BREAKING DOWN THE ‘WALLS OF SILENCE’:
SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TACKLING EXTREMISM IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Report by the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo)

August 2007
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

Waltham Forest Council has demonstrated its willingness to tackle difficult community issues and has developed a number of innovative approaches, such as “Defendin Da Hood”. It also provided real and successful leadership following the arrests of a number of suspected terrorists in the Borough in August 2006. The Council is not complacent and is aware of the further challenges it faces. This report is therefore part of its forward looking agenda, exploring issues affecting disengagement of young people in Waltham Forest from mainstream society. It looks in particular at factors which may have an impact on the adoption of extremist views or support for extremist organisations. We hope it will help the Council take stock and develop medium and longer term strategies following its immediate response to the events of August 2006.

Waltham Forest

Waltham Forest has a large BME population concentrated in the Southern half of the Borough. As elsewhere in the country, the areas with high proportions of BME communities also experience relatively high levels of deprivation and disadvantage. Although, in the south of the Borough, the communities are mostly mixed, many young people in particular appear to lead lives to a greater or lesser extent isolated from other racial or ethnic groups.

As is the case in other London Boroughs, the population of Waltham Forest is predicted to increase in the next few years. The number of Eastern European migrants has grown and is expected to grow further as work on the Olympics site creates demand for additional labour.

Our findings and conclusions

Corporate vision and ownership

The Council and its partners responded effectively to the challenges created by the arrests in August 2006, including the launch of the campaign: “One Community” and its recent re-launch. However in our discussions with Council officials, Members and stakeholders we gained the strong impression that whilst the Council’s formal commitment to community cohesion is evident, the agenda is seen as a matter for the Chief Executive’s Department, rather than a corporate strategy which is owned by all departments and fundamental to service delivery across the range of Council activity.

As we discuss below, Councillors are not perceived as “representing” all the communities they serve. The prevailing communal politics also affects Council...
staff from minority communities who, on occasion, appear to have been subject to inappropriate pressures or expectations from members or their communities.

Muslim Communities

Members of the Muslim communities have been affected by the events of August 2006, as they were by 9/11 and the London Bombings. Girls and women appear to have experienced particular pressures: some responding by adopting the Hijab or Niqab; others who already wore such attire, feeling under threat or attack for so doing.

We heard from young people of the inter-generational pressures within their communities and the effect on them (as with other young people from other communities) of gangs and other anti-social behaviour in the areas where they lived and go to school.

The Muslim Communities in Waltham Forest are as diverse as Muslim Communities in other parts of the Country. The majority are of Pakistani Punjabi heritage, mostly from Jhelum and Kashmir. They are mostly of Sunni Barelwi origin. Uniquely, Waltham Forest also has a significantly smaller, but very well established Mauritian Muslim community. They practice a diffused and tolerant form of Islam (reflecting their experience as secondary migrants to the UK and having adapted their traditions in recognition of their minority status). There is also a significant, though less well established new arrival Somali Muslim community, the majority of which follow the Shafi Madhab and Salafi strands. There is also a well established community of Deobhondi Muslims of Indian Gujarati heritage, mainly originating from Surut. There is also a small, but well established Shia community, also of Pakistani heritage. In addition there are some Muslims of Algerian heritage and White European and African Caribbean converts, together with those of dual and multiple heritage: they follow different traditions of Islam and worship in different Mosques across the borough.

Some of the Mosques appear to have less influence than others and community leadership may be more significant in respect of the leaders of the Birardari (or traditional kinship) networks. In addition, or alternatively, political organisations within the communities may hold greater sway, perhaps particularly with the young, who may be impatient with the leadership of community elders. Community and cultural bodies, and especially those representing new voices of young people and women may also have influence, however. Many members of the Muslim communities feel unrepresented by the Council and isolated from other statutory agencies: although there are 12 Muslim Councillors, they are all associated with the same Mosque and come from the same part of the Community. As mentioned above the influence of inter-community politics and rivalry also affects Council staff.
Women and girls

Women and young girls seem to experience particular and complex issues of "exclusion" from civic society. Those we heard from are committed to having a voice directly with the Council: at present they tend to express themselves through networks or through school based organisations. They described their circumscription by male dominated traditions and a culture which inhibits them from participating directly or from expressing themselves publicly.

Young women in particular had found it difficult to cope with the impact of the arrests: for example experiencing increased abuse on the streets, and, in some cases, pressures to adopt more traditional dress. As a result of this, some young women began to leave home.

Many of the women and young girls we heard from in focus groups and discussions felt that elected members need to be active and communicate with young people – and to get up to speed on culture and difference, which is very complex.

Young People: child protection or crime prevention?

There is a strong commitment to tackling inequalities and to support and encourage students from all communities in the schools and colleges we consulted. However, it appeared that, within Colleges young people of different backgrounds tend to stick together. This is reinforced by parents who put pressure on the young people to 'stick to your own' and not to mix. We also heard about some tensions between students from different communities or backgrounds within schools and colleges. The absence of a corporate commitment to community cohesion and related issues has manifested itself in a lack of co-ordination or coherence between (and within) the Council, EduAction, and Head Teachers themselves. There is a need to build on and develop the partnership with the Police: several school heads regretted the recent diminution of the School Liaison Officer role. Close links between the police and schools would seem to be a key element to tackling some of the issues we identify in this report. Head Teachers and Governors attending the conference organised by the Council and iCoCo on 28th March confirmed their need for more support and guidance, particularly focusing on community and faith organisation engagement, within a corporate vision and strategy.

