

# CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

## BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BME) HOUSING STRATEGY 2007-2010



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**Chinese**

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**Punjabi**

“ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਭਾਗ ਦੀ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਇਸਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ/ਠਕਲ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਐਂਡਿਓ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 01509 634603 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।”

**Hindi**

“इस दस्तावेज़ के किसी भी भाग की आपकी भाषा में व्याख्या का प्रबन्ध करने के लिए या इसकी प्रतिलिपी/कापी, ब्रेल, ऑडिओ टेप पर या बड़े प्रिंट में प्राप्त करने के लिए, कृपया 01509 634603 पर फ़ोन कीजिए।”

**Gujarati**

“આ ડોક્યુમેન્ટ (દસ્તાવેજ) ના કોઈપણ વિભાગને આપની ભાષામાં સમજવા માટે વ્યવસ્થા કરવા અથવા બ્રેઇલ (ઉપસાવેલા અક્ષરો), ઓડિયો ટેપ અથવા મોટા અક્ષરોમાં કોપી મેળવવા 01509 634603 નંબર ઉપર મહેરબાની કરી ફોન કરશો.”

**Bengali**

“এই ডকুমেন্টের কোন অংশ নিয়ে আপনার নিজের ভাষায় বিস্তারিত আলোচনা করার জন্যে অথবা এর কপি ব্রেইল, অডিও টেপ বা বড় প্রিন্ট পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01509 634603 এই নম্বরে ফোন করুন।”

## FOREWORD

This BME Housing Strategy is a key element of the Council's commitment to celebrating diversity.

The Council's Housing Agenda is comprehensive and wide-ranging. The production of this strategy demonstrates a continued commitment to community engagement and partnership working in order to improve housing choice, access to and quality of housing and services for all sections of the community.

This strategy will sit alongside the Council's 'Fit For Purpose' Housing Strategy 2005-2010 "Successful, Thriving, Inclusive," as a statement of intent and as a vehicle to deliver continuous improvement within the Borough. The Strategy also supports other key documents and plans for Charnwood and builds on the work of the Charnwood Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme.

To ensure that real change is delivered the Strategy contains an Action Plan identifying a work programme covering the next four years.

A Steering Group comprising key partners will continue to ensure that the Action Plan is monitored, evaluated and developed to ensure that it continues to be relevant.

The Housing Strategy has already set out how we will improve the quality of housing and housing related services across the Borough, and this BME Housing Strategy will ensure that these improvements are relevant to all sections of the community.

This is a challenging set of actions, but I am confident that the Council and its Partner Agencies will embrace and deliver them.



Councillor Betty Newton  
Lead Member for Housing & Health

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### **The Rationale for a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy**

There is significant evidence nationally that Black or other Minority Ethnic Groups may be disadvantaged in relation to housing and also areas such as health, education, employment, economic prosperity and community development. Although this Strategy is primarily concerned with housing it has key strands, which underpin and complement initiatives in these other areas.

The Council recognises that BME groups and individuals may have particular needs in relation to housing and support services. In order to deliver housing services that meet the needs of BME groups it is essential that those needs are first identified and understood. The Strategy starts from the premise that more needs to be done to understand and address the housing needs of BME communities in Charnwood to achieve the Council's vision for housing to:

***'Deliver improved access to good quality affordable homes and related services for the people of Charnwood to support a sustainable and balanced community'***.

The need for further enquiry and investigation is illustrated by a number of statistical examples in Chapter 3 taken from existing data sources. Some of these appear to show discrepancies in housing needs between different communities without fully understanding the reasons why the discrepancies exist, or indeed whether there is any need to be concerned about them. We also do not know enough at this stage about the housing aspirations of BME communities.

Where such gaps in the Council's knowledge are evident the Strategy makes specific reference to them in the **'What we need to do'** section at the end of the relevant chapters. These in turn link to specific actions in the **Action Plan (Chapter 6)**.

The Council recognises that responding to BME needs cannot be tackled in isolation and that the development of a BME Housing Strategy is one element of a corporate approach on race equality and as part of an even wider vision set out by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This will ensure equitable access to decent, affordable, quality housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

This Strategy explains what the Council is seeking to achieve in terms of race equality in housing and support services and how it expects to achieve its goals. It is intended to be flexible and adaptable in response to evidence of the changing needs of BME communities. It requires a continuous process of developing, promoting, implementing and monitoring.

## **Definition of BME**

For the purposes of this Strategy the Council has classified 'BME' residents as all those who do not count as White-British, including Refugees and Asylum Seekers. That is to say, someone who belongs to one or other of the following ethnic categories:

- White Irish
- White Other
- White & Black Caribbean – Mixed
- White & Black African – Mixed
- White & Asian – Mixed
- Other – Mixed
- Indian – Asian or Asian British
- Pakistan Asian or Asian British
- Bangladeshi – Asian or Asian British
- Other – Asian or Asian British
- Black Caribbean – Black or Black British
- Black African – Black or Black British
- Other – Black or Black British
- Chinese – Chinese or other ethnic group
- Other Ethnic Group – Chinese or other ethnic group

This approach was taken for the 2001 Census, however previous data using the 1991 Census categories do not break ethnicity down beyond White.

## **Developing the Strategy with the Community**

The importance of consulting with service users and service providers in developing and informing this Strategy and the Action Plan is fully acknowledged. The Council engaged external consultants to assist in the consultation process through the use of Focus Groups. The draft report of the Focus Group sessions is attached as an appendix to this Strategy, and further reference to the consultation process is made in Chapter 2 of the Strategy.

## **Strategy Framework**

A dedicated BME Housing Strategy is not only essential to ensure that the Council meets its legal obligation to provide a housing service, which helps to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunities and good race relations, but will also provide a framework to ensure BME communities in Charnwood receive appropriate housing and related services and a commitment from the Council and its partners to bring about real change.

The strategy focuses on three key areas forming the basis of the chapters:

- Addressing housing needs
- Eliminating unfair discrimination and inequality
- Encouraging social inclusion

## **Strategic Aims & Objectives**

This Strategy is a three year plan, which aims to:

- Gain a greater understanding of the housing needs and aspirations of BME communities in Charnwood
- Develop strategic partnerships and joint working to address local housing needs
- Deliver quality services for all the people of Charnwood which are accessible and appropriate to all
- Eliminate discrimination and inequality in housing service provision and encourage a more inclusive society
- Promote community cohesion and social inclusion by maintaining positive working relationships and effective communications with the BME communities
- Develop an Action Plan, which is needs-driven, achievable, sustainable and affordable

These strategic aims have been developed through consultation with a range of stakeholders, including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), other service providers, voluntary and community groups and residents.

Whilst the BME Housing Strategy exists as a strategy in its own right, it also sits alongside the Council's Housing Strategy in recognition of the fact that equalities are intrinsic to all aspects of the Council's work.

### **Performance Monitoring of the Strategy**

The success of the BME Housing Strategy will depend on its implementation. Chapter 6 of the Strategy presents the Action Plan, which shows how the Council will deliver its policy objectives.

The Action Plan includes both long term and short term targets. Targets are not confined to those that can be met through the Council's role. It is important, for the success of the Strategy that the Council continues to work in partnership with RSLs, community groups and voluntary organisations to achieve these objectives.

### **Role of the BME Steering Group**

The BME Steering Group, which was set up to oversee the development of the BME Housing Strategy, will continue to play an important role in the ongoing monitoring and review of the Action Plan.

Quarterly meetings will be set up to monitor progress against actions and discuss ways to take forward some of the actions needed.

### **Reviewing the Strategy – Future Plans**

This Strategy has a life of three years, after which it will be reviewed in conjunction with the Charnwood Housing Strategy 2005-2010. The Strategy sits alongside and must be read in conjunction with the Council's Housing Strategy.

## CHAPTER 2: SHAPING THE STRATEGY, SETTING THE CONTEXT

### The BME Housing Strategy in Context

In order to develop an effective BME Housing Strategy, the Council must take into account legislation, guidance reports and good practice as well as the context of Charnwood in relation to local, sub-regional, regional and national policy.

### National Context

Several pieces of legislation, reports and good practice guidance documents require the Council to adopt a strategic approach in delivering housing services, which meet the differing needs of local communities:

- **Race Relations Act 1976**

The Race Relations Act 1976 placed various duties on housing providers to eliminate racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The Act also introduced the key components of direct and indirect discrimination and set out when it is lawful for positive action to be taken to provide services specifically for particular ethnic groups.

- **Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999)<sup>1</sup>**

The Macpherson Report following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry underlines the need for a BME Housing Strategy. The report highlighted the continued existence of endemic racism within public services. The Inquiry developed a definition of institutional racism as:

*‘the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitude and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.’*

For housing providers the report is a clear reminder that having a strategic response is important in translating policies into practice. This can only be achieved through clear lines of management and responsibility, training for employees, monitoring and evaluation of effective policies, community consultation and effective disciplinary procedures.

- **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) 2000 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001. It strengthened the Race Relations Act 1976. The RRAA is the Government’s legislative response to the Macpherson Inquiry recommendations. It extended the provisions on direct and indirect discrimination to all functions of public authorities, including central and local government. It also placed the duty to promote race equality on a wider range of public authorities and this extends to contractors of public bodies.

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<sup>1</sup> The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny

- **LGA Equality Standard Local Government (2002)**  
The Equality Standard was developed in partnership with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission. The standard provides a framework for a generic approach to implementing equality in local government. The standard became a Best Value Indicator in 2002.

Councils are required to report on whether they have adopted the standard and what level of the standard they have achieved, ranging from one to four. The Council is currently working towards Standard 3.

- **The Barker Review of Housing Supply (2004)<sup>2</sup>**  
Kate Barker's review of housing supply confirmed the need for a major change in housing supply. The Government has accepted this and has committed itself to implementing a wide ranging package of reforms. The priority is to increase housing supply and improve affordability to meet the pattern of demand across the country.

- **Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing<sup>3</sup> (2006)**

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has published its new and revised Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing. This came into effect on 1 October 2006. It replaces the 1991 Statutory Code of Practice in Rented and Non-rented Housing.

The Code makes recommendations on the practical steps that housing organisations need to take to prevent unlawful racial discrimination or harassment and to ensure equality of opportunity and good race relations in housing. Its recommendations do not have the force of law, but they will be used by tribunals and courts in considering any questions arising in proceedings brought under the Race Relations Act.

The Code covers the following aspects of housing provision: governance and the role of governing bodies, new and improved housing, sales and lettings, neighbourhood development and community cohesion, mortgage lending and insurance, tenancy and housing management, racial harassment and anti-social behaviour, contractors and procurement, and involvement of residents and tenants.

- **Community Cohesion Report – Home Office<sup>4</sup>**  
This report defines a 'cohesive community' as one where diversity is valued, but also where there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all

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<sup>2</sup> Delivering sustainability: securing our future needs Kate Barker's review of Housing Supply, March 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Commission for Racial Equality, Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing England, October 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team, Home Office, 2001

communities. The report requires local authorities to promote good race relations by:

- Creating opportunities for people from different communities to discuss common issues; and
- Consulting with all groups to involve them in service planning and policy development.

As part of the Charnwood Community Strategy a ‘Stronger Communities Sub-group’ has been set up in response to the recommendations of the Charnwood Community Cohesion report.

- **ODPM Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (2005)**<sup>5</sup>

The Government’s five year housing plan, “*Sustainable Communities: Homes for All*” and complementary plan, “*People, Places and Prosperity*”, set out a strategy to offer greater choice and opportunity in housing and revitalise neighbourhoods and deliver sustainable communities. These plans seek to ensure equal access to public and private sector housing across all communities and to improve conditions in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

### **Regional Context**

The Council’s Housing Service recognises the need to work in partnership with other agencies to adequately identify and respond to needs. With the introduction of regional and sub-regional allocation of housing resources, it will be necessary to work across local authority boundaries with agencies to meet the needs of ethnic minority communities.

The Regional Housing Strategy 2004- 2010 sets out sixteen regional policies to form the basis of decisions on investment and allocation of resources for new social housing. The Council is a member of a Group established to represent the sub-regional interests. These include the requirement to understand and address the needs and aspirations of diverse sectors of their communities. This Strategy will inform the needs assessment of BME residents within Charnwood.

The Draft Regional Plan sets out a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2026. It contains new housing provision figures by Housing Market Area (HMA) groupings, and District Council Area. It also includes targets for affordable housing and development on brownfield land and for the provision of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. An adequate supply of affordable housing is important for the performance of the economy and to promote social inclusion.

### **Sub-regional Context**

The Regional Housing Strategy and Draft Regional Plan contain policies in respect of the Region’s five sub-areas. Charnwood sits within the Three Cities Sub-area comprising Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and some adjacent areas, containing almost half the Region’s population.

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<sup>5</sup> Sustainable Communities: Homes for All, ODPM 2005

Within the Region, the Three Cities Sub-area has been provisionally designated as a 'New Growth Point' to accelerate the delivery of housing. Within Charnwood, Loughborough has been identified as one of five additional areas outside the main city centres to promote a more sustainable pattern of development.

The relatively high concentrations of Hindu communities in Thurmaston, Birstall Wanlip and Syston West wards (see page 22 of this Strategy) may be seen as a natural extension of the communities based in the Belgrave and Rushey Meads areas of Leicester. This serves to emphasise the fact that housing market dynamics do not respect local authority boundaries, and confirms the importance of working in partnership with neighbouring authorities when planning the future provision of services.

The Council will continue to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities within the sub-region to ensure the social and ethnic diversity of the population is well served and that housing plays a full part in promoting the well being of communities and supporting community cohesion.

## **Local Context**

- **Charnwood Community Strategy**

The celebration and promotion of diversity and equal opportunity for all is at the heart of the Council's Community Strategy and core values, and the development of a BME Housing Strategy will be a key vehicle in the delivery of these values through one of the major Council service areas. The core values include Customer Focus and Respecting and actively encouraging diverse communities.

Delivery of this Strategy will contribute to two main themes within the Community Strategy: People Matter – nurturing healthy, strong and accessible communities, and Partnerships Matter – strengthening already effective working partnerships.

It will also play a leading part in achieving at least three of the nine Action Areas within the Community Strategy: Reducing deprivation and inequalities in some of the most deprived communities, Delivering actions that contribute to stronger communities and developing a sense of belonging and liveable areas within neighbourhoods.

- **Housing Strategy**

The Council's 'Fit For Purpose' Housing Strategy is a five year plan for investment and service development across all tenures in the Borough. The Housing Strategy is important because it:

- Supports the Council's key priorities and influences other plans
- Determines the amount of money available to spend on local housing schemes
- Is developed in consultation with all groups, individuals and organisations with an interest in housing in Charnwood

Through consultation the Council has identified three key overarching objectives:

- Enabling Regeneration and Affordable Homes
- Decent Homes in All Tenures
- Supporting a Healthy Thriving Community

The Council will achieve this by working towards nine strategic aims:

1. Creating Sustainable Communities
2. Balanced Housing Markets
3. Delivering Affordable Housing
4. Providing Decent Homes
5. Promoting Affordable Warmth
6. Promoting Healthy Homes
7. Protecting the Community
8. Tackling Homelessness
9. Supporting Vulnerable People

The BME Housing Strategy sits alongside the Local Housing Strategy and should therefore be read in conjunction with it. The overall aims and objectives of the Housing Strategy and Community Strategy are taken into consideration in the development of the BME Housing Strategy.

