

## **Harrow Strategic Partnership Board**

**Wednesday 6 April 2005**

### **Report on Tsunami Disaster Multi Faith Memorial Service and Community Conference on 22 February 2005**

#### **Purpose of Report**

This report details the outcomes of the Harrow Multi Faith Memorial Service and Community Conference held on 22 February to support and complement the work being done by Harrow's communities in the aftermath of the south east Asia Tsunami.

#### **The Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board is requested to:**

1. Note the report
2. Identify opportunities for joint working between HSP members in local relief efforts, particularly those that relate to medium and long term support.
3. Note the actions being taken by the council, at Appendix 1

## **Report of Memorial Service and Community Conference on 22 February 2005**

### **Memorial Service**

Harrow Council hosted an interfaith memorial service in partnership with the Harrow Interfaith Council and the Harrow Council for Racial Equality to pay respects to those who lost their lives and those who were directly affected by the tsunami disaster which happened on 26 December 2004.

The event took place at the Zoroastrian Centre in Rayners Lane, with over 150 members of the community attending.

The evening was emotional, but positive, with the first half of the evening led by the Harrow Interfaith Council, who held a multi-faith memorial service, with 10 faiths being represented, all of whom offered words and prayers of peace and support.

### **Community Conference**

Following this there was an opportunity for everyone attending to take part in group discussions aimed at focusing on the development and support of projects in south East Asia, including looking at the development of orphanages, rebuilding entire villages and the impact on older people.

### **Formulation of a steering group**

Many of the community representatives were keen to form a steering group to provide medium to long-term support to affected areas. The first meeting of the steering group will be take place on Wednesday 23 March, 7.30 –9:00 p. m. at the Harrow Teachers' Centre.

For more information, contact the Policy and Partnership Service on 020 8424 1393.

Bindu Arjoon  
Manager, Policy & Partnership Service, Harrow Council

### **Harrow Council Support**

The following relief efforts have been undertaken by Harrow Council to support the ongoing tsunami disaster relief effort:

#### **Support community grieving**

- Honouring a three minutes silence in the Council Chamber in commemoration of the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami.
- Honouring a one minute silence at events organised by the Council, involving the community, for example at the Black History Month meeting and the Community Consultative Forum.
- Honouring a one minute silence at full Council.

#### **Providing direct support to those affected by the disaster and the wider community**

- Elected members working directly with community groups to ascertain emerging needs and provide clear direction for officers.
- Supporting other boroughs by connecting their residents with community organisations to collect donated goods.
- Setting up a dedicated bank account for people in the borough who wished to contribute more locally towards the relief. The council has distributed the proceeds of this fund on a regular basis to those aid organisations involved in the relief effort.
- Using Council owned premises to allow community organisations to store donated goods.
- Providing office accommodation and use of council facilities to community groups to assist them to organise events.
- Helping families and individuals in the borough who are grieving or suffering anxiety, in Partnership with the Primary Care Trust and other agencies by offering counselling services to these people.
- Undertake fundraising initiatives amongst council departments.
- Facilitating payroll giving – all council employees were able to make a one-off donation through a deduction from their February salary to be used for either immediate relief or long-term projects.
- Holding an appeal concert organised by Arts for Schools (People First Directorate).
- Offering particular support to local groups with specific links.

#### **Channelling the community to take action**

- Acting as a signpost between community organisations and the public, which also enables the flow of information.
- Liaising with local providers on behalf of the community to received reductions in cost for fundraising events (for example though venue hire).
- Bringing together community groups to co-ordinate their donation and fundraising efforts.
- Encouraging and supporting staff volunteering. The council has compiled a list of employees who are willing to offer their time to help local, charities. This list was then communicated to local charities.

**Providing information for the community**

- Providing guidance and an information leaflet on adoption of children from the affected areas.
- Communicating and raising the profile of initiative and events being organised by the voluntary sector via the Internet and local press.

Harrow Council is also working with Westward Freight and the Yang Ming Marine Transport Corporation to organise the free shipment of goods donated to Harrow's community organisations to Sri Lanka.