



Minutes of the meeting of the ANTI-POVERTY FORUM held on 7 JULY 1999 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Legg	-	Denbigh Ward
Tony Lamming	-	MKC
Jane Hainstock	-	MK Health for All
Mary Brind-Surch	-	MKC
Trish Hunter	-	MKC Learning and Development Policy
Phil Wareham	-	MK Neighbourhood Services Policy
Geoff Snelson	-	MKC
John Barnes	-	Thames Valley Police
Greg Redman	-	Salvation Army
Louise French	-	North British Housing Association
Dominic Games	-	Warden Housing Association
Helene Vancliff	-	Shelter Housing Aid Centre
Christopher Meredith	-	MK Carers' Project
Reg Griffiths	-	MKCDP
Janet Croston	-	Youth Information Service
Danny Conway	-	Young People's Service MKC
Juliet Murray	-	MK Citizens Advice Bureau
Murdoch McKenzie	-	MK Christian Council
Linda Whyte	-	Community Trust

Apologies:

Ellen Clark	-	Age Concern
Sue Radaszkowicz	-	Welfare Rights
Mike Geddes	-	MK Economic Partnership
Ian Parker	-	Chaplain to people at work in Milton Keynes MKCC: Netherfield SRB
Alison Bower	-	MK Women & Work
Dilly Baker	-	MK Christian Council
Paula Judd	-	MK Energy Agency
Graham Ghaleb	-	MK Christian Foundation

1.0 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 March 1999 were received. It was agreed that the apologies of T Hunter and Maurica Legg should be added.

2.0 ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

The Forum received a copy of the draft anti-poverty strategy, drawn up by the Anti-Poverty Working Group after the discussion at the previous meeting of the Forum,

and noted that it incorporated a number of themes for further discussion. The meeting broke into small groups to discuss the further development of the strategy.

- The Forum received feedback from the discussion groups and noted that all the issues raised would go back to the Working Group for further discussion and development.

3.0 MK2020 CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

The Forum considered a report of the anti-poverty workshop at the 2020 conference in March 1999. One issue of particular concern was that of relative poverty and the need to address the problem of those just above benefits thresholds. It was also noted that Milton Keynes, while not listed as one of the 44 most deprived local authority areas, had areas which featured in the country's 5% worst enumeration districts in the country.

The Forum noted that the issues fed back from the conference had been referred to the sub-group, and further proposals reported back to the Forum.

4.0 COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

The Forum received a progress report on the development of the Community Legal service in Milton Keynes, and noted that Milton Keynes had been chosen as an Associate Pioneer in this project. Concern was expressed that, as legal services had broad implications, they should not be seen as part of an anti-poverty strategy. The Forum felt, however that the issue of access to justice had a strong relationship with poverty and was a valid part of an anti-poverty strategy. It was also agreed that being part of a pilot project would have major benefits in terms of both learning how to deliver the changing community legal service and providing an opportunity to influence the direction of the development of the Government's policy on community legal services.

5.0 BENEFITS TAKE-UP

The Forum received an oral up-date on progress in developing a take-up initiative, now known as MK-£CASH. It was noted that the initial approach would be to run a low-key take-up campaign focusing upon Olney and Wolverton in the first instance. It was hoped that this would result in a steady, slow increase in enquiries which would enable agencies to assess underlying demand for services, without placing too great an initial strain upon existing provision.

The Forum noted that the initial literature used to advertise the campaign stress the independence of MK-£CASH from the Benefits Agency in order to encourage people to respond. There would also be detailed monitoring and follow up of the campaign which would be reported to a future meeting of the Forum.

6.0 BENEFITS DATA

The Committee noted a table showing benefits data for Milton Keynes wards compared to Great Britain. It was noted that significant variations exist within Milton Keynes, and that the data provided a useful starting point for the analysis of the distribution of poverty in the area.

7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum be held in October 1999, and that a future meeting be held in February 2000.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.32 PM