

June 2001

A BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC HOUSING STRATEGY FOR LEICESTER

LCC Housing Department

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A Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy for Leicester

Foreword : *Councillor Draycott
(Lead Cabinet Member for Housing & Neighbourhood Renewal).*

Leicester is a multicultural City with a diverse Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population, characterised by communities from different cultures, religions and with different languages. There is a strong tradition of partnership working between housing providers from the public housing sector (local authority and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)) and the private housing sector (owner-occupied and landlords) to address the priority housing needs of the population including the BME population.

This strategy sets out the priority housing needs of Leicester's BME communities and how these needs can be addressed by housing providers in the City. It represents the outcome of extensive consultation and discussion around practical ways in which these needs can be met and demonstrates a strong commitment towards achieving this. The strategy complements other existing strategies, plans and policies such as the Housing Strategy (1999-2002), the Single Homeless Strategy and the Housing Corporation's BME Strategy for the East Midlands.

On behalf of the City Council, I would like to thank all the partners who have contributed to the development of this document and look forward to seeing the effective delivery of the outcomes.

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Part 1. Introduction and Background to the BME Strategy

Introduction

- 1.1 This is Leicester's first full Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy. It sets out the identified housing needs of Leicester's diverse BME population, the priorities that will be addressed and the outcomes to be sought. 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).
- 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.
- 1.4 The City Council will act as the Lead Agency in promoting this Strategy, although it has been developed through extensive consultation (see Appendix B) and will be implemented through ongoing partnership arrangements. It will be regularly monitored and reviewed in order to assess results and achievements against the targets and objectives set out in Part 3.
- 1.5 The BME Strategy is also a response to the report on the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry, in December 1999. The City Council has accepted the Lawrence Enquiry's definition of 'institutional racism', that it is a feature of all large organisations including the City Council. The Lawrence Enquiry defines 'institutional racism' as follows:

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

This Strategy is therefore a key element within the City Council and the Housing Department's ongoing commitment to overcome 'institutional racism' and to make and encourage changes that can achieve this end.

- 1.6 It is intended that this first strategy will be for a period of about 18 months (until approximately Autumn 2002), after which there it will be reviewed. The initial focus will be on the social housing sector (local authority, RSL and voluntary sector stock and services) and will over time be developed to look at services

provided by the private sector.

Background

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

* The City Council's overall aim is to:
'promote the integrity and sustainability of Leicester for its people in the interests of their past, their present and their future'.

* The Housing Department's overall aim is to work towards:
' a decent home within the reach of every citizen'.

This BME Strategy is part of the City Council's commitment to promoting equality in the city through the provision of high quality housing services in Leicester, in partnership with other organisations and agencies. It also has provided 'Targets' to be inserted into the Leicester Community Plan.

1.8 The City Council has been well aware of its 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.

1.9 The City Council is also aware that the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry drew attention to 'institutional racism' and the need for public bodies, including local authorities, to address how racism negates the promotion and provision of a truly equal service to all citizens within a local authority's area.

The City Council has therefore adopted the Lawrence Enquiry proposal for how a 'racist incident' will be defined. This is: "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person". This definition will be used for reporting and recording racial incidents in employment and service delivery, and as a starting point for investigating complaints of this nature.

1.10 The City Council has adopted the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) standards and recommendations of the Lawrence report that sets the background against which services will be reviewed and developed. In addition the Council will take into account equality issues within a Best Value approach and review policies and procedures in the context of the Human Rights Act.

1.11 This strategy also seeks to complement and add to the Housing Corporation's national 'Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Policy' and a regional BME Strategy which was published in November 1999.

The Regional Strategy sets the context for the identification of needs, partnership working and service provision by the RSL movement. This local BME

Strategy for Leicester will have a focus on City area, the make up and needs of its BME population and communities, and how these needs can be met.

- 1.12 The City Council annually assesses and identifies what housing needs should be prioritised, and these are set out in the Housing Strategy. This information is gathered from a number of sources including the Housing Register, Housing Needs Survey data, CORE data, research etc.

The Housing Needs Survey is carried out every 4 years and is based on a sample survey with a booster sample for the African-Caribbean population which was included to provide valid results on the needs of this community. The survey results can be analysed by ethnic classification to provide an overview of people's aspirations in relation to their housing needs. This information has proved useful in identifying the need for housing type, location and affordability criteria which are used to develop the City Council's overall Housing Strategy, including specific targets like its Renewal Strategy, and priority for bids by RSLs for the Housing Corporation's Annual Development Programme (ADP).

- 1.13 The City Council is the largest landlord in the City and is continually striving to improve its services for all tenants including BME communities. The provision of language services, a comprehensive harassment policy and alarms for victims of racial harassment and the screening of RSL tenants who require an element of social care through housing benefits by Social Services are a few of the initiatives developed within the Department.

- 1.14 Over the past 15 years or so, the City Council has worked with a number of partners and has been proactive in its support to address the housing needs of the City's BME communities. There are at present six BME-led RSLs operating in Leicester; ASRA Housing Association, Foundation Housing Association, CARA (predominately Irish community) Belgrave Co-op, Ross Walk Co-op and Maynard Co-op. There is also an active and vibrant voluntary sector that provides housing and support for vulnerable BME groups.

The City Council will continue to work with all RSL and voluntary sector partners to identify and address the need for social housing in the City.

