

# Minutes



## **Minutes of BME forum meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 @ Boardroom, Houndsgate**

**Present:** Ruth Davis (RD), Tony Stubbins (TS), Jackie Brown (JB), Jennifer Copeland (JC), Elaine Hamilton (EH), Linford Stevens (LS), Ade Aderogba MBE (AA), A Smith (AS), Jacinth Hall (JH), Kalwant Kandola (KK), B Hall-Archer (BHA), Colin Worthington (CW), Gill Moy (NCH)(GM), Connie Hall (NCH)(CH), Cynthia James (CJ), Sue Taylor (NCH)(ST), Pat Greenwell (NCC)(PG), Angel Hayes (WRM)(AH), Carolyn Caldwell (WRM)(CC), Rita Wynter (RW), Vicky Myers (NCH)(VM)

**Apologies:** Amdani Juma, Mr and Mrs Anderson

### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

The election of a Chair and Vice Chair took place and Cynthia James was elected as Chair and Jacinth Hall as Vice Chair. It was agreed that CW will act as mentor to the Vice Chair.

### **Minutes from last meeting**

#### Page 1

What Really Matters are at the meeting today to talk about the consultation event mentioned in the minutes.

Correction - Amend the minutes to say Tuntum are having fewer intakes of BME tenants due to introduction of CBL.

CJ updated the group that funding had been released today to finish work at Broad Oak Close

#### Page 2

Sheltered Housing was discussed at the meeting with the council.

### **BME Inquiry**

Carolyn and Angela from What Really Matters attended the meeting and gave a presentation on how they will be doing some research to support the new Housing Strategy that is being developed by the council.

What Really Matters was commissioned in January to do work to support the new Housing Strategy. The BME strategy will form part of the general strategy. Everyone is invited to sit down and talk about what is really important to them as residents in a 'world

café' format.

Carolyn and Angela asked the group 'What are the conversations you would like to have now?'

This prompted a lot of discussion within the group, the main points being:

- Not fed up with being consulted, but fed up of never getting any feedback
  - VFM in social housing, as it is expensive to run
  - It is important that the tenant feels like the person on the end of the phone cares about them
  - Turnover of staff makes it difficult, as get consulted then staff change and consultation starts again – need continuous feedback to stop this.
  - Need more action e.g. need more resource for young people
  - Lack of 'community'. Need to build communities
  - Lack of BME community groups and no main database to record this.
- 
- A question was asked about the housing company set up by the city council, and the group were told that this was still in formation. It was suggested that Sushma Cheesbrough and Leanne Taylor be invited to the next council meeting to discuss.
- 
- A suggestion was made that when new play areas are being built, the children should run them as they don't like being told what to do by grown ups
  - Angela commented that they are trying a partnership approach and moving away from consultation
  - A comment was made that the BME community is over researched
  - Not everyone has access to e-mail, and not everyone will phone a mobile phone from a land line, so might not be that easy for people to get involved
  - Do the people organising the event really understand what community is?
  - A question was asked about the real benefit , the purpose of the event – AH answered that it will allow people to talk more freely and the results will go to housing providers
  - Is the workforce representative of the community it's researching?

Some members were concerned that they were not able to use the mobile number or email addresses that had been included on the poster. It was agreed that NCH would contact members with an alternative means of accepting the invitation to attend.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting with the council is being changed and letters will be sent out shortly.

### **Action Plan for 2009/10**

The typed up flip chart notes and forward plan were distributed to the group

- Leanne Taylor is providing an update in the April meeting with the council about Memories
- CH will bring the 09/10 Delivery Plan to the meeting
- Homes 4 Us are looking at Mental Health issues, it was suggested Clive Thorpe provides an update on this. Homes 4 Us are having a conference on 24/04/09 at Denewood, all invited

### **Allocations Policy review**

Pat Greenwell from Nottingham City Council attended the meeting to give a presentation on the allocations policy review.

The review has been recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to make sure Homelink is working for everyone.

During the presentation several points were raised, these were around:

- Lack of 4 bed properties is a problem
- How does policy address Sickle Cell Anaemia sufferers
- Local connection
- Adapted properties
- Help for people wanting to downsize

The policy review has taken place although there was no consultation with the BME community. The BME forum raised concerns that the Equality Impact Assessment had been completed but they had not been consulted. They informed PG that they had been involved with setting up the original allocations policy, and were of the opinion that they should be consulted on the review as this is an important policy. PG informed the group that she was not aware of the BME Forum but would now feed back to the council that specific consultation needs to take place. The group members raised their concerns that she was not informed that there was a BME forum in place which was the main vehicle to discuss housing and other related issues with the Council and NCH.

There was also a discussion about under-representation of BME in the workforce at all levels. NCH are trying to address the issue and are reviewing the HR policy to achieve this.

### **Customer Equality Impact Assessment Workshops**

CH gave an update on the workshops, which went very well and when the documents have been updated they will be published on the internet. Members that attended informed the forum said that it had been an excellent event and well organised.

### **Memories Project update**

Leanne Taylor is providing an update in the April meeting with the council about the Memories project.

### **TSA National Conversation for BME communities**

The TSA are holding a conversation for BME communities in Leeds and London in April.

This is an important conversation as it will influence governments approach to assure standards of housing and resident involvement in the future.

The group were informed by AA that he had tried to book some places and had been told it was full.

AA suggested that if we can't get any places he will ask if they can come to us. It was agreed that VM would contact the TSA and if there were no places we would contact other housing organisations that work in Notts to suggest that we invite the TSA to hold another event in Nottingham.

### **Any Other Business**

The forum was informed that 8 black members of staff had been suspended on full pay and were under investigation.

Also the Marcus Garvey or ACNA centres are under threat of closure due to council funding.

It was suggested that this goes on the agenda for the next council meeting.