

## **RACE ADVISORY FORUM**

**8<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at 6.15 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Mr. A.R. Malik – Pakistan Kashmir Welfare Association (Chair)  
Mr. A.R. Khan (Vice-Chair)  
Mr. P. Markland – African Caribbean Community Development Forum  
Mr. S. Roy – Bengali Hindu Cultural Association  
Dr. N. Khanum OBE – Luton Multi-Cultural Women's Coalition  
Mrs. A. Farthing – Victim Support (Racial Harassment)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. A. Abrahams – Luton Hebrew Congregation  
Mrs. B. Felson  
Ms. P. Stepney – Luton Equalities Agency  
Ms. L. Nicholls – Community Funding Manager  
Tracy Cowan – Extended Schools Strategy Manager  
Mrs. P. Manning – Performance and Support Services Manager, Department of Environment and Regeneration  
Mrs. M. Drummond – Equalities Support Officer, Department of Environment and Regeneration  
Mr. D. Williams – Transportation Planning Officer  
Mr. P. Cunningham – Traffic Engineering Team  
Mr. P. Jones – Head of Leisure and Community  
Mr. R. Nayer – Equalities Officer  
Mr. D. Collins – Operations Manager, Youth Offending Service  
Miss N. Boston – Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. M. Qureshi (Khidmat) and Ms. N. Kellett (Luton Irish Forum).

## **26 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)**

### **Matters Arising**

Minute 20 – Changes to Luton Carnival – Dr. Khanum referred to the fourth paragraph and enquired which community groups had opposed the adoption of Option 2 for the 2007 Carnival. The Equalities Officer responded that he did not have that information to hand but he understood that the opposition had surrounded inadequate consultation.

With regard to the fifth paragraph, Dr. Khanum further enquired what the current level of representation was by the various communities on the Carnival Planning Group. The Equalities Officer responded that again, he did not have that information to hand but he understood that representation from the Asian community was very low.

Dr. Khanum requested a copy of the balance sheet of income that the Council received from the Carnival. The Equalities Officer undertook to request the relevant Officers of the Council for this information.

**Resolved:** That, subject to the inclusion of Dr. Khanum's apologies being recorded, the Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **27 FEEDBACK FROM PREVIOUS FORUM MEETINGS (REF: 6)**

The Equalities Officer referred to Minute 23/07 and reported that he had written again to the 18 organisations that had not previously responded. He advised that in future agenda pages only would be sent to those organisations.

The Equalities Officer further reported that an advertisement had been placed in LutonLine to encourage new members to the Forum and following that advertisement, three applications had been received.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That it be agreed that agenda pages only will be sent in the future to the 18 organisations that had not responded to the further letter sent by the Equalities Officer.

## **28 TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES CRITERIA (REF: 7)**

The representative of the Traffic Engineering Team reported on the criteria for the area traffic calming programme of work.

Members were advised that requests and need required prioritisation. To do this, the Borough was divided into 25 fairly self-contained areas. The 25 areas were then assessed having regard to a number of factors such as the number of accidents, the index of multiple deprivation and the number and location of local community attractions.

Prioritisation was carried out by representatives from Council departments, bus operators and the emergency services. The priority list was being worked through methodically. Work had started four years ago and had now reached the 11<sup>th</sup> area. Traffic calming was very much based on what local people wanted.

There were two stages of consultation. Firstly, residents were asked what the problems were and what they thought the solutions would be. Following that, a design of the scheme would be prepared and residents were consulted again and asked if they were in favour or opposition to the scheme. Schemes were only introduced where the majority of residents were in favour of the measures. The priority list was reviewed every year.

Mr. Khan enquired to what extent did residents get involved in consultations. He was advised that 2 leaflet drops took place within the area concerned.

Following further enquiries raised by Mr. Khan, he was informed that the typical response rate to a consultation was between 10 to 15% and that if there was opposition to a scheme then Councillors would be recommended not to introduce it.

Mr. Khan enquired how consultation took place with regard to how many road humps there should be and the frequency of them. He was advised that residents were informed of the advantages and disadvantages of each measure and attempts were made to base the proposals on what residents wanted. There was also a requirement to speak to the Police and the emergency services about any proposals.

In response to a further question from Mr. Khan, he was informed that the Engineers designed the specifications of the measures and made sure the contractor built them correctly.

The Equalities Officer reported that the Forum had previously had concerns that in areas of high deprivation traffic calming measures were being applied with great severity. It was confirmed by the representative from the Traffic Engineering Team that this was not the case. He added that decisions in such cases were always taken following consultation with local residents.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## **29 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT SERVICE PLAN (REF: 8)**

The Head of Leisure and Community reported on the progress made on the Improvement Plan for the Community Development service.

Members were advised that in the main, actions in the Plan had now been completed.

Mr. Khan referred to there still being considerable work outside of the plan to undertake to resolve some of the work place cultures that had developed and enquired what this meant. The Head of Leisure and Community responded that in some parts of the Council there were high levels of sickness, grievance and complaints which had to some extent developed into a culture. He added that attempts were being made to address these issues early and to involve independent mediators if appropriate.

