

**Committee:** Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations

**Date:** 24 September 2014

Wards: All

**Subject:** Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Voice – Update

Lead officer: Kate Herbert, Head of Policy, Strategy & Partnerships

Lead member: Councillor Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Equalities and Engagement

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**Recommendations:**

- A. That members of the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations (JCC) note the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) voice activity that has taken place since their last meeting and the events planned over coming weeks.
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**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. To provide members of the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations with an update on the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) voice activity that has taken place since their last meeting and the events planned over coming weeks.

**2 DETAILS**

- 2.1. At their meeting in March 2014 the Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations considered a proposal for a project to explore concerns about capacity within the BAME voluntary sector to support BAME voice and capacity building. The JCC expressed concerns about the need for an additional piece of research, stressing that sufficient information was already available, and requested that a public meeting be called to discuss the proposed project.
- 2.2. Timing constraints in the run up to the local elections in May prevented an earlier date, so the extra JCC meeting was held on 23 July 2014, at the civic centre. A note of the discussion is attached at Appendix I.
- 2.3. The extra JCC meeting agreed that a community meeting should be held to bring together a wider group of representatives of the BAME community to seek their views on what is needed to promote BAME voice and capacity building in Merton.
- 2.4. A small steering group involving Fitzroy Dawson, Hannah Neale, Grace Salmon, Edward Maliki and Lola Barratt, supported by Kate Herbert and Evereth Willis from Merton Council, oversaw the planning on a public meeting, which took place on 9 September 2014.
- 2.5. The event was held at the Positive Network Centre and was facilitated by Carol Campayne and Paul Anthony from Diversity Practice. The Leader of

the Council opened the event, welcoming the 47 people who attended and took part in discussions.

2.6. The session explored a number of themes:

**With regards to the BAME Voice...**

- Your personal Leadership story
  - Does the BAME Voice in Merton matter to you?
  - If so why?
- Your Leadership Stake
  - What's your personal vision for the BAME Voice in Merton?
- Your Legacy
  - What's the Legacy that you want to create around this agenda?

**BAME Voice - Yesterday & Today**

- Looking back what have been the 3 key achievements of the BAME Voice in Merton?
  - Individual Leaders
  - Community or faith-based organisations
  - Umbrella voluntary sector organisations
- Today, what are the 3 most significant challenges getting in the way of success?
- What are the 3 critical needs that the BAME Voice should address?

2.7. The notes gathered from flipcharts and discussions of these themes are provided at Appendix II.

2.8. There was a great deal of energy, commitment and enthusiasm for taking the discussions further, however we ran out time. It was agreed that a further session was needed to continue the exercise and the council agreed to resource this. The second session will be organised for the end of October/ early November.

2.9. A further update will be brought back to the JCC after this event.

**3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1. We could choose not to hold a second session but this would lose the momentum and commitment of those involved to date.

**4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1. The event was publicised through the council's website, Merton Connected website and newsletter, and various community mailing lists held by the council.

**5 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- Appendix I – Note of the extra JCC Meeting on 23 July 2014
- Appendix II – Notes from the BAME Voice event on 9 September 2014

**6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1. None

**Note of the extra JCC Meeting on 23 July 2014**

**Joint Consultative Committee with Ethnic Minority Organisations  
Discussion regarding BAME Voice  
23 July 2014**

Present: Councillor Edith Macauley, Councillor Adam Bush, Councillor Abdul Latif, Abayeh Savage, Lola Barrett, Dr Aru, Zo Neufville, Andrea Colquhoun, Safet Vukalic, Hannah Neale, Fahim Akhter, Patricia Anderson, Saleem Sheikh, Mohammed S. Sheikh, Edward Maliki, Eula Valentine, Andrew Wakefield, Beau Fadahunsi and Kate Herbert.

