

## **Northampton Borough Council Northampton Disabled People's Forum**

**Friday, 30 January 2015**

**Present:** Martin De Rosario (Community Co-Chair), Vicki Rockall (NBC), Luisa Jepson (Northants Police), Keith Goodwin (Northampton Door-to-Door), Jessica Marayan (Deaf Hub CIC), David Smith (Independent), Graeme Wilson (Sport Northamptonshire), Stephanie Weldon (NAB), Interpreter, Simon Burgess (Independent), Barbara Barber (Independent), Eira Bassett (Independent), Larry Barber (Independent)

### **1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Cllr Larratt, Rashmi Shah, Jacqueline Forrest-Smith, Ann Timson and Carl Weininger.

### **2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

#### **Matters arising**

VR discussed the issue of recording that was raised at the last forum meeting. VR and AM have sought legal advice about this, and the response has been that although the forums are public meetings, they are not committee meetings, and therefore should not be recorded. If in the future, someone would like to record the forum, this will need to be agreed by the forum and a request sent in, in order for us to publicise that the meeting is going to be recorded amongst attendees. This detail will be included within the code of conduct.

A forum member asked whether AP will be allowed back to the forum, following the incidents of the last meeting. VR advised that AP will be welcome to come back to the forum, as long as she signs up to the code of conduct.

### **3. CLLR BOTTWOOD - NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET CONSULTATION**

Cllr Bottwood gave an overview of the budget.

Cllr Bottwood advised that there are no current plans to move over to private car parking.

DS asked, following the Chief Exec of Northamptonshire County Council announcing plans for NCC to change to a Commissioning based Council – how does this fit in with NBC? Cllr Bottwood explained the positive effect of Shared Services, and the savings that have been found through moving to LGSS.

DS – spoke about the Equality Duty, part of the equality act, and commented that when completing Equality Impact Assessments it is a requirement for contractors and third party bodies to have the same ethos. DS has tried to find the policy around

Procurement, and the equality and diversity policy. VR added that Procurement is shared with LGSS, and therefore it may be available on the LGSS website. **ACTION: VR to get clarity around this.** Cllr Bottwood also advised that the Procurement system under LGSS is being reviewed. Cllr Bottwood commented that he would like to see smaller local businesses contracted through the procurement processes.

Cllr Mennell spoke about the Decent Homes Standard contract work and commented that NBC should be learning lessons from the issues that have been experienced through some companies contracted out to. Cllr Mennell commented that she would like to see small local businesses contracted to do the work procured by NBC also.

LB asked whether tenders are broadcasted to the general public. Cllr Bottwood advised that the main way that tenders are put out is through Insource. Anything that is over £75,000, this will need to go through to Europe. Tenders are looked at and scored by Officers. Companies can challenge the decisions that are made, and therefore it is in the best interest of the Council to make sure the tendering process is open and transparent.

Cllr Mennell felt that savings could be made by the Council moving to a Unitary Authority and she commented on the cost of the role of the Chief Executive. Cllr Bottwood advised that shared services and a tiered structure provide significant savings.

DS commented on the Riverside Enterprise Zone tax breaks, and asked how are NBC encouraging companies to employ people with disabilities as part of the tax breaks. Cllr Bottwood explained that there are difficulties with this, as tax breaks are set by central government, and the Council can encourage, but cannot force conditions upon companies. It was explained that NBC are encouraging more companies to come to the borough, in order to widen the opportunities for employees within Northampton. DS commented that he felt NBC could be more proactive to encourage companies to employ disabled people, with the financial support they are receiving. Cllr Bottwood advised that this should be raised with the Regeneration Team. **ACTION: VR/AM to take this back to Cllr Hadland and the Regeneration Team.**

JM spoke about the lack of access to support while looking for work, such as Interpreters, to allow the person to get into work experience. Also, this is an issue for people trying to get into sports. The forum discussed this; it was felt that small organisations may not have this money to be provided interpretation all the time. There would be a need to provide this under the Equality Act, but smaller, voluntary organisations may not have the budget to provide this.

The forum discussed the accessibility of work places, and the policy which is used for this.

#### **4. LUISA JEPSON (NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE) - HATE CRIME**

LJ gave an overview of the closing of the Hate Crime Police, and the Hate Crime provision that is now in place at Northamptonshire Police.

Hate crime is a crime targeted at a person due to their race, ethnicity, faith, sexuality, gender identity or disability. Disability Hate Crime has been high profile in recent years. Within Northamptonshire County, there is an average of 78 reports of racist hate crime, 11 reports of homophobic hate crime, and 11 reports of disability hate crime a month.

LJ explained that she is visiting the forums as Northants Police know that hate crime is not always reported to the Police, and are looking to set up third party reporting centres to ensure reporting is accessible for everyone. The Councils are set up as third party reporting centres, but are looking to widen this further into communities; in places accessed by the community etc. to ensure reporting is as accessible as possible.

LJ is the Hate Crime Coordinator, which is a project based role. To report a hate crime to the Police, you can call 101 for non-emergencies and 999 for emergencies. There are also several ways for hearing impaired people to access the Police, through sign videoing etc. DS will be attending the next forum meeting to provide a wider overview of this. LJ will provide her email address if anyone would like to contact her further.

KG agreed this is something that Door to Door would be interested in. JM also agreed this is something Deaf Hub would definitely be interested in introducing this to Deaf Hub's services also. SW from NAB said this is something that would be of interest, but first must discuss with the community teams to ensure this is something they are comfortable with taking on. **ACTION: Add to action plans for the forum.**

## 6. ACTION PLANS

It was agreed that third party reporting centres would be added as an action plan, to share with the wider distribution list also.

DS commented that National Disability Awareness Week in November. VR commented that this could be a good idea to have an awareness event, raising awareness of the services in the Borough available for Disabled People.

Existing action plan - publicising of the forums, DS will speak to Chief Inspector to see if the Police will be interested in publicising.

LB suggested the borough council have a dedicated page for Disabled People to report difficulties and issues, around hate crime etc. **ACTION: VR/AM to check whether this is already available, and if not, will speak to the Community Safety Team about refreshing this.**

VR suggested tying the Awareness Week together with raising awareness about Hate Crime. **ACTION: AM to look into whether LJ would be able to support this.**

MDR suggested we set up a work shop about hate crime, as we do have a lot of time up to November.

LB commented that this should all be publicised on Radio Northampton. **ACTION: AM and VR to discuss this with Communications Team**

## **7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

GS – sporting updates.

- Wheelchair dance taster session 28<sup>th</sup> Feb, 12-3pm. Open to all. Duston Sports Centre
- 14<sup>th</sup> March – Deaf football development day. Sixfields.
- NLT update – recently had 80 members of staff on disability awareness training. Cyclone Mobility, working with stroke victims, people with MS.

SW – Abington Street now open, and a lot of the changes recommended by NAB have been implemented. Some issues still exist with some of the lamps and bollards. Also, SW felt that there is not enough signage to warn drivers of pedestrians. NAB already is contact with an officer at NBC taking on NAB's issues.

DS – Dean Eales from Disabled Go has contacted DS for a reference for their bid to the NBC Partnership grant. No guarantee that the access guide will be provided. VR commented that Disabled Go have been advised to go through the Partnership Grant, as all other VCS organisations have to go through this process for funding.

## **8. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

1. NBC Planning process
2. David Smith – Police Disability Access Services

## **9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March, 10-12pm, The Holding Room, The Guildhall

The meeting concluded at 12pm.