

## FOREWORD

The Council recognises that despite the small number of black and minority ethnic people resident in the district it is vital to ensure that they are able to access services provided by the Council and that these services meet their needs.

This strategy provides information on the number of residents who are from minority communities and provides details on how the Council aims to ensure that they are able to access Housing Services and what steps it intends to take to ensure its services do not treat people unfairly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I C Bates', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the signature.

**Councillor I C Bates  
Executive Member  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
April 2003**

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## INTRODUCTION

According to recent research published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Housing Research Summary No. 180, 2003) members of ethnic minority groups are four times more likely to see racist harassment as a serious problem in their area than Whites. The research evidence suggests that harassment associated with residence remains widespread and can have a negative effect on household choice of residential area. Studies have highlighted problems of the Asian and African/Caribbean communities generally and of both Black women and of White women with Black children or children of mixed heritage. Researchers have criticised the effectiveness of responses to racist harassment and the take-up of good practice on tackling it by official bodies, including social landlords.

Discrimination can occur in many ways and the council considers discrimination to be broadly defined as:

*To discriminate is to treat a person more or less favourably on the basis of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, culture, gender, marital, parental or property status, disability, age or sexual orientation, or other such category that is irrelevant to the individual's right to receive fair and equal treatment.*

Discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, gender, age and disability is unlawful. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is deliberate. Indirect discrimination is where an act or failure to act, intentionally or inadvertently, has a disproportionate impact on a particular group.

Institutional discrimination was highlighted in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Macpherson, 1999), which found that institutional discrimination could affect the way organisations operate and the way services are provided. The report provided a definition of institutional racism, which has been expanded to include other forms of institutional discrimination, such as age, disability and gender.

'the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, ethnic origin, gender, disability or age. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination though unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping which disadvantage on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability or age'

The Council is committed to providing equality in the way services are delivered and accessed, when determining future plans, policies and strategies and in the employment of staff. It is committed to listening to all sections of the community and values diversity, aiming to deliver services that reflect the requirements and needs of its local communities.

The Council recognises that there is a small Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community within Huntingdonshire. Approximately 2.8% of the total population. The Council understands that the issues faced by these communities will be the same as those faced by similar communities elsewhere, but possibly exacerbated due to lack of support networks. The Council accepts the need for greater engagement with

these communities to ensure that services and opportunities are readily available to all residents.

The Council's Equality Strategy formalises its commitment to quality, effectiveness and efficiency in its services, underpinned by equality for users of those services and the employees who deliver them. The Council has enhanced its Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination Policy to reflect new government initiatives and legislation and is seeking continuous improvement in all its services. The Equality Strategy lays out how the Council intends to meet this commitment through action planning, consultation, assessment, monitoring needs and how it intends to evaluate and measure its performance.

This BME Housing Strategy contributes towards achieving the Council's commitment to equality in Housing Services.

## CHAPTER 1

### Background

The 2001 Census informs us that 97.2% of Huntingdonshire residents are white. This is slightly higher than the national average. Please see Table 1.

**Table 1. PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENT POPULATION IN ETHNIC GROUPS**

Group	Total number residents in Huntingdonshire	% Huntingdonshire	% England
White	152487	97.2	90.9
Mixed	1475	0.9	1.3
Asian or Asian British	1453	0.9	4.6
Black or Black British	788	0.5	2.3
Chinese or Other	751	0.5	0.9

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

However just over 4% of white people, 5917 residents are from minority groups, with 1192 being Irish and 4725 being classified as 'white other'. If people from all minority ethnic groups are included, the percentage of the district's BME population rises from 2.8% to 6.8%. Please see Table 2, which provides a further breakdown of white groups.

**Table 2. PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENT POPULATION INCLUDING WHITE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS**

Group	%	Total number
White	93.2	146570
White Other	4.0	5917
Mixed	0.9	1475
Asian or Asian British	0.9	1453
Black or Black Asian	0.5	788
Chinese or other	0.5	751

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

There is no further information on what groups make up 'white other' but the figures indicate that this is the largest group, as classified by the 2001 Census, of minority residents in the District.

Table 3 shows the diversity within our community and highlights the further work that is required in determining what groups are included in the 'white other' categorisation.