Security and safety was the over riding concern of the young people we met: gangs and gang culture appear to have a major influence over the lives of many young people in the borough. We heard also of some tensions and conflict between the different minority communities in the borough (eg clashes between Pakistani and Black Afro Caribbean gangs) although such views were not
necessarily corroborated. Although the factors prompting young people to become involved in gangs and other anti-social or criminal behaviour may be different from those which lead to violent extremism, they have in common many of the agencies and individuals best placed to support such young people and the approaches they use. We illustrate in more detail how such links might apply in practice.

Many in schools, as in other agencies, expressed concern at the risks to wider community cohesion of the apparent focus by the Council on issues affecting Muslim Communities. We heard also of the challenges schools and others face in “tackling extremism”. There are real dilemmas about whether and how to intervene in cases where a teacher or other professional might consider the behaviour of a young person gave rise to concern that he or she was becoming involved in potentially illegal activities. Responsibilities in the context of Child Protection provide one basis for action. Similarly, as we mention above, this might also in some contexts be more appropriately treated as a matter of crime prevention. Whatever the Council’s response, it needs to be proportional (we are only talking about a very small minority of young people), within the existing structures and frameworks, and supported by appropriate guidance to help teaching and other staff.

There were suggestions that ‘the Council is ‘in denial about the Asian community and drugs’ – and that not enough was being done proactively with families and communities.

The development of the Children and Young People’s Strategy; the response to Youth Matters in the context of Every Child Matters, associated with the forthcoming integration of Connexions into Children and Young People’s Services; and the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the associated Community Cohesion Guidelines and recent Curriculum Review on Diversity and Citizenship provide an opportunity to tackle some of the issues which have emerged in part following the events of 10 August and more generally.

Role of Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors

Everyone we spoke to agreed that the Voluntary and Community Sector in Waltham Forest was weak. And there is not any long term tradition of inter-faith activity, although the borough does have a Faith Communities Forum, and a funded Faith Communities Project Manager.

The Voluntary and Community Sector has a key role to play in tackling the issues we describe in this report. In particular the Council and its partners will need increasingly to work with and through trusted third party intermediaries if it is to
have any success in communicating with and understanding the needs of disengaged young people and in providing appropriate support and help.

**Recommendations**

The Council needs to

- develop a more sophisticated engagement strategy to ensure that all communities in the Borough feel represented, listened to, and included. This is particularly important in respect of the Muslim communities and young people. In terms of the former, further work needs to be done in partnership with the communities to build a clear understanding of the way the communities are organised, and to identify ways of engaging with and involving women in particular; and in terms of the latter it will be important to building on existing initiatives to listen and communicate more effectively with young people and demonstrate that the Council has taken account of their concerns. The Council needs to build on some of its existing and innovative initiatives (such as ForestFlava) and make them comprehensive. It also needs to be more creative in the way it engages with young people and women at a local level through using organisations that are able to have dialogue with the hidden communities such as the Kiran’s Women’s Group and Waltham Forest College who are good at engaging those excluded from school;

- tackle the communal politics which have prevailed hitherto: no councillor should be expected by the Council to “represent” one section of the community, nor should the community expect such representation. The role of councillors in this regard needs to be clarified including ensuring adherence to the relevant Codes of Practice;

- ensure that all Executive Directors and service areas see community cohesion [and tackling youth disengagement] as part of their core business. The corporate positioning and ownership of this agenda should be reviewed – and we understand that the Chief Executive now has this in hand;

- reflect its priorities for building community cohesion and tackling disengagement in the forthcoming Sustainable Communities Strategy;

- increase its understanding of the likely changes in population of the borough, especially in terms of the labour market, education, and housing to ensure that proper planning is put in place;

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• ensure that Community Cohesion Impact Assessments are applied where major changes are anticipate to support the necessary planning;

• increase the links between Children and Young People’s Services, other parts of the Council and its partners to develop properly “joined up” services and interventions for all young people in the Borough and in particular those most in need in accordance with the principles of “Every Child Matters and Youth Matters”;

• review the support provided to schools by the police;

• make more effective use of forums such as Head teacher Executive to build dialogue and joint action on cohesion with the Councils Management Board;

• support the wider community cohesion agenda and the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 through the curriculum in schools and colleges, having regard, for example, to the recommendations of the Ajegbo Report²;

• be much more proactive in anticipating tensions in the community, understanding and responding to the malign influence of extremists and providing a stronger basis for democratic engagement;

• work with and build capacity in the Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors;

• support the above with appropriate training, support and guidance for staff (including in schools) and Councillors.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Our brief

1.1.1 London Borough of Waltham Forest asked us to consider the underlying causes of disengagement of young people within the borough from mainstream society. This was also to identify those factors that may have an impact on the adoption of extremist views or support for extremist organisations. We were asked in particular to give attention to levels and methods of engagement with children, young people and women to tackle and build resilience to extremist behaviour.

