

Merton Council

Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations Agenda

Membership

Councillors:

Fidelis Gadzama
Abdul Latif (Vice-Chair)
Edith Macauley MBE (Chair)
Marsie Skeete
Charlie Chirico

Substitute Members: Adam Bush

Joan Henry

African Educational Cultural & Health Organisation (AECHO)

Deputy

Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

Asian Diabetic Support & Awareness Group

Asian Elderly Group of Merton

Asian Youth Association

Bangladeshi Association of Merton

Deputy

Bengali Association of Merton

Deputy

Bengali Women's Association of Merton

British Muslim Association of Merton

Ethnic Minority Centre

Euro Bangla Federation

Deputy

London South West Chinese Community Association

Merton African Organisation

Merton Somali Community

Merton Unity Network

Mitcham Filipino British Association

Deputy

Morden Citizen's Advice Bureau

Pakistan Cultural Association of Merton & Wandsworth

Pakistan Welfare Association

Deputy

Positive Network Ms G Salmon

South London Somali Community Association

South London Tamil Welfare Group

Victim Support Merton and Sutton

Wimbledon Mosque

Revd Mrs H Neale

Mr A. Hadi

Mrs N. Shah

Mr M S Sheikh

Mr T Hassan

Mr. N. Islam

Mr J Choudhury

Mr M Rahman

Mrs M Ahmed

Mr B. Afridi

Mrs Sabitri Ray/Mr A Savage

Mr Q Anwar

Ms L Saltoon

Mr C J Lusack

Mr A. Ali

Ms P Anderson

Ms A Colquhoun

Ms C Batallones

Ms J Gillies

Mr M A Shah

Mr S U Sheikh

Mr Rizvi

Mr A Musse

Dr P Arumugaraasah

Mr A Morgan

Mr Z Khan

Date: Wednesday 23 September 2015

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council chamber - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

This is a public meeting and attendance by the public is encouraged and welcomed. For more information about the agenda please contact diversity@merton.gov.uk or telephone [020 8545 4637](tel:02085454637).

All Press contacts: press@merton.gov.uk, 020 8545 3181

Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations Agenda

23 September 2015

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------|
| 1 | Declarations of Interest | |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Minutes of the last meeting | 1 - 6 |
| 4 | Matters arising | |
| 5 | Merton Clinical Commissioning Group Patient Engagement Group | Verbal update |
| 6 | Preventing diabetes in the South Asian Community - Stella Akintan, LBM Scrutiny Officer | To follow |
| 7 | Feed back from the Safer Neighbourhood Board - Abayeh Savage | 7 - 8 |
| 8 | BAME Voice update - Evereth Willis, LBM Interim Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships | 9 - 18 |
| 9 | Community Cohesion Strategy update - Evereth Willis, LBM Interim Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships | 19 - 26 |
| 10 | Any Other Business | |

Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. If members consider they should not participate because of a non-pecuniary interest which may give rise to a perception of bias, they should declare this, withdraw and not participate in consideration of the item. For further advice please speak with the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance.

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Agenda Item 3

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WITH ETHNIC MINORITY ORGANISATIONS

17 JUNE 2015

(7.15 -8.30)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Edith Macauley (in the Chair),
Councillor Fidelis Gadzama, Councillor Abdul Latif,
Councillor Marsie Skeete and Councillor Charlie Chirico,
Councillor Joan Henry

Rev Mrs H Neale, Mr Sheikh, Mr Rizvi, Mr Savage, Mr Khan, Mr Afridi, Mr Hadi, Evereth Willis, Dr Kay Eilbert, Inspector Vere Bowyer

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

None.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies were received from Dr Arumugarassah, Mrs Sabitri Ray and Mr Islam

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The Minutes were agreed.

4 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

Evereth undertook to amend the spelling of Mr Afridi's name on the minutes of 11 March 2015.