- **Charnwood Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme**

The 'Meeting the Challenge – Community Cohesion in Charnwood' report made a number of recommendations to the Charnwood Together Local Strategic Partnership about key areas for joined-up action. The Local Strategic Partnership 'Stronger Communities Sub-Group' will be responsible for producing a strategy/framework for community cohesion issues, which will link with the BME Housing Strategy.

In areas of community cohesion and deprivation, the Council intends to take a more pro-active stance. The Audit Commission's Local Area Profile, shows that Charnwood is above the national mean in the percentage of residents who think that people being attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion is a very big or fairly big problem in their local area, and at the same time close to the bottom of the bottom quartile of percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, race relations have improved or stayed the same. To address this, the Council has created three posts of Community Strategy Support Officers to support neighbourhood management and community cohesion. These posts will be responsible for delivering actions within the LAA including a partnership approach to tackling issues of anti-social behaviour, racial harassment and discrimination.

- **Corporate Plan**

In the Council's new Corporate Plan the promotion of community cohesion is one of the "Top ten things to improve", and the BME Housing Strategy will be a key Strategy in achieving this aim.

### **Consultation with BME Service Users and Service Providers**

The need for social housing providers to work proactively with BME communities and the importance of consulting BME communities in the decision-making process is fully recognised.

An independent consultancy, ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd, specialising in equality and diversity issues was employed on the Council's behalf to hold a series of well-attended Focus Groups with BME service users and agencies supporting them to obtain service user perceptions of the extent to which the Council understands BME housing needs and aspirations and addresses them.

The purpose of the Focus Group sessions was to ask the community and service providers what the Council needed to do to improve services to residents from all housing tenures and to make sure the diverse housing needs of Charnwood's BME communities are met.

Over 50 delegates attended, representing a wide spectrum of interested parties and organisations, including local residents, voluntary and statutory organisations and BME community groups.

The consultation sessions focused on the four key topic areas:

- Experience of the Council's Housing Services
- Housing Needs and Aspirations
- Community Cohesion/Social Inclusion
- The BME Housing Strategy

The Focus Groups were very successful with positive feedback from delegates. Key findings from these discussions, along with other research findings, have been used to inform the Action Plan (Chapter 6). The views of the participants are not intended to be read as statistically representative of all members of any particular BME group in Charnwood. However, the views expressed provide a useful insight into the likely and potential issues for the BME group in question.

The topic guide and draft consultation feedback report can be found in Appendix B.

### **Charnwood Community Profile**

The Council used a number of different data sources to develop this Strategy. These included existing data and research:

- 2001 Census
- Charnwood Community Profile
- Housing Needs Survey 2003 & Housing Needs Survey (Desktop Update) 2005
- Housing Services Monitoring Data

The 2001 Census provides the Council with the most up to date information about Charnwood's population and ethnic composition. At the time of the 2001 Census Charnwood's population was 153,462. The BME population had increased from 6.2% at the 1991 Census to 10.8% at the 2001 Census (please note however that the 1991 Census categories were less detailed and all "white" respondents were grouped as one broad ethnic group. A similar approach in 2001 would have given a BME population of 8.33% in 2001. The latter figure is quoted in the Corporate Plan)

### **Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Exact numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in Charnwood are not known by any of the agencies, but it is clear that, apart from Leicester, Charnwood has more people in these categories at any given time than any other Council in the County.

### **Faith Communities**

The 2001 Census invited people to declare their religion if they so wished. Census figures show that by far the largest faith group in Charnwood is Christian making up 69.55% of the population. The next largest, at 3.98% is Hindu followed by Muslim at 1.57%. No other faith group makes up more than 1% of the population. Although non-Christian faith groups make up a small proportion of Charnwood's population, because of the importance faith plays in people's lives services need to address faith-based needs.

**See also Chapter 3 for a more detailed breakdown of faith communities.**

## CHAPTER 3: ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

### Introduction

The most comprehensive source of information relating to ethnicity and religion remains the 2001 Census despite the survey now being 5 years out of date. The Census uses the notion of Household Reference Person to identify the religion and ethnicity of a household.

The Household Reference Person identified in the 2001 Census replaces the Head of Household used in 1991. In 1991, the Head of Household was taken as the first person on the form unless that person was aged under 16 or was not usually resident in the household.

### Overcrowded Households

The rising cost of housing in the Borough and the fact that BME households are more likely to have a low household income mean that it is often difficult for BME communities to access the type and size of accommodation needed. Overcrowding and poor housing conditions can be the result.

The 2001 Census shows that in Charnwood BME households are more likely to be overcrowded than White households. However, the following table shows the large variations between communities:

**Table 1 - Overcrowding in Charnwood by Communities**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>All Households</b>	<b>Number Overcrowded</b>	<b>% Overcrowded</b>
<b>White - British</b>	55,278	2,040	3.69%
<b>White - Irish</b>	580	29	5.00%
<b>White - Other</b>	1,070	77	7.20%
<b>Mixed - White and Black Caribbean</b>	59	5	8.47%
<b>Mixed - White and Black African</b>	24	3	12.50%
<b>Mixed - White and Asian</b>	81	14	17.28%
<b>Mixed - Other</b>	72	10	13.89%
<b>Asian - Indian</b>	2,063	262	12.70%
<b>Asian - Pakistani</b>	60	7	11.67%
<b>Asian - Bangladeshi</b>	279	69	24.73%
<b>Asian - Other</b>	204	51	25.00%
<b>Black or Black British - Black Caribbean</b>	112	7	6.25%
<b>Black or Black British - Black African</b>	113	21	18.58%
<b>Black or Black British - Other</b>	16	3	18.75%

<b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group - Chinese</b>	308	86	27.92%
<b>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group - Other</b>	157	40	25.48%
<b>TOTAL</b>	60,476	2,724	4.50%

### People in Housing Need

The Council commissioned a BME Housing Needs survey with Foundation Housing Association in 2000. However, the survey, produced by Hunter Systems Ltd, was not found to be statistically reliable. As a result, the Borough-wide Housing Needs Survey in 2003 specifically targeted the BME population with face-to-face interviews to produce a separate report on the housing issues facing the BME population in addition to the general household needs survey.

The 2003 survey found that 80% of BME householders identified an in-house solution to their housing problem through improvement, repairs or better energy efficiency, compared with 68.6% of the main survey group. The reasons for this are not fully understood. It could indicate a stronger culture of self-help or a lack of knowledge about, or trust in, alternative solutions.

Of households requiring a move to solve their housing problem BME households were, interestingly, less likely to cite overcrowding as their main need for a move but more likely to identify expensive rent/mortgage or insecurity of tenure. This would imply that a higher proportion of the BME population is in private rented accommodation, which may be the most flexible form of tenure to enable individuals to remain close to their own communities.

Of the households who wished to move but could not, a smaller percentage of the BME households identified affordability as a barrier (64.5% as opposed to 71.9% overall) but a far higher proportion of the BME community (41.9% as opposed to 13.9% overall) identified family reasons as a barrier to moving.

### Ethnicity and Tenure

The 2001 Census provides details of housing tenure in Charnwood by ethnic group. The table below shows this information for Charnwood and compares the tenure proportions for White British and BME households.

**Table 2 – Housing Tenure in Charnwood by Ethnicity**

	No. of Households	Tenure			
		Owner Occupation	Private Rent	Social Rent	Other
<b>White British</b>	55,278	78.1%	7.7%	12.4%	1.8%
<b>BME</b>	5,188	74.1%	15.3%	8.6%	2.0%

Owner occupation is the major form of tenure for both groups although the proportion is slightly higher for White British households. Within the rented tenures, private renting predominates for BME households and social renting for White British households.

Many explanations have been offered for the differences in tenure between the communities. Further research is needed to fully understand the position in Charnwood and to decide whether the Council should take action.

### **Demand for Social Housing**

The table below shows the breakdown of applications for housing by ethnicity for those not already in social housing within the Borough at 27<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

**Table 3 - Charnwood Borough Council Housing Applicants by Ethnicity**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total Applicants</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>New Registrations 2005/06</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Census</b>
<b>White British</b>	1847	86.19	1442	87.50	89.2
<b>White Irish</b>	16	0.75	13	0.79	0.75
<b>White Other</b>	27	1.26	15	0.91	1.72
<b>Indian</b>	26	1.21	23	1.40	4.70
<b>Pakistani</b>	4	0.19	3	0.18	0.11
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	28	1.31	20	1.21	0.81
<b>Asian Other</b>	21	0.98	21	1.27	0.38
<b>Black African</b>	11	0.51	10	0.61	0.22
<b>Black Caribbean</b>	9	0.42	7	0.42	0.15
<b>Black Other</b>	6	0.28	4	0.24	0.03
<b>White and Black Caribbean</b>	6	0.28	5	0.30	0.27
<b>White and Black African</b>	1	0.05	1	0.06	0.06
<b>White and Asian</b>	2	0.09	2	0.12	0.37
<b>Other Mixed Background</b>	3	0.14	4	0.24	0.20
<b>Chinese</b>	6	0.28	4	0.24	0.70
<b>Other</b>	35	1.63	22	1.33	0.34
<b>Not Stated/Unknown</b>	93	4.34	52	3.16	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2141</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1648</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

This table suggests, when comparing the ethnic breakdown of applicants on the Housing Register with the ethnic breakdown in the 2001 Census, that Bangladeshi, Asian Other and Black Caribbean communities are more likely to perceive themselves as requiring social housing to meet their housing needs than their White British counterparts. This could be for a number of reasons such as economic status, family/support networks, unsatisfactory housing, or newly forming households. Further research is required to understand if some issues are more prevalent within the BME community than the population as a whole. Similarly, of the groups where there are fewer applications research needs to be undertaken to establish the reasons for this or if particular groups feel more deterred from applying for housing than other groups and why.

### Charnwood Borough Council Tenants

The ethnic breakdown of Charnwood Borough Council Tenants as at 27<sup>th</sup> September 2006 is shown below. The service has not yet undertaken a complete tenancy audit, and there are still a significant number of tenancies for which the ethnicity of the head of household is not recorded. Most of these “unknown” tenants will have been Council tenants for several years, having been allocated tenancies before ethnicity was routinely recorded.

**Table 4 – Charnwood Borough Council Tenants by Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Number	%	Census %
White British	3307	56.98	89.20
White Irish	15	0.26	0.75
White Other	2	0.03	1.72
Indian	14	0.24	4.70
Pakistani	1	0.02	0.11
Bangladeshi	12	0.21	0.81
Asian Other	32	0.55	0.38
Black African	7	0.12	0.22
Black Caribbean	6	0.10	0.15
Black Other	6	0.10	0.03
White and Black Caribbean	4	0.07	0.27
White and Black African	1	0.02	0.06
White and Asian	0	0.00	0.37
Other Mixed Background	1	0.02	0.20
Chinese	3	0.05	0.70
Other	37	0.64	0.34
Not Stated/Unknown	2356	40.59	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5804</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The high percentage of ‘unknown’ ethnicity status (40.6%) highlights the need to complete a full tenancy audit as soon as possible before a meaningful analysis of Council tenancies by ethnicity can be made.

### Charnwood Borough Council Lettings

During 2005/06 there were 647 lettings made to permanent Council housing. The ethnic breakdowns of the first named person on the tenancy were as follows:

**Table 5 - Charnwood Borough Council Lettings 2005-6 by Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Housing Register	%	Transfer List	%	Census
White British	372	88.57	98	73.7	89.2
White Irish	3	0.71	0	0.00	0.75
White Other	0	0.00	0	0.00	1.72
Indian	3	0.71	0	0.00	4.70
Pakistani	1	0.24	0	0.00	0.11
Bangladeshi	1	0.24	0	0.00	0.81
Asian Other	4	0.95	0	0.00	0.38
Black African	1	0.24	0	0.00	0.22
Black Caribbean	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.15

<b>Black Other</b>	1	0.24	0	0.00	0.03
<b>White and Black Caribbean</b>	1	0.24	0	0.00	0.27
<b>White and Black African</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.06
<b>White and Asian</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.37
<b>Other mixed background</b>	1	0.24	0	0.00	0.20
<b>Chinese</b>	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.70
<b>Other</b>	5	1.19	0	0.00	0.34
<b>Not Stated/Unknown</b>	27	6.43	35	26.30	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	420	100.00	133	100.00	100.00

The main discrepancy here appears to be the under-representation of new lettings to Indian households compared to their percentage of overall population in the 2001 Census. However, it is evident from Table 1 that a number of factors may explain this percentage. Until further research is undertaken it is difficult to draw any conclusions from the current information available.

### **Housing Association Lettings**

During 2005/06 there were 241 lettings made to general needs HA accommodation. As with Council lettings the Indian community appears to be under-represented in new lettings by HAs and the reasons for this need to be fully understood. The Council will seek to establish a common arrangement for the collection of performance data on ethnicity for tenants of social housing providers within Charnwood which should assist in identifying the needs of particular BME groups.

### **Private Rent and Owner Occupation**

- **Private Rent**

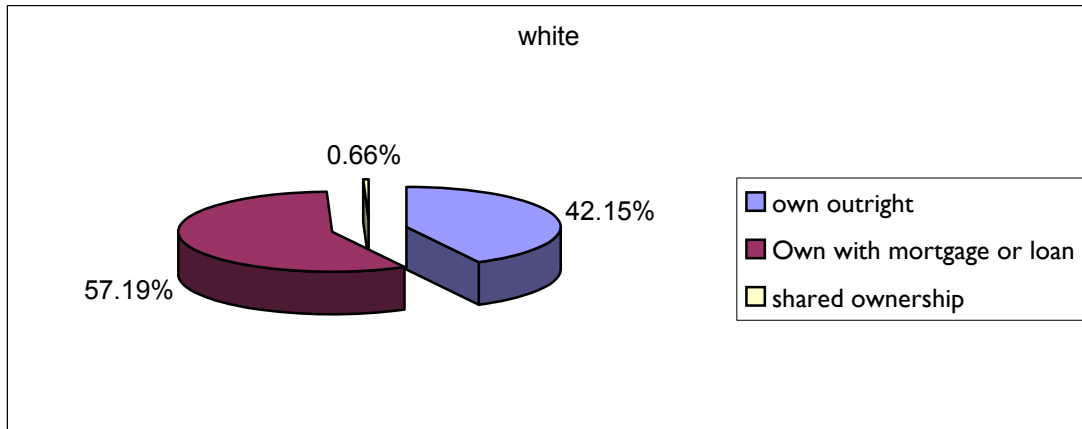
As noted earlier, a significantly higher proportion of BME households rent their home from a private landlord. This is the case for 15.3% of BME households but only 7.7% of White British households. The reasons for this difference are complex and likely to involve different:

- economic situations
- cultural expectations
- locational preferences in relation to available housing stock
- levels of knowledge about alternatives, and
- households sizes

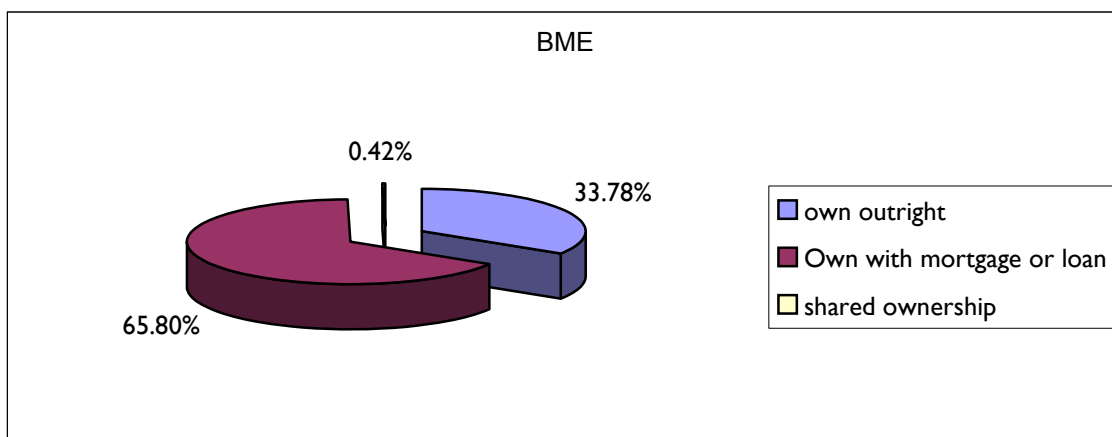
Further research is needed to fully understand the position.

