

Time commenced – 6.30pm
Time Finished – 8.30pm

MINORITY COMMUNITIES DIVERSITY FORUM 11 SEPTEMBER 2008

Present: **Representing Derby City Council**

Councillor Naitta (In the Chair)
Councillor Holmes
Councillor Nath
Councillor Shanker

Representing Communities

Kamal Amier – SEWF
Ferid Kevric – Derby Bosnia-Herzegovina Community Association
George Mighty – DWICA
Angella Mighty – DWICA
Kirit Mistry – Derby REC
Lloyd Newby – DWICA
John Pearson – Derby Irish Association
Dawn Robinson-Ruane – Community Safety Partnership
Hazel Simpson – Family Action Derby
Louise Wilkinson – Community Safety Partnership
Tony Walsh – Derby Irish Association
Zbigniew Wijcik – Eastern European Migrants Advocacy Committee
Irka Wolociuha – Ukranian Cultural Centre

Council and Other Officers

Kamaljit Busi – Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service
Ray Cowlshaw – Derby City Council
John Sheil- Derby City Council
Steven Lee – Derby City Council
Rajesh Lall – Derby City Council
Dave Powner - Derby City Council
Ann Webster – Derby City Council
Pamela Thompson – Derby City Council

11/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roberts, Nasreen Iqbal, Jangir Khan, Joe Kupranic, Balbir Singh Sandhu, Father O’Sullivan, Nezrine Hudson and Mohammad Sharief.

12/08 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2008 were noted

13/08 Updates on matter arising from the previous meeting

Following discussions with the Leader of the Council, Councillor Naitta was reaffirmed as Chair of the Forum. It was noted that no vice-chair had been selected and it was agreed to bring this to the next meeting

04/08 Vulnerable Employment of Migrant Workers

A letter from the Chair had been sent and a response was awaited

06/08 Housing Strategy and BME Housing strategy

The information on the Equality Impact Assessment for the BME Housing Strategy had been received

07/08 Black Minority Communities and the Arts

A contact for the Arts team was circulated to the Forum

Agreed:

- 1. to hold an election for Vice-Chair at the next meeting**
- 2. for nominations to be made on the night and for nominees to be in attendance**
- 3. to note the updates**

14/08 Work Programme 2008-09

The Forum considered the work programme for 2008-2009. It was noted that the items currently on the work programme required linked objectives setting for them, to enable the Forum to ensure that they met their aims for the year. It was reported that the Disabled Peoples' Diversity Forum held a workshop to reflect on the previous years work programme and set an agenda for the forthcoming year. It was agreed that this would be a good model to follow as many of the Forum members were not present.

Agreed:

- 1. to note the work programme**
- 2. to hold a workshop to set the work programme for 2008-09, including the objectives for each item**

15/08 Housing Strategy and the BME Housing Strategy

The Forum received an update from John Sheil on the BME Housing Strategy. It was reported that 3 Equality impact Assessments had been undertaken to date, and a second round would be undertaken imminently. The strategy team were keen to involve the communities in future assessments. The Forum raised concerns regarding the surge in new communities, as it was felt that those who did not have English as a first language could be barred from accessing housing services. The

Forum queried how the strategy was raising awareness in these communities of the services available. John Sheil reported that they had recognised that this was a gap in the current provision, as the previous BME strategy had focussed on a narrow group of communities, but the services were being expanded to provide a mechanism for more people to access the systems. It was noted that this would fit in with the national agenda to help communities improve their language skills. The Forum were encouraged to contact the Housing strategy team with any suggestions for further community engagement.

Councillor Nath asked how the social landlords were being kept up to date with these developments. It was reported that a BME charter had been produced, which was designed to ensure that the Housing Association in the city provided an effective service. This was seen as an exemplar service, and it was hoped that this identification of good practise would allow other associations to reach those levels. It was requested that the strategy team provide information regarding BME families on the housing waiting list, how many had been housed in the past 12 months and how this compared to other communities.

It was reported that new IT systems had been introduced which would eventually allow people to access housing information from their own PC's, and would be available in a variety of languages.

