

ITEM 4

Time commenced - 6.30 pm
Time Finished – 8:58 pm

MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE 3 FEBRUARY 2005

Present: **Representing Derby City Council**
Councillor Burgess - in the Chair
Councillors Khan, Roberts, Richards and Willitts

Representing Communities
Fares Abdollah – Iraqi - Kurdish Community
Kamal Amier - Somalian Community
Jack Butler – Irish Community
Nezrine Hudson - Caribbean Community
Nasreen Iqbal - Pakistani Community
Shokat Lal – Pakistani Community
Mohan Manku - Indian Community
Lloyd Newby - Caribbean Community

Community Advisors
Shirley Howard - Caribbean Community
Bhagat Shanker - Indian Community
Mr Dhillon - Derby REC
Tony Walsh – Derby REC
Abas Salihiy – Iraqi - Kurdish Community

Council Advisors
Sue Glithero - Director of Policy
Pam Thompson - Consultation Support Officer
Rajesh Lall – Education Officer
Carol Mee – Public Relations Officer
Donna Norris - Corporate Recruitment Adviser
Cathy Ford - Head of Admissions
Susan Sanghera – Recruitment Officer Positive Action
Ann Webster – Equality Standard Project Manager
Hazel Lymbery – Children's Planning and Commissioning Manager
Mohammed Jakhara – Project Manager Social Services
Don McLure – Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits
John Sheil – Housing Strategy Officer
Isabella Stone – Assistant Director - Community Policy

59/04 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gupta, Mr Sharma, Mr Kevric, Mr Bola, Mrs Rattu, Mr Sandhu, Mr Negipooran and Mr Mighty.

60/04 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

61/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

62/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63/04 Community Cultural Event

Shirley Howard reported on her experience of the Community Awards Eid Ceremony held at the Pakistani Community Centre on 21 November 2004. Nasreen Iqbal also reported on her experience of the event. Shokat Lal emphasised that the event had not been organised by the Pakistani Community Centre itself. The concerns around this event had also been reported to the Women's Advisory Committee and it was reported that the Chair of the Women's Advisory Committee had written to the organisers of the event to express their concern and to make sure everyone was included in future events.

Resolved to note the report.

64/04 Cultural Diversity Somalian Event

The Committee considered a report from Tony Walsh which gave details of the Celebration for Cultural Diversity Somalian Cultural Event held at the Indian Community Centre on 28 November 2004.

65/04 Schools Admissions

This item was withdrawn.

66/04 Report on the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools

Cathy Ford, Head of Service for Admissions gave a presentation on the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools. A new code of practice on school admissions required all local education authorities to act as a clearing house for all applications for secondary school from September 2005 intake. This was to make sure that the process of applying for a school place was easier for parents as only one form was needed. It also made sure that parents received only one offer of a school place, rather than multiple offers. Foundation and voluntary aided schools, which were their

own admission authorities, still applied their own over-subscription criteria to those who had expressed a preference and the scheme did not affect their status as Admission Authorities. The Scheme had been approved by the Secretary of State for Education and all admission authorities within Derby had signed up to the scheme. Exceptions to the scheme were Landau Forte and independent schools. All other schools in the country were governed by the national scheme.

Tony Walsh reported that the changes had not been communicated sufficiently to parents and often they did not understand the changes. He referred to a head teacher who had said to parents that they must put the school as their first choice, or they would not be considered. He suggested that the presentation for parents needed to be improved and parents needed to be engaged more, as well as teachers being briefed on the rules. Cathy Ford reported that there had been liaison between primary schools and that the Education Service were planning to offer training courses to school administrators on the scheme and what it would include. It was noted that Catholic schools were voluntary aided schools who were their own admission authority. Mr Manku was concerned that parents still did not get offered the school of their choice. He was reassured that parents would still have the right of appeal to schools which appeared higher on their preference list to that allocated.

Resolved to note the report.

