

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY
ORGANISATIONS

11 MARCH 2015

19.15 – 21.00

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Edith Macauley (in the Chair),
Councillor Adam Bush, Councillor Fidelis Gadzama,
Councillor Abdul Latif

Mr Motiur Rahman, Mr Abayeh Savage, Dr P Arumugaraasah,
Mr Zia Khan, Mr Jerry Hall, Mr A Hadi, Mr N Islam, Mr I Rizvi, Mr
S Sheikh, Mr A Ali, Mr B Adridi, Ms L Nur
Aneeqa Malik – The Loop Global Management
Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer
Joyce Ogundade, LBM Future Merton
Kris Witherington, LBM Consultation and Community
Engagement Manager

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from, Councillor Marsie Skeete, Ms A Colquhoun, Mr J Hall,
Mrs N Shah, Mr M Shah, Ms P Anderson, Mr S Vukalic, Revd Mrs H Neale, Mr
Anwar Khadi and Mr Abdi Musse.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10 DECEMBER 2014 (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed.

4 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

None.

5 ESOL AND INTEGRATION (Agenda Item 5)

Aneeqa Malik from the Loop Global Management gave an overview of an ESOL and Integration project. She is working with Q.E.D, a Home Office funded organisation that has received EU funding to provide ESOL lessons to women from migrant communities. She would like to work in conjunction with local communities to provide ESOL and Integration lessons to Merton residents.

Ms Malik is delivering training in London and has already arranged a course at the Baitul Futuh mosque but would like to provide more sessions in the borough.

The course runs for 10 weeks and has space for 12 to 5 for women who must meet the following criteria:

- Must hold British or EU nationalities/passports. (Most of the previous course participants have tended to be women of Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Arabic or African origin).
- They must have been legally resident in the UK for less than 10 years. (Passports are checked to see if women are eligible).
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Previous course participants have been supported to take the Citizen's Test. Aneeqa appealed to the JCC membership to help with publicity and to make referrals to attend the course. Evereth agreed to circulate Aneeqa's information to the JCC membership.

6 EMPLOYMENT SKILLS UPDATE (Agenda Item 6)

Joyce Ogunade gave an overview of Future Merton's Employment and Skills programme. She outlined that there is a gap in reaching partners and providers. The Employment Skills Action Plan 2012-14 is being refreshed and new research is being undertaken to inform it. Stakeholders have been interviewed to find out why people are finding it difficult to find work. One recommendation is to engage with the following groups that need support:

- Older residents over 50 years
- Lone parents/carers
- Looked After Children
- Ex-Offenders

A newsletter has been produced, the next one will be published in April and monthly thereafter. Ms Ogunade asked the JCC representatives to get in touch with her if they would like to be included on the distribution list. Ms Ogunade clarified that jobs will be advertised in the newsletter and long-term unemployed is defined as being unemployed for 6 months plus. Job opportunities are open to all except for the programme targeting the over 50s

Future Merton is developing an Employability programme for the hardest to reach residents in Merton. The programme aims to give sustainable job prospects and work experience to participants. An IT programme has also been developed that will give participants basic to advanced computer skills.

7 CUSTOMER CONTACT (Agenda Item 7)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be discussed at a later date.

8 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY (Agenda Item 8)

Kris Witherington gave an overview of the ARS results. 1084 adults and 250 11-17 year olds were surveyed. The quota sample is representative of Merton's population. Core questions were asked across London and local questions also.

Kris reported that council tax and crime had reduced as top concerns and replaced by concern about litter and traffic congestion. There is an East/West split with litter being a concern in the East and traffic more of a concern in the West. Across London litter and council tax concerns had increased. The survey results show that the council is doing well in terms of image of council, doing a good job and providing value for money.

In terms of perceived service delivery leisure and sports and council tax collection received lower scores than in 2013/14, however satisfaction with parks improved and received a good score.

My Merton is now the top method of communication and the score for the website has also increased.

The results show that 80% of people do not volunteer because of lack of time- the information will be given to MVSC to learn lessons.

The Public Health scores have not changed much in comparison to 2013/14 and generally were received good scores with the top three remaining the same.

The crime responses showed that residents in the East worried about Anti-Social Behaviour whilst residents in the West were more concerned about drunk/rowdy behaviour.

The Community Cohesion results have not changed much, the score for whether people think that the council tackles racism is back to the 2010 level. The score for agreement that people from different backgrounds get on well together is consistent.

It is noticeable however that disabled respondents gave less positive responses and more work needs to be done to identify the underlying causes.

Young People scores had similar trends to adults but were more positive about school than the adult scores. The percentage of respondents from East/West was divided into ward clusters. The sample reflects the population, e.g. slightly larger numbers in the West.

It was suggested that consideration be given to changing the format of the graphs to make them easier to distinguish when printed in black and white. Councillor Macauley gave an overview of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Act which has given power to magistrates to be more effective in dealing with ASB matters. She added that Merton is one of the safest London boroughs and the ASB Act will enable the council to give fixed penalties for ASB. The courts have also been given guidelines to implement to deal with racially aggravated crime.

9 BAME VOICE UPDATE (Agenda Item 9)

Evereth updated the meeting on the work to develop a strategic BAME Voice in the borough and reported that a steering group has been developing terms of reference. Mr Rahman and Dr Arugarmassah want to get involved in the steering group. Evereth undertook to circulate previous discussions to the representatives who expressed an interest.

10 FEED BACK FROM THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD (Agenda Item 10)

An update will be given at the next meeting.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 11)

The issue of Muslim students being bullied in schools was raised and Evereth undertook to report back to the director of Children Schools and Families. It was felt that Islamophobia issues are not being tackled and all agreed that the wider community needed to be educated. A representative reported that SACRE is looking at Islamophobia based on a letter from Dr Nash.

