

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM

28 SEPTEMBER 2004

Chair: * Councillor Nana Asante

Councillors: * Arnold * Currie
 * Bluston (1) * Lavingia
 * Janet Cowan * Anjana Patel

* 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**98. **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 Omar	Councillor Bluston

99. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
8.	Councillor Nana Asante	Declared an interest arising from the fact that she is a member of both the community groups.
9.	Councillor Bluston	Declared an interest arising from the fact that he is Chair of the Best Value Advisory Panel.
12.	Councillor Arnold	Declared an interest arising from the fact that he is a Member of the Grants Advisory Panel.
	Councillor Nana Asante	Declared an interest arising from the fact that she is a Member of the Grants Advisory Panel.
	Councillor Bluston	Declared an interest arising from the fact that he is a Member of the Grants Advisory Panel.
15.	Councillor Bluston	Declared an interest arising from the fact that he is a Director of ALMO.
17.	Councillor Bluston	Declared an interest arising from the fact that he is an Executive Member of Harrow Sports Council.

100. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

101. **Minutes:**
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
102. **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).
103. **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).
104. **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).
105. **Presentation by a Community Group:**
The Forum received a presentation from two community groups. The first was delivered by two representatives from Harrow in Europe (HiE), which detailed the work undertaken by the group in their 25 year history and outlined the group's plans for the future.
- The Forum was informed that the aim of Harrow in Europe was to promote cultural understanding. This was achieved through organised community events and school exchange programmes with Douai in France. One such event was outlined which included plans to celebrate the group's Silver Jubilee through a thanksgiving event, further school exchanges and a competition sponsored by 'Kodak'.
- It was advised that the group was funded through a small grant, organised community events and fees from other organisations. The representative emphasised that this funding was important in order that children could continue to sample French culture and build positive attitudes towards Europe and other parts of the world.
- The second presentation was delivered by a representative from the African SANG who detailed the plans in place for Black History Month, which included an item regarding the African perspective on the history of migration.
- The Forum was informed that there were varying types of migration and the motivations for African populations to migrate were diverse, for example, war, natural disasters and the wish to share beliefs.
- With regard to Black History Month, it was advised that the final day would include an awards ceremony where children would be given the opportunity to debate the statement that 'Black History Month has not achieved anything over the last 80 years.'
- The representative closed the presentation by inviting the Forum to make donations to the Darfur in Sudan and the Mayor's Charity.
- RESOLVED:** That the information be noted.
- (See also Minute 99).
106. **Safer Harrow Crime and Drugs Audit to Strategy Consultation Progress and Audit Findings:**
The Forum received a report of the Interim Head of the Crime Reduction Unit/DAT which detailed the findings of the 'Safer Harrow Crime and Drugs Audit'. The item was presented by Dr Kennison of Middlesex University.
- The Forum was informed that while the fear of crime remained high amongst residents, the reality was that Harrow accounted for only 2% of all the crimes in London and was the second safest Borough in which to live.
- Dr Kennison advised that to deal with anti-social behaviour was to deal also with crime as the two were connected. The Forum was informed that since 2001, the majority of Harrow's disorder issues included disturbances in public places, criminal damage and

drunkenness, all of which had increased over the last two years. This increase had also applied to motor vehicle crime and violence against the person (VAP). However, with regard to offences surrounding racist crime, drugs and street crime, the statistics demonstrated a decrease in their occurrence.

In response to a query regarding the impact of the new licensing laws, Dr Kennison stated that there was a need for the Police to make informed recommendations to the Licensing Committee and for these two bodies to work together.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

(See also Minute 99).

107. **Establishing Local Priorities for Community Strategy 2005:**

The Forum received a report of the Executive Director (Organisational Development) which detailed the work that had been undertaken by the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board and Executive in order to identify local priorities for partnership action.

The Forum was advised that the aim of the HSP Board and Executive was to devise a Community Strategy for 2005 which fulfilled the needs of Harrow's residents by highlighting 12 priorities for action, examples of which included 'Anti-Social Behaviour', 'Housing Need' and 'Public Transport'. There were 6 principles underpinning each of the priorities, some of which included 'Targeting Neighbourhoods', 'Community Cohesion' and access to 'Sport and Leisure'.

At the request of a Member, an officer undertook to report back to the Forum with any comments and updates once the report had been submitted to the Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee. In addition a monitoring report on the progress of the current community strategy for 2004 would also be presented.

RESOLVED: That (1) the information be noted; and

(2) the officer liaise with the Chair concerning update reports on the progress of identifying local priorities for partnership action.

108. **Our Achievements in Employment Opportunities:**

The Forum received a joint verbal presentation by the Principal Employee Relations Officer and the Group Manager - Human Resources Strategy (Harrow Council) which detailed the progress made to date in relation to revised equal opportunities legislation and related achievements within the Council.