- 1.15 In the private sector (66.8% of the total housing stock), there are issues for owner-occupiers and private tenants relating to both stock condition and affordability. The City Council's Renewal Strategy Programme was launched in 1976 has sought to tackle some of the problems faced by BME communities in seeking good quality, affordable housing in specific neighbourhoods to meet local needs. The Programme has sought to provide services in inner-city areas which tackle issues such as poor housing and overcrowding, both through the provision of renovation grants and by working with RSLs to provide large family housing and to bring empty properties back into use.

- 1.16 This Strategy is therefore set within the context of existing policies and programmes that seek to tackle discrimination and social exclusion. It is also one that will evolve over time through the continued identification and prioritisation of needs to reflect the position in Leicester at any given time.

Part 2. The Housing Needs of Leicester's BME Population

Profile and Housing Needs of Ethnic Groups in Leicester

- 2.1 Leicester has the largest BME population of residents in the East Midlands region and outside of the London Boroughs. It is a multi-cultural City with a resident population of 295,600 (Office of Population, Census and Surveys 1997 mid year estimate) of which at least 28% are from minority ethnic groups. The characteristics of the population are described in more detail in Leicester's Housing Strategy for 1999-2002 copies of which are available from the Housing Policy and Research Team on (0116) 2528797/voice Minicom (0116) 2528798.
- 2.2 Since the late 1960's and the early 1970's the City of Leicester has been home to a diverse ethnic minority community. Much of this population was from East Africa, the Caribbean, India, as well as Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Far East, and Southern African countries such as Malawi and Zambia.

The BME population, as based on the 1991 census data, was assessed as:

*	Indian	22.3%
*	African-Caribbean	2.4%
*	Other	2.4%
*	Pakistani	1%
*	Bangladeshi	0.4%

[The 1991 Census had no detail on the Gypsy & Travellers population.]

Between 1995 and 1998 there was a significant influx of Montserrat refugees arriving in England following an extensive volcanic eruption of the Soufriere Mountains in Montserrat. Further additions to the ethnic composition of the city's communities have been asylum seekers originating from the Balkans territory and from African countries such as Somalia. The overall BME population is therefore very diverse, with different needs and priorities

- 2.3 It is estimated that at present the BME population is around 33-35% of the total population. By the year 2010 Leicester is expected to be the first city in Europe that will have over 50% of the population from BME community backgrounds.

Demographics by Ethnic Group and 'Wards'

- 2.4 Of the 28 wards in Leicester, four have an ethnic minority population of 50% or more. This population is predominantly of Asian origin. Of the four wards that contain the largest African-Caribbean population, only one is the same as that for wards where the Asian community is concentrated.
- 2.5 Aside from these concentrations, ethnic groups are distributed across different wards in the City, although some wards have relatively small ethnic minority communities. Six wards have 5% or less ethnic minority households (Aylestone, Eyres Monsell, Mowmacre, New Parks, North Braunstone and Saffron wards). In

addition, a further four wards have 10% or less minority households (Thurncourt, Saint Augustines, Humberstone and East Knighton).

- 2.6 A larger percentage of African-Caribbean households than any other ethnic group are concentrated in single person households under 60. African-Caribbean households also contain a much greater proportion of single parent households than any other groups.
- 2.7 Non-BME households (i.e. 'White' households by Census classification) are significantly concentrated in the older age ranges, particularly as older couples.

Needs Assessments

- 2.8 The Housing Department has commissioned 2 Housing Needs Surveys to date (1993, 1997) that have identified housing needs and aspirations within Leicester, based on sample surveys of households in the City.
- 2.9 The most recent Housing Needs Survey (1997) highlighted a number of issues in relation to the housing needs of the BME communities in the City. These continue to inform the key housing 'priorities' that are summarised below.
- 2.10 The next Housing Needs Survey is due to be carried out in 2001/2002 and this will again provide more up to date information on overall needs including a focus on the needs of Leicester's BME population. This information will be used as feedback into this Strategy, as will the results of the next Census in 2001.
- 2.11 The 2001 Census will now include an 'Irish' category which will enable further information on the needs of this community to be identified. The City Council has already adopted the CRE recommendation to identify a separate 'Irish' category to enable monitoring and the provision of services to meet the needs of this community. It is still hoped that some further identification of the 'Gypsies and Travellers' community can be adopted.
- 2.12 The needs of vulnerable groups amongst the BME communities – e.g. people experiencing domestic violence, single homeless, etc. - will also be reflected in other housing strategies such as the 'Single Homeless Strategy' and an 'Older Persons Housing Strategy'.

Identifying the Needs of Demographic Groups

- 2.13 Leicester is home to emerging communities where people have come to settle in the City. There are now resident populations from a wide range of backgrounds - Somalian, Montserratian, Bosnian, Kosovo, Turkish, Kurdish, and Afghanistan, plus increasing interest being shown from by households from other African states, the Middle East, Asia and other parts of Eastern Europe.

Whilst the number of households may be small there will be specific needs for different housing and support services for these communities, and it is

anticipated that partners will need to work jointly to identify these needs more precisely and consider how they are to be addressed. The needs set out in the paragraphs below are where some of the issues are already apparent.

2.14 Irish Community:

As a result of initial work in the Irish community the Housing Department has undertaken a survey that looked at the issue of housing need among Irish households. The principle findings of the research have borne out the predominantly poor condition of Irish households' housing. It has also shown that they have disproportionately high needs as far as long term illness and disability is concerned - partly because as a population they have a significantly higher percentage of older people than the population for the City as a whole. In addition, it was found that 76% of Irish households with an illness or disability had no related adaptations or special facilities in their homes.