5 POLICE PERFORMANCE - VERE BOWYER, PARTNERSHIP INSPECTOR, MERTON BOROUGH (Agenda Item 5)

Partnership Inspector Vere Bowyer presented the Police Performance report. He reported that over a rolling twelve month period Total Notifiable Offences (TNO) in Merton is up from 11,449 recorded offences to 12,310 an increase of 7.5%. This amounts to 861 more offences. The TNO sanction detection remains largely static at 20.6%.

MOPAC 7 - Seven crime types are included within MOPAC's crime reduction target of reducing crime by 20% from 2011/12 to 2015/16. The average year on year change for these 7 crime types has improved from -14.7% in November 2013 to 19.8% and is therefore on target.

There have been reductions in most areas except a rise in violence with injury which is primarily down to an increase in reported domestic violence and home office counting rules. However burglary has increased by 5.9% on the previous 12 months and violence with injury incidents has increased by 18.8% in the previous 12 months to 443 (mainly due to an increase in Domestic Violence reporting).

Confidence as measured by the Public Attitude Survey remains high in Merton and has improved by 3% to 76% of people stating that the police do a good job in their area. This exceeds the target of 66%. This is reflective of data obtained from the Resident's Annual Survey and represents an improving picture in terms of trust in local policing and a reduction of fear of crime.

For user satisfaction During January Merton was best in the MPS but was again beaten into second place after last month's data was published. Merton remains joint second in the MPS at 81.0%, with only Richmond at 83.0%. The User Satisfaction Survey now measures satisfaction for victims across just three crime types, namely burglary, motor vehicle crime and violent crime. Improvement has been seen in all areas.

Overall ASB calls are down 21% and confidence figures continue to show that residents of Merton feel that the police tackle ASB more effectively than in other Boroughs. There has been a reduction in repeat callers from % in repeat callers. The increase is predominantly down to callers experiencing issues of mental health and represents a challenge across the Safeguarding Adults piece.

Merton has had 30 crimes reported this year to date where a race or religious flag has been added. This equates to around three offences per week, which is consistent with previous performance. The positive news is that 15 of the offences reported this year have resulted in a sanction detection. This represents a percentage of 50% which is the best of any borough in London

The number of stop and searches for the period May 13 to April 14 was 3355. This compares to 2433 for May 14 to May15. At the same time the percentage of people arrested as a result of stop and search has risen from 15.9% to 20.0%.

A question was asked about why the focus was on the MOPAC 7 crimes and not others? Inspector Bowyer clarified that the focus is on victim based crime and is set by the Police Commissioner and the Mayor of London. Emergency calls are prioritised urgently based on information received.

Violence with injury includes assault and domestic violence. In Domestic Violence cases continuing with the prosecution is important. In answer to a question about how the victims are supported, Inspector Vere replied that there is a victim support team in the court. A case can not be withdrawn and once listed will be heard in the victim's absence.

What contact is made with the victim before court? Inspector Vere replied that the court contact team supports victims. The Police conduct investigations promptly and officers are trained to get evidence quickly. This reduces having to go back to the victim.

It was suggested that Hate crime need to be broken down to give detail on the various types. It was agreed that in future they will be broken down.

A question was asked about which communities are affected by domestic violence . Concern was expressed that communities need to be supported. Inspector Vere undertook to find out more.

Stop and Search has decreased because the strategy has changed. The emphasis is now qualitative rather than quantitative. Inspector Vere informed the meeting that there has been an increase in Police Officers on the street talking to young people. This has resulted in notable changes in the Pollards Hill area.

Resolved: Evereth undertook to contact an officer Safer Merton to get the criteria for the funding.

6 BAME VOICE UPDATE – EVERETH WILLIS, LBM INTERIM HEAD OF POLICY, STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS (Agenda Item 6)

Evereth gave a update on the BAME Voice meetings that had taken place. A launch is planned for 11 July and will be funded from a grant from Circle Housing Merton Priory.

