



South West London Housing Partnership Black and ethnic minority housing strategy

April 2008 version

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1. Introduction

The South West London Housing Partnership is a group of seven local authorities¹ that joined together in partnership to work on housing strategy, delivery and best practice. It is one of five housing sub-regions in London. The Partnership produced an ethnic minorities housing strategy in February 2006. This document summarises that strategy and its priorities and also provides details of the latest version of the action plan that we are working to in 2008.

Why have a BME housing strategy for South West London?

In April 2004 the Partnership published a Housing Strategy for South West London, which recognised that ethnic minority households were more likely to experience disadvantage in their housing, more likely to become homeless and to be in unsuitable housing. In addition they were more reliant on social and affordable housing². Given these facts, the Partnership made it a key objective to *meet the needs of black and minority ethnic residents*³. Partners wanted to improve the situation for these households.

Although some Partner local authorities had their own BME housing strategies it was clear that there were some actions that would be more effective if authorities worked together rather than individually. Partners have therefore worked together to produce a set of objectives and actions that will complement and enhance the individual borough strategies.

2. Priorities, Objectives & Actions

The Partners have used key information and indicators⁴ to assess the housing position of BME communities in our area of London. There has also been consultation with community groups and key housing providers on what needs to be done. This, together with the knowledge and experience of officers working in the Partner boroughs, has resulted in a set of priorities and an action plan which we hope will add value and deliver benefits additional to the work the boroughs are already doing individually.

¹ The boroughs are: Croydon, Kingston, Lambeth, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth

² A Housing Strategy for South West London, SW London Housing Partnership, April 2004

³ Page 34, A Housing Strategy for South West London

The four priorities that have been agreed for the work of the Partnership on BME housing are:

- i. To develop and maintain a clear and comprehensive picture of the housing needs of ethnic minority communities across the South West London;*
- ii. To respond effectively to housing needs and work to prevent homelessness;*
- iii. To promote sustainable communities and ensure fair access to housing services and housing;*
- iv. To mainstream ethnic minority housing issues within the work of the Partnership*

PRIORITY 1: To develop and maintain a clear and comprehensive picture of the housing needs of ethnic minority communities across the sub-region

A good knowledge of the situation, which is constantly being updated by regular and systematic collection of information about BME housing needs, is essential to finding solutions and meeting need. We need to do more across the sub-region to make sure that the information is collected, analysed and feeds into policy and practice. For example:

- although we have general information about ethnic minority needs, we do not have detailed information about the needs of new and emerging communities – this is a gap;
- more work is needed on the supported housing needs of ethnic minorities. In particular there is a need to identify the needs of ethnic elders and assess current provision against that need;
- data collection on ethnic minority housing issues is not consistent (in terms of content) or regular across the sub-region; and
- we need to put in place more effective consultation processes to ensure that communities are able to make their views known and help to identify issues and solutions.

The objectives for our work are therefore:

- Develop more effective engagement and consultation mechanisms with ethnic minority communities particularly new, emerging and under researched groups to find out about housing needs
- Develop a good understanding within the sub-region of the housing needs of different groups within ethnic minority communities
- Improve and update methods of data collection across the sub-region

Key actions to support these objectives include:

- Projects to identify the needs of new, emerging and under-researched groups;
- Specific work which looks at supported housing needs for the BME community, including ethnic elders; and
- Standardising data collection across the sub region and update regularly.

⁴ This can be made available on request

PRIORITY 2: To respond effectively to housing needs and work to prevent homelessness

We clearly need to ensure that as a sub-region the housing we are providing is appropriate and meets need. In most cases, the housing needs of ethnic minority communities are the same as for all communities: good quality and affordable housing of the right size and in the right place. General efforts to improve housing therefore will benefit ethnic minority communities too. However, there are also some specific requirements, for example where culturally sensitive design and services are required.

The objectives for our work are therefore:

- Develop new homes that meet the needs of ethnic minority households, and link in with the sub-region's project on overcrowding
- Improve existing private sector housing conditions
- Work to prevent homelessness amongst ethnic minority communities and improve housing advice and the range of housing options provided by partners in the sub-region

Key actions to support these objectives are:

- A target of 15% of the development programme targeted to BME RSLs;
- Work with housing providers who are able to provide appropriate housing and services and who have a good record in working with ethnic minority communities;
- Develop a sub-regional design brief for new housing that is culturally sensitive;
- Ensure that funding for improvements to existing housing is fairly distributed, including improving the homes of ethnic minority households;
- Provide guidance and make recommendations to the sub-regional private sector housing group of ethnic groups most reliant on private sector/overcrowded housing and ensure information is fed into private sector renewal strategies and allocation of grants and also into the sub-regional private sector housing strategy that is being developed;
- Carry out research into the main causes of homelessness amongst ethnic minorities and use the experience of homelessness officers to produce an action plan to specifically tackle ethnic minority homelessness at the sub-regional level;
- Link into the London Housing Advice Strategy and implement specific ethnic minority recommendations from that strategy within the sub-region; and
- Improve access to housing advice amongst ethnic minority communities.

PRIORITY 3: To promote sustainable communities and ensure fair access to housing services and housing;

This objective recognises that inequality still exists in the delivery of services and that there is a need to be ever vigilant to ensure that it is identified and tackled.

The objectives for our work are therefore:

- Ensure that sub-regional work on allocation processes addresses the impact on ethnic minority communities
- Ensure that supported housing services are being accessed by ethnic minority communities
- Promote fair access to employment in housing jobs

Key actions to support these objectives might be:

- Work with RSLs and private developers to promote housing as a career choice for ethnic minorities; and
- Address shortage of ethnic minorities representation in senior management positions
- Disseminate information about positive actions by social landlords, find out about existing diversity training across the boroughs provided by Housing related services, and map voluntary and community groups provision of housing advice services

PRIORITY 4: To mainstream ethnic minority housing issues within the work of the Partnership

As we worked on ideas for our strategy, it was clear that, many of the activities we undertook would have a significant impact on ethnic minority households, and that much of that impact was the same as for the general population. In all the work that we do, therefore, both strategic and operational, we need to consider the impact in terms of race equality.

The objectives for our work are therefore:

- Ensure that any new information and research findings about ethnic minority housing issues are considered by the Partnership
- Ensure that each sub-regional group identifies and addresses ethnic minority housing issues as part of its work
- Carry out race equality impact assessments on all sub-regional strategies and action plans using CRE guidelines

Key actions to support these objectives are:

- Ethnic minority issues to be addressed in the work of all sub-groups;
- Research carried out and information collected by the ethnic minorities strategy group to be shared with all sub groups as appropriate; and
- New sub-regional policies and processes to go through an equalities impact assessment

SWLHP BME Strategy Action Plan - summarised

Priority 1: To develop and maintain a clear and comprehensive picture of the housing needs of ethnic minority communities across the sub-region

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timetable
1.1 Develop more effective engagement and consultation mechanisms with ethnic minority communities particularly new, emerging and under researched groups to find out about housing needs	1.1 a) Draw together best practice about engagement and consultation and produce guidelines for the sub-region to use	Lambeth	2008
	1.1 b) Map sub-regional programme of consultation and engagement	Richmond	2008
1.2: Develop a good understanding within the sub-region of the housing needs of different groups within ethnic minority communities	1.2 a) Identify the needs of new, emerging and under researched groups	Sutton	2009 – 2010
	1.2 b) Research the housing needs of older people from ethnic minority communities	Wandsworth	Review of existing research completed
	1.2 c) Work with Supporting People Managers Group to identify supported housing needs	SP Group	2008
	1.2 d) Collate existing information on the pressures faced by extended families from ethnic minority communities due to housing shortages	Lambeth	2009 – 2010
1.3: Improve and update methods of data collection across the sub-region	1.3 a) Work towards standardised data collection across the sub-region	Merton	2008
	1.3 b) Regularly collect high level core data	All boroughs	2008

Priority 2: To respond effectively to housing needs and work to prevent homelessness

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timetable
2.1: Develop new homes that meet the needs of ethnic minority households	<p>2.1 a) monitor proportion of new 2006/08 development funding to go to ethnic minority providers either directly or indirectly and ensure development partners produce and deliver on their commitment to work with BME communities</p> <p>2.1 b) Work to Brent/London protocol and associated documents on all relevant new developments</p> <p>2.1 c) Develop culturally sensitive design brief</p> <p>2.1 d) Ensure that the sub-region's priorities for new housing incorporate the needs of ethnic minority households, including the need for larger units. Monitor the delivery of the capital programme to ensure priorities are implemented</p>	Development Managers	<p>a) ongoing</p> <p>b) ongoing</p> <p>c) 2009 – 2010</p> <p>d) Ongoing</p>
2.2: Improve existing private sector housing conditions	2.2 a) Ensure that funding for improvements to existing housing is fairly distributed	Private Sector Group	ongoing monitoring
2.3: Work to prevent homelessness amongst ethnic minority communities and improve housing advice and the range of options provided by partners in the sub-region.	2.3 a) Improve access to housing advice amongst ethnic minority communities	Homelessness Group	2009-10

Priority 3: Promote sustainable communities and ensure fair access to housing and housing services

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Status
3.1 Ensure that sub-regional work on allocation processes address the impact on ethnic minority communities	3.1 (a) Set sub-regional standards for allocations monitoring to ensure fair access	Allocation group	2008
	3.1 (b) Investigate the impact on ethnic minority communities of choice based lettings	Kingston	2009
3.2 Promote fair access to employment in housing jobs	3.2 (a) Promote housing as a career choice for ethnic minorities, particularly for young people	Richmond	2009
3.3 Ensure that supported housing services are being accessed by ethnic minority communities	3.3 (a) Examine the take up of supported housing services by ethnic minority households	Croydon	2008
	3.3 (b) Examine the take up of supported housing services by ethnic minority households		
Carry out race equality impact assessments on all sub-regional strategies and action plans using CRE guidelines	3.4a Impact assessments to be completed using CRE and other good practice guidelines on all strategy and policy developed in the sub -region	all	2008

Priority 4: Mainstream ethnic minority housing issues within the work of the Partnership

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Status
4.1: Ensure any new information and research findings about ethnic minority housing issues are considered by the Partnership	4.1 (a) Both Ethnic Minorities and strategy sub-groups to ensure new and key research and issues are considered by the sub-region	Merton	2008 and ongoing
4.2: Ensure each sub-group in the Partnership identifies and addresses ethnic minority housing issues as part of its work	4.2 (a) All sub-groups to build into their work plans, review progress at least quarterly and report on progress	All	Ongoing
4.3: Carry out race equality impact assessments on all sub-regional strategies and action plans using CRE guidelines	4.3 (a) Impact assessments to be completed using CRE and other good practice guidelines on all strategy and policy developed in the sub-region	all	Has to be done as they happen

Translation information

Please note that this will be added shortly.