- **Owner Occupation**

At the time of the 2001 Census BME households were slightly less likely than White British to be owner-occupiers, 78% of White British households compared to 74% of BME households. The charts below show the split between levels of ownership of White British and BME households:



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

◦ **Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)**

Currently around 70% of all households own their own home nationally. National polls estimate around 90% of households aspire to be in this position at some point, but rising house prices have made it much more difficult for first-time buyers and social tenants of all communities to get a foothold in the housing market. Research has shown that ethnic minority households have particularly benefited from low-cost home ownership schemes. Nationally, only 5% of all owner occupiers are from ethnic minorities. In comparison, 16% of all households who benefited from shared-ownership in 2004/5 came from ethnic minorities.<sup>6</sup>

The Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2005 clarifies its policies on the proportion of affordable homes the Council will seek on new housing schemes, including how it will determine the type and tenure of dwellings. The Council recognises that Shared Ownership and Shared Equity have a role in meeting housing need in the Borough. Other forms of affordable housing, such as low cost, discounted and sub market housing play a lesser role as the Council believes these are only helpful to people in housing need if substantial discounts are available and transferred to future applicants in housing need.

<sup>6</sup> A foot on the ladder: low cost home ownership assistance, National Audit Office, July 2006

An important part of this process is evaluating the take-up of LCHO schemes by BME groups. Efforts have been made to monitor the ethnicity of shared ownership within the Borough. Two recent examples within the Hastings/Lemyngton wards, which have a high percentage of BME residents (26.2% and 27.2% respectively), show a 10% take up of shared ownership; City Heights comprising 21 units and Harlington Street (20 units). The Council needs to ensure that new housing development meets the needs of BME groups. The Strategy therefore includes an action to increase the awareness of and interest in LCHO schemes for BME applicants.

### **Choice Based Lettings (CBL)**

Increasing social housing tenants' choice over where they live helps to achieve stable communities. Government is working towards nationwide use of Choice Based Lettings (CBL), including all rental sectors: Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords, Shared Ownership Schemes and the Private Rented Sector. Moving away from bureaucratic housing allocations towards a much more customer-focused model may reduce the likelihood of discrimination in housing allocations. However, choice also requires a greater input from the customer. Some BME groups, in particular those with poor English language skills, may need help to fully exercise their choice and avoid indirect discrimination.

The Council is currently working towards the 2010 Government target of introducing CBL and will continue to monitor research in this area to ensure that CBL does not disadvantage any groups.

### **Homelessness Applications**

The Government's quarterly monitoring of Homelessness services requires a range of information on those accessing homelessness services and the outcomes they achieve. Much of this information is requested by ethnicity.

In English region the proportion of homeless BME households is greater than the proportion in the population as a whole. There are also differences in the rates of statutory homelessness between ethnic minority groups. Ethnic minority households are around three times more likely to experience homelessness. People of Black African and Black Caribbean origin are twice as likely to be accepted as homeless as those of Indian, Pakistan and Bangladeshi backgrounds.

The table below shows the total number of homeless decisions made by this Council in 2005/06 by ethnicity and also shows this as a percentage of all decisions compared to the 2001 Census profile:

**Table 6 – Charnwood Borough Council Homelessness Decisions 2005-6**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Census</b>
<b>White British</b>	175	86.21	89.2
<b>White Irish</b>	0	0.00	0.75
<b>White Other</b>	1	0.49	1.72
<b>Indian</b>	1	0.49	4.7
<b>Pakistani</b>	0	0.00	0.11

<b>Bangladeshi</b>	2	0.99	0.81
<b>Asian Other</b>	14	6.90	0.38
<b>Black African</b>	2	0.99	0.22
<b>Black Caribbean</b>	0	0.00	0.15
<b>Black Other</b>	1	0.49	0.03
<b>White and Black Caribbean</b>	0	0.00	0.27
<b>White and Black African</b>	0	0.00	0.06
<b>White and Asian</b>	0	0.00	0.37
<b>Other mixed background</b>	1	0.49	0.2
<b>Chinese</b>	0	0.00	0.7
<b>Other</b>	4	1.97	0.34
<b>Not Stated/Unknown</b>	2	0.99	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	203	100.00	100.00

The quarterly returns to Government also allow a comparison between the numbers of applicants owed the full homelessness duty by ethnic group. As there are a small number of applicants in many groupings it is difficult to draw conclusions. However, by grouping together under broader headings we can see a noticeable difference between White and Asian applicants found to be owed the full duty:

**Table 7 - Charnwood Borough Council Homelessness Decisions 2005-6 (White/Asian)**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total Decisions</b>	<b>Full Homeless Duty</b>
<b>White</b>	176	89.8%
<b>Asian</b>	17	58.8%

(6 or 35.3% of the Asian applicants were found to be not homeless)

Although the above statistics are based on relatively small numbers, the clear difference between the outcomes for the two main communities cannot be readily explained and requires further investigation.

### **Single Homeless BME People**

The Council discharges its statutory housing advice function in partnership with The Bridge Housing Advice Centre. 6.2% of single people accessing the service during 2005/06 were from BME communities. This is disproportionate to the overall percentage of BME people living in the Borough (10.8%). Of all the BME groups using this service (Asian British, Indian, Bangladeshi, Black Other, Pakistani, Black Caribbean, Black British) Asian British use this service the most and account for 43% of BME clients during 2005/06.

### **Refugees & Asylum Seekers**

Since July 2000, destitute asylum seekers have been referred directly to the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) for support and they are dispersed and accommodated outside London on a “no choice” basis whilst their applications are being processed. Asylum Seekers also experience displacement when they receive a decision on their asylum applications, as they cease to receive subsistence from NASS and are given 28 days to leave their NASS accommodation.

Following positive decisions by NASS, Asylum Seekers in priority need can be assisted as Refugees by the Council to find permanent accommodation. There are no known discrepancies between the service offered to Refugees and that offered to the host communities when the full homeless duty is accepted.

Asylum Seekers not in priority need have to rely on existing accommodation for the single homeless or private sector accommodation, which is often inappropriate for their cultural needs. Lack of support can also lead to deterioration in mental health, which is often exacerbated by trauma they have experienced. The need for tenancy support is therefore important to enable tenancies to remain sustainable in the longer term. During 2005/6 seven Asylum Seekers considered not to be in priority need approached The Bridge Housing Advice Centre for assistance.

### **Faith & Housing Need**

Faith communities play an essential role in helping to deliver many of the Government's policies, especially those to do with crime reduction, anti-social behaviour and issues affecting young people. Housing needs studies in Charnwood have not considered the issue of faith, but in future this may become a more significant factor in planning new housing in the Borough.

The 2001 Census included a question on faith for the first time, although completion of the question was voluntary. In Charnwood over 76% responded with a stated religion. The table below shows the results for Charnwood as a whole:

**Table 8 – Faith Communities in Charnwood**

Religion (voluntary Question)	Charnwood		Leicestershire		East Midlands	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Christian</b>	106,732	69.55	452,347	74.21	3,003,475	71.99
<b>Buddhist</b>	350	0.23	904	0.15	7,541	0.18
<b>Hindu</b>	6,105	3.98	12,329	2.02	66,710	1.60
<b>Jewish</b>	152	0.10	614	0.10	4,075	0.10
<b>Muslim</b>	2,410	1.57	4,937	0.81	70,224	1.66
<b>Sikh</b>	805	0.52	4,971	0.82	33,551	0.80
<b>Other</b>	422	0.27	1,287	0.21	9,863	0.24
<b>No Religion/ None Stated</b>	36,486	23.78	132,189	21.69	976,735	23.42
<b>TOTAL</b>	153,462	100.00	609,578	100.00	4,172,174	100.00

Although at District level the majority of the population classed themselves as Christian, No Religion or Unknown there is considerable variation across the Borough's 28 wards. 1.57% of the population of Charnwood overall classify themselves as Muslim. However, in Loughborough Hastings the figure is 14.3% and Loughborough Lemyngton 9.7%. The Hindu population makes up 3.98% of the Borough but 8.9% of Birstall Wanlip, 8.85% of Loughborough Hastings, 13.3% Loughborough Lemyngton, 12.2% of Syston West and 13.6% of Thurmaston.

Future planning and design of affordable housing must take account of these locally high population concentrations but must not assume that the longer-term aspiration of the communities, or next generations, is to remain always in the same areas.

### **Young People from BME Groups**

The Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG) Homelessness Grant Programme part-funds a Mediation Worker based at The Bridge Housing Advice Centre. This post was specifically developed to address the growing number of young people from all communities being excluded from the family home.

There are generally fewer referrals from BME groups than are representative of the local population. The referrals received to date mostly involved Asian females, who have become pregnant outside of marriage. Cultural codes and community influence may prevent the young person from returning home in these circumstances. This is an area which will need monitoring to ensure adequate support is provided where a return to the parental home is deemed not appropriate.

Referrals from BME groups have increased slightly during 2006/7, with one young person remaining at home and one young person undergoing mediation at present.

### **Gypsies & Travellers**

Gypsies and Irish Travellers have been recognised as distinct ethnic groups and have the full protection of the Race Relations Act. The Government's 5 year plan<sup>7</sup> states that Travellers and Gypsies are amongst the most excluded people in our society. They are believed to experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England. Research has consistently confirmed the link between the lack of good quality sites for Gypsies and Travellers and poor health and education.

In 1994 the duty on local authorities to provide sites was removed and since then under-provision of authorised sites has resulted, in some areas, in Gypsies and Travellers camping on unauthorised land or developing their own land without planning permission. One way of reducing unauthorised camping is to increase the supply of authorised sites.

Recent Housing legislation<sup>8</sup> and the new Planning Circular<sup>9</sup> have put in place a new framework, which requires each Council to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). This will provide a strategic view of needs across the region and identify the number of local pitches required in each Council's area. In Leicestershire the number of Gypsy and Traveller caravans exceeds the number of authorised places where they can stop. The provision of suitable accommodation, therefore, is seen as a vital approach in dealing with unauthorised camping.

The Council has signed up to the Code of Practice, an agreement between Councils in Leicestershire and Rutland and Leicestershire Constabulary aimed at managing

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<sup>7</sup> Sustainable Communities: Homes for All – A five year plan from the ODPM, 2005

<sup>8</sup> The Housing Act 2004

<sup>9</sup> ODPM Circular 01/2006 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites'.

unauthorised encampments by Gypsies and Travellers. The Countywide joint working party for the provision of transit and stopping place sites for Gypsies and Travellers meets on a regular basis to progress this initiative. The joint working party has recently commissioned a countywide GTAA. The data arising from this will inform the wider housing work of the Council and its partners, by providing a clearer understanding of the accommodation issues faced by Gypsies and Travellers, including support needs, homelessness prevention and how permanent housing can be made more attractive for Gypsies and Travellers.

### **Services for Older BME People**

The population trends suggest an increase in the overall population of older people including people from BME communities and that numbers of people living longer and beyond 75 will increase. Now and over the next decade, as the first generation migrants are entering retirement they will create new demands for care, support and housing services specific to their cultural and religious needs.

Within Charnwood the 2001 Census data shows that the population in the over 65 age group is projected to increase by 16.6% by 2016, and those 80 and over by almost 46% by 2016<sup>10</sup>. As the elderly population increases, the need for a culturally specific approach, particularly for large scale housing related investment, will need further research. However, this does not prevent the development of approaches within existing services that will contain a culturally sensitive element, or the development of a continuum of support services to help older BME people to access low level support needs to help remain at home or to access sheltered housing and extra care, which is within or close to the community, and which provides community-sensitive services and floating support services.

Charnwood's mobile warden service provides support to its older tenants. Low take up of the service by BME applicants highlights a need to develop a more specific service tailored to the needs of the BME community. In the late 1980s East Midlands Housing Association developed a sheltered housing project for Asian elderly in Rendell Street, Loughborough, known as Vrudha Nivas. This provides 14 small flats and is managed by a local management committee. The continuing demand or need for this type of provision in the BME community has not been researched. This issue will be covered in the course of developing an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Charnwood in 2007.

### **Supported Housing Needs**

The Council's tenancy support services aim to make quality, affordable housing options and support services available to everyone in Charnwood, allowing vulnerable people to maintain their independence, whilst providing them with real choice and inclusion within the community.

There is a range of housing support services within the Borough. These range from purpose-built specialist accommodation to floating support services. Their aim is to make quality, affordable housing options and support services available to everyone in Charnwood, allowing vulnerable people to maintain their independence, whilst providing them with real choice and inclusion within the community.

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<sup>10</sup> Housing Needs Survey 2003

As well as a range of local and regional providers to broad client groups Refugee Housing Association also provide a tailored floating support service to Refugees in the Borough to develop integration into the community

### **The Role of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Meeting Housing Needs**

In July 2000 the Housing Corporation published its revised BME Housing Policy, which aims to ‘develop a culture among RSLs which empowers BME communities, integrating their needs and aspirations into their everyday business’. The Council supports the overall aim of the Housing Corporation Policy and will continue to actively encourage mainstream RSLs and BME RSLs to work together to deliver specialist schemes within the Borough.

Three of the consortia developing in Charnwood now contain a specialist BME RSL. The Council recognises that in order to make best use of BME RSLs, there must be a reasonable number of units owned/managed by BME RSLs. At the moment there are 20 units owned by BME RSLs in Charnwood, with current discussions underway to provide additional units on new developments in areas where there is a significant BME population. The Council recognises that it must set targets to ensure that a minimum proportion of new units are managed by BME RSLs in wards where there is a significant BME population.

Working in partnership with an RSL and the East Midlands Development Agency the Council has been successful in developing a major housing and regeneration scheme in one of the most deprived areas of Loughborough with a significant BME population. The scheme has also contributed to the local community through the provision of office space/community facilities leased to the Bangladeshi Social Association. This has contributed to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the neighbourhood. The Council will continue to work in partnership to provide new developments, which meet the needs of its diverse community.

### **Conclusions**

Where robust data sets exist it would appear that the BME population as a whole is proportionately represented in service provision although the breakdown within minority groups is not necessarily representative. This may be in part due to the small numbers involved given the narrow nature of the census definitions. The significant number of tenants and applicants within the local authority classified as “ethnicity unknown”, however, means that a comprehensive and meaningful analysis is not possible until a full tenancy audit has been completed and the full data relating to housing applications has been gathered.

