



**Black and Minority Ethnic Community
Consultation Forum Report**

**Rugby
Nuneaton & Bedworth
Warwick District**

September/October 2010

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Introduction

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

- The Rugby forum - 28th September 2010 at the Rugby Sikh Community Association.
- North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth forum – 7th October 2010 at the Nuneaton Guru Nanak Gurdwara.
- Stratford and Warwick District forum – 19th October 2010 at the Sydney Centre.

There were a total of four themes discussed at the forums and included:

1. Warwickshire County Council (WCC) – “Change, Cuts and the Big Society”.
2. Warwickshire Police Authority (WPA) – “Establishing confidence in the Police”.
3. NHS Warwickshire (NHS) – “Transforming community services.
4. Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership (WREP) – “Local issues”

The themes for Rugby included WCC, WREP and NHS Warwickshire. On this occasion, NHS consulted on the pertinent issue concerning the proposal of closure the Rugby Accident and Emergency Department.

Themes for North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth forum included WCC, WPA and WREP.

Themes for the Stratford and Warwick District forum included WCC, WPA, NHS and WREP.

The comments overleaf are direct quotes and questions expressed by participants of the workshop sessions and some of the response given by the workshop facilitators.

1 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) – “Change, Cuts and the Big Society”. Facilitated by Tejay De Kretser, Corporate Equalities and Diversity Manager and Nick Darwen, Relationship Manager.

Rugby forum:

- Small grants
 - Is there a move to make it more localised and simpler?
 - Links to local community forums
 - Heart of England – need to work better with them
- Who has a list of all organisations? – WCAVA has 2000 charities on its database but is limited because only 20% engage with public organisations.
- Could there be a directory of all Warwickshire VCS organisations?
- Support to voluntary groups – needs to come from one place and not send people to 5 or 6 different places e.g. go to WCAVA or WREP.
- Funding – hard to know what organisations to go to.
- Role of community groups in engaging vulnerable and isolated people?
- Big Society is about voluntary community services (VCS) picking up the slack.
- Bar for funding / criteria is always changing – VCS takes the brunt
- Local community forums – voice of BME communities in Rugby is very dispersed – strength of voice isn't equal – need to make sure that this is addressed.
- Consultation meetings – process for consultation. Daytime meetings inconvenient for Rugby Community Groups representatives who need evening meetings.
- Funding – budget cuts are already hitting services. There is a danger that we will be looking at the Big Society and VCS's gone
- Locality – people want services close to home – what data is available on what services people want and how it can be provided – WCC need to talk to the people.

North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth forum:

Challenges:

- On the list provided by Nick Darwen, point 3 seems more difficult to achieve.
- How do we ensure recording / monitoring within VCS is robust.
- Doing more for less – volunteers are very helpful but they cannot commit to regular time.
- Putting systems in place require money – core costs, how will these be funded?
- Volunteers – they require training, support and have to recruit them in the first place – how will this be funded?
- Seeing ‘bigger picture’ – use this to rationalise resources to get better outcomes for all.
- When / how can the VCS be involved?
- Internal public sector discussions need to happen before VCS can be contracted to take on work which was previously provided by public sector!
- Politicians need to be in touch with the communities before they make decisions.
- VCS groups still need money – cannot run things with volunteers only.
- ‘Free’ services may become a thing of the past – raises issues around access to services by older people, people on low income.
- Non-professionals telling professionals what to do – where does this fit with Governance?
- Concept good – issues around how it is put into practice.
- Rules / regulations for VCS to undertake the work.
- Need to develop VCS’s capacity to take on this work – their ability to tender for contracts etc.
- How can the VCS be supported to actively participate?

- Can't be run by volunteers only – 'big leap' from 'small' scale community run things to 'larger' centres taking on contracts.
- Challenge is for the public sector – VCS has already been delivering on the 7 points raised in the paper.
- Remove red tape to enable VCS to participate.
- Rules / regulations – need to be clear / concise.

