

Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee

Wednesday, 25 October 2006

Present: Councillor P Malpas (Chair), Councillor H Khan, Mr G Finlayson (Vice Chair) (African Caribbean Group), Mr M Allam (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mr Z Aslam (Dosti Men's Forum), Mrs C Finlayson (African Caribbean Group), Mr G Guye, Ms M Iqbal (Asian Women's Forum), Mr S Javid (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mr L Khansab (Dosti Men's Forum), Mr H Mala (Dosti Men's Forum), Ms Y Mala (Asian Women's Forum), Mr A Patel (Dosti Men's Forum), Ms Y Patel (Asian Women's Forum) and Mr M Sajid (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society).

Chorley Council Officers: Ms L-A Fenton (Director of Policy and Performance), Ms G Viragh (Senior Human Resources Advisor (Resourcing)), Ms S Dobson (Graduate Policy and Performance Officer) and Mr A Uren (Democratic Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Sergeant J Hickey (Lancashire Constabulary Southern Division), Ms C Kubicki (Nguzo Saba Centre) and Mr B Patel (Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council).

06.EM.39 WELCOME BY CHAIR

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

06.EM.40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs M Gray, Councillor Miss M Iddon, Councillor C Snow, Ms K Banati (Asian Women's Forum), Ms D Hall (Chorley Council's Chief Executive), Mr J Carson (Chorley Council's Director of Leisure and Cultural Services), Mr D Herne and Mr J Hodge (Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust), Mr N Sharif (Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service) and Mrs P Cuerden (Neighbourhood Watch Association).

06.EM.41 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.42 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

(a) Confirmation

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

(b) Matters Arising

(i) Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel (Minute 06.EM.34)

The Chair reported that, as requested at the last meeting, arrangements would be made for the Committee to receive a short address from Mr W Marland from the Lancashire County Council on the procedures operating in Lancashire schools for reporting and treating racist incidents.

(ii) Celebration of Diversity (Minute 06.EM.37)

The Chair confirmed that Chorley Council's Chief Executive and Communications Officer would be invited to attend the next meeting to assist discussions on suitable means of celebrating Chorley's cultural diversity.

06.EM.43 COMMUNITY HEALTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(i) Saheliyaan – Asian Women's Forum

Councillor Hasina Khan presented a report updating the Committee on the extent of the Asian Women's Forum's work sponsored by the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust as part of their Community Health Development Project. The report highlighted recent activities of the Forum and commented, in particular on:

(i) Health Mela

A successful Health Mela had been held on 12 August 2006 in conjunction with several health and social care organisations (including Lancashire County Council's Social Services Directorate, Open Minds, Arthritis Care, Alzheimer Society, Alcohol and Drugs Association, Diabetes UK and Age Concern) who had provided useful information and advice. Workshops on aroma and marriage therapy, counselling and healthy eating had formed part of the event. The event had been the first initiative organised by the Asian Women's Forum for both males and females and had been attended by over 50 women and 15 men, along with a number of children.

(ii) Courses

The ESOL and confidence building courses for women had concluded in August. The courses had proved to be popular and successful, with new courses requested after Ramadan and Eid.

(iii) Drop-In Sessions

The project had proved popular and beneficial to the Asian community, with the assistance of PCT funding and conscientious volunteers. It was hoped that the sessions could be extended to run during weekdays if suitable premises could be found.

(iv) Premises

The Asian Women's Forum was presently only allowed the use of the Chorley Youth and Community Centre on Saturdays, which was inhibiting the extension of the Drop-In Sessions.

The Chair thanked Councillor Khan for her update report and wished the Asian Women's Forum well in its future endeavours.

(ii) Nguzo Saba Centre

Ms C Kubicki circulated a report on the outcome of a health needs assessment survey of 50 members of the broader African community in Chorley, commissioned by the Primary Care Trust, and undertaken by the Nguzo Saba Centre. 31 of the 50 people surveyed had returned the questionnaire.