The research recommended that more specialised Housing Association accommodation for the Irish community should be developed. A scheme for Irish elders has been developed in consultation with a local Irish Steering Group and is managed by CARA Housing Association on the Saffron Lane estate.

2.15 Gypsies and Travellers:

The level of the city's Gypsy and Travellers community is a fluctuating figure, by its virtue of its own character. There is, nevertheless, a clear need to increase the facilities available to transient and mobile households, as well as support Gypsies and Travellers settled in housing who require space for caravans or vehicles. The existing Gypsy site at Meynalls Gorse is already operating at full capacity, and other locations are needed for the provision of small sites for at least 'temporary' abode. The City Council has agreed in principle to the provision of a small number of temporary stopping places.

Under present government regulations neither mainstream Housing Department resources nor Housing Association grant finance can be directed towards the provision of Gypsy site facilities. It will be a clear priority to identify alternative resources suitable to establish services on 'temporary' sites, as soon as agreement can be reached on the location of such sites.

2.16 Montserrat Evacuees:

In 1999 research was carried out by the City Council into the issues and concerns faced by Montserrat evacuees in Leicester, since coming to the United Kingdom. Households are mainly living in Highfields, Beaumont Leys, Rowlatts Hill, Saffron, and St. Matthews.

The survey found that the Montserrat community had experienced particular difficulties with finances (the repayment of loans and managing on benefits) and with health care problems that are the result of experiences associated with the

eruption of the volcano. Further work has been recommended to consider how to address budgeting on low income, and making contact with the Health Authority to determine how best to support the evacuees.

2.17 Somalian Population:

The Somalian community is mostly living in Highfields and St. Matthews, although a few households have moved into new homes on South Braunstone. There is already 'hidden' homelessness and overcrowding within the community, as some Somalian families remain here after initially having come to stay with relatives and families already settled in Leicester. The lack of large family housing is also crucial here, as the main need is for 4-bed housing.

2.18 Housing for other Asylum Seekers and Refugees:

Leicester has been identified by the Home Office as a cluster area for receiving asylum seekers dispersed by the Home Office, under the Immigration and Asylum Seekers Act 1999. Local authorities are unable to offer accommodation directly to asylum seekers - the National Asylum Seekers Support Service (NASS) is required to procure accommodation from public and private sector providers and from local authority organised contractors. Authorities are, however, responsible for providing housing services to refugees (i.e. those in receipt of a 'positive' permission to reside in the UK), to enable them to leave NASS accommodation within 14 days.

Leicester is the lead administration authority of the newly constituted East Midlands Consortium for Asylum Seekers (EMCASS). This is open to all local authorities in the region, together with Police, Health and the Voluntary Sector. A Regional Project Manager has been appointed to co-ordinate the work of EMCASS. In conjunction with Nottingham and Derby a contract has been signed using Refugee Housing Association as a specialist provider of properties acquired through agreements with RSLs, the private sector and the City Council. A separate organisation, Refugee Action, has been grant aided by the Home Office to provide support for asylum-seeking people, and to co-ordinate the voluntary sector.

Leicester City Council is working in partnership with all service providers, asylum seekers and their resident and local communities to help develop sustainable communities. The Asylum Seeker Co-ordinator has been in post since April 2000. A full 'housing strategy for refugees' will be finalised later this year.

Summary of Key Housing Priorities

2.19 The identified priorities for services to BME households can be summarised as:

- (a) large family accommodation (3-5 beds) in areas with a large percentage of BME households - Belgrave, Evington, Rushey Mead, St. Matthews;
- (b) wheelchair and/or 'accessible' housing;

- (c) advice and support services to BME communities, particularly refugees and other emerging communities from abroad;
- (d) to review and monitor existing policies in order to relate them to the cultural requirements of BME communities in practice.
- (e) advice and assistance to refugees leaving NASS accommodation.

Part 3. Key Principles for Housing Services

3.1 Housing Management services

3.1.1 Culturally Sensitive Management Services

The City Council and Registered Social Landlords are the two main landlords of social housing in the City, respectively @ 24% and 8% of the city's housing stock (by 2000 figures). This is provided principally to those in priority housing need and unable to secure affordable housing on the open market. This will, and should, continue to include BME households.

For BME communities, this must also include recognition of the need to provide culturally sensitive housing management services that take into account the particular needs of various client groups. This is seen as an important aspect of service provision by all providers, and will be focused not least through providing housing services in areas where BME communities want to live due to their family links and other social infrastructure.

It will be important to provide information to potential service users in an accessible and meaningful way so as not to indirectly discriminate against particular groups. This in turn will enable people to have an awareness about relevant 'choices', even if these are limited. A key aim will be to increase the effectiveness of information being available in appropriate languages and formats - staff who have language skills, interpreters, etc. - across a range of services.

3.1.2 Racial Harassment

Racial harassment and the fear of harassment is an aspect that affects BME communities across all tenures. Social landlords have a responsibility to ensure that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with incidents of racial harassment and anti-social behaviour in order to ensure that harassment of any form will not be tolerated. It is also important to develop examples of 'best practice' and joint protocols/working between partners e.g. RSLs, City Council, Police, Voluntary Sector and to integrate this work into other policies and strategies, such as the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

Accepting the Lawrence definition of a 'racist' incident is the key to starting a process that can deal with harassment. Multi-agency working will be needed and it will be essential that agencies share information to carry out effective investigations. It will be important that example of 'best practice' are developed and shared and that joint working protocols are in place between the necessary

partners – e.g. RSLs, City Council, Police, voluntary sector.