### **What we need to do:**

- Improve the collection of ethnicity data in all forms (applications, surveys, databases, etc)
- Complete audit analysis of tenants by ethnicity
- Improve the systems for monitoring housing allocations to identify any problems with accessing the service

- Consider how future housing needs survey could be used to find out more about private sector needs and the aspirations of BME households
- Monitor and evaluate trends in homelessness and temporary accommodation by ethnicity
- Review the information requirements for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in relation to homelessness and temporary accommodation
- Work in partnership with agencies to assist Asylum Seekers and Refugees to settle into the community
- Take into consideration the needs of different groups in the design of new housing (new build and refurbishment)
- Increase awareness of and interest in intermediate housing (Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes)
- Improve information for BME young people about the housing options available to them
- Undertake additional research into the needs of BME groups under-represented in accessing housing services (i.e Gypsies and Travellers)
- Map the supply of services for BME older people. Undertake a survey of BME older peoples' needs and preferences for sheltered housing and related services
- Ensure supported housing schemes meet the diverse needs of BME communities
- Work with RSLs to maximise provision of housing (permanent and temporary accommodation) to meet the needs of BME groups
- Establish a common monitoring arrangement of performance data for tenants of social housing providers

## **CHAPTER 4: ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY**

The Council recognises that it has a key role in eradicating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality and diversity. In doing so the Council understands that diversity is about acknowledging and appreciating that individuals and groups may have different lifestyles, cultures, abilities, religions or beliefs, experiences and backgrounds. Diversity within the workforce, as well as the community, is also an asset to the Borough.

The BME Housing Strategy complements a number of policies and initiatives, which already exist across the Council and Housing Services to tackle discrimination and inequality. This chapter will outline the work undertaken to date and highlight the areas where more action is needed.

### **Corporate Equality and Diversity Plan 2006-2009**

The Corporate Equality and Diversity Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and promoting good community relations.

The Council recognises that it has a responsibility to all communities it serves to ensure that discrimination does not occur in the delivery of services and also the way it treats its employees. In meeting its general duty the Council incorporates race equality as a mainstream activity and makes it a central part of the way it delivers its services to ensure everyone can take part in the social, cultural and economic well being of the Borough.

- **Race Equality Scheme 2006-2008**

The Race Equality Scheme reaffirms the Council's commitment to achieving race equality for everyone who works, lives in and visits Charnwood. Many of the actions to fulfil the requirements of the RRAA duties are captured in the Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Plan; however, distinct race equality actions are highlighted in the Action Plan accompanying this Scheme.

- **Corporate Equal Opportunities Policy 2006-2009**

The Council believes that the quality of life for people in the Borough as a whole will be improved through good practice in the pursuit of equality of opportunity.

The Council's commitment is supported by a legal duty to provide all services and employment opportunities fairly, without discrimination and to adhere to the relevant codes of practice. The Council's approach to equality of opportunity goes beyond a policy not to discriminate and extends to pursuing a positive strategy, whenever legally possible, to help disadvantaged groups/individuals.

- **Charnwood Borough Council and the Equality Standard**

A key Council corporate priority is to address equality issues, both within the Borough and as an employer. The Equality Standard was issued as a framework to mainstream equalities into service delivery and all aspects of the Council's work.

The Council uses the five levels to introduce a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equalities. These levels cover all aspects of policy-making, service delivery and employment. They are:

Level 1 - Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy

Level 2 - Assessment and consultation

Level 3 - Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 - Information systems and monitoring against targets

Level 5 - Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The Standard sets out a level by level checklist for implementing the system, and progress through the levels is monitored and audited in a way that measures the achievement of each level. The Council has achieved Level 1 and 2 of the Equality Standard and has set a target to achieve Level 3 by August 2007 and achieve Level 4 by August 2008.

### **Tackling Racial Harassment and Discrimination**

The Respect Action Plan, launched in January 2005, draws together the key actions to build respect in neighbourhoods. The 'Respect Standard for Housing Management' aims to encapsulate the core components of an effective response to tackling anti-social behaviour, including incidents of racially motivated anti-social behaviour. The Council is committed to implementing the Standard, signalling its commitment to help create and sustain places where anti-social behaviour and disrespect for people are not tolerated but tackled.

- **Community Safety Partnership**

The Charnwood Community Safety Partnership is formed by groups from the public, private and Government sectors all working towards the aim of making the Borough a safer place to live. The Partnership was created in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which placed a statutory responsibility jointly on the Council and the Police, in partnership with the Probation Service and the Health Authority, to develop plans to reduce crime and disorder within the local area. The Community Safety Partnership meets quarterly to discuss the progress of the local action plan and any other issues relevant to crime and disorder.

Combating racial harassment is one of the Partnership's targets. The Racial Harassment Sub-group, which meets every two months, has been established to consider ways of achieving this objective. This Group also reports to the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group. Anecdotal evidence suggests that incidents of racial harassment are under-reported. One of the Partnership targets is to increase the level of reporting in this area which will more accurately reflect the local situation.

- **Racial Harassment**

The Council's Housing Services have developed a Housing Services Racial Harassment Policy (Tenants & Leaseholders), which is supported by specific clauses in the Council's Tenancy Agreement designed to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to any instances of racial or religious-based harassment by or against its tenants.

All local social housing providers have policies in place to enable effective action to be taken against known perpetrators of racial harassment. The Council can serve a Notice of Seeking Possession, or seek injunctions against a perpetrator who is either a tenant or member of a tenant's family (subject to criteria e.g. court evidence from reliable independent witnesses where there is a reasonable chance of gaining possession of the property). In these instances the Council will ensure effective action is taken to move the perpetrator of racial harassment to alternative accommodation rather than requiring the victim to be moved.

In 2005 Tenancy Services dealt with four cases of anti-social behaviour with a racial element using the standard reporting form to record all racially motivated incidents.

The Macpherson Report concluded that many social housing organisations already have in place anti-racist policies and procedures and effective reporting systems for victims of racial harassment. However, all organisations need to consider ways of improving performance in tackling racism and in understanding the impact such incidents can have with BME communities. The Council will continue to work in partnership with the Community Safety Partnership, key stakeholders and BME community groups to promote racial awareness and combat ignorance and prejudice. It will also continue to encourage the reporting of all racial harassment incidents so they can be recorded and investigated irrespective of whether or not a crime has been committed. Future activities have been incorporated within the Action Plan (Chapter 6).

### **Customer Care**

Feedback from the Focus Group research shows that service users believe the Council could improve the standard of its front line customer services. Customer service itself is not a race-specific issue, however, if BME service users whose first language is not English receive poor customer service, this could affect their ability to access the service they need. It is suggested the Council undertakes further training of front line staff to improve cultural awareness and the differing needs of each BME group.

### **Monitoring**

The development of this Strategy has highlighted areas where monitoring systems need to be reviewed:

- Trends in homelessness by ethnicity and length of stay in temporary accommodation

- Take-up of sheltered housing/retirement housing by older BME people
- Satisfaction of Housing Grants service
- Formal complaints

Applicants' ability to access services is largely dependent upon their ability to understand written information either in leaflets/newsletters or the website. The Council must be mindful of the impact of the increased use of new technologies to provide services. BME communities may not have adequate access to computers and may find written information in English difficult to understand. This underlines the need to monitor new initiatives carefully.

### **Tenant Satisfaction**

Nationally, 22% of Bangladeshi and 16% of Black Caribbean households are dissatisfied with their accommodation, compared with 5% of White households. There has been a slight decrease in this level of dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction among the Indian Community is almost as low as for White households, reflecting the high proportion of owner-occupiers among both groups.<sup>11</sup>

In the 2004 Charnwood Tenants Satisfaction survey 77% of tenants who returned their survey were satisfied with the overall service provided by their landlord. For BME tenants the satisfaction level was 78%, although the sample size was too small to be statistically reliable.

### **Private Sector Renewal Grants**

The Council monitors take-up of grants and assistance in the private sector by ethnicity, however further work needs to be undertaken to improve these systems.

In 2005, 181 grants were approved, of these ethnicity was recorded for 119 applicants. Of the applications where ethnicity was recorded, 85% of grants were to White British households. The largest BME group to benefit was Indians making up 8% of the total.

### **BME Staff Representation at Charnwood Borough Council**

People from ethnic minorities nationally are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as the national average. Rates of unemployment are highest for Black Caribbean, Black African and Mixed Race groups at 9%.<sup>12</sup>

As an employer, the Council recognises that having a diverse work force, which reflects the community, results in a better-informed, more adaptable organisation better able to reflect and respond to the needs of its customers. Within Housing Services BME staff account for 4% of the workforce. This compares to 7% of the overall proportion of BME employees in the Council's workforce overall. There are currently no BME senior managers, who fall within the top 5% of earners within the Council.

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<sup>11</sup> Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society, DCLG 2006

<sup>12</sup> Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society, DCLG, 2006

### **Training for Housing Services Employees**

The Council recognises that the most effective way to deliver effective equality and diversity initiatives is by training its employees. Equality and Diversity are essential elements of staff training and development at Charnwood and have been incorporated into the “Academy” programme. Equality and Diversity competencies are also included in employees’ Performance and Development Reviews.

#### **What we need to do:**

- Raise awareness of initiatives to tackle discrimination and harassment
- Produce a signpost pack of information outlining who to contact within the Council. This could also include information about Housing Needs, Equal Opportunities Policy, Racial Harassment Policies and translation and interpretation services. This needs to be translated into key community languages and distributed to community groups and key agencies
- Continue to develop ethnic monitoring of housing allocations to ensure that the scheme is not discriminating against any group or contributing to social exclusion
- Continued ethnic monitoring of formal complaints and resident satisfaction of all housing services
- Develop a race equality and diversity training programme for staff
- Promote a diverse workforce, which reflects the community profile
- Ensure commitment to equal opportunities policy and strategy from staff, partners, contractors and consultants

## CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY COHESION, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Council is committed to promoting community cohesion, social inclusion and valuing cultural diversity and needs to ensure fairness and equality in the delivery of its services.

Community cohesion promotes a greater knowledge, respect and contact between various cultures and establishes a greater sense of citizenship. Social inclusion requires that everyone has access to opportunity and that no one suffers discriminatory behaviour or practices, which will limit their choices in life. People should be able to exercise both their rights and responsibilities, irrespective of their ethnicity, faith, culture, sexuality or gender. People should be able to engage in the development of their communities and have their opinions and ideas heard.

Charnwood has a rich diversity of communities each with their own range of skills, knowledge, values and aspirations, which can be used to create a social and economic environment that benefits everyone in the Borough. However, the Council also recognises that BME residents are over-represented in the main indicators of social exclusion, such as poor and overcrowded housing, high unemployment and low incomes and poor health, all of which have an impact on the need for housing and services.

Information on housing need provides only a partial picture of the barriers to social inclusion for BME communities. Data about income levels, employment, harassment and other crime, health and education gives a wider understanding of the needs of the BME communities in Charnwood. This is borne out by the 2001 Census data (see Chapter 3) and the Housing Needs Survey 2003, for example:

- Income levels in general are lower within BME households than those in the whole population. There are higher proportions of BME households (29.9%) on the lowest incomes, i.e below £10,000pa, compared to all households (21.5%). The UK figure is 33%<sup>13</sup>
- 64.5% of BME households, who wished to move but cannot, said they could not afford to move compared to 71.9% in the main survey<sup>14</sup>
- 61% of 16 to 74 year olds were in employment but the figure was just 29% for Black Africans and 37% for Bangladeshis<sup>15</sup>
- 3% of respondents aged between 16 and 74 were unemployed but the figure was 7% for Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and White and Black Africans<sup>16</sup>

However, more comprehensive data needs to be collected, which analyses social inclusion data by ethnicity. This information will be relevant to the Council and RSLs in planning how proposed new housing or existing services can be developed to

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<sup>13</sup> Housing Needs Survey 2003

<sup>14</sup> Housing Needs Survey 2003

<sup>15</sup> Census 2001

<sup>16</sup> Census 2001

encompass social inclusion. This information will need to be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that services are relevant, fair and accessible and improve the quality of life for the community.

Building community cohesion was recognised as an important Council objective within the Focus Group discussions. It was felt that Housing Services could play an important role in this area, including a partnership approach to regeneration issues, increasing levels of participation for wider tenant/resident participation, zero-tolerance policies to tackle anti-social behaviour, improving living conditions and quality of accommodation, which otherwise could have a negative impact on residents, and allocations policies which promote social inclusion.

Members of the Focus Groups felt that the Borough had a high proportion of predominantly white housing estates, where community cohesion policies could reduce tensions towards non-white residents. In addition, limited housing stock may restrict housing choices to certain areas/tenures. There were some individuals who had a genuine interest to volunteer and attend meetings. To encourage this, the Council should consider resident involvement opportunities which would allow different levels of involvement. Regular community drop-in sessions would facilitate this further. Members also felt that better access to support services would help prevent social isolation.

### **Communication Issues and Language Barriers**

- **Knowledge about language requirements of service users**  
The Council recognises that for many of its service users English is not their first language. However, the Council's knowledge about the language requirements of its tenants and leaseholders is inadequate and further work needs to be undertaken in this area to develop a comprehensive profile.
- **Translation & Interpretation Services**  
Housing Services arrange for written information to be translated upon request. A translation statement is enclosed with all information, which publicises the availability of the service. This service is bought in from external companies. Depending on the importance and relevance of the document the Council will also arrange for key information to be translated into key languages in advance.
- **Use of Plain English**  
Evidence suggests that many households, for whom English is not their first language, do not read their own language. The advice from bodies such as the Plain English Commission is that the best way to communicate is to use clear English. This should be tackled through a training programme for all staff.
- **Where BME residents go for information about Housing**  
The Focus Group consultation showed that not all residents were aware of the services offered by the Council and that communication was a major barrier facing BME residents. The common consensus was that the Housing

process was complex and difficult to understand. It is therefore important that the Council develops new mechanisms for sharing information with residents, including the production of simplified information and key documents translated in core languages. The Action Plan (Chapter 6) outlines the actions Housing Services will take to ensure its services are accessible and appropriate to all.

## **Empowering Communities**

- **Access to Services – Employment and Training/Health/Education/Childcare**

In addition to collecting information, the Council also needs to consider ways to work with its partners and with local community groups to support community initiatives, which promote social inclusion, for example, promoting job opportunities, improving access to childcare, providing help with childcare costs.

- **Support for BME Businesses**

The Council has a role to support BME businesses. Initially, by monitoring the use of approved contractors and consultants the Council can identify issues where action is needed to ensure equal access to contract opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

The Council recognises that community cohesion – and particularly its relationship to housing – is important. Housing is a major determinant in shaping communities and the relationships between different races and cultures. Community cohesion can be promoted through the use of more creative strategies to create mixed housing areas and to provide support mechanisms for BME communities facing harassment and victimisation.

While there is a consensus that segregated housing is likely to encourage or exacerbate tensions between communities, more needs to be done to identify the most effective means of promoting cohesion in housing. Through continued consultation and resident/tenant participation the Council will endeavour to identify the local causes of conflict and barriers to cohesion with the aim of overcoming these problems.

Building cohesion is a continuing and long-term goal and there remain a number of challenges ahead.

### **What we need to do:**

- Provide a more accessible translation and interpretation service for BME communities
- Audit the availability of translated materials and review the quality of plain English in key documents
- Consider how to improve information for BME groups about the housing services available to them. This could include a more targeted circulation of

- key leaflets, including translated materials to community centres and community groups
- Develop close links with community groups – visit community groups, give discussions on requested topics
  - Work with community groups to produce information on opportunities to get involved with the work of the Council and the wider community
  - Map the current level of BME tenant and resident participation in the Borough and set targets for increasing it
  - Monitor the use of approved contractors and consultants
  - Undertake an analysis of social inclusion data by ethnicity
  - Address negative perceptions. Some communities perceive that they are less favourably treated than others. It is important to look at these perceptions and deal with the concerns.
  - Integration. The Council needs to strike a balance between the need to build integrated societies and the need to allow choice in housing.
  - Opportunities for all. The Council needs to continue to ensure that all people from all backgrounds have access to similar life opportunities, which will help to create a cohesive and forward looking community.