**Summary of points made during the discussion**

- There was some discussion about whether there was a need for a collective BAME voice in the borough and different views were put. On balance there was support for a collective BAME voice.
- There was a question about whether the BME Forum was the right mechanism to channel the collective BAME voice. It was suggested that a community meeting – in a community venue – should be held to bring together a wider group of representatives of the BAME community to seek their views on what is needed to promote BAME Voice and capacity building in Merton.
- It was queried whether the BME Forum was just for the Black community or if it included the Asian community. Those involved in the BME Forum confirmed that the BME Forum did include the Asian community and indeed other ethnic minority groups. It was suggested that the BME Forum should be renamed the BAME Forum to avoid confusion.
- If this meeting takes place, an independent facilitator should lead the meeting and should be independent of local groups.
- The Council offered to pay the expenses of room hire, refreshments and facilitators for the event.
- The question was raised about how a renewed BME/ BAME Forum could be resourced and it was suggested that it may be eligible for Strategic Partner Funding. Strategic Partner funding is aimed at a) strategic support services for the voluntary and community sector, including umbrella organisations providing voice, advice and capacity building support; and b) cross-cutting accredited advice and advocacy services. The council is consulting until 27 August on the criteria.
- The Strategic Partner funding criteria should reflect the fact that 35% of the population are BAME and that this population is growing. The Strategic Partner Fund should fund cohesion, integration and access.
- It was noted that there is an application process for the Strategic Partner grant funding and that any bid for whatever solution the community seeks to put in place will have to be judged against the criteria for the fund and in context of other bids received.

- Recognise that the BME Forum and the JCC provide different formats for exploring issues affecting the BAME community and that there is a need to ensure that the BME Forum and the JCC complement each other. There is a need to reinvigorate the JCC and get better attendance. There is also a need to ensure that there is wider participation in community settings.
- There is a need for support to deliver the BAME Strategic Plan.
- There is a gap in the services for BAME case work in the borough and no organisation to gather facts and figures to challenge public services. Similarly, there is no third party reporting programme in the borough.

#### Next steps:

- Kate Herbert, Lola Barratt and Patricia Anderson to meet to make arrangements for a meeting(s) – via the mechanism of the B(A)ME Forum – to bring together a wider group of representatives of the BAME community to seek their views on what is needed to promote BAME Voice and capacity building in Merton. The scheduling of the meeting(s) will take into account the timetable for the Strategic Partner funding stream.
- This meeting(s) will take place in community settings, not in the council chamber, and needs to be clear about what it wants to achieve.
- The Council will cover the expenses of room hire, refreshments and facilitators for the event.
- The Strategic Partner funding criteria should be amended to reflect the fact that 35% of the population are BAME. The Strategic Partner Fund should fund cohesion, integration and access. This will be fed into the consultation

## Notes from the BAME Voice event on 9 September 2014

**With regards to the BAME Voice...**

- Your personal Leadership story – Does the BAME Voice in Merton matter to you? If so, why?
- Yes - voice enables support; prevent isolation.
  - Yes – Black organisations tend not to be as stable and don't get funded. Collective voice can improve things.
  - Yes – because I am black, been here a long time and worked hard.
  - Leadership story: collaboration – get things done by working together.
  - Yes – more difficult to communicate with others.
- We live in a very divided community.
  - Lived here since 60s; want to feel part of Merton and feel valued.
  - BAME communities exist in significant numbers and at the moment are not represented fully in the decision making processes which affect their life.
  - Yes – the BAME voice does matter because we are underrepresented in the wider community and if we want something done or need things to change we have to have a voice in order to be heard.
  - Concept of BAME voice does not exist at present. Therefore, communication and positive listening essential.
  - It will contribute towards continuous improvement and access to services.
  - Health and wellbeing, prosperity, community cohesion.
  - It is important to influence change.
  - Ensuring that BAME groups are supported and people empowered in community action.
- It is important for our younger generation to attend organisations like this, so our different ethnic backgrounds is not a barrier.
  - BAME voice is important as they represent a large community. If we don't hear from them we will not find out about issues, problems and needs.
  - Important; live; entitlement. Riot of the unheard. Don't know what the needs are.
  - Having a voice must also deal with injustice.
  - Many in our communities have no voice.
  - If you have no stake in society it is dangerous.
  - Without a voice we have no stake in Merton.
  - BAME voice matters to me because I live and work in Merton and I plan to have a family in Merton.
  - 'A riot is a voice of the unheard' (Martin Luther King).

