

Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee

Wednesday, 24 October 2007

Present: Councillor Hasina Khan (Chair), Ayuub Patel (Vice-Chair), Max Allam (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Councillor Terry Brown (Chorley Borough Council), Reverend Dr John Cree (Chorley Faith Forum), Mrs C Finlayson (African/Caribbean Group), Gary Finlayson (African/Caribbean Group), Councillor Mrs Marie Gray (Chorley Borough Council), George Guye, Miriam Iqbal (Asian Women's Forum), Zafar Khan, Areesa Malek (Asian Women's Forum), Councillor Peter Malpas (Chorley Borough Council), Mohammed Nazife (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Arifa Patel (Asian Women's Forum), Saira Patel (Asian Women's Forum), Mohammed Sajid (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society), Salma Suleman (Asian Women's Forum) and Anwar Tulati (Chorley Muslim Welfare Society)

Officers: Sarah Dobson (Performance Advisor (Corporate and Customer)), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Performance)) and Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer)

Partner Organisation Representatives: Heather Aird (Minority Ethnic Services in Libraries, Lancashire County Council), Liz Easterbrook (Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust), Bhikhu Patel (Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council) and Steve Van (HM Prison Wymott)

07.EM.46 WELCOME BY CHAIR

The Chair (Councillor Hasina Khan) welcomed everyone present to the meeting and introduced Heather Aird from the Lancashire County Council's Library Services whose remit was to improve communication and relations with minority ethnic communities.

07.EM.47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mrs Pat Cuerden (Chorley and District Neighbourhood Watch Association), Donna Hall (Chorley Council's Chief Executive), Sergeant Jeanette Hickey (Lancashire Constabulary), Mr H Mala (Dosti Men's Forum) and Yaisr Nisar (Chairperson of Ar-Rahmah Academy).

07.EM.48 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.49 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

(a) Confirmation

The minutes of the last meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee held on 3 July 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

(b) Matters arising not otherwise covered on agenda.

(i) Dosti Men's Forum (Minute 07.EM.41)

The Chair corrected the minutes and clarified that the bid to the Lancashire County Council's Social Services Directorate by the Older People's Forum for £32,000 funding of a 2 year project to establish a shelter for elderly residents

had not been successful at this stage. Further applications could be presented in the future.

(ii) Multi-Faith Event (Minute 07.EM.42)

Reverend Cree and Sarah Dobson reported that, owing to insufficient support for an event that would accommodate all faith sectors, the Chorley Faith Forum had decided not to proceed with the planned Multi-Faith Event in 2007. Funds were still available and the Forum was contemplating the production and distribution of a suitable leaflet inviting ideas from all faiths for the organisation of a future event. Any interested parties would be welcome to plan and participate in the organisation of the event.

Bhikhu Patel expressed his disappointment that the 2007 event had not taken place and considered that the Consultation Committee should be able to influence the spending of the available monies. Lesley-Ann Fenton, in response, clarified that the budget of £2,000 had been allocated to the Chorley Faith Forum and was still available to expend on any selected project or event that would promote community cohesion and religious tolerance.

(iii) Racist Incidents Statistics (Minute 07.EM.43)

Bhikhu Patel noted that Sergeant Hickey was not present at the meeting and was, therefore, unable to present the requested statistical data showing the number of racist incidents occurring throughout the Borough.

In this context, Sarah Dobson advised the Committee that a County-wide group was examining means of promoting community cohesion. The group would be assessing statistics relating to race hate crimes and incidents as part of its remit and a report of the group's findings could be presented to future meetings of the Consultative Committee, along with the Police statistics.

07.EM.50 COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Committee were reminded of the intended adoption of a procedure whereby each Committee member was to be requested to arrange for a questionnaire to be completed by around five or six members of their respective communities. The aim of the survey was to seek opinions on the level of services provided, ease of access and any suggested revisions or improvements.

Sarah Dobson circulated copies of a draft questionnaire which had been agreed by a Sub-Group of the Consultative Committee. The draft questionnaire listed a number of topics and issues from which the respondents would be asked to select the 5 most important topics affecting their community in Chorley. The responses to the survey would be analysed and fed back to the Committee, with a view to members' consideration of any community cohesion or service problem highlighted in the questionnaire responses.

Mr Patel intimated that respondents should be asked to prioritise their five selected topics and requested the inclusion of a further section on the form to accommodate respondents' comments.

The Consultative Committee members were requested to notify Sarah Dobson if they considered that any other amendments to the draft questionnaire were required in advance of the copies of the survey form being supplied to the Consultative Committee members for distribution to 5 or 6 other members of their respective communities.

