



Leicester
City Council

EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
AFRICAN CARIBBEAN WORKING GROUP

Held: 1 March 2006 at 5.30.pm.

PRESENT:

Councillor Nurse– Chair

Councillor Sood Councillor Tessier

Co-opted Members

Lois Wilson	African Caribbean Citizens Forum
Gina Samuel	African Caribbean Citizens Forum

Officers in Attendance

Mark Eaves	Standards and Effectiveness, Education
Roy Roberts	Chief Executive's Office
Peter Field	Housing Strategy and Performance
Gurjit Minhas	Housing Strategy and Performance
Francis Connolly	Committee Services

Also In Attendance

Deborah Sangster African Caribbean Citizens Forum

77. LEICESTER'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTION PLAN

Mark Eaves, Standards and Effectiveness, Education and Lifelong Learning Department, was in attendance to provide an overview of Leicester's Children and Young People's Action Plan.

Mark explained that it was now a national requirement that every local authority in the country produced a Children and Young People's Plan. He explained that the document was unique in the sense that it was the first occasion that all services provided for children and young people

in the City, appeared in a single document. It was stressed that although Leicester City Council was the Lead Commissioning Body, the plan was not solely a Council document, but comprised of the work to be achieved by the Council, as well as a number of partner organisations.

Mark described the contents of the report. The group were directed to Section 7 of the report, which detailed the planned actions to improve outcomes. He informed the meeting that Leicester City's plan included an additional action (h) that aimed to meet the needs of children from ethnic minority backgrounds. One further key aim of the Plan was to build participation, as the plan had to seek views of potential service users, including adults and children and young people, as well as the wider community.

The working group made a number of comments regarding the Plan, which Mark agreed to take away and address as far as was possible when it was reviewed.

It was felt that stronger recognition of the BME voluntary sector was needed within the report, in addition to the recognition that was given to the rest of the voluntary sector. It was further stated that the BME voluntary sector had capabilities and knowledge of specific issues, but often lacked the capacity to deliver services or engage in such initiatives, and that this would need to be addressed if they were to do so. Furthermore, no indication had been given in the Plan as how wider community participation and involvement would be sought as it suggested in the 'participation' section.

A question was asked around the process of consultation, specifically seeking details of how BME communities had been given an opportunity to look at the plan and to say how they would be affected by it. It was reported that members of the public were consulted at a number of different events. A sample of those consulted was representative of some BME groups but not all. Furthermore, there was engagement with adults around the plan through the press and the schools. The officer acknowledged that due to the time constraints not all BME groups were consulted and that they intended to address this when the Plan was reviewed.

Concern was raised as to the general use of the term BME around the development of aims and action within the Plan. There was a need to clarify which ethnic minority groups 'needs' required addressing as not all BME groups were for example underachieving or needed to be targeted to ensure a particular target was effectively achieved. Furthermore, it was requested that consideration should be given to focusing the section 'BME Children and Young People' on addressing specific areas of concern among particular BME groups, as more general issues would be picked under other sections. For example, it was noted that no targets had been set for addressing the over

representation of dual heritage children in the City's child protection, looked after, and youth offending figures.

A query was made around ensuring equality in terms of addressing the under-representation of staff by ethnicity and disability. It was confirmed that this was very much a priority, and that it was a chief aim to ensure that the workforce was representative, with particular emphasis at senior levels. A further suggestion that was put forward around equalities was to look closely at making improvements around the target of increasing the uptake of interpreting and translation services.

Members enquired how the Council would be able to hold the various partner organisations to account. It was explained that the Federation Board consisted of representatives from all key partners and it was this board that held the accountability. All organisations involved were fully accountable to deliver the specific services. Additionally, it was a legal requirement that all partners co-operated with the City Council.

A recommendation was made that Sheila Lock, Corporate Director of Children's Services, be invited to a future meeting of the Working Group to provide a further update on the Children and Young People's Action Plan and the performance of Black pupils.

Members were informed that the Action Plan was to be considered by Cabinet on 13 March, and that if the plan was to be amended, then the comments of the African Caribbean Working Group could be incorporated into the Action Plan. If this was not feasible, then it was agreed that the comments would be inserted into the Plan's annual refresh which would commence in the summer.

The Chair summarised the discussions that had taken place, and felt that, notwithstanding the detailed comments made, the plan had positive implications.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That comments of the Working Group be noted and included as part of the next review of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- (3) That Sheila Lock, Corporate Director of Children's Services, be invited to a future meeting of the Working Group.