

**Camden's Community Strategy
Response on proposals from
Camden BME Alliance**

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Director**

Introduction

1. This paper is to set out Camden BME Alliance's (CBMEA) broad response to the consultation paper on Camden's Community Strategy.
2. On a general note CBMEA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the borough's draft Community Strategy. As a key stakeholder in the borough (representing some 40 voluntary and community organisations) we have an important contribution to make in shaping the future direction of the borough.
3. Over the past year, CBMEA has revised its priorities and is now prioritising work in the areas of communities, neighbourhoods and social cohesion. In view of this, the future design or shape of the Community Strategy, will have a significant impact upon our work and the communities we serve.
4. CBMEA's view is that a Community Strategy should reflect the needs and aspirations of the people that live in the area. It should look forward, empower, facilitate and enable. Fundamentally, every citizen (in particular those that are at risk, disadvantaged, marginalised or vulnerable) must be able to recognise themselves in the vision for the area and the subsidiary priorities for action.
5. From a BME perspective in particular, the Community Strategy is increasingly important. European Union accession and the need to successfully integrate existing and established minority ethnic communities into our borough, presents huge challenges for local decision makers and service providers.
6. In formulating our response, CBMEA has therefore carefully considered the above issues along with our findings from consultation meetings held with our membership. The details of which can be found in Appendix A of this report with a summary of key points set out below.

The role of the voluntary and community sector

7. The voluntary and community sector (VCS) contributes significantly to the social and economic life of the borough. The sector has well established networks, provides services and advocates on behalf of the community. Succinctly put, the VCS is a community asset and one which the residents of Camden would expect to see fully utilised.
8. As a result of this, CBMEA is concerned that nowhere in the draft document has any reference been made to the development of a strong, vibrant and sustainable VCS. Such a statement would clearly demonstrate that the value that the borough places on our resource and be a clear commitment into the longer term to develop VCS capacity for the overall benefit of the borough.

A place with values

9. There is a clear absence of explicit community values for the borough and the draft Strategy fails to address this requirement. The point should be made that within the existing Community Strategy 'Our Camden Our Future' community values are implicit, however they are not explicit. The thinking is that values should be written large and overarch the new Strategy. The values should talk about those things that characterise Camden citizens and are common to all people, regardless of their background or circumstance. Set out below are a draft list of priorities for consideration:
 - We are a community that listens to each other
 - We are a community that works together
 - We are a community that treats people fairly and with dignity
 - We are a community that cares about the well being of others
10. Values are critical not just in terms of defining Camden people, but also in terms of how the borough does its business and plans its activity. For example, as part of the commissioning of projects or tendering of contracts potential providers could be asked to set out how, in the delivery of services, they will promote Camden's values.
11. The development and integration of values within the Community Strategy creates a unique opportunity to further reaffirm the vision, we have, for our borough.

Community cohesion priorities

12. CBMEA believes that community cohesion should be clearly reflected in the Community Strategy, this is non-negotiable. The argument however is whether this should be mainstreamed throughout the priorities or profiled as a distinct and separate priority in its own right. CBMEA's view is that it should be profiled as a priority in its own right. Set out below are variants of community cohesion priorities that could be included in the document.
 - Support the development of the community and increase its capacity to act independently, provide services and significantly contribute to improving quality of life in the borough
 - Improve the quality of services through increased choice, diversity and accessibility
 - Empower communities and neighbourhoods to be actively involved in local decision making¹

¹ Social Capital Report 2005, reveals that xyz% of Camden residents participate in local decision making and xyz% believe they have any influence over decisions that affect them.

- Build upon the unique skill and knowledge assets of the community to increase choice and opportunity for the most disadvantaged and least accessible communities
- Build stronger communities, where there is trust and goodwill within and between communities and public institutions in the borough
- Promote inclusiveness by increasing opportunity for the least well off and most vulnerable, to fully participate in the social and economic life of the borough
- Increase the sense of personal well being, reduce fear and social isolation

Devolved decision making

13. Devolution is a central plank of the Government's vision for community development. However, the draft Community Strategy fails to address this issue in a substantive manner. Nor indeed does it make clear how the Community Strategy will serve as a vehicle or framework through which the wider vision for neighbourhoods might evolve. This cannot be right.

14. The draft Strategy must contain a clear reference to how the Community Strategy will facilitate further discussion regarding the neighbourhoods agenda and a subsequent devolution of decision making to local people. For example, the document could reflect a set of guiding principles, ideas and values regarding neighbourhoods that could function as a kind of mini vision statement for neighbourhoods.