(A short refreshment and networking break was taken at this point)

07.EM.51 COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY/REPORT OF COMMISSION ON INTEGRATION AND COHESION

Sarah Dobson advised the Committee of the recommendations and actions that had evolved from the Sub-Group's consideration of the report entitled 'Our Shared Vision' published by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, which set out practical proposals for the encouragement and development of integration and cohesion at local levels.

(a) Mapping

Sarah circulated a map of the Borough which identified the percentage of ethnic groups within the population of each Borough Ward as calculated from the 2001 census data.

It was intended that similar mapping exercises would be undertaken to illustrate the following information:

- the percentage of people who feel that they get on well together within the different Wards;
- mapping of migrant communities;
- mapping of places of worship in the Borough.

The mapping exercises would be useful in both identifying specific geographical trends and providing evidence of service needs in different areas. Chorley Council would also be collaborating with the Lancashire County Council and other neighbouring Authorities to trace cohesion activity throughout Lancashire and to monitor the impact of partnership working.

(b) Lancashire County-wide Initiative

Sarah advised the Committee that a County-wide Group was to be established with a priority remit to examine how community cohesion across Lancashire could be progressed and hate crimes and incidents reduced.

(c) Community Cohesion Strategy for Chorley

Sarah also circulated copies of the draft Community Cohesion Strategy for Chorley which the Council had recently produced for consultation purposes. The Strategy aimed to deliver a vision for 'One Chorley' where people would have the opportunity, resources and motivation to belong to and participate in community life, regardless of their background and circumstances.

The Plan included a series of assumptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of the Borough in terms of community cohesion, together with an action plan to address relevant issues and deficiencies.

The views and suggestions of the Consultative Committee, along with all other local community, faith and voluntary groups, were being sought during the consultation period prior to the approved adoption of the Strategy by the Borough Council and Chorley Local Strategic Partnership early in 2008.

It was **AGREED** that arrangements be made for an early Workshop session to be held as an opportunity for Consultative Committee members to examine in depth the draft Community Cohesion Strategy and put forward their respective communities' views.

07.EM.52 ISLAMIC ACADEMY

An invitation had been extended to the Chair of the Ar-Rahmah Academy in Cunliffe Street, Chorley, Yaisr Nisar, to attend the meeting to update the Committee on the facilities at the Academy. Unfortunately, Mr Nisar was unable to be present, but he had sent a letter confirming that the Centre would soon be operational. Mr Nisar was prepared to meet the Committee to discuss the Academy's aims and aspirations with members.

It was **AGREED** that Mr Nisar be invited to attend the next Consultative Committee meeting.

07.EM.53 FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Chair invited representatives from the separate Community Groups present at the meeting to inform the Committee of any new initiatives or activities being pursued by their respective Groups.

Representatives from the Asian Women's Forum outlined the Forum's continuing outreach work and collaborations with other local agencies. The Women's Forum had offered particular assistance in the establishment of the Dosti Men's Forum.

Ayuub Patel reported that the Dosti Men's Forum would be officially launched at an event on 25 November 2007 and Ayuub thanked the Asian Women's Forum for their help and advice in the setting up of the Men's Forum.

07.EM.54 HM PRISON SERVICE

The Chair welcomed Steve Van from HM Prison Wymott, who had been invited to the meeting to advise the Committee of the opportunities available for local community groups to link with the Prison Service.

Steve referred to the work undertaken by RESPECT, which had been set up to assist prison staff affected by racial discrimination and/or racist attacks. The organisation had already arranged a number of events and sessions for Officers and prisoners on ethnicity related issues, and would welcome the extension of links between the Prison Service and local community groups and agencies to promote community cohesion and the rehabilitation of prisoners into the community.

Steve issued a general invitation to any interested group or organisation wishing to visit HM Prison Wymott, and/or organise an event in conjunction with the Prison Service, to contact him at the address to be supplied to Consultative Committee members.

07.EM.55 QUESTIONS

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

07.EM.56 LIBRARY SERVICE

Heather Aird promoted the Lancashire County Council's plans to encourage stronger links between the Council's Library service and local community and faith groups. Heather hoped that local groups would make use of the library facilities and support organised events. Heather also invited local groups to contact her, or her staff at the Chorley Central Library, if they wished to display suitable posters or exhibits to promote either the general aims of their groups or specific events.

07.EM.57 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The members noted that the next meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 20 February 2008.

Chair