

Time commenced - 6.30 pm
Time Finished - 9.00pm

MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE 29 JANUARY 2004

Present: **Representing Derby City Council**
Councillor Burgess - in the Chair
Councillors Crosby, Dhamrait and Gupta

Representing Communities
Nezrine Hudson, Caribbean Community
JS Johal, Indian Community
Ferid Kevric, Bosnia Herzegovina Community Association
Shokat Lal, Pakistani Community
George Mighty, Caribbean Community
Santokh Singh Moar, Derby REC
Farhad A Neghipooran, Persian Cultural Association
Mohammed Sharief, Pakistani Community
Zigashane Zigy - Congolese Community

Community Advisors
Tony Walsh - Derby REC

Council Advisors
Jim Clark, Superintendent Registrar
Steve Dunning, Assistant Director, Democratic Services
Sue Glithero, Director of Policy
Barbara Hillier, Social Services
John Holdridge, Social Services
Mike Kaye, Assistant Director, Development
Donna Norris, Corporate Recruitment Adviser
Sue Scott, Chief Personnel Officer
Muzar Syed, Head of Equalities

47/03 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Rehman and Asif Afzal, Javed Ahmed, Amjid Ashraf, Raj Bali, Jack Butler, Jangir Khan, Angella Mighty, Lloyd Newby.

48/03 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

In accordance with Section 100 (B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed that the following item be admitted as a late item, to enable discussion to take place before the next meeting. Complaint - re BBC Today programme.

49/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

50/03 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

51/03 Matters Arising

Minute No. 39/03 Shokat Lal asked what the latest situation was in providing a community centre for the Iraqi Kurdish Community. It was reported that the Community Safety Partnership was not looking at creating a major centre but wanted to support a modest facility.

Minute No. 42/03, Mohammed Sharief reported that the workforce statistics were disproportionate to the population and asked what the Council were doing to address this. It was reported that positive actions were being undertaken to overcome general under-representation. Forms requesting the ethnic origins of employees were being chased in order to provide more realistic figures for the workforce statistics.

52/03 Budget Presentation

The Chair and Sue Glithero, Director of Policy, presented the Council's priorities and the Budget Proposals for 2004/05. In the presentation, the following issues were covered:

Priorities For Action - the Council was proposing ten priority areas where the Council wanted to significantly improve its performance, by instituting new ways of working and/or additional spending where required. The Priorities were in order of importance, starting with what the Council currently thought were the most important.

The Top Ten Priorities were:

1. Limit increases in Council Tax and improve value for money from Council services.
2. Improving customer service, including using new technology and investing in better buildings to provide our services from.
3. Promoting the city as a centre of industry, commerce, culture and tourism.
4. Improving management of the city and district centres, making them more attractive to residents and visitors.

5. Improve road and other transport links to remove traffic from city centre streets, as part of "Connecting Derby".
6. Help under-achieving schools improve their performance.
7. Improve the Council's fostering service for children in care and improve residential and community services for adults.
8. Increase recycling facilities, including at the point of collection from homes.
9. Speed up the process of deciding planning applications, maintaining good quality decision making.
10. Develop the leadership role of the Council, both a regional and local level to express the views of local people and work in partnership with other organisations.

The presentation also included the Revenue Budget 2004/05, - the current budget for 2003/04, compared with the proposed budget for 2004/05 and a comparison of Council taxes. On budget submissions, the main issues, Council tax implications and timetable were set out.

Shokat Lal was very pleased with investment for schools, as he thought this was very important. Councillor Burgess reported that one of the key points within the School budget was for English as a second language. George Mighty asked for assurances that Community sector issues would be covered. Mohammed Sharief stated that any cuts to funding of the voluntary sector would particularly effect minority communities. Councillor Burgess referred to the Compact, which was an agreement with the voluntary sector, the first meeting was held in November and there was to be another meeting in February. He felt that this was a vital part of links with the community. Sue Glithero stated that there were a large number of services that were not in the Top Ten Priorities, but were still very important.

