

Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee

Wednesday, 24 January 2007

Present: Councillor Peter Malpas (Chair) and Councillors Mrs Marie Gray, Hasina Khan, Mr G Finlayson (Vice Chair - African/Carribbean Group), M Allam (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mr Z Aslam (Dosti Mens Forum), Ms K Banati (Asian Women's Forum), Rev John Cree (Chorley Faiths Forum), Mrs C Finlayson (African/Caribbean Group), Ms K Grzeczynska (Polish Catholic Community), Ms M Iqbal (Asian Womens Forum), Mr H Mala (Dosti Mens Forum), Ms M Malek (Asian Women's Forum), Mr M Naeem (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mr M Nazife (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Mr A Patel (Dosti Mens Forum), Ms Y Patel (Asian Womens Forum) and Mr Mohammed Sajid (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society)

Officers: Donna Hall (Chief Executive), Lorraine Charlesworth (Director of Human Resources), Shelley Wright (Communications Manager), Sarah Dobson (Performance Advisor - Corporate and Customer), Sara Cooper (External Funding Officer) and Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: Terry Brown, Ralph Snape, Mr D Herne (Chorley & South Ribble Primary Care Trust), Ms C Kubicki (Nguzo Saba Centre) and Mr B Patel (Preston & Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council)

07.EM.01 WELCOME BY CHAIR

The Chair (Councillor P Malpas) welcomed everyone present to the meeting.

07.EM.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr J Carson (Director of Leisure and Cultural Services), Mrs P Cuerden (Neighbourhood Watch Association), Sergeant J Hickey (Lancashire Constabulary), Mr S McGibbon (Victim Support), Mr N Raza (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society) and Ms J Sethi (Nguzo Saba Centre).

07.EM.03 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

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

07.EM.04 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee held on 25 October 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

07.EM.05 HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY - 27 JANUARY 2007

The Consultative Committee's attention was drawn to the invitation to members to attend each of the following two events to be held on Saturday, 27 January 2007 to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day:

- A memorial service at the Cenotaph, Astley Park, Chorley at 11.00am.
- A civic event at the Town Hall, Chorley at 3.45pm to recognise the horror of genocide.

The Chair welcomed Councillor R Snape and Ms K Grzeczynska, the joint co-ordinators of the morning memorial service, who explained the origins and reasons for the annual service. The Polish community of Chorley, in collaboration with the Royal

British Legion, had instigated the services but all residents of the Borough were welcome to attend the service in memory of not only the victims of the Second World War atrocities, but also the victims of subsequent incidents of genocide worldwide.

Sarah Dobson and Reverend Cree outlined the arrangements and proceedings for the later afternoon civic event to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall to recognise the atrocities of genocide all over the world. People of all faiths and backgrounds would be welcome to attend the event to help build tolerance and understanding of different faiths and cultures across the Borough. All persons attending the meeting would be requested to sign a declaration promising to promote a greater understanding and respect of others and to work towards building a sense of friendship, unity and cohesion. It was expected that the declaration would form the basis of a Community Charter for Chorley to be launched later in the year.

The Chair thanked all the persons involved in the organisation of the two commemorative events and hoped that as many members of the Consultative Committee as possible would be able to attend one or both of the events.

07.EM.06 RACIST INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS

The Chair welcomed Mr W Marland, Principal Advisor with the Lancashire County Council's School Effectiveness Service, who had been invited to make a short address to the Committee on the processes in place to deal with racist incidents in schools.

Mr Marland (a former Ofsted Inspector) explained the duties of his post and his work in promoting race equality in the 643 schools spread across Lancashire. Mr Marland and his colleagues were responsible for the collation and monitoring of schools' statistical reports on recorded racist incidents, as well as responsibility for the recruitment of tutors to teach English to new immigrants.

Mr Marland circulated at the meeting copies of the following four documents:

- A copy of the 2006 annual report from the Lancashire School Effectiveness Service monitoring and reporting racist incidents in schools from August 2005 to July 2006.
- A Race Equality Guide for School Governors, which aimed to assist Governors in their deliberations and monitoring of racist incidents in schools.
- Department for Education and Skills Guidance on recording and reporting racist incidents.
- Guidelines and Procedures for dealing with and reporting racist incidents in schools produced by the Lancashire Education Authority.