## **CHAPTER 6: ACTION PLAN**

The Council has stated in its new Corporate Plan its vision and priorities, which set out what it plans to do between now and 2013/14. It is based on the views, wishes and needs of local people about what sort of place Charnwood should be in the future and the part the Council should play in building a better Borough. It is shared and supported by its partners, staff and members and is underpinned by targeted actions to provide a firm foundation for the future of Charnwood.

The Action Plan for the BME Housing Strategy shows the links to the three themes in the Corporate Plan underpinning the delivery of all the Council's front-line services:

- Customers and Partners
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Innovation and Learning

**Strategic Aim One:**

**Gain a greater understanding of the housing needs and aspirations of BME and faith communities in Charnwood**

This section outlines the actions to be taken by Housing Services to improve its understanding of BME housing needs and the services it delivers to BME service users through the collection of ethnicity data, analysis of performance data by ethnicity and through conducting surveys into their needs, aspirations and experiences.

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
I.1	Improve the collection of ethnicity data on housing forms, surveys and databases	Ensure all forms, surveys and databases request ethnicity data based on the 2001 Census definitions	100% of forms, surveys and databases to request ethnic monitoring data	December 2007	Existing staff	Housing Policy Officer (HPO)  Housing Needs Manager (HNM)	Efficiency & Effectiveness
I.2	Complete knowledge base of CBC tenancies by ethnicity	Carry out tenancy audit on all tenancies where ethnicity still not recorded	100% tenancy audits completed	June 2008	Existing staff	Housing Officers  HPO	Efficiency & Effectiveness
I.3	Monitor trends in homelessness by ethnicity	Analyse quarterly the information entered onto the	Publish an annual report on BME	First annual report by September	Existing staff	HNM	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
		housing database system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the causes of homelessness</li> <li>• Monitor reasons for acceptance</li> <li>• Monitor use of the housing advice service by ethnicity</li> </ul>	homelessness	2007			
I.4	Monitor the housing provision/allocation process by ethnicity to ensure equality of access to accommodation	Examine nominations, offers acceptances and refusals by ethnicity for the various housing needs groups (general let, supported)	Nominations to BME households should equate to BME composition of the Housing Register.  6-monthly reports to HPSM	Ongoing.  First report to HPSM to cover period January-June 2007	Existing staff	HNM	Customers & Partners
I.5	Map supply of services for BME	• Map supply and	• Monitor	Ongoing	Existing staff	HPO	Customers &

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
	Older People and monitor take-up of Sheltered Housing/Retirement Housing by BME Older People	survey BME needs as part of Older Persons Housing Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse annually by ethnicity applications for sheltered housing</li> </ul>	100% of applicants who have provided ethnicity information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the proportion of sheltered lettings to BME community</li> <li>Ensure Older Persons Housing Strategy has full regard to BME needs</li> </ul>	Ongoing First report to HPSM by May 2007 on lettings and applications  June 2007			Partners
I.6	Monitor length of stay in Temporary Accommodation (TA) by ethnicity	Analyse quarterly length of stay in all forms of TA before permanent offer of accommodation,	Achieve less than 5% variation between the length of stay in TA by BME	Ongoing  First quarterly report April 2007	Existing staff	HNM	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
		by ethnicity	applicants and the general population	to HPSM			
1.7	Continue to monitor satisfaction with Housing Grants Service, by ethnicity	Continue satisfaction surveys	Achieve less than 5% variation between the satisfaction level of BME residents and that of the general population	Next report April 2007	Existing staff	Group Manager Private Housing (GMPH)	Customers & Partners
1.8	Monitor progress towards reaching the 5 levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government	Monitor the review and impact assessment process	100% of service areas to meet Equalities Standard Level 3	August 2007	Existing staff	Performance Improvement Officer (PIO)	Efficiency & Effectiveness
1.9	Undertake additional research into the needs of BME groups under-represented in accessing housing services due to disability/gender/race/age/religion and belief and sexuality	Establish which BME groups are under-represented and why – produce report	Assess whether any under-representation is detrimental – take action to correct any imbalance if	October 2007	Existing staff	ALMO Operations Manager (AOM)  HNM	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
			necessary			HPO	
I.10	Participate in a county-wide Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment	Identify suitable site provision for Gypsies and Travellers within the Borough	Ensure that the number of local pitches reflects the requirement of the Regional Plan	September 2007	Existing staff	Housing Strategy Officer (HSO)	Customers & Partners
I.11	Review the information requirements for refugee and asylum seekers in relation to the homelessness service and temporary accommodation	Produce information pack in consultation with service users translated into key languages and information about how to arrange interpreters	Information pack to be produced in key minority languages	July 2007	Existing staff	HNM HPO	Customers & Partners

**Strategic Aim Two:  
Develop strategic partnerships and joint working to address local housing needs**

This section outlines actions Housing Services will take towards establishing priorities and working arrangements with internal partners and external partners such as Social Services, Health, Education, Housing Associations, Community and Voluntary Organisations and the Police in order to address local BME housing needs.

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
2.1	Take into consideration the needs of different communities in the design of new housing (new build and refurbishment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review of Housing Register to update need patterns of BME groups</li> <li>• Consider findings and take into account in negotiations on suitable new developments</li> <li>• Set minimum target of new development units transferred to BME RSLs</li> </ul>	5% of overall new build affordable housing managed by BME RSLs. This will not be an across-the-board percentage, but will be targeted in BME areas	2010	Existing staff	HNM  Enabling & Development Officer (EDO)	Customers & Partners  Efficiency & Effectiveness
2.2	Increase awareness	Disseminate info	Increase number of	Ongoing	Existing staff	EDO	Customers &

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
	of and interest in Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes for BME applicants	about S/O schemes to BME community groups as well as individuals, and in the key local languages	BME residents willing to consider Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes			HNM	Partners
2.3	Increase BME tenant and resident participation in the housing service	Develop BME tenants' forum to include capacity building and training opportunities to assist BME residents in becoming more involved with the mainstream Tenants' and Residents' Associations and decision making processes.	Achieve a balance of representation from BME communities to match the Charnwood profile as far as possible.	Ongoing  Set up initial BME forum meeting by April 2007	Existing staff	TPO  HPO	Customers & Partners
2.4	Work in partnership with agencies to help young asylum seekers settle into the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support e.g. with grant applications</li> <li>• Develop welcome pack/leaflets in key languages in partnership with relevant agencies</li> </ul>	Carry out home visits within first week of placement	Ongoing  Welcome pack by July 2007	CBC staff and external partners	AOM  The Bridge Manager  CRE	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
2.5	Seek to establish a common arrangement for the collection of performance data on ethnicity for tenants of social housing providers within Charnwood	Consult with partner RSLs to identify good practice and establish common criteria to achieve this aim	To have 100% of providers subscribe to the arrangement	January 2009	CBC staff and RSL partners	HPO RSL partners	Efficiency & Effectiveness
2.6	Steering Group to oversee implementation of the BME Strategy and Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite community groups</li> <li>• Involve RSLs</li> <li>• Agree terms of reference</li> <li>• Outline aims and objectives</li> </ul>	To obtain involvement and support of key stakeholders	Initial Group now established.	Internal staff	HPSM HSO	Efficiency & Effectiveness
2.7	Work in partnership with BME RSLs to identify best practice in service provision for BME residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite and encourage BME RSLs to attend quarterly RSL Liaison Group Meetings</li> <li>• Arrange regular individual meetings with BME RSLs</li> </ul>	Adopt and disseminate any examples of good practice	Ongoing	CBC staff RSL partners	HPO RSL partners	Customers & Partners Efficiency & Effectiveness

No	Detailed Objective	Action	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
2.8	Restore Landlords' Forum to raise awareness of BME issues in the private rented sector – subject to resources	Map the current level of private lets to BME tenants	Private landlords fully familiar with CRE Code of Practice in Rented Housing 2006	April 2007 subject to resources being available	Proposed Homelessness Resources Officer	GMPH HPO	Customers & Partners

**Strategic Aim Three:**

**Deliver quality services for all the people of Charnwood which are accessible and appropriate to all**

This section outlines actions Housing Services will take to ensure that its services are sensitive to the cultural needs of different communities.

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
3.1	Provide a more accessible translation and interpretation service for BME communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure core leaflets are translated into required languages</li> <li>• Record and register the language/ communication requirements of non-English speaking BME customers</li> <li>• Conduct survey of staff/volunteers to develop database of languages spoken/skills</li> <li>• Include interpretation and translation services feature in Housing News and</li> </ul>	<p>All core housing service leaflets translated and available in main minority languages</p> <p>Other actions ongoing</p>	December 2007	Internal staff and external partner agencies	HPO  Partner agencies	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>other publications on a regular basis</li> <li>• Identify gaps in interpretation service and resources required</li> </ul>					
3.2	Ensure that the Homelessness Service treats all communities fairly and without discrimination	Monitor the levels of homeless acceptances, broken down by ethnicity	Broadly similar levels of acceptances across all communities	Ongoing	Internal staff	HNM	Efficiency & Effectiveness
3.3	Ensure that the housing needs of BME elderly are fully understood	Work with partners to investigate the needs of BME elderly	Improved knowledge to inform future developments of affordable housing	April 2008	Internal staff and external partners, CRE, The Bridge	EDO Key Partners	Customers and Partners
3.4	Develop a procedure for housing staff about using interpreters and translators and train staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce procedure</li> <li>• Provide training for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff to undergo training at least every two years</li> </ul>	Procedure and first training complete by August 2007	Internal staff  Appropriate partner agencies	HPO	Customers & Partners  Efficiency & Effectiveness
3.5	Audit the availability of translated materials and review the quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify gaps in translated materials</li> <li>• Review English in key</li> </ul>	All key documents to be available in Plain English as well as	December 2007	Internal staff  Partner	HPO	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
	of Plain English in key documents	documents	main minority languages		agencies		Efficiency & Effectiveness
3.6	Continue to promote the take-up of Housing Grants to under-represented BME Groups	Continue to promote grant aid in current priority action areas (which are already areas with high BME population)	Service level take ups are representative of BME community profile	Ongoing	Internal staff	GMPH	Customers & Partners
3.7	All Housing Needs Surveys to incorporate a BME/Equality review and assessment where appropriate	Ensure future HN Surveys include a BME booster sample	Next HNS scheduled for 2008. Ensure this includes BME booster survey or equivalent	December 2008	Internal staff HNS Consultant	HSO	Innovation & Learning
3.8	Enhance the level of choice available to all customers when allocating permanent accommodation.	Investigate feasibility of introducing Choice Based Lettings (CBL) in Charnwood. This should incorporate mechanisms to enable BME customers to access assistance when seeking properties	Introduce CBL in Charnwood, which is fully accessible to applicants from all communities	2010	Internal staff Possible later assistance from external consultancy	HPSM	Customers & Partners
3.9	Ensure that BME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map lettings across</li> </ul>	Achieve less than 5%	Ongoing	Internal staff	HNM	Customers &

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
	applicants have fair access to good quality permanent CBC accommodation	<p>the Borough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up quarterly monitoring reports to monitor outcomes</li> <li>• Monitor patterns of refusals and appeals on offers of lettings</li> </ul>	differentiation between property allocated to BME applicants and the general population				Partners
3.10	Continue to monitor resident satisfaction of all housing services provided for BME communities by the Council and other social housing providers	Conduct annual satisfaction surveys in conjunction with RSLs	Increased levels of tenant satisfaction year on year	Ongoing	<p>Internal staff</p> <p>The Bridge</p> <p>RSL partners</p>	<p>TPO</p> <p>HPO</p>	Customers & Partners
3.11	Improve information for BME young people about the housing options available to them should they be faced with homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify where information needs to be circulated and the languages required</li> <li>• Disseminate information</li> </ul>	All BME young people have access to accurate and up-to-date housing options information if they are faced with potential homelessness	January 2008	<p>Internal staff</p> <p>The Bridge</p> <p>External BME agencies</p>	HPO	Customers & Partners

**Strategic Aim Four:**

**Eliminate discrimination and inequality in housing service provision and encourage a more inclusive society**

This section outlines actions Housing Services will take to eliminate discrimination and inequality in housing service provision and to rectify gaps in its policies and service delivery to promote equality of opportunity and good community relations.

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
4.1	Ensure commitment to the Council's equal opportunities policy from all Housing staff, partners, contractors and consultants	All Housing staff to undergo equality and diversity training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of staff at any time to have undertaken training within the last 2 years</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Internal staff	PIO	Efficiency & Effectiveness
4.2	Promote a diverse workforce, which reflects the community profile	Obtain ethnic composition data of Housing staff by service area and grade. Identify areas of under-representation. Address any identified shortcomings	BME employees within Housing Services reflect community profile as far as possible	2010	Internal staff	Director of Housing & Health  ALMO Chief Executive	Efficiency & Effectiveness
4.3	Raise awareness of initiatives to tackle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review publicity and awareness of</li> </ul>	All racial harassment	Ongoing	Internal staff	ASB Officer/Co-	Customers & Partners

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
	discrimination and harassment	<p>Council's Equal Opportunity and Racial Harassment Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate publicity to BME community</li> </ul>	incidents fully reported and investigated		Partner agencies	<p>ordinator</p> <p>The Bridge Manager</p> <p>CRE</p>	
4.4	Continue ethnic monitoring of formal complaints in Housing Services	Analyse complaints to see if there is differentiation by ethnicity	Volume of complaints received from BME customers reflects community profile	Ongoing	Internal staff	<p>AOM</p> <p>HNM</p>	Customers & Partners

**Strategic Aim Five:**

**Promote community cohesion and social inclusion by maintaining positive working relationships and effective communications with the BME communities**

This section highlights the actions Housing Services will take to encourage a greater understanding and respect of different cultures to ensure that all communities in Charnwood are empowered to maximise choices to create an environment that benefits all.

