



Rugby Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Forum
24th September 2009
Conference Centre Warwickshire College, Rugby

The Rugby black and minority ethnic consultation forum took place on the 24th September 2009 at the Conference Centre in Rugby College. It was attended by individuals and representatives from the local community and participants from statutory and voluntary organisations.

Consultation documents from Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) were distributed. It was reassuring for the community to know that any possible station closures would not have a detrimental effect on the service WFRS provides. If individuals are worried about the closures they are welcome to come and meet with WFRS and participate in their consultation regarding a Fitter, Stronger Fire and Rescue service. Please visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fireandrescue or telephone 01926410410 for further information.

The four workshops which ran in the evening included:

- 1. Probation & Community Sentences**
Facilitated by Assistant Chief Officers Donald McGovern and Thomasina Chapman
- 2. Access to Services (Health)**
Facilitated by Carolyn Parker (PALS Coordinator)
- 3. Policing & Community Safety (Prevent Violent Extremism Agenda)**
Facilitated by PC Jillian Atkinson and PC Roni Koshi
- 4. Local feedback**
Facilitated by Junaid Hussain

Probation & Community Sentences

There is a perception from the community that offenders are given 'soft' sentences and frustration that victims are not given priority over offenders. Some individuals are afraid to report offences as they feel they will become a victim. There is also a lack of knowledge provided to victims once a crime has been committed. Community individuals are scared of offenders and many are worried about leaving their home after dark.

There is a Community Payback Service for people who are on probation to work in the community. The scheme will not take on work which would take over from paid employment. The Community Payback Scheme is being put into practice in New Bilton allotments in Rugby. A lot of people who are on

probation re-offend but do so with less severity and frequency. Probation work hard to limit re-offences and provide rehabilitation support to offenders where required. Offender Management Schemes looks at patterns of offending and the key components of this, for example alcohol and drugs.

A lot more work is needed in Warwickshire in working with communities in identifying preventative measures. However resources are scarce but increased monitoring, supervision and support is required. There is a perception that prison cells are like hotels and very luxurious. Individuals know of some offenders which will re-offend to enter prison again as they are unable to cope or prefer the experience and security that prison provides. Offenders of very severe crimes like murder will be monitored and supervised by a multiagency approach. Probation officers can place offenders in approved premises if their behavioural patterns change in a negative way.

Access to Services (Health)

The budget in supporting individuals to access interpreting and translation support has been revised and clarified. NHS Warwickshire is now in the position confirming with health providers that they will provide financial support for these services. NHS Warwickshire and Warwickshire County Council have an agreed partnership Service Level Agreement.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) will monitor the use of interpreting and translating for private contractors. All GP surgeries and dentists who provide services will have support with interpreting and translation.

Individuals migrating to the UK are often not aware of health services and where they can go to access support. A booklet (Accessing Health Services) has been printed and translated into four key community languages (Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, and Gujarati). The Sri Lankan community is new in Rugby and would benefit from accessing the booklet. Booklets could also be distributed through Housing and Tenancy departments.

Carolyn Parker will put together a timetable to visit community organisations and key individuals and people to give out the health booklet and answer any questions. NHS Warwickshire will also publicise information through the Family Information Service and look to develop a 'spoken' word facility on their website

Policing & Community Safety – Prevent Agenda

Warwickshire Police are raising awareness around the 'prevent agenda'. They are also looking to inform other community organisations about the 'prevent agenda' and are happy to answer questions. They do workshops and would like to be contacted by anyone who knows of groups who would

like more information. Individuals would like to know what signs to look out for. It may also be possible to befriend people of different faiths.

The negative views surrounding Islam and Muslims is extremely disconcerting and is creating additional tension in the area. Wrong assumptions of Islam can marginalise individuals and lead to radicalisation. Individuals should report any negative behaviour immediately to the Police which will be recorded as a hate incident. Again if parent's families or guardians notice a detrimental change in young people, they should inform the Police. Family and society can provide boundaries and raise alerts. People want to know how they can help their children. They also want to know the tell tale signs of radicalism and who they can approach with their concerns. Some people were unaware that Rugby had cases of radicalisation and violent extremism.

Local Issues

There is an issue with the BNP Party in New Bilton and Long Lawford. The BNP are creating friction in the community with their right wing views and attitudes. The community want answers on what is being done about this party and the negative literature they distribute.

There is an active group based in Rugby which meets to counteract BNP misinformation. Tracey Nutall will find out the name of the group and forward to those interested in participating.

The Police are in a difficult position as the BNP are a legitimate party so they themselves cannot counteract the misinformation sent out.