

<b>Mayor and Cabinet</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Establishment of strategic Race Equality Organisation in Lewisham		
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	<b>Item No.</b>	8
<b>Ward</b>	All Wards		
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Community Services, Executive Director for Resources, Head of Law		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date:</b>	19 January 2011

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report describes issues arising from a review of organisational arrangements in the Borough to tackle race equality and race relations. It sets out proposals to meet identified unmet needs within the Council's overall equality strategy, to fill the gap left by the demise of the Race Equality Action in Lewisham (REAL) organisation and to assist the Council in meeting its overall statutory requirements in line with equality and human rights legislation. Outlining three options for a way forward, it recommends the establishment of a new organisation, and how to carry this forward.

## 2. Purpose of report

The purpose of the report is to outline the conclusions of a review undertaken by Lord Herman Ouseley on the organisational arrangements in the Borough to tackle race equality and race relations, and to seek approval for proposals to establish a new organisation.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 will replace the existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act and includes a new public sector equality duty replacing the separate public sector equality duties relating to race, disability and gender, and covering age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment more fully. The equality duty consists of a general duty, which states that public bodies must have due regards to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
  - Foster good relations between different groups.
- 3.2 The Council supports a range of initiatives and organisations that support the delivery of the equality duty and Lewisham's priorities in the area of

Equalities and Human Rights. This includes both directly delivered programmes such as the Young Mayor's scheme as well as grant aided organisations such as Lewisham Disability Coalition, Lewisham Ethnic Minority Partnership and faith-based organisations. The Council also works with the sector to ensure that the diversity of organisations are tackling potential areas of discrimination.

- 3.3 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything, which it considers, is likely:
- to promote or improve the economic well being of its area or
  - to promote or improve the social well-being of its area or
  - to promote or improve the environmental well-being of its area.
- 3.4 In exercising its powers under Section 2, the Council must have regard to Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council gives grant aid to a number of organisations in pursuit of the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and in particular organisations that promote equality.
- 3.5 Some voluntary and community sector organisations make a direct contribution to the Council's priorities through specific service provision whilst others contribute more indirectly through providing network support to clusters of specialist organisations or through contributions to strategic planning and development together with playing a key role in strategic partnerships. The Council recognises that the grant aid programme assists in ensuring that the voluntary and community sector has a voice and can represent independent interests as well as in ensuring effective service delivery to residents.

#### **4. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Mayor and Cabinet:

- 4.1 notes the review undertaken by Lord Ouseley (Appendix A)
- 4.2 agrees to the establishment of a new organisation as set out in paragraphs 7.3 – 7.5 and paragraph 8.

#### **5. Background**

- 5.1 Race Equality Action for Lewisham (REAL) was established in 2003 to provide a strategic race equality organisation for the borough, working with statutory, voluntary and community sectors to ensure race equality is incorporated into local agendas. The organisation also existed to tackle all forms of racial injustice and discrimination, providing advice and support to victims of racial discrimination. The organisation was in receipt of funding from the Council's main grants programme (£154,277 for 2008/09) to undertake this strategic race equality role, with additional funding from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

During 2009 REAL collapsed due to a number of serious organisational problems, and the Council ceased to fund them from October 2009.

- 5.2 With the demise of REAL, the Council engaged Lord Herman Ouseley to undertake a review on how best the Council could meet its race equality commitments within the context of its overall statutory equality obligations as a public service authority, especially in promoting good race relations, equality of opportunity and tackling unlawful discrimination, whilst recognising the need to respond to the wider equality needs of the Borough's population.