**Table 3. Breakdown of minority groups**

	Number	Percentage
White British	146,570	93.2
White Irish	1,192	0.76
White other	4,725	3.01
Mixed white & Black Caribbean	379	0.24
Mixed White & Black African	207	0.13
Mixed White & Asian	459	0.29
Mixed Other	430	0.27
Indian	592	0.38
Pakistani	561	0.35
Bangladeshi	149	0.09
Other Asian	151	0.09
Black Caribbean	323	0.20
Black African	220	0.14
Other Black	245	0.15
Chinese	360	0.23
Chinese Other	391	0.25

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

The 2002 Housing Needs Survey was not able to produce any reliable information on the District's BME community because the numbers are so small. This has prompted the Council to identify ways of collating more information about the resident BME population this includes applying for additional funding from the ODPM for a specific BME survey.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Way Forward

The Council recognises the need to provide an equal and fair service to all and is committed to:

- make services available to all that need them and deliver them in an appropriate way
- seek to avoid discrimination when designing, delivering or charging for services
- seek to ensure that information about services is published as widely as possible and in such formats as will encourage awareness in all customers and residents
- frequently review arrangements for access to Council premises
- assess and review alternative ways of making service delivery more accessible
- ensure that equality issues are considered as part of the Service Planning process
- seek to ensure that when working with others, partners adopt the same approach to equality
- incorporate equal opportunities into its procurement arrangements when not expressly prevented by legislation or statutory guidance.

As part of the Council's commitment to maintaining and improving performance it will;

- review and report upon on its communications activities annually
- complete a review of access to all Council premises and information points, report on and publish its performance and improvement plan on a five yearly basis
- ensure that equality issues are evaluated as part of the Best Value and Service Review programme.

The Council is also committed to ensuring that no Council policy discriminates directly or indirectly against any groups in the community. Council policies, strategies and plans will be reviewed to ensure that they are fair. The Council will;

- consider equal opportunities as part of each policy deliberation and service strategy
- consult with relevant sections and groups within the community to ensure that a policy or strategy does not have a discriminatory impact on that group
- carry out impact analysis where a reasonable request is made
- promote and contribute to improving the awareness of equal opportunities in the community as part of our community governance
- use national guidelines and definitions to inform its practices.

The Council will report upon its performance in the following ways:

- as part of the Communication Strategy a Consultation Strategy will be produced in 2004. This Consultation Strategy will include an equal opportunities statement and all consultation undertaken will comply with the equal opportunity statement contained in this strategy. The representativeness of consultation will be considered in all survey reports
- service strategies will be reviewed on an annual basis. Equality will be included as a key element of our service planning process and will be part of Best Value and service reviews
- corporate, cross-cutting and multi-agency strategies will contain a statement to demonstrate that consideration has been given to equality
- the Council will maintain a glossary of terms and definitions, informed by national guidelines as part of its Equality Strategy. The Strategy will be reviewed annually and amendments will be submitted to the Council's Cabinet.

### **The Current Situation**

The Council recognises that further work needs to be undertaken to determine whether it provides the services residents from minority groups want and if it does whether residents are able to access them. This is an issue the *Mapping Diversity Group* will be taking forward. The group meets regularly and consists of representatives from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Multi-cultural Education Service, Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership, Huntingdon PCT, Cambridgeshire Community Education, Cambridgeshire Traveller's Initiative and Huntingdonshire Council.

A bid has been made for funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to undertake a detailed survey of BME residents. If successful it is anticipated that this research will further inform the actions that the Council will undertake to continue to actively engage with residents from BME groups.

The 'Open Out' scheme for Huntingdonshire and Fenland was launched in April 2003 taking the scheme county-wide. Open Out is a local Partnership scheme designed to encourage the reporting of racial and homophobic incidents, otherwise known as Hate Crime. The idea behind the scheme is to encourage people to report incidents without having to go to a police station. Reporting centres are situated throughout the district and county and aim to be user friendly. Examples of reporting centres are, libraries, CAB, McDonalds, Job Centres, council offices and Sports centres.