Frontline staff will need to be trained in how to provide a sensitive service to victims of racial harassment. Victims will need to be encouraged to report incidents so that adequate records can be made, and it will then be important to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate support and advice available for victims and for witnesses.

Action taken against perpetrators will need to consider the full range of existing civil remedies available to address criminal action, and to publicise the response to any harassment incidents.

Preventative work will need to be undertaken in areas where there may be high incidents of harassment, and all this should be integrated into other policies and strategies, such as the city-wide Crime & Disorder Strategy.

3.1.3 Role of Registered Social Landlords

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) now provide the majority of new social housing in the City, both for 'general needs' housing and 'supported' housing. All RSLs are monitored by the Housing Corporation on equality issues and will play a role in delivering the Corporation's own Regional BME Strategy. Many of the larger RSLs play an active role both in housing BME households and also in providing support to 'BME-led' RSLs in the City.

3.1.4 Partnership between BME-Led RSLs and larger RSLs

There are BME-led RSLs operating in the City which provide housing both directly and under management agreements with other RSL partners.

The contribution made by BME-led RSLs in meeting the needs of BME communities has long been recognised as providing 'added value' to existing housing services, including :

- (a) offering choice through culturally sensitive housing services in terms of both design and management;
- (b) promoting access to social housing for BME communities which may not previously have been a tenure choice;
- (c) promoting the development of other services e.g. meals on wheels, home helps service, emergency alarm service for vulnerable people from BME communities;
- (d) supported people from BME communities to develop a career in social housing management and empowered BME communities through the involvement of people from BME communities on management committees.

3.1.5 Consultation

Consultation and tenants participation are important elements in understanding and responding to the needs of our customers. Therefore all social housing providers should have clearly set out policies and practices, which can be evidenced, on how they consult with tenants and service users and how they can participate in the provision and evaluation of those services.

The actual methods used to encourage the participation of BME households will be as important as the overarching principles, and examples of good practice will be sought to demonstrate how partners can work towards this objective.

3.2 Housing Development and Regeneration

3.2.1 General issues

Research has shown that a large proportion of Leicester's BME population are on relatively low incomes, living in poor quality housing e.g. overcrowding, unfit housing conditions, etc. There is a high demand for family housing, particularly large houses, to meet the needs of BME communities in areas like Highfields and Belgrave.

3.2.2 Approved Development Programme (ADP)

The ADP for each financial year will set out the needs and priorities to be met by all RSLs and as such enables the City Council as the 'Strategic' Housing Authority to outline how the housing needs of all Leicester's communities should be addressed.

The City Council has sold vacant properties and land at a discount to RSLs to facilitate new development to meet housing needs, including sales to BME-led RSLs. This has included houses in multiple occupation which have been converted to provide large family houses in areas of need. It will continue to consider selling appropriate vacant stock and land to support this Strategy, subject to achieving the standards on rent levels and quality set out each year in the Approved Development Strategy.

In addition to this some larger RSLs have sold properties/transferred stock to BME led RSLs. The City Council will work to encourage RSLs to consider transferring stock in appropriate locations to BME-led RSLs from both their own existing stock and from any future development opportunities that may arise.

Where a transfer of properties or sales may not be appropriate, BME-led RSLs and voluntary sector projects can enter management arrangements with other RSLs.

More work needs to be done to determine the level of demand or interest in Shared Ownership and other 'low cost home-ownership' (LCHO) options, and to consider how affordable these options would be for BME households.

3.2.3 Regeneration initiatives

Area-based regeneration initiatives which seek to address physical and social needs will need to review how they can ensure there is a commitment to addressing the needs of BME communities in their areas.

This will include consideration of, and provision for, the needs of BME communities within combined physical and social regeneration programmes, such as:

- the Single Regeneration Budget programmes (e.g. St Matthews, Highfields, Beaumont Leys, etc.);
- the New Deal for Communities programme in Braunstone;
- the Surestart programme (St Matthews, Beaumont Leys, Saffron Lane).

The City Council will look to prioritise the needs of BME communities within any redevelopment of housing stock, and promote the role of BME-led RSLs within area redevelopment, such as with ASRA's role in the redevelopment of the St. Matthews tower blocks.

3.2.4 Other area initiatives

Both Hamilton and Ashton Green Hamilton are identified in the City of Leicester Local Plan as areas for substantial residential development. The City Council will look in particular for the inclusion of family housing to meet the needs of larger BME households on land allocated for housing, together with other appropriate social and physical infrastructure to ensure the development of sustainable communities.

3.2.5 Use of Commuted Sums

The City Council's 'Committed Sums Strategy' makes provision to promote and support the provision of housing to meet the needs of local communities. Specific mention is given to BME communities and to supporting BME-led RSLs. This Strategy will be applied to finance accrued through 'planning gain' in order to address priority housing needs.

3.3 Sheltered and Supported Housing services

3.3.1 Sheltered Housing and LeicesterCare

The City Council has 18 schemes of 'sheltered' housing throughout the City area which are a variety of one bedroomed flats, studio flats and groups of bungalows. All of these homes are connected to the LeicesterCare Emergency

Alarm Service and have Sheltered Housing Officers responsible for the well-being of the residents and the security and up-keep of the buildings. CCTV surveillance is also available at some locations to increase local security.

The BME communities are under represented in 'sheltered accommodation' although demand for this type of housing exists. It is also acknowledged that the City Council needs to promote the availability of the LeicesterCare Emergency Alarm Services to BME communities and to raise awareness that the service is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and that some call-handling staff can speak Asian languages.