## **6 Race Equality Review**

- 6.1 The Review comprised a process of dialogue with representatives of local organisations and individuals previously and currently involved in race related work to some extent in the Borough. Focus group meetings and sessions for individuals were held to clarify issues of relevance, to draw on their appropriate experiences and to guide and shape the matters of substance for the Review. Ethnic, economic and social needs data was reviewed and is commented on in the report, where appropriate. In addition, consideration was given to operational models elsewhere for such activities in order to assess their appropriateness for application to Lewisham.
- 6.2 The Review took the demise of REAL as its starting point and sought to determine how any unmet needs arising from continuing racial disadvantage may be best tackled through local voluntary, community-led initiatives within the overall context of general public services provision as well as those meeting special and particular needs.
- 6.3 Several issues were identified by BAME and other community consultees as priorities for action in filling the gaps left by REAL, requiring urgent consideration and responses and necessary to be included in the remit of any newly created organisation. Issues identified included the need for assistance for individuals facing discrimination. The EHRC do undertake some casework, however they only take on cases that potentially have national impact. Local advice agencies also provide some assistance around discrimination, particularly employment and housing, however consultees felt that the level of support does not adequately meet local need. Other equalities areas such as disability and older people are in receipt of funding from the Council specifically for advice work, with young people's advice being supported from London Councils.
- 6.4 Another key issue identified by the review is the need to improve engagement and involvement in local agencies including the voluntary and community sector. Specific needs identified were work with vulnerable young people, education and training, mental health (with a disproportionate number of BME people within the mental health system), unemployment and a perception that there is an increase in prejudice, giving rise to the need for areas of promotional work in borough organisations.

## 7. Options

- 7.1 Three options have been put forward by Lord Ouseley. The first option is to do nothing other than absorb REAL's functions and responsibilities into the Council's own provision. This option is not recommended as it would seriously impede the Council in delivering its equality duty with regard to the race equality aspect.
- 7.2 A second option would be to follow the model of the EHRC establishing one equality organisation to take a broad-brush approach to equalities, for the whole Borough. Lord Ouseley's report does not consider that this is the best way forward. There is little evidence about how well this model might work and Lord Ouseley, in presenting the report questioned how feasible it might be to bring all equalities areas together without losing focus on specific equality areas, which might be to the detriment of work around equality of opportunity. Existing equalities organisations locally felt that this would be difficult to achieve in the short term and there would need to be a more gradual approach to achieve the emergence of such a unified body to tackle all forms of inequalities.
- 7.3 The third option put forward in the report is to have a single focused race equality body, with due regard to all equality areas. This would be achieved by having a co-ordinated approach through a consortium with all other voluntary organisations and especially those providing equality and advocacy support services for other disadvantaged groups of people on grounds of sex, disability, age, sexuality, religion and belief. This is the favoured option of local consultees and the one recommended by Lord Ouseley.
- 7.4 In exploring the three options, officers recommend the third option. It will assist with the Council's Equality Duty (see paragraph 3.1), ensuring that all equality areas are supported appropriately. In establishing the new organisation there are a number of principles that should be adhered to. These are:
1. The governance needs to be credible, transparent and independent. In explaining this principle Lord Ouseley outlined that there needs to be different leadership, both in terms of staff and management committee, from that of REAL or other previous Race Equality organisations. Feedback from those consulted identified that there were concerns that a new organisation would not be in a position to operate effectively if those involved previously in the local race equality organisations were leading the new consortium. To this end, those people involved with the governance or management of REAL should not be leading on the new organisation.
  2. The new organisation needs to be in an accessible location, where people know where they can go and what is on offer
  3. The organisation needs to be inclusive, including people from all backgrounds

4. Independent scrutiny by non-executive scrutiny (independent members not involved with the organisation)
  5. Maximisation of income - the organisation needs to ensure that it is funded from a range of sources.
- 7.5 Officers have explored the feasibility of establishing an organisation across boroughs. Discussions with Southwark and Lambeth have shown that the approach to race equality is different and therefore not feasible at this time. Lambeth do not have a race equality organisation, with discrimination cases being undertaken by local advice agencies. Any strategic work is undertaken internal to the Council by an Equalities Team who provide the corporate strategic framework and aim to embed the approach corporately. Southwark have a number of community of interest fora that feed into the Council and partnership consultative bodies. They also fund the advice sector to undertake discrimination cases. They are therefore currently going out to tender for an existing local organisation to act as 'critical friend' on race equality as that is what they consider is needed in Southwark.

