

Minutes



BME forum meeting 9th September 2009 Boardroom, Hounds Gate

Present: Jacinth Hall – Chair (JH), Jackie Brown (JB), Ade Aderogba MBE (AA), Arabella Smith (ASm), Kalwant Kandola (KK), Cynthia James (CJ), Carole Donnelly – NCH (CD), Kelly John-Baptiste (KJB), Andrew Filer – NCH (AF), Ingrid Robert-Davies (IRD), Linford Stevens (LSt), Gill Moy – NCH (GM), Sue Taylor – NCH (ST), Minnie Brazil (MB), Jennifer Copeland (JC), Ethel Anderson (EA), V Trowers, (VT), Dr Mahbub Alam (MA), Mark Lowe – NCC (ML), Loretta Seymour (LSe)

1 Welcome and introductions

JH opened the meeting and asked for introductions around the room and for any apologies.

Apologies received from Mr Anderson, Mrs T Anderson, Johnson John-Baptiste, Chris Langstaff (NCH)

CD apologised that NCH had been unable to get speakers in for the two forward plan items. These will be deferred to a future meeting. Tonight's agenda has therefore been amended (copies were handed out to the group).

2 Minutes from last meeting

Item 3 JB requested an update on the Mental Health work that is ongoing. ST responded by saying Sue Lomax is now meeting on a regular basis with Service Heads within Adult Services, NCC and working arrangements and protocols have been revised to ensure closer communication and joint working more effective. Training is also ongoing between mental health support workers and frontline NCH staff.

Item 4 JB requested some copies of the BME Forum leaflet that was developed with the Forum following discussions at previous meetings. AF distributed these amongst the group.

Item 7 CJ started a general discussion on the board recruitment, and went on to discuss the demographics of the

Action

Executive Management Team, and the new NCH and '1 in a million' apprentices. The group felt that there was a lack of diversity across the board. GM responded by stating NCH are actively promoting vacancies to diverse communities, and some existing staff are completing a 'black leadership management' course to develop themselves. GM also said she had been to BEST with Chris Langstaff, and feedback from those residents had identified online recruitment as a difficulty for some members of the community. NCH are therefore looking at the recruitment process to make it easier. The meeting suggested a representative from Organisational Development should be invited to a future meeting to discuss BME representation within NCH and aims to increase diversity at Board level and within the workforce.

JH stopped the discussion in order for the agenda to stay on track.

3 Gypsy and traveller site development presentation – Mark Lowe (Policy & Development Officer - NCC)

The presentation is enclosed. The term 'New' traveller relates to travellers with fairs etc. The Regional planning body mentioned is currently the East Midlands Assembly.

JB thanked ML for his presentation and asked whether there were any handouts available. ML will forward it to AF to send out copies with the minutes.

ML /
AF

CJ requested the feelings of MB, who is a representative from the gypsy and traveller community. MB confirmed permanent sites are preferred, but there are also different cultures between the gypsy and traveller community and therefore different attitudes, lifestyles and needs.

IRB asked whether land was available to gypsies and travellers at reduced rates to use for pitches. ML responded by saying that land is available with the same rules as if a building plot was being bought, so no discount is given.

AA raised the issue that as a board member, he is not aware of any interaction between NCH, NCC and gypsies and travellers. ML responded by stating there was still a team within NCC that is available to give support and advice, there are also specific support workers provided through Framework.

GM added that at her previous Housing Association, a gypsy and traveller awareness session was held following consultation with the communities involved. KJB also suggested NCH could provide information sheets, or include an article in NCH News. JC advised that the general feeling where she lives is that of

ignorance. GM continued by saying NCH would be happy to meet with representatives from the gypsy and traveller community and NCC to look at specific issues, as input would be useful in the Allocation Policy.

4 Chair & Vice Chair discussion

GM opened this item and invited CJ to update the forum. CJ advised that she had tendered her resignation as Chair of the group, however, having spoken to MS that she wished to rescind her resignation. CJ felt that the group had stood still since NCH had achieved 2* status, and she wished to drive the Forum forwards. CJ advised that Forum members were frustrated and needed NCH to recognise and support the BME Forum.