Stratford and Warwick District forum:

- Cuts will have the biggest impact on those who are vulnerable but who also have worked very hard.
- Concerns about the impact on frontline health services.
- Increasing thresholds for access to services will remove services disproportionately from BME communities.
- Contract monitoring domiciliary care will release funding.
- Concern that there will be a social underclass that is afraid to apply for personalised budgets.
- Community Forums – engaging diverse communities in the locality agenda. Catching the intelligence is most important.
- Community radio is a useful way of engaging communities.
- Priorities need to be identified and agreed fairly.
- Need to be able to provide information in community languages to make sure that there is real collaboration.
- Need to run meetings in community languages where possible.
- Need to get local language volunteers into local community services.
- Anti Social Behaviour – may not be able to express concerns to Council on issues.
- Impact of cuts on local services especially BME Day Care Services.

- Languages – to produce information in community languages.

2 Warwickshire Police Authority (WPA) – “Establishing confidence in the Police”. Facilitated by John McPhail, Policy Officer and John Vereker, Chair of WPA.

North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth forum:

- Family issues – not dealt well by police e.g. man with family member on the run.
- Need for the police to be trained in dealing with community.
- Victimisation because of racial prejudice – police do not follow procedures.
- More information about individual cases.
- Different ways of communicating with the community could include the use of radio/media outlets.
- Communicate through Independent Advisory Groups – opportunity to engage with community.
- There are good experiences of police support.
- Role of PCSOs is vital - there is a naturally high turnover of better ones. They should just drop in to the BME centres.
- Reporting incidents – lack of confidence /language barriers.
- Lack of communication regarding incidents.
- A lot of ASB goes unreported – Horsten Grange area.
- Lack of visibility of PCSOs.
- Need to know more about how to report incidents of ASB.
- Victim Support can give advice/support even if victim did not report crime.
- Posters are needed in places of worship and other meeting places.
- Not knowing who to go to.

Following notes taken by Jo-An Golding, Equality Scheme Manager, Warwickshire Police.

Table 1

The group were asked to share their policing experiences. The following comments were made in response.

“Local Force – the Police acted wrongly on a family issue. It was difficult, if not impossible to challenge the Police, even agencies and solicitors appear to be reluctant to challenge the Police.” Eventually, the informant did speak to the Superintendent (Supt.) and raised a number of issues. “As a member of the public, you don’t feel that you have the finances to challenge the Police or the system.” The family didn’t pursue the matter in the end. “This incident happened three to four years ago. The Supt. did acknowledge that officers were wrong in their handling of the situation (not formally though).”

The circumstances involved here was the removal of a grandchild during the night by relatives with the assistance of Slough Police and Nuneaton Police.

Victimisation – incidents are handled in a very bureaucratic way. Police seem to down-play the severity, telling me, “Don’t use 999, call on the general number.” The informant is being harassed but does not feel supported by the Police. “There is a lack of continuity with communication. This needs to improve. You feel as if you get left high and dry.”

“Local Police should support local people and this doesn’t appear to be the case.” There was an allegation of Police Officers colluding against the public.

The group were asked if there is a way in which information and messages from the Police could be got out to the community. The group suggested local radio and community radio stations.

Table 2

An IAG member was able to engage in effective communication with the Police via the IAG. He felt it would be good for local officers to be more visible in the community and for them to get more involved in local events and community centres.

One member spoke of the organisation she works for receiving three nasty letters that meant involving the Police. She was very happy with the way that this issue was being dealt with; an investigation is underway and there are regular updates as to progress. The member also mentioned that there is a problem

with anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the centre, where youths are regularly taking drugs. She would like Police Officers to be more visible in tackling this issue.

One member said that there was inconsistency in the service delivered by the Police. She felt that this was due largely to the high turnover of officers – through career progression, but for the public, this meant a loss of local knowledge and rapport.

New P.C.S.O.'s don't call into the centre so the staff have not had the opportunity to build a relationship with them.

