

**LEICESTERSHIRE TOGETHER (LOCAL STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIP) BOARD**

Tuesday 21st February 2006

BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC CITIZENS' JURY

REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an overview and update to the Board on the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Citizens' Jury Report recently received from the project consultants and circulated to Board Members.
2. To request that the Board both approves and actively embraces the Report and its recommendations.
3. In the light of the Report's broad focus, to assist in the formulation of a specific Action Plan for Leicestershire based on the Report's recommendations.

Context

4. Following its receipt from the project consultants (ECOTEC Research and Consulting), the initial draft Report was distributed to all members of the BME Citizens' Jury for comment. The Project Manager at Leicestershire County Council also reviewed the document.
5. Following feedback from both Jury members and the Project Manager, the Report has been amended and was received on Friday 10th February. This updated version has been circulated to members of the Board as well as Project Team members and other relevant people.
6. The Report has four Sections, as follows:
 - An Introduction
 - The Process Leading up to the BME Citizens' Jury – focusing on the scoping, research, consultation, Focus Group and Training stages.
 - Leicestershire's BME Citizens' Jury – details the two-day event in November.
 - A Framework for Action (see overleaf)
7. An Executive Summary and Appendices are also included.
8. The Report reflects the broad and wide nature of the consultation and engagement processes. As a consequence, the recommendations contained within are necessarily at this broad strategic level. More specific knowledge of the Leicestershire context is required for effective action-planning, and accordingly, this task is more appropriate for the Citizens' Jury Project Manager rather than the project consultants (who will nevertheless support the former in this process).

'A Framework for Action'

9. Broad recommendations were identified for each of the six thematic sessions of the Jury event. All reinforced “the wider messages that the content and approach to underpin race equality in the development of policy and services cannot be developed in isolation from an understanding of the experience of the BME communities in Leicestershire” (*Citizens’ Jury Report: Executive Summary*).
10. For each of the areas, the focus of the recommendations was as follows:
- **Theme 1:** Actions to support Leicestershire Together as a lead partner to develop a co-ordinated strategy for a more accurate representation of the BME communities.
 - **Theme 2:** Leicestershire Together funded initiatives to proactively combat areas of under-representation and stereotyping.
 - **Theme 3:** Leicestershire Together to promote participative, inclusive and supportive approaches to improve access for excluded BME communities and to ensure ‘equality of access’.
 - **Theme 4:** Leicestershire Together to adopt a stronger understanding of Leicestershire’s ethnic profile and take affirmative steps to deal with the challenges of community cohesion, profiling and service provision.
 - **Theme 5:** The encouragement of a better understanding and more effective management of race equality in employment practices and succession planning.
 - **Theme 6:** To increase the capacity of local BME communities and to develop strategies to improve participation in local decision making.
11. The organisational focus for such actions is all Leicestershire Together partners, though it should be emphasised that these are issues for all – communities and organisations alike.
12. The recommendations identified in the Report will form the basis of an Action Plan to be developed by the Project Manager in collaboration with partners, the project consultants and members of the Citizens’ Jury.

Additional Drivers for Action

13. Additional drivers for actions identified in the Citizens’ Jury process and Report include the following:
- **Race Relations Amendment Act 2000:** The promotion of race equality & equal opportunities; the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination; the encouragement of good race relations. The requirements of Race Equality Schemes, Equality Impact Assessments etc. The achievement of Equality Standards Levels.
 - **Local Area Agreement (LAA):** The penultimate draft indicates linkages between the LAA and Citizens’ Jury issues and outcomes, including further engagement with BME communities and community cohesion.

- **Moral and Ethical Considerations:** Recognition that statutory requirements and the inclusion in significant initiatives needs to be underpinned and bolstered by moral and ethical considerations i.e. that developments and recommendations are undertaken because these are fundamental, appropriate and desirable in order to achieve a more equitable and cohesive society.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- a) The Report of the Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury be approved and acted upon in full by all members of the Board.**
- b) Leicestershire Together Board members and partner organisations actively work with the Project Manager in the formulation and implementation of an Action Plan.**
- c) The race equality principles inherent within the Report be recognised, mainstreamed and promoted by all partner organisations.**
- d) Leicestershire Together partners use the Project Manager as a source of assistance and guidance in the implementation of the Report recommendations and the Action Plan within their own organisations and spheres of influence.**

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