Real ambition for BMEs

15. CBMEA is keen to ensure that the Community Strategy creates real opportunities for BMEs in the borough. The point to make here is that within the Community Strategy it is right to mention that the rates of unemployment for BMEs are disproportionately high. Indeed, it is also right to note that effort should be made to reduce unemployment amongst BMEs of working age. However, reference needs to be made to the fact that the focus of tackling BME unemployment is not just about creating jobs but also opportunities.

16. Here it is worth noting that it is possible to increase employment in an area through the provision of jobs, but effectively not significantly increase opportunities for those in employment. As a result, what is required are jobs that increase access to promotion, advancement and economic mobility. Such ambition is lacking in the consultation draft and therefore calls into question the ambition the Council has for its BME population.

Conclusion

17. CBMEA is keen to ensure that the above comments are recognised within the context of the development of Camden's Community Strategy. The document should reflect all Camden's citizens. All should be able to recognise themselves within it.

APPENDIX A

Camden BME Alliance Community Strategy Consultation with Member Organisations

The following notes are based on dialogue that AB (Community Engagement Officer for CBMEA) has had with member organisations regarding the new Community Strategy draft document that Camden Council has circulated borough wide for consultation purposes.

Opinions were gathered regarding the council's vision for 2012 as well as specific questions that CBMEA posed to member organisations.

Views were sought on barriers that communities face in being included in this vision as well as points that members would wish to be specifically mentioned in the strategy.

The approach to this consultation used two methodologies.

1. Workshops conducted with Camden BME Alliance member organisations, and Trustees.
2. Open ended questionnaires/interviews with member organisations

The reasons for conducting the interviews were, firstly, to gain a more detailed profile on how BME communities can be involved in the council's vision. Secondly, in agreement with the council's strategy unit it was agreed that AB would concentrate on communities that the council was keen to engage with over the community strategy.

Additionally, organisations that were engaged individually also gave their responses to questions that CBMEA posed in the workshops with Members and Trustees.

All responses by the individuals and organisations that fed into this consultation are reproduced thematically and the findings of this consultation are reproduced in the following phases.

A)

BME member organisations and professional colleagues that have fed into the consultation via workshops that addressed questions posed as a strategic organisation to its members regarding the community strategy. These included

1. Bengali Workers Association
2. Camden Back Parents and Teachers Association
3. Camden Chinese Community Centre
4. Centre for Filipinos

5. Ethiopian community in Britain
6. Kings Cross Racial Diversity Project
7. London Irish Centre
8. Camden Crossroads
9. Third Party Reporting Project
10. British Somali Community
11. VAC
12. Camden Age Concern
13. Equalities Unit (LBC)

B)

Open ended questionnaires/interviews that Azhar Bhatti, Community Engagement Officer (Camden BME Alliance) conducted with BME member organisations using “Camden together” as a template.

1. Congolese Action Group (CAG)
2. Asian Women’s Lone Parent Organisation (AWLPA)
3. Somali Community Centre (SCC)
4. Ethiopian Health Support Network
5. Camden Chinese Community Centre (CCCC)
6. Camden Cypriot Women’s Organisation
7. Ethiopian Community in Britain
8. Camden Care Alliance

Part A

Questions posed by CBMEA to Members regarding the Camden Community Strategy

Below are the questions that Camden BME Alliance has posed its members as a strategic organisation regarding Camden's draft community strategy. Member's organisations responses to these questions are also outlined below.

Should CBMEA argue for an overarching set of values to be included in the documents? E.g. things that bind Camden citizens together (mutual respect, fairness, concern).

1. Delegates agreed that the voluntary sector in Camden is diverse and plays an important role in, and that the voluntary sector is value driven. This should be recognized in the new strategy, since the old strategy was more explicitly, people centred.
2. It was also mentioned that BME groups form a large part of the community, but there is little specific mention of them in the community strategy.
3. Yes, everyone needs to be Valued, especially in our diverse borough

Does the community strategy not need to be saying something about how the borough will not only be a place where people are equal but one where all people feel equal as well?

1. Members drew attention to the fact that BME individuals in Camden do complain about employment and educational specifically the opportunities for promotion and development.
2. It was also mentioned that the road can often be blocked when it comes to the nitty gritty help and support that BME organisations require in order to meet, individuals and their communities needs. Along with this point it was agreed that equality of opportunity should be reflected across the board, which includes funding.

3. Organisations don't feel equal; strategy does need to specifically mention equality issues.

Do we need to see a strong focus on empowering communities and devolving decision making to local neighbourhoods? And the specific (critical) roll of local members in facilitating this?