7 COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY UPDATE - EVERETH WILLIS, LBM INTERIM HEAD OF POLICY, STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS (Agenda

Item 7)

Evereth presented an update on the Community Cohesion strategy. The report was noted.

8 FEED BACK FROM THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD - ABAYEH SAVAGE (Agenda Item 8)

Abayah gave an update on the Safer Neighbourhood Board meeting. He has concerns about stop and search. He made an appeal for activity to divert young people from being on the street and being drawn into activity that gets them into trouble.

Abayah outlined that the SNB has funding that could be bid for, up to £2000 can be applied for.

A question was asked about whether the funding can be used to prevent small numbers of young people being drawn into anti social behaviour. The fund has £36,000 available.

Resolved: Evereth undertook to contact an officer Safer Merton to get the criteria for the funding.

9 REFRESH OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY - KAY EILBERT, LBM DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH (Agenda Item 9)

Dr Kay Eilbert presented the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy. She explained that the strategy addresses the gap in health outcomes. Good health is underpinned by numerous variables including opportunities to have good choices for education and employment.

The strategy has five themes:

1. Best start in life
2. Good health
3. Life skills- life long learning and good work
4. Community participation and feeling safe
5. A good natural and built environment

Kay stressed that the challenge is to take up a good life for all in Merton.

The strategy was commended and Cllr Henry urged others to get involved. Community groups are to be encouraged to lead a healthy life. Kay undertook to

give councillors the one page summary of the strategy for them to put up in their surgeries.

The key to healthy living is more than healthy eating, many factors such as education, employment and good housing are all determinants of good health.

Is the gap widening or narrowing? Kay replied that it is increasing and Public Health is trying to halt the gap rising.

Are there financial implications for halting the gap? Kay replied that much of the activity is being delivered by partnership working. There is weight management funding available but little else.

Kay reported that for child immunisation there has been an increase in the take up for the second MMR injections.

What are the reasons for the increase in the gap? – Kay replied that 70% - 80% of what creates health is outside health care, therefore good education, jobs and decent housing are needed to reduce the gap. Health prevention and whole environment are important not just health care.

Merton on Move launched on 13 June at Mitcham Carnival, community groups are encouraged to form a team and get involved.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 10)

None.

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Report to the JCC on the Safer Neighbourhood Board Meeting

Held on the 25/06/2015

Election of Vice Chair:

I am pleased to let JCC know, I have been elected in the above position and the Meeting on the 25/06/2015 was chaired by me.

Crime pack and update on Merton Policing Performance:

Mayor Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) mission and challenge for the Metropolitan Police Service by 2016 is to cut crime by 20%, boost public confidence by 20% and cut costs by 20% known as 20/20/20. In the case of Merton, the Borough Commander was able to confirm that this target can be achieved.

Funding:

In my last report, I urged the BAME communities to come up with a bid under Crime on MOPAC7, design to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and to promote good relations between communities. Very much disappointed no proposal or bid was put forward by the BAME Organisations. Five bids were received from Merton Chamber of Commerce, Youth Conference, Stop and Search, Neighbourhood Watch and Merton Centre for Independent Living.

These projects were to be delivered not later than 31/03/2015 unfortunately none of the organisation were near ready to meet this date. The reasons are vetting and helping organisations with their applications.

Bids range from £7000 to £13000 and all were approved. MOPAC has agreed to let us carry-over of any underspend to 2015/2016.

Funding process was discussed as the current process doesn't seem to be serving the bidders. Rather than sending applications to Lee who had to be helping out with guidance on costing and shaping of bid, a committee is to be established to deal with this process of dealing with organisations and ultimately recommending to the Board for approval.

Can the BAME organisations please contact me if help or advice is needed to put forward a bid? I can be contacted on 020 8417 1960 or 07956213567.

ABAYEH SAVAGE: Joint Consultative Committee Representative.