## **8. Establishment of a new Race Equality organisation and consortium**

- 8.1 If Option 3 is agreed a clear specification of the services that need to be provided will be drawn up along with the aims and objectives of the consortium and further development of the consortium model, taking on board the principles as set out in paragraph 7.4.
- 8.2 The consultation carried out by Lord Ouseley identified a number of issues that need addressing. The main issues identified were the need for advocacy, discrimination casework, and social policy particularly around employment, housing, education and training and the criminal justice system. Also identified was the need to build the capacity and local engagement of the BME community. The need for advocacy casework in the area of discrimination is one that has also been identified through the needs analysis undertaken as part of the Framework for funding Information and Advice Services in the borough. The discrimination cases supported by REAL were recognised as part of the pattern of provision locally and is currently a gap that needs to be filled. This is particularly important in the areas of employment and training given the current financial climate. The new organisation would be expected to work collaboratively with the other advice providers in the borough to ensure effectiveness and spread of provision.
- 8.3 The Consortium would need to :-
  - a) provide a focal point for voluntary and community-led responses to race equality and race relations in the Borough and to secure positive collaboration in the design of more coherent, cost effective and easily accessible and efficient arrangements for tackling all inequalities affecting the borough's diverse population.

- b) engage with and involve those individuals and particular groups of people experiencing discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion in activities designed to secure their participation in civic facilities/ functions/events and to have their voices heard by all statutory agencies, public service providers and local employers.
  - c) liaise with and provide appropriate support to the Council and all other public service providers in the borough in the fulfilment of their statutory responsibilities with regard to equalities.
  - d) secure financial resources to cover operational costs and to widen the base of funding to achieve sustainability and maintain independence.
- 8.4 In establishing the new consortium, all local third sector organisations will be invited to become members and would elect six members of the consortium to sit on the non executive board of the organisation. There would also be a panel of individual members, who support the aims and objectives of the Consortium, they would be made up of individual committed people and especially local business people. They would elect two members from their panel to serve as members of the Board. The purpose of the independent panel members would be to act as a balance to the voluntary sector representatives. In addition the board would appoint a suitably qualified independent non-executive individual from outside the ranks of its membership with the specific responsibility for scrutiny and audit of staff performance, maintenance of professional standards of conduct and effective accountability including that of governance (See Figure 1 below)
- 8.5 A small working group, chaired by Lord Ouseley will be set up to oversee the move towards the establishment of the Consortium. Membership of the working group will be drawn from a range of organisations involved in the different strands of equality to ensure breadth, as well as some representation from umbrella organisations. The composition of the working group will initially be drawn up by Lord Ouseley in consultation with the Mayor. The work of the working group will be resourced by the Council, with the progress regularly reported to the Council. A timescale for the establishment of the Consortium will be drawn up, with milestones to demonstrate the progress of the working group. The work programme and areas of work of the consortium to be supported by the Council will be negotiated and agreed prior to any funding being agreed, although advocacy as identified in 8.2 is considered key.
- 8.6 If this option is agreed, the funding that has been ring fenced for a new organisation should be utilised for this purpose. Prior to the organisations being set up, a report will be submitted to Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) outlining the structure, work areas and budget for the organisation for approval.