1.1.2 The focus of our work has been on tackling extremism in its widest sense. The Institute has also carried out a study reviewing Directorates’ Community Cohesion Action Plans which complements this project.

1.2 Context

1.2.1 We hope this study will contribute to the process of taking stock following the arrests of suspected terrorists in the borough in August 2006. The immediate local response to these events was generally commended by those we spoke to and gives evidence to the effectiveness of the Council’s earlier work on community cohesion.

1.2.2 This exercise is timely as the Council moves into a different phase of its policy and strategy development and approach to community cohesion and the wider agenda. The Council has recently achieved three star rating, being judged by the Audit Commission as improving well and only one of three Councils to move up by two categories since the last assessment. Having successfully tackled earlier problems of poor performance, Waltham Forest is now well placed to review its approach to community cohesion and related issues as part of its broader commitment to service improvement and in developing its Sustainable Community Strategy.

1.3 Events of 10 August 2006

1.3.1 For many in the community, the arrests and the surrounding publicity were of momentary interest only. There were those from white communities we spoke to who didn’t even realise they had happened, or confused the August arrests with the earlier, much publicised exercise in Forest Gate.

1.3.2 However, the arrests have had made more impact on the Muslim communities (although as we shall show below, different parts of the Muslim communities have been affected differently) and for this reason we devote below a section of this report to issues affecting those communities. More generally,
the events of August have served as a “wake up call” for agencies in the borough and emphasised the importance of community engagement more generally.

1.3.3 The Council’s response was multi-faceted: including setting in place the necessary project management and organisational arrangements; allocating the necessary resources; and putting in place a range of reactive measures aimed at providing information and reassurance as well as supporting the community. The Council used a range of media in its efforts to provide information and reassurance: public meetings, letters to community leaders and places of worship; using the Council’s website; issuing open letters; co-ordinating the public response from partners across the borough and providing media advice and support for Mosques experiencing a high degree of media intrusion.

1.3.4 Supporting the community included increasing patrols by street wardens and Safer Neighbourhood Teams; building on and using existing contacts for hate crime and harassment; visits by senior politicians along with the Met Police to Mosques; offering personal safety advice and facilities; and providing support and counselling to local residents.

1.3.5 Following the immediate response the Council put in place a number of medium term measures to maintain and build the confidence of the communities and communications with them. A key example was the community reassurance campaign and involvement of the LSP and other partners.

1.4 “Community Cohesion” and “Counter-Terrorism”

1.4.1 In offering this Report, we need to strike a note of caution in the linking of the discussion of “community cohesion” with tackling violent extremism and counter-terrorism. It is important to bear in mind the origins and aims of policies and initiatives aimed at addressing problems of community cohesion as compared with more immediate concerns (such as those in Waltham Forest in August 2006) to engage communities and address their concerns in the context of counter-terrorism. Whilst it is true that building cohesion will address some factors potentially contributing to the development of violent extremism, it is essential to avoid giving the impression that Community Cohesion is only of concern because of the threat of violent extremism. There is a risk that such an approach will do even more to marginalise certain groups within our communities and increase the resentment about apparently unequal treatment. Indeed, “community cohesion” should not be seen in isolation. As will be shown below, community cohesion should be seen as a fundamental element of activities across the board, and in particular, tackling crime and poverty. Improving the standard of services to everyone living in Waltham Forest will be of key significance in addressing the underlying causes of disengagement and disaffection.
1.5 About iCoCo

The Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race and diversity and, in particular, to focus on the development of harmonious community relations. iCoCo is a unique partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, which combines the experience and expertise of four Universities – namely, Coventry, Warwick, De Montfort and Leicester. Other key partners include local authorities, voluntary agencies and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The iCoCo team come from a wide range of backgrounds and professions.

We are committed to 'improvement from within', to working with local authorities to build on their current strengths and good practice. We therefore operate as a 'critical friend', constantly questioning and challenging, but also trying to find ways of supporting councils in improving community cohesion by bringing good practice and expertise to the recommendations we make.

Details of the iCoCo team are at Annex 6.

1.6 Acknowledgements

Our thanks are due to the Council members, staff, partners and community groups that contributed their views. Their willing participation and cooperation was greatly appreciated.

A full list of participants is given at Annex 5
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT – WALTHAM FOREST

2.1 Demographic and related data

Council-wide

2.1.1 The description of the Council contained in its Community Strategy highlights a number of factors of particular relevance to this study – for example

- the fact that its residents are relatively young compared to the national average;

- its ethnic and religious diversity (with the 3rd largest Muslim population in London (33,600 or 15.5% of the borough population are “Asian” – see Annex 1 for more detail)

- its high levels of deprivation; and

- the predicted increases in population by 2012 – both in overall terms of around 10,000 (to c237,000); and in terms of the proportion of residents from ethnic minority backgrounds to 55% (from 44% in 2001). Numbers of migrants from Eastern Europe are expected to increase significantly in the next few years as demands grow for labour to work on the site for the Olympics.