1. Need more understanding of what this process would actually mean and entail. Sometimes councillors just like to score political points. There has to be a genuine commitment to empowering communities at the local level.
2. Members also highlighted issues of accountability. It was felt that people would need support to do this i.e. tackling cross-cultural issues. How real and meaningful is this without that level of commitment
3. Awareness of neighbourhood partnership is patchy and their profile/and role needs to be clarified. It was felt that If supported in the right way, local forums could improve the situation in terms of facilitating greater decision-making power locally.

Congolese Action Group

- Yes but the council needs to recognise the value of this approach rather than trying to deliver everything that is centrally driven by them.

AWLPA

- Local members such as councillors need to be better networked with local communities and more visible. Not sure how well BME councillors are aware of women's issues. BME leaders tend to be older men who are not always sympathetic to women's issues. In order for this to work there would have to be a certain level of accountability and transparency. Also need more women leaders locally.

Somali Community Centre

- This would be good, as you need participation of local communities, and you can't really achieve this without empowerment, and well funded BME organisations and recognition of the work they do.

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- Yes, absolutely. This is very important in Decision making at a local level, but you need to empower communities first before they are able to be more involved in decision making.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- Our organisation is a pan Camden service, and our concern in being able to deliver to deliver in our community is that we are not getting funded to develop neighbourhood or area based subsidiary branches. This approach would benefit our community

Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation

- This is important to emphasises and underlines the importance of ensuring all communities are well represented. As it is usually same suspects and this approach would need to be wholly inclusive in terms of representation.

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- Yes, neighbourhoods need to be robust enough to be able to do this.

Care Alliance

- It is important, all groups and communities would need to be represented equally otherwise there would be no change
- It depends on what is devolved. Local people would need to be prepared for this. For example on how to work together and developing partnerships.

<p>Should community cohesion be a separate priority for Camden?</p>
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1. Yes, because 50% of the population in Camden are from BME communities, and because of this it was felt that the new community strategy needs to make a specific mention and commitment to this
2. It was also agreed that some BME communities are feeling increasingly targeted, and unless action is taken now, there is a risk of increasing marginalisation for these groups. The community strategy needs to recognize this development and make a explicit commitment towards addressing this.

Congolese Action Group:

- Yes

AWLPA:

- It could not do any harm

Somali Community Centre

- Yes, this is an important issue for the Muslim community in Camden with the current climate of Muslims being demonised, and race hate crime and abuse towards Muslims has increased.
- Understanding between cultures and communities is becoming more difficult. The first generation suffered this problem, but our second generation is more assertive and has led to more friction with other communities. This has led to anti social behaviour and exclusion from schools.

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- Yes, this is a big area. We need to create links between communities, increase harmony, reduce cultural misunderstanding, learn from each other, and also tackle inter- ethnic conflict.
- There are many communities from the BME Communities in Camden, so community cohesion is very important for the borough.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- Yes, because many BME communities in Camden are marginalized and Camden has a diverse range of BME communities.

Camden Cypriot Women's organisation

- It is important that everyone respects everyone else.
- Cypriot community has issues around feeling targeted, our first generation has more problems in this area than our second or first generation, but we do have needs around older people.
- Community cohesion is a relevant point for us especially around older people, but the flavour of the strategy is orientated towards community cohesion anyway, not sure that we need a specific mention of this in the strategy.

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- Yes, this has to be stressed and underlined

Care Alliance

- Yes, if it can be done, it might be hard to achieve in the current climate.
- Communities need to understand each other, especially refugees who feel that they are not understood.

How much profile should be given to the 7/7 attacks? And should this be treated as a community cohesion issue or public safety issue

Some members mentioned that a large problem with the 7/7 attacks is that the local authority views them as a national issue and not as a local issue. This really needs to be tackled locally especially when a particular community is targeted.

A.) Community Cohesion

1. Racism is entrenched in attitudes and there is a long way to go before this can change.
1. Young people in the local community are affected through the intense stop and search policy used by the police.
2. Relations with the affected community could go backward unless more resources are targeted at this issue.
3. There was too much of a short term, knee jerk response, and the issue was forgotten.
4. Other members felt that the 7/7 attacks were a national as well local priority, and pointed out that a lot of work was carried out locally before 7/7, but it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of this work
5. There was also the view given by some members that groups are starting to care less and less about diversity issues and maybe becoming more isolationist in their outlook – the danger of this happening needs to be addressed.
6. Members felt that we do need a focus on community safety, locally people are talking about how John Mendez was killed, and people question this.

b.) Community Safety

1. Public safety has to be considered through both angles. The safety of the community from the point of the conduct of the police also needs to be examined.
2. This entails additional issues of the police being investigated and is an Issue of concern for BME groups
3. Increased power of police to stop/search "Tanned" Men

The consensus of members was that the 7/7 attacks are both national and local priorities, and this needs to be reflected in the new community strategy as community cohesion as well as a public safety issue.