- People matter to me.
  - BAME voice matters as well as overall voice of Merton. Why? To create relevant projects.
  - Community cohesion.
  - Creates diversity and Equality.
  - It is important. Yes, it is big, voice should be heard.
  - Find the appropriate aims and objectives; bringing the community together; community cohesion
  - Catalyst for change to live in a fairer and equal society.
  - To promote social cohesion and integration and put away segregation and discrimination.
  - 35% [of Merton's population] is a big chunk. We need to be consulted on issues that affect our lives.
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- Working together with one voice.
  - Understanding each other's backgrounds and needs.
  - Make sure public services meet BAME needs.
  - We should play with everyone even if they are black or are less able. Always try your best in everything.
  - Giving our children a sense of identification of themselves, what their roots are, where they belong to and should be proud of their identity.
  - BAME voice matters yes.

**With regards to the BAME Voice...**

- Your Leadership Stake – What's your personal vision for the BAME Voice in Merton?

- Globalisation has changed access to information and we should learn from this and come together. Have events to find a common ground to come together.
  - Richness of different cultures coming together in the same way as when we were colleagues.
  - Leaders should lead their membership to think about and understand other cultures.
  - Replicate the diversity of my church. BAME voice should include all different backgrounds.
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- It will be heard and respected.
  - Shared knowledge, skills.
  - Positive changes will commence.
  - That in time (not too long) a separate organisation for BAME communities will not be necessary. We will finally be AT HOME.

- Strong organisations working well with others.
- Need to have a co-ordinated approach to BAME matters.
- Be heard and be respected.
- Want to see everyone happy and confident.
- People to get together.
  
- Unity on the basis of need not skin colour.
- Justice and accountability at every level.
- I would like to see a voice of BAME which represents all the community in Merton.
- To create a bridge between generations and various cultures so that all members of the BAME are connected.
- Inform the younger generation about it a little bit more.
- Buildings and books.
- Personal vision is that BAME should be a part of the decision making process.
- That I employ my successor!
- Fit for purpose.
- Raise education levels/enterprise/socio-economic sector on par with other boroughs and to offer services to ensure this happens.
- Services that are relevant and appropriate 4 BAME community.
- Relevant services.
  
- Respect and play with everybody. We are all human beings.
- Place where can go to raise issues/problems - & know something will happen as a result.
- BAME could be a way of sharing your skills and improving the overall look of mixed communities.
- To have one BAME voice that matters.
- Young people engaged and involved in the conversation.
- LEADERSHIP – giving local people to voice matters that applies to daily living.
- Personal leadership – “what does the BAME voice look like?” What should it look like?
- Black and Asian friends be good and play with everyone.
- It is a way of building relationship with other than your own culture and it will help in socialisation and mixing of different communities.
- A group to take collective BAME views to the council (at the moment it is fragmented and no action taken).

**With regards to the BAME Voice...**

- Your Legacy – What’s the Legacy that you want to create around this agenda?

