

Time commenced - 6.30 pm
Time Finished – 8:45 pm

MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE 18 NOVEMBER 2004

Present: **Representing Derby City Council**
Councillor Burgess (in the Chair)
Councillors Richards and Willitts

Representing Communities
Fares Abdollah - Kurdish Community
Kamal Amier - Somalian Community
Raj Bali - Indian Community
Jules Bappa - African Community
Jack Butler – Irish Community
Nezrine Hudson - Caribbean Community
Nasreen Iqbal - Pakistani Community
Ferid Kevric – Bosnia Herzegovina Community
Shokat Lal – Pakistani Community
J S Johal - Indian Community
George Mighty – Caribbean Community
Lloyd Newby – Caribbean Community
Farhad Negipooran - Persian Cultural Association
Zigashane Zigy – Amnesty Congo Support Group

Community Advisors
Balwant Bubber - Indian Community
Shirley Howard - Caribbean Community
Asif Afzal – Pakistani Community
Tony Walsh – Derby REC

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
Shahid B Ashrif - Derby Homes
Marion Nixon - Tourism Manager
Andy Thomas - Head of Service, Anti-Social Behaviour
Zia Bhatti - Team Leader - Youth Service

38/04 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gupta, Khan and Roberts, Mr Sharif, Mr Manku, Ms Mighty, Mr Dhillon.

39/04 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

40/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41/04 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42/04 Cultural Diversity Events

Tony Walsh reported that there would be an event on 28 November 2004 at the Indian Community Centre organised by the Somalian Education Association, the event would be held between 4pm and 10pm and had received some funding from the Small Change Fund.

43/04 School Admissions

Tony Walsh asked if, at a future meeting consideration could be given to how the confusion among parents about secondary transfers and the selection process could be resolved. Rajesh Lal reported that the Education Service acted as a clearing house for applications and the system was designed to make it fairer and simpler for parents as they applied on one form and would receive one offer only. The scheme had been agreed by the School's Admission Forum and shadowed the Derbyshire scheme. The closing date for applications was 25 October 2004 and the national offer day was 1 March 2005. Tony Walsh reported that some Headteachers were telling pupils that if they did not put the school as their first choice, they would not get offered a place. Councillor Burgess suggested that Tony Walsh put his specific concerns in writing, so that they could be investigated and considered at the next meeting.

George Mighty reported that he had not received information on the new admission system, even though he was on the Admissions Forum and he was concerned that parents did not know about the changes. Balwant Bubber suggested that there needed to be a justification for choices and that the rules should be clear and made easier for people to understand as there were often problems with interpretation of information. Asif Afzal reported that each year it was a different set of parents involved, and the issue needed to be addressed, often parents felt victimised by where they lived.

Resolved to ask the Director of Education to make a presentation at the next meeting on the new co-ordinated admissions scheme.

44/04 CGB Review - Community Consultation on Implementation

Tony Walsh reported that community groups needed to know about changes that were being made and in good time.

45/04 City Council Funding Arrangements for Community Organisations

George Mighty reported that there needed to be meaningful consultation with community groups on CGB grant applications. He was concerned that the appraisal form was very long, with vague questions and multiple choice answers. He was concerned that it may take community groups several hours to complete the forms.

Resolved to ask the Director of Policy to provide a brief report at the next meeting with the form attached, to enable the Committee to consider how the process could be made more user friendly.

46/04 Kurdish Community Needs

Fares Abdollah reported on difficulties being experienced by the Kurdish Community in Derby on a range of issues including education, housing benefits and immigration problems. There was a particular problem with people who had been refused asylum but could not return to their country of origin. Councillor Burgess reported that he had already spoken to the local MP's about this situation and that the Committee could make formal representations to the Government regarding their concerns. He suggested that a letter from the Chair of this Committee be sent to central government. Tony Walsh reported that people were allowed to stay temporarily, but were not allowed housing. Councillor Burgess requested information on individual cases so that they could be investigated.

Zigashane Zigy reported that there were difficulties with getting support from NASS and people were working illegally and were tempted to steal, if they had no food, homes or temporary accommodation, or food money. Ferid Kevric suggested that a meeting be set up with the Housing Options Centre, to enable people to have an understanding of how houses were allocated, particularly in relation to the points system. A query was also raised about why Housing Options would not accept letters from the Home Office without passports. Joe Pearce, introduced himself to the Committee and explained that he was the Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer working for the Community Safety Partnership. He gave information on what the Community Safety Partnership were doing particularly in relation to the Kurdish Community .