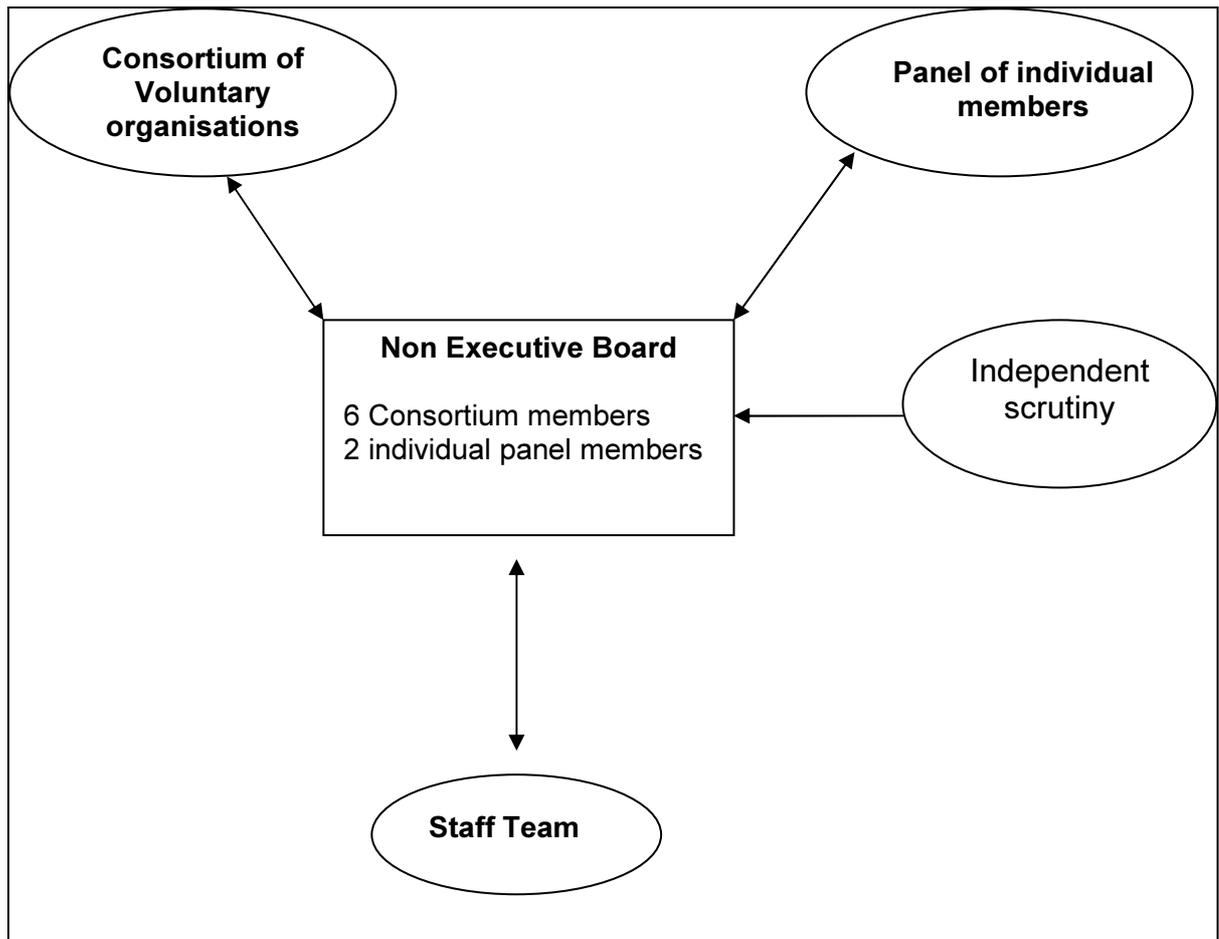


Figure 1. Proposed structure of a new race equality organisation

## 9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The current ring fenced grant budget for equalities in Lewisham is £160,220, as approved by Mayor & Cabinet (Contracts) on 20th January 2010.
- 9.2 Costs to date in 2010/11 for the winding up of REAL and payments for Lord Ouseley's review have been £17,758 (£3,900 Review, £13,858 winding up).
- 9.3 Paragraph 8 of the report describes the process for setting up the new organisation, and the costs for this will be contained within the balance of budget available.
- 9.4 Grants to the new organisation from 2011/12 onwards will be assessed and approved in the same way as any other grants from the main programme.
- 9.5 If the brief for moving this work forward does have to go out to tender, this will be done in accordance with the relevant Financial Regulations & Procedures.

## **10. Legal Implications**

- 10.1 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything, which it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This allows the Council to establish and provide funding for a Race Equality Organisation.
- 10.2 The Organisation must have regard to the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000). The Organisation must also have regard to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).
- 10.3 The Equality Act 2010 came on to the statute books this year but many of its provisions await commencement. Therefore the Acts referred to in paragraph 10.2 are still in force and have not, as yet, been replaced by the Equality Act 2010.

## **11 Crime and disorder implications**

There is a need for an organisation to fill the gap made since the demise of Race Equality Action Lewisham who worked extensively with the police and crime reduction service to improve community safety within the borough and build positive relations between the police and BME communities.