Congolese Action Group:

- Both

AWLPA:

- Both.

Somali Community Centre

- It should be treated as a community cohesion issue.
- The Muslim community needs to take more responsibility to educate angry disillusioned youth. Young Muslims should be involved and listened to more

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- Both, Cohesion will help people to understand each other and live in harmony, education, and training.
- Festivals would help this.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- Both

Camden Cypriot Women's organisation

- Both, Camden needs to address this issue; however for our community the emphasis is on the Community safety issues around the 7/7 attacks

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- As a public Safety Issue

Care Alliance

- Should be treated as both
- Muslim people are concerned over the backlash of the 7/7 attacks and afterwards the Bangladeshi's did not open the market on Charlton Street for a few weeks afterwards for fear of reprisals.
- Do need to ask why it happened.

Are members content that a profile should be given to the development of a strong, vibrant and sustainable voluntary sector-with an emphasis on promoting equality within the sector?

1. It was agreed that strong, vibrant and sustainable should inform the main document and be mentioned at the beginning because these points need to go to the heart of the document.
2. It would be desirable because this would/should reflect a long term commitment to the voluntary/community sector
3. It was also mentioned that the community strategy would inform other strategies and frameworks and is therefore a long-term reference points hence the need for it to be reflected in commitment to the Voluntary and Community sector
4. There is a danger of these words becoming buzzwords and this would have to be avoided.
5. The Consensus was that we should take every opportunity to promote the voluntary sector and so new community strategy should make a commitment to the sector and a vision for its long term future

Congolese Action Group

- Yes

AWLPA

- There should be a mention of this in the strategy with a specific mention of the BME sector.
- BME sector communities are behind on issues such as housing, health services, and education. There should be recognition of people's differences (that is more like equality).

Somali Community Centre

- Yes, because this is missing from the strategy. It would show that the council is truly committed to a fair and just society where people are truly included.

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- Yes, this is very important, because this will help to empower communities, and only then can there be true equality.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- Yes, we definitely agree with this
- An example is the meals on wheels service offered by social services, the food is not suitable for our people, and our elderly do not like the food, and cannot really say that they benefit from the service too much.
- A solution would be to subcontract us to provide the service to our own community. This would massively benefit the elderly and disabled members of the community.
- We can provide the food and lunches, but we simply lack delivery resources. We are relying on volunteers at the moment but this system means that we can only deliver to a limited area.

Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation

- Yes, the voluntary sector makes a massive contribution towards communities; this should be recognised.
- There is such a large sector in Camden that maybe it should merit a specific mention in the strategy.
- We also have issues around the meals on wheels service as many of our elderly do not take up the service because the food is culturally incompatible.
- Community based food for the meals on wheels service would work better and ensure a better uptake of the service. We would like to be involved in this but would need the resources to make this happen.

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- Yes, but the infrastructure organisations need to be supported and maintained. It is these organisations that work towards empowering and capacity build in communities and other voluntary sector organisations. There are very few such organisations, like VAC who do their work effectively. They need to be maintained.

Care Alliance

- Yes because at the moment there is a lack of recognition of the work that we the voluntary sector does, especially around the hard to reach groups, because the sector provides very good value for money.
- Staff teams produce results, often with a lack of resources. We, as an organisation feel that more services should be targeted for the refugee community.
- Often it is the smear groups that do a lot of the difficult work, but get the least money, and in partnerships larger partners usually end up swallowing most of the funds.

Summary

- BME Community and the diversity of the borough should be more specifically recognised.
- BME Communities lag behind in employment, housing, education.
- BME organisations should be preserved and sustained because they essentially work with hard to reach communities. This should be reflected in funding and not just strategy.
- More specific mention of equality
- Devolving decision making to local/neighbourhood level is seen as desirable, but neighbourhoods need to be robust enough to be able to manage this, and it could not work without effective representation for all communities.
- Community cohesion should be a separate issue for Camden, and there are particular issues around this for the Muslim Community.
- The 7/7 attacks should be treated as both a community cohesion issue and a public safety issue.
- Muslim Community at risk of being marginalized and needs to be involved discussion around this issue.
- Concerns around the conduct of the police in the killing of John Mendez and the increased number of BME youth being stopped and searched.
- The role of the voluntary sector should be more clearly specified, because it delivers an enormous amount of work and services to communities (especially the BME sector which works with hardest to reach communities).
- Voluntary sector empowers communities and this should be recognized in the strategy and a specific commitment made to the voluntary sector in the Community Strategy.