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
5.1	Develop closer links with community groups. Visit community groups to give discussions on requested housing-related topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact community groups to discuss information requirements and agree on format</li> <li>• Develop programme</li> <li>• Visit community groups to give discussions on requested topics/ forthcoming events</li> <li>• Monitor and review take-up</li> </ul>	Two information sessions delivered to community groups by Sept 2007	Sept 2007  Ongoing	Internal staff	TPO	Customers and Partners
5.2	Raise awareness of	Challenge racist	Year on year	Ongoing	Internal staff	PIO	Customers

No	Detailed Objective	Actions	Target	Target Date	Resources	Lead Officers	Links to Corporate Plan Themes
	anti-racial harassment initiatives Borough-wide	attitudes and foster good relations between different ethnic groups	reduction in the number of racist incidents reported		External partners	HPO	and Partners
5.3	Provide support for BME residents who are isolated where they live	Identify isolated BME residents in Borough  Assess needs and provide relevant support	Promote social inclusion for BME residents	Ongoing	External partners	The Bridge and other support agencies	Customers and Partners

## **APPENDICES**

### **Who the Council Consulted**

- Appendix A Consultation Framework
- Appendix B Focus Group Topic Guide
- Appendix C Focus Group Report

### **Further Reading**

- Appendix D Acronyms
- Appendix E Glossary of Terms

## Appendix A - BME Housing Strategy Consultation List

Action for a Better  
Charnwood/Environment Network  
Advance Housing and Support  
Age Concern Leicestershire & Rutland  
Asian Women's Carers Support  
Group  
Bangladeshi Ekota Project  
Building Relationships  
Burleigh Community College  
Business Link  
CABE  
Care & Repair Ltd  
Centre for Deaf People  
Charnwood Asylum Seekers Forum  
Charnwood Community Safety  
Partnership  
Charnwood Day Centre  
Charnwood & North West  
Leicestershire Primary Care Trust  
Charnwood & North West  
Leicestershire Primary Care Trust  
Charnwood Carers Forum  
Charnwood Community Council  
Charnwood Dementia Carers Group  
Charnwood Council for Voluntary  
Service  
Charnwood Disability Forum  
Charnwood Ethnic Minority Forum  
Charnwood Health Forum  
Charnwood Learning Disability Action  
Group  
Charnwood Mental Health Forum  
Charnwood Racial Equality Council  
Charnwood Standing Committee for  
the Elderly  
Charnwood Voluntary Sector Mental  
Health Trust  
Chinese Mental Health  
Association/Wah Sum Helpline  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
Commission for Racial Equality  
Community Action Resource  
Enterprise (CARE) Ltd  
Connexions  
Department for Work & Pensions  
Disability Rights Commission  
Domestic Violence Panel Co-  
ordinator  
Dreamers  
(Leicestershire Youth Service)  
Drug Action Team  
East Midlands Development Agency  
East Midlands Regional Assembly  
Eastern Leicester Primary Care Trust  
EMASS  
Energise Lifeskills  
English Partnerships  
Environment Agency  
Fairdeal  
FATIMA Women's Network  
Government Office for the East  
Midlands  
Help the Aged  
Hind Leys Community College  
Home Office  
Homestart Charnwood  
House Builders Federation (Eastern  
Region)  
Jewish Association for the Mentally Ill  
(JAMI)  
Jobcentre Plus  
LAMP  
Leicester West Primary Care Trust  
Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce  
& Industry  
Leicestershire County Council  
Leicestershire County Council Youth  
Service  
Leicestershire County Council Youth  
Service North  
Leicestershire Education Authority  
Leicestershire Constabulary  
Leicestershire Children's Information  
Service (CIS)  
Leicestershire Economic Partnership  
Ms Kelash Sharma, Leicestershire  
Ethnic Elderly Advocacy Project  
(LEEAP)  
Leicestershire Family Practitioner  
Committee  
Leicestershire Learning Skills Council

Leicestershire & Rutland Association  
 of Parish & Local Councils  
 Leicestershire & Rutland Probation  
 Service  
 Leicestershire & Rutland Rural  
 Community Council  
 Leicestershire Social Services  
 Leicestershire Youth & Community  
 Education  
 Leicestershire Youth Service  
 Leicestershire Supporting People  
 Team  
 Life Skills  
 Lifeline For the Homeless  
 Local Association of Parish Council  
 Longslade Community College  
 Loughborough Chalchaley  
 Loughborough Chamber of Trade &  
 Commerce  
 Loughborough College  
 Loughborough & District Civic Trust  
 Loughborough Endowed Schools  
 Loughborough Older Persons Forum  
 Loughborough Project  
 Loughborough Students Union  
 Loughborough University  
 Loughborough Urban Forum  
 Loughborough Women's Aid  
 Trish Crowson, Melton Rutland and  
 Harborough PCT  
 Dee Shields, Moira Youth &  
 Community Centre  
 National Asylum Seekers Support  
 Service  
 New Direction Team  
 Parentline Plus  
 RNIB Vocational College  
 Rawlins Community College  
 Refugee Action  
 Regional Housing Board  
 RNIB Vocational College  
 Roundhill Community College  
 SHARP  
 Shenton House  
 Shree Ram Krishna Projects  
 Surestart  
 The Bridge  
 The Gypsy Council  
 The Housing Corporation  
 Traveller Education Service

Traveller Law Reform Coalition  
 Turning Point  
 Victim Support Charnwood  
 Woodbrook Vale High School  
 Women's National Commission  
 Wreake Valley College  
 YWCA Community Centre  
 Bangladeshi Social Association  
 Barrow Upon Soar Council of  
 Churches  
 Charnwood Bangladeshi Society  
 Christian Link  
 Church Commissioners for England  
 Churches Together in Anstey  
 Churches Together in Loughborough  
 Emmanuel Loughborough and St Mary  
 Geeta Bhawan Centre  
 Loughborough Buddhist Mediation  
 Loughborough Council of Faiths  
 Loughborough Jansari Centre  
 Loughborough Mela  
 Loughborough Mosque & Islamic  
 Cultural Association  
 PACE  
 Polish Community Centre  
 Sikh Gurudawara Centre  
 Sikh Temple  
 Sprititual Assembly  
 VOICES (Young Muslim Group)  
 Young Muslim Organisation  
 All Saints Residents Association  
 Ashby Road Estates Community  
 Association  
 Association of Charnwood Tenants  
 Barrow Upon Soar Community  
 Association  
 Charnwood Leaseholders Forum  
 Fearon Hall Community Association  
 Glenmore Community Association  
 Gorse Covert Community Association  
 Hastings Community Association  
 Longcliffe Road Senior Citizens Club  
 Mariners Quay Residents Association  
 Shelthorpe Community Association  
 Shree Ram Krishna Community  
 Association  
 Sriniketan Cultural Association  
 Storer & Ashby Area Residents  
 Association

Storer Road & Rosebery Street  
Community Association  
St Peters Community Association  
Advance Housing & Support Ltd  
Abbeyfield Society  
Asra Midlands Housing Association  
Derwent Housing Association  
DeMontfort Housing Society  
East Midlands Housing Association  
FCH Housing & Care  
Hanover Housing Association  
Housing 21  
Leicester Housing Association  
Metropolitan Housing Association  
North British Housing Association  
Nottingham Community Housing  
Association  
Raglan Housing Association  
Riverside Midlands  
Blaby District Council  
Harborough District Council  
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough  
Council  
Leicester City Council  
Melton Borough Council  
North West Leicestershire District  
Council  
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council  
Private Landlords  
Andrew Granger & Co Ltd  
Belvoir Property Management  
Bradford & Bingley  
Castle Estates (Leicestershire)  
Connells Estate Agents  
Countywide Residential Lettings  
Freckletons  
Haart Estate Agents  
Hartley Estates  
Hartley's  
Hetterley Associates  
Hetterley Associates  
Hetterleys Estate Agents  
Hamlets  
Howm  
Hutchings & Butlin  
John German  
Moore & York  
Nicholas Humphreys Estate Agents  
Northstar Estates  
Property Seen Relocation

Select Mortgage Services  
Sinclairs Estate Agents  
Taylors Estate Agents  
The Residential Letting Co.  
William H Brown  
Your Move

## Appendix B – Topic Guide for Focus Groups with People from BME Groups in Charnwood

### NOTES FOR RESEARCHERS

Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) has commissioned ECOTEC to conduct a series of focus groups to better understand the housing needs and aspirations of people from Black, Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The purpose of the focus groups will be to:

- ▶ Explore how Charnwood housing services interact with the community within which they operate
- ▶ Explore the housing needs and aspirations of different BME communities
- ▶ Ascertain the challenges and barriers CBC need to address

These focus groups will help Charnwood Council to develop a BME housing strategy that meets the needs of its diverse population.

#### **Additional information provided by CBC:**

Census figures show the population of Charnwood as 153,462 and the number of ethnic minority residents in Charnwood as 16,573, 10.5% of the population. The largest ethnic minority groups are Indian (7,203), Other White (2639) and Bangladesh (1,249). 69.55% of the population are Christian. The largest non-Christian religious group is Hindu (3.98% of the population).

For the purpose of this research the term BME is taken to include White Minority Ethnic Groups including Gypsy and Traveller and Irish, mixed heritage households, refugees and asylum seekers.

Please take 5 minutes to settle participants and to explain the following:

- ▶ **About the study:** ECOTEC is carrying out these focus groups on behalf of CBC but we are an independent organisation not attached to the local authority we are therefore able to give an objective view.
- ▶ **Confidentiality and anonymity:** assure them that they will remain anonymous. Participants will not be identified in any quotes included in the report to Charnwood or within the strategy.

- ▶ **Explain how the information will be recorded:** we will capture what is said accurately and will read back our notes at the end of each session to ensure that we have interpreted what has been said correctly.
- ▶ **What we want to talk to them about:** Their current experience of housing, housing needs and aspirations and their experience of the housing services offered by CBC.
- ▶ **Length of Focus Group** – two hours – explain that people can leave for toilet breaks throughout the session and can also help themselves to tea and coffee.

**Aims:**

- ▶ Explore how Charnwood housing services interact with the community within which they operate
- ▶ Explore the housing needs and aspirations of different BME communities
- ▶ Ascertain the challenges and barriers CBC need to address

Explain ground rules as follows:

<p><b>Participants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Not to talk over each other</li> <li>▶ Allow everyone a chance to speak</li> <li>▶ Confidentiality within the group – no repercussions</li> <li>▶ Feel free to say what you feel – (within reason – no swearing please)</li> <li>▶ There are no wrong or right answers</li> <li>▶ Interested in a range of views and opinions The purpose is to generate discussion among participants – not a Q+A</li> </ul>	<p><b>Facilitator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Moderator role</li> <li>▶ To move the conversation between participants forward</li> <li>▶ Prompt the discussion as appropriate</li> <li>▶ That you may have to interrupt people to ensure everyone gets a chance to talk – so participants should not be offended</li> <li>▶ Explain that the observer and note taker is there to record the proceedings and get a feel for what is being discussed not individual views.</li> </ul>
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**Explain that to start off – we will go round the group introducing ourselves.**

## **EXPERIENCE OF CHARNWOOD'S HOUSING SERVICES**

To help the Council to deliver services that are accessible and appropriate for all customers I would like the group to just take 2 minutes to consider the services that they have accessed or tried to access in the past and how the experience made them feel.

### **► What CBC services have you had experience of?**

- Contact centres
- One stop shops for advice
- Applying for grants (decoration / new tenants)
- Housing lists / transfers

Tease out more information about people particular experiences of:

- Homelessness services
- Services for older people
- Refugees and asylum seekers

### **► Did you feel that housing services have adequately met your needs?**

- Were there any barriers and if so what were they?
- Staff Awareness, etc
- How were these overcome?
- What lessons could the Council learn from these experiences?

### **► Is there sufficient information available about different housing tenure, homelessness issues, housing supply etc.**

#### **Note for researcher:**

Observer / note taker writes up the different barriers and ways that they can be overcome to ascertain priorities from the group.

## **HOUSING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS**

We are very interested to hear about what aspects of housing are particularly important to you.

### **► What do you like and dislike about your current housing environment?**

### **► What factors do you particularly value when looking for a property?**

- Type of housing – new build / terraced / detached

- Size / number of bedrooms
- Outdoor space
- Location – near the town centre / near family / other social networks / open space

▶ **What tenure will people be seeking in the future?**

- Social rented
- Private rented
- Shared ownership
- Outright homeownership

▶ **What are people's perceptions of different tenure?**

▶ **When deciding on a location to live in what is important to you?**

- Importance of living around people of the same culture
- Other infrastructure factors – transport / schools etc
- Do you plan to stay in the area
- Where do you aspire to move to

▶ **What would you change to help Charnwood's housing market better meet BME needs and aspirations?**

**Note for researcher:**

At the end of the session ask participants to rank which factors are the most important to them.

**COMMUNITY COHESION / SOCIAL INCLUSION**

▶ **How does your housing environment help or hinder social inclusion?**

▶ **Are there tenants associations in the area?**

- Are you encouraged to participate in these?
- What are your perceptions of them?

▶ **What developments could Charnwood put into place to help social inclusion?**

- Do participants think that these are different for older / younger people?

## **THE BME HOUSING STRATEGY**

- ▶ **When you heard that Charnwood was developing a BME housing strategy what did you think?**
- ▶ **What are your expectations of the strategy?**
- ▶ **Having listened to today's debate what do you feel should be the three main priorities for the strategy?**
- ▶ **What would help the policy come alive and affect real change?**
- ▶ **In the future what is the best way for Charnwood to communication with different communities?**

## **END OF SESSION**

Thank participants and reiterate the importance of their participation in the research.

**Draft Feedback from Consultations to Support the  
Development of Charnwood's BME Housing Strategy**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Census figures show the population of Charnwood as 153,462 and the number of ethnic minority residents in Charnwood as 16,573, 10.5% of the population. The largest ethnic minority groups are Indian (7,203), Other White (2639) and Bangladeshi (1,249). 69.55% of the population are Christian. The largest non-Christian religious group is Hindu (3.98% of the population).

For the purpose of this research the term BME is taken to include White Minority Ethnic Groups including Gypsy and Traveller and Irish, mixed heritage households, refugees

## **1.1 Methodology**

Charnwood Borough Council commissioned ECOTEC to conduct a series of focus groups to better understand the housing needs and aspirations of people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. In total eight focus groups took place and more than 50 people took part in the groups. Participants included:

- representatives from support services such as: SureStart, Loughborough University, the Police, the health sector;
- local residents living in: Housing Association accommodation, privately owned, Local Authority maintained, Hostels, Traveller sites; and
- Councillors.

The purpose of the focus groups was to:

- Explore how Charnwood housing services interact with the community within which they operate
- Explore the housing needs and aspirations of different BME communities
- Ascertain the challenges and barriers CBC need to address

These focus groups will help Charnwood Council to develop a BME housing strategy that meets the needs of its diverse population.

## **2.0 Feedback from the Focus Groups**

### **2.1 EXPERIENCE OF CHARNWOOD'S HOUSING SERVICES**

#### **2.1.1 Charnwood's Housing Process**

- There was common consensus that the housing process was complex and difficult to understand. It would therefore be useful if the Council produced simplified information, which explained the different processes for issues such as housing stock and allocation, the way that properties were maintained etc. Participants also stated that they would welcome information from the Council that demonstrated what services were the responsibility of certain departments.
- There was a concern that the Housing service, like other Council departments, operated in a silo and therefore opportunities for providing a joined up service to people was lost. For example if a new arrival to the UK moves into Council accommodation it would be beneficial for Housing to work closely with any voluntary sector support providers also working with the client.
- An underlying theme to the discussions was that CBC should pursue a multi-agency approach to supporting new and existing tenants, particularly those deemed to be vulnerable such as refugees. Providing a holistic and joined up service which provided advice and support in one place was essential for residents, rather than a piecemeal and disjointed approach.

#### **2.1.2 Staff Representation and Training**

- Participants believed that the workforce profile of the Housing Department and the Council at large did not reflect the different communities within which it operates. This can lead to people from BME groups feeling like they are on the fringe of the community and that services do not reflect their values and opinions.
- Participants also felt that this under-representation reinforced an image that the Council did not reflect the needs of the BME community, even if this were not the case in reality.
- Some participants reported that there was a perception within the Borough that Housing Service staff acted in a discriminatory manner towards non-White customers; however specific examples were not provided and other participants disagreed and said that they felt they had received parity of service.
- Representatives from support services in the Borough reported that some residents from BME communities failed to receive an adequate service from the housing team until they were accompanied by an advocacy service. This was particularly the case when the person did not speak English.
- There was consensus amongst the group that CBC should make more efforts to show that it is non-discriminatory and fair. This could include:
  - Highlighting the work of the equality officer;

- Introducing equal opportunities training as standard practice. This would not only improve service delivery but would demonstrate internally the importance placed on addressing inclusion and diversity;
- Asking one or two officers in the Council to have a dedicated responsibility for developing cultural awareness across the Council as part of their core duties;
- Mainstreaming equality into everyone's work;
- Developing better links with existing BME networks.

