

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

12 APRIL 2005

Chair: * Councillor Nana Asante

Councillors: * Arnold * Lavingia
* Janet Cowan * Omar
* Currie * Anjana Patel

* Denotes Member present

[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**135. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

136. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

137. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

(i) **Appointment of Vice-Chair (Minute 122)**

To amend the minute to read:

“The Chair expressed concern that this item was on the agenda again given that Councillor Currie had been appointed as Vice Chair at the previous meeting of the Forum. After being informed that a further appointment to the office would be required, one nomination was received and seconded.

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Janet Cowan as Vice-Chair of the Community Consultative Forum for the remainder of the 2004/2005 Municipal Year.”

(ii) **Representatives of Community Organisations who Attended (Appendix 1)**

To correct the record of the representatives and organisations, as follows:

M Rizvi	Pakistan Society of Harrow
K Omar	Harrow Islamic Society

138. **Public Questions:**

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

139. **Petitions:**

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

140. **Deputations:**

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

141. **Presentations by Community Groups:**

The Forum received presentations from two voluntary organisations operating within the Borough. The first was delivered by a representative from Harrow Women's Centre, who familiarised the Forum with the structure of the organisation and the services that it provided to women in Harrow.

The Forum was informed that the Women's Centre offered advice and advocacy, counselling, advice on domestic violence issues and free pregnancy testing to women, as well as offering additional services such as alternative therapies and social events. The representative advised that the counsellors at the Centre represented a wide range of ages, ethnicities and cultural and social backgrounds, allowing a counsellor to be specially selected to meet the needs of an individual.

In the discussion that followed, the representative identified young women as a group that the Centre would like to increase engagement with, and it was suggested that more young volunteers might attract younger women to the Centre. The Forum was informed that the majority of counselling provided was for relationship issues, although a wider range of issues were covered, and that the demand for the services provided by the Centre varied depending on the nature of the cases that they were dealing with.

The second presentation was delivered by a representative from the Somali Family Support Group, a national organisation funded by the Association of London Government, who were looking to expand their agenda within Harrow. The Forum was informed of the extensive partnerships formed by the organisation with groups within the private, statutory and voluntary sectors, as well as the services that the Group provided to individuals within the community. The representative informed the Forum that the Group's work had been recognised with awards, including the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2004, and added that the Somali Family Support Group was the first Somali organisation to receive this award.

The representative emphasised that a dedicated team of volunteers formed the backbone of the organisation, and that it would not be able to reach such high levels without them. The representative agreed to consider an invitation to join with a Somali umbrella organisation, and accepted an offer from a Member of the Forum to arrange a visit to the Group from the Community Safety Team.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

142. **Next Steps in the Community Engagement Strategy:**

The Forum received a verbal report from the Service Manager (Policy and Partnership) that provided an update on the progress of the Community Engagement Strategy, which had been presented in its draft format to the Forum at its last meeting.

The Forum was informed that the officers had received a large number of comments on the Strategy from associations in the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP), which had been incorporated into the draft report. The Officer added that there had been a slight delay in producing the final Strategy, which had resulted from a desire to incorporate the results from a Council review of engagement into the final Strategy. The officer hoped that this would ensure that the views of both the Council and the community would be represented in the final Strategy.

The officer encouraged the organisations present to attend the public consultations on engagement, to help the authority to understand what methods of engagement worked and how engagement could be improved.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

143. **Update on the Community Strategy:**

An officer introduced a report of the Director of Organisational Performance, that provided an update on the progress made with the implementation of the Community Strategy, launched by the HSP in May 2004. The officer focused on how the Strategy would be monitored to ensure that it was fulfilling the priorities of the local community. The Forum was informed that monitoring would take place over the first three years of the Strategy, and that the results of the monitoring exercise for 2004 would be presented to the Forum as soon as they became available, to involve community and voluntary organisations in the development of the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That officers present the results of the monitoring exercise on the Community Strategy for 2004 to the Forum when they become available.

