

CABINET

25th June 2001

BLACK & ETHNIC MINORITY HOUSING STRATEGY

Report from the Director of Housing

1. Purpose of report

This report summarises the completion of the “Black & Ethnic Minority (BME) Housing Strategy”. A copy of the final Strategy is attached as an Appendix.

2. Summary

A first draft of the BME Housing Strategy had been drawn up and widely circulated for consultation during mid-2000. Feedback from this first consultation together with other proposals designed to enhance the impact of the Strategy have been incorporated into a revised draft and the amended Strategy sent out for further consultation. The final Strategy incorporates minor revisions and is now ready for publication and dissemination.

3. Recommendations

Members are recommended to endorse the final BME Housing Strategy, and to support its application to housing services and provision in the city area.

4. Financial & legal implications

There are no direct financial implications from this report, although the BME Housing Strategy proposes clear priorities for use of housing finances to support housing provision for BME communities in the city.

The report’s legal implications relate to the authority’s response to the report on the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry. It is therefore a key element within the City Council and the Housing Department’s commitment to overcome ‘institutional racism’ and to make and encourage changes that can achieve this end.

5. Report author

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

- 1.1 This report provides detail of Leicester's first full Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy. This Strategy sets out the identified housing needs of Leicester's diverse BME population, the priorities that will be addressed and the outcomes to be sought. It is intended that the Strategy will complement the City Council's Housing Investment Programme Strategy and will be a key driver in identifying and addressing the housing needs of Leicester's BME population.
- 1.2 The definition of 'BME' is based on the ethnic classifications proposed for the 2001 Census, which will be adopted by the City Council. (See Appendix A of the Strategy, attached to this report).
- 1.3 The Strategy sets out an overall agenda for all housing providers in the City, including the City Council, Registered Social Landlords and the voluntary and private sectors. It seeks to gain commitment and support from all housing providers to address the needs of BME communities in the City across all tenures. The City Council will act as the Lead Agency in promoting this Strategy, although it has been developed through extensive consultation and will be implemented through ongoing partnership arrangements. It will be regularly monitored and reviewed over the next eighteen months in order to assess its achievements against the targets set out in within its various Action Plans.
- 1.4 A first draft of the report was prepared earlier in 2000, and distributed to a wide circulation list of local housing bodies and BME organisations and interests. A series of meetings and workshops were also held from which a number of proposed revisions were returned to the authority. Changes in key Housing Department personnel have meant that new officers within the Policy & Research Team during Winter/Spring 200/2001 have compiled the final revised version of the Strategy. This was circulated for final consultation during April, and was presented at the latest meetings of the Leicester Housing Forum and the LA/Housing Association Liaison Group at the beginning of June.

- 1.5 It is proposed that the impact of this 'BME Strategy' is formally reviewed at the start of 2003, however an interim report of its impact will be presented to elected members in twelve months time.
- 1.6 The copy of the BME Housing Strategy attached to this report is the proposed final version of the overall Strategy. Members are asked to endorse the authority printing and distributing the Strategy as a key element of its overall housing and community strategies.

2. Consultations

Versions of the Strategy's text and subsequent amendments have been circulated to the following contacts for comment and consultation:

- (a) All LCC Departments
- (b) Registered Social Landlords operational in the city area.
- (c) Other local housing service agencies and providers
- (d) BME organisations
- (e) Other relevant community-based bodies

3. Aims and Objectives of the Housing Department

The overall background context for BME Housing Strategy is the aims adopted by the City Council and the Housing Department for the provision of local services:

- * 'to promote the integrity and sustainability of Leicester for its people in the interests of their past, their present and their future'.
- * 'to provide a decent home within the reach of every citizen'.

4. Background Papers : Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Draft versions of BME Housing Strategy (June 2000 to May 2001) :
LCC Policy & Research Team

5. Financial, Legal and other Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. The BME Housing Strategy does however propose clear priorities for the use of housing finances to support housing provision for BME communities in the city, part of which will entail the use of local authority resources upon its own housing stock and housings services.
- 5.2 The City Council has a duty under Section 72 of the Race Relations Act 1976 to 'carry out its functions with a view to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups'. This has become an enforceable duty, through the extended provision of the Race relations Amendment Act 2000. The key legal implications of this report relate to the formal obligations noted above and the authority's response to the final Report on the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry.

The BME Strategy is therefore a key element within the City Council and the Housing Department's commitment to overcome the 'institutional racism' challenged by the Lawrence Report, and to make and encourage changes that can achieve this end.

5.3 Other implications for 'equal opportunities' are as follows:

Other Implications	Yes / No	Paragraph reference within supporting papers
Equal Opportunities	Yes	All report
Policy	Yes	All report, especially Part 4 of the Strategy in Appendix A
Sustainable & Environmental	No	
Crime & Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	Yes	Part 1 and 2 of the Strategy in Appendix A

6. Author of this Report

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