

RACE ADVISORY FORUM

3rd April 2006 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mrs. R. Davis – African Caribbean Arena
Mr. P. Markland – African Caribbean Community Development Forum
Mrs. J. Matthews – EQFA Recruitment Solutions
Mrs. J. Bullock – Luton & District St Vincent & the Grenadines Association
Mrs. N. Kellett – Luton Irish Forum
Dr N. Khanum OBE – Luton Multi-Cultural Women's Coalition
Mr. A. R Malik – Pakistan Muslim Association
Mr. N. Solanki – Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj
Mr. A. R. Khan – Bangladeshi Self Support Society

IN ATTENDANCE: Val Grant – Head of Equalities
Raj Nayer – Policy Officer (Race)
Chris Goulding – Head of Human Resources
Hazel Burgess – HR Manager (Children and Learning and Schools)
Sandra Legate – Equalities Manager (Housing and Community Living)
Maureen Drummond – Equalities Support Officer (Environment & Regeneration)
Pauline Manning – Performance & Support Services Manager (Environment & Regeneration)
John Harper – Head of Local Democracy

9 ELECTION OF CHAIR (REF:1)

The Head of Local Democracy advised that the following persons had been nominated for the position of Chair for 2006/2007:

Joycelin Bullock	–	Luton & District St Vincent & the Grenadines Assoc.
Rose Davis	–	African Caribbean Arena
Noreen Kellett	–	Luton Irish Forum
Dr Nazia Khanum OBE	–	Luton Multi-Cultural Women's Coalition
Mobeen Qureshi	–	Khidmat

Dr Khanum OBE declared that she was not willing for her nomination to go forward.

Resolved: After a secret ballot resulted in a tied vote for Rose Davis and Noreen Kellett, with 4 votes each, it was resolved that:

- i) Rose Davis and Noreen Kellett be elected Joint Chairs of the Race Advisory Forum for 2006/2007
- ii) Rose Davis take the Chair for the meeting
- iii) The Forum express their thanks to Mr Abdul R Malik for his work as Chair of the Forum for the past 3 years
- iii) At the next meeting Mr Abdul R Malik be invited to make a presentation on the work of the Forum during 2005/2006

(NOTE: The outgoing Chair, Mr Abdul R Malik, advised the Forum that he would not be standing for re-election although he considered he was still eligible to stand)

10 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR (REF: 2)

The Head of Local Democracy advised that the following persons had been nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Forum for 2006/2007:

Mrs U Bakshi	–	Pragati Women's Group
Joycelin Bullock	–	Luton & District St Vincent & the Grenadines Association
A R Khan	–	Bangladeshi Self Support Society
S Khan	–	Luton Educational Cultural Centre
J Thakoordin	–	Luton Committee for Racial Harmony

After a secret ballot the votes cast were as follows:

Joycelin Bullock	–	5 votes
A R Khan	–	4 votes
Mrs U Bakshi)	
S Khan)	No votes
J Thakoordin)	

Resolved: That Joycelin Bullock is hereby elected Vice-Chair of the Forum for 2006/2007

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 3)

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of J Thakoordin (Luton Committee for Racial Harmony).

12 MINUTES (REF: 4)

Resolved: That subject to the addition of the word “representative” after the word “Forum’s” in the resolution, the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2006 were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Joint Chair

13 REFERENCE FROM EXECUTIVE – WORKFORCE COMPOSITION IN SCHOOLS 2004/2005 (REF: 6.1)

The Human Resources Manager (Children and Learning and Schools) presented a report in regard to the current composition of the workforce in schools and the comparison of outcomes with previous years.

She referred to a letter, which had been submitted by Mr Thakoordin of the Luton Committee for Racial Harmony, which had been tabled at the meeting. She commented that a response had been drafted and advised the Forum of the principle points of that response.

The Human Resources Manager (Children and Learning and Schools) reported that the response rate for 2005 was an improvement on the previous year with a 91% rate for employees compared with 71% for 2004.

She reminded the Forum that the survey on workforce composition was entirely voluntary for employees but that a lot of work had been undertaken with schools to increase the level of response.

The Forum was reminded that the responsibility for the recruitment, dismissal and training of school-based employees (including teaching staff) was the responsibility of schools.

Resolved: (i) That a copy of the response to Mr Thakoordin referred to by the Human Resources Manager (Children and Learning and Schools) be circulated to the Members of the Forum with the Agenda for the next meeting.

(ii) That Alison Batten 14-19 Director be invited to attend the next meeting of the Forum on 5th June 2006 to give a short presentation on “Campus Luton”.

14 RECRUITMENT STATISTICS (REF: 7.1)

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report updating the Forum on the queries raised by them (at Minute 44/05) on recruitment statistics for the 6 month period ending 30 June 2005.

He advised the Forum of the work which had been undertaken, or was proposed to be undertaken, to increase the level of black and minority ethnic appointments. This work included:

- Representative Interview Panels
- Vacancy list to go to all community groups in the town
- Job Centre Plus initiative on Marsh Farm
- Plans to host interview technique sessions for people wanting to apply for jobs

The Forum welcomed the initiatives outlined by the Head of Human Resources and congratulated him on his report.

Resolved: That the Head of Human Resources be requested to report further on recruitment statistics at the meeting of the Forum to be held on 9 October 2006.

15 DRAFT EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN GUIDANCE (REF: 8.1)

The Head of Equalities submitted the draft departmental equality action plans for consideration by the Forum and she identified the 4 key themes and objectives, which had been adopted by the Council. These themes and objectives reflected the key performance areas outlined in the Equality Standard and current legislation.

Resolved: (i) That the Head of Equalities submit a report on the comparison of targets and outcomes for 2005/2006 to the next meeting of the Forum

(ii) That any amendments to the draft departmental equality action plans proposed by Forum Members be submitted to the Head of Equalities at grantv@luton.gov.uk

(iii) That the Head of Equalities be requested to submit a report in regards to the legislation which is currently in force and to which departments have to have regard in preparing their equality action plans to the next meeting of the Forum

16 LUTON EQUALITY AGENCY (REF: 8.2)

The Head of Equalities reported that an indication had been received from the Home Office that it was unlikely to support the Council's funding application for the establishment of a Luton Equality Agency. It did appear, however, that funding would still be available from the Commission for Racial Equality.

The Forum were further advised that an approach had been made to the Luton Assembly to discuss the immediate issues which needed to be addressed to secure the release of the Commission's funding.

Resolved: That the report be noted

17 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (REF: 9.1)

The Forum received proposals for the dates and times of meetings to be held in the 2006/2007 Municipal Year.

Resolved: That Meetings of the Forum be held at 7.00 p.m. at the Town Hall on the following dates:

- Monday 5th June 2006
- Monday 7th August 2006
- Monday 9th October 2006
- Monday 4th December 2006
- Monday 5th February 2007
- Monday 2nd April 2007 (Annual General Meeting)

18 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS (REF: 10)

Resolved: That the items mentioned below be submitted to the meetings indicated:

5th June 2006

- Outgoing Chair's report
- Presentation by Alison Batten 14-19 Director
- 2005/2006 equality action plan outturn comparisons

9th October 2006

- Recruitment statistics

(Note: The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.)