

Bristol Somali Forum Meeting (BSF)

Date: 03 February 2011

Time: 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

Venue: Council House

Type of meeting: Joint meeting with BCC

Chaired by: Latif Ismail

Present **BSF Management Committee & BCC Equalities and Community Cohesion**

Latif Ismail (Chair, BSF) Gillian Douglas (Equalities, BCC)
Said Burale (Treasurer, BSF) Debbie Clough (Community Development, BCC)
Abdi Mohamed (Secretary, BSF)

In attendance: **Full Name** **Organisation/Representing**

Muna Abdi	Somali Women's Voice
Afrah Hussein	Somali Women's Voice
Sagal Aden	Somali Women's Voice
Abdullahi Farah	Somali Resource Centre
Kenadid Sharmarke	Somali Resource Centre
Mohamoud Mumin	Amana Education Trust
Mohamoud Matan	Amana Education Trust
Liban Obsiye	Amana Education Trust
Ahmed Abdi	Tawfiq Mosque

Also present:

Rose Richards	Youth and Play Service, BCC
Phil Cotgreave	Youth and Play Service, BCC
Steve Vaughan	Avon and Somerset Police
SGT Jon Ames	Avon and Somerset Police
Tom Gent	Avon and Somerset Police
Matt Lloyd	Avon and Somerset Police
Roger Allen	Housing, BCC
Valerie R Emmott	Business Link/Equality South West
Cllr Sue O'Donnell	Councillor (LibDem), Lawrence Hill Ward
Jayne Mills	Consultation, Research and Intelligence, BCC
Liban Abdi	Community Member
Mohamed Barre	Community Member
Zakariye	Community Member

Apologies: Apologies were received from:
Farhan Ahmed
Brenda Hugill
Neil Burwell

Minutes

- 1 **Welcome.** Latif took the chair and welcomed everyone.
- 2 **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising**
 - It was agreed the minutes were a true and accurate record of the previous meeting on 2nd December 2010 were agreed.
 - One amendment to "apologies".

- Roger Allen (RA) has spoken with Abdullahi Farah (AF) re developing workshops, but has not yet disseminated information, which he will do.
- Valerie Russell (VR) advised that Equality South West, together with partners, are to run an event around the skills of migrant workers. Aim is to help get people either into work or running their own business. It is hoped to put on this event sometime in the spring. Suggestion that Migrant Rights Centre be invited to become involved, in view of their expertise in dealing with various communities.
- VR concerned at low take up of benefits by BME tenants since establishment of new service point; is there any data available? RA will attempt to obtain this information. Self service access point at Barton Hill Settlement is a real success story. RA has met with Integrated Customer Service Team and more workshops will be organised. Plan to create a Somali focused CSP.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
To keep forum advised of role out of workshops and provide data around use of CSP's. This can then be discussed at next meeting.	Roger Allen	Before next meeting

- Sue O'Donnell (SO'D) expressed concern at the suggestion that 60% of children with special needs/autism were Somali. This requires further investigation. Due to be discussed at March meeting.

3 **BSF Update**

Abdi Mohamed (AM) advised:

- The Somali Forum now have a permanent base at St Agnes Lodge.
- They have been working successfully with elders, young people, on various projects and NHS on disability and mental health issues.
- The Forum have also helped Linksan and Somali Disability and Elderly Association secure a joint bid for the Somali elders' lunch club.
- The forum are also working with Bristol LINK, organising workshops for Somali men.

4 **Community Cohesion Strategy**

- Gillian Douglas (GD) advised the strategy has now been adopted by full council. VCSE Investment Strategy will now go out for consultation in next few weeks. Applications for grants will still be invited, although with reduced funds available.

- Bid for City Of Sanctuary status also endorsed. Awaiting national agreement. Launch in May. Premise is that Bristol is a welcoming city, especially for asylum seekers and refugees.
- GD's team have now moved into their new office at Brunel House.
- As from 21st February, VOSCURE will lead on providing support to VCSE sector. They too are to move into new premises in Queen Sq. GD agreed it was important that appropriate support be given across the whole sector and there would be various measures in place to monitor this. It is essential VOSCURE are aware of different barriers faced by the sector. Anyone with comments/questions can contact GD/SO'D.
- In response to query from VR, GD confirmed this information is in the public domain. VOSCURE will continue to offer usual services to sector, but may be a change of name.

5 Youth and Play Services

- Ruth Richards (Service Manager-Youth, Play & Outdoor Education) RR and Phil Cotgreave (Team Manager-East Central) PC attended to give an overview of the service. Focus is on personal and social education of young people. Details can be found on 2 websites; [HTTP://www.goplacesdothings.org.uk](http://www.goplacesdothings.org.uk) and [HTTP://www.goplacestoplay.org.uk](http://www.goplacestoplay.org.uk).
- There is a study centre in the Forest of Dean and a camp in Exmouth. Much of the work is delivered by non-council workers.
- In-house work is focused on high priority areas and LGBT, BME and Disabled young people.
- Young people are often viewed negatively and another important role of the service is to highlight the good work done by young people in the community. An event is to be held at Colston Hall on 12th February, celebrating the achievements of young people. Results of elections to UK Youth Parliament and Select Committee will also be announced.
- RR is aware of the lack of Somali youth workers. Unfortunately the council has not been recruiting for some time and it has proved difficult to find volunteer workers. Youth Services are looking for people to go onto their casual register. Volunteers will receive basic training and this is a good route into the work. The Play Service has, with the help of Amana, recruited some Somali play workers however.
- SO'D pointed out some organisations, such as Community Resolve, do employ Somali youth workers and they are doing some good work. SO'D

does accept the council need to work towards being more representative of the communities they serve.