The group were asked if they were aware of the Community Forum Meetings which would enable the community to engage in dialogue with the Police. There was a resounding 'No' from the group. It was recognised that if there was better awareness around such events, then information could be better passed on. The group then went on to say that three weeks ago there was a March/demonstration involving the EDL, but the community weren't made aware. Concerns were raised that innocent people could have been caught up in the procession. Had there been a warning, members of the local community could have made informed choices about their activities during key times. The group felt that having Points of Contact in community locations would enable more information to filter through to the Police. At the Gurunanak Gurdwara, members pass concerns to the Branch Secretary who in turn speaks to the Police.

Another member of the group recounted a Road Traffic Collision he was involved in where a lorry driver failed to stop. The incident happened in the West Midlands area (Coventry). After finishing work for the day, the informant took his first opportunity on returning to Nuneaton to report the incident at his local Police Station, but hit a barrier with the process and protocols of reporting incidents. This individual would like to see a simplified way of incident reporting – practical steps to improve things and not just talking shops.

The group were asked what they thought about the publicising of offenders' photographs in the local press. Generally the group thought that this was a good idea in raising public confidence.

Table 3

A member of the group spoke of a lack of communication; limited updates are provided and there is inconsistency in how issues are dealt with, in addition to a lack of continuity with Officers dealing with matters.

Another member of the group recounted an incident that occurred seven years ago. His vehicle was broken into and property stolen. The matter was reported

to the Police however there was no officer attendance. The informant saw officers attending a neighbour's address on an unrelated manner and decided to speak to them about this crime. Rather than getting a considerate response, the informant was challenged and questioned about his own integrity. He still feels very let down and resentful towards the Police.

A high volume of anti-social behaviour was reported to be happening on the Horeston Grange estate by another member of the group. They thought that engaging the local youths was the root of the problems being experienced. A solution would be to have an avenue of communication to raise issues without making yourself vulnerable to attack; a case of being able to nip things in the bud before they are allowed to develop.

Someone cited incidents of eggs being thrown at their window – the youths involved were approximately 16 years old. Although the incidents were reported to the Police, nothing appears to have been done.

Generally the group had limited awareness of local policing services or of means of contact to report incidents. There was no knowledge of the Community Forums either.

The question was asked on how we move forward? The group were adamant that the Police should avoid leaflet drops as homes are inundated with unsolicited mail already and the material simply won't be read. What is needed is an alternative method of getting information out. (The Facilitator suggested something like a fridge magnet.) The group offered the suggestion that Neighbourhood Watch groups could be better utilised, however this is a little hit and miss at present as some groups are very active/ proactive and others aren't. The representative from the Victim Support Unit reiterated that people can speak to them even if they haven't reported their incidents to the Police. The Council also have staff to deal with anti-social behaviour issues, however it was clear from the reaction of the group that very little awareness of this service is out in the wider community. The group suggested that places of worship, community centres, Faith Forums and the like should be utilised to publicise initiatives and forge better communication with the Police and other agencies.

Stratford and Warwick District forum:

Table 1 – all from the Portuguese Community.

The best way to share information is through newsletter/e-mail. It is better to share information with Mario Jaco. The Portuguese Community in Leamington meets on a Friday afternoon – opportunity for the public agencies to address them.

Those present indicated that they had experienced a degree of harassment: name calling; ringing bells; and letters. They had reported these incidents to the Police –address 66 & 92 Ashton Court, Lillington. They have also experienced racial harassment.

Migrant Communities and Equality Advisor, Mario Jaco 07754458539.

Table 2 – mainly officers not community

Police are good at tackling issues –less good in giving feedback – “need to close feedback loop”.

One person was irritated that he had called the Police at 10pm and nobody came and the police denied call. This was discourteous

There was a complaint of too many questions over the phone and a lack of understanding.

They needed to have concentrated work in certain communities, with officers that have an understanding of that community. They should look to meet members of the community in places like Temple on Sundays. There also needs to be accountable structures – something happened and we did this/you said, we did.