Existing services will be developed which are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of BME elders with the aim of increasing an awareness and interest in 'sheltered' housing. Advice and help in marketing such accommodation and the LeicesterCare service will be sought from BME communities and relevant voluntary sector organisations.

3.3.2 Supported Housing Services

There are a number of well-established specialist projects that offer separate services to BME communities in Leicester. The 'Single Homeless Strategy' in particular has identified the need for supported housing and floating support appropriate for single homeless BME communities. In view of this the City Council has continued to support and encourage Housing Corporation bids for BME RSLs in the development of specialist supported housing and floating support services in the City. These include:

*Tenancy support for BME-led RSLs, targeting the most vulnerable tenants in the RSL sector - e.g. single homeless, people with mental health difficulties, and those with other complex needs.

* A supported housing scheme of 16 one-bed two-person units for BME groups experiencing mental health difficulties, developed in partnership between RSLs and the Council. This will support independent living with the provision of support services and encourage strong links with the community.

* Resettlement and Tenancy support services for BME ex-offenders are expected to come on line this year and will be provided by a BME-led RSL in partnership with the 'Black Prisoners Project'.

The Housing Department also grant-aids BME-led voluntary sector agencies for the provision of services to single Asian women fleeing domestic violence and to Asian women and their children fleeing domestic violence. The Department in partnership with Social Services is reconfiguring how to provide services to Asian women and in light of the changing external environment. An enhanced specification to include a city-wide 'outreach service' is currently open for tender.

Although much development is underway, BME communities remain under

represented in supported housing and floating support services, for which further research and assessment is required. The City Council's Housing Department will continue to work with specialist agencies to access demand and identify potentials for service development.

3.3.3 'Supporting People' Programme

The Government is introducing a new 'Supporting People' programme in 2003. This will introduce new funding and planning arrangements for housing-related support services and offer a new opportunity to ensure the support needs of BME groups are appropriately met.

Implementing this programme can only be effectively achieved by drawing on the knowledge and experience of all the relevant bodies that will be involved in future services. The Housing Department along with Social Services and Probation are the lead agencies in ensuring how the new arrangements will come into place in 2003 and will work in collaboration with other health and voluntary projects, private landlords, and RSLs on local proposals for an overall 'Support Services' Strategy. This will map the current supply of support services and identify priorities for future development.

3.3.4 Adapted Housing

Recent Housing Needs Surveys show there is a need and demand for 'adapted' housing in the City to address the specific needs of disabled and elderly people. Some funding is available through the City Council, the Housing Corporation and RSLs for aids and adaptations for Council tenants and RSL tenants, and for owner-occupier / private tenants. These resources are limited and are targeted to meet agreed priorities across public and private housing.

The City Council in partnership with the Housing Corporation and RSLs has developed an Adapted Housing Database that is designed to match suitably-adapted homes with people in need. This database will over time be extended to cover the private sector. The needs of BME communities for adapted housing will be identified through the development of this database and opportunities sought to address these needs such as targeting some ADP resources to key areas.

3.4 **Services in the Private and Voluntary sectors**

3.4.1 Voluntary Sector

The Housing Department provides funding support to a number of voluntary sector housing projects that provide housing and support to a number of BME groups. In total during 1999/2000 this amounted to £122,700, (19.42% of the overall budget for voluntary housing sector projects) and for 2000/01 was £124,800 (19.49%). For 2001/02 this is estimated at £126,800 (19.53% of the overall budget). This funding will provide in the region of 35 bedspaces. The City

Council will continue to work with voluntary sector projects to ensure funding is directed to key needs, particularly in the area of 'supported housing' services.

3.4.2 Renewal Areas

The majority of housing in the City is owner-occupied and in the private sector there are problems of unfit/substandard housing and a high level of empty homes. Over the years the City Council has developed an area-based approach to tackle the worst areas through the Renewal Programme. In the past areas such as Highfields and Spinney Hills have benefited from the provision of grants and advice to owner-occupiers.

The City Council's 'Housing Renewal' programme seeks to improve the housing and environmental conditions in these areas through house improvements, energy efficiency measures, traffic calming etc. Both the Belgrave and Evington Valley have been declared Renewal Areas and are areas with a large Asian population. These areas receive support in the form of advice and assistance to maintain and improve homes, renovation grants and environmental works to tackle both poor housing and environmental conditions. These grants are publicised locally and staff with Asian language skills are available in local offices to provide information and advice to customers, and for other public meetings.

Four further areas have been identified as the next potential Renewal Areas – St. Saviours, Windsor Avenue, Abbey Lane, and Swainson Road – of which the first two of which have a majority of the population from BME backgrounds.

3.4.3 Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector in the City is largely dominated by properties let to students from one of the two universities in the City, and by some large City Centre developments which are being targeted to a different professional clientele. There are also four national 'letting companies' providing private accommodation to the National Asylum Seekers Support Service (NASS – see 2.18 above). Any specific needs of the BME communities within such provision are yet to be identified.

As with other Cities, the condition of the older housing in the private sector continues to be a source of some concern. The City Council's Private Sector Housing Group (in E & D Dept.) will continue its work to identify poor housing, enforce action against private sector landlords to improve conditions and to support tenants (see also below).

3.4.4 Health and Housing

The links between poor health and poor housing have been clearly demonstrated. In the City areas of older housing in poor condition and overcrowding exacerbate the adverse conditions which can cause ill health or which make illnesses worse and more difficult to recover from. Particular issues

in some BME populations concerning asthma and other respiratory illnesses are known to be exacerbated by cold, damp housing. Some work has been carried out under the Home Energy Strategy to address these problems but it is acknowledged that further work is required.

