



Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Consultation Forum Report

Rugby Nuneaton & Bedworth/North Warwickshire Warwick/Stratford District

March 2011

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Introduction

WREP's BME Consultation Forums were held on the following dates and venues:

- Warwick and Stratford District forum – 22nd March 2011 at the Sikh Cultural & Sports Community Centre, Leamington Spa.
- Rugby forum - 24th March 2011 at the Rugby West Indian Community Centre, Rugby.
- Nuneaton & Bedworth / North Warwickshire forum – 29th March 2011, Hatters Space Community Centre, Nuneaton.

The four themes discussed at the forums were:

1. Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership (WREP) – “Local issues”
2. Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership (WREP) – “Our Future Services”
3. Warwickshire Police – “Changes to Warwickshire Police and Local Policing”
4. Digital Outreach – “The Digital Switchover”

We dedicated two out of the four themes to WREP for two reasons. Firstly, rather than offering ‘more of the same’ we wanted to shape our services to be as effective as possible, in order to match the needs of our stakeholders and align our work programme. For this reason, in addition to the focus groups we also conducted consultations via paper and online surveys which proved hugely successful.

Secondly, the ‘local issues’ theme at the consultation forum is one of the key platforms for us to gain an understanding of issues that BME communities are currently facing. Issues identified from the forums are then addressed by WREP officers through an action plan. This is discussed in further detail below.

In addition to the four themes discussed there were a range of additional speakers who fed back from the previous consultation forum and agencies that provided information on current issues such as the ‘Library Services.’

The Way Forward

Information gathered from WREP's consultation forums together with issues identified from WREP's community engagement events and visits will be added to an action plan which will be used to address individual issues. The action plan feeds into community area forums, and specific issues will be fed into the relevant area or agency to address. The active use of the action plan will allow WREP to keep track of issues raised and consequently feed back the outcomes/progress of the issues at consultation forums and to individuals.

Issues identified by WREP feed into the action plan in four areas:

- Safer Communities
- Health & Well Being
- Housing
- Economy, Skills & Employment

These four areas are in line with many of the Community Area Strategies. This allows WREP to effectively communicate the issues with the area teams in order to get the issues addressed.

The comments in this report are direct quotes and questions expressed by participants at WREP's consultation forum workshop sessions and some of the responses given by the workshop facilitators.

WREP – “Local Issues”. Facilitated by Mario Jaco, (New & Emerging Communities Equality Officer) & Doreen Wallace, (Administration Officer).

Warwick & Stratford District Forum

Nightlife

- The Shade nightclub in South Leamington is applying for a sexual entertainment venture license through the District Council. In the past, licenses were hard to get but now it is much easier.

People do not know what this license entails. The Police say that no-one reports any trouble from the club. Some community representatives feel that it is a place that arouses men. When these men leave the club they accost ladies in the street. Unfortunately these ladies do not report this to the police. People are also upset about the way the girls who work in the club and those outside the club are treated by customers of the club. They feel that people in the Brunswick area are not doing a good job and that this is exploitation of women. This club makes the area unsafe and those in the area feel unsafe. It was recommended by Cllr Weston that this problem be reported to the police at Leek Wootton where it could be logged as an incident. It was felt that there is a North / South divide in Leamington. South Leamington standards are slipping. Also late night licensing needs to be cut down as students from pubs / clubs make trouble once they leave these establishments.

Housing

- A lady had an issue with the constant dirtiness of the only lift in her building and wished to know who to complain to. She was told that her landlord would be Warwick District Council.

Education

- There is a north / south divide. Champion school has moved and will be moving again further into Whitnash. The present venue of the school will be turned into a housing estate. This is a grave concern to the community.
- Carlos Spencer is looking for a course in basic computer skills for the elderly. It was suggested by Tracey Baker of the library service that Stratford District Council Adult and Community Learning at Arden Street may be able to help.

Refuse Collection

- In the Milverton area around Highfield Terrace the refuse collectors empty the bins then throw them down on the road. This needs to be reported.
- In the Brunswick area some teams are not emptying the recycling bins properly. The Councillors response to this is that some collectors are dedicated and others are not.