Use schools more- police give messages in schools – children go home and they tell their parents.

There is no BME representation in South Leamington Community Forum meetings. Are we meeting the needs of BME community through the Forum. Need to provide a bridge between the community and the Forum.

How do we build confidence to engage better with community.

Table 3

One person is a chair of a charity and has had model dealing with police. Agreement that problem was at a lower level, dealings of individual officers with individuals – poor language skills or lack of cultural awareness.

e.g. the definition of police harassment may vary from culture to culture and from experience to experience. Some from the Polish community may find being stopped, spoken to for some time and subsequently let off greater harassment than being stopped and charged. The way the police in Warwickshire are perceived by members of the new communities are determined by the experiences of the police in their own countries.

It is still the case that Asian men are still being stopped if they are driving expensive cars. In one instance an Asian driver has been stopped 6/7 times because it was thought he didn't have insurance.

Table 4 - were predominantly Sikh men.

This table had no problem with the police. They were happy, only wanting more police on duty at night.

They valued the role of the NW co-ordinator and want more co-ordinators from the BME communities.

There should be more meetings in schools, including senior schools and 6th Form Colleges. They felt that parents from their community did not discourage children from joining police. But felt it would be almost impossible to increase number of BME officers at present because of lack of recruitment and redundancies.

They were not aware of Community Forums but felt they knew where to go if needed help from police (police stations?)

Send leaflets about Safer Neighbourhood Teams to community locations. There was some disquiet about the number of people committing crimes who are not being arrested.

3 NHS Warwickshire (NHS) – “Transforming community services.

Rugby forum facilitated by Wayne Bartlett:

- Why are NHS Warwickshire trying to cut back services to the poor?
- What are the waiting times in Rugby?
- NHS Warwickshire do not consider the travelling times to Coventry.
- Accessibility (not all people have cars).
- There needs to be a subsidy rate for car parking for Rugby people attending UHCW.
- Economically, how can poor BME people afford to travel to Coventry
- Growing town – how will the number of people affect services in Rugby?
- Why is it more difficult to recruit doctors?
- Rugby health services have been stripped down.
- Where do residents go in an emergency?

Stratford and Warwick District forum facilitated by Carolyn Parker, Involvement Coordinator:

- What is happening with regard to Virtual Wards in the Warwick District? If it is being implemented in Warwick, what kind of results/outcome/impact is expected?
- What mental health provision/support is being provided at home in the Warwick district? Answer – People with mental health issues receive support through Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) and Mental Health Social Workers who will devise a package of support for someone appropriate to their needs. This may be home based (support workers or home care) or may be to support people to regain independence skills through going out to use community facilities.
- Are we providing the information on TCS and Virtual Ward in Portuguese and other languages?

- When implementing the Virtual Ward, are we taking into consideration the extra stress that may impact on families/carers?
- When someone is being treated at home under the Virtual Ward scheme, what provision is in place when a patient needs emergency care during the night, or at any other times?

**4. Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership (WREP) – “Local issues”.
Facilitated by Morin Duntoye, Community Casework.**

Rugby forum:

- Closure of Rugby Magistrates Courts
 - Running down Rugby
 - Time & financial costs of travelling further to attend courts
 - Effect on disabled users
 - An additional burden e.g. witnesses on a person’s behalf are less likely to attend to support
 - Economics of scale for bureaucracy rather than communities
- Years ago Rugby had 50k people, now has over 100k people AND services are being removed and the only cemetery is being kept.
- Special need for youth provision
 - Need training of skills for youth
 - Activities to divert their attention
- People Referral Unit (PRU) – minimum hours of tuition, not in schools, not with parents ... messing around
- GPs used to care about individual needs of patients but now it is a production line exercise.
- Are the doctors the right ones to be holding money?
- Morin visited the Rugby Caribbean Friendly Association to hear their concerns
- Academies – if expelled where do they go?
- Gang culture in Rugby
 - Territorial Brownsover vs Overslade