The City Council in partnership with RSLs and other agencies will continue to promote a 'Home Energy Strategy' to enable all households to have access to affordable warmth and a healthy living environment and to reduce the consumption of non-renewable sources of energy. Funding opportunities have been identified to work towards achieving better standards of energy efficiency and promoting affordable warmth and to help 'fuel-poor' households achieve affordable warmth and energy efficiency and improve the internal air quality of homes. The funding has been targeted at inner city areas where there are high percentages of BME households in homes with low energy-efficiency ratings.

Part 4. Aims and Objectives of the BME Strategy

- 4.1 The specific objectives of this strategy are set within the overall context of the City Council and the Housing Department aims which have already been noted above. Therefore, this strategy sets out objectives that will relate to the housing and support needs of BME communities. Over time these will need to be reflected in the programmes designed to tackle social exclusion, poverty and economic development in order to have a comprehensive approach towards developing sustainable communities.

It is recognised that these needs can only be addressed through partnership working and arrangements across housing providers in the City. This is therefore reflected in the Strategy's stated objectives and targets. The City Council will seek to engage with and work with a broad spectrum of agencies and other organisations including RSLs, the voluntary and private sectors, and local police and health authorities.

- 4.2 **The overriding aim of the BME strategy is to promote and ensure racial equality and to promote measures that can address institutional racism.**

The specific objectives that will promote this aim are:

Objective 1: To identify the housing and housing related support needs of the BME population and communities across all tenures.

Objective 2: To encourage the active participation and involvement of BME communities in the development and delivery of all housing provision.

Objective 3: To tackle racial harassment and discrimination to ensure that the needs of BME communities are met through services that are sensitive and appropriate to cultural diversity.

Objective 4: To enable the development of BME-led Registered Social

Landlords (RSLs), along with existing RSLs, to provide housing and support services to local BME communities.

Objective 5: To maximise opportunities to address the needs of BME communities within major new initiatives, such as Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal schemes.

Objective 6: To prioritise the housing and housing support needs of BME communities by ensuring that they are reflected in associated policies, strategies and programmes of the City Council and its partners.

Objective 7: To identify and promote examples of Best Practice within the local delivery of housing services to BME communities.

Part 4. (cont.) Key Targets and Proposed Action

Objective 1.	To identify the housing and housing-related support needs of the BME population and communities across all tenures.	
TARGET	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
To achieve a confident overview of the needs of local BME communities.	Review existing data and sources: eg. Housing Register, CORE and RSL data, Adapted Housing Database, etc.	Housing Policy Section.
	Carry out ‘booster analysis’ within 2001 city-wide Housing Needs assessment.	Housing Policy Section
	Identify needs within current and anticipated ‘supporting people’ surveys.	Supporting People
	Review procedures for registering ‘needs’ via Housing Advice Centre, and via RSLs.	Allocations Officer, plus Adapted Database Officer
To clarify how existing plans will satisfy needs of local BME communities, and identify areas requiring further research.	Areas of research to be prioritised in line with key strategies – HIP, ADP, etc.	Housing Policy Section, plus Housing Development
	To promote research into housing needs across joint boundaries of ‘Wider Leicester’	Housing Development

Objective 2.	To encourage the active participation and involvement of BME communities in the development and delivery of all housing provision.	
TARGET	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
To include an adequate representation of BME interests within any current or new ‘strategic’ focus on housing provision.	To set up a suitable strategic ‘subgroup’ to monitor implementation of this strategy.	Housing Policy Section / Housing Equality Officer
	Identify groups that represent local BME communities and enlist into sub-group.	Housing Policy Section / Housing Equality Officer
	Involve BME-led RSLs and other bodies with BME interests within sub-group.	Housing Development
To include BME ‘housing’ issues within current “revitalising neighbourhoods” work	To identify localities where BME housing needs require greater prioritisation.	Housing Development

Objective 3.	To tackle racial harassment and discrimination to ensure that the needs of BME communities are met through services that are sensitive and appropriate to cultural diversity.	
TARGET	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
To carry out a thorough review of existing procedures in practice, and to test their effectiveness.	To review and amend existing policies to tackle racial harassment.	Housing Equality Officer, Housing Management, plus (E & D) Racial Harassment Officer
	Regular recording and consistent monitoring of harassment incidents and outcomes of responses.	Housing Management, plus Homelessness & Rehousing Section.
	To produce updated 'checklist' of necessary action when harassment occurs, and clarify type of response to different settings.	Housing Equality Officer, Housing Management, plus (E & D) Racial Harassment Officer
To provide up-to-date information on action to address harassment, on request.	Review joint protocols between the City Council, RSLs, the Police, and any other bodies involved.	Housing Management, plus RSLs
	Frontline services to provide this information – policies to be made available to all tenants in accessible formats.	Housing Management, plus RSLs
To arrange sufficient support and advice to affected households affected by harassment.	To review existing arrangements to respond to incidents with support mechanisms and staff resources.	Housing Equality Officer, Housing Management, plus (E & D) Racial Harassment Officer
	To review current provision for 'vulnerable' groups like asylum seekers / refugees.	Supporting People, plus Supported Housing Team Asylum Seekers Co-ordinator