An analysis of the survey results had revealed that the 900 or so member community was resilient in combating health problems and that, whilst language did not constitute a barrier to communication, a number of people surveyed

considered that the needs of the Black/African/Caribbean community was not being afforded sufficient attention.

The following recommendations had been agreed as an attempt to address the issues raised by the survey:

- Training for all primary care staff in the different cultures of communities from the broader African community.
- Mental health services to be available at a local level.
- Workplace healthcare and advice, targeted at men, but available to all.
- More programmes to tackle racism in schools and communities.
- Information on how to report racist incidence and the importance of reporting made more widely available.
- Ensure all patients can see their GP within 24 hours.
- The PCT to work with the broader African community to develop confidence in services and diagnosis
- Local authorities, youth work agencies and other appropriate agencies to develop programmes to encourage use of community centres and community facilities by the broader African community.

Ms Kubicki circulated leaflets giving details of two family events being hosted by the Nguzo Saba Centre on 24 and 30 November 2006.

Ms Kubicki explained that, while the PCT had originally agreed to fund the project up to March 2007, the recent merger of PCTs had resulted in the financing of the initiative being expected to terminate in December 2006. This situation was, however, being reviewed by the newly formed Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust and the Consultative Committee expressed the hope that the project funding would be extended beyond December.

It was **AGREED:**

(1) that, in order to allow Members to assimilate the report, further consideration of the health survey report be deferred to the next meeting of the Consultative Committee.

(2) That Ms Kubicki be requested to update the Committee at its next meeting on the delivery of the report's recommendations by the relevant agencies.

06.EM.44 DOSTI MENS' FORUM

Councillor Khan informed the Committee that the East Chorley Men's Forum formed in July 2006 was to be officially launched as the Dosti Men's Forum in November. The Group had been supported by the Saheliyaan Women's Group during its formative stages and would welcome males from all faiths and backgrounds to join.

Mr A Mala introduced himself as the Chair of the Men's Group, emphasising that the purpose of the Group would be to provide a forum in which all sections of the community could meet in joint respect and knowledge of each other's culture. The issues and concerns raised at the meetings could then be relayed to the relevant Authorities and agencies for action. The Chair welcomed the initiative and wished the Dosti Men's Forum well in its activities.

06.EM.45 MULTI-AGENCY DIVERSITY INCIDENTS PANEL

The Consultative Committee were reminded that, at the last meeting, the Members had requested the Officers to examine means of re-invigorating the role and operation of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel by broadening its scope and membership. It was important to consider ways of encouraging 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.

Consequently, Ms L-A Fenton and Ms S Dobson presented a discussion paper which set out recommendations for suggested actions to ensure the Panel's delivery of key outcomes in terms of equality, diversity and community cohesion.

There was an opportunity to examine ways of creating a more proactive and strategically focused Panel and the report put forward the following proposals for consideration:

- the re-naming of the Panel to Community Cohesion and Diversity Incidents Panel to reflect the Panel's new remit and proactive approach to community relations;
- the establishment of a group of core partners (Police, PCT, Council, Childrens Services Officer, Chorley Community Housing etc), which would be requested to attend meetings and report regularly to the Panel;
- the establishment of a group of Non-Core Partners to be requested to attend periodically whenever they are able to contribute to agenda items;
- the circulation of agenda papers prior to the meeting as an opportunity for Non-Core partners to evaluate the usefulness of meetings and the subsequent circulation of minutes to Core and Non-Core Partners;
- the establishment of working groups to tackle particular issues and report back to the Panel and partner agencies;
- the hosting of an event with appropriate speakers as an opportunity to showcase the work of the Panel, attract potential partners, foster the sharing of good practice, and raise awareness of reporting procedures;
- the Panel to address issues on an ongoing basis around:
 - economy (become actively engaged with economic regeneration activity currently underway in the Borough);
 - housing;
 - migrant workers;
 - removing barriers to reporting incidents and raising awareness of reporting procedures;
 - funding opportunities for community cohesion work;
 - creation of information network between partners;
 - identify community tensions (real or perceived) and undertake proactive work to tackle such tensions;
 - manage effective responses to incidents;
 - report diversity Performance Indicators as a standing item on agendas and explore how performance can be improved and linked in with Directorates' ongoing activity;
 - proactive action to address and counter false/misleading assertions in the press nationally and locally;
 - identify trends in terms of geographical areas and tackle relations proactively.