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Agenda Item 8

'LAUNCH OF MERTON BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC VOICE' SEPTEMBER 2015

Suggested Programme (1)

1.45pm -2.45pm	Organisations set up their stalls.
3pm – 3.15pm	Registration/Drinks
3.15 - 3.25 pm	Introduction to the day's activities/ 'The Minority Ethnic Voice ' – its origins and significance for Merton.
3.25 – 4.40pm	Cultural welcome (Steel Band)
3.40 - 3.50 pm	Merton Council's response to the Minority Ethnic Voice
3.50 - 4pm	Questions
4pm – 4.45pm	Workshops
	Workshop 1 'Strong & Sustainable Communities'/ 'Community Safety, Crime & Disorder'
	Workshop 2 'Employment Skills & Enterprise'
	Workshop 3 'Older people/Health &Well Being'
	Workshop 4 'Young people/Education & Learning'

**Workshop emphasis will be on community action in the different categories
Workshops to come up with one plan of action to be undertaken during the
next 12 months.**

4.45 -5.15pm	Refreshments
5.15 – 5.45pm	Cultural display
5.45 - 6.30pm	Feedback from the Workshops
6.30 -6.50pm	Where Next ?
7pm	Acknowledgements & Close

'LAUNCH OF MERTON BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC VOICE' SEPTEMBER 2015

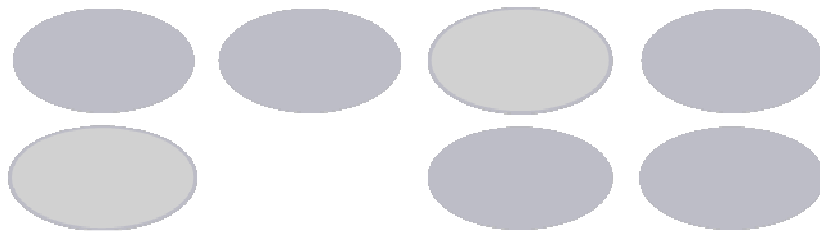
Suggested Programme (2)

1.45pm -2.45pm	Organisations set up their stalls.
3pm – 3.30pm	Registration/Drinks
3pm – 3.30pm	Steel Band welcome guests during Registration
3.30 - 3.45 pm	Introduction to the day's activities/ 'The Minority Ethnic Voice ' – its origins and significance for Merton.
3.45 - 3.55 pm	Merton Council's response to the Minority Ethnic Voice
3.55 - 4.00pm	Questions
4.00 pm – 4.45pm	Workshops

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Merton Black Asian Minority ETHNIC Voice
THE UNIFIED VOICE OF MERTON'S MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES



Working strategically to increase the influence, representation and active engagement of all Merton's Black Asian Minority ETHNIC Voice and their communities in the decisions and policies that affect them.

Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice

Steering group terms of reference

Introduction

Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice has been formally established in response to the need for an independent representative body to look at key local issues and their impact on minority ethnic communities who make up over 35% of Merton's population.

" Too often in the past we have devoted too much time and energy in analysing the problems and not enough time in developing and delivering practical solutions that connect with real lives"

Key aims and objectives

- To advocate on behalf of **Merton's Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** in their dealings with public sector agencies and other statutory and non-statutory organizations.
- To provide a unified and strategic voice within the Borough ensuring that the **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** communities are actively involved in strategic decision making and that services provided meet the needs of these communities.
- To identify commonalities, but recognise the need to work through the issues a particular community might have.
- Reach out to newly settled minority ethnic communities and assist them in setting up structures and gaining access to services as well as delivering good quality services to their Users.

We also aims to promote and encourage mutual co-operation, assistance and the sharing of resources, expertise and information between its members.

2. Priorities for Action

Specific areas of interests within the **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** communities are in the following eight thematic groups that were identified in the **BAME** Strategic Plan.