67/04 Recruitment Statistics April 2003 to March 2004

A report of the Director of Policy was considered which gave information about recruitment to the Council's vacancies, which were advertised between April 2003 and March 2004. It explored each stage of the process giving details of general numbers of applications, short listed candidates and appointments. It also focused on ethnicity, gender, disability and senior positions. Susan Sanghera also gave an outline of her new role which related to positive action. She was involved in encouraging applications from black and minority ethnic and disabled people. Shokat Lal stated that the Council needed to reach out to the heart of the community and in particular to reach groups of people who were qualified but were working in restaurants and as taxi drivers. A rapport with the community needed to be built up. It was reported that collaborative careers events were held at the Pakistani Community Centre. Councillor Roberts suggested that a breakdown of community figures in the workforce would be useful but was informed that this had been provided at the previous meeting although further statistics were still to be provided. Susan Sanghera reported that a lot of minority groups within the city, especially refugee and asylum seekers, were already setting up links.

Resolved to note the report.

68/04 Letter to Secretary of State on Failed Asylum Seekers

The Committee considered a letter written by the Chair of the Committee to Charles Clark MP, Home Secretary on failed asylum seekers. The Chair reported that he had received an interim response and that the Home Office were looking at a pilot where failed asylum seekers could do community work and receive assistance. Shokat Lal welcomed the letter being sent to the Secretary of State.

Resolved to note the letter sent to the Secretary of State.

69/04 Housing Advice

Sue Glithero, Director of Policy reported that she had written to the newer communities asking if they would like sessions from Housing Options staff, who could advise on housing allocations, and from Housing Benefits and Derby Advice. No responses had been received to date.

Resolved to note the report.

70/04 Forward Plan

Resolved to request item 58/04 of the Forward Plan on Social Services Mainstream Funding for Voluntary and Community Organisations 2005/06 for consideration at the next meeting.

71/04 Best Value Performance Indicator 174 - Racial Incidents

Ann Webster reported that the Audit Commission had said that racial incidents between tenants should not be counted towards the Best Value Performance Indicator 174. She reported that she was trying to get more information from the Audit Commission. Tony Walsh was concerned that representation should be made to make sure that these incidents were counted. It was reported that, despite the Best Value Performance Indicator, Derby Homes had a robust way of dealing with racist complaints.

Resolved to request the Chair, in consultation with Derby Racial Equality Council to make representations to the Audit Commission and the appropriate Minister about the Committee's concern with the Audit Commission's guidance to exclude racial incidents between Council tenants from Best Value Performance Indicator 174.

72/04 Service Review of Children in Need Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Children and Families

A report of the Director of Social Services was considered, which gave details of a project initiation document on a service review of Children in Need Services for Black and Minority Ethnic Children and Families. The key aims and objectives were outlined and the review fitted the agenda of the Race Relations Amendment Act and the Equality Standards for Local Government. The programme was led by Social Services and it aimed to work with partner agencies and relevant voluntary organisations. The scope of the review was Children in Need Services. The project team would consult staff, organisations and service users, using a range of methods including sub-project groups, focus groups and events. The review would be an organic process and quick wins would be implemented during the process. Shokat Lal asked what the definition for Children in Need was, and it was reported that this was defined in the 1989 Children's Act and related to between 2,000 and 3,000 children within the city; 21% of whom were from black and minority ethnic families. It was reported that the review would find out whether there were insufficient services and what was required. There would be consultation with existing groups, for example, Sure Start, and questions needed to be developed to ask the community how to develop the service. The project team now had a fair representation from black and minority ethnic staff. The age range of the children concerned was birth to 18 and for those leaving care, up to the age of 21.

Resolved

- 1. To note the service review for children in need from black and minority ethnic families.**
- 2. To request an interim report on progress at a later date.**

73/04 Outreach Work in Housing and Council Tax Benefits

A report of the Director of Finance was considered about the new post of Ethnic Community Liaison Officer which was created in Revenues and Benefits Division in October 2003. The purpose of the post was to promote access to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Schemes by members of minority ethnic groups in the city through contact with individuals and community organisations and to make sure that publicity about benefits was widely available within minority ethnic groups. The report looked at the work done by the post-holder and the progress made in promoting housing benefits and council tax benefits among ethnic groups. Janghir Khan felt that more people were required to cover the Normanton area. Shokat Lal was concerned that people who were living in houses owned by relatives and were therefore related to the landlord, were concerned about fraud and were reluctant to claim benefits. He asked for clarification of the rules that applied

in these cases. Fares Abdollah requested that leaflets be made available in the Kurdish language. He offered help with free translation.