On the Revenue Budget, Mohammed Sharief asked why the Public Priorities fund had been reduced from £1,000,00 to £250,000. Councillor Burgess explained that during the current financial year the £1,000,000 for Public Priorities Fund, had mainly been spent on highway's issues. This fund had been put together for one-off issues, rather than being ongoing year on year commitments. Mohammed Sharief commented that the public priorities fund was well used and should be maintained, even if this meant an increase in Council tax. Councillor Burgess stated that the Deputy Prime Minister had threatened to "come down hard" on authorities with high council tax increases. George Mighty asked about the costs relating to children who were being educated, or looked after outside of the city. Sue Glithero reported that there would still be costs relating to these children, even if they were educated or looked after in the city. Councillor Burgess referred to an overspend of £800,000 in the Fostering Service in the current year and the difficulty in getting people to come forward to be foster carers. Sue Glithero reported that this problem did not just apply to Derby, but was a problem

nationally. Councillor Burgess reported that a recent recruitment campaign for foster carers had been quite successful.

53/03 Day Services Manual Draft

Barbara Hillier and John Holdridge presented a report of the Director of Social Services, which set out a draft Day Services Manual for people with learning difficulties, mental ill health and older people. The Committee were asked to advise on its contents and feedback their comments.

Shokat Lal asked what happened if standards were not met. It was reported that this was a positive document, which would enable staff performance to be monitored. There was concern that some co-ordinators may not be able to write Service Care plans. It was reported that training would be given to staff. A question was raised about what constituted "staff" an example was given where a person was employed in the Pakistani Community Centre who was paid by Derby City Council, but was managed the Committee of the Centre. John Holdridge agreed to investigate this particular issue. Muzar Syed reported that the Equalities Unit would be looking at the full document in detail. It was suggested that the document be submitted to the Plain English Panel for comment and that the Padley Centre be added to the list of consultees.

54/03 Citizenship Ceremonies

Steve Dunning, Assistant Director, Democratic Services, presented a report of the Director of Corporate Services, which gave details of Citizenship Ceremonies which would be introduced in May 2004. The Committee were asked for their comments on the content of the Citizenship Ceremonies to make sure that it appropriately reflected Derby's cultural diversity. A video from Brent showing a mock ceremony was viewed. It was reported that current procedures would continue, in that Citizenship would be granted by the Home Office, but this was conditional on taking part in a Citizenship Ceremony. It was an individual's obligation to contact the Council to make arrangements for the ceremony, within three months. A reminder system would be put into place to make sure applicants attended ceremonies. The fee for Citizenship had been increased to cover the cost of the new ceremonies.

Mohammed Sharief was concerned that there should be cultural flexibility. Steve Dunning said there was discretion, within reason, outside the legal requirements. It was anticipated that 40 to 45 applications would be received each month. A question was raised as to whether gender specific ceremonies could take place, and there was a concern that some venues may cause problems for some people, particularly if the venue served alcohol. A form would be completed for each applicant, which would set out cultural and individual requirements. Consideration was being given to using the Council Chamber and Reception Room at the Council House, rather than the Assembly Rooms which was originally proposed. Shokat Lal asked whether a private ceremony for an individual could take place, and it was reported that it could, but may attract an extra charge. It was suggested that

consideration should be given to holding ceremonies in Community Centres as this would help with community cohesion. Steve said that the ceremonies were intended to be invested in civic ceremonies which would be difficult to achieve outside civic buildings. Ceremonies would be conducted in English, and initially people could have interpreters to assist them with the Ceremony. Eventually knowledge of English would be a requirement for gaining citizenship. Tony Walsh reported that a naturalisation application currently took between 12 and 18 months to process and he was concerned that the Citizenship Ceremony would only add to this. It was felt that awareness should be raised about the requirements. It was agreed to write to the Home Office asking for assistance in awareness training. Steve Dunning said that proof of capability with English would be a requirement of Citizenship at a later date and that he would liaise with the Equalities Unit over cultural issues. Councillor Gupta felt that, once initial issues had been ironed out, Citizenship Ceremonies would promote a feeling of belonging.

55/03 Recruitment Statistics - April 2002 to March 2003

Sue Scott presented a report of the Director of Policy, which gave information about recruitment and Council vacancies which were advertised between April 2002 and March 2003. It explored each stage of the process, giving details of general numbers of applications, short-listed candidates and appointments, then focusing on categories of ethnicity, gender, disability and senior positions. The percentage of short-listed and appointed applicants for minority ethnic, women and disabled people, were calculated by using the total number of people from those groups that were short-listed or appointed as a percentage of the total number of applications from those groups.