- Spread the word.
  - Creating a community base for the children in the future.
  - For our children to know that we tried to do something.
  - Everyone is equal and not separate.
  - Awareness that we are all the same.
  - Barriers broken – more interaction between community groups.
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- BAME community will lead (not always playing catch-up).
  - An end to tensions between voluntary and community groups about this issue.
  - The BAME communities not engaged are reached out to and brought into the process.
  - Establishment of the road map for continuous improvement.
  - Better facilities and opportunities for BAME. Total integration.
  - Make Merton a better place to live.
  - The legacy I want to create is to leave a historical record of the journey the BAME communities have made in settling in Merton.
  - Want to see a community with respect and confidence.
  - Leave MVSC with this issue – on the way to resolution.
  - To leave a positive legacy for the younger ones growing up to pass on to the future generation just how my parents and their foreparents stood up for what they believed in, and to never “give up the fight”. Also, to live in harmony.
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- To leave a community structure of equal opportunity and involvement.
  - Co-operation in hospitals. Not as many managers.
  - An education system where all members of various cultures work together to achieve.
  - A Merton and London, in general, that is more inclusive and equal to all people of all backgrounds.
  - Young people and children having a say/stake in their futures.
  - That we deal with social and economic injustices in Merton i.e. stop and search.
  - That we hold people in power to account and train ourselves to do so.
  - That we create opportunities for the young and old for growth and development.
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- BAME is mainstreamed.
  - Something that is a sustainable system.
  - Something to bring the whole community together.
  - Whatever disparities/inequalities there are, are met.
  - Equalities of N and E Mitcham to be realised.
  - A robust system in place for continuance of the BAME voice.
  - More inclusive community.
  - Evolving/new ethnic groups have a voice.



- Make a less disadvantaged borough. Create successful projects to fill in skills gap.
- More inclusive community.
- A BAME voice that is sustainable and representative and brings the voice of day-to-day people.
- Engagement with all communities and age groups.
- A place where you will feel you are fairly treated without prejudice and without discrimination.
- A borough that is inclusive of all people.
- A place where I know people will respect me and value and respect my belief and culture.
- That my children will have a voice that matters.
- Leadership stake - single voice which is effective.

### **BAME Voice - Yesterday & Today**

- Looking back what have been the 3 key achievements of the BAME Voice in Merton? (Individual Leaders, Community or faith-based organisations, Umbrella voluntary sector organisations)
  - Individual – Mr Stanislaus, South London Tamil Welfare Association leader – ability to bring people together.
  - Racial Equality Council – brought together migrant communities. Represented Black voice well in 1980s and 90s.
  - Merton Unity Network – BAME Strategic Plan – first one developed nationally.
- Positive network.
- Members of BAME becoming Mayors, Deputy Mayors and councillors.
- High grades attained by BAME children.
- Colleges have improved.
- Merton BAME Strategic Plan.
- Lots of new BAME councillors.
- Lots of BAME volunteers running groups for their community.
- Strong BAME organisations that laid the foundations for others to build on.
- Freedoms to practice faith/share views.
- Violence free community.
- Community togetherness/EMC.
- One-stop shop.
- Recognition.

### **BAME Voice - Yesterday & Today**

- Today, what are the 3 most significant challenges getting in the way of success?

- Different times – racial discrimination and attacks have reduced; legislation to protect people has resulted in less need to fight.
- Need to ensure Asian community is engaged in the conversation. The leadership is missing.
- Getting young people to be involved.
- Still have discrimination.
- Youth involvement in leadership and different communities involvement.
- Challenges in inequality.
- Lack of resources including funding.
- Cuts disproportionately affecting those who are poorest - % BAME are in deprived areas.
- Difficulty in engaging communities (BAME) in services/activities.
- Finance! Distribution of finance.
- Equality – lack of equality.
- Understanding each other's views and aspirations (communication).
- Funding.
- Communication.
- Accommodation/premises.

### **BAME Voice - Yesterday & Today**

- What are the 3 critical needs that the BAME Voice should address?

- Leaving legacy – an asset entrenched in society.
- Challenge young people to have dreams and aspirations.
- Knowledge of the needs of various communities.
- Dealing with gangsters.
- Fear of crime.
- Advisory group for LBM/CCG/NHS/Police at policy-setting/pre-commissioning stage.
- Stop doing research – act on what we know.
- More data.

- Programmes that facilitate/enable people from diverse communities to come together to learn and solve common issues/needs.
- Mental health issues.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Getting our voice heard.
- Younger generation.
- Equality/ disadvantaged people.