Mr. Khan enquired whether this indicated that the policies were not working satisfactorily. The Head of Leisure and Community responded that the report had said that policies had been applied inconsistently. He added that the interpretation of those policies should be constrained so that they could be applied consistently.

The Chair referred to where the report stated that human resources involvement was part of all selection processes and enquired if this meant the recruitment aspect. The Head of Leisure and Community responded that their involvement was predominantly in recruitment.

Dr. Khanum stated that there needed to be a proper mechanism in place for the training of managers in equal opportunities law, etc. In addition, she commented that Councillors needed to be trained as well.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

### **30 ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION DEPARTMENT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS PROGRESS REPORT (REF: 9)**

The Performance and Support Services Manager (Environment and Regeneration Department) reported on progress with regard to equality impact assessments.

**Resolved:** (i) That the progress of equality impact assessments due for completion by November 2007, and, the reasons for deferment of equality impact assessments to 2008/09 be noted.

(ii) That the summaries of the equality impact assessments carried out for the Local Transport Plan 2, Extension of Burial Service and Children's Play Strategy carried out be noted.

### **31 WORK OF THE LUTON YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE (REF: 10)**

The Operations Manager of the Youth Offending Service reported that the service was a statutory organisation working with young people aged 10-17 years because of their offending behaviour by either the Police or the Courts.

Members were advised that the service is an established partnership with staff from agencies such as the Police, health, probation service, Connexions and the local authority working together. It was created when the Crime Disorder Act 1998 was introduced.

The Operations Manager reported that there was a need to make more links with black and minority ethnic groups/charities in the town. Although the Youth Offending Service had some good links in the Town, the Operations Manager was aware that there were many more groups and charities in the Town that were working towards the same aims of reducing offending. Any contact would be welcomed.

The service also had a prevention arm as well for children and young people who were at high risk of offending or committing anti-social behaviour. There are also parenting teams to work with families of young people who have offended or at risk of offending.

The Luton Youth Offending Service had commissioned the National Association of Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) to see if young black Afro Caribbean and those of mixed parentage were over represented in the secure estate. It looked at whether there were indications of any institutionalised racism within the Youth Justice System in Luton. Although the report was not yet available, it showed that whereas there is

an over representation of Black British youths in the secure estate, it was not the case that the Courts or the pre-sentence reports written by Luton YOS were overly biased against this group. The report makes a number of recommendations to tackle these issues.

If members of the Forum required further information about the service they should visit the Council's website: [www.luton.gov.uk/youthoffending](http://www.luton.gov.uk/youthoffending).

Mr. Markland enquired whether any work was being undertaken at Marsh Farm. The Operations Manager responded that two meetings had taken place and that an action plan had been drawn up.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

### **32 REVISED EQUALITY POLICY (REF: 11)**

The Equalities Officer reported on the revised Equality Policy.

Members were advised that the Policy was last reviewed in 2003 and since that time there had been numerous changes in equality legislation. This had required a revision of the Policy. The document focussed on policy only as the strategic element was already covered in the Equalities Policy framework within the Corporate Equality Scheme.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

### **33 UPDATE ON ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION TO THE EQUALITY STANDARD (REF: 12)**

The Equalities Officer reported that independent assessors appointed by the Audit Commission would be undertaking an audit to see if the Council could progress to level 3 of the equality standard. The assessment would take place on 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Two members of the Forum were sought to make up a joint forum group of approximately 6 to 8 members who would meet the assessors at 1.30 p.m. on 31<sup>st</sup> October at the Town Hall.

**Resolved:** (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Chair and Mrs. Farthing be nominated as the Forum's representatives on the joint forum group.

#### **34 APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP (REF: 13)**

The Equalities Officer reported on the receipt of three applications for membership of the Race Advisory Forum.

The applications were received from Mr. A. Abrahams representing The Luton Hebrew Congregation, Mrs. B. Felson (individual membership) and Mr. Kubir (individual membership).

The Forum's attention was drawn to the fact that Mr. Kubir was an officer of the Council and the advice of the Equalities Unit was that officers should not be considered for membership of the Forum as it could potentially compromise the independent status of the Forum and/or present a conflict of interest.

**Resolved:** (i) That Mr. Abrahams and Mrs. Felson be approved as members of the Forum.

(ii) That consideration of Mr. Kubir's application for individual membership be deferred until the next meeting of the Forum.

**(Note: Mrs. Felson apologised for arriving late at the meeting and asked for it to be recorded that she had been informed of the incorrect start time by the Chief Executive's Department.)**

#### **35 WORK PROGRAMME (REF: 14)**

The Chief Executive (Head of Local Democracy) updated the Forum on the details of the latest version of its Work Programme.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

#### **36 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (REF: 15)**

None.

**(Note: (1) As the meeting was inquorate from Agenda Item 11 the views expressed on those items would require ratification at the next meeting.**

**(2) The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.)**