Agreed:

- 1. To note the update**
- 2. To receive the information regarding BME families on the housing waiting list, how many had been housed in the past 12 months and how this compared to other communities.**

16/08 Community Safety Partnership: Employment Profile

The Forum received a briefing on the Employment Profile of the Community Safety Partnership. It was reported that the Partnership had a diverse range of employees, working for partner organisations. The Partnership were not an employing body and so they had no direct staff. The Forum considered the figures for the 147 Derby City Council Employees working for the partnership. The Forum noted that there were particular gaps in the figures for the Pakistani Community. It was reported that there was no identified reason for this, but that this would be explored through the workforce development programme. The Forum also requested figures for the gender breakdown of employees.

Agreed:

- 1. To note the update**
- 2. To receive figures on the gender breakdown of Derby City Council employees working for the partnership to a future meeting**

17/08 Working for the Council – Employment Statistics

The Forum received the Council employment statistics for the last financial year. It was reported that the Council was now fully complying with the statutory duty for

reporting these statistics. The Best Value indicators showed that Derby City Council were in the top quartile for representative workforces, including those in the top 5% of earners.

It was noted that when comparing the workforce data with the census data, it was broadly representative with the exception of the Pakistani community. It was acknowledged that this data was out of date, and that actions had been taken to address this, for example the partnership with JET. It would take some time for the fruits of this effort to be seen in the figures. Further figures would be brought to the Commission in November for consideration.

The Forum asked what action was being taken to accommodate newer communities. It was reported that there was no specific action, and there was an ongoing struggle for appropriate representation for existing communities. There was work being done to improve the cohesion through information sharing with the partners. It was noted that there was a lack of good historical and baseline data and so it was necessary to work with what information was available. The Forum felt that it was important to start more work with newer communities as there was a particular problem with the transfer of qualifications. It was reported that the job application form had been amended to include European as an option.

The Forum welcomed the statistics, and also raised the question of disciplinary action against employees. It was felt that there was an issue to be addressed regarding Caribbean and Black employees and disciplinary and dismissal appeals. In the five cases reported in the statistics, 4 had resulted in dismissal and the Forum felt that this warranted further attention. It was noted that the numbers were still small overall, but it would be worth monitoring to see if it was a trend developing.

Agreed:

- 1. To note the updates**
- 2. To receive further updates at the November meeting**

18/08 City Centre Eastern Fringes Action Plan

The Forum received the summary documentation of the preferred option for the City Centre Eastern Fringes Action Plan. The Forum were invited to submit comments either in person or using the feedback forms. It was noted that some Forum members had already been in contact with the Planning Team to submit their comments.

Agreed for Forum members to raise any further comments with the planning team

19/08 Bosnia Herzegovina Centre – Progress to Date

The Forum received an update on the Bosnia Herzegovina Centre. It was reported that the realignment of the ring road would have originally miss the Bosnia

Herzegovina Centre, and make a loop around it. It went out to consultation in 2003 and then to Cabinet who approved a new realignment which would cover the area of the Centre. This meant a compulsory purchase order. Since 2003, the Council have been trying to find suitable accommodation for the centre. So far 12 buildings have been offered but none have been assessed as suitable. There was another possibility at 58 Gerrard Street, and it was hoped that this would be a suitable venue. IT was noted that if the Centre gave approval for the new venue then work could begin as early as mid November. It was reported that any delays to the scheme would escalate costs and so it was imperative to find a suitable location as quickly as possible.

It was reported that the compensation available for the building was at the existing value, and this did not cover the cost of having to adapt future buildings for the needs of the community. It was reported that while the needs of the community were recognised, there were certain rules regarding what could and could not be financed. There were other Compulsory purchase orders on properties on the street, and they could not give different treatment to different people.

It was reported that the community may need to move to temporary accommodation as an interim measure as it was important to get the project moving, but it was noted that a temporary solution may have financial implications for the permanent solution. There were no Council owned buildings of the scale and size currently available to the centre and the amount of furniture that would need to be accommodated.

Agreed to note the update and receive further updates when available.

20/08 Open Discussion

The Forum discussed possible items for future discussions. It was agreed that knife and gun crime should be on the next agenda as this was a serious issue that the Forum needed to take a position on. It was agreed that a police representative should be invited to be part of the discussion

Agreed for gun and knife crime to be the next topic for open discussion and that a police representative should be invited.

21/08 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for 13 November 2008. Three Forum members were invited to the next pre-meeting, date to be confirmed.

Noted

To be signed by the Chair of the next ensuing meeting