

# Agenda Item 3

## **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS 24 SEPTEMBER 2014**

(19.15 - 21.00)

**PRESENT** Councillor Adam Bush, Councillor Abdul Latif and Councillor Marsie Skeete, Councillor Joan Henry

Mr Edward Maliki (in the Chair), Mr Motiur Rahman, Mr Abayeh Savage, Dr P Arumugaraasah, Mr Safet Vukalic, Mr Bawan Allan, Ms Gracia Kabongo, Mr Zia Khan, Mr Jerry Hall, Mr A Hadi,

Evereth Willis, Equality and Community Cohesion Officer

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None.

### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Cllr Macauley, Cllr Gadzama, Ms Colquhoun and Mr Islam.

### 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 18 JUNE 2014 (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were agreed

### 4 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

A correction was noted on page 5 – delete ‘and p’. It was suggested that in future the Police statistics on page 3 should include numbers and percentages. Requests were made for a presentation on the review of the new Policing model, more information about Asian households being targeted for burglary and what is being done to recruit Muslim Police Officers.

### 5 CONNECTING COMMUNITIES - ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY (Agenda Item 5)

Bawan Allan from the Alzheimer's Society gave an update on the work being done on Dementia in the borough. He gave details of the Understanding Dementia booklet and asked for feed back from the JCC representatives and encouraged them to discuss the booklet with their communities. He also provided details on the Dementia Hub (which was launched in June) and the Dementia Action Alliance.

Mr Allan encouraged the representatives to join the Dementia Action Line. His colleague Ms Gracia Kabongo gave an overview of the Dementia Café that is being launched on 25 October and encouraged carers to attend. The café is targeting the BAME community who are some times reluctant to seek help. Therefore referrals from the BAME community are actively encouraged.

## 6 INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION (Agenda Item 6)

Tim Revell, Interim Head of Electoral Services gave an update on the recent changes to the voter registration system and stressed the urgent need to get more people registered.

The new system went live on 10 June and moved to a system of individual registration instead of household registration. Registration can be done online or in paper form. Electoral Services need help in getting people registered. Currently 150,000 are registered to vote in Merton.

Electoral Commission research thinks that 6 to 8 million people are missing from the register. Canvassers will be sent out in October to encourage people to register. Young people and BAME residents are more likely to be missing from the register. There are also differences between groups as Indians have higher registration rates than Pakistani or Bangladeshi residents and Black Caribbean have higher rates than African households.

Mr Revell encouraged the representatives to encourage members of their communities to register to vote. He suggested that the organisations include Individual Registration information in their newsletters.

**Questions** – It was suggested that fear sometimes deters people from registering because they do not know how the information is going to be used. Mr Revell clarified that only names and addresses are published on the register.

Does everyone have to vote and if you voted in the Council elections in May 2013 will they still be registered to vote? Mr Revell suggested that people get in touch with electoral registration to check.

What is the simplest way to get registered because not everyone wants to register online? Registration may be online or in paper form.

Mr Revell informed the meeting that 21000 people have been written to who are missing from the register and were not automatically transferred. The register can't be used for marketing purposes.

7 BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) VOICE UPDATE (Agenda Item 7)

Kate Herbert, Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships updated the meeting on progress to date in developing the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voice in Merton. A meeting was held at the Positive Network Centre on 9 September to engage the wider community.

There was discussion about the JCC's role and the need for a mechanism for less formal input from the BAME community. Ms Herbert informed the meeting that another community meeting will be held early November to take forward the discussion of 9 September.

It was noted that the September meeting lacked Asian representation and JCC representatives were encouraged to attend the next meeting and promote it to members of their communities.

8 HUMAN RESOURCES PRESENTATION ON LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT PROFILE (Agenda Item 8)

Dean Shoesmith, Joint Head of Human Resources (HR) and Kim Brown, Joint Head of Policy Development presented details of Merton's Senior Management Profile. Bench marking data taken from other London boroughs show that Merton is slightly above the median with 15.7% of senior officers being from a BAME background.

Good progress has been made over the last 2 years increasing from 11.1% to 15.7%. It is recognised the data shows that the senior management BAME profile is not representative of the community. However due to financial constraints recruitment is restricted so actions have been geared internally to increase opportunities to progress. A Leadership and Management Development programme has been commissioned the content of which is designed to increase the capacity, knowledge and skills of the workforce to enable them to progress in they Council.

In response to a question about what the workforce target is based on Mr Shoesmith clarified that the council aims to be representative of the borough's community.

A question was asked about how Merton compares to neighbouring boroughs, Mr Shoesmith replied that the top performer is Brent (27%) and the worst in Richmond (2.9%).

Resolved: Mr Shoesmith to send details of neighbouring borough profiles to Evereth Willis for circulation to the JCC.

9 FEED BACK FROM THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD (Agenda Item 9)

Mr Abayeh Savage gave an update on the Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB). He stressed the importance of the JCC members giving him information to report to the SNB.

Mr Savage gave details of the funding that is available and encouraged JCC representative organisations to apply.

The first Face the People meeting was held on 23 September and had a low level of BAME residents in attendance. Mr Savage encouraged people to attend in the future to voice their concerns and to give him any issue that they wished to have raised at the SNB. He stressed that it was particularly important for community leaders to attend the meetings.

He also informed the meeting that the Police would soon have body cameras.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 10)

None.