

# Northampton Borough Council Northampton Diverse Communities Equalities Forum

Wednesday, 30 July 2014

**Present:** Cllr. Malpas (Chair, NBC), Sue Ward (NIFF), Nick Stephens (Police), Rachel Packman (Police), Neelam Aggarwal-Singh (IHWO/NIFF/BME SRP), Pauline Woodhouse (BME SRP), Robert Henry (Nubiwise), Wendi Buchannan (Solar), John Rawlings (Quakers), Chris Fray (NREC), Anne Wankiiri (Zimwomen Association), Dmitri Antipin (Northamptonshire Eastern European Community Centre), Natalia Antipina (NBA), Abade Ahmed (Somali Community), Rutendo Nyatsine (Zimwomen Association), Anjona Roy (NREC), Mick Stamper (Police), Vicki Rockall (NBC), Alice Morgan (NBC, took minutes)

## 1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Matthew Toresen (VIN), James Kitchener (NBA), Sarah Hughes (Bellinge Community House), and Ivor Agbemenyale (Northampton Ghanaian Union)

## 2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

With reference to the Stop Search item, AR circulated the NREC report on Stop Search to forum members. Actions from last meeting for AC regarding stop search, AM will ask for a response for the next meeting. Other matters arising regarding the Hate Crime unit will be addressed during this meeting.

## 3. ELECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR

Voting papers were circulated and collected by NS and RP (impartial, Northants Police). Rutendo Nyatsine was elected as Community Co-chair.

## 4. ACTION PLANS

Each of the action plans was discussed in turn, in relation to the forum's agreed outcomes. The action plans are a starting point to agree forum work and projects. The forum discussed the financial element to the action plans, with some projects requiring a modest amount, and others asking for a lot more without any in-depth budgetary information. VR explained that there is not an unlimited amount of money to fund these projects, and that the funding will come from the forum submitting an application to the NBC small grants pot, which is administered by NCF. It was requested that Rachel McGrath is invited to a future forum meeting to give an overview of how the NBC small grants pot is administered. **ACTION:** AM to send an invitation.

### Multi-cultural festival – Zimwomen

AR raised concerns about far right activity at the same event in 2013 – need to promote positive messages of anti-racism. Need to minimise risk. Forum **agreed** in

principle for this event to be on action plan

VR explained that each project will be on the agenda as the time comes closer, for planning etc. Ownership will still sit with the lead organisation; however the planning process will be more inclusive etc.

### **Platform for all community information to be promoted and published.**

NA told the forum that there she has experienced poor communication for BME community groups, especially from NCC. In terms of connecting with BAME groups, NA suggested that BMESRP are in good position to do this. AR added that another key body for connecting with BAME groups is Inspiration FM. The forum **agreed** that they are in support of this action plan.

The forum then discussed further issues they face with communication with organisations. NA felt that the three organisations she represents (IHWO/BMESRP/NIFF) have experienced improvements in engagement and communication since AM and VR have been in post. JC told the forum that she still has experienced difficulties with volunteers from Inspiration FM contacting NBC's Communications team. **ACTION:** VR to pass on JC's concerns, and to follow up a way to improve the dialogue

### **Play/film**

Suzanna Storey, lead on this activity, was not present at the meeting to discuss the action plan. JR felt that this project would be a good way of bringing groups together. However, it was felt by others in attendance that this project could not be discussed until the person leading the activity is present. It was agreed 'in principle' this would be accepted onto the action plan for future development, and would be discussed at a later date.

### **Diwali**

The forum discussed this item, and agreed that it would be good if the forum can help facilitate and support all celebrations. This type of project is a celebration of diversity, and an opportunity to show that NBC want to support BAME celebrations. The forum agreed that it would be a good idea to have a calendar of multi-cultural events, which will raise awareness of all that goes on. This will link to the action plan for a communication platform. It was suggested that in the future the forum look for funding to support BAME celebrations, and to facilitate collaborative working. In principle, the forum **agreed** that they were happy for Diwali to sit on the action plans.

### **WW1 commemoration.**

RH (Nubiwise) as lead on this project, explained that this activity would be an evening event, focused on World War One and recognising the contribution made by the commonwealth. WB suggested that story telling would be a good element to

this type of project; providing other people with the opportunity to talk about personal stories of local people and their families, reinforcing their historical link with this country and sharing their experience of the wars and how they effected them. RH confirmed that he is also part of the Northampton Black History project. Again, in principle, the forum **agreed** for this project to sit on the action plans, to be discussed further at a later meeting.

### **HIV testing awareness.**

WB outlined this proposal (see action plan table for detail). This project is focused on awareness and reducing stigma. To be discussed at a later meeting.

### **Suggestions for Forum focus**

JC raised a number of issues for forum focus, including:

- Stop and search for recording when stopped.
- Public service announcements to publicise local events supported by the forum
- Housing – BME needs/strategy
- Schools – underachievement / hate crime
- Zero working hours contracts
- Northants Police – BME recruitment drive
- HMO's
- Northampton Faith communities profile and places of worship – audit and needs assessment
- Northampton Carnival – changes to venue etc.