2.1.2 There are five schools in the borough with more than 40% Asian pupils; and in three of these schools the overall BME population is more than 66%. There are three schools in the (north of the) borough where there are more than 70% white pupils. It appears from the limited data available that BME communities are under represented amongst school governors.

2.1.3 In terms of its own employees, Waltham Forest’s workforce broadly reflects the communities it serves in overall terms (including a disproportionately high number of staff of Black or Black British origin). Its record in this context is amongst the best amongst the London Boroughs. As occurs elsewhere, staff from BME backgrounds appear to be concentrated at the lower levels of the organisation.

Key Wards

2.1.4 We set out at Annex 2 profiles at selected ward level, which seek to provide a fuller picture of the circumstances in which many of the young people of Waltham Forest are living. As can be seen in two wards (Lea Bridge and Leyton) Black and Minority Ethnic communities are already in the majority (just with c 51% of the population) and Cathall has 49% BME communities.
wards with the highest proportions of Asian communities are: Markhouse (c27%), Forest (26.5%), and Grove Green (23.5%) and we focus in particular on these 6 wards. Of the 6 wards, Lea Bridge/Markhouse, Can Hall/Cathall, and Leyton are Priority Neighbourhoods (and more detailed profiling data is available in that context. This echoes the Council’s own analysis of the census data by religion, which shows clusters of areas with higher proportions of Muslims in parts of High Street, Markhouse, Hoe Street, Lea Bridge and Leyton Wards; with small areas in Grove Green, Cathall, and Leytonstone.

2.1.5 As is the case nationally, the areas with high concentrations of BME communities also experience higher levels of deprivation including unemployment, proportions of young people not in education or employment, educational attainment, health and crime (see Annex 1). However, as can be seen in the annexed tables, it appears that white students are most likely to leave school without an educational qualification. It is also the case that the schools in 4 of the 6 wards with the highest proportions of Asian students appear to have (in 2006 at least) amongst the lowest levels of GCSE and equivalent achievement and attainment: between 21% and 30% against a borough average of 38.6% and a national average of 45.8%.

2.1.6 And although the wards we have highlighted do have significant proportions of BME communities, including, for example, clusters of those from Muslim communities, local residents do not experience the levels of segregation experienced in some parts of the country. In terms of the [isolation ratio] (a measure used by some commentators to illustrate the extent to which minority communities in a particular area are “separate from” white residents), Waltham Forest at 1.5 is one of the lowest in the country. And the [index of dissimilarity] which measures the unevenness of distribution between social groups by showing the proportion of one group which would have to move in order for the distribution of the two groups to be the same - is again low by national standards. As we were told by many of the people we met, Waltham Forest is a mixed community and people get on well with each other.

One place or several?

2.1.7 The Local Development Framework identifies 5 key areas for future development – namely Walthamstow Town Centre; Blackhorse Lane; Leyton, Whipps Cross; and the Walthamstow Town Hall complex. The south of the borough in particular is expected to benefit from the Olympics - bearing in mind

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1 The isolation index measures “the extent to which minority members are exposed only to one another” and is computed as the minority-weighted average of the minority proportion in each area.

2 The index of dissimilarity measures the probability that a person from a given ethnic group will meet a person from a different ethnic group in their neighbourhood.
the proximity to the Stratford site. This excludes those wards with the highest Asian populations.

2.1.8 The “north/south” divide in the borough is particularly striking (as illustrated in the comparisons in Annexes 1 and 2)

**A Changing Borough**

2.1.9 Anecdotal evidence (including feedback from our own interviews and focus groups) abounds concerning the increase in the number of migrants from Eastern Europe in the borough. However there appears to be limited data within the borough (as elsewhere in the country) to support more detailed planning and policy responses to these changes in the population. This is an issue highlighted in our parallel review of Directorates’ Community Cohesion Action Plans.

2.1.10 The Community Strategy assumptions on population figures and growth are based on GLA projections. The estimated population on this basis is c227,000, predicted to increase to 237,000 by 2012. This is likely to be a significant underestimate of growth. For example the number of patients resident in Waltham Forest registered with GPs in the borough was c250,500 in September 2006 (ie already exceeding by some 10-15,000 the figure predicted for 2012). There has been an increase of c 10,000 in GP registrations since June 2003 (though people tend to leave the area without notifying their GP). It is likely that some of the recent increase in the borough’s population is due to the arrival of newly arrived migrants: in 2005/6 there were some 15,000 applications for National Insurance numbers by newly arrived migrants living in Waltham Forest – an increase of 97% in applications from 2002/3 (one of the largest increases in London for which the average was 59%).

**2.2 Community Strategy and Community Cohesion**

2.2.1 As we indicated above, Waltham Forest Council has demonstrated its commitment to community engagement and community cohesion in the relevant policy documents. This report reflects to a considerable extent the five key priorities described in the Community Cohesion Strategy – namely

- Building local pride and sense of belonging
- Promoting knowledge and understanding between communities;
- Engaging and supporting young people;
- Addressing social tensions and conflict and responding to the threat from political and other forms of extremism; and
- Mainstreaming community cohesion.

2.2.2 In its parallel review of Directorate Community Cohesion Action Plans, iCoCo has identified the importance of developing a compelling vision of what a more cohesive Waltham Forest would look like. As we shall discuss below, this and other recommendations apply equally in the context of this study.

