

Agenda Item 3

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS 5 DECEMBER 2018

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Edith Macauley (in the Chair),
Councillor Eloise Bailey, Councillor Joan Henry and
Councillor Marsie Skeete

Councillor Anderson, Councillor Akyigyina, Councillor A Bush,
Mr Islam, Mr Sheikh, Mr Din, Ms Poole, Mr Poole, Inspector
Whitehead, Mr Samuels, Mr Fagan, Mr Musse

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Mr Rizvi, Mr Hall, Dr Arumugaraasah,
Mr Sivapragasam, Councillor Omar Bush

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed.

4 YOUTH 24 PROJECT - JASON FAGAN, DIRECTOR (Agenda Item 4)

Jason Fagan and Carl Samuels gave an overview of the Youth 24 (Y24) project. The aim of the project is working with Children and Young People (CYP) aged 10 - 25.

The core service incorporates a personalised 24-step programme of continuous support, which includes an on-going phase of assessment, monitoring, target setting and review over a period of 4, 6 and 9 months throughout the. The programmes are based on working with the young person on a 1:1 basis.

Y24 has a dedicated team of professionals with over 70 years combined experience of working with young people. Their expertise comprises of mentoring, youth work, formal education and teaching, employability, sports coaching and project management.

The project offers mentoring and gets young people involved in activities and offers employment opportunities.

Y24 works with private business and supports participants with interview training, CV writing, know your rights and civil responsibilities.

Carl Samuels has experience of working in Special Needs schools and Pupil Referral Units. The team want to work with young people who do not want to engage with statutory services.

Jason Fagan is a Graphic Designer and will work with employers to give young people work experience and ultimately a job.

The project wants to initially identify the need in the borough and map it out.

Questions/Comments

Hannah Neale asked if the project focuses on children living with their families or is it just those not living at home. Carl Samuels replied that the focus is to work with young people who have been statemented, Looked After Children and those coming out of Youth Offending.

Hannah Neale asked how the project would support those who are experiencing problems outside their homes. Carl Samuels replied that he has a lot of experience supporting vulnerable young people and he aims to recruit people with empathy.

Cllr Macauley asked if Carl Samuels is in touch with Jason Young the council's Gang Worker. Mr Samuels replied that he has worked with Jason Young in the past and has worked with schools to give support for excluded children.

Rachael Wardell informed Mr Samuels and Mr Fagan that she is happy to speak to Y24 to see what is necessary. She does not want to see duplication.

Cllr Henry thanked Mr Samuels and Mr Fagan for the work they do.

Cllr Akyigyina stated that it is good to hear that the project can work alongside Merton and asked for the JCC to be kept informed of their work.

Cllr Anderson asked how the project is funded. Carl Samuels replied that the project has a range of funding including Awards for All and fundraising is undertaken too.

5 CRIME UPDATE - INSPECTOR ROBERT WHITEHEAD (Agenda Item 5)

Inspector (Insp) Robert Whitehead presented an update on local policing. He informed the meeting that crime across London is rising slower and Merton is the 4th safest borough. He gave an overview of the new structure – the Basic Command Unit (BCU) includes; Wandsworth, Kingston, Richmond and Merton. The BCU contains specialist roles e.g. Safeguarding, CID, Mental Health, Children's Response, Neighbourhoods and Head Quarter.

Questions/Comments

Cllr Macauley asked about the robbery that took place in Wimbledon on 3 December. Insp Whitehead replied that one person was shot and the investigation is being dealt with by the Flying Squad. The robber has been charged with an offence.

Cllr Henry informed Insp Whitehead that the Police knocked her door following an anonymous call being made about an incident. Insp Whitehead replied that normally the Police would go to the incident –the Police have to be careful and won't go to the door if told not to.

Mr Din asked if the new BCU structure has affected Policing. Insp Whitehead replied that the budget cuts have affected the Police because there are less resources. There has been a 3% decrease in performance for 999 calls but the Police are doing a good job in difficult circumstances. Mr Din commented that the community does not think the Police are doing a good job.

Mr Sheikh asked why following the incident a large part of Wimbledon was shut off for two days? Insp Whitehead replied that it was unfortunate but necessary for forensics. The crime scene was reduced as quickly as possible especially as it was extensive and impacted on the community.

Cllr Anderson commented that less Police are visible in the wards and asked if Merton resources will be used in Wandsworth? Insp Whitehead replied that there are still 2 PCs and 2 PCSOs of each ward, those numbers have not changed.

Cllr Anderson asked when Mitcham Town Centre will get PCs. Insp Whitehead replied that there are no extra resources for Town Centre Police.

Cllr Henry asked what's happening to Special Constables. Insp Whitehead replied that the use of Special Constables has been reviewed to ensure that enough hours were being done. He confirmed that Special Constables are still being used and predominantly in Wimbledon and Mitcham Town Centres and for large events.

Cllr Bailey asked where the specialist services are based. The Safeguarding and the Missing Persons Team are based in the BCU, CCID is across the four areas. The PCs and PCSOs are ward based.

