

Time commenced : 6.30 pm
Time finished : 8.30 pm

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE 21 JUNE 2005

Present: **Representing Derby City Council**
Councillor Fay Winter (Chair)
Councillor Evonne Berry
Councillor Sara Bolton
Councillor Margaret Hird

Council Officers

Andrew Auld, Head of Communications and Consultation
Sian Hoyle, Head of Service, Education Service
Isabella Stone, Assistant Director Community Policy
Pam Thompson, Consultation Support Officer
Ann Webster, Equality Standard Project Manager

Community Representatives

Shabana Hussain	Hummari Manzil
Arshia Iqbal	Individual
Nasreen Iqbal	Individual
Naranjan Lalria	Individual
Chandra Sayal	Individual
Jenny Woolley	Individual

1/05 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor MacDonald, Angela Neill, Shirley Howard, Susan Boon and Janice Platt.

2/05 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

3/05 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4/05 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2005 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5/05 Membership on the Committee

Councillor Berry asked about representation on the Committee, and whether individuals represented organisations or themselves and what other organisations they were involved with within the City. It was decided that a

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mapping exercise would be carried out and the findings would be reported back to the Committee.

It was then agreed for Jenny Woolley to become a member of the Committee.

6/05 Recruitment of School Governors

Sian Hoyle presented a report to encourage women to become school governors in Derby City schools, of which there were currently 44 vacancies. The Education Service stated that they were keen to recruit women as governors and would welcome WAC members' views on how to do this.

Members of the committee suggested advertisement, either in the DET or internally within the Council in Goldrush.

Sian explained that there was free training available and any skills or experience any members had had before would be invaluable. An open day was to be organised by the Education department and hopefully that would gain a good response.

If any members were interested in becoming a School Governor they could contact Sian directly.

7/05 Receive a presentation from the Domestic Violence Unit

Nina Akhtar presented a report on the Derby Domestic Violence Strategy 2005-2008. The Derby Community Safety Partnership identified that domestic violence was a key issue in the City. The domestic violence strategy group represented many organisations in the city to work together to reduce violence and create a safer community. The partnership had links with the county and other domestic violence forums. Over the past three years there have been a number of achievements including:

- domestic violence court
- appointment of a court support co-ordinator
- appointment of community advice works in Allenton and Osmaston
- two user groups – untouchables and Sham Marriages
- domestic violence forum
- domestic violence directory
- common monitoring framework software purchased
- mental health and policy training.

The aim of the domestic violence strategy was to reduce domestic violence in Derby City, this had three main areas which were:

- providing safe choices and support to those affected by domestic violence
- the education of young people on the issues of domestic violence
- working with perpetrators of domestic violence to prevent reoffending.

Councillor Berry stated that she went along to the Domestic Violence Partnership last week in London and met Councillors from other authorities and found that Derby was well ahead of others on partnership working.

8/05 Presentation from Association of Indian Women on None British Spouses

Joginder Baines spoke to the Committee on None British Spouses. The Association of Indian Women and Indian Workers Association had observed that many None British spouses were vulnerable to abuse, as they needed to wait two years before they could apply for indefinite leave to stay in Britain. None British spouses were unaware of their rights and where they could gain advice, this included financial advice, as many suffered financial hardship.

The women were sometimes pressured by their families to remain married, as it would dishonour their families as divorce was a taboo subject. Some women had told of various forms of physical or emotional intimidation or abuse.

By the time a lot of spouses had left their marriage, they had already been mentally damaged and may have suffered depression; this kind of hardship could be equally suffered by both men and women. The spouses were given an opportunity by the Home Office to apply to remain in Britain if they could prove they had suffered domestic violence. But unfortunately such evidence had often been lost.

The two year time limit that None British spouses had to wait before gaining indefinite leave to remain in Britain had been introduced in less than a month of its introduction and without consultation of campaigning institutions such as JCWI and had gone against the advice of the Joint Human Rights Committee.

This extension of the time limit meant that the misery suffered had to be endured for longer. The Indian Workers Association and the Association of Indian women were asking that:

- repeal of probationary period and the None British spouses to be given indefinite leave to remain in Britain
- the None British spouses must be given financial support by the state at the time of the marriage breakdown
- a package of information in relevant languages should be available at the time of interview with an Immigration Officer. The pack would include the spouse's rights in Britain and the institutions they could seek advice and support, should they face matrimonial difficulties
- those who perpetrate physical or psychological violence or hardship of any nature must be prosecuted.

A campaign started in February in Derby for None British Spouses which had members from various organisations. The group met with Margaret Beckett who agreed to tackle some issues raised. A leaflet had been designed by the group explaining who they were and what they were trying to achieve, and that they would be holding a conference in September, these would be distributed by the Primary Care Trust.

Isabella Stone suggested that the group could contact the Council about gaining support from the Small Change Fund.

Joginder Bains asked the Committee if as individuals they would write to their local MP to stop the deportation of these individuals.

9/05 Equality and Diversity Plan 2005-2008

Ann Webster presented a report on the Draft Equality and Diversity Plan 2005-2008. It was explained that as a public authority the Council had a general duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act to eliminate racial discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good relations between people from different racial groups. Race equality was a central part of the way the Council works so it had to be put at the centre of policy making, service delivery and employment practice. A Race Equality Scheme had to be produced every three years and the Equality and Diversity Plan included the contents of a race equality scheme, but also a more general equality plan. The plan had been worked on by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and the Equality Standard Task Group for the past six months. As the plan was such a large document it was agreed to hold a separate meeting with interested members of the Committee. Ann Webster would write to the members of the Committee for nominations for group members.

10/05 Equality Grants to Voluntary Groups 2004/05

The Equality Grants to Voluntary Groups 2004/2005 item was circulated and it was agreed to note the item.

11/05 The Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement item was circulated and it was agreed to note the item.

12/05 Forward Plan

There were no items identified on the July Forward Plan for consideration.

13/05 Work Programme

It was noted the all future meetings would be more focused with a theme.

14/05 Date of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Women's Advisory Meeting would be on Tuesday 20 September at 6.30pm.

MINUTES END