

Bristol Somali Forum Meeting (BSF)

Date: 03 March 2010

Time: 11.00 am – 1.00 pm

Venue: Barton Hill Settlement

Type of meeting: BSF Monthly Meeting

Chaired by: Latif Ismail

Present **BSF Management Committee**

Latif Ismail, Chair
Said Burale, Treasurer
Abdi Mohamed, Secretary

In attendance:	Full Name	Organisation/Representing
	Abdullahi Farah	Somali Resource Centre
	Omar Sabriye	Somali Resource Centre
	Liban Obsiye	Amana Education Trust
	Muna Abdi	Somali Women's Voice
	Dalmar Osman	Somali Development Group
	Ahmed Duale	Linksan
	Ahmed Abdi	Tawfiq Mosque/Barton Hill Primary
	Khalil Abdi	Somali Youth Education & Welfare Foundation
	Mohamoud Mumin	Amana Education Trust
Also present:	John Ames	Avon and Somerset Police
	Valerie R Emmott	Business Link
	Cllr Brenda P. Hugill	Councillor (Lab), Lawrence Hill Ward
	Deborah Barkham	Millpond Primary School
	Mathew Symonds	VOSCUR
	Pip Young	CAAAD, Barton Hill Settlement
	Suad Abdullahi	Migration Fund Project, BCC
	Jill Edumerds	Barton Hill Settlement
	Steve Vaughan	Avon and Somerset Police
	Charlotte Pritchard	UWE/Avon and Somerset Police
	Sally Web	Bristol Brunel Academy
	Farhan Ahmed	Ashley, Easton & Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood, BCC
	Eleanor Briggs	Connexions
	Abdul Malik	Pak Butchers/LibDem
	Jan O'Hara	May Park Primary
	Ismail Osman	NHS Bristol

Apologies: Apologies were received from:

Gill Kelly, City Academy Bristol
Hadassah Radway, EMAT/BME Advisor
Phil Cotgreave, Youth and Play
Denise Quilty, Bannerman Road Primary
Sue O'Donnell, Cllr Lib/Dem
Steve Wilmshurst, Jubilee Trust
Roger Allen, BCC Housing
Ian Quaife, BCC Community Cohesion

Minutes

1. Latif took the chair and welcomed everyone.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1. The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd February 2011 were agreed.

2.2. One amendment to “apologies”.

2.3. And one amendment to “minutes”.

2.4. Matters arising:

3. Census 2011

3.1. Abdullahi Farah (AF) stated that Somali Resource Centre will arrange workshops for the community.

3.2. Prevent Agenda Mini Census – Abdul Malik (AMK) advised that the Prevent Agenda programme had carried out a mini census on the Muslim communities. The Forum should get/request a feedback about the mini census.

3.3. Airport Group

- Steve Vaughan (SV) informed the group that Somali representatives have been found through the Forum: Muna Abdi (Somali Women's Voice) and Liban Obsiye (Amana).

4. Somali Forum: Education and Schools Engagement

4.1. Abdi Mohamed (AM) said that it is better to give a brief introduction of our education engagement programme and generally the achievement of Somali children in Bristol schools as our main guest speakers (Gill Kelly, Principal, City Academy Bristol; and Hadassah Radway, Head EMAT/BME Adviser) are not here today, sent apologies.

4.2. The Forum have started to engage schools, and relevant education providers, to respond to demand from Somali parents and carers – as well as community educators, activist/development workers, and elders – for better engagement and participation; simultaneously, to enable them remove hurdles to their children's advancement.

4.3. Education is top of the agenda of community concern because Somali parents believe that they could only realise their aspirations for their children through education. Although we (the Forum) fully acknowledge this on the one hand, we equally recognise the challenges faced by schools – both primary and secondary schools – on the other. Therefore, the Forum's education engagement programme aims to address the above mentioned issues – relevantly though – through:

- **Constructive dialogue** – developing relationships and helping schools overcome challenges and/or obstacles to empowering parents and communities actively involve school activities and contribute to improving outcomes for children; and

- **Community contribution** – enabling schools to explore and take advantage of the wealth of talent, experience and resources available within the community.