Part B

(Questionnaire/Interviews)

Creating a borough of opportunity

Vision for 2012

We have a strong local economy that adapts well to future change and where more people, especially young people can acquire skills and access education, training and jobs

Congolese Action Group

- In terms of young people's development and involving them towards increasing training and employment, we are sometimes puzzled by the way that the council is working towards this.
- For example they have been recruiting from schools for young people to take up some of these opportunities, but they should be targeting non school goers who hang out on the streets, but they don't know those youths are, but we do because they are from our community. They should be working with us more.
- There has to be more of recognition of our specialist knowledge and links regarding our ability and competence to work with our own community who can often be the most marginalized members in Camden.
- J.O cited the RAISE project as an example, when initially no youth from the Congolese Community took up participation in the project, however when CAG was approached for help they supplied 16 young people to work on the Kings Cross Development in construction.
- Our young end up in gangs a lot of the time, and fitting into a gang creates a sense of belonging. Issues of conflict between parents and children needs more work
- The vision is good but the council cannot presume that it knows better than us in how to work with our own communities (This was also said within the context of the Voluntary Sector review and the LAA). Recognition of this would be important.

Awlpa

- There is a need for more BME women to be included in this vision and attention needs to be paid as to how organisations like ours can contribute to this.

Somali Community Centre:

- Our community lags behind in most in most areas, and this will be made doubly difficult with the new funding regime that is due for Camden (referring to Voluntary Sector Review and LAA).
- If BME organisations are removed or hindered in providing services to their own communities how will the Somali youth participate in these opportunities, how with the council reach them. There is a risk that the community will lag further behind (especially due to the three year funding cycle).
- The vision expressed by the council is all well and good but the funding and commissioning processes also need to reflect this.
- Our community is open to be approached, previous leaders in the council were also approachable and committed, and progress has been made. However, the new administration that has been elected to make changes does not necessarily know the profiles of BME communities the way Labour did.

Ethiopian health support network

- Agree that it is a good vision, and the barriers that face the Ethiopian community in being included in it are the usual one ones facing BME communities.
- We face issues of lack of skills and language problems. Our youth suffer from mental health, alcohol, and drug issues. A mentoring project might be useful in helping some of these problems.
- Before we as a community can move forward these problems need to be tackled.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- We do not have particular issues around young people, nor is language a concern for them.
- As a community we have concerns around middle aged and older people. a lot of work and resources are needed around language and interpreting.
- What has really affecting our community is when the statutory sector cuts services. For example Camden & Islington PCT have made redundant the post of the hospital advocacy and interpreting post. This will have a big impact for the Chinese elderly. Phone interpreting does not work. Health is one of the top priorities for our community.
- Language is also an issue for people coming over from Mainland China, mainly women who are marrying into British Chinese families, so Esol is an important resource for us and is working to help with this problem. We would also like to provide NVQ level 1-2 training for them as this would help in employment for those who need more skills.

Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation

- Most of our members are elderly and have contributed to the economy, but it is older and middle aged that need services,
- Needs around advocacy, language and interpreting,
- The advocacy and interpreting posts in the hospital has been closed and this will affect our elderly, we are not funded to provide this service. To substitute this service, we will have to fundraise or failing this, suffer the loss to our community, especially the elderly.
- The other issues that we have are people that come over from Greece, which is now part of the (EU). So there is real demand in these people seeking advice on employment, benefits, general advice, training and housing.
- This has put an added burden onto our service. No new resources have been allocated to us to help us. So we have needs around this.

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- It is a good vision, and a good idea to set a strategic vision and work towards achieving this.
- But for this dream to come true, the council needs to give opportunities to all those who wish to contribute to this effort. Mainly, these are organisations at the front line, give them a fair chance, and consider them as equals.

Care Alliance

- As an organisation we support refugee communities by helping to deliver training to them in employment and basic skills. However our delivery of these services is affected by short term funding.
- There are many youths in these communities hanging around because they are jobless and dropped out of education. There are also drug issues, and a lack of motivation. We find that many of these youths are from the Somali and Congolese community.
- We need to know why this is happening and what effective work can be done around it.
- We would like to stress that refugee communities need to be advised by their own communities.

Balancing growth with our environment

Vision for 2012

We work together to accommodate a growing population while protecting our environment and quality of life. We are meeting the needs of people in Camden now and safeguarding our inheritance for future generations.