2.2.3 Waltham Forest’s successful “One Community” campaign was launched in August 2006 in response to the arrests and related events earlier that month. Its aim was to ensure that residents felt informed, reassured and safe and to reinforce the positive message that Waltham Forest is a borough characterised by strong community relations. Using photographs from the “1000 faces of Waltham Forest” to portray the borough’s diversity and strong community relations, the campaign’s tagline was “Waltham Forest: 225,000 people, 1 Community”. The campaign helped build and reinforce relations between the Council and community groups and partner agencies, many of which contributed to the campaign. Anecdotal feedback suggested that the campaign had been successful in achieving its objective in reflecting the true Waltham Forest where the diversity of the community is valued.

2.2.4 The second phase of the campaign was launched in March 2007 focusing on civic pride, showcasing the diversity of Waltham Forest’s community on a red sofa. This campaign will provide a backdrop for a series of events and activities which celebrate diversity, engage young people, and promote sports and physical activity. As before the Council continues to work closely with community groups and partners on the campaign.

2.2.5 Waltham Forest has been actively involved in developing and will be piloting new guidance on tension monitoring, in association with the Met Police and other partners. They already have some good practice in community safety on which to build and have a level of awareness which appears to be significantly more advanced than many other authorities.

2.2.6 We hope this Report will help the Council develop longer term approaches not only to the specific agenda of tackling issues raised by the events in the borough in August 2006 and continuing general concerns about security and counter-terrorism but also in embedding principles of Community Cohesion across the council through its Sustainable Communities Strategy and other longer term planning. This will, in our view, require some structural changes which we know are already under consideration, but the key challenge will be building a clear, overall vision and leadership for Waltham Forest, including making a reality of the commitment to mainstream Community Cohesion across iCoCo
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the Council and its partnerships.

2.2.7 A list of the individuals interviewed and discussion and focus groups is at Annex 5.
3. OUR FINDINGS

3.1 Muslim Communities

Diversity and complexity

3.1.1 Despite the language used by some commentators, there is no single, homogeneous “Muslim Community” in the UK. And this is equally the case in Waltham Forest. The majority of members of the Muslim Communities in Waltham Forest are of Pakistani Punjabi heritage, mostly from Jhelum and Kashmir. They are mostly Sunni Barelwi – though they prefer to be known as Ahle Sunnah Wal Jammat. Uniquely, Waltham Forest also has a significantly smaller, but very well established Mauritian Muslim community. They practice a diffused (influenced primarily by Deobhondi tradition, to a lesser extent by Salafi tradition and with elements of Barelwi tradition) and tolerant form of Islam (reflecting their experience as secondary migrants to the UK and having adapted their traditions in recognition of their minority status). There is also a significant, though less well settled newer arrival Somali Muslim community, the majority of which follow the Shafi Madhab and Salafi strands. In addition, there is a well established community of Deobhondi Muslims of Indian Gujarati heritage, mainly originating from Surut. There is a small, but well established Shia community, also of Pakistani heritage. Finally, there are some Muslims of Algerian heritage, White European and African Caribbean converts, together with those of dual and multiple heritage: they follow different traditions of Islam and worship in different Mosques across the borough. Annex 3 provides more detail of the different strands in Waltham Forest.

3.1.2 One thing which unites members of the Muslim communities in Waltham Forest (as elsewhere in the country) is a sense of isolation from white or “British” communities. A common response from young Muslim males to our question about identity was that “I’m Muslim First”. Other comments included:

“I am Pakistani and Black and will never forget my culture and tradition but have to live here and be part of society.”

Asian woman in Focus Group discussion.

“No matter how long we live here they will not call us British but Black – but we have to be part of society.”

Asian woman in Focus Group discussion

“I feel a sense of pride when I hear our own language in the Borough.”

Asian woman in Focus Group discussion
3.1.3 Given the present international context and the tensions which are apparent, these views are not necessarily surprising. A lot can be done, nationally and locally, to assuage the fears of different communities and to build a stronger sense of a shared and inclusive future. The Council and its partners are in a strong position to influence views at a local level and indeed, have already begun to give consideration to this.

3.1.4 It is important to recognise that the communities’ diversity means that they will perceive things in different ways. Most Muslims in Waltham Forest are likely to follow the Barelwi tradition, which in many respects is more secular and adaptable than some of the other strands (namely the Deobhandi and the Salafi/Wahabi). The Birardari system of deference to elders tends also to be prevalent (and particularly sophisticated) amongst the Pakistani heritage communities. There are positive aspects of the system – for example in terms of conflict resolution, and its role in empowering and representing the Pakistani communities in particular. However, a less positive effect (recognised by many in the communities) may be to discourage or prevent debate amongst young people as compared, for example to other strands of Islam, where there is a different tradition in contesting and debating the nature of Islam and its relation to political ideology. This includes the approach to the education of its young people, such as amongst the Deobhandi. We also heard concerns expressed about the possible harnessing of the Birardari system by criminals in the context of organised crime in the Borough.

