

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE'S FORUM

Monday, 8 January 2007

PRESENT:

Councillor Palethorpe (Chair)	
A.Bewers	NLGBA
Dennis	Individual
Shaun	“
L.Jepson	Hate Crimes Unit
G.Owens	NBC
Y.Faulkner	“
L.Ambrose	“

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Sergeant Paul Colhoun.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED)

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2006, copies of which had been circulated, were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

At this juncture Yvonne Faulkner and Gary Owens, from the Borough Council's Housing Strategy Team, were introduced to the meeting as they had been invited to attend to speak on the Housing Strategy. G Owens stated that the Housing Strategy was now on the Borough Council's website and that they had been invited to the meeting to go through the main points of the Strategy. It was noted that the closing date for consultation was 26 January and that it would be submitted to Cabinet for approval in March. He then made his presentation on the Strategy, copies of which were circulated. He went through the consultation document, highlighting various aspects accordingly. He stated that there were five key priorities that had been brought out as part of the Strategy and added that any comments on the Strategy as part of the consultation process could be sent via email or by post. The five key priorities were to increase the supply of affordable housing, create sustainable communities, improve the housing service, provide support to the most vulnerable people and meet the Decent Homes Standard. The objectives of the Strategy were also highlighted, namely that they should SMART, ie specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Each strategic priority would

have objectives as part of their delivery. In terms of taking the Strategy forward following the consultation process a draft would be submitted to the Project Board and Steering Group and then the final draft would be submitted to the Borough Council's Cabinet which, having been agreed, would be submitted to GOEM.

The Group then discussed the consultation paper generally and Andrew commented that, under the objective summary, one of the priorities was to provide support to the most vulnerable people and that it would be nice to see LGB people identified in this category, ie as vulnerable, particularly young LGB people. Reference was then made to the Supporting People Strategy and how this could be linked in, and possibly assist, in terms of this Strategy. It was agreed that this Group would wish to pass on its comments as part of the consultation process on the Housing Strategy, the comments made in terms of LGB young people being considered under the aspects of support for vulnerable people.

Yvonne and Gary were thanked for the presentation on the Housing Strategy.

4. HIV POLICY UPDATE - H.CRABTREE CORPORATE MANAGER HUMAN RESOURCES TO PRESENT

H Crabtree, Corporate Manager Human Resources, was present to speak to this item. He circulated a document entitled Northampton Borough Council HIV Policy Employment, which he stressed was a draft policy and the way forward to look at HIV and employment in its entirety, and stated it was before this Group for its views and comments accordingly. He stated that the question on the occupational health questionnaire had been changed and that the Borough Council had recently agreed a new Diversity and Equality Policy and that had been used as the basis of the HIV policy on employment. Also Manchester's and the Terence Higgins Trust's policies had been used to assist in the production of the Borough Council's Policy. He added that no job applicant was required to take an HIV test. Furthermore the draft Policy stressed confidentiality and the Borough Council did not see the occupational health questionnaire. It was noted that pension benefits were not related to HIV status. He commented that the Policy had been submitted to this Forum prior to going to any other group.

Andrew stated that he was still disappointed in relation to the actual question regarding HIV and he still failed to understand why it was actually necessary to need to ask about HIV. He stated that a person diagnosed in 2006 with HIV was able to live a normal lifespan and therefore why was there the need to ask the question. He also had an issue in terms of how Medigold dealt with the information it received. He expressed the view that there was a lack of clarity on how or why Medigold would divulge the information on HIV. L Ambrose reminded the Forum that T Welsh had also expressed concerns that some information on the form might be forwarded to the applicant's GP. H Crabtree stated that the question had remained on the form until such time as this Group was able to discuss the matter and commented that if the question were to remain on the form then the Council would be prepared to add in some sort of caveat giving some reassurance that confidentiality would be strictly observed. He stated that he was assured, having discussed the matter with Medigold, that confidentiality was maintained. Therefore it was down to whether the

question should be in or not. Andrew commented that if there was an issue that had arisen out of the HIV status then that could be identified as the issue, rather than the HIV itself. and that was the road that he would want to go down. He added that there were also one or two issues about the language on the form that needed to be given more thought. H Crabtree agreed that he would await further feedback from Andrew and then produce a further draft and that in the interim he would give further thought to the symptoms of HIV rather than the HIV status itself. It was noted that the Disabled Peoples Forum had also questioned the way the Medigold pre-employment health questionnaire had been worded in part. For example, question 41 rather than saying, "Is there anything else you should declare?" could be worded to say, "Is there anything else you might like to tell us?" thus making the form more user friendly. The Group welcomed the fact that there was now a positive move towards getting an HIV employment policy and it was agreed that the Group take this away to consider and that any further comments on the draft be passed to L Ambrose by the end of this month so that the comments could be passed on for consideration prior to compilation of the final draft accordingly.

5. WEDDINGS AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS FAIRS

L Ambrose stated that she was still getting positive feedback from the participants of the last Weddings and Civil Partnerships Fair that had been held at The Guildhall and as such it had been decided to make this an annual event. The next one would be held on 3 November 2007 between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. It was also suggested that a Weddings and Civil Partnerships Fair would be held on 24 February and the Women's Forum had also indicated that they would like to support this event. The Group concurred that a Weddings and Civil Partnership Fairs event should take place on 24 February and that it would be a similar format to the one held previously.

6. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL EVENT - UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that the Holocaust Memorial Day was 27 January, which was a Saturday, and that there would be a lunchtime flower-laying ceremony at midday at The Guildhall. In the evening, commencing at 7:00 pm, there would be songs from around the world, dance displays, speakers, etc. Also a series of other events were being organised to mark the event.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

L Jepson, from the Hate Crimes Unit, stated that officers were still holding surgeries at the Boston Clipper on a Wednesday as mentioned at the last meeting.

L Ambrose stated that in terms of the Money for Youth Initiative, there was a further £120,000 for the period April 2007 to March 2008 and they were now looking for ideas from young people for that period. Therefore if anyone knew of any young person with an idea, she urged them to send it in. This applied to 13-19 year olds. She added that 176 ideas had been sent in so far. Forms were available on the Borough Council's website or they could contact L Ambrose.

A Brewers asked if he could be given a copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy and he also asked for information on the monitoring of performance management data. He also asked whether it could be ascertained whether the PCT had taken on board this Group's comments in terms of the eligibility criteria on IVF treatment as discussed at the last meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 14 March 2007.

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