- 4.4.** Since January 2011 the Forum have contacted and arranged meetings with schools which have a high percentage of Somali pupil population. These include City Academy Bristol, Bannerman Road Primary, Easton Primary, May Park Primary, Mill Pond Primary, etc, and we will meet others as well. We are also keen, committed to build positive relationships with all schools in the city, even those we had difficulties with or have had few obstacles to arranging a meeting such as Fairfield High School.
- 4.5.** Most of the schools that we have visited said that they have good relationships with parents and communities. Moreover, they acknowledge the aspirations and determination of Somali parents, and pupils.
- 4.6.** But it is also worth mentioning that each of the schools has some positive stories and good practices that they can share with not only among themselves but with the community too. For example, May Park's behaviour system, Bannerman Road's and Millpond's energy, enthusiasm and resolve to overcome current challenges, White Hall's achievement records, too many to mention.
- 4.7.** Intercultural communications and cultural awareness, however, remains one of the biggest challenges facing the schools. The Forum must therefore address these issues (cultural competency) both on strategic levels and on ground levels – both in schools and out of schools.
- 4.8.** In addition to the above mentioned schools, the Forum has established links with Barton Hill Primary School and Children's Centre and Bristol Brunel Academy (BBA). Representatives of both schools have not only participated previous Forum meetings, but they also delivered presentations and discussed about the work of their schools and how they support children and work with all communities. There are good case studies to share with the community and generally in the city. But then again, BBA's 20% improvement (BCC 2010) on 2009 results is commendable.
- 4.9.** In relation to achievement and educational progress, available data shows that the attainment of Somali pupils is improving quickly although they are still well behind. According to the provisional school examination and test results 2010 report (BCC, December 2010) :
- **5A*-C (including English and Maths):** The second lowest attaining group is Somali (26.8%) despite 11.8% improvement; and
 - **5A*-C:** The lowest attaining group is Somali (57.1%) despite 18.7% improvement.

Further details or the full report can be found:

http://www.bristol.gov.uk/item/wrap/Council/committee/2010/sc/sc006/1213_11.pdf

- 4.10.** All children, nevertheless, can improve attainment, achieve full personal potential and realise their aspirations if they receive appropriate educational support and guidance, feel safe, included and valued – regardless to their background.
- 4.11.** The following key notes were noted in the ensuing discussion:
- Suad Abdullahi (SA) advised that the aim of EMAT (Ethnic Minority Achievement Team) is to meet the needs of EAL (English as Additional Language). The team is under review and there is a lot of change nationally. However, they are focusing FSM (Free School Meals) rather than BME.
 - SA worked with Hadassah Radway to recruit bilingual teaching assistants. The idea is to address the needs of all pupils.
 - Ethnicity recording does not show the full picture as some Somali pupils are under the Black African.
- 4.12.** Deborah Barkham (DB), SENCO at Millpond Primary, explained the importance of identifying the needs of children; identifying the needs of Somali children. Parental engagement is crucial, but allowing children attend Early Years Setting is vital too.
- 4.13.** Millpond is part of the 4 Schools Project (others being Cabot, Bannerman Road and Glenfrome). We use highly trained teachers to teach reading; whole school approach to reading. Children must develop their reading skills in relation to their age.
- Parents need to read with their children. If they can't, they must get help.
 - We have had difficulties with recruiting Somali Teaching Assistant(s).
 - We are committed to improve the cultural competency of our teachers.
- 4.14.** Cllr Brenda Hugill (Cllr BH) stated that Millpond has been promised for a new school in 2008: where is the money gone?
- 4.15.** Ahmed Abdi (AA), Somali Achievement Manager at Barton Hill Primary, advised that if schools are open and engaging the community, then the children will achieve.
- The best achievers in Barton Hill Primary are Somalis. And we are considering why other groups are not achieving.
 - Working together will improve children's achievement. However, teacher expectation is very low. This must be addressed appropriately.

- 4.16.** Valerie Emmott (VE) stressed the mismatch between available information and what has been translated into Somali. As a result, only 4 Somalis were present at a recent cultural diversity group meeting at Cottom.
- 4.17.** Mumin added that Somalis need to link up with day-to-day activities at schools – as well as general community activities. And promoting the diverse cultural needs of all pupils is very important, imperative.
- 4.18.** Farhan Ahmed advised the Somali Forum representatives must always attend the Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) Forum(S) as issues go back to the NP delivery team. And Jon Ames reinforced this message: “If you want your voice to be heard, you must come to the NP forums.”
- 4.19.** Cllr BH advised the importance of education. It’s very important that our young people feel valued; conversely, it’s very sad that BME pupils are low achievers. Young people must be supported; they need one-to-one support. Hence, funding must be provided. The funding for the 4 Schools Project has been agreed till next year.
- 4.20. May Park Primary** – Jan O’Hara (JO’H), Head Teacher, advised that 40% of the school are Somali. The school has 19 different groups, and with 34 different languages.
- Somalis have high aspirations.
 - If pupils stay with us for the whole or most of their primary education, we guarantee they will be top 5% nationally in Maths and top 10% nationally in English by the end of year 6.
 - We inform parents through the school newsletter to enable them understand targets and levels, and the importance of making sure that children do their homework.
 - We have 3 Somali governors at the school.
- 4.21.** Liban Obsiye underlined the role of the community language teachers. And the need to work together – schools and parents must work together, else children will suffer. Schools must also welcome external service so as to enable our children achieve best.
- 4.22.** Abdul Malik advised that school-parent engagement is very crucial. The community must also help the schools. For instance, Bannerman Road Primary and City Academy Bristol need help. These two schools also need Somali representation; they should increase participation. However, we should acknowledge the extra effort made by Somali parents at the City Academy (and generally in the city).

