

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD/ENFIELD
RACIAL EQUALITY COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2011**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Donald McGowan (Chairman), Eric Jukes and Ingrid Cranfield

OFFICERS: Martin Garnar (Equalities Officer), Christine Cox (Benefits Performance Manager) and Peter Lister (Interim Head of Health and Adult Social Care Commissioning and Procurement) Elaine Huckell (Secretary)

ENFIELD RACIAL EQUALITY COUNCIL (EREC)

Bevin Betton (Co-Chairman) (part), Chandra Bhatia, Roger Hallam, Suhas Khale and Ken Allen

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simbodyal, Councillor Zetter, and Sam Bell.

2

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest

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MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (7:30PM)

AGREED that the minutes of the 9 November 2010 be confirmed except under item on Personalisation in Enfield – the following to be included
“Over 6000 questionnaires were sent out to service users and carers. A total of 1562 questionnaires were received. A full report of the consultation findings will be available on the Enfield Council website soon.”

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MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Abolition of Slave Trade Plaque

Martin Garnar confirmed that the artist, Les Johnson, had been advised of changes required to the sculpture and a new version would be available in March. An unveiling ceremony would be organised and Martin Garnar would discuss the possible format of this event with an officer who organised a similar ceremony in Waltham Forest. He asked if Bevan Betton would confirm the name of the officer, as he had been unable to locate him.

'Improving Health Project'

At a previous meeting it was asked that consideration be given to the continued funding of this project. Councillor McGowan stated that he had asked officers in Health & Adult Social Care to look into this matter and would respond back.

Audit of Recruitment Activity

It was confirmed that at the next meeting Olive Jones would provide an update on recruitment processes for agency staff, and also on the Council's apprenticeship scheme

Enfield Homes Equalities Monitoring Report

It had been requested that a member of staff from Enfield Homes be requested to attend the Hate Crime Forum Case Management Panel. Martin Garnar would update S Khale on if this had taken place.

Personalisation in Enfield

Martin Garnar would respond back to Roger Hallam on details of which communities had been consulted on the Personalisation Programme. Members emphasized the need for us to engage with hard to reach groups and to encourage people to respond.

Engagement with BME Communities.

At the last meeting Martin Garnar referred to the Enfield Strategic Partnership engagement toolkit and framework that gave names and organisation contacts. It included a section on engagement with hard to reach groups, Martin Garnar and Chandra Bhatia would examine this further.

It was thought a review would be undertaken on the Enfield Observatory which, it was hoped, would make it more user friendly.

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MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE BME ELDERLY POPULATION (7:45PM)

Peter Lister, (Interim Head of Commissioning and Procurement), Health and Adult Social Care presented a report on Health and Social Care Needs of BME Elderly population in response to a paper submitted to the November meeting of this Group by EREC.

The report aimed to answer the 12 questions put forward by EREC which requested information relating to the population profile of BME elderly people, the services provided to them and their current and future needs. It had been hoped that a working group would meet in December to discuss the issues raised, however, this had not been possible. Feedback had been provided instead by EREC to an initial report and their comments were also answered in this report.

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The following issues were highlighted:

- That the Enfield Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2010-12 had been used to provide information about the health and wellbeing needs from NHS Enfield, Enfield Council and key stakeholders. Information had also been supplied by the Office for National Statistics "The Older Peoples Profile" Sept 2007.
- The next census was due to be completed in 2011 which would provide more accurate and up-to-date data on the Enfield population.
- That it was necessary to engage with the Enfield community to ensure that any gaps in service provision were addressed

Members raised the following issues:

- The monitoring of the quality of service provided to BME groups - Peter Lister confirmed that this was carried out in a number of different ways that included the setting down of clear standards in contracts and careful monitoring by performance teams.
- Feedback from BME elders who use the services. Peter Lister stated that questionnaires were being used as a means of obtaining information to gauge the perception of the service provided. He would present findings relating to BME elders to this Group.
- (Para 4) It was confirmed that the proportion of older people in Enfield (29%) was higher than London (25.6%) but lower than the England average of 33%.
- (Para 4) That of the 1067 people aged 65 and over that live in a care home, only 11% were from BME communities. It was thought this may be because a larger proportion received personal care in their home. Of the 1,800 elderly people who received personal care in their homes 787 were BME elders i.e 44%.
- (Para 4) It was questioned whether the figures indicated that the BME community was 'shouldering more of the burden' in providing care at home, or that the experience of being in a care home was perceived differently for BME elderly people.
- (Para 8) It was confirmed that the LBE Citizens Panel which was used as a means of providing consultation/ research information was weighted to reflect the equality strands of the Enfield population.
- (Para 8) Martin Garnar stated that he would be able to provide an update on the Citizens Panel to a future meeting of this Group if required.
- (Para 8) Cllr McGowan thought it would be useful if EREC would carry out informal discussions with organisations that provide facilities for the BME elderly. This may include informal clubs, day care centres, home care etc and could provide information on whether the service was suited to the needs of the BME elderly. An example of this may relate to different dietary requirements or cultural needs. It was thought this information could build on the work undertaken as part of the Personalisation agenda.