1. *Children and Young People*
2. *Community Safety, Crime & Disorder*
3. *Education and learning*
4. *Employment, Skills and Enterprise*
5. *Health and Social care*
6. *Housing, Regeneration & The Environment*
7. *Older People*
8. *Stronger and Sustainable Communities*

Leadership and Management

The steering group will be formed as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It will have a board of directors with overall responsibility for the focus and work of the organisation. The board members will comprise one selected representative (with a deputy) from each registered **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** organisations and represent a range of **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** communities within Merton. It will appoint representatives to the various local Strategic Partnerships, the JCC and other bodies within Merton and be linked to the Involve Network. The Board will meet at least four times a year, hosted by Positive Network Centre. The Board's tasks will be principally to:

- Ensure that **Merton's Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** voluntary sector groups are made aware of policy decisions and initiatives which will have an impact on their communities
- Give the **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** organisations the opportunity to analyse issues, agree priorities with others and more crucially, have the power to instruct representatives to take the key priorities forward to the relevant bodies
- Identify, monitor make representations where necessary when **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** communities/individuals are disadvantaged
- Work in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organizations to advance equality of opportunity, promote cohesion and act as a reliable resource to public agencies.

- To improve communications, raise the profile of **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** groups and be the primary focus for improving community cohesion in the borough.

An overall Chairperson and Vice-Chair will be elected. In the absence of the Chairperson or Vice-Chair another Member will be nominated to chair the meeting.

- Thematic groups shall be formed from organisations whose primary work falls within particular themes. E.g. Young people education and Learning, Employment Skills and Enterprise, Strong Sustainable Community/Crime and Disorder, Older people and Wellbeing.

Invite guests from key agencies and influential local people could also be invited to attend. Chairpersons will be nominated for each of the thematic groups.

Sub-groups which shall meet as and when required to look in more detail at issues affecting the **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** community in each thematic area and relay suggested action to the Board.

The board will ensure that the day-to-day running of the organisation is done effectively.

Meetings of the steering group officers will be held every three months or as becomes necessary, to look at issues around the eight identified thematic groups. Any agreed action will require the full agreement of the Board.

Funding

The Board will facilitate funding streams at local, national and international levels. Core funding will be requested from Merton Council and strategic partners, being the host Borough (time based) and from local commissioning agencies. The board will be proactive in bringing in funds to assist with various projects and activities e.g. Training to meet the specific needs of the different the **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** communities and for the various community annual events e.g. Black History Month, (Oct) Gypsy Roma Traveller month (June), Refugee Week (June); Holocaust Memorial Day (Jan), other Merton cultural events.

Membership

Practicing **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice** groups or organisations and their communities will be encouraged to become members of the steering group and supported in any contributions they might wish to make to the board's programmes and activities.

Review

July 2015

The steering group will review and update its terms of reference as well as the **Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic** Strategic Plan annually to reflect developments which might arise.

Governance

An Annual General Meeting will be held to elect board members.

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‘LAUNCH OF MERTON BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC VOICE’ SEPTEMBER 2015

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'LAUNCH OF MERTON BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC VOICE' SEPTEMBER 2015

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3pm – 3.30pm	Steel Band welcome guests during Registration
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Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minorities	Date: 23 September 2015
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SUBJECT: Update on Merton Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy 2012 - 2015

LEAD CONTACT: Evereth Willis

POSITION: Interim Head of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

ORGANISATION: London Borough of Merton

OFFICER CONTACT: Joseph Dance (joseph.dance@merton.gov.uk)

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Joint Consultative Committee:

- A. Notes the timeline set out at 3.2 for the development of a revised Merton Community Cohesion Strategy 2016–2018.
- B. Review the existing Community Cohesion Strategy 'Key Priorities' (Appendix A) and 'Local Issues' (Appendix B).

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. To update the Joint Consultative Committee on the refresh of the Merton Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan 2016-19.