Resolved to note the report.

74/04 Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2005/2008

A report of the Director of Policy was considered, which stated that the Council Housing Needs and Market Study 2001 and identified a number of distinct issues of inequality in relation to black and minority ethnic households and related gaps in housing provision. The Council's Housing Strategy 2002/06 provided a commitment to produce Derby's first black and minority ethnic housing strategy in order to tackle the issues highlighted in the Housing Needs and Market Study. Following publication of the Housing Strategy, the BME Housing Strategy Steering Group was established to guide the formulation of the strategy. The group comprised a range of representatives from the Council, partner organisations and the local BME communities. A question was raised on the definition of overcrowding and Sue Glithero, Director of Policy, reported that this was a statutory definition which was taken into account when looking at allocations. The Chair reported that some areas of the city had very few Council houses and therefore long waiting lists. Councillor Roberts suggested that information should be taken from the Census to show where people were living. Shokat Lal welcomed the action plan and was pleased that there was a strong position on domestic violence. He suggested that lack of car parking should be considered, particularly in the Normanton area, and that this issue should be addressed when considering new builds.

Resolved to note the report.

75/04 Council Funding Arrangements for Community Organisations

A report of the Director of Policy was considered which gave details of the Council's Community Grants Budget – CGB. The CGB provided funding for voluntary and community organisations in the city and grants were awarded on either a three-year or one-year basis. Organisations applying for three-year grants had to satisfy one of the following criteria:

1. supporting the voluntary and community sector infrastructure city wide
2. delivering city wide services which supported the Council's strategic objectives.

Isabella Stone, Assistant Director Community Policy, reported that there would be a review of the whole process in the next year and that the budget was heavily over-subscribed. The detailed form was required to enable informed decisions to be made on grant applications. Shirley Howard asked if a Children's Group from a church could apply and it was reported that

grants could not be given for religious purposes, but applications could be made if the service was delivered to the general population; an example given was a youth club. Mr Manku stated that the form should be simplified and Isabella Stone said that she hoped to be able to do this. It was reported that community groups could get help from the Council to complete the forms.

Shokat Lal requested that information be passed through to grass-roots groups. The deadline for applications for 2005 was likely to be in August/September. The appraisal panel which would consider the applications was made up of officers and then recommendations would be made to Council Cabinet, who actually made the decision on the grants allocated. Nezrine Hudson was concerned that there was only a short time in which to fill in the applications.

Resolved to note the process of application approval for the Council's Community Grants Budget for the financial year 2005/2006.

76/04 Extension of Meeting

Resolved at 8.30pm in accordance with the Committee's working protocol that the meeting be extended to complete the business on the agenda.

77/04 Draft Revenue Budget 2005/06

The Chair, Councillor Burgess, and Sue Glithero, Director of Policy gave a presentation on the Council Priorities and Budgets 2005/06 onwards. This included the Council's vision and the five priorities for 2005/06, further priorities over the three year horizon, the Revenue Budget 2005/06 to 2007/08 and this included the context, the financial settlement, budget proposal 2005/06 and Council tax 2005/06. Shokat Lal was disappointed that the non-school element of the education budget increase was small. He referred to the Gershon Efficiency Review and was informed that efficiency savings had been built in to the budget for each year, certainly since re-organisation in 1997. Tony Walsh said that he thought the Guildhall and Assembly Rooms were self-financing but it was reported that they received a subsidy of £600,000.

Resolved to note the report.

78/04 MECAC Newsletter

The Committee was asked to consider items for inclusion in the next MECAC Newsletter.

79/04 MECAC Work Programme

The Committee considered MECAC's latest work programme.

Resolved to note the report.

Minutes End