



BBEMI Unity House Project Development

In order to strengthen its position as a leading supporter of regeneration and multiculturalism throughout Yorkshire and Humber, BBEMI and its stakeholders created a vision for a multi cultural centre in the heart of Barnsley, owned and managed by the Black and Minority Ethnic community and facilitated and supported by BBEMI and its team. It is envisaged that the centre will become a vibrant new facility in which diversity can be celebrated by all sectors of the community whilst addressing the specific needs of ethnic minority organizations and their users.



The main functions of the building are to

- Provide facilities to accommodate the social and cultural needs of the ethnic minority communities in Barnsley.
- Provide community facilities for use by all sectors of Barnsley's population.
- Provide business support infrastructure, for ethnic minority organizations, more specifically social enterprises and new small businesses in Barnsley thus promoting an enterprise culture in an attempt to move towards sustainable economic development.

The need for such a centre became clear during extensive consultation with various agencies and individuals involved in promoting and enhancing BME community involvement in Barnsley, in which 98% of the BME community group members questioned stated that Barnsley *does* need a multi-cultural centre. The enthusiasm of the local steering group was also very apparent and many members hoped it would become a social and cultural hub for all members of the community and a physical symbol of community cohesion.



This overwhelming support from the black and ethnic minority community in Barnsley is perhaps hardly surprising when it is understood that there are no dedicated cultural, social or religious facilities in Barnsley for any of the ethnic minority communities who hope to use the building and that this lack of facilities is particularly applicable to religious and cultural festivals, weddings and parties.

It has also been recognized that there has been little engagement of BME communities and businesses in social and economic regeneration. As a result of this extensive research and community consultation, it was agreed that the centre would provide a number of facilities intended to fill a number of these service provision gaps while still servicing its main functions as described above.



As such, the Unity House centre will include:

- A large multi-purpose hall with the capacity to cater for large festivals, weddings and parties.
- Office space for BME organizations.
- Meeting and conferencing facilities available to the wider business community of Barnsley.
- IT/Training rooms.
- Business Starter units to encourage innate entrepreneurial activity and support a successful, sustainable business environment in the BME community and Barnsley more widely.
- A Café.
- A communal kitchen.

Images shown are artists' impressions

BBEMI Unity House Project Development Gallery