The Race Equality Scheme Assessment process has been undertaken with 30 Council services assessed. The results of which will be used to inform future actions and services.

Housing services produces information in a range of languages and has access to an interpretation service for people whose first language is not English. All application forms, enquiry forms and survey forms include ethnic monitoring and systems have been implemented to monitor the results, which will be published every month. The results will be used to determine if housing services are being accessed by BME groups and if not, what can be done to ensure they do. A range of measures is



currently being initiated and it is anticipated that the monitoring information will also be able to inform future service provision for this client group. Current initiatives include:

- working with our RSL partners to ensure the needs of BME groups are taken into account when developing new homes
- expanding the range of information available in other languages
- reviewing and monitoring allocations to ensure that BME households are not disadvantaged
- applying for funding for a specific BME survey
- ensuring that housing advice and information is accessible to BME residents
- increasing the participation of BME residents in consultation exercises
- ensuring that Energy Efficiency measures are promoted amongst BME households.

### **Conclusions**

This strategy will be updated as further information becomes available on the services proposed and facilities available for BME households in Huntingdonshire.

The Mapping Diversity Group is now well established and the recent launch and implementation of the Open Out scheme has been very successful.

The Council recognises that a significant amount of work is needed to fully understand the needs of its BME community and to develop its strategy. This strategy outlines the further work that is required and the Council's commitment to that work.

## APPENDIX 1.1

### Ethnic origin of residents in the Huntingdonshire District by Tenure

	All People	White British	White: Irish	White Other white	Mixed White and black Caribbean	Mixed: white and Black African	Mixed: White and Asian	Mixed: Other Mixed	Asian or Asian British: Indian	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	Black or Black British Black Caribbean	Black or Black British: Black African	Black or Black British: Other Black	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other Ethnic Group
Owns outright	33985	32269	326	712	35	13	63	43	105	153	4	27	41	14	11	97	72
Owns with a mortgage or loan	86700	82440	550	1584	189	82	292	226	330	216	87	76	165	85	48	160	170
Shared ownershop	571	547	-	4	5	-	-	3	-	6	-	-	-	3	3	-	-
Rented from council/Other Social Housing	18771	17802	172	220	89	31	49	60	33	118	29	15	44	22	53	12	22
Private rented	12890	10483	98	1572	41	52	37	65	109	62	17	27	37	76	59	75	80
Living rent free	2369	1682	11	485	12	14	10	27	7	3	9	3	10	8	44	13	31
Living in a communal establishment	1669	1347	33	148	8	15	7	7	8	5	3	4	24	13	29	3	15

## APPENDIX 1.2

### Ethnic origin of residents in the Huntingdonshire District by Accommodation Type

	All People	White British	White: Irish	White Other white	Mixed White and black Caribbean	Mixed: white and Black African	Mixed: White and Asian	Mixed: Other Mixed	Asian or Asian British: Indian	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	Black or Black British Black Caribbean	Black or Black British: Black African	Black or Black British: Other Black	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other Ethnic Group
Household in unshared accommodation	155231	145172	1159	4575	372	192	451	425	582	556	147	147	299	207	216	355	376
House or bungalow	146603	137454	1051	4207	348	167	431	404	505	500	140	132	280	165	190	302	327
Flat; maisonette or apartment	7986	7111	103	352	21	25	20	18	77	53	7	15	19	42	26	53	44
Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure	642	607	5	16	3	-	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Household in shared accommodation	54	51	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communal Establishment	1667	1347	33	148	10	15	7	7	9	5	-	4	24	11	29	3	15
Medical and care establishment	804	749	5	37	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-
Other type of establishment	863	598	28	111	7	15	7	7	6	5	-	4	24	11	22	3	15

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you would like additional copies of this Housing Strategy or any of the following related documents please contact us.

Housing Strategy 2004-07  
Housing Strategy Summary 2004-07  
Reading The Housing Market July 2002  
Homelessness Strategy 2004-07  
Home Energy Conservation act – 6<sup>th</sup> Progress Report (2002)  
Empty Homes Strategy


If you have any comments on any of our documents or you would like to be involved in the ongoing consultation we undertake on the District's Housing Strategy please contact us.

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If you would like a copy of this document in larger print please contact us.

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