### **2.1.3 Housing Services: Repairs and Maintenance**

- There were mixed responses from participants about their experience of housing services. Some had positive experiences of housing services; others had received a poor service from the Council's housing team / contractors but were unsure whether this occurred sporadically to all tenants or to those from certain BME communities. Complaints included: being unable to get through to the correct person to discuss the work, jobs being left incomplete and slow responses to necessary adaptations.
- It was recommended that there should be one single point of contact in the Housing Department where tenants could call directly to lodge a request for repairs, rather than wasting time trying to get through to the contractors directly. This would be particularly useful for those that did not speak English and may require talking to someone through 'Language Line'.
- Participants recommended that CBC pursue a multi-agency approach to supporting new tenants, particularly for vulnerable tenants such as refugees, providing a holistic and joined up service which provided advice and support in one place, rather than a piecemeal and disjointed approach.
- Not all those attending had negative experiences, one tenant was happy with the repairs service offered by Housing department, stating that 'they come when they say they will', another tenant found a Housing Officer to be very helpful and would approach this staff member whenever he experienced any problems or needed repairs.

### **2.1.4 Getting Information About Housing Services**

- Residents were not aware of the services that were offered by the Council's Housing Department and yet tenants reported that they received regular newsletters from the ALMO.
- Participants in the group felt that Council information tended to only be accessible through the CBC website. This was seen to pose problems for both people with language difficulties and those without access to the Internet. They felt that the Council needed to develop better mechanisms for sharing information with residents.
- Residents stated that there was little information about the support that could be provided by the Council, this is particularly important to people who have recently been placed into Social Housing.

- One tenant reported that when he moved into his flat he was simply provided with some forms with telephone numbers on them. There was no further explanation or encouragement to continue contact with the Council.
- In some instances it would help if information would be provided face-to-face and available over a period of time. This would help people new to the area who were adapting to a new language, community and culture. It was recommended that new tenants be provided with floating support, before there is a problem, not after.
- A good practice example from a housing association was outlined. This reported that all the Housing Associate tenants received an information-pack, informing them of benefits and other information, each with a translated cover sheet provided in the language that the tenant understood, also stating which other translated documents and leaflets can be obtained. In addition, tenants were kept up to date through regular tenant meetings and quarterly newsletters, which covered neighbourhood problems.
- It was recommended from a tenant that CBC hold a monthly open evening in a local hall to provide an opportunity for tenants and officers to meet and discuss issues relevant to tenants.

### **2.1.5 Communicating with the Housing Department**

- Participants in the group underlined the importance of being able to communicate with the Council to express their housing needs.
- It was identified that communication was a major barrier facing the BME community. Some progress from CBC was reported, for example offering leaflets in community languages (notably Punjabi), but much more could be done.
- It was reported from the tenants in the group that leaflets did come through the door, about topics such as heating your home, but they did not think people really paid any attention to them. Also, the leaflets were all in English and it was only right at the end of the leaflet in small text saying that the leaflet was also available in community languages.
- One tenant wanted to raise a problem he had with his water tank but did not feel confident enough to approach the Housing Services Department to explain. This was concerning as regardless of the severity of the problem, he did not feel comfortable approaching the Council because of difficulties he experienced in articulating himself and understanding people's response.
- One Housing Association representative reported that when they consider a tenant for a property, they collect details from the individual including the languages they speak. They would then ask if they would be happy to offer their language / translation skills to support their fellow tenants. The Housing Association now has a database of tenants who are able to provide interpretation support and are also able to identify which tenants need support with which language. This idea was thought to be a good idea by several of the participating tenants.
- Representatives from support services felt that the Council could learn from other departments that had successfully developed communication with and from BME communities. An example mentioned was the work CBC was

undertaking on education (working with The Bridge and Connexions), supported by Central Government funding.

- It was felt that important learning and progress held within the Council was poorly filtered down to key agencies or adequately publicised to keep partners informed.
- In the past the Council has done consultation exercises with BME communities. This has aimed to encourage open communication, however the lack of subsequent action has further damaged the interaction between the Council and BME communities. Therefore it is essential that this work leads to some outputs / outcomes.
- To encourage better communication it was recommended that CBC should:
  - Should clearly explain its decision-making and endorse a policy of open and transparent communication. This would help to address some of the concerns raised by refugees and asylum seekers (see section 2.3);
  - Provide customers with a timescale for responding to their queries;
  - Develop a way of capturing who needs which language and provide information according to that language need;
  - Consider re-forming the cross sector Landlords' Forum. This enabled community, student and BME issues to be raised with the Council. It would provide an opportunity to learn about the SRB pot, ALMO risk assessments and implications to private landlords, and impact of the new Housing Act.

### **2.1.6 Awareness of Local Communities**

- It was felt that the Council, as a whole, did not know enough about its local population. This prevented all departments from communicating effectively within them and providing services that met people's needs
- It was commonly agreed that baseline data was needed in order to identify and understand the changing population trends in the community. This was considered to be imperative in order to inform any future strategy for the Charnwood area.
- Participants criticised organisations, which relied on the Census, condemning it as being already out of date, and so failing to provide an accurate profile of the local community. The need for local intelligence was therefore imperative in order to inform strategic decision making, which should be shared across various Council departments, and also with partner agencies and interested groups.
- There was concern that as the local demographics and human environment was changing, CBC had failed to adapt accordingly. For example, it was reported that there was an emerging Polish community in the local area and it was unclear how the Council was responding. It was suggested that information about the changing population might already be available within the Council, but restricted to economic development contexts, and not distributed across different departments.
- The Housing team and the Council at large do not link with existing organisations that represent the needs to BME communities. This would help them to test their thinking before going head with finalised policy development. That is why consultations such as these are important.

## **Housing Services – Summary of Key Recommendations:**

- It would be beneficial for information to be provided in simple formats, using easy to follow diagrams to demonstrate the operational flow of the process. This could include:
  - Explanations of different types of tenure;
  - Explanations regarding maintenance;
  - Explanations regarding housing stock, availability and waiting lists
  - Explanation of housing rights
- Staff to receive diversity awareness training.
- One single point of contact in the Housing department where tenants could call directly to lodge a request for repairs, rather than wasting time trying to get through to the contractors directly. This would be particularly the case for those that do not speak English as the person fulfilling the role would know how best to facilitate the conversation e.g. through 'Language Line'.
- Provide comprehensive multi-agency support structures.
- Have a bank of staff able to speak community languages
- Start to develop mechanisms to improve the communication between the Council and residents.
- CBC should pool together its intelligence and share information about BME communities and migration trends across departments
- Learn from other Council's who have implemented positive strategies (possibly identified through Beacon Council awards).

## **2.2 HOUSING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS**

### **2.2.1 Housing Availability**

- A representative from a Registered Social Landlord acknowledged that the biggest issue it faced, along with the Council, was to understand the needs of its tenants. It was therefore essential that the Council developed clear links to different communities and did not to make assumptions but provided services that were flexible to meet reasonable demand.
- It was generally acknowledged that there was significant pressure on housing stock and high rents in urban and built up areas meant that it was becoming increasingly difficult to meet the local populations housing needs and aspirations.
- It was reported that Asian groups (but also other cultural groups, such as Greeks) tend to live in extended families, thus requiring larger houses to support their housing needs. It was necessary for the Council to understand this and where possible meet the need, however participants felt that this characteristic was changing in second and third generations. This demonstrated the need for flexibility rather than services based on assumptions.
- Whilst it was reported that amongst BME families, who had been through mainstream education, there were around two children per household, these were not typically in social housing. More generally, there were a number of

BME groups, which for cultural or religious reasons endorsed very large numbers of children, which put a demand on larger households.

- Participants felt that for many BME people, family considerations represented one of the most important factors in deciding a house: 'it's a whole family activity'. One example was the terrace houses near the canal, which was a popular area for Bangladeshi families, as it was close to the local Bangladeshi community and also could be extended at the back of the property to accommodate an extension to the family numbers.
- Participants stated that many people like to be housed near their cultural community, as it engendered a feeling of safety and it is more likely that the desired amenities are available, such as culturally based shops. This was not just the case for people from BME groups but also white, British residents. Again, however, some participants felt that this trend was changing and more people from BME groups now aspired to move to more affluent areas, which were predominately white British.
- It was also discussed that older Asians wished to live near their place of worship, as many were unable to drive and so desired easy access and reach.
- Tenants reported that they were not provided with any real choice in their housing as they received an offer letter, which printed out in block capitals that if the person declined the offer they would be put on the bottom of the list. This did not encourage dialogue of any kind.
- Participants were not clear how the CBC conducted ethnic monitoring of its housing register, identifying which communities approached the Council for which types of housing and in which areas.

### **2.2.2 Specific Housing Needs of Younger People**

- It was reported that young people from BME groups, notably young male Bangladeshis, faced enormous difficulties in deciding to live independently. This was due to both a lack of suitable provision and also the cultural tradition and family pressure to stay at home until marriage. The Council needed to better understand such pressures and provide supportive structures to respond effectively.
- It was discussed that the next BME generation would be more likely to have new ideas of modern life and wish to live independently, but it was felt that the young BME people would still wish to live locally and close to their families, albeit in smaller properties (thus easing demand for larger properties).

### **2.2.3 Specific Housing Needs of Older People**

- It was stated that the more established BME communities are ageing, such as the Hindus and Punjabis who arrived in the local area 20-30 years ago. As people get older, their mother tongue 'comes to the fore' and as such there is a high demand for sheltered housing for elderly Asians who live in the borough. At present this need is not being met and the only available places are away from their local community.

- It was reported that there is a need for services for elderly Asians with higher level of needs, requiring more intensive support and care in their first language.
- Comments from the group suggested that CBC was not expected to directly provide housing services for elderly Asians, but to enable the service to occur as easily as possible.
- It was recommended that, as a short-term measure, a waiting list be introduced to help manage allocations to the only Asian sheltered housing scheme, which would fast track those with critical needs.

#### **2.2.4 Supported Housing**

- It was reported that disabled people from BME groups found it difficult to access services and support from CBC. They often had negative experiences of dealing with the Council, which resulted in poor customer relations and low expectations of Council services.
- There was concern that vulnerable groups were being overlooked and missing out on services and support due to poor customer relations. CBC should consider steps to build community relations and improve its public image
- It was reported that there were no services provided for BME individuals with special learning needs, despite a need for this type of support.

#### **2.2.5 Traveller / Gypsy Communities**

- In terms of their housing needs, it was reported that most Travellers wanted their own site, but generally speaking, Local Authorities were obstructive when it came to dealing with Gypsies and Irish Travellers.
- The Council needed to acknowledge that Travellers are becoming more aware of their rights and are becoming more willing to challenge decisions, which rule against their interests. Therefore, the Council needs to encourage a more open and positive attitude amongst its Housing Services staff in order to foster better relations and be more supportive to the Traveller community.
- It was reported that at present, Travellers are only given licence agreements, which means they can be evicted from their site within a week's notice. They don't have tenancy agreements, which would give them legal protection.
- B&B is an inappropriate option and it was felt that CBC needed to develop better tailored options for this group
- Across the groups, there was a strong sense of tension towards the Traveller community. Complaints included the debris, refuse and human waste left behind.
- CBC should consider how it can help alleviate hostility towards the Traveller community, e.g. clean up the refuse, provide toilet facilities
- Leicester City Council was reported to have employed a Housing Support Officer specifically for Travellers. It was stated that CBC should also provide some staff training to help Housing Services staff understand the ramifications of when Travellers decide to go in to housing.

- It was felt that Housing Services staff should proactively offer to inform Travellers of what other options are available to them when they face problems.
- It was reported that young people from the Gypsy and Irish Traveller community wanted to stay and continue to live with their family, even when they were married. However, they faced problems getting planning permission to support extending living arrangements.
- There were comments that CBC needed to instil attitudinal change across the whole organisation, notably amongst Councillors who, in regards to the Traveller community, lacked the incentive to take an active interest in their needs, as they did not vote.
- The Council will need to be aware of new legislation coming into force from early April 2007 which places an obligation on local authorities to mainstream assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers into its common housing policy practice. It is anticipated that many residential and transit plots will be needed. This information will ultimately feed into the Local Development Framework, required by each authority.

### **Housing Needs and Aspirations – Summary of Key Recommendations:**

- Improved monitoring and analysis of housing needs to help identify trends;
- Work on improving the flexibility of services to accommodate needs;
- Develop a database of language skills within the Council and Resident Associations;
- Respond to an ageing BME population.

## **2.3 RESPONDING TO REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

### **2.3.1 Understanding and Responding to the Needs of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

- It was reported that many people who come as Refugees and Asylum Seekers (such as Somalis) are poorly educated in their own country and many cannot read or write in their own language, let alone in English. This represents a major barrier to communication with the Housing Department. Proactive steps therefore need to be taken to accommodate different groups' needs.
- There was general consensus that CBC was failing to tackle the negative perceptions held amongst the White communities of refugees and asylum seekers. Participants felt that there was particularly a misconception around illegal immigrants and asylum seekers, believing that these were the same category of people.
- Policy can undermine cultural needs, for example, where visitor curfews (within Housing Association properties) are implemented, informal support networks are affected and for groups where socialising is an important element of their culture this is negatively impacted upon.
- Barriers existed to the conventional way that the Housing Service operated, for example, the formalised process of filling in forms was often a new concept that required a great deal of explanation. Before arriving in Charnwood many asylum seekers relied on informal networks in order to

access health and education provision. There should be better explanations of these new processes.

### **2.3.2 Asylum Seekers and Refugees Experience of Housing Services**

- A number of participants were dissatisfied with the level of service that they received from the Housing team, although it was not always clear if participants were talking about Council staff or those that they worked in partnership with. It was felt that the Council needed to better understand the needs of refugees and asylum seekers,
- There was particular concern about the allocation of housing and few were clear about why some people were housed more quickly than others. A number of people believed that those that were 'pushy and loud' received the best service from the local authority.
- Others believed that people got better Council services if they lived in better areas – if housed in a notorious area – you had to deal with the Council's negative image of the area.
- Participants reported that they often did not understand what they were told by staff and therefore staff needed to better explain processes and housing services.
- The group complained that it was easier to be housed if you were unemployed and this could act as a disincentive to be economically active.
- The groups felt that if housing services were sometimes delivered by people from a BME community, it would help them to feel represented.

### **2.3.3 The Housing Needs and Aspirations of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

- Council housing was perceived to be better than private rented and housing association accommodation. Individuals living in private rented and housing association accommodation spoke about restrictions that were placed upon them, for example, visitor curfews. The rent was also often more expensive in private housing, which meant that they were unable to save. Tenants in both Housing Association and private rented properties were unhappy with the additional service charge asked of them for communal parts as Charnwood was paying them to provide this service and therefore why should they pay again.
- Housing Services and associations could do more to encourage safe neighbourhoods, for example lighting, CCTCV etc. The Kurdish community attempted to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme to tackle problems such as graffiti and vandalism, but the Housing Association did not support this activity and non-Kurdish people did not want to join.
- Different communities will have different needs, for example the Kurdish people we spoke to would like the opportunity to live in a village, with access to outdoor space as this reflected where they had come from.
- Participants expressed a wish that the Council took more consideration of their religious beliefs, when allocating housing. Individuals housed in hostels were forced to live with people who drank and took drugs, which was very much against their religious beliefs.

- Participants said that they felt far safer when housed in areas with existing BME populations.
- Support services felt that the provision of temporary housing provision is particularly poor across the Borough and that the housing provision was too short-term and reactionary.
- It was stated that B&B / temporary accommodation is not a suitable option in the mid-term (beyond 3-4 months), especially for families.
- Participants said that having some ability and more independence to purchase their own furnishings would help them to 'feel at home'.

