

Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee

Wednesday, 26 July 2006

Present: Councillor P Malpas (Chair) and Councillor Miss M Iddon, Councillor Ms H Khan, Councillor C Snow, Mr M Allam (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mr O Aslam (Asian Men's Forum), Ms K Banati (Asian Women's Forum), Mr H Desai (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mrs C Finlayson (Afrian Caribbean Group), Mr G Finlayson (African Caribbean Group), Ms M Iqbal (Asian Women's Forum), Mr H Mala (Asian Men's Forum), Mr M Muldowney (Seymour Street Community), Ms Y Patel (Asian Women's Forum) and Mr M Sajid (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society)

Officers: Mr P Morris (Executive Director – Corporate and Customer), Mr J Carson (Director of Leisure and Cultural Services), Ms G Viragh (Senior Human Resources Advisor (Resourcing)), Ms J Rowlands (Policy and Performance Officer), Ms S Dobson (Graduate Policy and Performance Officer) and Mr A Uren (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: Reverend Dr J Cree (Chorley Faiths Council), Mr D Herne (Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust), Ms C Kubicki (Nguzo Saba Centre), Mr B Patel (Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council), Ms J Sethi (Nguzo Saba Centre), Mr W Syed (Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust) and Mr S Van (HM Prison Wymott)

06.EM.27 WELCOME BY CHAIR (COUNCILLOR P MALPAS)

The newly appointed Chair of the Committee (Councillor P Malpas) welcomed everyone present to the meeting, particularly the new members and Officers who were attending their first meeting.

Councillor Malpas also thanked Councillor C Snow for his Chairmanship of the Consultative Committee over the past few years.

06.EM.28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs M Gray, Ms D Hall (Chorley Council's Chief Executive), Mr K Allen (Interim Streetscene Manager), Ms J Hodge (Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust) and Mrs P Cuerden (Neighbourhood Watch).

06.EM.29 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any of the Borough Councillors in any of the items on the agenda.

06.EM.30 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2006/07

In accordance with the terms of the Constitution, nominations were invited for the appointment of a Vice-Chair of the Consultative Committee for the remainder of the current financial year.

Mr G Finlayson was nominated and seconded for the Vice-Chair's position.

It was **AGREED** that Mr G Finlayson be appointed to act as Vice-Chair of the Ethnic Minorities Committee for the remainder of the 2006/07 municipal year.

06.EM.31 CHORLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Consultative Committee noted that the following Councillors had each been appointed to represent the Borough Council on the Committee during 2006/07:

Councillor P Malpas (Chair), Councillor Mrs M Gray, Councillor Miss M Iddon, Councillor Ms H Khan and Councillor C Snow.

06.EM.32 MINUTES - CONFIRMATION

The minutes of the meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee held on 26 April 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

06.EM.33 COMMUNITY HEALTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Chair introduced Mr D Herne (Public Health Specialist with the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust (PCT)) who had been invited to make a presentation at the meeting on the findings of the recent research commissioned by the PCT and the Chorley Community Safety Partnership into minority ethnic communities' accessing of primary and secondary health care services, and the PCT's plans to address the identified issues and service deficiencies.

At the outset of his address, Mr Herne thanked the Asian Women's Forum and volunteer members of the Mosque for their assistance in securing responses to the questionnaires and compiling the statistical data.

The PCT's research project had focused on Chorley East Ward, which was, statistically, the most deprived Ward in the Borough in terms of low incomes and high rates of unemployment. There was a high concentration of black and ethnic minority community members and a need to address apparent inequalities within the Ward. The primary aim of the survey, therefore, had been to ascertain and assess the health needs of the black and minority ethnic members of the Chorley East Ward and to identify the principal barriers to the communities' accessing of the health care services.

Councillor Khan outlined the extent of the Area Forum Women's work sponsored by the project, including the organisation of several social, educational and health awareness events and activities. Councillor Khan reminded the Committee that all women, irrespective of faith, were welcome to join the Asian Women's Forum and advised the members of the plans to establish an Asian Men's Forum.

Mr Herne confirmed that the PCT had been pleased with the level of response to its survey from all age groups of both genders and gave a brief summary of the survey's results, highlighting the most significant issues that had emerged. In particular, the following factors had been identified:

- a substantial proportion of respondents did not speak English;
- a significant proportion of both male and female respondents were unemployed;
- finance and health issues were the principal sources of enquiries;
- difficulties in communication was a major problem for the black and minority ethnic communities;
- a high proportion of male and female respondents do not consider that health services are culturally appropriate;
- a substantial number of people find that accessing services is challenging;

- more bilingual staff was favoured by female members of the communities, with the establishment of a Men's Support Group high on the list of male requirements;
- adult education and counselling services were also required.