The report also set out a list of organisations and agencies whose participation as a Core or Non-Core Partner was likely to benefit the new Panel.

The report was accompanied by a schedule listing the racist incidents reported during the period 1 July to 30 September 2006 that had been presented to the last meeting of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel. The Consultative Committee noted that the number of reported incidents in the quarter period had reduced considerably when compared to the previous quarter's figure, but the Members were reminded that the figures may not be truly reflective of the actual number of incidents occurring as only the Police had submitted statistics to the Panel.

The Consultative Committee welcomed the proposals to expand the remit, scope and effectiveness of the current Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel and, particularly, the suggestion that a representative of the Consultative Committee be included within the membership of the revised Panel.

Mr Patel was anxious to ensure that issues of race (related to race equality and diversity) would not be diluted, but afforded sufficient prominence in the remit of the new organisation.

It was **AGREED**:

(1) that the proposals to re-invigorate the role and effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel as outlined in the submitted report be supported and that the following measures, in particular, be explored:

- the Panel to be re-named the Community Cohesion and Diversity Incidents Panel and revised terms of reference for the Panel to be produced;
- a meeting be held with existing partners to the Panel to gauge the level of support for the plans;
- potential partner agencies to be contacted to attract expressions of interest in contributing to the work of the Panel;
- the new Panel to be re-launched at an event with existing and new partners and community representatives;
- the operation of similar Panels in Blackburn and Preston and other best practice models be examined;
- the exploration of possibilities for broadening the scope of the Panel in the light of recent legislative developments in the field of equality and diversity which place new duties on local authorities.

(2) That the Consultative Committee members be requested to submit their views, and possible alternative suggestions, on the plans to improve the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel to the Council's Officers.

06.EM.46 PROPOSED MULTI-FAITH EVENT

Ms L-A Fenton reminded the Consultation 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 in the Borough. Consequently, a provisional draft programme for a half-day event early in 2007 was circulated for consideration.

The general aim of the event would be to promote community cohesion and good will, and to encourage co-operation and collaboration between the various faith groups and sectors within Chorley.

Councillor Hasina Khan referred to the possibility of the event attracting finance from the Government's Connecting Communities Fund and intimated the possibility of other PCT funding if the event was combined with the launch of the Dosti Men's Forum.

A number of Committee members expressed their disappointment that the multi-faith event was to replace the traditional Eid Festival event, which they claimed had been successful in past years and had, in fact, embraced a number of faiths in addition to the Muslim faith. There was a reluctance to organise a separate Eid celebration event without specific Council support.

In response, Ms Fenton reminded the Committee that resources were limited and that it had been proposed to devote the available sum of approximately £2,000 to the organisation of an event that would celebrate the Borough's diverse cultures and faiths and unite the whole community. The organisers very much hoped that the

Muslim community would become involved in the organisation and holding of the event.

Ms Kubicki considered that the proposed event should aim to celebrate the District's multi-cultures, rather than faiths, and emphasised that the role of the Black/African/Caribbean community should not be overlooked.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chair thanked all the members for their contribution. The Chair confirmed and assured the Committee members that their views and suggestions would be assessed and considered by the Sub-Group organisers of the event and the Council's Officers before firm decisions were agreed.

06.EM.47 QUESTIONS

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

06.EM.48 ASIAN WOMEN'S FORUM

Councillor Hasina Khan notified the Consultative Committee that the Asian Women's Forum had been awarded funding of £17,000 over the next three years by the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust. The funding would allow the appointment of two part-time salaried Officers.

06.EM.49 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, 24 January 2007 at 7.00pm.

Chair