The County Council was currently reviewing the current procedures, with a view to revised guidance being produced later in the year.

Mr Marland reminded the Committee that, by accepted definition, 'a racist incident is considered to be a racist incident if it is perceived to be a racist incident by anyone witnessing or experiencing the incident'. Whilst the definition was open to a wide-ranging interpretation, the guidelines and procedure document had been supplied to every school and training courses were held for School Governors and Head Teachers.

There was a statutory requirement for each school to produce a Race Equality Policy, which needed to be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The guidelines advised schools to record racist incidents as quickly as possible after the incident and

all schools were required to produce and submit to the County Council regular statistical reports on the racist incidents occurring in schools. Appropriate extracted information and data was shared with the Police, MAPS Team and relevant agencies (including the newly constituted Multi-Agency Diversity Incidents Panel) responsible for community cohesion.

Mr Marland informed the Committee that around 600 recorded racist incidents had occurred in Lancashire schools in 2006, an increase of 25% on 2005 figures. The continued rise in the number of recorded incidents was attributed to a greater willingness of persons to report racist incidents.

Donna Hall highlighted Chorley Council's commitment to the promotion of community cohesion and tolerance amongst all sectors and community groups and confirmed the Authority's wish to work closely with local schools and parents on projects aimed at achieving joint aims.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chair thanked Mr Marland for his contribution to the meeting. The Chair requested the Committee members to filter any queries or comments on Mr Marland's presentation through Tony Uren at the Town Hall, Chorley (Tel: 01257 515122; e-mail: tony.uren@chorley.gov.uk)

07.EM.07 EQUALITY SCHEME

Sarah Dobson circulated at the meeting copies of Chorley Council's Equality Scheme (incorporating the Race, Gender and Disability Equality schemes) which had been published on 4 December 2006.

In addition to meeting statutory requirements, the Equality Scheme described Chorley Council's objectives and vision for equality across the Council and throughout the Borough. The Scheme also outlined the mechanisms by which the Council aimed to achieve equality and how the success of those measures would be regularly monitored.

The scheme also incorporated detailed action plans, which set out specific targets for each Council Directorate, identifying Lead Officers and timescales, together with performance review arrangements.

Sarah Dobson emphasised the robustness of the document, which would be developed and updated on an ongoing basis. Members of the Committee were invited to submit any comments or suggestions in relation to the Equality Scheme to either Sarah Dobson (Tel: 01257 515325; E-mail: sarah.dobson@chorley.gov.uk) or Tony Uren at the Town Hall.

It was **AGREED** that a standard item be placed on the agenda for all future meetings of the Consultative Committee as an opportunity for the Committee to monitor the delivery of the action plans.

07.EM.08 CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

Donna Hall and Shelley Wright (Communications Manager) had been invited to lead a discussion on the purpose and means of celebrating Chorley's cultural diversity and tradition of harmonious co-existence between the faiths and minority ethnic groups within the Borough.

Donna referred to the challenges facing the Borough in seeking to achieve community cohesion and build bridges between all sectors of the community, in addition to the celebration of the Borough's diversity and cultures. There was an opportunity for the Council, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Consultative Committee to collaborate on the promotion of the proposed Community Charter, particularly

amongst families and young people, who were especially vulnerable to racist behaviour. In this context, the Committee might benefit from an address from a Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council Officer on that Authority's 'Belonging' campaign.

Shelley intimated that the Committee would need to define the messages it wished to communicate (eg the celebration of the Borough's diverse cultures; to raise awareness of the Consultation Committee and the projects it initiates; the promotion of the Community Charter) and identify its target audiences.

The Committee members welcomed and favoured the proposed review and revision of its working practices and procedures in order to make the Consultative Committee more proactive and effective. It was suggested, for instance, that the Committee should promote more effective assistance to the impending number of minority ethnic groups relocating to the Borough and become involved in community campaigns, such as the present efforts to safeguard the future of Chorley Hospital.

Mr B Patel considered that the Committee might evolve into a more informal and proactive body, perhaps concentrating on the examination of a small number of priority issues. Meetings could be rotated at venues around the Borough and an opportunity afforded for the discussion of Member-led agenda items and issues, as well as more formal Officer-led items.