2. Merton's Community Cohesion Strategy 2016-19

2.1. At its meeting in March 2015, the Merton Partnership Executive Board confirmed its commitment to refreshing Merton's Community Cohesion Strategy for a further three years.

2.2. Merton's current Community Cohesion Strategy 2012-15 came to an end this year. JCC members received a report in July 2015 on the successful delivery of the priorities in the current Strategy and Action Plan and an indicative timeline for the development of a refreshed Strategy for 2016-19.

2.3. Since then a working group of stakeholders including representatives from Merton Centre for Independent Living, Merton Council, Merton Voluntary Service Council, Merton Police and Circle Housing Merton Priory has met to review the current strategy and update its evidence base and list of key priorities.

2.4. The existing priorities of the strategy are outlined below:

- Improving engagement with minority and new communities
- Supporting and engaging with the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Supporting employment and economic development opportunities
- Engaging and supporting children, young people and families
- Continuing interfaith dialogue
- Improving health outcomes

- Monitoring community tensions and maintaining community cohesion

2.5 Appendix A provides the list of key priorities at a greater level of detail. Appendix B details the 'local issues' which form the evidence base underpinning these priorities. Members of the JCC are asked to review both the local issues and key priorities and provide feedback on the following questions:

- Are the local issues still pertinent? Are there any other issues/themes that underpin Merton's cohesion agenda?
- Are our Key Priorities still fit for purpose?

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 It is envisaged that following a period of consultation and engagement with stakeholders, Merton's revised Community Cohesion Strategy will be endorsed by the Merton Partnership Executive Board in February 2016. The Policy, Strategy and Partnerships Team will co-ordinate development of the new revised Strategy.

3.2 Please see below for an indicative time table for the development of the revised Strategy.

Date	Activity
March 2015	Monitoring report to Merton Partnership Executive Board.
July 2015	Update to JCC
August 2015 – January 2016	Develop draft Strategy and Action Plan with key stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Partnerships • Safer Stronger Group / Executive Board • JCC and Faith and Belief Forum • Merton Partnership Executive Board
February 2016	Merton Partnership Executive Board to endorse the revised Strategy.

4. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The strategy is being delivered within existing resources.

5. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on local authorities in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". The community cohesion strategy will present opportunities to deliver partnership activity that will promote inclusion and support local people to get involved in their local community and to continue to build good relations in the borough.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

6.1.1 The borough faces future challenges as the community continues to change and become increasingly diverse. The community cohesion strategy supports Merton to focus promoting inclusion, fairness and cohesion and diminishing potential conflict.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The strategy identifies potential risks and suggests actions that can be delivered across the Partnership to prevent or reduce possible community tensions.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None.

9. APPENDICES

9.1 Merton Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy Action Plan

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The Merton Partnership Community Cohesion Strategy

http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/equality-diversity/120612_community_cohesion_strategy_v13.pdf

12.2 Community Cohesion Charter: http://www.merton.gov.uk/community-living/equality-diversity/cohesion_cohesion_charter.pdf

13. REPORT AUTHOR

Name: Joseph Dance

E-mail: joseph.dance@merton.gov.uk

APPENDIX A – KEY PRIORITIES

We have identified seven key priorities for Merton’s Community Cohesion Strategy, listed below, along with the main approaches that can be taken to tackle them.

Improving engagement with minority and new communities

- Developing and maintaining staff and Member awareness of the many different cultures and cultural sensitivities
- Supporting and integrating new communities
- Raising awareness and fostering understanding in and between minority communities
- Identifying tensions and differences within minority communities

Supporting and engaging with the Voluntary and Community Sector

- Promoting benefits of volunteering
- Supporting small and medium sized voluntary and community organisations through changes in the sector
- Sharing information between local government and the VCS

Supporting employment and economic development opportunities

- Encouraging skills development in disengaged areas of the community
- Encouraging communities to move away from self-contained trading practices
- Developing cross-community infrastructure and opportunities for minority groups.

