

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

RACE EQUALITY FORUM

Wednesday, 28 November 2007

PRESENT: Councillor Collins (Chair);
Mark Farmer Overview and Scrutiny Officer, NBC
C & S Owusu-Akuffo Divine Prayer Society
C V Mistry Vishwa Hindu Parishad/Hindu Welfare Organisation
DS P Colhoun Police Hate Crimes Unit
J Patel Patel Samaj, Northampton

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Lindsey Ambrose, Val Dumbleton and Neelam Aggarwal.

2. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Collins welcomed all present and introduced Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Mark Farmer, who was standing in for Lindsey Ambrose.

3. MINUTES

Subject to verification with Morcea Walker about the term 'white Irish', the minutes were agreed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

Item 3(a) – Equalities Standard

M Farmer reported that the new Chief Executive of the Borough Council was keen to progress through the Equalities Standard levels and had revived the Corporate Equalities Steering Group with himself as the lead and membership including Corporate Directors, Corporate Managers and Operational Managers. A single document describing the Council's equalities scheme was being produced and was due to go out for consultation from 3rd December 2007. It was agreed that the document should be widely circulated to all Forum members.

Action: L Ambrose to send the Council's Equalities Scheme document to all Forum members along with an accompanying explanatory letter.

5. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL AND ANNE FRANK AMBASSADORS

M Farmer informed the meeting that a survivor of atrocities in Uganda would be speaking at the Holocaust Memorial event at the Guildhall on 27th January. The Northants Black History Association was also to be represented and other individuals or organisations wishing to take part were invited to contact L Ambrose (01604 837566 lambrose@northampton.gov.uk)

Action: L Ambrose to produce a basic flyer to be circulated to all Forum members to advertise the event.

6. WORKING INCLUSIVELY WITH FAITH COMMUNITIES

Councillor Collins stressed the importance of the Council creating a better understanding of issues relating to religion, faith and race and of establishing a means of access for people into the Council. To this end, the Administration was in the process of electing a Faith Champion from amongst its members. Following on from a recent Faith Forum meeting attended by V Mistry and L Ambrose, the Race Equality Forum members were asked to consider whether they felt that the title of the Forum needed to be reviewed as it may imply

the exclusion of some faith groups who believed that there was only one race: the human race. V Mistry felt it was important to retain the separate identities of the Faith and Race Forums as they supported different needs.

After discussion it was agreed that it would be better to continue with the existing structure, as the Council did not have the resources to establish an additional forum. However, investigations would continue as to how best to integrate Faith Communities and give them a more direct route into the council structures and a voice in council policy across the town.

7. HATE CRIMES IN NORTHAMPTON - WEST NORTHANTS HATE INCIDENTS FORUM

M Farmer explained about a new form that was available for the reporting of hate crimes. Samples could be downloaded from the Borough Council's website at: http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=1311&documentID=23#navbox. He requested that members carefully study the form and pass back their comments to L Ambrose. He then went on to describe the new Northamptonshire West Hate Incident Forum on which the Borough Council representatives were Simone Wade (Governance and Policy Manager), Nickie McKenzie (from Housing and with an active role in dealing with hate incidents relating to council tenants) and L Ambrose (in her role of working with communities and supporting community cohesion, as well as forums).

P Colhoun then circulated a sheet of statistics comparing the figures for reported hate crime incidents for April to October 2006 with April to October 2007 in the Northamptonshire West district. He commented that the majority of incidents had occurred in the Northampton area. The total number of reported incidents had increased by 58, with most of the increase being non-crime, for example, harassment by verbal abuse, name calling, racist text messages and low level intimidating behaviour. Criminal incidents would include public order offences such as threatening behaviour, criminal damage and assault. He felt that the increased figures showed a positive trend and demonstrated victims' increased confidence in the Police's ability to support them and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

He explained that the Northampton West unit worked with five dedicated Police Officers who also worked with other agencies to improve the victims' situations and, if necessary, take Police action. He gave an example of the Council's Housing Office, who might deal with tenancy issues or possible eviction in extreme cases.