It was **AGREED** that a small Sub-Group, comprising the Vice-Chair (Mr G Finlayson), Councillor T Brown, Councillor H Khan and Mr B Patel, meet with appropriate Council Officers to examine ways in which the Committee's role and operating practices might be altered to improve the effectiveness of the body, and to report its recommendations to a future meeting of the Committee.

07.EM.09 PROPOSED MULTI-FAITH EVENT

Sarah Dobson reported that, owing to time constraints and other logistical problems, it had not proved possible to hold the proposed multi-faith event on 19 January 2007 as envisaged.

Donna Hall confirmed that Chorley Council was committed to the success of the multi-faith event on an alternative date and had allocated £2,000 towards its organisation. The Consultative Committee members were requested to advise Sarah if they wished either to become involved in the arrangements or to promote any particular event or project.

Mr Patel welcomed the initiative and requested a report to a future meeting of the Committee showing the financial resources allocated by the Borough Council for the support of race equality and community cohesion throughout the Borough.

07.EM.10 COMMUNITY HEALTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(a) Asian Women's Forum

Councillor Hasina Khan circulated a report updating the Committee on the extent of the Asian Women's Forum activities in the Borough, including the work sponsored by the Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust as part of their Community Health Development Project. The Committee's attention, in particular, was drawn to the following issues:

(i) Access to Services Research Project

The Primary Care Trust funding for the project had terminated in December 2006. Sara Cooper (Chorley Council's External Funding

Officer) confirmed that a bid was being compiled for funding from the Home Office's 'Connecting Communities' grants scheme to support the Asian Women's Forum's work in the promotion of minority ethnic group's greater access to public services. The outcome of the bid was expected in July 2007.

Sara also intimated that opportunities for funding of capital works to community buildings, family learning projects and play activities for young children would also be explored.

(ii) Health Improvement Project

The project was being funded by the Primary Care Trust for 2.5 years. Councillor Khan introduced the three part-time Officers recruited to provide four days of outreach/advocacy/home visits/partnership work and health services in the community. In addition, a part-time Administrative Officer, based in the Lord Street Community Centre, would commence in early February 2007.

Mr D Herne commended the work being undertaken by the Asian Women's Forum, which contributed greatly to the Primary Care Trust's objectives and responsibilities.

(iii) International Women's Week

Councillor Khan indicated that the Asian Women's Forum was collaborating with Chorley Council on the organisation of a suitable event during International Women's Week in March 2007. The event aimed to bring together women from various cultures and backgrounds to promote a better understanding and appreciation of Chorley's diverse cultures.

(iv) Sports and Leisure Project

Councillor Khan informed the Committee that the Asian Women's Forum had been awarded £5,000 to undertake a sports and leisure project for young people in Chorley East Ward. The project would be supported by the Borough Council's Leisure and Cultural Services Directorate.

(b) Nguzo Saba Centre

The Committee had been provided with a further copy of the 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.

The report had been presented to the last meeting of the Consultative Committee on 25 October 2006, but consideration was deferred to this meeting to allow Members the opportunity to assimilate the findings.

The Committee members accepted that the survey's findings and recommendations would be useful in informing discussions on the future role of the Consultative Committee.

07.EM.11 DOSTI MEN'S FORUM

Councillor Khan circulated a report on the establishment of the Dosti Men's Forum, which was now awaiting a formal launch.

Potential funding sources for the employment of bilingual male staff to support the service would need to be examined, together with office premises for the organisation, if it was to operate successfully.

07.EM.12 QUESTIONS

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

07.EM.13 ASIAN WOMEN'S FORUM - BOARD

Councillor Hasina Khan informed the Committee that the Asian Women's Forum wished to increase the membership of the Forum's Board from 9 to 18 members. Nominations for appointment to the Board were to be invited from Chorley Council, the Primary Care Trust, the Police and any members of the Consultative Committee interested in serving on the Forum's Board were invited to notify Councillor Khan of their interest (Tel: 01257 461505).

07.EM.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee was scheduled to be held in the Town Hall, Chorley on Wednesday, 25 April 2007.

Chair