Roads

- There has been an increase in potholes which is an issue for cars and bicycles. In Stratford the Council is quick to fill in the potholes but this is a 6 month fix.

- In South Leamington (Sydenham) the temple traffic is about 1000 people a week. They have told the Council that a crossing is needed but no notice has been taken. The area needs to be made safe.

Crime

- Burglaries have risen in Leamington. The perception of the local community is that the Police are not doing anything.
- The community feels that they are not getting help or support from the police. Crime prevention is needed and feedback should go to the relevant agencies. The cuts are taking us backwards.

Information Gathering / Reporting mechanisms

- Information on local issues needs to be gathered and addressed. The Community should go to the Neighbourhood Watch who should feed issues back into the area forums. Community forums have resources and funding to help the BME communities, who need to embrace its work by collecting information and feeding it back to them.
- WREP & Warwick should work together to link both forums. This has been mentioned before.
- It was suggested that any complaints should be reported to WREP. An advert regarding this should go in the WREP newsletter. If the community are not happy and do not come to WREP then issues cannot be passed on.
- Community Intelligence – Reports from BME communities should go to County forums who would develop locality plans to meet the needs of BME communities. How can this work if the forums do not get the information?
- WREP should raise BME community issues at County forums until BME communities are encouraged to attend.
- There was a suggestion that BME groups liaise with County forums, arrange pre - meetings and raise any issues from these meetings at the County forums. It would be the County's responsibility to ask WREP to help plan the County's forums which could be held once a year at community centres. County forums would then go to that venue.

Cuts to BME Day Care Services

- Members of the Satkaar need maximum disability support. 5 people are living on a small grant. They are worried that they will not receive any help. This will have an effect on the daily life of the elderly.
- Many groups face closure because of the cuts in funding. WCC funding will be for individuals to buy into the service. This will not support an organisation to maintain their services. WREP is challenging this and has noted the major concerns from the BME community.
- The Council needs to understand the special needs of the BME Community which are very different from other communities.

- Community centres are accessible to BME individuals who feel happy and safe there. They don't have another option. It is felt that if the centres fall BME people will have no place to go.
- Some people may not be eligible for the personalised budget. In order to fit the criteria you need to be severely disabled.
- Some staff at community centres work there on a full time basis. BME people would not go to the CAB but to the community centre for their issues to be addressed, especially as the elderly have a language barrier.
- Centres offer other services including a meal, free advice, information and help which should be provided by local services but is not.
- BME communities are disadvantaged and the cuts will further disadvantage them. The cuts discriminate against community groups whose population is increasing.

Translation Services

- Translation costs are expensive. If volunteers are used there is an issue of data protection. WCAVA have a volunteer database. It was suggested that WCAVA, universities, colleges, and voluntary and statutory agencies should work in partnership to produce a centralised volunteer policy and a shared volunteer database.

Rugby Forum

Library Services

- Consultation on the library services and St Cross hospital were not well publicised. Additionally the care of the elderly consultation information which was in libraries was hard to find. Agencies say that they send information to the library but they don't display until they are reminded. Information should be readily available in the library.
- In Leicestershire the library offered to help filling in the census documents for people who have language problems. This did not happen at the Rugby library and the form is hard to fill in. A place in the town centre was set up for people who needed help filling in the census form. This was near the North Street side of the shopping centre.

Education

- There is an older multiracial group that wishes to take computer classes. They meet on Wednesdays from 10-12noon at the Benn Partnership Centre. There are approximately 20 people who are over 50 years of age.
- Russian classes are needed for children in order to keep the language alive for the next generation.
- Teachers should address issues with kids at assemblies.

Roads

- Street motorbikes running around at night should be reported to the police.
- The bus services have been withdrawn from rural communities which will cause a problem of isolation for those without transport.
- Car parking fees on Rugby streets have risen. This is an awful situation.

Crime

- Some drunken people coming out of pubs / clubs are vandalising cars. Nothing is happening because the police want proof.