Engaging and supporting children, young people and families

- Building on good practice, increase the ‘voice of young people’ to identify issues and develop services.
- Support schools, colleges and places where young people meet to address intolerance and bullying
- Improving support to vulnerable young people

Continuing interfaith dialogue

- Supporting interfaith activities and projects
- Improving understanding between faith groups
- Increasing the involvement of young people

Improving health outcomes

- Closing the gap in life expectancy between the east and west of the borough
- Improving engagement and access to services
- Improving Mental Health Service provision

Monitoring community tensions and maintaining community cohesion

- Adopting a robust approach to reporting hate crime

- Build upon work engaging the police with particular communities to increase dialogue and improve relations
- Increasing community involvement in monitoring community tension
- Ensuring that community cohesion is actively and effectively monitored

• APPENDIX B – LOCAL ISSUES

From our partnership work, community consultation and a range of reports and surveys commissioned by the council and partnership organisations, some key issues that affect cohesion in Merton have been identified:

Diversity

- The borough's growing diversity is complex and interesting but brings challenges because of the variety of people from different backgrounds. Issues of social class are also apparent and it is evident that there is affluence amongst some of the new migrant communities. The east of the borough has more diverse communities, some of which are still experiencing discrimination and tensions.
- There are new communities about whom little is known regarding cultural, social and health issues. These communities need to be supported to access services.
- There is some spatial segregation of BAME communities in Merton: 61.4% of the total Black or Black British population live in just five wards.
- Some new migrants and Muslim women need ESOL opportunities.
- Senior management positions across the borough are not representative of the borough's ethnic diversity.
- A large and diverse school population (55.8% of secondary and 60.1% of primary pupils are BAME) is moving into adulthood. The JSNA predicts even higher figures.
- Potential tension and exclusion exists between Merton's diverse religious groups and denominations. The tensions are polarised in the Elder community and the young people seem to have an evolving understanding, which is leading to improved relations between faiths.
- Merton's high level of cohesion must be maintained as diversity increases.
- Far Right extremism in some areas is potentially a threat to community cohesion.
- Within some communities there are changes, which bring their own challenges: this is particularly true where the young and older generations have different views.

VCS/funding

- Smaller VCS organisations, often those with specialised priorities, lack resources and support.

Deprivation

- Deprivation is considerably more prevalent in Black/Black British residents than Asian/Asian British residents in Merton.
- Merton's low-pay economy and London's porous economy mean skilled workers tend to find work outside Merton.
- Focusing on providing opportunities for residents of the east only in the east can increase a sense of segregation.
- Different minority groups have different skill levels and economic needs; tailored support is needed.
- Local job opportunities are declining and often poorly paid, making it difficult for local SMEs to compete against larger companies.
- Employers can be unaware of their staff's individual faith values and needs.
- BAME children show higher rates of exclusion and expulsion in schools, leading to a disproportionate lack of attainment.
- Young refugees and asylum seekers have poor access to employment, housing, education and services.

Awareness and communication

- Many new minority communities are unaware of the services that the council provides and are inactive in civic life.
- The Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) community frequently experiences discrimination and can be hard to reach through official channels.
- Engaging with the LGBT community in Merton, particularly those within other minority communities can be difficult.
- Some minority groups feel that consultation on previous initiatives was superficial and that their voices are continually ignored.
- The reporting rate of homophobic crime has decreased in the last two years, which may indicate a lack of general awareness of the systems in place for reporting such hate crimes.
- Young people report feeling safe in Merton and recognise the use of stop and search as a tactic. However, they report that the poor attitude and lack of information provided by some police officers, when conducting stop and search activity, is reinforcing negative attitude in BAME young people towards authority.
- Only 59% of residents feel the council treats them fairly, while 19% of black residents and 25% of Asian residents feel the council does not tackle racism.

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