Resolved

- 1 To request the Chair to write to the Secretary of State to raise the Committee's concerns about refused asylum seekers and seek permission for them to have temporary work.**
- 2 To ask the Director of Policy to arrange for Housing Options staff to visit community groups in the city to explain the system of housing points allocations.**

47/04 Workforce Statistics

A report of the Director of Policy was considered, which gave information relating to staff in post on 1 October 2004, excluding staff based at Derby Homes, temporary agency staff and Learning to Work trainees. The statistics related to the Best Value performance indicators, but also included other analysis. BVPI 17 ethnicity profile and analysis of ethnicity using the categories in the 2001 census, BVPI 11 ethnicity profile of the top 5% of earners - salary greater than or equal to spinal column point 41, BVPI 16 disability profile including an analysis of the ethnicity of disabled employees and the DDA status of the top 5% of earners and age and gender profile. It was noted that the report was not comparable with the previous years as the information had been gathered in a different way. The Committee requested a more detailed breakdown of the Asian community, information relating to the total number of disabled people in Derby and information on to the make up of the groups and success rates of the policies as set out in paragraph 2.24 of the report.

Resolved

- 1 To note the workforce statistics and the progress the Council had made in achieving its objective of having a workforce that appropriately reflected the community.**
- 2 To request that Chief Officers become actively engaged in positive action initiatives designed to improve representation across the Council.**
- 3 To request the Director of Policy to provide the Committee with information relating to breaking down the Asian community into its component parts, the total number of disabled people in Derby and the make up of the groups and success rates of the policies set out in paragraph 2.24 of the report.**

49/04 Annual Diversity Events Calendar

Marion Nixon, Tourism Manager gave a presentation on the destination management system used by the Tourist Information Centre. The destination management system was a large database which underpinned

everything the TIC did and could be used to promote cultural events. There was a touch screen 24 hour kiosk at the Tourist Information Centre. It was noted that the system could only be as good as the information which was provided and that communities could promote events through the destination management system. The system was updated daily and would include information on venues, events, dates, wheelchair accessibility etc, wherever this was known.

Resolved

- 1 To note the presentation**
- 2 To request communities to contact the Tourist Information Centre direct with any events they wish to have publicised.**

50/04 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Andy Thomas, Head of Service for Anti-Social Behaviour gave a presentation on the work of the Community Safety Partnership and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. The Community Safety Partnership was made up from the Youth Offending Service, Drugs and Alcohol Action Team, the Crime and Disorder Team and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. He reported that there had been 1,300 referrals relating to anti-social behaviour and 20 anti-social behaviour orders had been issued over the last two years. New legislation was being produced all the time and the role of the Community Safety Partnership was developing.

Strategies were being developed to deal with a range of issues, including enabling people to report crimes and have less fear about crimes. Community Safety Panels were to be set up which would enable people to report issues to them and have them dealt with.

George Mighty asked about the cost of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and it was reported that in the early days they were in the region of £12,000, now the costs were negligible. Nasreen Iqbal reported that often communities did not know that they could report problems or their rights, roles and responsibilities.

51/04 Forward Plan

Resolved to notify Pam Thompson of any items from the Forward Plan that Committee members would like to see on a future Work Programme.

52/04 Pakistani Youth Project

Zia Bhatti, Team Leader Youth Service, presented a report of the Director of Education which set out details of the Pakistani Youth Development Project, which was established in December 2002 to address issues of increasing isolation, continuous education under-achievement and disengagement

within mainstream support activity experienced by Pakistani young people and in particular boys and young men. He introduced, Naeem Akhtar the Project Worker.

Resolved to note the progress report on the work undertaken within the Youth Services, Pakistani Youth Development Project.

53/04 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.

54/04 Racial Harassment Complaints Received by Derby Homes 1 April 2003 to 1 April 2004

A report of the Housing Equalities Advisor, Derby Homes was considered which set out racial harassment complaints received by Derby Homes, between 1 April 2003 and 1 April 2004. In collating the report, it had become clear that there needed to be more consistency and detail given on the harassment incident reporting forms and these had now been redesigned to achieve that.

Resolved to note the report.

55/04 Community Representation on Minority Ethnic Communities Advisory Committee

The Committee received an update on the latest position relating to Community representation on the Committee. The Director of Corporate Services had written to communities where representatives had not attended for three consecutive meetings without good reason, requesting them to nominate a new representative to attend the Committee. Nominations had been received from both the Somalian and Kurdish Communities for representatives on the Committee and advisors.

Resolved

1. To note the report.

2. To recommend Council to allocated the remaining unallocated seat on the Minority Ethnic Communities Advisory Committee to the Iraqi/Kurdish Community

56/04 MECAC Newsletter

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

57/04 MECAC Work Programme

The Committee considered MECAC's latest work programme

Resolved to note the report.

58/04 Small Change Community Cohesion

A report of the Director of Policy was considered, which set out information relating to Small Change Programme, which was a Derby City Partnership small grants scheme for community and voluntary sectors. It was an amalgamation of five different community chests, which were managed through a single application, approval and monitoring process.

Resolved to note the creation of a new Community Chest under the Small Change Programme.

Minutes End