There followed discussion as to the accuracy of the figures and the difficulty in classifying whether the number of incidents had in fact risen or if the figures just reflected an increase in reporting. There was also concern that the figures did not quantify crimes against minority groups that were not of a racist nature. P Colhoun was asked to request more in-depth figures from the Police analysts.

Action: More detailed analysis of hate crime incident reporting statistics to be produced at a future meeting.

8. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

(1) Faith Festivals

V Mistry reported on the success of the recent Ramadan festival, celebrated at the St George Campus of the University of Northampton and supported by members of the Faith Forum as well as a large number of students. There had also been good participation by a variety of communities at the Divali celebrations held in the town centre.

Councillor Collins asked that those responsible for these events be told of the Council's appreciation of the efforts that had gone into their organisation.

(2) Money for Youth

The scheme was due to continue until 2011 through the Youth Forum and ideas for projects were being submitted up until the end of November. The Youth Forum had undertaken a number of initiatives involving a variety of different community groups, including the introduction of kabaddi at Kingsthorpe Community College. The work of the Forum had been recognised nationally as an example of excellence especially in relation to the funding of projects for BME, faith and disabled groups.

(3) Shopping Event

A Shopmobility event was planned for 2nd December and disabled people would be assisted with their Christmas shopping.

(4) Polish Events

A Polish Market was due to visit the town from 14 – 16 December. On 16th December, there was to be an informal drop-in at Learning Today, Lorne Road. There was to be information about a number of NBC services.

(5) Children and Young People's Partnership Consultation

M Farmer explained that the CYPP Board comprised a group of service managers who made top level decisions about keeping children and young people safe, healthy, youth activities and achievement in school. Having decided it might be good to have their work routinely informed by the children and young people, a consultation had been instigated to ask children and young people if they agreed. Open till 7 January, the consultation could be completed or downloaded on-line on Northamptonshire County Council's web-site: <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/child/CYPP/stakeholders.htm>. Youth Forum members, L Ambrose and Morcea Walker had taken forms to a number of supplementary schools (schools enabling young people from ethnic minorities to learn their heritage and their family's mother tongue) Forms were also being sent to all local schools. Where children and young people wanted to become involved, elections for places from schools and community groups would take place from autumn 2007. Results of the consultation were expected to be published in spring 2008.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

10. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

It had been suggested previously that a representative from the Race Equality Council be invited to address the meeting – possibly Anjona Roy if the current REC structure was still operational.

Action: M Farmer to research the current and proposed structure that might replace the Race Equalities Council in Northamptonshire in the light of national changes in structure.

It was requested that additional items for discussion at the next meeting be sent directly to L Ambrose or M Farmer.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 8th January 2008 in the Holding Room.

The meeting concluded at 19.35



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Reporting Form for Hate Crime

Date of incident: _____ Date reported: _____

Does this need to be acted on urgently? Yes/ no
IF NECESSARY, PLEASE CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES.

What sort of hate crime is being reported:

Racist Homophobic Disablist Faith-based Gender

Other (specify) _____

REPORTER

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Email: _____

VICTIM (if different to reporter)

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Email: _____

Is English spoken? Yes/ No What is the victim's preferred language? _____

Victim's ethnic origin

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Asian | Black | Chinese | Mixed | White | |
| Indian <input type="checkbox"/> | Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> | White/Asian <input type="checkbox"/> | British <input type="checkbox"/> | Gypsy/ traveller <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> | African <input type="checkbox"/> | South-East Asian <input type="checkbox"/> | White/Black African <input type="checkbox"/> | Irish <input type="checkbox"/> | Refugee/Asylum seeker yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Bangladeshi Somali White/Black Caribbean

Other (please specify) _____ PREFER NOT TO SAY

Victim's religion/ belief

No religion Buddhist Christian Hindu Jewish Muslim Sikh

Other _____ PREFER NOT TO SAY

Victim's sexual orientation

Bisexual Gay Heterosexual Lesbian PREFER NOT TO SAY ()

