

Bristol Somali Forum Meeting (BSF)

Date: 20 May 2010

Time: 11.00 am – 1.00 pm

Venue: Barton Hill Settlement

Type of meeting: BSF monthly meeting

Hosted by: Somali Resource Centre

Chaired by: Latif Ismail

Present

BSF Management Committee

Latif Ismail, Chair
Dheeho Yusuf, Deputy Chair
Said Burale, Treasurer
Abdi Mohamed, Secretary

In attendance:

Full Name

Organisation/Representing

Abdullahi Farah	Somali Resource Centre
Khalil Abdi	Somali youth Education & Welfare Foundation
Dalmar Osman	Somali Development Group
Nasir Hassan	Community Action Network
Omar Sabriye	Community Elder
Ibrahim Ali	Towfiq Mosque & Community Centre
AbdiHakim Asir	Towfiq Mosque & Community Centre
Khalif AbdiRahman	Somali Resource Centre/Towfiq Mosque
Khalif Nur	Amana

Also present:

Ben Barker	Thriving Neighbourhoods Board
Roger Allen	BCC Housing
Farzana Saker	FaithNet South West
Kalsoon Bashiir	BCC Building the Bridge
Lynn Parfitt	BCC Community Cohesion
Arlene Owen	Avon and Somerset Police
Steve Vaughan	Avon and Somerset Police
Jimmy Taylor	BCC Youth and Play
Joanne Preece	BCC (Student)
Ian Quaife	BCC Community Cohesion
Shabana Kausar	BCC Community Cohesion
Anne James	BCC Equality & Community Cohesion
Liban Obsiye	Observer
Paul Smith	Observer
Zahra Mohamoud	Observer/Hillfields Somali Women Group
Zainab	Observer/Hillfields Somali Women Group
Fadumo	Observer/Hillfields Somali Women Group
Amal	Observer/Hillfields Somali Women Group

Apologies: Apologies were received from:

Mohamed Ismail
Farhan Ahmed

Mukhtar Abdi
Debbie Clough

Minutes

1 Latif Ismail took the chair and welcomed everyone.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

2.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd April were agreed.

2.2 Matters arising:

2.2.1 Financial support – Any financial support from Bristol City Council would go through the council's funding process.

2.2.2 Recent Local and National Elections – participants said that:

- Somalis had been encouraged to vote through targeted campaigns;
- Somali-led organisations, community workers and activists, politicians, etc., had enabled many Somalis to understand the electoral process and how it works;
- The message had got across and the point had been made on the radio (BCfm Somali show), streets, shops, etc.;
- On the election day, many Somalis had been seen voting – including both young and old people, men, women, even mothers with children;
- Generally, the elections had produced positive results for the community and it was very encouraging to hear that 7 members of the Somali communities in London became councillors and one in Manchester;
- Bristol Somali community have their eyes on next year's local elections.

3 BSF Update

3.1 Dheeho Yusuf, BSF Deputy Chair, informed the group that the following had been discussed in the Forum management meeting on 6 May 2010:

- **Office** – the Forum needs an office (a base) and a venue for meetings.
- **Finance** – to cover the immediate needs of the Forum such as the running cost.
- **Fundraising** – Sweat Training secured £500 for the Forum. The money had been transferred to LinkSan's account as the Forum did not have a bank account at the time. The Forum's own bank

account, however, was being opened (under process) and the Treasurer had updated us in the last Forum meeting.

- **Publicity** – Publicity leaflets were being prepared by Sweet Training. They will also meet the cost of the leaflets.
- **Communication strategies** – emails were exchanged with Steve Vaughan who agreed to help us with this.

4. Neighbourhood Partnerships (NP)

4.1 Ben Barker, Chair of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Board, said that the Neighbourhood Partnership was about to re-engaging people and enabling them to influence decision. Many people have been turned off by the political system. Only 20 – 25% of the local population thought they could influence decision. And it's also worth noting that:

- The local Neighbourhood Partnership is divided into 14 NPs (with units of twos).
- The NP works in collaboration with other agencies such as the Police, Health Community, etc.
- There are two key focuses on the local level:
 1. **Collaboration** – improving the way agencies work together.
 2. **Engagement** – engage with local people, both old and new communities.

4.2 The following points were noted in the ensuing discussions:

- The Forum can enable Somalis and their representatives to affiliate into the different groups.
- Participate in and work with the existing civic partnerships.
- Somali Resource Centre, for example, had been participating in the NP. And went to Leicester with other members of the local NP to learn from or understand what works.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Link Somali-led organisations to their local Neighbourhood Partnerships	Forum Management	To be agreed

5. Thriving Neighbourhoods Board (TNB)

5.1 Ben Barker explained that the Thriving Neighbourhoods Board is one of the five boards of the Bristol Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership, which has coordinated activities for local agencies or organisations from business,

the public sector, community, voluntary sector, and higher and further education to deal with problems appropriately.

5.2 Other 4 boards of the Bristol Partnership are:

- Safer Bristol Board
- Bristol and Children and Young People's Trust Board
- Prosperous and Ambitious Board
- Health and Wellbeing Board

5.3 TNB deals with different issues – such as health, crime, employment, etc. – in different areas of the city. Therefore, solutions are different.

5.4 Each area has a major issue. For example, people feel that Stockwood is the least involved area despite being the whitest area of Bristol.