Objective 4.	To enable the development of BME-led Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), along with existing RSLs, to provide housing and support services to local BME communities.	
TARGET	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
To support the role for BME-led RSLs within existing strategies.	To monitor the level of ADP funding - house types, location, tenure, etc. – in order to maximise the % of properties managed or owned by BME-led RSLs, in order to meet the local authority’s target of at least 30% going to BME-led RSLs and BME households.	Housing Development, plus HA/LA Liaison Group
	The City Council will promote sales of vacant stock to BME-led RSLs under the ‘Empty Homes’ initiatives, where this stock is a suitable to meet identified needs.	Housing Development
	To support personnel development initiatives of BME-led RSL staff and other representatives.	Housing Development, plus Housing Management
To carry out regular liaison with all RSLs to ensure effective delivery of management agreements.	All RSLs to review their housing management services in the light of providing an accessible and culturally sensitive service. CORE data to be kept to show the % of new tenancies that are going to BME households, to meet the local authority’s target of at least 30% going to BME households.	Housing Development , Housing Management, plus RSLs
	To promote ‘satisfaction’ surveys with the users of housing services from the BME communities.	Housing Management, plus RSLs
To identify opportunities to target commuted sums to BME-led RSLs to address specific needs.	A review of the use of commuted sums to specific BME needs, within the overall strategy for ‘commuted’ funds.	Housing Development
To include BME-led RSLs within housing ‘competitions’ run by the City Council’s Housing Department.	To monitor the delivery of houses provided through competitions : i.e. number, location and house types.	HALO, plus Housing Development.
To promote the employment of BME contractors by RSLs in the City.	Use will be encouraged of the BME contractors directory produced by De Montfort Housing Society.	Housing Development, plus Technical Services

Objective 5.	To maximise opportunities to address the needs of BME communities within major new initiatives, such as Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal schemes.	
TARGET	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
To include the needs of BME communities within aims and objectives of major Regeneration, Housing Renewal plans or other Neighbourhood Renewal initiatives.	To link needs of BME communities between key Regeneration and Renewal initiatives	Housing Development, plus Renewal & Grants
	To identify resources to address BME needs within new initiatives in current or future Regeneration schemes.	Housing Development, plus Urban Regeneration
	Ex-tower block area to be developed in St Matthews by ASRA and Foundation.	Housing Development
	To amend Renewal Strategy currently being written will have to identify these needs.	Renewal & Grants
	Identify opportunities to meet needs through new Neighbourhood Renewal proposals	Neighbourhood Renewal
	To increase focus of work in current and newly declared Housing Renewal Areas to identify owner-occupiers eligible for provision of renovation grants.	Renewal & Grants
To provide appropriate energy efficiency advice and information, and funding where this is available.	To renew publicity on services available and the benefits of taking up this service.	Energy Advice Centre, Renewal & Grants, plus Home Energy Team
To provide appropriate resettlement and tenancy support in 'Surestart' initiatives	Needs to be identified by Supporting People programme, with translators as required.	Supporting People
To plan an appropriate range of housing provision in major area development projects that will serve the needs of BME households.	To promote a range of mixed-tenure schemes in the Hamilton area, and encourage local involvement by BME-led RSLs.	Housing Development, (E & D) Urban Design, plus RSLs

Objective 6.	To prioritise the housing and housing-support needs of BME communities by ensuring that they are reflected in associated policies, strategies and programmes of the City Council and its partners.	
TARGET	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
To develop a comprehensive ‘Support Services’ strategy for the city-area and include the identified needs of BME client groups.	An overall strategy is being drafted by the ‘Supporting People’ Team.	Supporting People
	Needs of older BME client groups to be include within the development of an Older Person's Housing Strategy.	Housing Development & Older People, plus Supporting People
To respond to the needs of BME population within LCC’s Tenants Participation Policy and to identify how it can involve BME tenants within Tenants Compacts.	Invite groups that are representative of the BME groups in Leicester	Housing Management
To provide housing and other services to vulnerable groups that are in the city on an occasional or uncertain basis, such as vulnerable single women.	To maintain a clear process that can identify property types and location needed at short notice.	Housing Management, plus Housing Options
	To arrange for support services to be available from within the supporting people programme.	Supporting People
To respond to the identified needs of Gypsy and Travellers community.	To support the identification of temporary sites in suitable locations across the city-area.	Housing Development, Housing Management, plus E & D officers
	To support initiatives designed to secure funds to cover services currently outside of ADP or HRA funding criteria.	Housing Development

Objective 7.	To identify and promote examples of Best Practice within the local delivery of housing services to BME communities.	
TASK	PROPOSED ACTION	LCC LEAD(s)
Establish a list of areas to consider :Allocations.	Regular monitoring of allocations / nominations to BME households each financial year compared to all lettings.	BME Strategy Sub-Group Housing Advice and Rehousing Services
:Policies and interagency protocols.	Monitor and review policies	Housing Management
:Harassment policies and interagency protocols.	Monitor and review policies	Housing Management
RSLs to develop and share best practice and make an assessment of how their tenants participation strategy will be developed.	Review in light of the Housing Corporation's consultation document 'Making Consultation Count: Tenants Participation – The Next Five Years'.	Housing Management
Identify and implement Best Practice initiatives from around the country.	Research to find appropriate and suitable initiatives for the BME community in Leicester.	Housing Policy section / Housing Equality Officer, plus all other sections

Part 5. Timetable, Implementation and Monitoring

5.1 It is proposed that this Strategy is promoted by all the agencies noted in part 4 above, and formally reviewed in early 2003 in order to assess its success and impact.