## **12. Equalities Implications**

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 replaced the existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act and included a new public sector equality duty replacing the separate public sector equality duties relating to race, disability and gender, and covering age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment more fully. The equality duty consists of a general duty, which state that public bodies must have due regards to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
  - Foster good relations between different groups.
- 12.2 The Council supports a range of initiatives and organisations that support the delivery of the equality duty and Lewisham's priorities in the area of Equalities and Human Rights. This includes both directly delivered programmes such as the Young Mayor's scheme as well as grant aided organisations such as Lewisham Disability Coalition, Lewisham Ethnic Minority Partnership and faith-based organisations. The Council also works with the sector to ensure that the diversity of organisations are tackling potential areas of discrimination. With the demise of REAL, there has been a gap in independent voice on race

equality in the borough, and by establishing a new organisation, this will assist the Council in meeting its requirements under the Equality Act.

**13. Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

If you would like more information on this report please contact Sandra Jones, Community Sector Unit, Community Services Directorate on 0208 314 6579

**RACE EQUALITY IN LEWISHAM - A REVIEW****Purpose of Review**

This report describes issues arising from a review of organizational arrangements in the Borough to tackle race equality and race relations. It sets out proposals to meet identified unmet needs within the Council's overall equality strategy, to fill the gap left by the recent demise of the Race Equality Action in Lewisham (REAL) organisation and to assist the Council in meeting its overall statutory requirements in line with equality and human rights legislation. The review does not in any way attempt to comment on the Council's own internal arrangements to tackle race inequalities as part of its provision of personal and public services for the Borough's inhabitants.

**The Context**

1. In the post-war period of the last six decades, Lewisham Council has strived positively, as a public service body, serving the interests of all its inhabitants, to meet the particular and different needs of its increasingly changing diverse population. During that period, various organizational structures were established within the public services to respond to such changing needs, especially those exacerbated by racial disadvantage and the effects of racism and racial discrimination. More significantly for the context of this report, it is crucial to note that the Council has always been careful to prioritise support for community-based and led activities aimed at challenging racial prejudice, discrimination, harassment and exclusion, as well as stressing the necessity of such work connecting with all sections of the Borough's population.
2. A brief chronology of this relevant activity is reflected in the work of the previous Community Relations Council in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by Race Equality Councils in the 1980s and 1990s and, most recently, Race Equality Action in Lewisham (REAL). In 2009, REAL collapsed under the weight of internal management strife as well as pressure to respond

appropriately to the changing nature of race, race equality and diversifying needs and requirements among the Borough's population.

3. With recent legislation to harmonise statutory equality duties, local authorities, other statutory agencies and the third sector have been shaping their responses thereto to meet the government's requirements with regard to community cohesion, single equality structures and initiatives to tackle multiple discrimination and wide ranging inequalities. This is all being shaped within the framework of a squeeze on public finances and diminishing resources to meet diverse needs from other private and charitable sources during the economic downturn. Strategic partnerships have embraced these challenges and the Council has an extensive Equalities Strategy with a Comprehensive Equalities Scheme covering all the statutorily identified characteristics, which are distinguishing features in anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. The Scheme also covers all the non-statutory characteristics which are to be covered by newly enacted Equality legislation.

Within the sphere of community-based and community-led action, the Council provides support for third sector initiatives across the widest range of needs, which include specific race-related projects.

4. This Review has focused on how best the Council could meet its race equality commitments within the context of its overall statutory equality obligations as a public service authority, especially in promoting good race relations, equality of opportunity and tackling unlawful discrimination, whilst recognizing the need to respond to the wider equality needs of all sections of the Borough's population. The primary consideration herein is that of establishing an independently-led third sector organization to undertake community-based activities among and on behalf of disadvantaged communities to assist the Council to reduce racial disadvantages, eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good relations between people from all backgrounds. Any new organization established would have to adopt such fundamental core functions/duties within its constitution to justify its existence.

## **Process and Methodology applied**

5. The Review comprised a process of dialogue with representatives of local organizations and individuals previously and currently involved in race related work to some extent in the Borough. Focus group meetings and sessions for individuals were held to clarify issues of relevance, to draw on their appropriate experiences and to guide and shape the matters of substance for the Review. Ethnic, economic and social needs data was reviewed and is commented on in the report, where appropriate. In addition, consideration was given to operational models elsewhere for such activities in order to assess their appropriateness for application to Lewisham.

