



**NORTHAMPTON**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Item No.

**9**

[

**DRAFT**

<b>Name of Committee</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Directorate:</b>	People Performance and Regeneration
<b>Corporate Manager:</b>	Christopher Cavanagh
<b>Date:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2007

<b>Report Title</b>	Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Housing Strategy
---------------------	--

<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
---------------------	------------

**1. Recommendations**

Cabinet members consider and approve the draft Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy 2007-2011 and Action Plan.

**2. Summary**

The Housing Strategy 2006-2011 which was approved by GO-EM in March 2007 includes at Action 4.10 "Production of a BME Housing Strategy.

The draft BME Housing Strategy has undergone consultation and amendments made which take into account suggestions and comments received.

Cabinet are requested to approve this to enable it to be implemented across the relevant services of the Council.

### 3. Report Background

- 3.1 Item 4.10 of the Action Plan to the Housing Strategy 2006-2011 "Enabling and Delivering Housing Choice" requires the production of a BME Housing Strategy.
- 3.2 The Commission for Racial Equality issued new and revised guidance in 2006, replacing the 1991 and 1992 Statutory Code of Practice in rented and non-rented Housing. By producing a BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan the Council can demonstrate that it complies with this Code of Practice.
- 3.3 In 2006 the Local Authorities in Northamptonshire commissioned consultants "Opinion Research Services" to produce the Northamptonshire Study of Black and Minority Ethnic Housing and Support Needs. The study looked at the profile of the existing population, housing aspirations, consideration of wider issues impacting upon housing choice and quality of life, and an analysis of the need for specific support and housing services. Recommendations made in this study have been considered in the production of the BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.4 The Council also commissioned consultants Housing and Diversity Services Ltd to undertake an assessment of compliance against the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice on Housing in Spring 2007. This report makes many recommendations most of which have been incorporated into the BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan these include improvements to:-
- Information collection to establish needs of BME groups
  - Staff training relating to BME issues
  - Translation services
  - Customer satisfaction in relation to BME customers
  - Consultation and engagement
  - Other specific actions relating to the operation of the Housing Service
- 3.5 In November 2006 a BME Housing Strategy Steering Group was formed to develop the strategy. This included representatives from five Corporate Areas plus representatives from the Council for Ethnic Minority Communities, a specialist BME Housing Association and a representative from the local BME community.
- 3.6 Informal consultation was carried out between January and March with local BME groups which informed the development of the draft Strategy.
- 3.7 The draft Strategy was circulated for consultation from 13<sup>th</sup> April 2007 to local consultees including:-
- Council for Ethnic Minority Communities Action Northampton
  - Race Equality Forum
  - Northamptonshire County Council Officers
  - N-TACT
  - Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation

- Northampton Women's Aid
- African Caribbean Elders Society
- African Association
- SANKOFA (African and Caribbean Resource Service)

Relevant comments were incorporated into the BME Housing Strategy.

3.8 The Strategy identifies the following priority areas for action:-

- Improved provision of access and customer care for BME groups
- Closer working with partner RSLs and service users
- More accurate definitions of BME groups
- Investigate and address housing need for BME groups
- Improved communication and consultation/engagement
- Further monitoring of racial harassment incidents

These will be delivered through implementation of the Action Plan.

3.9 Cabinet approval is sought to adopt this Strategy and implement it across the relevant services of the Council.

#### **4. Options and Evaluation of Options**

The available options are as follows:-

1. Not to produce a BME Strategy
2. Adopt the Strategy and keep it under review

1. The option of not producing a BME Housing Strategy would mean that the Council would not comply with Action 4.10 of the Housing Strategy 2006-2011.  
2. The option of adopting the Strategy and keeping it under review is the preferred option since it will allow the Council to demonstrate that it is complying with the CRE Code of Practice, this is a requirement of BVPI 164.

#### **5. Resource Implications (including Financial Implications)**

Staffing and Printing costs covered in existing budgets.

The current Interpretation and Translation budget is £10k.

## 6. Risk and Opportunity Issues

The production of a BME Housing Strategy is an action in the Housing Strategy 2006-2011 and in the Housing Service Improvement Plan.

The risk of not delivering this is that housing provision in the future may not pay regard to or meet the requirements of the most vulnerable in our communities, and this important work of the Council is not inclusive.

## 7. Consultees (Internal and External)

<b>Internal</b>	<b>Housing Services, Environmental Health, Housing Maintenance, Customer Services, Policy and Governance,</b>
<b>External</b>	<b>CEMC, Race Equality Forum, NCC, N-TACT, Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation, Northampton Women's Aid African Caribbean Elders Society, African Association, SANKOFA</b>

## 8. Compliance Issues

### A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes

<b>Housing Service Improvement Plan</b>
<b>Objective 2.9 Develop a BME Housing and Support Needs Strategy</b>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>
<b>Priority 2 – To deliver an excellent housing service and provide affordable housing for those in need.</b>
<b>Priority 3 – To promote equality, social inclusion and improve health</b>

### B: Other Implications

<b>Other Strategies</b>
<b>Housing Strategy 2006-2011 “Enabling and Delivering Housing Choice”</b>
<b>Emerging LDF</b>
<b>Emerging Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy</b>


<b>Finance Comments</b>

<b>Legal Comments</b>

## 9. Background Papers

Title	Description	Source

[Report Author, title and extension]

Name	Signature	Date	Ext.
Author			
Corporate Manager			
Director		20 <sup>th</sup> June 2007	7287
Monitoring Officer or Deputy (Key decision only)			
Section 151 Officer or Deputy (Key decision only)			