Congolese Action Group:

- This is an issue in our community in terms of housing. The council builds houses that accommodate nuclear families, however in our community there is a strong preference to live in extended families.
- There is also a lot of overcrowding, and is leading to tension within in families, especially between Children and Parents.
- We have found that the new 3-4 bedroom houses in the new Kings Cross Development are not being allocated to BME communities. This will have a negative impact on our community i.e. revolts in the family, affecting older people and as we have found many young people ending up on the streets.
- The bidding system for housing is now done on the Internet our community is further disadvantaged because many are not computer literate. This applies particularly applies to refugees.
- In terms of the environment our community is not aware of energy conservation principles. There needs to be more work done in this area. Our people come from countries where energy saving does not have much concept of this. Our young people need to be educated on this as well, because they are also responsible for some of the vandalizing and graffiti that goes on in Camden. But we need to be given the resources to deal with them ourselves.

AWLPA:

- There is a lot of asthma and respiratory diseases among young people in our community and there does need to be more access to green spaces. Would especially welcome more spaces where families can go.
- In terms of environmental issues BME communities are often low income and have more immediate concerns. Maybe the council could offer an incentive scheme to gain credits. Additionally energy conservation and recycling is not part of their cultural vocabulary.
- Issues of overcrowding are a problem and there is a lack of housing options for BME lone parents. We need more housing that can accommodate larger BME families as well.

Somali Community Centre:

- The vision is good, but how will they achieve it. There are issues of congestion, overcrowding, affordable housing (al of which are big issues in BME communities. What assurances can the council give that they will overcome these this by 2012. How will they solve these problems?

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- Our community has increased in the last 5-6 years, and there are many housing issues that we face.
- Poverty is another issue, especially for our elderly people. It would be if they could be housed close their own community.
- We would like to contribute to environmental issues but we would need training around anti pollution and recycling.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- We could do with more support around smoking cessation and alcoholism. At the moment there is little or no help from the PCT.
- We often have complaints around noise pollution from motorbikes and it might be worth thinking about creating no go zones for them.
- Housing needs for the elderly is another concern. Many of our elderly would like to move to sheltered housing but there is not enough wardens from the Chinese community to make this feasible.

Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation

- The main priority is the health needs of our ageing and disabled population.
- A high proportion of our elderly suffer from high blood pressure, arthritis and heart problems.
- Depression is a growing concern, and we feel that the PCT is reluctant to fund BME organisations for health promotion activity, and it is very hard to get funds from them. Nor does the PCT acknowledge the health promotion work that we do.
- Sheltered housing and resident care is a concern for us, and there is none for Cypriots in Camden. Our community is an ageing population, and this playing on their minds and is becoming more of an issue for concern.
- Noise pollution, high number of people on council estates and noise interferes with quality of life.
- 2nd and 3rd generation Cypriots are coming back to Camden, and are showing an interest in the roots of the Cypriot Community, which was embellished, in Camden Town.
- There is a real interest in renewing and revisiting finding out more about Cypriots cultural roots in London, we would like to explore this and how this can lead to increased community cohesion

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- This is a natural trend that we all expect. Balancing growth with the environment is good and we all have to support and work towards that.
- We suggest that we need to involve all communities in the campaign and actual operation of this vision

- Road maintenance should be carried out at night when there is less traffic to avoid congestion and emission of CO2 and other emissions.
- Maintenance on main roads should be carried out in the fastest time possible
- Open spaces could be sponsored by communities who could be given the support to do this.

Care Alliance

- Refugee community is poorly housed and overcrowded.
- Many people have problems because of the poor quality of the council housing.
- There is a lack of space for children and young people to play. Everyone stays in overcrowded conditions with no outlet, so tensions within the family also build.
- There is a high unemployment rate for refugees, particularly among the 40-55-age range. This group finds it very difficult to find employment, because when they arrive in this country as adults it takes five years to settle and train, by that time, even people with degree cant get jobs.
- The RAISE project has not been as successful as it could have been. The refugee community was not involved in the shaping or delivery of services.
- Community organisations should be given more ownership of projects that are intended for the communities that they work for, and their skills to be recognized by council officers.

Building strong healthy and connected communities

Vision for 2012

People feel at home in Camden, take an active part in democracy and can influence the decisions that affect them. Quality of life is improving for all, particularly children, young people, and older residents

Congolese Action Group:

- To realize this vision, there has to be a certain level of integration, but this is difficult to achieve straight away and requires sustained effort. An example of this is that many of our community are also Muslims and do not drink, so they generally do not go to the pub and so socialising has to be given a different focus such as sport and playing with other communities and interacting with them that way.
- The other issue is that young people from BME communities stand united by their involvement in crime, so if you can recruit some of the streets, they could influence others from different communities to do the same, because often they know each other.
- Young people are important because they will be tomorrow's adults. More access to physical activities will also help with this situation (and in some instances religious needs to be taken into account).

