

1. Asylum Seekers – The Facts in Barnsley

Councillor Houghton informed the meeting of a proposal by the Council to place a full page advertisement in the Barnsley Chronicle and the Barnsley Star, drawing the public's attention to the real facts about Asylum Seekers residing in the Borough and to dispel any misunderstandings and misconceptions that people might have about Asylum Seekers.

The advertisement would also place further emphasis on opposition to racism in all its forms and point to Barnsley's proud record of welcoming people from other nations over many generations.

A copy of the draft advertisement was circulated round the meeting for comment. It was noted that the Council hoped to get support for the advertisement from a number of Organisations including Churches, Trade Unions, Community Groups and Private, Voluntary and Statutory Organisations, by asking the appropriate lead person from the Organisations concerned to sign the advertisement.

The meeting was informed that further work was needed to finalise the wording of the advertisement, including the replacement of "Local Tax Payer" with "Council Tax Payer". This work was required to be completed by Graham Gatehouse by the deadline of Friday 21st February 2003.

The meeting noted other work which would support the theme of the proposed advertisement, which included advertisements on buses, a letter to all BMBC employees and an entry in "Barnsley Matters".

AGREED that the proposal by the Council for an advertisement relating to Asylum Seekers in the Borough, as outlined to the meeting, be unanimously endorsed.

2. Draft Barnsley Community Plan 2003/2004

Sarah Wainwright introduced the Draft Barnsley Community Plan 2003/2004, copies of which had been circulated previously.

The Draft Plan set out the over-arching strategy for the future development of the Borough, it built upon and updated the previous two Community Plans and focused more sharply on priorities and joined up service delivery. Other developments in the Plan included an improved understanding of citizenship and local community priorities. The main revisions within the Draft Plan and the new sections dealing with Citizenship, the Barnsley Learning Curve, the Kendray Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion, were outlined.

The lead officers concerned then gave a slide presentation, outlining the key actions and targets within each of the four goals contained within the Community Plan, and responded to questions from Members. Particular emphasis was given in discussion to the issue of work related learning and the need for people to be equipped with the right skills necessary for future jobs. The need to increase the understanding among 14 to 18 year olds about the importance of training and for efforts to improve the capacity of employers to provide vocational training courses, was stressed. Reference was made to work on this issue currently being done by several agencies, including the Learning and Skills Council.

AGREED:-

- (i) that the draft Barnsley Community Plan 2003/2004 be received and that an updated draft incorporating further comments received within the consultation period be presented to the next meeting to be held on 19th March 2003;
- (ii) that further reports on the issue of workforce development be presented to future meetings of the Forum Executive.

3. Barnsley Community Summits – Interim Report

John Woodside introduced a report informing the meeting that all the Community Summits had now taken place and giving an initial evaluation of their success. The report noted that attendance at the Summits had varied from 45 to 300 plus residents and they had been well supported by Barnsley Forum Executive Partner Organisations. Discussion groups had allowed for in-depth examination of key issues with members of the public to take place and allowed local people to access information face to face from a range of local service providers. The positive targeting of particular sections of the community for example young people, appeared to have had a significant impact on the numbers and variety of ages of people who turned up.

The vast majority of feedback from members of the public was positive and the information gained would be used in deciding what improvements could be made if it was decided to run the Summits for a second time at a later date. The meeting noted that a comprehensive evaluation report on the Summits would be presented to the Forum Executive Meeting in March.

AGREED that the interim report on the Barnsley Community Summits be noted.

4. Local Cultural Strategy for Barnsley – Revised Draft

John Woodside introduced a revised draft of the Cultural Strategy established by the Council in consultation with local stakeholders. Recalling the comments made at the last meeting in relation to issues of ethnicity, the meeting noted that the revised draft did now make specific reference to Barnsley as a Multi Cultural Society with over 20 Black and Ethnic Minority Groups living and working in the Borough. It referred to the cultural events organised by Ethnic Minority Groups and the new Multi Cultural Centre which was being developed through the Barnsley Black and Ethnic Minority Initiative. The contribution which the Local Cultural Strategy would make towards increasing racial harmony was recognised, as was the positive contribution which the Black and Ethnic Minority Groups made to the cultural life of Barnsley.

AGREED that the revised Local Cultural Strategy for Barnsley as submitted to the meeting, be welcomed and endorsed.

5. 2001 Census of Population – Key Statistics for Barnsley

Miles Crompton introduced a report which summarised the first comprehensive 2001 Census results for the Barnsley Borough. With the aid of slides, he outlined the key statistics for Barnsley.

The population of Barnsley Borough in 2001 was 218,063, a decline of 5,100 (2.3%) since 1991. The age structure of the Borough was similar to the national average although there were fewer young people, partly because of local students living away from home.

The number of households in the Borough in 2001 was 92,165, an increase of 5,070 (5.8%) since 1991. Other household characteristics were outlined to the meeting.

Car ownership in Barnsley had increased from 59.4% in 1991 to 67.8% in 2001.

The statistics showed that Barnsley had a 99.1% white population in 2001, of whom 99% were described as British.

Health problems were more prominent in Barnsley in 2001 than in 1991, with over 55,000 people or 25% of the population reporting a limiting long term illness, up from 18%.

The economic activity rate in Barnsley had fallen from 71.7% to 70.8% between 1991 and 2001, owing to rising numbers of longterm sick, lone parents, carers and early retired people. However, the employment rate had risen from 62.4% to 66.1%. Whilst unemployment had almost halved to 6.5%, the number of longterm sick increased by 27%. Lone parents had been a rapidly rising group. Travel to work showed a continued shift towards the car, from 62% in 1991 to 69% in 2001, a level above the national average. Walking to work had fallen and bus travel had fallen most sharply from 14.5% to 7.9% whilst travel by train had increased slightly from 1% to 1.2%.

In Barnsley 41% of the population aged 16 to 74 had no qualifications in 2001, the tenth highest in England and Wales. Whilst 11% were educated to degree level, up from 7.9% in 1991 this was still well behind the national average of 20%.

An outline of the statistics in relation to the housing stock of Barnsley was given, including house type, number of voids, basic amenities and the proportions of owner occupied and rented properties, it being noted that the number of Council rented properties had declined from 30.2% to 23.6%.

The meeting noted that more detailed analysis of the Census results would be available in April and May 2003 and this would include detailed analysis of topics for the Borough and comparison with other areas.

AGREED that the summary report of the 2001 Census results for Barnsley be noted and that a more detailed report be presented to a future meeting.

6. Common Purpose

John Woodside tabled a report informing the meeting that Common Purpose were recruiting for the 2003 programme and he sought the Forum Executive's views on whether the programme should be supported. A telephone survey of the 8 people from Barnsley who had attended the 2002 event showed that responses varied from a waste of time to very useful and strongly recommended. It was noted that Doncaster Partnership was not intending to support the programme this year.

Following an exchange of views it was

AGREED that individual partners would decide whether to support Common Purpose 2003.

7. Date of Next Meeting

On 19th March 2003 at Hilder House.