The Forum was advised that the formulation of a new directorate structure within the Council had driven a review of the Council's framework for managing equality of opportunity. The Forum was further advised of the work undertaken by the Asian Applicants' Review Group, a working group set up by elected members with the aim of researching why Asian applicants appeared to be disadvantaged by the recruitment process. The officer stated that the group had also been influential in the Council's recent Middle Management Review and had had a positive impact in improving relations with the Asian community. With regard to other areas of equality, the Forum was informed that the Council was using the staff attitude survey to collect workforce information around religious belief and sexuality and was planning to sponsor the 'Disabled Go Project'.

The Group Manager - Human Resources Strategy concluded by outlining future challenges and emphasised the importance of drawing together all the strands of equal opportunities to improve services for the whole community.

In the discussion that followed, the Director of the Harrow Council for Racial Equality congratulated the Council and the officers present on the progress made in this area.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

109. **Strategic Review of Grants:**

The Risk and Insurance Manager (Harrow Council) delivered a verbal presentation which detailed the background to the proposed strategic recommendations resulting from the review of support to voluntary organisations.

The Forum was informed that the strategic review of grants to voluntary organisations had commenced in January 2004. It was stated that the Grants Advisory Panel had considered the review at 3 of its meetings and the resulting strategy took account of Members' decisions which themselves had been shaped by a comprehensive consultation process with the voluntary sector. It was advised that the Grants Advisory

Panel's recommendations would be presented to the Cabinet on 14 October 2004 for consideration and approval.

In response to a query regarding the consultation process, the Risk and Insurance Manager stated that this had initially involved consultation with the umbrella community groups, followed by a questionnaire and interviews. However, it was added that the workshops conducted with community groups had varied according to the nature of the group.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

(See also Minute 99).

110. **Reassurance Policing:**

Inspector Whittaker of The Metropolitan Police delivered a verbal presentation which detailed the implementation and impact of Reassurance Policing Policies across the Borough of Harrow.

The Forum was informed that the fear of crime was increasing across London, despite the fact that there had been a reduction in the number of violent crimes over the last 5 years. In part this increase in fear was due to the perceived lack of a police presence in the community. In order to breach this 'Reassurance Gap' it was advised that Harrow had been chosen to pilot a new scheme designed to increase the presence of the police across London. The Forum was informed that 3 wards within Harrow had been piloted – Wealdstone, Marlborough and Roxbourne - and each Ward had so far been assigned 6 additional officers to police the streets, with the aim that this would increase to an additional 126 officers overall in the Borough. It was added that if the scheme proved to be a success then it would be implemented in other London Boroughs.

Inspector Whittaker informed the Forum that the feedback from local residents had so far been positive. There had been a marked reduction in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour and local residents were feeling more confident to report these incidents and to name known perpetrators to the Police. It was added that work was underway to address the reasons behind anti-social behaviour and the aim was for the police to work more closely with community groups regarding these issues in the future.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

111. **Area Development in People First:**

The Forum received a verbal presentation by the Area Director of People First (Harrow Council) which detailed the aims of area development and its implementation in the future.

The Forum was advised that area development was intended to increase local access, improve joined-up services and pilot new initiatives/assess their outcomes. One such initiative included a pilot study to consult with families and local residents in Harrow regarding the services offered by schools and how these services could best meet their needs.

In response to a query regarding the distribution of funds and resources, the Area Director stated that areas of relative disadvantage were highlighted and prioritised for the allocation of resources. However, once these needs had been met other areas could be targeted.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

112. **What is an ALMO?:**

The Interim Managing Director of Spire Community Homes delivered a verbal presentation which detailed the work undertaken by the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) and the way in which the organisation was managed.

The Forum was informed that an ALMO was an organisation specifically set up by the local authority in order to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock. It was advised that the establishment of this organisation arose from the Government's 'Decent Homes Standard', which stated that homes should be provided in a reasonable standard of repair, with modern facilities and a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. The officer stated that provided the ALMO was assessed as delivering a good service by the Audit Commission, additional funds would be available to bring Harrow's homes up to these standards by 2010.

In relation to the ALMO's Board of Management, it was advised that this included 5 Councillors, 5 residents and 5 independent members of the community. In response to a query regarding the recruitment of ethnic minorities to the Board of Management, the officer stated that this had proved challenging, although the situation was being addressed.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

(See also Minute 99).

113. **Development of a Multi-Agency Strategy for Services to Refugees and Asylum Seekers:**

The Forum received a report of the Executive Director (People First) which detailed a draft multi-agency strategy for the development of local services to refugees and asylum seekers in the Borough of Harrow.

The Forum was advised that the District Audit Review of these services had highlighted a need for policies to take on a broader approach in this area. Arising from this recommendation the Forum was informed that consultation had occurred with the Harrow Refugee Forum and the opinions of refugees and asylum seekers in the area had been sought.

An officer emphasised the uncertainties surrounding attitudes and responses towards refugees and asylum seekers both from the general public and on the part of local authorities. In addition the fragmented nature of current services and the need for a coherent agenda were also highlighted.