## **The Issues**

6. The Council has detailed organizational arrangements in place for its own internal delivery of personal and public services to meet the identified needs of its population and to do so in line with its statutory duties under equality legislation. It supports independent community-led organizations, which provide services for local people to complement and enhance those provided by the Council in meeting social, information, economic and care needs. It is the local community-based and led sector that this Review is concerned with.
7. The Review took the demise of REAL as its starting point and sought to determine how any unmet needs arising from continuing racial disadvantage may be best tackled through local voluntary, community-led initiatives within the overall context of general public services provision as well as those meeting special and particular needs. Several issues were identified by BME and other community consultees as priorities for action in filling the gaps left by REAL, requiring urgent consideration and responses and necessary to be included in the remit of any newly created organization. These are as follows:-

- Advocacy and discrimination case work

- BME representative voices to challenge exclusion and discrimination
- BME visible in community leadership and governance
- Resources for BME-led groups/ exploring shared resources
- Vulnerable young people and families at risk
- Education and training
- Health care and mental health issues
- Unemployment/employment
- Housing and regeneration
- Criminal Justice System
- Local Assemblies attendance, representation and inclusion
- **Access to available complaints and ethnic data**
- BNP and the rise in racial prejudice
- Advice and public education against bigotry and hatred

### **Racial Disadvantage**

8. This section provides extracts of key demographic data and some factors pointing to evidence of continuing racial disadvantage:-

- a. Lewisham Borough's total population is estimated at 259,000, with 35% (91,000), being from Black and Minority Ethnic(BME) communities. (source: ONS mid year estimates 2007)
- b. The BME communities comprise a relatively young population, with an estimated 60% of the school-aged children being of that background.
- c. One main indicator of deprivation is that of the entitlement to Free School Meals. The data for 2009 show that the entitlements for children by ethnicity were White 22.7% and BME 26.5%.
- d. School Exclusions: Over the past decade, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of children excluded from schools in the

Borough. Although this reduction has been across all racial groups, disproportionality along race/ethnic lines can be discerned from the available data. The high point for Fixed Exclusions was in 2001, when there were 2,611 children excluded, of which 1,596 were of BME background. For year 2009, the total of Fixed Exclusions was 778, of which 527 were of BME origin. When it comes to Permanent Exclusions, the total for year 2001 was 94, of which 59 were of BME origin. For the year 2009, the total of Permanent Exclusions was 21 (surprisingly comprising more girls than boys), of which 18 were from BME backgrounds.

- e. Youth (aged 18-24) unemployment data at December 2009, showed that there were higher numbers of BME young people claiming Job Seekers Allowance than their counterparts. There was also adverse disproportionality impacting on economically active BME communities, of whom only 61% were in employment, whereas their white counterparts had over 77% in employment. (Source: ONS 2009)
- f. In the twelve month period leading up to April 2009, Council data revealed that BME households were disproportionately affected as homeless persons/households. Black homeless households totaled 486, Other BME households comprised 166 and White households were 220.
- g. Of the number of young people who are first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System(CJS), more are of BME background than White young people, although there are more BME young people at risk in the population of young people as a whole, so some adjustment of such variances must be taken into account.

### **Options for implementation**

- 9. Fundamentally, there are three options available to the Council in its response to the demise of REAL.

The *first* option is to do nothing other than for the Council to absorb REAL's functions and responsibilities into its own provision and to encourage other community-based voluntary organizations to pick up such elements as practicable. The weakness with this option, cited by BME and other consultees, is the paucity of knowledge about the limited existence of appropriate expert advisory services on inequalities, exclusion and discrimination case advocacy. This is a high risk option and would suggest that the Council is not serious about community empowerment and tackling the range of inequalities, multiple discrimination and racial disadvantage.

