

Committee: Community

Agenda Item

Date: 14 September 2006

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Title: Diversity

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Summary

1. The document updates on work in progress on the diversity agenda.

Recommendations

2. The Committee note progress made in developing work programmes to address the diversity agenda.

Background Papers

3. EEDA, Migrant Workers in the East of England, 2004

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	A consultation strategy is to be developed which will set out consultation with hard to reach groups
Community Safety	Research and needs analysis will seek to measure impact on community safety
Equalities	Programme of work proposed aims to address diversity issues within the equalities and diversities agenda
Finance	Any diversity activities or posts will be financed from existing budgets. Any additional requirements for 2007/08 will need to be identified during the forthcoming budget round.
Human Rights	Research and needs analysis will need to measure any human rights issues

Legal implications	None specific, but the council needs to step up its awareness of and response to the needs of its growing minority ethnic community
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	A small amount of funding suitable for a one year part time post or commissioned research is available and will be used in accordance with the discussion set out below.

Situation

5. Following the Diversity Festival in 2005 work has been ongoing to take forward the diversity agenda, taking account of the council's wider enabling role, and duty of well-being, but also recognising limited UDC resources.
6. Equalities and diversity are now priorities within the corporate plan, diversity forming part of the community engagement project. Any initiatives however must be funded from existing budgets.
7. Initial attempts to recruit to a part-time one year post to establish a diversity network have not been successful. It is now recognised that the likely community development work, or level of initial research and needs assessment, would be outside the grading of this original post, and a fresh look is being taken at how to support this agenda on a practical level.

Project Strands

8. There are two main strands in taking forward the diversity agenda:
 - Research and needs analysis
 - Community development work
9. The Executive Manager (Strategy & Performance) recently met with Sofia Everett who is currently providing unpaid assistance to the growing Polish community in the district. Mrs Everett is currently in contact with over 200 individuals who have a diverse range of needs spanning housing advice, language skills, employment rights, health etc.
10. The 2004 EEDA report 'Migrant Workers in the East of England' found that:
 - Most migrant workers used their own networks to find jobs and shunned official agencies

- Some – possibly those with better English – used private agencies
 - Most were unable to use the qualifications and skills they had for various reasons, including poor English and the lack of recognition of their qualification by British professional bodies
 - They were generally poorly paid and working in jobs which employers would otherwise have found difficult to fill.
11. ExDRA has recently put out to tender for a research contract, to be completed by mid November which will focus on the economic impact of migrant workers in the sub-region. Officers and Members have flagged up with ExDRA the district's significant interest in the study, and will therefore expect to have an input into the research, and benefit from the resulting knowledge base. ExDRA currently lack information about, or good estimates of:
- The overall numbers of migrant workers in the sub-region
 - How many are working in each different sector/industry which has significant numbers
 - The jobs/roles the migrant workers are filling
 - Whether and to what extent local people are finding it more difficult to find jobs as a result of the migrant workers
 - Estimates for how long the migrant workers plan to stay and whether there are any identifiable sub-groups with similar characteristics, e.g. migrants working in the hospitality industry who intend to return home to run their own restaurant or migrants with entrepreneurial ambitions who hope to start a business here.
12. The Council also needs to build a comprehensive picture of minority ethnic communities in the district, so that service provision and choice can be tailored accordingly. Census data is already old, and would not for example effectively capture migrant workers. The Joint Research and Intelligence Officer will be undertaking research to map the size and, where possible, needs of the district's minority ethnic community through various public and private sector sources. This information is expected to be available by mid October. A further assessment of any additional research/needs analysis will need to be made following both the results of the ExDRA and UDC work.
13. Because of the limited nature of UDC funding available for diversity related posts within the district, officers have made extensive searches for other authorities/voluntary sector organisations who would welcome an input into a jointly funded post. Early discussions are currently underway with East Hertfordshire District Council who already provides two part time support workers to the Polish and Portuguese communities in their own district. It may be possible for UDC to supplement the hours of these officers to carry out similar duties within Uttlesford.

14. An initial discussion has also taken place at officer level within Uttlesford Futures on common issues relating to migrant worker needs. Contact will now be made with existing public sector organisations and the voluntary sector who could support diverse ethnic community needs, working initially with the database of public sector organisations within Uttlesford and contacts from the Diversity Festival. This will be supplemented where appropriate with organisations across county and district boundaries, such as those representing the Polish community in Cambridge.
15. Once the new Communications team is fully staffed in November, a quick analysis will be undertaken of related issues such as language translations of key published materials, and appropriate consultation with minority ethnic and other hard to reach groups.
16. Finally, officers are also currently pursuing opportunities for joint applications (separately) with Braintree DC, East Herts DC and with Essex County Council, on Invest to Save Round 9 projects. These are expected to support Local Area Agreement priorities through LSPs, and include work to support minority ethnic communities.
17. An oral update will be given on progress with each of these strands at the Community Committee.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
UDC fails to communicate and consult effectively with ethnic minorities, migrant workers or people with disabilities	Medium	High	Communication & consultation strategy Consultation toolkit Equality & diversity training for staff & Members Equality Impact Assessments Accessible website and published documents including large print, tape and translated versions of key documents

A diversity network is not established	Medium	Medium	Initially a diversity network comprising support agencies available to minority ethnic, or people with disabilities, would be more practical than a network of groups representing the different communities of interest themselves
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