Ms Kubicki and Ms Sethi also reported on the results of a linked survey exercise with members of the African/Caribbean community, which they hoped would result in further research and the compilation of a programme of events and activities for the community.

Copies of the presentation material were presented at the meeting and Mr Herne advised the Committee that an action plan to address each of the issues and service deficiencies which had been highlighted by respondents in both the short and longer term was being compiled by the PCT. The successful implementation of the action plan, and subsequent monitoring, would be dependent on close collaboration between the PCT and other authorities and agencies.

Councillor Khan and Ms Banati hoped that the initiative and projects established as a result of the research exercise would be continued and the impetus to improve services would be maintained in the future.

Mr Morris, on behalf of the Borough Council, welcomed the initiative and accepted that the findings of the survey had revealed a number of factors that the Council would need to take on board. An action plan would need to be formulated to show how the Council would address the relevant issues and take action to improve customer services and, in particular, the black and minority communities' access to Council services.

06.EM.34 MULTI-AGENCY DIVERSITY INCIDENTS PANEL

The Committee received and considered a confidential report of the Chief Executive on a meeting of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel held on 20 June 2006. The report was accompanied by a schedule listing the racist incidents reported during the period 1 April to 30 June 2006 that had been presented to the Diversity Incidents Panel meeting. The summary report contained details of the date, time, location and nature of the incidents, the ethnicity of both the perpetrators and the victims and an indication of the subsequent action taken.

The Consultative Committee noted that the number of recorded incidents reported to the Panel during the quarter period, when compared to the previous quarter's figures, had decreased by 38%. However, Ms S Dobson indicated that the figures may not be truly reflective of the actual number of incidents occurring as a number of agencies had omitted to advise the Panel of incidents recorded by them.

In this context, Ms Dobson advised the Committee of proposals to re-invigorate the role and operation of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel by broadening its scope and membership. The Panel hoped to encourage ways in which it could encourage the greater participation and contribution of other agencies and bodies (including the Consultative Committee), as a means of enhancing the Panel's effectiveness and collaboration with other agencies.

Mr Patel also reminded the members that the growing confidence of the population to report racist incidents and the expansion of reporting procedures should be reflected in the availability of more accurate statistics.

It was **AGREED**:

(1) That Ms S Dobson be requested to prepare, for submission to the next Consultative Committee meeting, a report on suggested ways in which the Consultative Committee might contribute to the re-invigoration of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel.

(2) That Mr W Marland from the Lancashire County Council be invited to make a short address to a future Consultative Committee meeting on the procedures operating in Lancashire schools for reporting racist incidents and how the reported incidents are treated.

06.EM.35 PROPOSED MULTI-FAITH EVENT

Ms Dobson informed the Consultative Committee that a Sub-Group, chaired by Reverend Dr J Cree of Churches Together in Chorley, had been set up to facilitate and organise a Multi-Faith event for the Borough.

Reverend Cree, who had been invited to attend the meeting, advised the Committee of the role and objectives of the Chorley Faiths Council established three years ago to promote community cohesion and good will, and to encourage co-operation and collaboration between the various faith groups and sectors within Chorley.

The Sub-Group would be examining suggestions for the identification of themes and plans for a launch ceremony and the subsequent programme of multi-faith events. It was intended that the Borough Council and other statutory agencies would become involved in the planned programme.

Mr Patel also referred to the annual Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January and hoped that, in future years, the Chorley Faith Council would consider the organisation of a suitable commemorative ceremony to pay homage to the victims of the Holocaust that would encompass the participation of all faiths and communities.

06.EM.36 QUESTIONS

There had been no questions notified by the Consultative Committee members in advance of the meeting.

06.EM.37 CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

Mr Patel requested the Consultative Committee to consider any suitable means of celebrating Chorley's cultural diversity and the long tradition of the harmonious co-existence of the many faith and minority ethnic groups within the Borough as a means of counteracting recent negative media comments. A poster design competition was suggested as a potential project.

It was **AGREED** that Chorley Council's Chief Executive and Communications Manager be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss means of taking forward the proposals.

06.EM.38 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Members noted that the next meeting of the Consultative Committee was scheduled to be held in the Town Hall, Chorley on Wednesday, 25 October 2006 at 7.00pm.

Mr Syed offered the use of the Board Room at the Primary Care Trust's offices in Leyland for a future Committee meeting.

Chair