Information Gathering / Reporting Mechanisms

- Consultation is needed with the relevant people in the initial stages before decisions are made.
- Decisions are made by the time the consultation process goes to the organisations for input.
- Agencies do presentations at groups but don't give feedback to the group i.e. a report. There is a lack of community engagement

Cuts to BME Day Care Services

- The multiracial over 50's group at the Benn Partnership Centre are worried about cuts because of the cost of running the group and paying for rent, material, activities and trips. Funding is required.
- Input has been done by WREP. The momentum needs to keep going against WCC and everyone should be kept informed.

WREP Work

- People would like to know what's going on in WREP.

Services

- The bus timetable has changed for journeys from Rugby to Birmingham. They may be moving the bus times from 9.22am and WCC may change rules from 1st April 2011 so that bus pass users won't be able to use their passes until 9.30am.
- The Coventry hospital bus times have changed to after 9.00am for bus pass users.
- Charges are also high for hospital parking at Rugby and Coventry.
- The swimming classes which are only for half an hour a week are not enough. There is a need for more and longer classes.
- Mental health and disability issues are not focused on West Indian people despite there being many issues, including special needs, within that ethnic group. Assistance and recognition is needed for this issue.
- The Race & Disability Group deal with mental health issues at the Rugby West Indian Association on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 3pm.
- There needs to be more funding advice including who to go to and what is available.
- There are different aspirations for the young and old in the community.

- Awareness should be raised for people trying to access mental health services. People from the mental health services are coming to the Rugby West Indian Association to speak to the group. They wish to visit daycare service providers before moving on to other groups.
- A national charity based in Leamington called Making Space would like WREP to send out information to organisations on their behalf.

Young People

- A young Russian woman was happy to interact with other BME groups and wished to do some voluntary work.
- It is not the kids fault they have nothing to do and service providers are failing the young. They need to do something and not blame kids.
- There is a failure in society to stimulate kids / youths. No-one understands how agencies can be cutting youth services. The onus is on us to provide help / stimulate kids.
- There should be a way to instill community pride / spirit in the young generation. This should start in schools when they are young and can be taught not to accept violence as an answer to problems.
- The cuts are affecting a carer's son's life with him having nothing to get involved in. He is interested in music / drama but there is nothing for a disabled child. If funding is available, this is a big society issue. There is nothing in Warwickshire. The Rugby Disability Forum deals with adults. Do they do anything for kids? It is hard taking a disabled child into town because of the crowds. Activities are needed in the school holidays for kids.

Neighbourhoods

- The neighbourhood Watch has improved in the Pinfold Road area.
- There needs to be a way of promoting community cohesion.

Nuneaton & Bedworth / North Warwickshire District Forum

Housing

- A lady lives near an old people's complex where they have keys to get in. On one occasion someone locked the gate and also someone super glued the gate. What if there had been a fire? Keys are available at the fire and ambulance services but if someone has to go there first time would be wasted.
- The pavements outside the old people's complex are uneven and a tree is pushing up the pavement. This affects those on mobility scooters.
- Someone at the old people's complex asked for a sensor light outside so that she could get back into the building. The Council said they would come to see the lady personally but have still not been out to check. Yet the lights in the nearby car park are on constantly even when it is locked.

- If a house is derelict how long will it be left before someone does anything about it? A house was bought in the neighbourhood but nothing was done to it. The elderly lady next door is afraid that youths will break into this house and set it on fire.
- There are unscrupulous landlords and employers of the Polish community. In Atherstone there was a situation regarding a landlord but the tenant is still being harassed. Also some employment agencies have not been paying their Polish workers holiday pay. This employer has been referred to WERS.

Education

- There are issues regarding the kids from the G & T site in Alvecote getting to school. A bus service is provided but there is a lack of trust and the parents are not putting their kids on the bus. People need to find out why. One child has mental health issues and may need one to one support. There is a chaperone on the bus and the teacher meets them when they arrived to make sure they get to class. Unfortunately the literary skills of the G & T community are poor and the bus timetable is something they are struggling with.

Refuse Collection

- The area is inundated with rag and bone men in the mornings who take things out of garden skips and most of their lorries are not taxed.