GM responded by accepting that NCH may have made mistakes but that ultimately tenants and leaseholders should be driving the Forum and become responsible for setting the forward plans and agendas for the meetings so issues they want are discussed and consulted upon.

CJ reiterated that members of the Forum are there voluntarily to improve issues relating to the BME communities within Nottingham.

AA added that he is glad CJ has changed her mind and is now continuing as Chair, and that he felt better communication is required especially between NCH and NCC now the Forum has split in to two groups, and asked for a meeting to be set up to clarify how NCC, NCH and the BME Forum can ensure this arrangement works smoothly. GM suggested a group away day for the Forum without officers present to allow the group to be clear on what they want and how this can be achieved. This was agreed by the group.

AF /
CD

JB stated that the group required two main things: recognition and continuity, as several issues have arisen due to changing staff members.

KJB suggested that regular information is included in NCH News with regard to the group and what they do. AF responded by saying that as part of the Involvement Team communication plan, future editions will include articles on all of the various groups. The BME Forum has yet to be done, but is contained in the plan and AF will ensure there are regular updates and articles.

AF

MS also stated his pleasure in CJ continuing as Chair as she provides a 'challenge' to both NCC and NCH.

AA raised the issue of Black History Month. GM confirmed that NCC would be the driving force for this matter but NCH would contribute and support this.

5 BME Forum budget

CD handed out a brief update (enclosed) showing the amount spent so far from this financial year, advising that the group is currently within budget. There was however a payment of £580 payable to the Caribbean Carnival which AF is investigating, as this seems very expensive. Feedback will be given when results of the investigation are found.

CJ raised a question to AA as to why NCH had to pay for a stall after previously helping to fund the carnival. AA replied by stating the carnival is very expensive to run, and without the funding from NCH as previously done, the carnival actually made a loss this year. MS added that in the current financial climate a balance needs to be made on where and how much money is spent, so the cost of stalls would have been determined by the costs incurred in holding the event.

6 National Tenant Voice update

CD led on this agenda item, and handed round an update from a recent talk she had been to (enclosed). CD confirmed that the National Tenant Council which would be responsible for lobbying Government on National Policies was looking for 26 tenants or leaseholders to put themselves forward, and the National Tenant Voice are aspiring to have a good diverse cross-section of social housing tenants from across the country. Details on how to put themselves forward was included on the handout, assistance with this process can be received through the Involvement Team.

KJB raised the question whether there was a person specification. AF confirmed that as long as they were a tenant or leaseholder, and did not have an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or any other legal proceedings against them, anyone could apply.

It was confirmed the 4 meetings of the National Tenant Council would be held through England, and all costs incurred would be covered, such as possible travel and accommodation costs. KJB asked the question whether employment costs would be covered if the delegate worked full-time. CD replied that all of the details have yet to be decided, so was unsure at present. Further information will be available from the National Tenants Voice shortly.

AA added that this Council shows how serious the Government is to empower tenants and leaseholders to scrutinise their landlords policies and procedures.

7 Briefing / feedback from TLC

CD handed round an update of an away day held for the TLC (enclosed). She highlighted a new structure that the Board are adopting to help the way they work, and the involvement structure would be looked at to ensure it fitted in to this.

The TLC also had a session to self-assess the work they do, with the results showing similar issues to those picked up by the BME Forum.

8 Any other business

AF gave an update (enclosed) on the recent Polish Festival attended to try to engage with emerging communities and encourage them to come along to the BME Forum especially to get their views on the services provided by NCH.

CD handed out a poster for an Asian Poetry recital event (enclosed).

LS raised a personal issue. GM took details to try to resolve, and will deal with outside the meeting. GM

KK and KJB provided some personal issues and cases. ST to follow up ST

JH then closed the meeting, and thanked everyone for their attendance and input.

The next **NCC** meeting is to be held:

Wednesday 14th October

6.00 – 8.30pm

Venue TBC

The next **NCH** meeting is to be held:

Wednesday 11th November,

6.00 – 8.30pm,

Hounds Gate Boardroom