The *second* option is to take a broad-brush approach to equalities, community cohesion and human rights and seek to get it established under one umbrella organization for the whole Borough, almost along the lines of how the government has brought together all equalities and human rights regulatory, enforcement and promotional activities within a single body which is the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This would mean determining which existing organisation would lead this process of co-ordination and has the governance and sustainable infrastructure to take on such a demanding task. The primary benefit would be that of not having a plethora of different organizations serving the interests of a variety of different client groups of people. On the other hand, there is concern that some equality issues may lose its specific focus if all are blended into one organization. The latter view was one expressed by consultees, who were concerned to stress that they felt that race equality had already slipped down the agenda of priority policy considerations. Existing established organizations working with the elderly population and with disabled groups of people would be reluctant to accept that the best way forward for their interest groups would be to be part of a single unified body. Most people want to see a more gradualist approach to achieve the emergence of such a unified body to tackle all form of inequalities. It is fair to say that among consultees during the review there was evenly balanced support for this option and the third option.

The **third** option is to have a single focused race equality body leading on such matters at community level but linking up with all other voluntary organizations and especially those carrying some speciality in the provision of equality and advocacy support services for other disadvantaged groups of people on grounds of sex, disability, age, sexuality, religion and belief. This option is explored further in the next section. It provides developed suggestions for the Council's consideration of a "total place, one Lewisham" model to support in pursuance of the emergence of a coherent community-based and led approach to tackling inequalities, disadvantage, exclusion and diversity under a banner of "Fairness for All".

### **Fairness Consortium**

10. This section describes one approach the Council may wish to take to fill the void left by the demise of REAL, whilst working towards a more unified initiative in pursuit of improved equality, diversity, community cohesion, human rights and increased involvement and participation by people from all diverse backgrounds across community, voluntary organization and other civic activities impacting on quality of life issues.
11. Undoubtedly, some consultees felt very strongly that the responses to the race inequality challenges in the Borough should be led by the BME communities and, in particular, the Black communities. There is no reason why that should not happen and, indeed, there is evidence that such activities form an integral and inescapable element, to varying extents, within the remit of many existing BME organizations. They not only meet special and different needs but also have to deal with issues of racism, discrimination and exclusion. However, they were not set up with the explicit and specific remit to eliminate racial discrimination, to champion equality of opportunity and to advance good race relations. That requires a specialist organization and REAL was the last such organization in existence.

- 12.** It would be possible for a local BME organization to take on such a specialist role, if one existed and expressed the wish and competence to do so but none has been forthcoming to date. Were that to happen, the Council would, of course, have to be satisfied about its competence to undertake the task and meet the demanding standards set out in any procurement specification. Similarly, it could be argued that the recently established Lewisham Ethnic Minority Partnership has the potential to carry forward the development and implementation of this project. However, in order to do so, its limited infrastructure would have to be beefed up and it would have to be well resourced with expert staff and competencies.
- 13.** An alternative route would be to establish a new body, on a phased basis, to lead initially on a small number of specifically defined areas of activity, whilst working incrementally with other stakeholders and interest groups towards establishing a co-ordinated integrated structure for all community-based equality, inclusion and diversity programmes, based on needs, demands, and available resources.
- 14.** Such a proposal, as in 13 above, would be overseen by a Consortium comprising membership drawn from all local voluntary organizations in the Borough supporting its aims and objectives and working towards the achievement of the proposed outcomes. Each organization would appoint a representative to be its member of the Consortium's Council of Management, which, within an approved constitution, would elect a six-member Non-Executive Board to be responsible for the staff and their delivery of the work programmes. In addition, there would be the establishment of a Panel of Individual Members, who support the aims and objectives of the Consortium. They would be made of independent individual committed people and especially local business owners. They would elect two members from their Panel to serve as Non-Executive members on the Board. From among its eight elected members, the Board would appoint a Chair, who would also Chair meetings of the Consortium, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer and a Secretary. The Board would also appoint an appropriately qualified independent non-executive individual from outside

the ranks of its membership, with the specific responsibility for scrutiny and audit of staff performance, maintenance of professional standards of conduct and effective accountability, including that of governance.

**15. The overall aims of the Consortium would be to :-**

15.1.1 provide a focal point for voluntary and community-led responses to race equality and race relations in the Borough and to secure positive collaboration in the design of more coherent, cost effective and easily accessible and efficient arrangements for tackling all inequalities affecting the borough's diverse population.

