

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

30 JUNE 2004

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**85. **Appointment of Chair:**

RESOLVED: To note the appointment under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 2 of Councillor Nana Asante as Chair of the Forum for the 2004/2005 Municipal Year, as agreed at the meeting of Cabinet held on 20 May 2004.

86. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

87. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

| <u>Agenda Item</u> | <u>Member</u> | <u>Nature of Interest</u> |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 10. ALMO Update | Councillor Currie | Declared a personal interest in that he is a Member of the Shadow Board of the ALMO |
| 12. Update Report on the Planning of Black History Month 2004 | Councillor Nana Asante | Declared a personal interest in that she is a Member of the community group. |

88. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

89. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**

Further to the agenda item in this matter and the nomination now made it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Currie be appointed Vice-Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2004/2005.

90. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

91. **Petitions, Deputations and Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Petitions, Deputations or Public Questions received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 13, 14, 15 respectively (Part 4E of the Constitution).

92. **ALMO Update:**

The Forum received a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living) on the progress of the ALMO.

A Member was disappointed that the report presented was not as requested by the Forum and that an officer was not at the meeting to present the report and answer questions, as had been requested at a previous meeting. The Chair agreed with the comments made and that a report answering the question 'What is an ALMO?' should

be prepared.

RESOLVED: That (1) an officer from the Housing department attend the next meeting of the Forum;

(2) a relevant report be produced.

(See also Minute 87).

93. **Results of Mapping of Health Access for Afghan, Iranian and Somali Refugees and Asylum Seekers:**

The Forum received a presentation from Ibrahim Farah, Refugee Access and Development Worker of Harrow Council for Racial Equality.

Mr Farah explained the difficulties faced by the refugee community regarding healthcare. With limited funds research was carried out within the refugee and asylum seeker community with the aim of addressing those difficulties within the healthcare system. As there was limited funding the research was largely based on the Afghan, Iranian and Somali communities.

The aims and objectives were as follows:-

- To highlight gaps in the service provision & barriers to accessing healthcare.
- To identify the routes refugees and asylum seekers take into healthcare.
- To identify where best to target resources.
- To make a series of recommendations to service providers.

A list of 70 questions were asked at focus groups held within each community. Some of the key findings were as follows:-

- 6 months plus waiting list for Afghan and Somali heads of families;
- lengthy waiting times for disabled refugees for GP registration;
- one GP refusing registration;
- lack of explanation and understanding of the NHS system;
- very negative response to the language barrier;
- positive feedback regarding childbirth and childcare facilities;
- the lack of confidentiality particularly in Reception areas;
- no home support for the elderly apart from their families.

In response to one of the findings, Masood Farooqi, General Practitioner and a member of the Islamic and Cultural Society of Harrow expressed surprise at the lack of co-operation from GP surgeries. He urged everyone to contact the Primary Care Trust (PCT) should they experience any difficulties with their surgery, as the PCT had invested money into making such facilities more accessible to the refugee community. He also explained that the length of time on a waiting list in most cases was due to the fact that the person's status was not clear and needed to be investigated.

The Chair of the Forum thanked Mr Farah for his presentation at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

94. **Update Report on the Planning of Black History Month 2004:**

The Manager of the Strategic Partnership Section delivered a verbal presentation on the progress made on the planning for Black History Month 2004.

The officer explained that Harrow Council had been working together with community organisations to develop plans for this year's Black History Month (BHM). To oversee this a steering group and two sub-groups had been established. The sub-groups' aims were to gather funds for events/publicity, as defined by their terms of reference. The distinction between the groups was that the BHM Forum was comprised of groups who did not wish to take a proactive interest in planning any of the events, while the sub-groups and steering group consisted of proactive members who were also eligible for funding. To secure funding organised events had to relate to this year's theme which was the history of migration and involved work with schools.

The Chair stated that the aim was to encourage people to explore their ancestry and explain how they had eventually settled in Harrow. The idea was about how people moved around the world and it was hoped the associated events would strengthen community cohesion. It was confirmed that over 1,200 community groups had been invited to participate.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

(See also Minute 87).

95. **Community Strategy for Harrow and Partnership Planning for the Future:**
The Forum considered a tabled report of the Executive Director (Organisational Development) regarding the future planning of Harrow's Community Strategy.

An officer drew the Forum's attention to the new Board Members of the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) who were from the voluntary and community sector, and she urged Forum Members to contact the Board Members should they have any issues to raise. The Board Members were under an obligation to raise issues and take action where necessary to ensure that the HSP was being informed of issues relevant to the community and voluntary sector. The Members were:-

- Kris Fryer – Director, Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Mike Coker – Director, Community Link UP
- Janet Smith – Director, Mind in Harrow
- Asoke Dutta – Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS)

The officer explained that the HSP objectives were to create initiatives which would bring the community together. The aim this year was to focus on those areas in Harrow which were identified as requiring particular attention. 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.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

96. **Development of a Consultation Strategy and Involvement Strategy:**
The Manager of the Strategic Partnership Section gave a verbal presentation on the progress made on the Consultation and Involvement Strategy.

The officer informed Members that consultation was an on-going exercise amongst public sector bodies like the Council and Primary Care Trust (PCT). The Strategy was being developed in order to make consultation involvement more meaningful and with a view to implementing the recommendations. The information was being collated from previously gathered consultations, and the draft outcome would be presented to a future meeting of the Forum for comments.

The Chair reminded everyone that the Council was undertaking a review of grants to voluntary organisations, and urged stakeholders to participate in the workshops and respond to the questionnaires.

Representatives raised several queries regarding grants in relation to the hiring of community premises. This issue was referred to the "Open Forum" item.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

97. **Open Forum:**
The Chair called for suggestions of topics for discussion at future meetings. Members suggested a report and officer attendance in order to answer questions regarding the following issues:-

- Affordable premises for community groups.
- Lettings in relation to the hiring of community premises and costs relating to the hire of school facilities for community-led schools etc.
- Harrow Leisure Centre, Byron Hall - the poor condition of the premises, lack of tables and chairs for functions, health and safety issues, difficulties in contacting the Manager.

RESOLVED: That (1) the situation regarding lettings be clarified;

(2) an officer from the Housing Department be invited to a forthcoming meeting;

(3) an officer from Urban Living who is responsible for overseeing issues relating to Harrow Leisure Centre be invited to a forthcoming meeting;

(4) the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.55 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE
Chair

APPENDIX 1

Community Consultative Forum – 30 June 2004**(1) Representatives of Community Organisations who Attended**

| | |
|-------------|--|
| V Bavishi | Harrow Mencap |
| S Chettoraj | Harrow Council for Racial Equality |
| A da Costa | Harrow Refugee Forum/ACCA |
| I Farah | Harrow Council for Racial Equality |
| SMA Farooqi | Islamic and Cultural Society of Harrow |
| L Gosasia | Hindu Council (Harrow) |
| V Lodhia | Sarvedesic Satya Samaj |
| O Mustaphe | Event Coordinator |
| P Nauroozi | HLCA |
| N Sonuke | IJADA |
| P Turner | Harrow African-Caribbean Association |

(2) Interested People who Attended

| | |
|----------|-----------------|
| F Rogers | Harrow Observer |
|----------|-----------------|

(3) Apologies Received from Community Organisations

| | |
|--------|---|
| J Mayo | Harrow Association of Voluntary Service |
|--------|---|

(4) Officers who Attended

Vijay Malik, Equal Opportunities Development Manager
Bindu Arjoon, Strategic Partnership Section Manager