



Leicester
City Council

(iii)

Minutes of the Meeting of the
AFRICAN CARIBBEAN WORKING GROUP

Held: 15 January 2004 at 5.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Muggletsone – Chair

Councillor Garrity
Councillor Nurse

Councillor Tessier
Councillor Coles

Co-opted Members

Violet Chidombwe
Derek Owens Rawle
Valerie Walbrook
Lois Wilson

African Caribbean Citizen Forum
African Caribbean Citizens Forum
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Officers in Attendance

Haseeb Ahmad
Sukhi Biring
Roy Cole
Roanne Dearing

Chief Executive's Office
Social Care and Health Department
African Caribbean Centre
Resources, Access and Diversity
Department

Gurjit Minhas
Keith Murdoch
Roy Roberts
Patricia Roberts-Thomson
Janet Shaw
Shaun Whittingham

Housing
Education and Lifelong Learning
Chief Executive's Office
Chief Executive's Office
Education and Lifelong Learning
Education and Lifelong Learning

Also in Attendance

Rory Samuel

African Caribbean Citizens Forum

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Lois Wilson declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda 'Working with People with Learning Disabilities from Leicester's African Caribbean Community'.

37. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

2004/05 PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS TO AFRICAN CARIBBEAN PROJECTS

The Chair agreed to take an additional report from the African Caribbean Citizens Forum (ACCF) on the 2004/05 proposed budget cuts to African Caribbean projects.

The Working Group noted that the ACCF believed that the proposed cuts would affect all sections of the African Caribbean voluntary sector, which was already under resourced and reliant on one grant provider, the City Council.

The ACCF also felt that the cuts would potentially remove the African Caribbean community's capacity to express its cultural uniqueness and the physical demonstration that they were valued citizens in the community. There would also be a further reduction in the terms of the range of venues available for community use. It was felt that this reduction could lead the community to consider itself further marginalized and excluded from the mainstream, such a reduction could have detrimental effects on the quest for community cohesion in the City.

The ACCF felt that the potential cuts and the way in which they were announced served to undermine any attempt at partnership between the Council and the wider community. The ACCF also expressed their disappointment that the intention for cutting grant provision was not made known to the Forum at an earlier stage. If the Forum had been given adequate notice of organisations that would have been affected, it may have been possible to facilitate better communication between the wider African Caribbean voluntary sector and the Council.

The ACCF also expressed considerable misgivings with regard to the purpose and process of the cuts. Given that the African Caribbean led voluntary sector is to be more fundamentally affected by the proposed cuts concern was expressed that the Council had not explored the adverse impact of the policy proposal on specifically African Caribbean communities. It was also felt that the adverse impact of the proposed cuts needed to be explored in relation to legislation as well as the impact on social cohesion.

In relation to the proposed cuts to the Mental Health Shop the Working Group were informed that Social Care and Health proposed to look alongside other advocacy organisations to see if there was scope for savings by working together, co locating, merging and sharing services.

The Working Group noted that the deadline for responses to the consultation was 3rd February and it was suggested that the ACCF should work with other groups to submit their individual responses.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the budget proposals were still under consultation, the Working Group supported the views of the ACCF and it was therefore recommended that:

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the Cabinet reconsider the proposed cuts,

- (2) that the Cabinet consult the African Caribbean Citizens Forum to explore ways in which they can work together to make partnership real,
- (3) that the Cabinet consider the adverse impact of the proposed cuts on the wider African Caribbean community and;
- (4) that the Cabinet explore the proposed cuts in the light of the need for community cohesion.