- Debbie Clough (DB) can provide information regarding casual working and the register.
- RA agreed there were negative attitudes to young people, particularly in the media. RA mentioned the Truth about Youth project run through the Prince's Trust which aims to tackle this. There is also a feeling amongst older people that they, too, are viewed negatively and some kind of inter-generational event is planned for the summer. Young Somali people are being recognised in the council's participation awards and RA is keen to hear from anyone wishing to become involved in any projects.
- RR stressed the importance of VCSE organisations working together in order to protect the services they provide. If anyone is interested in casual youth work, PC can organise workshops to help facilitate this.
- VR would like to see a Somalian contributing to the Truth about Youth column in The Evening Post. RA is certain this would be welcomed and efforts will be made to find a suitable candidate.
- PC advised there was a Participation Team within Youth & Play Services, which is very interested in engaging with young people. Contact Zaena Barnard (Snr Youth & Community Worker).
- AM is happy with work done by RR/PC and the team. Also felt work of Neighbourhood Partnerships important and pointed to community feast that had been organised.
- Ahmed Elmi (AE) enquired about capacity at The Mill. Young people were looking for somewhere to go at the weekend, could Saturday sessions be organised. PC was willing to consider this, but there were resource issues. Stuart Smith (Snr Youth & Community Worker) was delivering introduction to youth work training. However there would need to be identifiable outcomes if such training were undertaken.
- SO'D advised the Stapleton Rd Working Group were looking at issues affecting people using, living and working on the road. The first meeting of the group would be on 21st February and youth provision could be included on agenda. Possibly the Somali Forum could be represented on group. AM expressed an interest in joining. SO'D also felt it might be useful if a meeting between the forum and working group could be organised. Penny Germon, the local area co-ordinator, has full details of group and its work.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
To circulate details of working group.	Sue O'Donnell	ASAP

- It is essential, but difficult for young Somali's to get work experience. Liban Obsiye (LO) has been in contact with both BCC and the business community in an attempt to promote work experience. It will be necessary to get something organised before May however. GD has arranged work experience for some youngsters, but such places are very limited. PC confirmed the Youth Service also takes a number of young people on work experience. AM has gotten work experience for 3 young people with the Library Service. It is sometimes difficult to know who to contact however.
- SO'D suggested Bristol Partnership could help promote work experience and apprenticeships for all communities.
- Latif Ismail (LI) suggested PC meets with a member of the forum to discuss issues. Celebrate success as well as identify problems. PC would like to see more young Somali women engage.
- LI also suggested RR attend meetings regularly, possibly every 6 months, to discuss issues around young Somali's.
- LO is engaging with business community to promote work experience. Forum to make contact with Bristol Partnership as suggested by SO'D. This is probably more a mid/long term goal.
- Anyone with ideas to feed them back through Forum.

6 **Tawfiq Mosque – new Barton Hill Mosque**

- Change of use/planning permission now granted. Local community groups, schools, churches, police and faith groups instrumental in bringing about this successful conclusion. VR worked particularly hard in this respect and should be thanked.
- Project is funded by the community and long term fund raising strategies are now being considered. It is the aim that, once finished, the mosque will become an asset for all communities in the area.
- AE was thanked for the work done in relation to this project.
- The meeting appreciated the very hard work done by all concerned often in the face of opposition from some narrow minded people. It was refreshing to see that people with genuinely held concerns were often won over when they had an opportunity to engage. It should be noted that many residents were very supportive of the project.

7 AOB

- John Ames (JA) advised a person had been arrested, in relation to the recent murder in Stapleton Road, in Spain and was to be extradited. Sup't Moss will be holding a meeting to provide an up-date and interested parties are invited to attend. AM will be kept in the loop.
- Operation Bowler has lead to more police officers on the streets in Easton. SO'D has met with 2 of these officers and has noticed an increased presence. Drug dealing in the area is being targeted. It is essential, however, that the community actively supports the police if lasting improvements are to be made.
- There are 5 volunteer Specials being trained, Matt Lloyd being one of these.
- Next Neighbourhood Forum will be held at Barton Hill Settlement on 1st March, 6:00-8:30pm.
- Jane Mills (JM) spoke about the census. There have been a good number of applications from people wishing to become collectors in the Barton Hill area. The Somali Resource Centre has been invited to apply to host one of the completion sessions being organised. These sessions are designed to assist people with the completion of census forms. Information will be provided in several languages, but the forms themselves are in English, so the completion events are very important.
- Census day is the 27th March. The Office for National Statistics will begin its publicity campaign on 21st February. Publicity bus will be in Bristol on 23rd February. Census forms will begin arriving around 7th March.
- SO'D stressed the importance of completing the census forms as this will effect funding going forward.
- JM confirmed whilst there was not a specific "Somali" box in the ethnicity section, this could be written when completing the form. Alternatively the "Black African" box could be ticked.
- Steve Vaughan (SV) advised a group was being set up at the airport to look at the issue of security screening. It would be advantageous to have Somali representation on that group. LI will take this forward and SV suggested 4/5 people are found so there is always likely to be some representation at every meeting.

Action	Responsible	Deadline
To look at finding Somali representatives for this group.	Latif Ismail	ASAP

- SV would like an indication of any interest by 11th February if possible.

- RA advised tenant participations annual conference would be held at The Council House on 5th March, 11:00am-3:00pm.

Date of Next Meeting: **Date:** 3rd March 2011 **Time:** 11.30 am to 1.30 pm

Venue: Barton Hill Settlement

41 – 43 Ducie Road

Lawrence Hill

Bristol BS5 0AX