

## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RACE EQUALITY FORUM**

**Wednesday, 29 November 2006**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Malpas (Chair)  
M.Felix  
C.Owusu-Akuffo  
S.Owusu-Akuffo  
R.Begum  
S.Jobbins  
DS P.Colhoun  
J.Patel  
L.Ambrose

NBC  
NREC  
The Church of the Family of God  
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Victim Support  
NCC  
Hate Crimes Unit  
Patel Samage  
NBC

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from P Shilson and C Fray.

#### **2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Councillor Malpas welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves in turn.

#### **3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (COPY HEREWITH)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2006, copies of which had been previously circulated, were agreed.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

- (A) L Ambrose circulated fliers promoting the Northampton Youth Forum and commented upon the make up of the Forum in terms of ethnicities of the young people on the Youth Forum. She stated that of around twenty five on the Forum this year at least eight of the young people had come from ethnic minority or mixed heritage backgrounds. It was noted that the young people were not elected as BME representatives but, as in past years, they were elected to represent organisations such as schools or individuals. Already the young people had been getting involved in raising awareness of diverse communities in Northampton eg working with Neelam Aggarwal-Singh in promoting and taking part in Diwali activities and also on a community oral

history project with the Northampton Museum and Northants Black History Association. Also they would be taking part in the Holocaust Memorial activities again.

- (B) L Ambrose then referred to the Money for Youth Initiative advising that the Youth Forum would consider the ideas received on 7 December and she asked the Group if they were aware of anyone wishing to send in an idea to ensure that it was sent in before this date.
- (C) L Ambrose then referred to the issue of education and BME young people's achievement. She stated that she had not been able to make contact with L Green but had spoken to M Walker at Northamptonshire County Council who had provided the following information. She stated that all schools had been required to submit a race equality policy to the County Council's Race Equality Team. In response to a query about whether parents, associations or forums existed M Walker had advised that most schools had parent/teacher associations or similar. Also parents could become governors on the schools/governors body. There had been a campaign to get more governors including from a BME background. M Walker had also highlighted the work done by community groups to support parents and achievements of young people in the school, citing the Polish, Bengali and Gujarati communities as examples and also noting that a new African/Caribbean group was trying to set up to include a focus on parents and schools within its community work. However sometimes the take-up of opportunities by parents was disappointing. For example a meeting had been arranged on 28 November with parents of young people who had taken part in a project and of the twenty five parents invited only four turned up. It was noted that there was an event coming up in the New Year, which might be of interest which was an afternoon conference on 23 June 2007 at the Moat House Hotel for black parents (due to the limits of the funding this was taken specifically to refer to dual heritage, Afro/Caribbean and African people) which would give them an opportunity to voice their views and discuss how best to utilise projects to benefit young people.

## **5. FORUM MEMBERSHIP**

L Ambrose advised that the whole issue of Forum membership was being looked at and was currently in the process of consulting with various groups, etc in terms of different ways in which people might want to get involved with the Forums. In response to a query regarding links with the Northants Refugee Forum it was noted that the Council was working together with them, with the links having been forged through the Refugee Week and International Women's Day activities last year.

## **6. CO CHAIR ELECTIONS PLANNING**

L Ambrose advised that it had been agreed that the postal process would be used. In terms of sending in a manifesto anyone not comfortable with writing their manifesto would be offered support and could telephone in and dictate it. It was also agreed that both a Co-Chair and Deputy Co-Chair should be elected. In the event of a contested election, postal votes would be sent out. The invitations to

stand as candidates would be sent to members of the Forum in January 2007 and the results would be announced to the Forum at its March meeting. The invitations would be accompanied by information about the role of Co-Chair.

In response to a query from M Felix regarding training issues it was noted that one of the things currently being looked at was provision of more skills and support in terms of Forums and their Co chairs in particular.

