

# Embracing Diversity

## EMPLOYER FORUM ON DIVERSITY

### MINUTES OF STEERING GROUP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2002 AT TRUMETER, MILLTOWN STREET, RADCLIFFE

Following the launch of the Employer Forum on Diversity, several members of the Forum and business representatives were invited to form a Steering Group in order to develop a future plan of action to determine a vision and set out the objectives and expected outcomes for the Forum.

The Steering Group would consist of a small representative number of members from the Forum and Officers from Bury EST. The Employer Consultant would arrange and co-ordinate this meeting. Invited members who agreed to participate and were in attendance at the meeting were:

Andy Ratcliff	Bolton and Bury Chamber of Commerce
Gerrard Curran	North Manchester Business Link
Peter Weidenbaum	Trumeter
Chris Sheelan	Unifi Dyed Yarns
Ingrid Hitchon	Molygran
Fred Bowen	Bury EST
Rod Goodwin	Bury EST
Lynda Smethurst	Bury EST
Carol Woodhams	Manchester Metropolitan University

For the purpose of this meeting it was agreed that Fred Bowen chairs the proceedings.

The meeting was opened with introductions from all in attendance.

For the benefit of members who had not been able to attend the launch of the Employer Forum, the Bury EST Employer Consultant gave a brief overview of the work currently undertaken by Bury EST and the new Embracing Diversity Project.

Members were introduced to Carol Woodhams, a lecturer on Diversity at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Fred Bowen had been in discussion with Carol Woodhams and was investigating the possibility of joint working with the Embracing Diversity Project and a project that Carol was working on at the University. There were some identified similarities with the two initiatives in terms of working with the employers and Carol had agreed to offer some assistance with the work of the Forum and speak to members on diversity issues at future meetings.

# Embracing Diversity

The subject of a questionnaire to be circulated to the employers taking part in the Forum was discussed and a draft of the type of questions that Bury EST would require answers to in order to establish some baseline information was tabled.

Following further discussion it was agreed to accept a suggestion from Carol Woodhams to work on a suitable document which would incorporate the requirements of Bury EST and liaise further with Fred Bowen on a final draft to be presented to the next meeting of the Forum. Carol Woodhams informed members that she was intending to produce a questionnaire for employers, which would provide her with information required for the project she is currently working on.

Andy Ratcliff offered the Chamber's service to circulate the final questionnaire to the members of the Bolton and Bury Chamber. This was a very welcome offer to be taken up in the near future.

Members entered into discussion regarding the main business of the meeting, to develop a mission statement for the Project. It was agreed that the mission statement should reflect the expectations of the employers and not Bury EST.

Several suggestions from all members were considered and examples were produced for consideration. The general consensus of thought for the mission statement, which will focus on the specific aims for the employers, was as follows:

**“To continually increase awareness amongst employers of the opportunities and benefits of employing a diverse workforce”**

This statement will be presented to the next Forum meeting for approval and the objectives will follow from the agreed statement.

Next actions were agreed as follows:

- The Employer Consultant, Fred Bowen would liaise further with Carol Woodhams towards the production of a suitable questionnaire to be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.
- Following agreement regarding the questionnaire Bury EST would arrange to circulate the document to Forum members and at a later stage a suitable questionnaire of similar content would be circulated to the members of the Bolton and Bury Chamber of Commerce.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.30 am.

All members were thanked for their attendance and valuable input to the discussion. A special thanks to the host of this meeting, Mr Peter Weidenbaum, Trumeter, Radcliffe, Manchester.

**Fred Bowen**  
**EMPLOYER CONSULTANT**