

## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **RACE EQUALITY FORUM**

**Thursday, 8 March 2007**

#### **PRESENT:**

J.Campbell (Cochair in the chair)	Inspiration FM
M.Felix	Individual
V.Dumbleton	County Travellers Unit/NTPCT/Npton Travellers Action Group
J.Patel	Patel Samaj Npton
DSP Colhoun	Nptonshire Police
M.Brown	CEMC
A.Abdi	Nptonshire Somali Community
AJ.Gray	NBC Community Involvement
A.Arden	NBC Housing Strategy
Councillor Malpas	Councillor NBC Co chair
L.Ambrose	NBC Area Partnerships & Forums Co-odr

#### **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The item "Community Co-Chair Announcement" was brought forward to the first item.

#### **COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENT**

L Ambrose advised that one person had indicated their willingness to be Community Co-Chair for this Forum namely Jenny Campbell. Her nomination was fully supported by those present and as such she was formally elected as Co-Chair for this Forum. She then assumed the Chair for this meeting.

J Campbell then welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves in turn.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from C Fray, Mr Mistry and R Begum.

#### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2007, copies of which had been previously circulated, were agreed.

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

L Ambrose referred to a radio interview broadcast on Inspiration FM and an interview done by the radio station with a Money 4 Youth dance and drama project led by and involving young BME people in Kings Heath and thanked J Campbell and Inspiration FM for their support stating that the young people Iqra and Titi who had

taken part in the live programme had been invited and were keen to go back in future. L. Ambrose then briefly updated on other Money4 Youth projects advising that they included many BME young people with some projects seeking to bring communities together and break down barriers such as projects for kabbadi, dhol (Punjabi) drum workshops and steel pan workshops with young people having the opportunity to take part in the Northampton Carnival, Diwali and other community events including the youth festival (itself a Money 4 Youth project) in Abington Park on 30 June. Leaflets were circulated regarding a number of Money 4 Youth projects. L. Ambrose advised that under the Money 4 Youth scheme the Youth Forum had to prioritise continuing projects to help them become established and reminded that it would be shortlisting ideas to be looked at for new projects for 2007-8 financial year on 31 March 2007 and encouraged anyone who knew young people with ideas to send them in by that date if possible.

J Campbell referred to an issue under Information Exchange at the last meeting where R Begum was to bring a breakdown on BME Police Staff in terms of ranking etc to a meeting of this group for information.

**ACTION L** Ambrose to liaise with R Begum with regard to obtaining this information.

## **5. NORTHAMPTON TRAVELLERS ACTION GROUP - OVERVIEW OF ROLE AND WORK OF THE GROUP**

Val Dumbleton from the Northampton Travellers Action Group had been invited to this meeting to give an overview on the work and role of the group. She circulated a note listing the aims of the Gypsy and Traveller Group and the action group's objectives for the period November 2005 to November 2010. She stated that the Northampton Travellers Action Group had been set up towards the end of 2005. The group had experienced its share of teething problems but there was now pretty much a balance of 50% Irish travellers and 50% Romany. She briefly explained the way the group operated and the fact that the meetings normally followed the same format. The first meeting of the Action Group had been set up in August 2005 at Maple House which was essentially a health group, Maple House being a health practice where travellers were permanently registered. However parking at Maple House was very difficult and therefore the meetings were subsequently moved to a venue in Thorplands. The Action Group had monthly meetings and at this point she referred to the aims of the group, copies of which had been circulated. These aims were essentially to increase awareness of children and young people on health issues, make surgery more traveller friendly, provide training for volunteers, become a consultative group, produce health information for travellers on various topics and promote traveller/gypsy culture and heritage.

In addition the group had produced a logo and a mission statement. V Dumbleton then referred to issues with which the group were currently involved which included producing diet cards. Last year they had held a sponsored walk with proceeds going towards the baby unit at the hospital. Mark McDonnell from Northamptonshire Police worked with the Traveller Unit and attended the meetings as did Runa Begum. In addition there was a representative from the Northampton Borough Council on the group to take up any housing issues and S Silver attended in terms

of the Holocaust Memorial Day event which had this year included a young traveller in the memorial activities. It was also noted that there was a literary class up and running at the NSPCC and they would be having a stand at the International Day Against Racism event in Northampton East on 24 March. Also it was hoped that a leaflet would be produced which would be available for distribution on the stand. It was also hoped to hold a fundraising bingo session with proceeds going to a local care home. V Dumbleton stated that efforts were being made to get more travellers to attend the action group meetings and that from January this year one of the travellers chaired the meetings and one took the minutes which was a very positive step forward.

Val was thanked for her overview and then took any questions/comments from the group. One point was made that there was possibly a lack of national guidance on housing for travellers and the question asked how many gypsies and travellers were in Northampton. V Dumbleton advised that as this was not officially monitored there were no exact figures but that as a very rough guide it was in excess of 4,000 in the county.