AWLPA:

- It is at present not easy for BME communities to participate fully in local decision-making and democracy, and the level of Islamophobia has made this issue worse.
- The other contributing factor related to this is the level of marginalisation BME communities can face.
- Our clients have reported a sharp increase in the number of animosity shown towards Muslims, even women. The Muslim community in Camden has suffered a post 7/7 backlash.
- Particular effort needs to be made to involve the Muslim communities. We also need an Islamic Forum in Camden that is truly inclusive of women, and we need a lone parent policy in Camden as well.
- Need to try and help men that are the perpetrators of domestic violence and do more about family discord in BME Communities.
- There is a lot of disaffected youth in our community and there needs to be a commitment to this in the strategy and how this will be achieved
- We also need more Bengali women in local politics.

Somali Community Centre:

- It is a great vision, but how will this be realized under the current funding review. Some organisations will miss out especially the smaller ones (which often do some of the most valuable work and are the most dedicated).
- Our community is still struggling at the basics, such as access to services and information, and educational achievement. These problems have to be fixed before we can truly participate in local politics and decision-making.

- The new funding regime risks communities drifting away from each other. BME communities currently only really feel at home through services provided by their own communities where they don't have to struggle with issues of religion, culture, or language.

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- Unfortunately this profile that the council has described does not really fit our community. Improvement has not been equal for us.
- Improvements in language, communication, and information would help this and also work towards integration and increased role in democracy.
- Our youth are behind in employment and school, because when they arrive in England they are used to a different education system and culture, and find themselves not having learned the necessary skills to find work.
- We also need to develop services for our older people because they are the most vulnerable and isolated. Our youth would very much benefit from more training in English and Computers so that they can get jobs.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- As a centre many of our clients are middle aged and elderly, and many of the issues are around health promotion, suitable housing and language/cultural support.
- Our younger generation that are British Chinese lead a more involved life in Camden, and do not suffer from some of the problems that other BME communities suffer from. Such as drug abuse, low educational achievement and anti social behaviour.

Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation

- Involvement of our community in upper levels of decision making is important; we need fuller representation before this vision can be achieved for our community
- We are not well represented, i.e. councillors, limited involvement with local neighbourhood and council affairs.

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- We support this vision, but it will need a lot of work to enable BME communities to play more of a part in influencing decisions that affect them, but again I will say that communities would find this difficult without organisations like ours who support and represent them. We are the connection between the grass root level and the council's vision.

Care Alliance

- More work needs to be done to support refugees to integrate into society, and some innovative programs are needed for this.
- A well organised and independent refuge forum that is supported but not owned by the council would be a good start. Ownership has to be by refugee communities.
- VAC does what it can but its services to refugees are limited. We need a bigger voice as we have over twenty five different refugee communities in Camden and it would be good to centralise resources that are available to them and give a central platform.

A safe and vibrant place at the heart of a world city

Vision for 2012

We share a thriving and safe part of London-and gateway to the rest of Europe-Where a local people benefit from the excellent cultural and leisure opportunities on our doorstep, including the Olympics.

Congolese Action Group

- Our community is not so interested in the Olympics, because we have more immediate concerns such as homelessness among our youth, anti social behaviour and lack of educational achievement.
- To deal with these issues we need to recruit more community support officers from Ethnic minorities. Feel that this will have a positive impact. And officers should be recruited from the communities that they from so that local knowledge and links are utilised.
- This approach will help to promote more solid relationship between the police and community, as well as police build more local knowledge.
- Any plans that the council has for delivering services to our community around leisure should involve organisations like ours, otherwise they will get some of the planning wrong.
- We should be involved in delivering sport because at the moment we are only informed about what is going on. Council should stop informing us and start involving us more.

AWLPA:

- Our community needs more consultation around the Olympics and our client group has shown a wish to be more involved and attend the Olympics but they are not sure on how best to get involved.

Somali Community Centre:

- For our community this vision is not so relevant, they are worrying about basic survival. London may be thriving but we generally have little part of this. Our community has money, welfare, housing and education issues, as well as a huge problem of tension within families.
- We do feel excluded due to our culture generally not being valued and Islama-Phobia issues.
- The Somali community and BME communities in general have a community safety concern.
- Somalis are suffering increasingly more racist attacks but our community is often seen as the perpetrators of crime and not as victims (supported by KCRDP). We need more police on the streets, but also appreciate that there is a lack of these resources.
- We need more heath promotion activity to promote the Olympics but the budget to do this in the Voluntary Sector Review is very small. We as a community need more resources to promote and participate in sport.
- Sport will help take BME youth of the streets, current sports facilities are out of the affordable range for many of our youth.
- Our youth, due to lack of education and employment have a lot of time on their hands and we fee that football would help make a positive

impact on this. (London Tigers, a pan London organisation that recently spoke at Health and Race Forum has proved that this approach really works).