5.2 It is also proposed that the "Leicester Housing Forum" (or a suitable alternative) will establish and co-ordinate a 'Sub-Group' that will oversee the implementation of this strategy.

[The Housing Forum is comprised of representatives from the statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations including tenants/residents groups, building societies, banks, developers and RSLs].

The City Council will act as the lead agency given its strategic housing role in identifying and prioritising the housing needs of the City and because the Strategy focuses on the City of Leicester.

5.3 The Membership of this Sub-Group will be drawn from the following:

- (a) Leicester's Housing Associations Liaison Group (rep for RSLs)
- (b) Voluntary Action Leicester (rep for voluntary sector)
- (c) Housing Department/Social Services (LCC reps)
- (d) Housing Corporation
- (e) Representative of BME-led RSLs
- (f) Private Sector
- (h) National Housing Federation (East Midlands Region)
- (i) Community representatives (2)

5.4 The Sub-Group will have the following purposes:

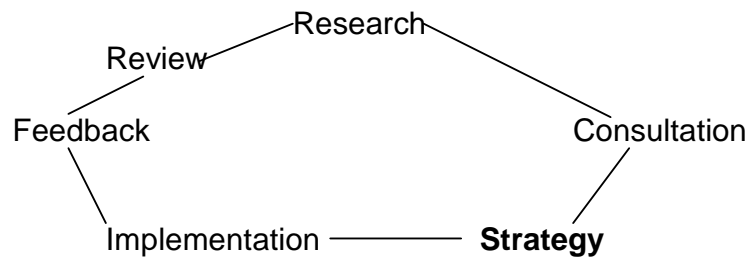
- (i) To meet at least twice a year to discuss and review this strategy, to discuss issues relating to the identified housing needs.
- (ii) To oversee the effectiveness of delivering the targets and recommend any changes to this strategy to be presented to the City Council's Housing Forum on an annual basis.
- (iii) To make recommendations to the Housing Department on ways in which to consult BME communities with reference to their housing needs and to develop more effective forms of involvement/participation.
- (iv) To identify medium and long term issues to be addressed through this strategy with timescales and outcomes for recommendation to the Housing Forum.

5.5 The City Council's Housing Department will:

- * Assist the Sub-Group with developing appropriate terms of reference.

- * Develop mechanisms to ensure that the group's recommendations are fed back to the Housing Forum as appropriate.
 - * Provide administrative support to the group by way of arranging meetings, sending out notices and agendas.
 - * Present reports to the group on progress and action taken as appropriate.
- 5.6 Individuals on the Sub-Group representing 'umbrella'/organisations will be responsible for ensuring that information is shared with organisations and views/comments are sought on relevant issues to feedback through the group.
- 5.7 The BME Strategy will be circulated to all the organisations and agencies listed at the end of this report and they will be invited to return feedback and comment whenever they feel this to be appropriate. It will be an aim of this Strategy to develop a comprehensive list of such agencies and organisations for all future consultation.
- 5.8 It will be important to provide affordable, good quality housing within a safe and secure environment and to develop joint protocols between agencies to achieve this. It will also be important to promote and encourage inter-racial harmony and greater awareness between community groups of different backgrounds.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that implementation of the Strategy will go side-by-side with identifying examples of good practice, and highlighting and sharing these between partners as part of promoting the objectives in the document.
- 5.10 It is hoped that the partners to this strategy will contribute towards identifying:-
- (a) Future housing needs and priorities of BME groups and communities in Leicester through the sharing of information, joint working, research, etc.
 - (b) Other needs of BME groups and communities that might be met through social, economic, health, and environmental initiatives and to over a long-term strategy.
 - (c) To develop a long-term BME Strategy which takes into consideration the development of joint partnership arrangements to address the issues raised in (a) and (b).
- 5.11 It is intended that the strategy will evolve through continual research and feedback to ensure that priorities are clearly identified and addressed over time.

All partners and other interested parties are encouraged to assist with a continual evaluation of this strategy :



5.12 Any comments on the Strategy should be forwarded in the first instance to:

Policy & Business Section
Housing Department
2nd Floor, 'A' Block
New Walk Centre
Welford Place
Leicester LE1 6ZG

Tel: (0116) 252 8797.
Fax: (0116) 254 5262.
Minicom: (0116) 252 8797.

APPENDIX A

Ethnic classification by proposed detail in 2001 Census

2001 National Census

(a) Asian or Asian British:

Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Any Other Asian background

(b) Black or Black British:

Black Caribbean
Black African
Any Other Black background

(c) Chinese or Other Ethnic Group:

Chinese
Any Other

(d) Mixed:

White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Any Other Mixed background

(e) White:

British
Irish
Any Other White background

2001 Leicester 'BME Strategy' Criteria

(f) Gypsy & Travellers Ethnic Group

APPENDIX B

Glossary of Terms

Approved Development Programme (ADP)

The annual allocation of funding for housing development for registered social landlords by the Housing Corporation.

Black and Minority Ethnic-led RSL (BME-led RSL)

A registered social landlord which has at least 80% of its governing body drawn from members of the BME communities.

Commuted Sums

Funding secured through the planning process which can be used to provide affordable housing to meet needs within a local authority area. The funding is negotiated by the Planning Authority with developers on individual sites.

Core Data

Information on lettings by housing associations which is collected and available at a local authority level.

I & GP Grant

Innovation and Good Practice Grant : research-based funding available to RSLs through the regional offices of the Housing Corporation.

Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

A provider of social housing such as a housing association or local housing company which is registered and monitored by the Housing Corporation.