Roads

- Changes in car parking in Bedworth. The local authority brought a civil parking enforcement in October.
- Lack of parking because Tesco has been demolished. This is a big issue even at 9am in the morning.

Cuts to BME Day Care Services

- There are successful day care facilities in the County which will suffer from major cuts. WREP is fighting our corner in this matter.
- The Muslim Day Care centre has been running very successfully for 11 years. The new price banding of services is going up in the area from 31st March which is not fair for the people. This centre has a membership of 40+ women and 50 men on the books with a joint management with Edgewell Grange as the previous manager, who was male, is gone. Since the manager left only 6-7 men come to the centre for lunch, half an hour on either side of lunchtime, because there is no male manager for them to talk to.
- The new pricing system will mean that members of the Muslim Day Care centre will not fit the criteria so they will have to pay full costs so will no longer come to the centre.
- The pricing system will mean that it is up to Joe Blogs what he wishes to do with the money and where he wishes to invest it. Some people will keep the money and not complain even if they are being bullied by their family and not fed properly. The cultural issue in this case will be that the person will not wish to complain.

- The ethos that one fits all doesn't work in this case.
- Day Care providers offer so many services. WCC deem them as low level users. In 5-10 years they will no longer exist.
- Day care providers bring people out of their homes.
- Older women in their 60's and 70's, who previously were stuck at home with the family, now experience freedom through the day care centre either by being in the building with others or by going on trips. These are the places where they feel comfortable.
- There are no other services to compete with the day care providers.
- The day care service grant of the Nuneaton Caribbean Friendly Association has been cut by 100%. This is totally unacceptable. Representatives have spoken to Junaid and LEMAC but it seems that WCC already made up their minds 12 months ago. Is this legal?
- WREP is looking into WCC's impact assessment procedure. There are gaps in the process. It was done from a race equality angle and not incorporated any other issues. WREP will be highlighting the short / long term issues in relation to cuts.
- Since day care began they have allowed members to look at different opportunities and stopped isolation. The cuts will be a step backwards.
- The Muslim and Afro Caribbean day care service providers have saved millions of pounds by doing voluntary work for the communities. The Equality Assessment Impact was biased and has made the wrong decision which in the long term will affect buildings of day care providers and groups which will shut down.
- WCAVA have the funding remit but not WREP.
- WCC need to look at why BME people visit day care centres for help understanding documents and forms and filling in forms. The answer being that there is no alternative to these services / support.
- Where can BME people go for support and advice after 5pm? Warwickshire needs to look at the bigger picture and recognise that these are vulnerable people.
- The Caribbean community understands that there will be cuts but wishes the Council to recognise that these cuts will isolate the older community and this will be a number of steps backward. BME communities, who are already at a disadvantage, will be more so with the cuts.

Deprivation

- There are deprived areas in the North in education, work, sport & health. The north / south divide shows that there people in the north have a life expectancy of 10 years less than those in the south.
- Despite health moving its services from the South to the North the gap is still there and growing. Changes and support are well overdue.

Services

- The Youth Services is closing so there will be no youth workers and Park House is being put up for sale. Who could afford to run it?
- Dual purpose buildings. The Council is cherry picking nice new places which are easy to maintain. The Community will get grade 2 buildings to maintain. This is a set up for them to fail.
- The Caribbean community lost their centre and moved to Park House. On their first day there they were told that Park House would be closing and no longer be available. The building is open to anyone who can pay the costs. The Council wish communities to take over buildings such as Park House and run them, but who takes the responsibility and help during the transitional stage?
- All the police cuts are worrying.
- The potholes have been filled in shoddily and once the frost comes all the work will be undone.
- Why are there 3 Councillors for one ward? We could save money if there was only 1 Councillor.
- A child with infantile Scoliosis was misdiagnosed. The family had to fight the PCT regarding getting an appointment. PALS helped the family get an appointment with a consultant after it had been cancelled 3 times.
- The Nepalese community would like support with a range of things but do not know who to talk to.
- Changes in services will have a big impact on BME communities and they need to have a say.