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- (Para 8) Census research/ analysis information was necessary to ascertain the needs of the BME elderly, and therefore the census should be promoted to ensure everyone takes part.
- (Para 10) The Council was currently undertaking a review of Third Sector organisations including luncheon clubs, day care etc. Peter Lister said it would be useful for EREC to be involved and have an input into this.
- (Para 11) As part of the personalisation programme, direct payments would be made to give individuals direct control of purchasing the services they required.
- (Para 12) A working group would be established to take forward issues raised by this report.

AGREED A working group be established between LBE and EREC to take forward issues raised by this report.

Peter Lister, Brigitte Shallow and Shaheen Mughal from Health and Adult Social Care were thanked for the report.

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IMPACT OF HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES (8:15PM)

Christine Cox (Benefits Performance Manager) gave a presentation on the Benefits Service changes that are to be introduced as part of the Government's changes to welfare benefits. She circulated a leaflet "Benefits Service challenges ahead – A briefing paper – Welfare Reform Changes announced by the Government" which set out the changes that would come into effect from 1st April 2011.

The following issues were highlighted:

- That a report detailing the full impact of changes for Enfield was being prepared and would be ready in March 2011, the numbers of people affected could then be reported back to this meeting.
- Changes from April 2011 would affect tenants who were renting privately and receive Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The maximum room entitlement would be capped to the 4 bedroom rate. It was thought this would greatly affect inner London boroughs, and that many inner London tenants may therefore move to outer London Boroughs where rents were cheaper.
- That the Local Housing Allowance rate would be set at 30% of average rent in the Enfield area rather than the 50% given at present.. The rent excess whereby a tenant could receive up to £15 a week if rent was lower than the LHA amount set by the Government would cease. It was mentioned that the incentive for a tenant to find a cheaper rented property may cease as a result of this.
- 52 families were thought to be affected by the 4 bedroom capping rate in Enfield. Each case has an annual review meeting, and there would

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be a 9 month transitional protection period. However there would only be limited discretionary payments available from the hardship fund.

- Forums would be held in January to discuss changes with private landlords. The new rules would enable payments to be made directly to a landlord where a local authority considers that it would help to secure or retain a tenancy for a claimant.
- There were also changes relating to the Shared Room Rate and also all new and existing claims were eligible to include an extra bedroom for a non-resident carer.
- Universal Credit would be introduced from 2013 that aims to create a leaner system administered by a single government department, and which would be focused on the Government idea that “work always pays”

Members raised the following issues

- Councillor Jukes and Christine Cox would discuss the issue of disregards, where an Authority previously had discretion in calculating benefit in relation to war widows’ pensions.
- It was asked whether a person getting less housing benefit and unable to afford the rent would be able to apply for discretionary hardship funds. It was confirmed that there were very limited funds available.
- It was confirmed that the new legislation did not consider a situation resulting in inappropriate housing i.e the sharing of accommodation for different genders as a result of a move to a property with fewer bedrooms.
- An impact assessment should determine how the legislation would affect Enfield, It was felt it may have a significant effect on BME families who may have larger families and would be in need of more bedrooms.
- That the local authority would need to ensure there would be sufficient social housing in the Borough and this should cover provision for larger families.

A ‘Toolkit for Communication’ had been prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions and it was confirmed that some families may be affected by more than one change to the benefits system. As some Boroughs have more than one housing benefit rate, it was thought this would probably result in people moving within a Borough i.e to the cheaper rental area before moving out of the Borough completely.

Letters would be sent to the 52 families who are affected by the 4 bedroom capping rule and leaflets would be prepared for tenants for information.

AGREED That details showing the full impact of changes for Enfield, as a result of the Welfare Reform benefit legislation, should be reported back to this Group when available.

Christine Cox was thanked for her informative presentation

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EQUALITY FRAMEWORK UPDATE (8:45PM)

Martin Garnar, Equalities Officer presented a briefing paper on the Equality Framework for Local Government. He highlighted the following points:

- The Council had previously measured its equalities performance against the Equality Standard for Local Government and had reached level 4 out of 5 levels of performance. In 2009 this had been replaced by the Equality Framework for Local Government
- An informal assessment meeting had been arranged for the 12.1.11 when interviews would be held with representatives from LBE including the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, and Corporate Equalities Group and other council officers to determine if the Council was ready to go forward for a more formal detailed assessment in March.
- The formal assessment on 22nd and 23rd March 2011 would include interviews with partners from the voluntary and community sector including EREC and other public sector partners
- The briefing paper set out the characteristics that an authority would be required to demonstrate in order to achieve the excellent standard and it was felt that the authority met these requirements.

Members raised the following issues:

- When asked if service users would be interviewed, Martin Garnar explained that, as part of the formal assessment, interviews would take place with community groups where they would be looking at the community engagement processes that were in place and would check that the correct outcomes had been reached.
- Martin Garnar confirmed that the lead assessor was appointed by a Government agency, Local Government Improvement and Development.
- Chandra Bhatia asked if an 'excellent' assessment would be of advantage to the authority and enable them to obtain government grants. Martin Garnar replied that whilst it would not entitle the authority to any government grants, it would be a prestigious award which may attract staff and would give the Council a higher profile. He stated that regardless of the outcome the authority would be continually looking to improve its performance.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 7:30pm on Tuesday 26th April 2011

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AGREED that the following item would be considered at the next meeting:

- Updates on Recruitment Processes for Agency Staff, and the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme
- Equality Monitoring of Services 2009/10
- Housing Benefit changes update
- New health commissioning arrangements
- Enfield Residents Priority Fund.