

1. MIRPUR – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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Wards affected: All

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

That the Committee recommend to Cabinet that the Memorandum of Understanding with Mirpur City be adopted to reflect the significant relationship that exists between the two locations, in line with the draft document at Appendix A.

Corporate Implications

Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the council to do any thing which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or coincidental to the discharge of any of its functions. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to the restrictions in Sections 1-4. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Council, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics under the Act and those who do not. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been made available on the Council's website

There are no or financial implications arising from this report.

There are no other human rights or community safety implications arising from this report.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been made available on the Council's website at <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/uploads/public/documents/Community/Equality-impact-assessments/Community/Equality-impact-assessment-Mirpur-memorandum.pdf>

Executive Summary

A request has been received that a Memorandum of Understanding be signed to reflect the significant contribution the city of Mirpur has made to the life and economy of High Wycombe. The High Commissioner for Pakistan has been approached by the Mayor and supports and will sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Sustainable Community Strategy / Council Priorities - Implications

This supports the Sustainable Communities Strategy theme of Cohesive and Strong Communities by increasing community confidence and improving understanding.

Background and Issues

The Mayor of High Wycombe, Cllr Zia Ahmed, raised awareness of the desire to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Community Services. The Mayor has asked that one be adopted to reflect the significant contribution migrants from Mirpur have made to High Wycombe's economy and to its cultural life.

Pakistani heritage residents make up between 15-20% of the town's population, the majority of first generation migrants originating from the city and region of Mirpur. Mirpuris settled in several cities across the UK from the 1950s onwards and the significant contribution they have made to local life has been recognised by Birmingham and Bradford city councils among others.

Residents originating directly from Mirpur as well as second and third generation Mirpuris have made a very vibrant contribution to the life of the town, in the well established annual march for the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, very active small business sector represented by the Asian Small Business Association, community life with Awaaz Radio and many social and cultural groups such as the Karima Foundation, as well as civic life, standing for and being elected to the Council, which this year has a Mayor and Chairman with Mirpuri heritage.

Residents from Mirpur raised the funds for the town's first mosque in Jubilee Road. Now residents benefit from the provision of seven mosques. The Council for Christian and Muslim Relations has been established to promote cohesion within the town.

A draft of the Memorandum of Understanding is attached at Appendix A.

Options

The alternative option is not to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding. This would mean that there was no recognition of the strong relationship between the town, its residents with Mirpuri heritage and the city of Mirpur.

Conclusions

That the Memorandum of Understanding with the Mirpur Linking Association be signed.

Next Steps

Once Cabinet has made its decision then a signing ceremony can be arranged with the Chair of the Mirpur Linking Association in the presence of the High Commissioner, the Mayor and the Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee. All town Members would be invited.

Background Papers

None