- Need more activities for young people especially in Brownsover – as more services are cut there is less provision
- Current situation of Benn Partnership Centre
 - Where will local people go?
 - It will be open at certain times but will it be staffed
- The Police do a good job and are not targeting particular groups
- The main issue is funding and how it will affect day care services
- The Rugby Indian Association received funding to do community work
 - Cuts in funding will affect the most vulnerable and BME people are very vulnerable
 - Service users enjoy the environment of the BME day care services
 - Day care services & BPC etc are social focal points
 - Prevents isolation & depression – alleviates pressure on social welfare
- You cannot isolate the elderly who need to mix socially to keep mentally and physically fit
 - The views of the elderly need to be included as they do not feel part of the wider community and feel pushed aside
 - They should not be secluded
- How can communities & public agencies work together so that the benefits of these grassroots BME organisations are not lost?
- Give statistics on the ages of membership.
- How can volunteers with full time jobs take time out to go for training on how to apply for funding?
- As the younger generation get jobs outside the district and move away from home this leaves parent groups more vulnerable
- Younger generation – is there an understanding as to why services are being withdrawn? How to make them understand. Need innovative ideas of how to occupy these young people.
- Provision for young people
 - Bad - Need more to occupy young people and have youth forums
 - Good – To extend the school age? Partnership working is needed to make this successful
 - Good – Facilities exist but are not well known and not accepted

within peer groups

- Youth
 - Need to consider prevention of youth ASBO
 - Give them ownership and get youths to run initiatives
- YMCA – concerns raised about the nuisance being caused e.g. throwing things at passer bys and leaving drug needles around
- YMCAs and such buildings should not be in local residential areas.
- In situations of break-ins, would like a quicker response
 - Want more feedback from police about what steps they have taken to deal with situations
 - Some would say that they get no response
- Young Black & African Minority Ethnicns do not want to join the Police because the do not believe they will be as accepted as their white counterparts
 - There is a stigma attached to the BMEs joining the Police
- Historical tensions within Asian cultures e.g. older Indians would not mix with other Indians of different religious backgrounds. However the younger generation is not as affected
- Afro Caribbean communities
 - Finding it hard to engage with their young people except for urgent / important matters
- Elderly BMEs may not want to let go of their powers
 - Counter argument is that the youth need guidance and advice
- The parents in BME communities are not as supportive of community organisations and do not give theirs kids the opportunities
- Consultations should be more advertised
 - It should be ensured that Mr Sagoo, the Secretary of the Sikh Social & Welfare Association should be on the mailing list
- Closure of Rugby County Court
 - There is a general feeling that services are being removed from Rugby

North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth forum:

- Heard that there were tensions within the Muslim communities.
- Read in newspapers.
- Believed that the Police handled it well.
- EDL are careful to have BMEs because its chairman is Sikh.
- Would tend not to report racist incidents.
- Using the Attleborough Gurdwara as a reporting centre.
- Using Park House – Youth Club as a reporting centre.
- Need to resend out the information on third party reporting and visit centres individually in person.
- There is a problem with BMEs recognising and accepting individuals with learning disabilities. Language is also a barrier in accessing services for learning disabilities.
- Did know of marches, but saw police presence then later heard it on the news.
- Local community not aware of marches so while they were going about their weekly shopping they became inadvertently caught up in the action.
- Should keep away from trouble if you know it is happening – stay away from confrontation.
- People from the community should have been warned.
- Reporting racist incidents / single equality.
- Local radio – Asian radio 1296 (Birmingham) – Community radio.
- Word of mouth.
- Small flyer on notice board – PUBLICITY!
- Need local police to be seen.