With regard to the proposed draft strategy, it was advised that this included the establishment of a new multi-agency group, and suggestions for the Harrow Refugee Forum and Organisation to take on a service provider role on the condition that funding could be gained from organisations such as 'Renewal'.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

114. **Harrow Leisure Centre:**

The Chair introduced the Sports Strategy Officer for Harrow Council to the Forum and advised that he was present in order to lead a Question and Answer session relating to issues surrounding Harrow Leisure Centre and in particular the booking of Byron Hall. The Forum was informed that this session had arisen from requests by community groups at the last meeting of the Forum on 30 June 2004.

The Sports Strategy Officer informed the meeting that the Leisure Centre was managed by the company Leisure Connections Plc, the Contract Manager for which was Mark Cribb. With regard to bookings, it was advised that Shirley White was currently responsible.

In response to a query regarding the lack of free access to the swimming facilities for pensioners, it was stated that this had ceased as a result of the contract the Leisure Centre had signed with Leisure Connections Plc that had stipulated a requirement for a Borough Leisure Card. The introduction of this scheme meant that all pensioners were now obliged to pay a fee of £2.50 per year for a card in return for the use of the leisure facilities. However the Forum was informed that Leisure Card holders who were over 60 years of age and lived in the Borough would continue to receive free early morning swimming activities.

Discussion having turned to Byron Hall, the lack of facilities and the poor state of some of the equipment were questioned. In response, the Sports Strategy Officer advised that as a result of the new contract, the hire of the hall no longer included the provision of equipment. However, the Forum was informed that Leisure Connections Plc would be able to provide the public with details of hire companies that could provide this service.

The officer concluded by providing a verbal summary of the charges to hire out Byron Hall in comparison with Brent Town Hall and indicated that to hire out the former was to achieve better value for money.

A Member commented that the public were keen to see an improvement in the condition of Byron Hall as they did not feel that they were receiving value for money when making a reservation.

RESOLVED: That (1) the information be noted; and

(2) the comments outlined above be given consideration.

(See also Minute 99).

115. **Young and Vulnerable Adults Facing Forced Marriage:**

The Forum received a verbal presentation from the Equal Opportunities Development Manager (Harrow Council) which detailed the aims of the 'Forced Marriages Working Group' and invited those from a minority ethnic community to join.

It was advised that the group had been established as a response to the recommendations contained in the Home Office document entitled 'Young People and Vulnerable Adults Facing Forced Marriage – Practice Guidance for Social Workers.' The Forum was informed that the aims of the group included the development of guidelines and a training programme to help raise awareness of the issue and safeguard those at risk of a forced marriage, the monitoring and sharing of information amongst professional and volunteer communities and the development of partnerships with multi-faith groups in order to aid those at risk of harm or forced into a marriage against their will.

The Equal Opportunities Development Manager advised that at present the membership of the group was not especially diverse and there was a particular need for those from an African community to join. She concluded by inviting attendees and their associates to become members.

RESOLVED: That (1) the information be noted; and

(2) those interested in becoming members of the 'Forced Marriages Working Group' register their interest with either the Equal Opportunities Development Manager or the Committee Administrator for the Community Consultative Forum.

116. **Open Forum:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no suggestions of topics for discussion at future meetings.

117. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

The Chair invited the Forum to attend a community event which would include talks and presentations.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.32 pm, closed at 10.24 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NANA ASANTE
Chair

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE FORUM – 28 SEPTEMBER 2004**(1) Representatives of Community Organisations who Attended**

M Barntefs	African SANG
A M Twunasi	Harrow in Europe
S Rooke	Harrow in Europe
S Blann	Harrow in Europe
H Ibvahium	Somali Family Support Group
K Mahmood	Harrow Muslim Education Society
	Euro Pakistan Society
M Rahim	Harrow Bengali Association
M Badale	Harrow Council for Racial Equality
K Nagda	Sangat Community Centre
F Mahmood	Pakistan Women's Association (Harrow)
V Bavishi	Harrow MENCAP
P Pawar	Harrow Council for Racial Equality
L Gorasia	Hindu Council (Harrow)
	KMK (UK)

(2) Apologies Received by Community Organisations

V Lodhia	Sarvedesic Satya Samai
P Perinparaja	Kala Anjali Arts Circle

(3) Officers who Attended

Ian Pearce	Crime Reduction Manager
Bindu Arjoon	Service Manager of Policy and Partnership
Sangeeta Jerath	Principal Employee Relations Officer
Jon Turner	Group Manager – Human Resources (HR) Strategy
David Ward	Risk and Insurance Manager
Michael Hart	Area Director (People First)
Ann Lucas	Interim Managing Director of Spire Community Homes
Martyn Ellis	Head of Plan and Performance Management
Clifton Jackson	Sports Strategy Officer
Vijay Malik	Equal Opportunities Development Manager