

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

29 MARCH 2004

Chair: Councillor N Shah

Councillors: \* Arnold \* Lavingia (1)  
 \* Bluston Omar  
 \* Janet Cowan \* Anjana Patel  
 \* Currie (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

\* Denotes Member present  
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

**[NB Attendance at this meeting by representatives of community organisations and representatives of the Local Authority is recorded at Appendix 1].**

## PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

## PART II - MINUTES

72. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor N Shah	Councillor Lavingia

73. **Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
6.	Councillor Bluston	Declared a Personal Interest in that he is a member of the Shadow Board of the ALMO
6.	Councillor Currie	Declared a Personal Interest in that he is a member of the Shadow Board of the ALMO

74. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

**RESOLVED:** That (1) agenda item 5 – Presentation by Harrow African-Caribbean Association, be considered before agenda item 4 – Progress Report on Meals on Wheels Service;

(2) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following item be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency listed below:-

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances / Grounds for Urgency</u>
7. Update Report on Harrow Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy	The draft Community Strategy was not finalised at the time of the meeting, so a report was presented at the meeting that explained the principles of the Strategy.

[It was also indicated that the draft Strategy would be published on Harrow Council's website for information, as it had been from the beginning of its development. Paper copies were available upon request to the officer.]

(3) all items be taken with the press and public present.

75. **Presentation by Harrow African-Caribbean Association:**

The Forum received a presentation by Trevor Chisholm, Chair of Harrow African Caribbean Association.

The Association's background and aims were explained to members. Members noted that the Association's mission was to unite the African and Caribbean people in Harrow, which arose from challenges faced by the Police and communities in Harrow in the late 80s. The Association formalised its constitution in 1991 and had operated as a voluntary group since that time.

It was emphasised that the Association relied upon funding from the Council and other external bodies to facilitate the Association's work. It was also mentioned that art and crafts made by elderly people who participated in organised activities like cloth painting were sold to generate revenue. Members who had contributed to the development of the Association were exemplified. It was also explained that much of the work carried out by staff was voluntary.

The Chair advised the Forum of the following successes achieved:

- Day Centre on Fridays between 11.30 am and 4.00 pm, which was attended by 30 elderly people;
- Organised day trips;
- Established accommodation at Community Premises;
- General meetings took place on issues that affected the black community;
- Dinner and dances attended by ambassadors and politicians;
- Participation in Black History Month;
- Dance School; and
- IT classes

It was also noted that general meetings, which were open to the public, focused upon social issues that affected the Black communities, like: educational under-achievement of Black boys, stop and search, diabetes and community policing.

It was indicated that the following areas would be concentrated upon in the coming months to maximise the Association's work:

- Greater engagement by younger people with the Association's work;
- Education issues, for instance encouraging parents to become Governors in schools;
- Expanding day services for elderly clients, such as visiting the sick in their homes;
- Suitable accommodation to house HACAS services;
- Further funding for services provided;
- Organised trips to theatre productions; and
- Increased partnership working with voluntary and statutory groups.

A community representative asked what partnerships had HACAS formed in education to address the problem of Black boys' educational under-achievement. The Chair of the Association responded by saying there were a great deal of options available to the Association to explore, such as mentoring schemes. It was indicated that a meeting would be called shortly to establish a way forward on that issue.

A community representative enquired how united the Association was in meeting the needs of the African communities that live within the borough. The Chair responded by saying the Association exists for Caribbean and African people and did not preclude any groups from using facilities. It was re-emphasised that this year would yield greater partnership working with a number of voluntary and community groups, which would in turn create more awareness of the Association's services.

The Chair of the Forum thanked Trevor Chisholm, Chair of the Association, for presenting at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the above information be noted.

76. **Progress Report on Meals on Wheels Service:**

The Forum received a report of the Head of Community Care, which was reported by Marilyn Vertes, Community Care Development Manager and Vijay Malik, Equalities Manager.

Members were reminded of the background surrounding Indian vegetarian meals and the Forum's involvement in a resolution being reached. The report was summarised to members for their information.

A community representative asked what 'Indian vegetarian' meant. The Community Care Development Manager responded by saying it referred to those who were Gujarati, however, it was thought that this should not deter other Indian vegetarians from eating those meals.

A community representative queried how direct payments would work, which was detailed in the officer report. The Community Care Development Manager explained that people who were eligible for Meals on Wheels would have the autonomy to buy their own meals instead of receiving it from the service.

A Member asked a supplementary question related to who would be paid for providing hot meals via direct payment. It was anticipated by the Community Care Development Manager that users would buy their meals from supermarkets and restaurants; relatives or someone who lived with person could not be paid for cooking meals.

A community representative queried the take up rate for African-Caribbean meals. The Community Care Development Manager indicated that she did not believe it was highly subscribed and that she knew of one person who had the meal.

A community representative commented that it would be worthwhile working with HACAS to publicise the service to its members, as the take-up rate might suggest that people were not aware of the service and types of meals provided. The Equalities Manager responded by saying people who were identified as having a need were assessed and issued meals. It was suggested that community representatives could also assist the Council by cascading information received to their members.