- Sunday gatherings – police talks
- Domestic violence issues need to be raised in the BME community.
- Heard that no-one even knew there would be demonstrations. Heard that the BNP was involved. Heard that nothing happened in first march but there were 7 arrests in second march. Regarding first march heard that no Punjabis were involved and that it was between Muslims and the BNP.
- From Muslim perspective – should have more co-ordinated work at events e.g. says EDL is against ‘Black’ community not just Muslims. Saying BMEs should all work together against such groups.
- Communities should be told in advance of such events so that they can prepare.
- Consultation with the Police should take place re event – management e.g. not just Police but council and community organisations as well.
- Wider consultation by Police with communities but should not be the Police on their own.
- Discuss at community safety partnership – it should be on the agenda.
- Community forums should be more widely publicised.
- Publicise to all community organisations.
- Local community organisations / groups to be given a reporting / referral form for them to know where to go to.

Stratford and Warwick District forum:

- How budget cuts affecting BME Communities – feels like they are always targeted.
- Polish Centre gets funding for language classes from ICSS. Cuts would affect small children. The effect of these cuts will be felt in the long term.
- Disability groups are concerned about how the cuts will affect their lives: Will they be able to maintain a good quality of life? Will they have to move to cheaper housing in areas that they will suffer more hate crime?

- The Police is considering what impact internal cuts will have on ethnic minorities. They will have to prioritise what is essential and what is not and make services sustainable.
- Centres that provide specialist services e.g. people from other backgrounds, not just Asian, and various reasons access centres talked of available funding
- Probation – social enterprises are the current buzz words, along with growing your own produce for sale. Also community punishment work was discussed and issues such as a complaint about the practicality of the hours of the workers and finding enough work for them to do.
- BME Day Care Services – One person felt that he has worked and contributed to UK Society for 40years etc, so should not have funding cut. Helps maintain mental wellbeing, prevents government from paying for mental care. Fear for those with language barriers etc. Helps with visas (Sikh Community Centre). BME elderly people do not have other social circles they can access.
- The BME Day Care Services / Sikh Community Centre are open to everyone of different religious backgrounds.
- Brunswick Elderly Asian Men's Group, which has been running for 28 years, echoed some concerns and said it is also open to people of all backgrounds.
- The Sikh Community Centre, which has been running since the 1970's, is also offering service for the youths and has many evening classes.
- These activities at the groups mean less work for the police and women / elderly people (30 or more) make use of the yoga classes.
- Some elderly people do not have transport services.
- There is a need for first aid training with all BME elderly.
- A resident of Aston Court, Lillington was concerned about:
 - ASB in the block of flats on the 5th and 7th floor of the building. He found drug syringes etc. He reported it to the Council but has not had a response from them.
 - Wind turbines are creating a noise nuisance.
 - People are knocking on their doors and putting their hands through the letter boxes at 2am in the morning – drug addicts?

- The lifts have no smoking signs but people smoke in them, which is bad for asthmatics.
- People also urinate on the stairs.
- Also a neighbour racially harassed them at the bus station and this was reported to the Police who did not give any feedback. It is felt that the Police did not deal properly with the problem because of language barriers. Instead, because of the language barrier, the police should have gone the extra mile to follow up with the victims.
- Local kids play football and other ball games outside the building and this damages the street lighting and the building as well.
- The building and grounds are badly damaged.
- Race equality issues organisations are facing:
 - WDC – grants review and EIA on BME communities
 - Warwickshire Police – Matters of hate crime (increases in hate crime need to be addressed) and community cohesion. Needs to ensure that after budget cuts can still meet the needs of dealing with hate crime and promoting community cohesion. Need to keep up on picking up warning signs.
 - Bernadette Allen mentioned a case study where a magistrate was dismissed for complaining that her fellow colleague was harder on black offenders than whites.
 - Bernadette Allen suggested having a focus group on whether black defendants receive differential treatment from the criminal justice organisations.
 - C.I. Mike Slemensek – some in custody who are perceived to be ASB may actually have mental health problems. What training is there for officers for this? For example, an autistic person may be mistaken for someone just behaving badly.
 - Jagdeep Rainu mentioned a matter of hidden disabilities and how police officers are trained to recognise this. The Police have come a long way in recognising disabilities.