

Minutes



Minutes of BME forum meeting held on 10th June 2009 @ Boardroom, Houndsgate

Present: Jackie Brown (JB), Ade Aderogba MBE (AA), Arabella Smith (ASm), Jacinth Hall (JH), Kalwant Kandola (KK), Cynthia James (CJ), Ethel Anderson (EA), Natasha Porteus (NP), J Anderson (JA), Angela Dias (AD), Carole Donnelly – NCH (CD), Masuad Subedar – NCC (MS), Amanda Schofield – NCH (ASc), Dr Tim Adebisi – FIF (TA), Betty Falaki – FIF (BF), Steve Hargrave –FIF (SH), Simon Temporal – NCH (ST), Lynda Kelly – Council for equality of human rights (LK), Rita Wynter (RW), Anthony Darby (AD)

1 **Welcome and introductions**

Apologies from Mr Anderson

2 **Minutes from last meeting**

ASc gave an update on the BME Inquiry

JB requested that NCH checks with NCC with regard to setting event dates to avoid diary clashes.

ASc advised she will discuss this issue with NCC and see if we can diary share where possible.

JB requested confirmation of future meeting dates as NCC has just had two in a row.

AF confirmed NCH are hosting the July meeting to make up for this, but will send out a revised meeting timetable to clarify. AF

LK requested an update on Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).

ASc gave a short update, and will expand in agenda item 3, but the EIAs received positive feedback from delegates and managers who attended. From looking at the results, NCH need to speak with partners to see how partnership working can be improved.

ASm commented on the jargon of TSA and DA from the last minutes. TSA stands for Tenant Services Authority which is the new governing body of social housing providers, and DA stands for District Attorney.

ASc mentioned that the Tenant services Authority has now released giving feedback from the recent round of National Conversation events. This sets out how the TSA will be governing social housing providers. This is a very large document, and so NCH will shortly be releasing a summary.

AA advised that he is going down to London for a conference on this, and asked whether any representatives from NCH are going?

ASc is leading on producing an NCH reply to the document, and so will be contacting tenants and leaseholders to help do this, rather than sending representatives to London.

Minutes were signed off as a true representation of the meeting

****Amendment to advertised agenda****

3 Diversity of the Leaseholder Forum

ST addressed the group and introduced himself as the Leasehold Officer for NCH, giving an explanation of what a Leaseholder is, and was asking for help in trying to increase the diversity of the Leaseholder Forum.

There was general mis-understanding of what was required by the Forum, and felt that the item had not been done in the proper manner.

ASc gave a review of the situation. ST requested attendance through the Chair, and as leaseholders were a forgotten entity until last year, he is trying to engage with more leaseholders, especially those from a BME background to try and shape the service they provide.

Equality and diversity information is not requested on a Right to Buy application, and it is also not held on their Council Tax information, and so it is unknown how many leaseholders come from a BME background.

If anyone has any ideas, please pass them through to Simon Temporal who is based at Hounds Gate on 9157385.

AA then recommended that Sam Else (Leasehold Manager) put together a professional report showing the most up to date information to then attend a future meeting to present this to the Forum.

****New agenda item****

4 Faith in families (presentation enclosed)

TA started their presentation giving a background on Faith in families stating that out of 3000 children currently looking for permanent families, many are from a BME background, so work needs to be done to reach out, educate, listen to and encourage BME families to adopt or foster children.

SH then continued by saying there are not enough families from a BME background that are willing to foster or adopt. He gave two

recent case studies where permanent BME families were required in order to reflect the heritage of the children.

SH finished off by saying they are looking to be invited in to different BME communities, and so if the Forum knows of any other groups they could attend, they would welcome the information.

Questions were then requested from the floor.

JB asked whether you could foster initially before adopting, so that you got to know the child. SH replied by saying that this is an option, and after a one year period of fostering you are eligible to adopt.

RW asked whether you received state benefits can be received if you adopt. SH replied by saying that adoption is a legal right, giving all rights to the parents as if they were born to them.

SH continued by saying that a full history of each child is given to prospective families.

JA asked whether you received any funding for adopting. SH replied that an amount for settling in is allowed, and further funding could be available if it was a difficult child being adopted, but generally no further funding is payable.

CJ rounded things off by asking that any further questions or details of groups to visit be completed on the form which was in the information pack that was given out, and then passed on to AF to collate. CJ thanked them all for attending, and requested that the links between them and the Forum are kept. CJ also informed them that at the next NCC hosted meeting in August had delegates coming from the Chinese community.

5 Equality and diversity (presentation enclosed)

ASc introduced herself as the Director of Strategy and Partnerships apologised for Connie Hall not being able to be present for this meeting, as she is the lead on this subject for NCH.

JB thanked ASc for coming, and for her thorough introduction.

Following the Audit Commission inspection in November, it showed that there are good examples of equality and diversity work being used throughout NCH, and the strengths outweigh the weaknesses.

A lot of work has been done through profiling our customer base so that we can tailor services to the customer needs of individuals. The 'Lets make a difference' customer service training has also improved the way NCH staff interact with customers.

There is still work to be done however, especially to ensure consistency across the company, which is why every service area has equality and diversity as a priority action as part of their 2009/10 service improvement plan.

ASc also suggested inviting George Pashley (Director of Organisational Development) to a future meeting to give a talk on Human Resources policy and equality and diversity.

AD recommended that all NCH literature is looked at, as NCH advertising and promotional material need more diversity in their pictures. Employee profiling also needs to be looked at.

6 Increasing diversity within the Forum

As part of the Forums forward plan, it was suggested to have this as part of this agenda to look at ways to increase the diversity of the BME Forum.

AF asked for ideas on how we can achieve this. AF advised that NCH had a stall at Nottingham Mela, and will also have a stall at Caribbean Carnival in July.

It was said that BME flyers, leaflets and welcome packs had been produced previously, but are no longer used. AF to find copies of all of this literature and look to refresh it with the new NCH logo ensuring that all of the information is up to date. CJ and JH to meet with AF to finalise this w/c 15th June 2009.

It was also suggested to put an article in NCH News, and mail shot BME tenants and leaseholders, along with different community groups in Nottingham. It was also advised that utilising Black History Month and Nottingham Carnival to promote the group.

LK advised that the literature is required to pull together existing information, and would need to look as professional as possible.

CD advised that there is a commitment from the Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Team to progress these issues.

AF

7 Budget for the Forum

AF advised that this financial year, a small participatory budget has been allowed of £1000 to each Forum and Area Panel. Confirmation of what this can be spent on will be brought to a future meeting.

8 Any other business

JB advised that there is a further Memories project meeting on 18th June at 6pm, and on 20th July from 10am – 4pm with all attendees welcome. Please contact Lianne Taylor for further information.

JA informed of an issue with the taxi that brought her to the meeting this evening. ASc and CD to discuss this after the meeting to take forward.

EA would like to thank AF and Afzaal Nawaz for their help with the Chase Central TRA tree and flower planting day on 25th May.