15.1.2 engage with and involve those individuals and particular groups of people experiencing discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion in activities designed to secure their participation in civic facilities/ functions/events and to have their voices heard by all statutory agencies, public service providers and local employers. A high priority should be accorded to young people's participation.

15.1.3 liaise with and provide appropriate support to the Council and all other public service providers in the borough in the fulfillment of their statutory responsibilities with regard to equalities.

15.1.4 secure financial resources to cover operational costs and to widen the base of funding to achieve sustainability and maintain independence.

**16. In pursuance of those aims the Consortium would be required to execute several tasks but principally defined as follows:-**

- provide advice, guidance and support to individuals who are adversely affected by treatment that is considered to be discriminatory and disadvantaging, working and collaborating with other local

organizations that can provide specialist and appropriate advocacy assistance, as necessary.

- liaise and work with and across all voluntary sector organizations in the Borough to share good practice in tackling inequalities and establish effective arrangements to maximize the use of all specialisms and expertise existing in the range of local voluntary organizations in pursuit of fair treatment for all;
- explore shared use and better utilization of resources available to community and voluntary organizations and develop proposals for a more unified arrangement for tackling all inequalities through the third sector in the Borough.
- undertake specialist race equality advocacy casework on behalf of victims of race discrimination, harassment and victimization.
- establish and maintain dialogue through a formal partnership briefing arrangement for and with all public service authorities in the borough.
- engage with BME organizations and interest groups to collaborate and develop programmes and projects to have their voices heard about issues of racial disadvantage, all forms of inequalities, and the improvement of good relations between all communities in the borough.
- engage with young people and those organizations working with young people to ensure their involvement and engagement in civic and community activities and to have self-expression about their own particular needs.
- produce and make widely available annual reports on performance, achievements, the utilization of resources and the further tasks ahead, outlining the risks, challenges and opportunities.

**17.** It would be vitally important to pursue a minimum of absolutely vital tasks to secure success and thus have the likelihood of moving from pilot project to the reality of greater certainty of outcomes, having regard to the

ultimate goals of achieving reduced discrimination and disadvantages, better community relations and cohesion, increased community participation and co-ordinated unified arrangements for independent voluntary activities to strengthen and support rights and responsibilities for all the Borough's inhabitants to share equally and enjoy.

- 18.** Of course, in the present difficult financial circumstances for public services provision, there must be an exploration of how best existing resources across the whole sector can be utilized to tackle issues of multiple discrimination and deprivation. Given the entrenched nature of persistent racial disadvantage and the likelihood of further disproportionality during a period of recession and austerity, the need for urgent action in pursuit of community-led anti-discrimination and equality initiatives to complement the direct Council-led provision, cannot be stressed to much.
- 19.** Should the Council decide to give support and provide resources for an independent community-led race equality Borough-wide provision along the lines described above in option 3, linked to the overall objective of establishing an integrated community-based service to tackle unfairness and inequalities, it would be required to move quickly to build on the established momentum and enthusiasm for such implementation by appointing a small steering group to prepare an implementation plan. Among its immediate tasks would be the preparation of a specification of the services required to be provided, the identification of any existing local organizations which would be willing and able to take on the tasks within specified criteria for selection and, in the event of there being none, to establish the processes and protocols to guide the setting up of the new body to take on the project.
- 20.** During the consultation meetings generated by this Review, there was enthusiasm for the approaches as emerged in option 3. Those who contributed positively in support of such provision argued vociferously for the adequate resourcing of such an initiative. Moreover, however, there was agreement that some core principles had to be key features underpinning the ultimate success of this project. These are summarized as:

(1) Governance having credibility, integrity, independence, openness and accountability; (2) The Consortium would have prominence in an accessible location and be able to publicise its services so that all people, with appropriate requirements and needs, would know where to go (a major defect with REAL) and be able to get access thereto; (3) It would be inclusive and maximize involvement of people from all backgrounds in its activities, thus complying with the spirit and letter of the public duty in the Equality Act 2010; (4) It would have independent continuous scrutiny of its performance and compliance with all standards and specification through non-executive inclusion on it's Board of Management; (5) It would seek to maximize its income and resources from the widest range of sources.

Herman Ouseley

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