3.1.5 Members of the Muslim communities who engage with the political process tend also to be drawn from the Barelwahi tradition. There are 12 councillors from the Muslim communities in Waltham Forest. However, these councillors do not reflect the diversity of the communities in the borough – associated as they all are with the Jamia Masjid Ghosia (Lea Bridge Road Mosque). There is, of course, no reason why councillors who happen to be from one community should represent all aspects of that and related communities – and such a “test” would not apply to any other group. However, different expectations seem to have been created in respect of these communities and we heard from many of those we met that members of the Muslim communities in Waltham Forest do not feel that they, or their interests, are “represented” on the Council. We heard - particularly from some women - that they “didn’t understand” democracy and that they simply voted as they were told by “their” Asian councillors. As in other boroughs, communal politics prevail, and Councillors from one particular community or group are perceived as working only in the interests of that group, rather than of all the people living in the ward they represent.

3.1.6 Similarly, Council officials from the Muslim communities are perceived by many to be partisan, and we understand that some have been placed under inappropriate pressure by Councillors or other members of their own communities.

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“Extremist” activity

3.1.7 We gained the impression that in the past there had been significant activity and support in the Borough for groups which are now proscribed, such as Al Muhajiroon and Al Ghuraba. Former prominent members of such groups are still active in the Borough. We also heard of activity by Jihadi Groups (in the past) openly recruiting in the Borough; and from the focus groups and some of the people we met about the way religious extremist groups targeted young people, for example by leafleting outside schools and colleges. Hizb Ut Tahrir (HT) are involved in community initiatives and state that they are committed to a strict non-violent political ideology. However we heard from members of the Muslim communities in the Borough, that HT sometimes sent out ‘mixed messages’. We heard that some young people had been exposed to extremist organisations at school at Year 9 and whilst willing to listen to the views expressed by such organisations, the young people thought it wrong that the organisations should intimidate people.

3.1.8 It was also suggested that many young people get involved in extremist Islamist activity, having adopted such views whilst in prison. However, knowledge about such activities is inevitably limited and may either be exaggerated, or underestimated. More needs to be done to understand these activities which should be kept under review on an ongoing basis.

3.1.9 Groups such as the Active Change Foundation are working in the Borough to counter extremism: they were commended for the important role they played as credible intermediaries in engaging with young people and with statutory agencies. Many young people told us that they would rather turn to their friends or Islamic teacher for advice and guidance rather than their parents. However, some of the women we heard from were critical of the Imams in some Mosques and feared the type of teaching may be seen as radical/extremist.

3.1.10 The Police are strongly committed to engaging with the communities of Waltham Forest and have made particular efforts to establish links with the Mosques in the borough. Whilst they enjoy a particularly good relationship with Noor Ul Islam, and with the Lea Bridge Road Mosque as well as other Deobhondi Mosques, there were five or six where they had no contact at all. This may in part be due to a lack of cooperation or understanding by the relevant community elders.
Pressures and challenges facing young people from Muslim Communities

3.1.11 Some of the people we spoke to, especially those working with young people, emphasised the difficulty for many young Muslims of coping with conflicting pressures in terms of their religion; family expectations; the gang culture which is prevalent in Waltham Forest; and other aspects of “westernised” life. This is, perhaps, reflected in a related observation about inter-generational issues affecting Muslim Communities. Some young people appear to provide the only link between their parents and wider society: parents rely on their children to tell them what is going on as they don’t know how to engage. We heard from some of the young people we met in the focus groups of the challenge they faced in light of their parents’ racism and prejudice against people from different communities – often based on their own experience as first generation immigrants. Many parents were very reluctant to allow their children’s friends from different backgrounds into their houses – it takes time to persuade them to accept difference. However, the messages we heard were not universally negative.

“We rebel in a good way – we don’t forget our religion and culture and still live in this society.”

Young Asian Girl in focus group discussion.

3.1.12 For many young Muslims, Islam provides “street cred”: even amongst non-practicing Muslims there is a general aspiration to one day becoming devout. This means that Islamic groups and Muslim-led organisations are often able to access and engage more effectively than the authorities. We also heard in the focus groups of several examples of individuals who had become practicing Muslims and broken away from a life of crime and involvement in gangs – for example by entering higher education.

3.1.13 People working with the communities in Waltham Forest found that different age groups had particularly pronounced differences in attitude: for example, those aged 40 - 50+ tended to be positive, supporting police and other agencies and generally “integrated” into wider society. Those aged between 25 and 40 tended to be more ambivalent about western society and their place in it. And those aged; under 25 were in many cases actively hostile, facing similar issues to those of the first generation, but made more complex by the current international climate.

“Our young people are not sure and confused as to whether part of the Asian or Western culture; at home they are Asian and outside they are White”

Asian Women in focus group discussion.

“This is the White man’s land and they want us to mix but not understand us.”
3.1.14 We also heard from people of all faiths who expressed concern at the lack of engagement by local Mosques with schools, colleges, and the youth service. Such engagement has a potentially significant role to play in breaking down barriers between communities (both perceived and actual). There were examples of Faith Leaders such as Noor UI Islam’s Chairman, Yusuf Hansa, who was commended by many we spoke to.