5.5 Below are the key points discussed following Ben's brief report:

- The Somali Forum is interested in to become a board member.
- Joint event, TNP and BSF together, to enable the Somali community involve in decision making.
- Membership of the Bristol Partnership and its five theme boards currently only recognises Voscur and BDA as voluntary sector representatives.
- TNB meetings are open so observers can attend.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
BSF to become a board member; to have a Formalised membership	BSF Management	To be agreed

6. Prevent

6.1 Kalsoom Bashiir reported that the aim of the Building the Bridge Partnership was to prevent extremism and radicalisation, and also prevent vulnerable individuals.

6.2 Generally, the prevent strategy worked in Bristol and produced positive outcomes for the Muslim community.

6.3 Young people feel uneasy with the police. Therefore, they could work with a community board.

6.4 Supporting young people to strategically prevent terrorism, radicalisation, vulnerability, etc., through:

- Group of community advisory board.
- Talking to Mosques.
- Improving relationship with non-Muslim community.

- Providing advice and guidance while safeguarding individual rights.
- Referrals:
 - Working with organisations and agencies.
 - More serious issues need to be referred to the Police.

6.5 The following key points were mentioned in the ensuing discussion:

- Prevent is very important and can be used to prevent school exclusions.
- Somali-led organisation did badly in terms of funding while many small projects have been funded.
- The prevent strategy has received negative image in the media and the Communities and Local Government Select Committee has criticised recently (in a report released on 16th March 2010).

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Identify Somali-led organisations that are interested in receiving/applying funding	Latif & Abdi	ASAP

7. Tenant participation

7.1 Roger Allen said that Bristol City Council had requirements to respond to and deal with arising issues/needs. The local authority had committed to provide tailor services for specific needs. The following services were on offer:

- **Dealing with concern(s) about under take-up of benefit entitlement** – Housing Benefit and Council tax.
- **Access to council services** – Translations and Interpretations; and practical training on self-service stations.
- **Outreach work** – Monthly Hot Desk at the Black Development agency, Russell Town Avenue. First Wednesday of every month, from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. No need for an appointment. Can help people to get involved or signpost to other services and provide support for complaints on-line.
- **Tenant Services Authority** – Help develop 'local' offers and carry out self assessment of services.
- **Tenant Participation Awards** – Nominations wanted by 4th June
- **Environmental Improvement Bids**
- **New Tenancy Issues** – Service user group.
- **Free CV training 27th May** 10.00 am – 12.30 pm at Tenants Resource Centre, Redcliffe Hill.
- **Tenant Management Organisation** – Leicester visit: lessons to learn.

8. Forthcoming Meetings

- 8.1 **Bristol City Council Bimonthly meetings 'Supporting the Somali Community' - 9th June**, from 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm, at the Council House. Theme of the meeting: Community Safety with Inspector Julian Moss.
- 8.2 **Meeting between the Polish and Somali community – 7th July**, from 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm, at Barton Hill Settlement.

9. Towfiq Mosque and Community Centre – Khalif AbdiRahman stated that:

- 9.1 Towfiq Mosque and Community was planned to be a place for worship as well as a community centre for Somali residents.
- 9.2 There were few problems, but it did not damage community relations.
- 9.3 The planning was its final stages and the planning permission will have happened in July, when the council's Planning Committee will have dealt with the application.
- 9.4 The mosque will have also organised this year's Annual Somali Meeting, a gathering for the whole community. Islamic scholars had been invited and the council could have addressed issues of concern and/or improved community engagement.

10. BSF – Stop Press

10.1 Said Burale – Forum memberships had been circulated to all member organisations and their representatives. The annual membership is due for renewal and the forms needed to be returned as soon as possible.

The Forum had 18 member organisations registered last year and number had increased since then, and still was growing.

10.2 Abdi Mohamed – the Forum had been asked about questions relating to an article, titled "Hell in Hillfields", published in Kontakt magazine (Spring 2010), the quarterly magazine of the BDA. The management of the Forum, therefore, had examined and discussed the content of the article in their meeting on 6th May 2010. And they had agreed that:

- The Forum had to address issues of concern (in relation to Bristol's Somali community and their representatives) independently; above all, to strengthen the voice of the community.
- The article was addressing incidents that had happened 3/4 years ago. Some of these incidents had been dealt with. The article could have created more problems for the Hillfields Somali community.
- The Forum's message was that the article did not help the community as the election campaigns were underway. It gave an opportunity for racist groups such as the BNP.

10.3 The following key points were noted then:

- There is a legal process going on between the council and the BDA.
- Racist incidents against Somalis in Hillfields had decreased, not as bad as before, although sometimes it happens at the parks.

11. AOB

11.1 **Interpreting and Translations** – Anne James, BCC Principal Equalities and Community Cohesion Officer, had requested a help with finding a Somali Interpreter and Translator; need a person with the skills. The post had been advertised twice and a suitable person had to be found yet.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
BSF to address this issue on behalf of BCC Interpreting and Translation Services	BSF Management	ASAP

Date of Next Meeting:

Date: **17th June 2010**

Time: **11.00 am to 1.00 pm**

Venue: **Barton Hill Settlement**

41-43 Ducie Road

Lawrence Hill, Bristol BS5 0AX

Future Dates					2010
July	August	September	October	November	December
15	12	09	07	04	02