Cllr Macauley asked why there has been an 11% increase in burglaries. Insp Whitehead clarified that the increase has been due to shed burglaries. He said that everyone should be aware of how they dispose of boxes.

Insp Whitehead demonstrated the Spit Hood that the Police have been using across London. The Spit Hood is to be put on in custody. Insp Whitehead is consulting about the use of them and invited comments from the community. The Spit Hood is for the health and safety of the Police.

Will it be used on children? Insp Whitehead said there is no minimum age for its use.

Insp Whitehead stated that the PCs have to justify its use in each case.

Cllr Akingyna asked what if the person is claustrophobic – it can do more damage to people.

Rachael Wardell stated that health and safety testing is needed for under 18 year olds and asked for this consideration to be part of the consultation.

Will the Spit Hood be used for abusive behaviour? Insp Whitehead replied that it will be used when a suspect is spitting at officers.

Does it consider children with invisible disabilities or complex needs and how are vulnerable children identified? Insp Whitehead informed the meeting that all impacts have been looked at, however, decisions made are based on what is in front of the officers at the point of arrest.

Mr Sheikh commented that the statistics presented show that all crimes have increased. Insp Whitehead gave assurances that the Police try to investigate all cases and focus on the needs of victims and look for trends.

6 RECRUITING BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC STAFF INTO SENIOR OFFICER ROLES - RACHAEL WARDELL, DIRECTOR CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES (LBM) AND KIM BROWN, HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & HR STRATEGY (LBM) (Agenda Item 6)

Following a request from members of the JCC asking for a breakdown of the BAME profile of the Council's senior managers. Rachael Wardell, (Director of Children Schools and Families) and Kim Brown (Head of Organisational Development & HR Strategy) gave a presentation outlining the data relating to the BAME background of Merton's senior managers and details of proposed actions to redress the issues identified.

The data shows that the borough's leadership is less diverse. At the recruitment and selection stage a proportionate number of BAME applicants are shortlisted but there is a reduction in the number recruited. Small practical steps can be taken to address this starting with monitoring ethnicity.

Questions/Comments

Cllr Akyigyina commented that the statistics do not look good. She asked what is the council trying to achieve. Also more BAME Head teachers are needed. Rachael Wardell replied that the statistics are only for council staff and do not include schools data.

Kim Brown informed the meeting that data does not show a consistent theme and outlined the actions that the council intends to take to including the following:

1. Having up-to-date data on staff - a reminder will be circulated to all staff to update their equalities information, including their ethnicity, through HR self-service software.

2. Sample checks will be introduced to ensure all shortlisting and interview panel members have up-to-date recruitment and selection training. This check will be undertaken in all cases for appointments at MGC and above.
3. The Workforce Strategy includes actions to run a diversity and cultural awareness programme including training, with the aim to achieve a more cohesive workforce able to serve our communities better. A training programme is being developed by Human Resources, in addition to actions being developed at departmental level.

Rachael Wardell clarified that Cultural Competency is internal bias that affects recruiting decisions. Culturally competent organisations do work to recognise internal bias.

The JCC members expressed frustrations and concern about the lack of BAME senior managers and urged the officers to work to change the behaviour in the council and address the imbalance.

Rachael Wardell informed the meeting that cultural competency training is being delivered in CSF and undertook to share information about the programme with the JCC.

Hannah Neale commented that some BAME staff get recruited but may leave due to the prejudice experienced. She added that individual's prejudice need to be tackled too as this affects people.

Rachael Wardell agreed and informed the meeting that cultural competency will highlight those type of issues.

For the recruitment of senior posts Cllr Macauley welcomed the introduction of withholding the names of applicants until the long listing is completed.

Kim Brown informed the meeting that HR is now scrutinising the appointments of management grades and above. The change at senior levels has been less and there is a need to develop staff so they can grow into senior roles. She added that HR speaks to recruiters to encourage them to try to get BAME senior applicants for vacant roles. Ms Brown stressed that it is important to create opportunities.

Cllr Macauley asked why if a BME officer is acting up into a role they are not permanently considered for the role? Kim Brown responded that acting up and secondment roles are advertised externally because HR has to ensure that the process is transparent. She added that the council needs stakeholders on panels to challenge the panel and add to the panel's diversity.

Mr Din commented in his opinion institutional racism and indirect discrimination is still apparent. He added that young people are still subject to discrimination and the system has regressed.

Cllr Akyigyina also raised concern about institutional racism and stressed that something needs to be done.

Mr Musse stated that he is not aware of the council employing staff from a Somali background and asked how many the council employees. He also expressed concern that the Somali community have qualifications and should be given a fair chance.

Kim Brown responded stating that the council does not collect nationality data, the monitoring is based on the census categories. Therefore she did not know the exact number of Somali employees, we do have some but she couldn't comment on the precise number.

The report's recommendations were agreed.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr Henry thanked Carl Samuels and Jason Fagan for their efforts to support young people in the borough.