MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD/ENFIELD RACIAL EQUALITY COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 31 MARCH 2009

COUNCILLORS

Henry Lamprecht (Chairman), Jonas Hall, Eric Jukes, Donald McGowan and Jeff Rodin.

OFFICERS:

Martin Garnar (Corporate Policy Officer), Anna Glace (Business & Policy Development Manager), Joanne Stacey (LAA Programme Manager), Shaun Rogan (Local Area Agreement Programme Manager), Kate Robertson (Assistant Director of Customer Services, Communications & Business Change) and Kathy Swallow (Committee Secretary).

ENFIELD RACIAL EQUALITY COUNCIL (EREC)

Bevin Betton (Co-Chairman), Telat Shaikh (Vice Chairman) Ken Allen, Sam Bell, Chandra Bhatia, Vicky Dungate, Roger Hallam, Suhas Khale, and Nisha Patel.

*Italics denote absence*

1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Enfield Racial Equalities Council members Bevin Betton and Vicky Dungate.

2

MINUTES

AGREEED that the minutes of the 5 November 2008 were an accurate record.

3

MATTERS ARISING

3.3 Councillor Attendance at LBE EREC meetings

EREC members had recently written a letter to Councillor Rye, regarding the lack of attendance by Councillors at recent meetings. However most Councillors were present at the meeting and stated that they were happy with 7:30pm start time.

NOTED that Councillor representation for the LBE may change following the Annual Council meeting in May 09.

4. The LBE’s Young Persons Life Opportunities Scrutiny Commission

Martin Garnar thanked Chandra on behalf of Mike Ahuja for her suggestions regarding the Commission. The Commission has recently held two events, one involving talks by relatives of young people who have been victims of the recent youth related violence.
AGREED that an update from Mike Ahuja regarding the Commission’s progress will be added to a future agenda.

5. Housing Equalities Monitoring Annual Report 2007/08
Martin Garnar had recently spoken to Jayne Paterson (Welfare Benefits Advisor) who is planning to undertake a survey of Enfield Homes Staff.

AGREED that the Jayne Paterson should be asked to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss the survey results.

The group then discussed the progress made with the Homeless Strategy Report. This Report is due to go to Cabinet to be officially agreed.

AGREED that Susan Sharry should be asked to an upcoming meeting to discuss the Homelessness Strategy and the Equalities Impact Assessment.

7.1 Black History Month
Martin Garnar commented that he was due to meet with Chandra Bhatia to discuss events for Black History Month in October.

7.2 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Bill – 60 Year anniversary in December 08.
The event is December to mark the 60 year anniversary took place and was a great success with very informative speakers. Congratulations going to Chandra Bhatia, Martin Garnar and Roger Hallam for all hard work in arranging the event.

4 ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION GUIDANCE UPDATE

Martin Garnar updated the group on the final version of the Accessible Information Guidance on the use of Translation and Interpreting Service.

NOTED
1. The guidance produced by Kate Robertson, follows on from the recent government guidance concerning the use of translation services and community cohesion.
2. A new policy and guidance for Enfield’s use of Translation and Interpreting services was agreed at Cabinet on 8 October 2008. The policy sets out under which circumstances LBE customers should be offered a translation or interpreting service, such as where complex advice is being given for example in legal situations.
3. Kate Robertson circulated a questionnaire to EREC members, Minority and Ethnic staff group and sensory impairment/deaf groups to ensure their views were taken into account when the new policy and guidance was produced.
4. Currently the take up of ESOL courses in Enfield is low, and the Learning & Skills Council who run the ESOL courses is going through a re-structure.
5. The new guidance recommends that where documents are interpreted, that the English equivalent is offered alongside the translated version.
6. LBE’s website is currently being re-designed to use ‘Plain English’ and be more accessible. A new Web Editor is being employed to improve the current site.

**LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

Joanne Stacey gave a presentation to the group on the current Local Area Agreement for 2008 to 2011.

The following points were NOTED:

1. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement between central and local government and is based on set local priorities. The targets within the LAA are delivered by the London Borough of Enfield and through partnerships with other public sector and voluntary organisations.
2. The London Borough of Enfield is now entering a new agreement that will run from 2009 to 2011 and was agreed and signed off by Council in June 08.
3. The LAA’s progress is monitored by the Audit Commission and other supervisory inspectorates, through the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process.
4. The agreement is made up of 34 key priority improvement targets, selected from 198 different national indicators that are set by central government. Education now has 10 separate indicators, which has reduced from 16, as the key stage 3 targets have now been removed.
5. The targets within the LAA have agreed between central government and LBE. To identify which targets were a priority for Enfield, extensive research and consultation with residents was undertaken.
6. The Enfield Strategic Partnership is chaired by the Leader of LBE and has overall responsibility for the LAA.
7. Thematic Action Groups (TAGS) are run to help the borough achieve it’s LAA targets and these are centred around specific areas. Currently there are 5 TAGS but these will be increased to 8, and will include groups for raising employment levels, making improvements to leisure & culture and tackling environmental issues.
8. Equalities monitoring and assessment is part of the LAA. However the group noted that none of the targets are aimed specifically at BME groups. For example there are targets for Child Poverty, which has been proved to effect BME communities more acutely and the group felt that the targets set would be more achievable if they included specific targets for BME communities.
9. The group questioned how involved residents and local councillors had been in the consultation for the new LAA targets, and how aware residents were generally about what the LAA was. Joanne Stacey commented that detailed research had been undertaken into the LBE’s performance and areas of weakness had been identified through surveys and areas were the borough had under-performed in the past.
Joanne Stacey agreed that residents and Councillors could be more involved with the consultation process.

10. Changes to the funding regime associated with the new LAA have now been made. Previously a funding amount was awarded initially to help progress with the targets get off the ground. This funding has now been withdrawn, and funding is only received once the targets are met.

AGREED that Joanne Stacey would take back the comments made by EREC members concerning the consultation process and BME specificity of LAA targets.

6 EQUALITIES MONITORING OF SERVICES 2007/08

Martin Garnar delivered the Equalities Monitoring Service Report for 07-08 and gave a brief update to the group regarding the findings of the report. The following points were NOTED;

1. Martin Garnar apologised for the lateness of the document, which was 12 months old, however the report circulated is the latest report available.
2. This is the fourth year the report has been produced and the circulated reported covered the widest variety of services to date.
3. The Equalities Monitoring of Services is a requirement of Equalities Standard for Local Government.

The group were then asked if there were any issues relating to the report that they would like to raise. In response to this Chandra Bhatia commented that it has been noted that parents are unwilling to disclose the ethnicity of their children during the schools admissions process. Regarding this the following points were NOTED;

1. Currently there is a lack of key data concerning how the admission of children to Enfield schools is being effected by their ethnicity and the inability for children’s progress to be tracked by ethnicity.
2. Councillor Rodin felt that many parents were concerned why this type of data is being recorded and he felt that there is a lack of awareness by parents as to how this type of data will be used. The group felt that increased awareness as to why this type of data is needed would result in a better response by parents.
3. The group then discussed the use of the ‘Mosaic Experian’ system to help fill-in missing ethnicity data. This system can identify a person’s ethnicity with an accuracy rate of up to 70%. To do this a person’s surname is matched to the most probable ethnicity, however data determined by this method may be inaccurate and only a broad correlation of data can be determined.

AGREED that Jo Fear will be invited to an upcoming meeting to discuss the schools admissions process and how ethnicity details are tracked throughout it.
7
ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Employment Data

Martin Garnar informed the group that following on from previous meetings, where the issue of ethnicity monitoring during the LBE recruitment process had been discussed, Human Resources were currently advertising for a workforce analyst. The post will involve the analysis of recruitment data and ethnicity data, which will be able to be presented at future meetings.

8
DATE OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED that the meeting scheduled for Wednesday 29 April 09 will be cancelled and rescheduled for June 09 after Annual Council has agreed the LBE membership for the group.