Ethiopian Health Support Network

- We are largely a London community, but need to be empowered to take a more active part in London life by teaching basic skills.
- We are planning to start a mentoring project for young people, and would like some support from the council in this.
- Need to tackle issues of drugs, language, information, and mental health.

Camden Chinese Community Centre

- The youth would like to be more involved but we need more information on how we do this
- Our elderly population have community safety concerns around anti social and drunken behaviour. This stops them fully participating in Camden's cultural opportunity
- In terms of cultural events we would like to be in a position financially to provide more cultural events for our own community.

Camden Cypriot Women's Organisation

- There are community safety concerns for our elderly population, their priority in this regard is to feel safe on the streets, however many live on council estates, do not go out late for fear of being mugged, robbed and attacked.
- Buses are a huge issue for the elderly, fear of young people and anti social behaviour keeps many indoors and they do not access parks and green spaces due to similar fears around community safety
- Cultural; events are very important, keeps the Cypriot community together. We would like to preserve our roots in Camden and would like to do more of this work.

Ethiopian Community in Britain

- The situation is improving but we need to work harder in this continuously.
- Issues that need to be addressed are crime, and peoples fear of it.
- Drugs and crime among youth needs to be tackled.
- We also need more sport activities that are available in Camden for residents use.

Care Alliance

- Anti Social behaviour among young people is a big issue for all groups, and drug taking is also high, more so among refugee women.
- Refugee communities need to be more involved in sport and related health activity. The people that we see are keen to know how they can get involved in sport.
- Trust between neighbours is lacking and there is a lack of interest in one another and lack of community spirit.
- Apart from the young people on the estates who mix and hang around together, most other groups go their separate ways.
- People seem suspicious of each other nowadays and are drifting away from each other.
- Children and young people suffer from a lack of parental supervision and involvement

Dissemination of Camden Community Strategy Consultation Findings

The findings of the consultation reveal a profile of the BME sector that is relatively marginalised in Camden.

Areas of concern/barriers for BME communities under each of the council's visions for 2012. These are briefly summarized below

1. Creating a borough of opportunity

- BME communities have issues around their young people being involved in crime and gangs
- Access to education, employment
- Homelessness issues
- Recognition from the council that BME organisations in Camden should be recognised for their ability to provide services to and involve their own communities

2. Balancing growth with our environment

- Severe housing issues, this includes a lack of housing for BME communities in Camden, severe overcrowding, and lack of housing suitable for BME communities (who usually prefer to live in an extended family structure.
- Lack of awareness about environmental issues
- An incentive scheme for recycling and energy conservation could be introduced to make the BME communities in Camden more environmentally minded.
- Lack of cultural vocabulary amongst BME communities.
- Many BME communities are struggling to access basic resources such as language, employment, housing and skills, so environmental priorities are lower on the agenda.
- Training for BME communities around the environment is necessary if progress in this area is to be made.

3. Building strong healthy and connected communities

- Lack of participation in citizenship
- Communities at the risk of being marginalised
- Islamophobia issues in Camden, Muslim community at risk of slipping further behind
- Need BME communities to be more involved in sport, including the delivery and planning of sport services.

4. A safe and vibrant place at the heart of a world city

- Olympics were not seen as being hugely relevant to the Olympics, because of more important priorities already outlined
- Even when there is an interest and keenness to get involved, there is a lack of information on how people can get involved

- More involvement in sport was also mentioned in this section as being a priority area for BME youth
- High level of concern around community safety issues, and BME communities suffering from increased racial and religious harassment.
- Concern that BME youth are often the victims and perpetrators of crime and more resources such as increased number of police on the streets was important.

During the consultation, it was noticed that individuals and organisations did not disagree with the vision as expressed in the draft strategy. However, respondents were keen to emphasise the barriers they faced in being included in this vision.

Thus, the areas highlighted in these findings should be viewed as problem areas for the BME communities, which the new administration will need to address.

During the consultation workshops that CBMEA conducted with members, it was widely felt that the Community Strategy should inform other policies and their respective frameworks.

Concern was raised that the new funding regime of commissioning and NFA's would make it extremely difficult to realize the vision as expressed in the strategy. There is a concern among members that the new funding approach (voluntary Sector Review and LAA) will weaken the link between BME communities and BME providers, which will impact on the communities themselves. If this does prove to be the case, it will compromise the vision that the council is advocating for Camden residents.