Reference was then made to a publication Travellers Times which essentially gave news updates and articles of interest and was on the internet which L Ambrose advised could be incorporated into the forum link.

**ACTION** V.Dumbleton to provide the web url and a copy of the publication to L.Ambrose so that the forum's web pages could be updated.

Val was then thanked for her presentation.

**ACTION** V.Dumbleton agreed to keep the forum updated on the work of the Northampton Travellers Action Group.

## **6. COUNCIL FOR ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES - PRESENTATION BY M.BROWN**

It was noted that this item had been deferred from the last meeting. Murphy. Brown from the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities was introduced to the forum having been invited to make a presentation on the role of the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities in Northamptonshire. He stated that his role was that of Business Development Manager and circulated copies of his presentation. He briefly explained the infrastructure support for black and minority ethnic groups in terms of the county-wide infrastructure development. The primary focus was to enable the BME Voluntary Sector to maximise access to external funding opportunities through a range of initiatives and to provide support, leadership development and work with BME organisations to work towards building and strengthening sustainable BME community development in Northamptonshire. He stated that there had been a lot of work with ethnic minority groups in the last two years and to this end felt that the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities was now going in the right direction. A view was expressed by a forum member that the Somali community were getting a poor service and delivery from the CEMC as the organisation was not engaging with all the support organisations for that community in Northampton. M.Brown replied that CEMC stated that they had been trying to get the Somali community to become more inclusive and that it was a case of getting the various sections of the Somali community to work together as a unified body.He

expressed a willingness to continue to do this.

**ACTION** M.Brown to liaise with members of the Somali community to see if links could be improved..

V Dumbleton commented upon problems with young travellers trying to get jobs and experiencing discrimination when they gave their address as the Ecton site and wondered if the CEMC could help. Murphy stated that he would be happy to meet with these young people or to go along with them to the job centre to talk to the staff.

**ACTION** M.Brown to liaise with Val Dumbleton.

In response to the comment as to whether M.Brown considered that the CEMC was engaging with the grass roots and whether it was being done successfully he stated that what needed to be done was for the CEMC to be getting behind organisations such as local authorities working with them and getting more support for minority groups in a mainstream way.

He then touched upon work and projects with which the CEMC was currently involved ie youth festival, museums, the Bridges project etc.

In referring back to his presentation M.Brown outlined what it was hoped would be achieved by 2009 which included increased BME VCS partnership working, services more mainstreamed including more working with the councils, improvements in the sustainability of BME frontline organisations etc. He then touched upon how the CEMC recruited volunteers and the importance of volunteer recruitment to the organisation.

M.Brown was then thanked for his presentation.

## **7. FORUM ANNUAL WORK PLAN**

It was agreed as this was the last meeting before the elections in May and there was the possibility of the membership of the group changing in terms of the Borough Council that discussion of this item take place at the next meeting of this group after the elections. However as the refugee week was an outstanding issue from the work plan it was agreed that this be continued with and the project taken forward after Easter. It was also agreed that items for the agenda for the next meeting include looking back at what the forum had considered in 2006-7 and reflecting on any outstanding issues the forum wanted to pick up in its work plan for the remainder of 2007. Particular issues noted to be of interest include Achievements regarding the BME young people in Schools and BME Police Staff Statistics.

**ACTION** L.Ambrose to go through past minutes and prepare a brief report for the next meeting including liaison with past speakers to seek updates on issues they had discussed with the forum.

## **8. INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

Alice Arden, Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer for Northampton Borough Council then introduced herself to the group and circulated a note on the BME Housing Strategy 2007 – 2011. She stated that she had been noting the various

points made in terms of BME Housing throughout the meeting. She stated that she worked in the Housing Strategy Team and that it was currently producing a BME Housing Strategy.

A.Arden asked the forum to help her with identifying issues and information to help her prepare the document and explained that what she had circulated was an initial draft as a guide. V Dumbleton commented that back in the 1990's there had been a BME Housing Strategy Forum and that M Spencer might still have details of this and that as she was involved she might still have some details and would let Alice have any documentation that she might still have available. She hoped that Alice might be able to make use of the work and use it in moving things forward.

A Arden noted that forum members may want to pass on comments after the meeting and asked that any comments, observations etc be conveyed to her so that they could be taken into consideration in the preparation of the strategy. Her e mail is [aarden@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:aarden@northampton.gov.uk) or tel 01604 837837.

M Felix advised that the Race Equality Council Office had now moved to 117 Kettering Road.

M.Felix also advised that he had resigned as Chair of Race Action Northampton and there would be an election for a new Chair and Vice Chair the following month.

V Dumbleton then referred to the issue of the missing traveller in Northampton which had recently been in the local and national news and stated that there was a poster and a Crimestoppers telephone number in terms of any information regarding this.

J Patel then advised of an event that the organisation were putting on which included a dance display at Weston Favell Shopping Centre.

## **9. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Dealt with under Forum workplan.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that this would be confirmed after the elections.

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm