

# ITEM 9a

## Camden Local Strategic Partnership

<b>Meeting</b>	15 October 2009
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Social Cohesion Forum, 13 July 2009</b>
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<b>Purpose</b>	Note of the Social Cohesion Forum held on 13 July 2009 at Westminster Kingsway College.
<b>Recommendations</b>	The LSP is asked to note the report.

**Attendance:** Anju Bhatt, Dominic Clout, Cllr Moffitt (Chair), Cllr Marshall, Sharabeel Lone, Ibrahim Isse, Khadija Shirer, Lou Hart, Guljabeen Rahman, Amanda Whelan (Westminster Kingsway), Kim Caplan (for Andy Wilson)

**Council Officers present:** Jeff Hopwood, Dean Stokes, Olivia Mensah (note taker), Dawn Aldred

**Guest speakers:** Dr Peter Wright, Chair, Holborn District Management Committee and Connor Brennan, student, Westminster Kingsway 14-19 programme.

**Apologies:** Simone Hensby, Andy Knowles, Moira Ugoji, Andy Wilson, Cllr Ali, Rukshana Chisti, Rosemary Leeke

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Cllr Moffitt opened the meeting detailing the main discussion topics:
- Matters arising from the Special Social Cohesion Forum meeting and next steps
  - Engaging with the local community on housing issues
    - White youth focus
    - LGBT people
    - Tenant participation
  - White working class research proposal

## 2 Matters arising from SCF 27 April 2009

- 2.1 Terms of reference and work plan were agreed.

## 3 Follow up from special SCF 27 May 2009

- 3.1 Cllr Moffitt confirmed that a letter had been sent to the Home Secretary and copied to the Secretary of State, (Department for Communities and Local Government) and Frank Dobson MP but that no formal response

had been received to date despite best efforts to chase a response. Some of the SCF members felt that the letter should have been circulated more widely through the press. Cllr Marshall pointed out that taking a softer approach can often achieve the best results. Sharahbeel Lone stated that he wanted to change policy and not just raise awareness and therefore felt it was better to help rebuild trust by circulating the letter widely among community groups.

- 3.2 Khadija Shireh stated that she thought the incident had contributed to some breakdown in trust between some members of the local community and community leaders, who were perceived as being on the side of the enforcement authorities.
- 3.3 It was agreed that lessons for the future could include: sending a letter to the Letter to the Editor's page of the Camden New Journal, taking out an advert in the local press if press released letter not published, copies being sent to community groups for dissemination, and/or publishing a personal statement.

**Action:** All to ensure the letter is disseminated to the local community.

#### **4 Engaging with the local community**

*Youth Focus (Connor Brennan - Westminster Kingsway College)*

- 4.1 Connor Brennan from Westminster Kingsway's 14-19 programme addressed the meeting and stated he often felt discriminated against because he is being brought up in care. People make assumptions that it must be his fault rather than considering that he may be in Council care due to an unsuitable home life. Whilst in Islington it was difficult to get support but in Camden he was re-housed successfully into a children's home where he is very happy. CB found the traditional school regime to be inappropriate for his needs and has found the college environment more welcoming and suitable. He is treated as an adult and responds well to this environment. He engages best when he has consistency and stability. However he felt there were many areas in Camden where he does not feel safe after dark and mentioned Kilburn and Camden Town as examples.

*LGBT People (Lou Hart – LGBT Forum)*

- 4.2 The Camden LGBT Forum has taken part in meetings about Camden's tenant participation strategy and also attended the one day conference and workshops about the strategy. However, Lou felt it was still very difficult to engage people from local LGBT communities in Tenant participation due to the historical lack of available public housing for single people and fear of victimisation and or harassment from other residents and staff. Older LGBT People are less likely to engage with tenants groups due to memories of being targeted by police and authorities in the past. There is a sense that this group may be doubly

vulnerable due to their age and sexual orientation which may be compounded by disability ill health. For many there remains the fear of being 'outed' and victimised and therefore they may be unwilling to identify themselves as part of the LGBT community.

- 4.3 There is a need for retraining as many front line housing staff are unaware of homophobic harassment points. It was felt that mere monitoring was not the issue but what is done with the information gleaned. LH explained that research<sup>1</sup> shows that LGBT people tend to leave school earlier and make up 40% of rough sleepers.

*Tenant Participation and the BME community (Dr Peter Wright - Holborn DMC Chair)*

- 4.4 Dr Wright explained that the main thrust of consulting with tenants and residents about housing issues is carried out through the District Management Committees which are made up from elected representatives from Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA). The DMC Chair has approximately £130,000 to spend on the local area each year. Often at the TRA there tends to be familiar faces therefore it may be necessary to find alternative methods of attracting new people in an effort to be more representative. He felt it was also important to ensure that local representative did not feel overwhelmed by their workload.
- 4.5 The forum felt there needed to be different methods of consulting to ensure all who wanted to contribute had an opportunity to and that it was important people were empowered to contribute on matters that concerned them. Cllr Marshall felt it was important that all were represented but noted that we have to respect that some people do not want to engage. Khadijah Shirer felt that it was important that there was some movement in DMC and TRA members to allow space for fresh perspectives. She also felt that the way Tenant Halls were managed was sometimes an opportunity for conflict and that a lack of opportunity in use of tenant halls discouraged BME residents from engaging in more formal processes. It was also suggested that TRA and DMC Chairs needed better training to help them foster a more inclusive approach. Dawn Aldred informed the meeting of the range of training and new initiatives the Tenant Participation team are carrying out to improve opportunities for participation for all concerned.

**Actions for HASC:**

- Housing to produce short paper detailing what is being done to improve representation and participation of young, LGBT and ethnic minority tenants.

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<sup>1</sup> Stonewall Housing 2001

- Council to respond to recommendations to come out of LGBT tenant participation report presented by Lou Hart

## **5 Burning Issues**

- 5.1 These were discussed during the course of the meeting.

## **6 Any other business**

### *White working class research proposals*

- 6.1 The results of the Social Capital Survey indicated that the social categories D and E British white working class (semi-skilled and manual workers and those on the lowest incomes) had the lowest levels of social capital across all indicators. To investigate further, we will be undertaking research into this community looking at issues relating to social and economic marginalisation; barriers to achievement (both educational and employment) in the main. The research will be divided into two cohorts - young people and adults. The research is expected to commence later this year.

### *Results of the last election*

- 6.2 Turnout for Camden was 34.23%, compared to London's 33.53%. It was noted that the total votes to far right political parties was 3.57%.

### *Prevent Sub group*

- 6.3 Action: Update of the Prevent sub group and action plan to be given to SCF at the next meeting.

## **7 Date of future meetings**

- 7.1 12 October 2009, 21 January 2010 - meetings normally held in Committee Room 1, Town Hall between 6.00 -8.00pm