Women and girls

3.1.15 All Mosques provide after school Madrassa (Islamic schooling), though only Noor UI Islam (the Mauritian Mosque) provides full time Primary level education. In addition, this Mosque, which has a separate Women’s committee, provides a wide range of activities for women and girls from across Muslim communities. We understand that there are also facilities for women at Lea Bridge Road Mosque and Al Tahweed Mosque (Salafi) also has facilities for Women, but that these are under-used.

3.1.16 We were told that the London bombings and subsequent developments had had a particularly negative impact on some Muslim girls in terms of an increase in abuse on the streets; and pressures to adopt the Hijab, Jilbab or even the Burka or Niqab. This experience made some young women leave home. Conversely, we heard in several focus groups that Hijab or Jilbab wearing Asian girls and women had been taunted, or that people had tried to pull off scarves or veils, which increases their sense of fear. Others mentioned an increase in the incidence of self harm amongst young Asian girls and their sense of isolation (being prevented by their communities from expressing their views and finding a voice) and the potential consequence of under-achievement at school.

3.1.17 Conversely, we heard of positive examples of the ways in which girls from Muslim communities were succeeding in schools, expanding their horizons and making the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Several Head Teachers emphasised the importance of teachers from the Muslim communities as role models in supporting students in their schools.

3.1.18 Several of the people we spoke to commented on the potentially key role of mothers and young women who did not feel they could speak out and challenge or explicitly disapprove of some of the behaviour and views of their young men. Such women were excluded, for reasons of language, circumstance or family or community pressure, from efforts on the part of the Council or other agencies (statutory and voluntary) to engage and involve them more widely. They were dependent on the men in their communities for any information about what was going on around them and discouraged from...
participating in schools, employment or community activity.

3.1.19 We gained the impression from the women and girls we met that they did not see “their” male community leaders as representing the whole community. When women had been publicly outspoken they sometimes found that they were subsequently excluded from further events by community leaders. Women had been constrained by some of the men in their communities from commenting on issues such as domestic violence and forced marriage.

3.1.20 However, the women and girls we heard from were strongly committed to more direct communication with the Council. They were keen to increase their democratic engagement: currently many did not vote, or simply voted for whoever they were instructed to. Many of these women and young girls rely on key (mainly Asian) women’s networks at school or in the community – such as the Kiran’s Women’s organisation. They suggested greater use and understanding of approaches respecting the need for women only space, including formal and informal mechanisms for women’s voices to be heard. Stereotyping needed to be addressed - such as the perception that working mothers, and mothers at home had little or no understanding of what was going on around them. Approaches such as the development of role models from within the communities, or activities to develop confidence and language skills would help this process. Women would welcome regular meetings in safe environments with the Leader and/or senior Council management. For younger women, schools and colleges would provide an appropriate environment to encourage and support more engagement, including with those from other communities.

Schools and colleges

3.1.21 As can be seen in the data in Annexes 1 and 2 there is relatively little disproportionate clustering of students of any one ethnic origin in the schools in Waltham Forest. However a few schools do have a significant proportion of their students from the Asian communities – for example Norlington School for boys (in Grove Green ward) with 56% (the highest proportion in the borough), Kelmscott (Markhouse) with 48%, and Willowfield (William Morris) with 42%. And, as we indicated above, some of the schools with the highest proportions of Asian students appear to have (in 2006 at least) amongst the lowest levels of GCSE and equivalent achievement and attainment: between 21% and 30% against a borough average of 38.6% and a national average of 45.8%. The Colleges in the borough (which are independent of the Council) also have high proportions of students from minority communities.

3.1.22 The two all-girls schools in the borough Walthamstow School for Girls (in Hoe Street ward) and Connaught School for Girls (in Leytonstone) have 42% and 45% proportions of Asian pupils respectively.
3.1.23 The GCSE performance in some schools in Waltham Forest appears to be going against the trend of national improvements in the performance of Asian pupils at GCSE or equivalent over recent years. This is not the case in all schools – indeed the GCSE performance exceeds national averages by some margin. This is a potentially complex issue: examination of the results in more detail may highlight whether there are specific issues affecting Asian students in these schools or in the borough more widely which need addressing. Although this is not necessarily directly related to extremism, a culture of low educational attainment and sense of limited opportunities, which came out of some of the focus group discussion, potentially reinforces youth disengagement.

3.1.24 The key concern for many young people was the lack of engagement of their parents, in particular at parents’ evenings or in the general life of the school. Most parents rely on their offspring to report on their progress at school, in terms of the curriculum, extra curricula activities and discipline. We gained the impression that this was due to lack of confidence, often with the English language and perhaps a lack of understanding about the education system in general.

3.1.25 Schools and colleges across Waltham Forest can demonstrate a number of examples of good practice in respect of their Muslim students including: the provision of dedicated facilities such as prayer rooms and associated facilities, support and encouragement of debate and discussion of issues of particular concern and relevance to young Muslims such as the events of August 2006, and the role of teachers from Muslim communities as mentioned above. Head Teachers commended the Council’s immediate response to the events of August 2006 and the provision of support for teachers believing their students may be being radicalised, although others suggested that more could have been done. Several welcomed the contribution of the recently appointed Council Muslim advisor in helping schools tackle sensitive or difficult issues.

“Our school is one of the few where we do all mix.”