### **2.3.4 The New Refugee and Asylum Seeker Reporting Centre in Loughborough**

- Concern was expressed regarding the introduction of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Reporting Centre, which is due to open shortly. This was seen to have been imposed on the community without any prior consultation or involvement.
- The groups thought that news of the centre had created some resentment and hostility amongst some communities in Charnwood. It would benefit the area if the Housing Department worked with the local press to allay fears about loss of available housing stock for those on existing Council waiting lists or reported plans to cope with any increased demand.

### **Responding to Asylum Seekers – Summary of Key Recommendations:**

- A need for the transparency about how housing allocation is decided.
- Better communication about the forthcoming increase in demand created by the new Refugee and Asylum Seeker Reporting Centre.
- Better awareness perhaps provided through training to staff about the issues that face refugees and asylum seekers.
- Staff need to instil more trust in the groups by offering consistent services.
- Consider partnership working to ensure safer communities.

## **2.4 HOUSING'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY COHESION / SOCIAL INCLUSION**

### **2.4.1 Building a Sense of Community**

- Building community cohesion was recognised as an important Council objective and that the Housing Department could play an important part within this area.
- Some participants were sceptical about the Council's overall commitment to improving social inclusion/cohesion. Participants referred to the limited outputs and outcomes from Central Government funded regeneration and community cohesion initiatives.
- Throughout the focus groups there was very little awareness of resident / tenant associations.

- A tenant who lived in the Russell Street / Peel Street area, was angry about the approach taken by the Council to initiate a Tenants' Association on his estate. He felt that the Council had sent letters to a few selected tenants inviting them to start a Tenants' Association rather than providing an open opportunity to participate.
- Tenant Associations were reported to be difficult to organise, particularly as a large proportion of former social housing stock had been bought under the Right-to-Buy Scheme and were now privately rented.
- It was felt that with a more fluid turnover of tenants in privately rented accommodation, there was a reduced sense of community as people were no longer as rooted and settled in the same property.
- It was felt that CBC should ensure it consults with key BME community centres, in order to help support them and also as a way to develop links with the local community.
- There was concern expressed regarding the lack of any youth policies in the some areas, which impacted negatively on residents living conditions again (Russell Street and Peel Street were cited).
- Need to ensure that the Council could facilitate communication between different and sometimes hostile communities.
- Participants also expressed the apparent tensions existing amongst the more localised communities, such as the Bangladeshi and Gujarati communities which had self-inflicted segregation and divides which could undermine potential efforts to instil wider cultural harmony
- Allocation of housing was one reason for the tension. Participants felt that clear explanations were required from the Council to inform and educate people as to why certain people get housed and when. It was felt that poor communication regarding housing decisions, reinforced negative racial stereotypes and increased the level of resentment amongst different racial groups (e.g. perception amongst White customers that Black customers are given preferential treatment)
- There was discussion about the merits of getting neighbours to talk to each other and establish some formal support structures. Following from this, it was raised that elderly/ older people may feel a sense of uselessness and this could be resolved by establishing a type of community support exchange. Notably, the elderly / older people could take care of children whilst their neighbour went out shopping (similar to 'Time-bank' scheme)

#### **2.4.2 Empowering the Community**

- There was a perception that CBC was reluctant to take the lead in BME Housing issues, preferring to support the more vocal and articulate community groups to assume action. There was a concern that this led to patchy representation for some communities, particularly those newer to the area.
- It was felt that those individuals who have a better grasp of the English language are able to articulate their views and so get heard by officers more clearly.
- Tenants felt that the Council could support tenants to develop a sense of pride in their local communities, such as providing cleaning services.

- There was an observation that when there were any formal meetings or consultations to address social inclusion, officials outnumbered residents. The Council has to show that consultations have weight and influence; the local people rather than officials should set the agenda.
- When discussing issues around community empowerment, it was acknowledged that people often needed an incentive to motivate them to give up their time. They also needed to be confident in articulating their views, as it is unlikely people would speak in front of a group of people and potentially embarrass themselves.
- There were some individuals who had a genuine driven interest to volunteer their time to get involved and attended meetings. They welcomed further contact from the Council following this consultation.
- It was reported that Charnwood had a high proportion of predominantly White housing estates, which were felt to be hostile towards non-White residents. This limited diversity was seen to be a key issue, particularly in light of the new Reporting Centre for Asylums Seekers and Refugees, which was anticipated to generate a rise in the number of BME individuals coming into the area on a daily basis.
- It was acknowledged that Charnwood's housing stock is limited, and as such people are compelled to accept housing in undesirable areas, however support should be made available to help people to integrate into these communities.

### **2.4.3 Anti-social Behaviour**

- Some tenants felt that the Housing Department responded well to anti-social behaviour. One tenant reported problems when he first moved into his flat when someone tried to set fire to his front door. He reported this straight away and had a reinforced door installed quickly by the Council, he felt secure following the Council's actions.
- Other residents felt unhappy about the Council's policy towards tenants displaying anti-social behaviour, which was felt to be too heavy-handed and failed to resolve the problem. Tenants felt that the Council had a responsibility to support the tenant to adjust their behaviour, rather than add to their problems by evicting them and effectively making them homeless, contributing to 'an ever decreasing spiral'.
- A few tenants reported experiencing problems with neighbours who displayed anti-social behaviour (e.g. loud music, throwing parties, shouting out the window...). In all incidences, the tenants were involved in some action (starting a petition, discussing with other neighbours...) and offending neighbour was evicted.
- Representatives from the Police informed the group that they operated within Joint Action Groups in order to respond to issues arising from the community, so that incidences (typically of low level anti-social behaviour) can be dealt with straightaway.
- The Police appeared reluctant to take the lead in community issues, but rather support community-led groups to take action, such as the 'Four Streets' project, which was set up by residents and has been supported by

the Police and local authority in submitting an application for funding from the Home Office.

- The Police representative was keen to ensure CBC consulted effectively with the Police in regards to placement of individuals who are known offenders in order to avoid placing difficult people in inappropriate environments (e.g. placing people with known racial issues in densely BME populated areas).
- It was reported from the Police representatives that 2-4 Neighbourhood Officers had recently been employed. This was believed to be a developing role, with remits still to be determined. It may be possible for the Housing Department to help inform this process.

#### **2.4.4 Recommendations**

- Charnwood should consider resident involvement opportunities, which would allow different levels of involvement dependent on interest and time.
- Loughborough has recently launched a “new arrivals strategy” which identifies and proactively links up all the services in the town and supports newly arrived individuals in a more joined-up way. It will be important to measure the effectiveness of this and Housing's part within it.
- The Housing Department should work closely across service provision to ensure a joined up approach to anti-social behaviour experienced by BME groups.
- It was suggested that CBC consider developing links with deprived areas through organisations such as Sure Start, which would provide an automatic access to families
- CBC could extend and provide interpreters at the Housing Centre for open drop-in sessions (possibility of sub-contracting to draw upon existing translating services who could support on providing audio and written translated material)
- Have regular community drop-in sessions where residents could come and go, enabling the Council to meet its resident, residents to meet each other and officials.

## **2.5 KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE BME HOUSING STRATEGY**

- There was over-whelming support for the development of the strategy and the willingness of the Borough to consult, however the consultation exercise should continue to allow feedback on the actual strategy.
- All participants expressed a desire for the strategy to have tangible outputs and outcomes, which were measurable and therefore accountable. Many felt that there was a danger that a strategy remained a paper document that effected little change.
- It would be useful to show how the strategy will be communicated to other Council departments, Housing Associations and procured services.
- *The strategy needed to outline how it would interact with other statutory responsibilities such as Public Sector Duties.*

- Participants were clear that the distinction of BME went beyond just skin colour (e.g. Polish were considered to fall under this category), and a broader definition should be built in to the BME Housing Strategy.
- It was raised that for the first time, diversity is emerging in village areas (notably with Polish farm workers), which required fresh thinking on the part of CBC as to how to approach this issue. Also, it was stated that with Romanian accession to the EU due to occur in Jan 2007, it was a timely occasion for CBC to put measures in place to support this increased diversity.
- It was reported that 2 years ago CBC conducted a face-to-face housing survey in several wards however there was major criticism that of the Council that the actions proposed in the findings did not translate into practice. It would be extremely damaging if the same occurred after this exercise.
- The strategy should consider links with other diversity strands for example disability and gender.

## **Appendix D - Acronyms Used in the Strategy**

<b>ALMO</b>	Arms Length Management Organisation
<b>ASB</b>	Anti-Social Behaviour
<b>BME</b>	Black and Minority Ethnic
<b>CBC</b>	Charnwood Borough Council
<b>CBL</b>	Choice Based Lettings
<b>CRE</b>	Commission for Racial Equality
<b>DCLG</b>	Department of Communities and Local Government
<b>GATAA</b>	Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment
<b>HMA</b>	Housing Market Assessment
<b>LAA</b>	Local Area Agreement
<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Association
<b>NASS</b>	National Asylum Support Service
<b>ODPM</b>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
<b>RRAA</b>	Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
<b>RSL</b>	Registered Social Landlord

## Appendix E - Glossary

This glossary is a tool to assist in understanding the BME Housing Strategy. It is not intended to provide a precise or legal definition of the terms used.

**Affordable Housing** – Normally refers to “social rented” or shared ownership housing for those households who are unable to resolve their housing needs in the local private sector market because of the relationship between housing costs and income.

**ALMO** – See Arms Length Management Organisation

**Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)** – A company set up by a Council to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock. The company is owned by the Council and operates under the terms of a management agreement between the Council and the ALMO

**Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** – Any activity that causes alarm, harassment or distress to an individual, a community or group of households

**Asylum Seeker** - Someone who is waiting for his or her application to be recognised as a refugee to be considered by the Government

**B&B** – See Bed and Breakfast

**Bed and Breakfast** – Temporary accommodation provided for homeless people while their applications are assessed or they are waiting permanent housing

**Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)** – A set of Government indicators to measure performance. They are collected nationally to allow a comparison between Local Authorities

**Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)** - People of African, Asian or Caribbean heritage or descent, encompassing other migrant communities who may be discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity or colour’

**BME** - See black and minority ethnic

**BME Steering Group** – A of key stakeholders responsible for overseeing the development of the BME Housing Strategy, including the ongoing monitoring and review of the Action Plan

**Census** – An official count carried out by the Office for National Statistics every ten years to find out the number of people living in the country and further information about them

**Charnwood Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme** – One of fifteen Cohesion Pathfinder Programmes within the Country, providing funding by the Home Office to test and evaluate new methods of encouraging social cohesion

**Charnwood Racial Equality Council (CREC)** – A voluntary sector organisation set up under the Race Relations Act 1976 to tackle racial discrimination and promote racial equality

**Charnwood Strategic Partnership (CSP)** – Charnwood’s Local Strategic Partnership (see LSP)

**Community Cohesion** – Common vision and sense of belonging for all communities; diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are positive; people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities

**Community Safety Partnership** – Work with the police, other agencies and local people to introduce effective crime prevention measures

**Community Strategy** – A Long term strategy identifying residents’ priorities for action in their communities. The Plan also aims to promote economic, social and environmental well being of the community

**Concealed Household** - A household living within another household but not by choice

**CREC** - See Charnwood Racial Equalities Council

**CSP** - See Charnwood Strategic Partnership

**DCLG** – Department of Communities and Local Government (formerly the ODPM)  
The Government department with responsibility for local government including housing, homelessness, planning and sustainable communities

**Decent Homes Standard** – A Government standard that all social housing (both housing association and the Council) has to reach by 2010. A decent home will pass four tests:

It must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing (it must not be unfit);

It must be in a reasonable state of repair;

It must have reasonably modern facilities and services; and

It must provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This target was widened in 2002 – improving the housing conditions of vulnerable people living in private accommodation (PSA7)

**Deprivation** – Indicates a level of poverty which restricts life chances in relation to income, employment, health, education and training housing and geographical access to services

**DFG** - See Disabled Facility Grant

**Disabled Facility Grant (DFG)** – This grant is available for people with disabilities who need improvements made to their home in order to allow them to access it easily, move around inside easily and make better use of the facilities such as bathrooms. Disabled people can apply for the grant through their local Council

**Ethnic Minority** – A national or racial group living in a country or area which contains a larger group of people of a different race or nationality

**Fit For Purpose** – Government Standard for Local Housing Strategies comprising thirty criteria

**Floating Support** - Support provided to tenants and owner-occupiers in a number of different properties, rather than attached to a specific property. Floating support is defined as low-level support which can be provided to vulnerable tenants in ordinary accommodation. It is generally considered suitable for all client groups (depending on need)

**HNS** - Housing Needs Survey

**Housing Corporation** – The Corporation's role is to fund and regulate housing associations in England. It is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)

**Housing Register** – The list for applicants wanting Council or Registered Social Landlord property

**LAA** - See Local Area Agreement

**Local Area Agreement (LAA)** – Local Area Agreements are a new approach to improve co-ordination between central government and local authorities and their partners, working through the Local Strategic Partnership

**Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** – A Local Strategic Partnership (LSPs) is a single non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors

**NASS** - See National Asylum Support Service

**National Asylum Support Service (NASS)** – A Government service that provides support, accommodation and financial help to asylum seekers whilst their asylum claim is being processed

**ODPM** - See Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

**Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)** – The former Government department with responsibility for local government including housing, homelessness, planning and sustainable communities, now called DCLG (see above)

**Office of National Statistics (ONS)** – Organisation responsible for official United Kingdom statistics reflecting the British economy, population and society. Responsible for the Census 1991 and 2001 data

**OISC** – See Office of Immigration Services Commission

**ONS** - See Office for National Statistics

**Performance Monitoring** – Performance monitoring is a method of helping Council's deliver lasting improvement. It does this by ensuring individuals, teams and, ultimately the organisation, know what they should be doing, how they should be doing it and take responsibility for what they achieve

**Priority Need** – Under the homelessness legislation, the council has a greater duty to people accepted as being in priority need. This includes people with dependent children and people who are vulnerable

**Refugee** - A person who has been forced to leave their country because it is not safe for them to stay and has been granted rights to remain in another country as a result

**Regional Housing Board (RHB)** – Following the Sustainable Communities Plan in 2003, RHBs were formed to advise ministers on strategic housing priorities and to advise on the allocation of social housing funding through the new Single Regional Housing Pot

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL)** - These are independent housing organisations registered with the Housing Corporation under the Housing Act 1996 formed to provide affordable housing. Most are housing associations, but there are also trusts, co-operatives and companies

**RHB** - See Regional Housing Board

**RSL** - See Registered Social Landlord

**Shared Ownership** – A method of acquiring part ownership of a dwelling. Rent is paid on the non-purchase share

**Sheltered Housing** – Homes for older people, usually with a scheme manager on site or on call to offer help and support

**Social Housing** – A general term for rented and shared ownership housing not provided for profit, e.g. by Councils, Registered Social Landlords, almshouses etc

**Social Inclusion Positive** – Action to make employment, training and economic intervention sustainable. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister research indicates that housing investment can play a key role in anchoring communities

**SPD** - See Supplementary Planning Document

**Stakeholders** – Those who will be affected or have an interest in a particular issue or policy

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - Supplementary documents that expand upon existing local plan policies

**Supporting People** – The Supporting People Programme is designed to fund housing related support services which help improve vulnerable people's lives and maintain independence in their own homes

**Sure Start** - Sure Start is the government programme to deliver the best start in life for every child. They bring together, early education, childcare, health and family support.

**Sustainable Community** – A number or people living in the same place having a common interest to maintain the well-being of the community

## **Contacts**

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This document is also available on the Housing & Health, Housing Policies & Information page of the Council's website [www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk)