

Time commenced – 6.30pm
Time Finished – 8.10pm

MINORITY COMMUNITIES DIVERSITY FORUM 12 JUNE 2008

Present: **Representing Derby City Council**
Councillor Naitta (In the Chair)
Councillor Roberts
Councillor Shanker

Representing Communities

Andrew Kadete – Black Wellness Initiative
Johnson Sibotshiwe
Kirit Mistry – DREC
Joe Kupranec – Association of Ukrainians
Zbigniew Wojcik – EMAC
Kamal Amier – Somalian Community
Lloyd Newby – DWICA
Nasreen Iqbal – Pakistan Community
Arshia Iqbal – GDF Member and Observer
Shokat Lal – Pakistan Community Centre
Jangir Khan – Pakistan Community Centre
Mohammad Sharief – Pakistan Community Centre
George Mighty – DWICA
Tony Walsh – Derby Irish Association
John Pearson – Derby Irish Association

Council and Other Officers

Ray Cowlshaw – Derby City Council
Rod Wood - Derby City Council
Ray Rippingale - Derby City Council
John Sheil- Derby City Council
James Beale - Derby City Council
Rajesh Lall – Derby City Council
Yasmin Fazil – Derby City Council
Christine Collingwood – Derby City Council
Pamela Thompson – Derby City Council

The Forum expressed concern that the Minority Community Champion was also chairing the meeting, as it was felt that if the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council were the Chair they would be able to work more effectively alongside the Champion to promote Minority Community issues. It was agreed that this would be referred back to the Cabinet.

01/08 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Shirley Howard Johnson, Balbir Singh Sandhu, Father O'Sullivan, Nezrine Hudson and Irka Wolociuha.

02/08 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March were noted, subject to the amendment of minute 58/07 to include a query regarding which specific groups received funding, and to note that CSV should read CVS throughout.

03/08 Work Programme 2007-08

The Forum considered the Work Programme for upcoming meetings. It was reported that many of the items had been first set at the launch of the Forums, and were still relevant to the work of the Forum. It was noted that there were some gaps in the Programme, reflecting the work which had already been completed. It was agreed that the next meeting would cover any outstanding items deferred from previous meetings, and agree new items for the work programme.

Agreed to bring suggestions for new work programme items to Pam Thompson.

04/08 Vulnerable Employment of Migrant Workers

The Forum received a report from Zbigniew Wojcik on vulnerable employment of migrant workers. It was reported that a Commission on Vulnerable Employment (CoVE) had been established to address this issue, particularly amongst the most at risk groups, which included migrant workers and refugees. It was noted that the report contained only a fraction of the examples of substandard conditions facing vulnerable workers, as there had been 250 cases in Derby alone, which included 5 major city employers. It was reported that the Trade unions were trying to respond to the highlighted problems, but this was an ongoing battle. The Forum felt it was important to bring this report to the attention of the City Council, as about 70% of the cases related to agency workers, and it was known that the Council did use agency staff.

Rod Wood reported that as the Council had an ongoing requirement for staff, agencies were a good source of workers. However, it was reported that the Council used a 'holding' company called Comensura to deal with temporary staff, and they had clear instructions regarding suitable conditions and pay. It was agreed that it was important to ensure this was the case and report back to the Forum.

It was noted that the report's work programme did not include a visit to the Midlands, and it was felt that this was an oversight that should be addressed. It was agreed that the Chair would write to the Commission saying that the Forum had noted the report, but that there were concerns that the Midlands had been excluded as it was felt that this was a key area for these problems.

It was noted that many Forum members may have information regarding vulnerable worker issues and this should be circulated round the Forum. There were research projects going on on this issue (for example by the TUC) and the Forum felt it was important to ensure they were feeding into this research and not working against it.

Agreed:

- 1. to note the report**
- 2. to receive an update on the Council's agency workers at a future Forum meeting**
- 3. for the Chair to write to report authors expressing the Forum's concern that the Midlands was excluded from the work programme**
- 4. to circulate any information on vulnerable worker issues through Rod Wood**

05/08 Derby Playhouse

The Forum received an update from Zbigniew Wojcik on the Derby Playhouse. It was reported that this was an issue close to many people's hearts and that there were plans in place which, if accepted by the administrators, would see the Playhouse open again in the Autumn.

Noted

06/08 Housing Strategy and the BME Housing Strategy

The Forum received an update from John Sheil on the BME Housing Strategy. The first strategy was launched in 2005 in recognition of the issues of inequality in relation to Housing needs of BME communities. It was reported that a range of positive impacts had been felt from the first works undertaken, targeted at improving housing conditions for BME communities.

The Forum welcomed the update, but raised concerns about the predominance of the Normanton area in the strategy, as there were other areas of the city which had BME communities in need of support. The Forum felt that many strategies focussed only on the traditional groups, yet there were many other groups, for example the Slovak community or the Irish community in and around the highlighted areas who had diverse needs which needed to be met. It was reported that the strategy recognised that there were other groups who needed support, and these needs would be addressed in due course.

It was reported that the houses mentioned would be located in and around Derby. It was later clarified that the properties would all be in Derby City – 2 in Abbey Ward, 1 in Darley Ward and 1 in Mackworth Ward. It was noted that some properties were located away from the traditional BME areas as in some cases it had been shown that some residents had a better chance of succeeding in a new area. The Forum noted that there was a lack of details and statistics within the report provided, which made effective consultation difficult. It was reported that extra information could be circulated through Pam Thompson if required.

It was reported that the strategy had undergone an Equality Impact Assessment and had consulted with a wide range of community groups. The Forum felt that although the results of these assessments were available online, there would be value in circulating them to the relevant Forums. It was also felt that there was scope for wider consultation outside the community centres. It was reported that further consultation would take place once the success of various strategies had been assessed.

Agreed:

- 1. To receive further information on the Equality Impact Assessment**
- 2. To receive a report to the next Forum meeting on how the Housing strategy fitted into the government agenda for integration**
- 3. For Forum members to request further statistics on the strategy from Pam Thompson as required.**

07/08 Black and Minority Communities and the Arts

The Forum considered a report from Ray Rippingale, AD Culture, on Black and Minority Communities and the Arts. It was reported that Art was regarded as a significant factor in quality of life and social cohesion, and so the cultural strategy for Derby had been introduced to improve quality of life, promote inclusion and celebrate diversity, and to contribute to the regeneration and prosperity of the region. The Forum received updates on forthcoming arts activities taking place within the city, and were encouraged to bring their community members to the various events to help them achieve their aims. It was noted that there was a diverse arts network within Derby with a growing membership, but with very limited resources.

The Forum welcomed the update, but felt that there were still problems with traditional community centres losing focus as they were under resourced and had to become more multi-purpose centres. It was hoped that the Council could support the centres, and places of worship within communities, to help bring different communities together within these centres for activities. It was reported that the Community Cohesion Team had plans to do this with some new budget allocation.

Agreed:

- 1. For Pam Thompson to provide a contact in the Arts Team for Forum members**
- 2. For Forum Members to relate ideas for future cultural events in the Arts to the Arts Team or via Pam Thompson**

08/08 Black Employees Support Network

The Forum received the annual report of the Black Employees Support Network, detailing the history and achievements of the network. The Forum welcomed the update, but raised concerns about response times to queries people had, as experience had shown that queries were not often replied to promptly. It was reported that Forum members should always highlight problems they experienced

getting replies to the relevant directorate, as these matters were taken very seriously.

Agreed for Forum members to raise any problems they experienced obtaining information with Pam Thompson for her to follow up with the relevant directors.

Noted.

09/08 Open Discussion

Christine Collingwood., Consultation Support Manager, addressed the Forum. It was reported that the Council wanted to undertake consultation on the impact of the introduction of Home Care Charges, and this was planned for July/August 2008. The Forum agreed that, as this was before the next scheduled meeting, a special meeting should be held where all of the Diversity Forums could join together for consultation.

The Forum considered options for future discussions. Suggestions included debates regarding gun crime and knife crime.

Agreed

- 1. for a joint Diversity Forum meeting to be arranged for consultation on Adult Social Services Home Care Charges**
- 2. to send further suggestions for open discussion items to Pam Thompson**
- 3. for future meetings to contain an open discussion item on the agenda to allow Forum members time to prepare**

10/08 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for 11 September 2008. Three Forum members were invited to the next pre-meeting, date to be confirmed.

Noted

MINUTES END