## **7. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL UPDATE INCLUDING FORUMS COMMUNITY HISTORY PROJECT**

L Ambrose circulated the current draft Schedule of Events for information. It was noted that the theme this year was "Dignity of Difference". More information about this could be found on the Borough Council's website <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/forums>. In terms of the Schedule of Events, L Ambrose briefly elaborated upon these noting that the main event in terms of the theme was from 22 January to 1 February and would be an exhibition in the Courtroom of The Guildhall, which was a display featuring the personal stories of people from the diverse communities who had suffered in the Holocaust and the personal stories of people in Northampton's diverse communities today reflecting our commitment to developing a society that was tolerant and respectful of difference. Also it was noted that a community history project was being undertaken, working with Northampton Museum and Northampton Black History Association. The project sought to fit in with the theme "Dignity of Difference". Also the project would highlight work done by existing community history projects for Northampton and the webpages in the Forum's section of the Borough Council's website included links to existing work done regionally and nationally. The young people would be having their first interviewing session on Saturday 2 December and anyone interested in being interviewed was encouraged to let L Ambrose know in advance so that an appropriate interview slot could be identified for them.

## **8. FORUMS EVENTS PLANNING/IDEAS**

### **(A) INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT - SATURDAY 10TH MARCH 2007**

It was noted that this had been planned for Saturday 10 March 2007. At this stage ideas were being gathered and any thoughts or ideas from this Group that could be put into the event would be welcomed. M Felix stated that he would like to be involved with the Women's Forum event.

M.Felix also suggested this Group might like to consider a Race Equality conference and involve all the Forums. S Jobbins commented that there was a county-wide cohesion strategy due to be submitted to the LAA Board on 18 December and that really it was a case of all organisations and partnerships working together rather than just individual organisations working in isolation of each other.

Attention was then drawn to another forthcoming event ie. Refugee Week event in June 2007.

**(B) REFUGEE WEEK**

**(C) FORUM WORKPLAN**

**9. INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

**(A) COMMUNITY COHESION CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS AT THE GUILDHALL - 8 AND 13 DECEMBER**

It was noted that two workshops had been organised for 8 December and 13 December, both at The Guildhall, and that S Silver had been charged with implementing the Community Cohesion Strategy Northampton for Northampton Borough Council through its links with countywide networks and his work with the Forums and neighbourhood management. Also central Government was looking to identify a national picture of good practice and perspectives so were seeking views via consultation and there was a document available with regard to this. This had been e mailed out to members of the Forums and a couple of copies were available at this meeting. The workshops would provide an opportunity for people to come together from across the localities within Northampton to inform and be updated about the development of community cohesion working in Northampton and County. S Jobbins expressed some surprise as she felt the workshops and the work being done by the Borough was a duplication of work already being done and referred to the draft countywide community cohesion document which had been produced and with which S.Silver was involved for Northampton Borough Council. L Ambrose suggested that S Jobbins liaise with S Silver regarding this aspect.

**(B) SHOPPING EVENT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE NORTHAMPTON - SUN 10 DECEMBER 11AM TO 3PM**

It was noted that arrangements had been made to offer a helping hand for those with mobility needs in terms of their Christmas shopping in Northampton on Sunday 10 December between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm. On this day there would be extra help available for shoppers with disabilities and Northampton Borough Council had teamed up with the Northampton Town Centre Partnership and Northampton's four Rotary Clubs to arrange for volunteers to help people with their Christmas shopping. The team of volunteers would meet at the Ridings car park and the scheme was supported by Northampton Shop Mobility. Also there would be mince pies and refreshments on offer to shoppers and carers. More information on this could be obtained from the Borough Council Town Centre Team on 838427.

**(C)** M Felix advised that Race Action Northampton he would be moving offices from Hazelwood Road and that as of tomorrow he would be needing to look for new premises. He therefore asked that if anyone knew of any alternative to let him or Chris Fray know.

**(D)** J Patel circulated a leaflet detailing forthcoming events being organised locally in terms of the Hindu community.

**(E)** S Jobbins then advised that a countywide BME New Arrivals Strategy had just been approved, the purpose of which was to access key mainstream services and this would probably kick-off in April. Funding for it was still being sought but this

strategy would go ahead. Councillor Malpas suggested that this be sent to all County Councillors for information as he had not been previously aware of this.

#### **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

#### **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 8TH MARCH 2007**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 9 January 2007.