## **5. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE - HATE CRIME UNIT**

Northants Police made a decision it would not have a hate crime unit; MS holds this portfolio for Northampton. The force is happy to look into this decision in another 6 months' time and will continue to review the service as they do for all other areas.

MS gave an overview of what used to be the Hate Crime unit – which was a team of individuals who would deal with a percentage of hate crimes and incidents crime. However the force is in a position where it has budget constraints. They have tried to maintain the service provided, and looked at a number of small dedicated teams and asked whether they could afford to keep team, and thought of how the service could be improved. Previously, an officer would attend a crime, and if was classed as a hate crime this would be passed on to the unit. Now, if a 'serious' crime is suffered, this is dealt with by detectives and CID, and other crimes are dealt with directly by Police officers. Through this change, MS said that they now have a local oversight of hate crime.

MS told the forum that the force understand that this change will bring challenges, and that some may not have the same service that they had six months ago, however they will deal with these incidences as they arise. MS advised the forum that he has attended NIFF, this forum, and will also be attending LGBTQ forum in September, and is happy to talk about issues with everyone.

## Questions:

AR – felt that this decision has eroded trust in communities, specifically how the decision was made with the lack of communication, equality impact assessment, and anything else to pay due regard to statutory responsibility for equality. AR asked about Hate incident review groups that were in place previously and haven't met since April. How and when will these groups meet? AR said that NREC have facilitated more complaints in last 2 months than last 4 years around hate crime.

MS advised that HIRGs will keep meeting. MS is ensuring they are in place in Northampton and Andy Cox will put in place elsewhere. MS has written to Luisa Jepson, the new Hate Crime Coordinator, about this and they will be up and running ASAP. **ACTION:** MS will send the dates for these through.

JR – How do we make clear than BME needs are being taken care of, and how much savings are really being made?

MS advised that the Hate Crime unit was just one of a number of areas of cuts. MS said that he believes the service will be maintained at an acceptable level; if you report an incident to Northamptonshire Police, an officer will investigate the issue, resolve with you and put governance in place to ensure this is dealt with properly. MS said that he hadn't seen a large amount of dissatisfaction since the change, but will look into this to confirm. With regards to the needs of BME communities and their perception of the Police as a result of the change, the Force did anticipate the issues with perception, but also have similar concerns as other cuts are made. However there is a commitment in Northampton to maintain and improve the hate crime service.

WB – took a lot of time for communities to be active with reporting, officers have not in past reported crimes did not take responsibility and did not ensure crimes were investigated. To have someone to speak to who understood issues and would follow through was really important. WB said that she would like to see a commitment to BME communities and to communities who are affected disproportionately by hate crime. WB asked that this is taken back to PCC.

MS explained that this was a decision made operationally by the chief constable, rather than the PCC. MS himself was not involved in the direct decision making so cannot comment on the way the unit was closed.

AR raised that she believes the communication from the Police happened a week after the unit was closed, and that NREC had 2 weeks to run petition campaign, of which that haven't had any communication from the Police since it was handed to the Police. On the day of closure, AR does not believe that there were any announcements made to the press. AR felt that this implies a lack of transparency.

MS said that he would be surprised if the petition would have made any difference as other factors made the decision financially. MS advised that he will ask the question about the Community Impact Assessment and whether or not this was

conducted. MS added that the Chief makes a lot of operational decisions every day, and that it would be difficult to consult all communities on every decision.

JC asked whether officers have received training. MS advised that training has been completed around risks and vulnerable victims, and the Force will now look at officer's skills, and will implement ongoing training over the coming months. MS advised that there are safeguards in place – Officers are aware of all categories of hate crime; if they fail to identify this will be picked up by an auditor in control room.

AR asked what the Force wants the review results to look like. The forum agreed to invite a representative from the Police for the January meeting to discuss further what has/hasn't worked, which gives the 6 month window for review.

MS advised the forum that he stands by the force decision as the right thing to do. However, MS will go back to the Chief regarding the Community Impact Assessment. MS also advised that he will look at complaints they have received and keep an eye on this. If any problems are experienced, please send through to MS either through AR at NREC or through the forum – all feedback appreciated.

## **6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING**

- Action plans – further develop

## **9. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

- AW - Zimwomen wellbeing day Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August
  - Umbrella festival Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August
  - IA - Northampton Ghanaian Union Big Picnic Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August.
  - NA - NBA Eid celebration Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August.
  - Cllr. Malpas – group of 17/18 year olds at umbrella fair promoting Guide dogs.
  - RN – thanked the forum for voting for her to be community co-chair
- With reference to the annual refresh of the equality strategy, AR asked VR whether SMART objectives have been included. VR to discuss with AR after the meeting.

## **7. AOB**

JC told the forum about a tour organised by NBC for young people who volunteer for Inspiration FM. They felt that this was really useful and they left with more knowledge about the Guildhall and the democratic processes.

VR and AM are going to organise a series of visits through local democracy week, with NBC democratic services – details of this to follow.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 6:30 – 8:30pm in the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 8:50 pm