The Council is already successful in attracting minority ethnic applicants. To improve this further the Council has recently subscribed to two websites specifically aimed at black and Asian people. Research into internet search by minority ethnic groups shows that there are higher proportions of minority ethnic people who found the job they applied for on the internet so we are hopeful this will increase minority ethnic applicants further.

It was reported that minority ethnic applicants have a slightly lower success rate at being short-listed or appointed. One explanation for this is that certain jobs tended to attract greater numbers of minority ethnic applicants and only one person can be successful so it does impact on success rates overall. A tracking policy had been introduced to identify barriers, to provide better feedback to candidates and the initial findings suggest that tracked applicants have been successful through the recruitment process. A job seekers register and interview skills courses were also provided.

Shokat Lal requested that ethnicity figures be broken down to get a better indication of the result. Sue Scott agreed to provide this information. Mohammed Sharief was concerned that the Council were not doing anything specific to improve representation of minority ethnic people and suggested involvement in an initiative currently operating in Normanton. Sue Scott mentioned a number of initiatives such as involvement in a positive action

training scheme that were being worked on and agreed to look further at the initiative. Shokat Lal referred to a Police recruitment fair in the Pakistani Community Centre which had been successful and suggested this may be a way forward for the city Council. Sue Scott said this would be very helpful as would any suggestions from MECAC about improving representation in the Council.

56/03 Extension of Meeting

Resolved at 8.30 pm, in accordance with the Committee's Working Protocol, that the meeting should be extended for a further 30 minutes.

57/03 Community Cohesion - Employment and Economy

Mike Kaye, Assistant Director, Development presented a report of the Director of Development and Cultural Services, which gave details of the approach by the City Development and Tourism department in conjunction with Derby City Partnership's Prosperous City Executive, to address the community cohesion agenda. Shokat Lal was concerned about the issue of visitor attractions, particularly in the Normanton area. He referred to attractions in Leicester being nationally recognised and requested more investment in the Normanton Road area. The Council were working with Derby City Partnership "Cultural City" on a way forward and this could be raised through the Prosperous City Executive. George Mighty reported that carnivals should be recognised, as they brought money into the city.

Resolved to note the work of Derby City Partnerships Prosperous City Executive in contributing towards the community cohesion agenda.

58/03 Community Cohesion and Planning

Mike Kaye, Assistant Director, Development presented a report of the Director of Development and Cultural Services, which stated that Planning had an important role in ensuring a balanced approach to resolving the sometimes conflicting aims of long term development needs of the city, developers and land owners interests, individual citizen's rights and aspirations and community neighbourhood views. As the Local Planning Authority, the Council had a duty to prepare development plans within a framework of Planning Policy Guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. He gave details of area and neighbourhood plans and their links into the planning system and stated that the planning system was based on the community strategy.

Councillor Crosby asked if there were any plans to use or improve the Normanton Hotel. The Normanton Hotel had been purchased by an individual and that there were currently no plans deposited with the Council.

Shokat Lal referred to a problem with parking in the Normanton area. Mike Kaye reported that if a solution required land use, then a plan would be used to resolve it, otherwise parking issues would generally be dealt with through the local transport plan. Tony Walsh was concerned that the process should engage the local community. Councillor Gupta requested that a further report be presented before this was implemented fully, with practical examples.

Resolved

- 1. To note the planning implications in the Community Cohesion Guidance and the work being done by the Council in this particular area.**
- 2. To request the Director of Development and Cultural Services to bring a further report to the Committee before the proposals are implemented fully, with practical examples.**

59/03 Community Cohesion Housing Strategy

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

60/03 Complaint - BBC Today Programme

Shokat Lal presented to the Committee a letter he had written to the Editor of the BBC Today Programme, relating to the asylum seeking Iraqi Kurdish Community and the implication that there was a particular problem, both with the community and their relationship with other communities within Derby. He felt that Derby was a very tolerant and welcoming community, which had tackled challenges and the message should be put forward of a united community, who lived together well. He reported that Radio Derby were attempting to put the record straight.

Resolved to note the report.

61/03 MECAC Newsletter

The Committee were asked to consider items for inclusion in the next MECAC newsletter. None were forthcoming.

62/03 MECAC Work Programme

The Committee considered MECAC's latest Work Programme.

Resolved to note the report.

Chair of the next ensuing meeting
at which these minutes were signed