Victim's age _____ PREFER NOT TO SAY ()

Does the victim self-identify as disabled? Yes If yes, please specify type of disability

Physical disability () Learning Difficulty () Visual Impairment () Hearing Impairment ()
Mental health issues () Deaf BSL user () Long term health condition(e.g. diabetes, arthritis, HIV) ()

No PREFER NOT TO SAY

Victim's gender

Male Female Transgender PREFER NOT TO SAY

BRIEF DETAILS OF INCIDENT(S): (location, date, time, and other details where possible, such as perpetrator description)

Has something similar happened to the victim previously? Yes/ No

Is this for information only or does the victim want further action?

Information only/ further action

IF FOR FURTHER ACTION:

1. Brief details of action wanted

2. Any relevant agencies, with contact names/ numbers where known

3. Does victim consent to this form being sent to specialist victim-support agencies that participate in Northamptonshire West Hate Incidents Forum? Yes/ No

4. Does victim consent to this form being sent to statutory agencies?

a. Police Yes/ No b. Housing Yes/ No Are you a council housing tenant? Yes/No

5. Does victim/reporter consent to agencies contacting them for further action? Yes/ No

Inform victim/reporter that this form will be sent to the central collection point for action.

To be signed by the reporter:

I, _____ (name of reporter), understand that this form will be sent to the Policy Governance and Community Development at Northampton Borough Council and to other agencies if I have marked them above. I understand these details will be treated with all due respect for confidentiality.

Sign _____ Date: _____

Please send completed form to the Policy Governance and Community Development team at Northampton Borough Council, F.A.O Lindsey Cameron email: lcameron@northampton.gov.uk
Address: NBC, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE

The data provided will be kept securely by the Policy Governance and Community team at Northampton Borough Council. The data will only be disclosed to staff in the Policy Governance and Community Development team and other agencies working to tackle hate crimes with the permission of the victim/person reporting the hate crime except in special circumstances where there is a duty to share certain information (e.g. where child protection legislation requires it). The data will be kept for as long is necessary and then it will be destroyed securely.

Notes for staff helping someone to report a hate crime incident

1. You do not have to do any work on this form other than taking the report and passing it on to the Policy Governance and Community Development team (unless you have direct responsibility for this victim in some capacity).
2. Please invite the victim to fill the form in themselves if they would prefer, and show them to a space where they can do so. They can then hand the completed form back to you.
3. If the victim would prefer you to take the report, do spend an appropriate amount of time doing so. The form has been designed to be relatively quick to fill in.
4. If there are language issues, be aware that your workplace may have access to phone interpreting services such as the Community Access and Language Service CALS. You may want to familiarize yourself with how these services work, prior to a time when you may need to use them.
5. Please explain to the victim:
 - If there is serious danger to life or property, you can make an emergency call to relevant services on the victims' behalf.
 - If it is not an emergency, your role is to forward the completed form to the Policy Governance and Community Development team at Northampton Borough Council.
 - The Policy Governance and Community Development team at Northampton Borough Council will forward the form to relevant agencies for further action, or file it if no referrals are requested.
 - If the victim has requested further action, reassure them that someone from the relevant agencies should contact them within 10 working days. The referral can be speeded up if necessary, by indicating at the top of this form that it is urgent.
 - If NBC has special responsibility for this victim/ reporter (for instance, where it is a Council tenant and the victim is reporting the incident at the Housing office), please assure the victim that you will pass a copy of the form to the relevant officer internally for action. Then please ensure that you pass a copy to the relevant officer immediately, and also send the original to the Policy Governance and Community Development team at Northampton Borough Council
6. Once the form has been filled, where possible please offer the victim a copy for their records. You do not need to keep a copy but you must record the form code and time of sending the record sheet.
7. Send a copy of the form to the Policy Governance and Community Development team at Northampton Borough Council.