Young people

- There are more young people, less jobs and less for them to do after 3.15pm. Where do young people go when their parents are at work?

“WREP’s Future Services”. Facilitated by Suleman Dadabhai (Office Support & Community Engagement Advisor) & Benji Evans (BME Sport & Active Recreation Co-ordinator)

Warwick & Stratford District Forum

- WREP has helped immensely with assisting Census people reach out to BME groups. There needs to be an improvement in reaching out to the ‘less well known’ BME groups.
- WREP should focus more on supporting public agencies to reach out to BME groups. There is often difficulty from agencies to know who to contact in the event that they need to speak to a particular group. WREP should be the facilitator for this and should have a ‘map’ of the community make up throughout Warwickshire and be able to tell agencies where and who to contact. WREP should focus on being that vital link between agencies and communities therefore should help on communication and information sharing.
- There should be better communication with under/non represented communities (New & Emerging communities). The Portuguese community members felt isolated and they do not know where to turn to for help. Mario is currently the only one able to help them. What if he isn’t there?
- Some agencies felt the need for affordable/free translation services to be provided by WREP. Although agencies want to help BME communities in the best way they can, this is often difficult as they cannot afford to pay the high translation services fees. This means that communities do get left out for this reason. They would like help with translation (translating documents, translating meetings etc).
- The casework service was praised. It was said that this should be another of WREP’s focuses as many BME communities suffer some sort of issue and they would only feel comfortable speaking to WREP. More should be done to advertise the benefit’s of this service.
- There should be better processes developed in order to help new & migrant communities better integrate into the wider community in order to prevent isolation.
- In light of all of the cuts community organisations are facing, they would like WREP to present them with funding opportunities, and also help build their capacity to be able to write the applications.

- A potential conference – community organisations said they would benefit from a conference where a range of funders came to the event and exhibited potential funding streams & grants available.
- There was the thought that nine core functions are far too many and as WREP's resources may be scarce, there should be more focus on delivering a few things well rather than promising the world and delivering badly on them.
- NHS wants to know 'what are the specific health issues in the BME communities?'
- Why are there only middle aged people and above at these consultation type events? What is WREP doing to address this? More should be done to bring in the younger generation.
- Some community groups especially the elderly feel that there is no communication method better than meeting somebody in person. They feel that they do not see WREP officers and would therefore not know who to contact. They need someone to regularly visit their centres and listen to their concerns, hence increase WREP's visibility in the communities.
- WREP should be more visible in places such as the newspaper.

Rugby Forum

- WREP should focus on supporting public agencies to reach BME groups. Agencies raised the point that they don't know where different ethnic groups are across Warwickshire and how to contact them. They hope that WREP can provide a 'map' of the region which will enable them to provide services according to the various communities. Communities also raised the same issues that WREP as well as agencies are unaware of their communities and more should be done to address this.
- Race Discrimination Casework is very important; however, communities would appreciate feedback on cases i.e. how WREP has dealt with cases and how WREP have helped people.
- WREP needs to raise public awareness in race issues. It is felt that this needs to be done particularly in some pockets of white communities where deep racism still exists. These communities need to be 're-educated' and taught about race issues.

- WREP should help communities with signposting funds as well as helping them to apply for funding as community organisations do not have the capacity to do so.
- Libraries are one of the only places where every type of person visits. Therefore this should be used as a strategic location for promoting WREP.
- There should be a focus on helping agencies raise issues on Mental Health together with people who have hidden impairments.
- Many people commented that they missed the sports activities that were set up in their area. When Benji left, all sports activities also stopped. Sport helped their health and wellbeing whilst WREP provided the sports provision.
- WREP needs to maintain their independence to retain credibility.

Nuneaton & Bedworth / North Warwickshire District Forum

- There needs to be more youth involvement. There is no youth present at the consultation, only middle aged and elderly people.
- WREP should engage with youngsters at schools and colleges within school time to raise awareness of race equality issues. If they are involved at this level they would be very valuable as young people are full of drive and zeal.
- Questions were raised around the BME youth conference. Although it was very successful what came out of it and how is WREP taking that forward?
- The library service is very keen to have WREP on board and would offer space to market WREP's services. They are keen to hear how they can help WREP.
- There is a feeling that WREP should channel resources into an area that is equivalent to how much they are being funded. WREP in the past has not followed this and some areas are unfairly discriminated and this rule is not applied.
- Agencies as well as communities do not know where certain community groups are around the county. It would be a valuable help to both to have the communities 'mapped out'.
- WREP should concentrate on 'health and wellbeing.' There is a tendency in the Asian communities to make this a low priority which is reflected in their poor

health. If WREP worked in conjunction with NHS as well as community leaders to raise awareness, this would have a significant impact. Sports projects with the young and old would considerably raise health, confidence & wellbeing.

- Through sport, the young would become interested in the work WREP does. This would also help interfaith work.
- Anger was directed to WCAVA as to why they do not do anything to help BME communities. There are no ethnic minorities represented on WCAVA's board either.
- WCAVA have received money to help the BME groups who are affected by the decommissioning of day care centres. How much was this? Where is the money? And how has it been used?

Warwickshire Police – “Changes to Warwickshire Police and Local Policing” – Paul Mason-Brown

Warwick & Stratford District Forum

- We need to encourage young people from BME communities to become volunteers. Does Warwickshire Police monitor the recruitment of Special Constables in the same manner as with Police Officers?
- How can reduced neighbourhood teams deliver 100% Community Forum priorities?
- How does a team of 39 countywide officers deliver to low crime areas?
- What is the role of the Neighbourhood Watch?
- How can we assure the community about continuity of service delivery without neighbourhood police and support officers?
- Are there corresponding cuts in senior policing posts?
- How do we find information about changes in Neighbourhood Team post 9th May?
- Can agencies still talk to the same officer with follow-up work and feedback to communities?
- Will you be linked into other police forces?
- You say 20/10 minute commitment stands. Is it credible to say that service delivery will not go down?
- Why haven't you done this before?
- How many police stations are you closing?
- You are saying you can deliver a better service for £77 million. Were you inefficient previously then?
- Are you looking to increase the use of Restorative Justice?
- Perception of fear amongst BME communities is different.

Rugby Forum

- How quickly will the new model be in place? **May 9th**
- Will you be less likely to come to individual cases that will not be pursued by CPS? **We will prioritise not on cost but the severity of crime.**
- What about people whose first language is not English? **There is a national network of interpreters. There is also telephone support.**
- Question of response time. How can you guarantee? – **Increased technology.**
- New shift patterns – **4 days on 4 days off.**
- **Opening hours 8am -8pm front office but 24 hours cover at Station.**
- Nuneaton /Leamington not easy places to get to from Rugby.
- What about specialist units?- **Still countywide and more investigation**
- Will there still be consideration and prioritisation of Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Crime? **There will be an increased investigation time for these crimes.**

Nuneaton

- Will communities feel safer if fewer police deployed from PS? You should deploy teams from community. **Police stations get 6/7 calls a day- poor return**
- Will you be monitoring crime on a daily basis?
- Policing Priority Areas –are they reflected in the new model?
- Warwickshire County Council (WCC) should be replicating Warwickshire Police (WP) by prioritising areas.
- Why does most of it have to happen in next 12 months?
- How can SNT area be policed by 1 Officer and PCSOs – tyre slashing, ASB, nuisance. All crime will be investigated by a DS; new model will increase the priority of problem solving.
- **With changes you will be seeing more Bobbies on the beat.**
- Dial 999 usually response from outside area
- Will those not from Nuneaton understand cultural sensitivities?
- Problem with reactive response –not SNT
- **3 deployment bases – Bedworth, Rugby and Leamington**
- Force needs to understand cultural differences within county
- Locally relationship with police force very good. Don't want to lose that.
- Volunteers, where do they come from?
- With cuts community members will have less time to volunteer.
- Connect schemes
- This is already going on in Nuneaton with issues such as EDL. Share good practice
- WP and WCC developed Community Leadership Certificate as part of PREVENT. What happens next?
- Look at how much was saved by communities policing themselves.