144. **Report from the Work Programme Group:**

The Chair introduced the verbal report from the Work Programme Group, which was given by a community representative who served on the Group. The Group had been established at the last meeting of the Forum on 26 January 2005 to propose a work programme for the Forum, and to address concerns regarding mutual communication between the community and voluntary sectors and the Council.

The community representative presented the key issues and priorities identified by the Work Programme Group to the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

145. **Discussion on the Work Programme:**

Following on from the presentation given under the previous agenda item (Minute 144 above refers), the Chair invited the Forum to comment on and expand upon the priorities and issues raised in the presentation. Members of the Forum agreed that the discussion that had arisen from the presentation had been energetic, and expressed their disappointment that more time could not have been devoted to it.

Members of the Forum raised the following points, which supported the feedback from the Work Programme Group, as outlined below:

(i) **Understanding and Engaging with the Council**Meetings of the Community Consultative Forum

- Provision of pre-meetings for community groups before the main meeting of the Forum would allow the groups to consolidate their opinions and make the meetings more constructive;
- seating arrangements in the meeting could be amended to facilitate discussion between groups;
- is the timing and location of the meetings convenient for community groups? Issue debatable, no 'right answer';
- inviting members of the wider community, ie not just black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, could make the Forum more inclusive and improve race relations;
- improving the advertisement of the meetings;
- officer support for groups wishing to present – more guidance from officers on what is expected of a group presenting would be helpful;
- making the meetings more interesting by addressing issues relevant to the community groups;
- co-ordinating the work of the different committees addressing community concerns to avoid duplication.

Understanding the structure of the Council and how to work effectively with it

- Understanding how the decision making process works, and how organisations can engage effectively with the Council; for example, by presenting public questions to a meeting;
- understanding the political and officer structure within the Council, and learning how best to work with it.

Partnership

- Issue of whether partnership with the Council is rhetoric or a reality;
- a need for meaningful engagement and effective partnership on a day-to-day basis with the Council, and for the Council to listen more actively to the needs of the community;
- community awareness of the services available to them, through timely engagement.

Council databases

- Provision of a central database of community and voluntary organisations that is accessible to all.

(ii) **Funding**

- Organisations requested greater transparency in the breakdown of Council funding, especially in relation to BME organisations;
- the development a more accessible application process without too much jargon;

- organisations wished to be provided with a list of the groups currently with Service Level Agreements (SLA), and a breakdown of BME groups within this bracket and the services that they provide.

(iii) **Voluntary sector issues/needs**

Premises for community groups

- A need to increase the amount of premises for community groups in Harrow, and increase funding support to groups who vacate the Community Premises;
- it was suggested that the Council could subsidise rental space for the community groups.

Understanding of other community groups

- Developing greater awareness of community groups and the services that they provide;
- a suggestion was made that a self-registration website like the Harrow Business Portal would improve networking between organisations;
- greater understanding of how to work with bigger organisations such as the Harrow Association of Voluntary Services (HAVS), and how to access the HAVS directory;
- avoiding duplication amongst organisations, and increased understanding of the function of umbrella organisations.

(iii) **Services provided by the Council**

Service Provision

- Access to Council services should be made easier, avoiding the “run-around syndrome”;
- statistics provided on waiting lists for services such as Meals on Wheels and Day Care need to be provided, and a breakdown of who accesses these services.

Black History Month (BHM)

- To provide a separate meeting of the Forum devoted to BHM.

In response to a Member’s query about BME Lunch Clubs, the Forum was informed that the Harrow African-Caribbean Association, based at the Community Premises, provided a luncheon club on Fridays between 11.00 am and 4.00 pm.

A Member of the Forum stated that he hoped the issues raised by the organisations would result in positive changes to the Council’s engagement through the Forum. The Chair responded that the energy surrounding the ideas generated would carry them forward, and that the Councillors on the Forum were committed to representing the community.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted and incorporated into the future work programme of the Community Consultative Forum.