A community representative indicated that he was apart of a working group that looked at the Meals on Wheels service, and said that there had been an intention to have a tasting session for African Caribbean meals but this had never come to fruition, so that might be an indication of why the take-up rate was low. The Community Care Development Manager said that she would look into the matter.

A community representative queried the price of meals provided by the service. The Community Care Development Manager indicated that, from 1 April 2004 all the hot meals would be priced at £2.60, frozen meals at £2.50.

A Member requested further clarification on those who would receive hot meals by the service in the future. The Business Support Manager re-emphasised that, in order to provide equitable basis for people to receive the service, it was proposed that people who were unable to use kitchen equipment to reheat frozen meals because of a physical, sensory or mental health problem or severe learning disability would receive hot meals. People whose strict religious practices made frozen meals inappropriate or unacceptable and those that could not cope or had no-one who could assist them with direct payments would also qualify for hot meals.

**RESOLVED:** That the initial findings and plans for future progress be noted.

77. **Presentation regarding the Black and Minorities Ethnic Housing Strategy:**

The Forum received a presentation from the Strategy and Research Manager.

Members were informed that the Council was working to produce a strategy that highlighted current demographics and living arrangements in Harrow and would include inequalities or specific issues. It was also mentioned that an action plan would be developed to address issues raised.

It was emphasised that the Council had to embrace the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, McPherson report and the Audit Commission's recommendation from a recent Best Value Inspection; it was anticipated by the Strategy and Research Manager that the Strategy would foster good practices for the Council and benefit the borough. It was stated that the Strategy would be in place by July 2004.

It was explained that the Strategy would achieve the following:

- Understand the needs and aspirations of residents with different cultural and religious backgrounds;
- Work in partnership with the community and other service providers to address local needs;
- Work to eliminate discrimination and inequality in services provided;
- Ensure services were accessible and appropriate for all residents of Harrow; and
- Deliver quality services and achieve greater level of satisfaction.

It was thought that the Forum's input in the Strategy would be appreciated.

During the discussion community representatives asked a number of questions in relation to the Housing directorate, particularly the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), which was outside of the Strategy and Research Manager's remit. As a consequence of that, it was recommended by the Chair that it would be more appropriate for a Housing officer working on ALMO to attend a future Forum meeting to answer community representatives' questions, which was agreed by the Forum.

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation regarding the Black and Minorities Ethnic Housing Strategy be noted.

78. **Update Report on the Harrow Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy:**  
The Manager of the Strategic Partnership Section delivered a verbal presentation based upon the developments of the Community Strategy. Additionally a report of the Executive Director (Organisational Development) was tabled at the meeting for Forum members' information.

The Forum was informed that they were supposed to have received a draft Community Strategy in advance of the meeting, but this had proved impossible due to it not being finalised.

It was stressed to members that the Strategy indicated the current plans of the Council and other public sector partners as well as the voluntary and community sectors. The Manager advised that the HSP would monitor the Strategy and progress made against action points by service providers, in order to promote equality and ensure life opportunities. It was noted that the Strategy was for a ten-year period and was anticipated to be launched at the HSP Summit on 19 May 2004.

The Manager further informed members that a second document would be produced which would indicate the HSP's action in addressing issues of inequality in the borough as well as planning for economic, social and environmental changes that might occur over the next 10 years.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

79. **Verbal Report on Community Cohesion:**  
The Manager of the Strategic Partnership Section delivered a verbal presentation based on Community Cohesion.

Members were reminded of the rationale behind the Community Cohesion agenda and the existence of the West London Pathfinder project that included Brent, Hillingdon, Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing, Hounslow. Members were informed that a joint publication between the Greater London Authority and the West London Alliance had been launched in Harrow in February (2004) by the Mayor for London. It was suggested that the publication represented a commitment to the Community Cohesion principles.

The Forum was informed that the Council was continuing to explore ways in which to integrate Community Cohesion principles into its working practices, and that each directorate would be encouraged to address those principles in their service plans. Members were also informed that the Harrow Strategic Partnership had decided to establish a Community Cohesion Reference Group to ensure that local partners embraced the commitment.

A community representative queried whether the Council would hold a borough wide event on the subject for the community, like other councils had. The Manager of the Strategic Partnership Section indicated that this was subject to resources, and would need to be discussed by officers before a decision could be reached. The decision would be reported back at the next Forum meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.

80. **Open Forum:**

The Chair called for suggestions of topics for discussion at future meetings. Members put forward the following ideas:

- Information on ALMO
- SSI Inspection of Services for Disabled People

**RESOLVED:** That the above ideas be noted.

81. **Public Questions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put at meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

82. **Petitions:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no petitions received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

83. **Deputations:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

84. **Minutes:**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2004 be deferred until printed in the next Council Bound Minute Volume.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.40 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BOB CURRIE  
Vice-Chair in the Chair