4.23. Omar Sabriye said that as a community we must concentrate parental engagement and promote our success. But homework supervision is missing and we need to address this.

4.24. Dalmar Osman made aware that they work with schools such as Cottom. Worked with 12 parents in there and identified the gaps. This helped us improve the parental engagement. We also provide cultural training for education workers.

4.25. Latif Ismail (LI) noted the following (main) points from the discussion:

- **Schools** – it is imperative that parents and communities to work with schools. Equally, the schools must work with the parents, communities and external agencies.
- **Governors** – appropriate guidance must be provided and received to all (the school, community, parents, teachers, etc).
- **Somali Teachers** – the lack of Somali Qualified Teachers in schools is of serious concern. The Forum, together with relevant organisations, must address the issue.
- **Ethnicity** – raise awareness about ethnicity related issues as some Somali pupils are under different categories such Black African instead of Black Somali.
- **Engage** schools that are not currently engaging. Also celebrate success and cultural diversity.
- **Funding** is needed for Somali-led organisations, whether is for supplementary schools, youth organisations, education providers, etc.
- AM is leading the Forum's **education sub-group**.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Continue having constructive dialogue with schools and engage schools that are not currently engaging.	Abdi Mohamed	ASAP
Establish the forum's Education Task Group.	Abdi Mohamed	Before next meeting
Address the lack of Qualified Somali Teachers to CYPS and to the local authorities.	Management Committee	TBA
Raise awareness about the lack of funding for Somali-led organisations; promote fair access to resources.	Management Committee	ASAP
Improve the positive engagement of Somali children and their families – both within the mainstream society and within BME groups.	Management Committee	ASAP

5. VOSCUR – Mathew Symonds (MS) informed the group that VOSCUR has been commissioned to deliver the voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructure

support service. We help the voluntary and community groups have a strong voice. We also work across Bristol, both small and large organisations. We are going to create a steering group for smaller groups and VCS. Consultations will take place between April to July.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Send more details of how can we involve this + relevant contact details.	Mathew Symonds	Before next meeting

- 5.1.** LI said that VOSCUR did not serve the needs of the Somalis. Since you are now the only player in town, I hope this will be addressed accordingly. AA also put emphasis on this by clearly stating that Somali organisations have had less support from VOSCUR. So what has changed now?
- 5.2.** AMK, in addition to the above statements, highlighted the need to do consultations with the Somalis, exclusively though to address these issues.

6. AOB

- 6.1.** VE advised that Business Link will be closed, stop providing services, in November. Therefore, through the Forum, how we can get the free business support to the community?
- 6.2.** SGT Jon Ames informed the group that he is leaving Barton Hill for Hillfields. But Andy Welton is coming in Barton Hill instead. JA also said that he love to come down and support the Forum still.
- 6.3.** Abdul Malik (AMK) advised that he is doing some work with the youth, who are hanging about in Stapleton Road. He is offering work experience/apprenticeship for young people at Pak Butchers. But he needs to partner this with the Forum.
- 6.4.** AMK announced that he is standing for Lawrence Hill Councillor for the LibDem.
- 6.5.** Steve Vaughn advised that Avon and Somerset Police developed research partnerships with Bristol University and the UWE. They are looking how violent extremism has been dealt with? They also need to understand engagement.
- 6.6.** Charlotte Pritchard, student at the UWE, said that she is researching (in relation 6.5) community and identity – living in Britain and how recent events affected you?
- 6.7.** Pip Young made aware that she is a new employee at CAAD and she is responsible for hiring diverse volunteers that can work at the centre, and engaging more volunteers due to the cuts. She also stressed that she is very keen to have Somali volunteers.
- 6.8.** Khalil Abdi stated that SYEWF needs a child care training provider or a trainer. They have the resources to deliver this.

Date of Next Meeting: **Date:** 7th April 2011 **Time:** 11.00 am to 1.00 pm

Venue: Barton Hill Settlement, 41-43 Ducie Road,
Lawrence Hill, Bristol BS1 5TR