146. **Community Concerns:**

(i) Community Premises

The Chair received a list of concerns from different ethnic minority organisations working in the Community Premises at 27 Northolt Road, South Harrow. The Chair informed the Forum that a review was currently underway to assess how the Community Premises served the community groups that occupied them and how to improve the current arrangements. The Chair added that those currently occupying the premises would be contacted shortly so that the review group could meet the individuals to hear their concerns. She emphasised that rumours being circulated that the Council wanted to move organisations out of the premises without just cause were unfounded.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

147. **Any Other Business:**

(i) Connaught Opera

Connaught Opera, an organisation that had received funding from Harrow Council and the Association of London Government, wished to perform

concerts for older people during Black History Month (BHM), and asked the Forum to suggest Luncheon Clubs and other events frequented by older people where they could go during BHM and perform suitable musicals.

- (ii) Black History Month (BHM) Questionnaire
The Chair encouraged Members of the Forum to complete the questionnaire on BHM provided at the meeting, asking Members to pay particular attention to question 7, which relating to organisations' preferences for a theme for next year's events.
- (iii) Harrow Leisure Centre
The standard of the facilities and services provided by the Harrow Leisure Centre were identified as an ongoing issue for the Forum that would be addressed at a future meeting.
- (iv) Report on Faith Communities within Harrow
A Community Development Officer told the Forum of an analysis she was performing of the needs and aspirations of the faith communities in Harrow, and expressed a wish to contact the organisations present to hear about their faith. The work was based at the Harrow Association of Voluntary Service, and funded by Harrow Council.
- (v) Community Event
A representative from Kala Anjali Arts Circle wished to advertise an Indian Music Festival to be held at the Kadwa Patidar Centre on 20 April at 7.30pm, and informed the Forum that tickets costing £5.00 were available from the Teachers' Centre.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.40 pm, closed at 9.35 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE
Chair

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM – 12 APRIL 2005**(1) Representatives of Community Organisations who Attended**

Faiza Mohamed	Somali Family Support Group
Qarshel	“ “
Fahad Mohamed	“ “
Kanti Nagda	Sangat Centre
Ms. Serwah	BTWSC
Sonoo Malkani	HPCCG
Mohamed Ali	Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations
Deven Pillay	Harrow Mencap
Jenny Wilson	HPCCG
Pravina Patel	Harrow Victim Support
Dawn Sewell	The Salvation Army
Captain Kingsley	“ “
Captain Paula Layton	“ “
Pat Turner	HACAS
B Sharma	Harrow Anti-Racist Alliance
Punitha Perinparaja	Kala Anjali Arts Circle
Mohammad Rizvi	Pakistan Society of Harrow
Lauretta Johnnie	HAVS
Mary Kanu	Development Support Agency
Michelle McKenzie	Harrow Council for Racial Equality
Alex da Costa	Angolan Civic Community Alliance
	Harrow Refugee Forum
Jesse Mashate	SAHARA
Amina Mohamed	Drug and Alcohol Services Turning Point, Ealing
Sonia Mohamed	“ “
L Gorasia	Hindu Council (Harrow)
	Kutch Madhpar Karyalay (UK)
M Yak	N'Kanda African Women Family Academy and Support
Moji Sorunke	IJAPA
Dr. Rahim	Harrow Bengalee Association

(2) Officers who Attended

Bindu Arjoon	Service Manager, Policy and Partnership
Vijay Malik	Equal Opportunities Development Manager
John Kennedy	Area Manager, School and Community Services
Samia Malik	Area Manager, Children's Service
Betty Lynch	ACPC Policy and Performance Coordinator

(3) Councillors who Attended (not members of the Community Consultative Forum)

Councillor Mark Ingram

(4) Apologies received (Community Representatives and Officers)

Paul Clark	Director of Children's Services
Puspinder Chowdhry	Tongues on Fire
Pete White	Yeldall Homeless Projects
Trevor Chisolm	HACAS
Satya Samaj	Vinod Lodhai
Eileen Martle	Harrow Family Learning Network
Heather Johnson	Paddington Law Centre
Representative	Special Connection