Young Asian girl in focus group discussion at Connaught School.

3.1.26 One useful consequence of the events of August 2006 appears to have been an emerging clarity on the part of the police and other agencies that extremist radicalisation could justify intervention as a child protection issue in the context of Every Child Matters.

3.1.27 However, many we spoke to in the educational sphere questioned what they saw as the Council’s apparent pre-occupation with extremism, rather than the wider cohesion agenda. They argued strongly that focusing exclusively on Muslim communities was counter-productive: creating an increased sense of
victimhood amongst Muslim communities and resentment and further disengagement on the part of others. There was also some confusion between the roles of EduAction and the Council and a perceived lack of co-ordination and coherence between them.

“Wrong to label all Muslims as one”
(Young African Male speaking in a focus group)

3.2 Wider context

Engagement/Strategic ownership: role of Council and partners

3.2.1 Many of the officials and others involved in this area of work, whom we met in the course of this study, are strongly committed personally to the principles of community cohesion and are very concerned that any apparent focus on Muslim communities in the context of counter-terrorism and national security, but under the guise of community cohesion, will only create more problems and increase the sense of victimhood on the part of the majority of law abiding members of the Muslim communities. We reflect on the implications for the Council of this in the concluding section below.

3.2.2 As has emerged from iCoCo’s parallel work on the Directorates’ Community Cohesion Action Plans, and in other Local Authorities we have worked in, we found a lack of widespread ownership of the clear commitment to Community Cohesion demonstrated in the Council’s policies and its response to the events of August 2006. It tended to be seen as the realm of the Chief Executive’s Department rather than fundamental to the day to day activities of the rest of the Council and its partners. The failure to effectively “mainstream” this agenda, particularly in areas such as Children and Young People’s Services presents a real obstacle to the Council in tackling many of the issues described in this report, especially given the importance of work with Children and Young People.

3.2.3 Many of those we met talked of well intentioned written plans and policies which did not translate into effective action or delivery on the ground. Again, this reflects the finding in our review of Directorate Community Cohesion Action Plans: that the process of developing initiatives seems to have been largely driven by pressure to produce proposals to a deadline imposed by Council Committees, rather than by a thorough analysis of the problems on the ground and identification of appropriate solutions.

3.2.4 Several of the people we spoke to emphasised the importance of effective dialogue between the Council and its residents and their perception that such dialogue was not taking place. In particular we gained the impression that the voices of members from Black and Minority Ethnic communities were not being
heard, again, due in part to the perhaps understandable pressures set by Council Members’ deadlines and concern to get “quick results”.

3.2.5 Partnership working, with both statutory and voluntary sectors is key in tackling issues such as youth disengagement and extremism. Many of those we met talked about the relative weakness of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Waltham Forest. The Faith Communities Forum is in its early stages of development and still finding its voice. We believe that the Council should give support and encouragement to the faith sector to respond, whilst recognising that the Faith Leaders will wish to take the lead in this development. The Council is part funding a faith communities project manager. There have also been some excellent initiatives such as the health preachers’ project.

3.2.6 We understand that SACRE had been instrumental in supporting EduAction and schools in producing a religious guidance document and cultures, traditions, values and religious days/customs.

3.2.7 As we have mentioned above the events of August 2006 highlighted the importance of strong and effective partnership between the police and other local agencies. We gained the impression that this partnership has undoubtedly been strengthened as a result of that experience but those involved all take the view that there is still much to do. In particular, those working in different agencies are not always clear about who should take the lead in what circumstances.

3.2.8 The response by the Council and its partners to the events of August 2006 testifies to the effectiveness of agencies’ capacity to respond to crises or emergency situations. As described above, the Council is involved in work with the Metropolitan Police to improve its tension monitoring arrangements as recommended in a separate piece of work by iCoCo. The key challenge in this context is to build on and work in partnership with the police and other relevant agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to anticipate problems based on intelligence and data from across all such agencies. The Council will be writing up this experience within a Community Cohesion contingency plan in the summer, and this will assist in managing crisis in the future.

Schools

3.2.9 In schools there was for the most part a warm welcome for the Council’s response following the August arrests. However, we gained the impression that they had no sense that this was part of a wider strategy, nor how it related to any expectations of them in terms of building community cohesion.

3.2.10 Related to this was an apparently ongoing concern expressed by some schools about the lack of guidance or response from the Council about the approach to marking religious holidays such as Eid, Diwali, and the Birthday of
Guru Nanak. Other schools did not regard this issue as problematic and exercised discretion in how they marked such events. As we have mentioned above, many working in this area believe that the Council’s perceived preoccupation with extremism is counter-productive. Their preference is and has been to tackle it as part of a wider agenda focusing on citizenship and respect. Linked to this is an apparent lack of clarity on the “ownership” of aspects of this agenda between the Council and EduAction, and the possibly consequential isolation of Head Teachers from engagement with the Council.

3.2.11 Schools welcomed the involvement of the police. Head Teachers have appreciated the school liaison role and regretted an apparent diminution of the commitment following the introduction of neighbourhood policing teams. They understood the pressures on police resources but took the view that the development of a close relationship between a dedicated officer and the staff and students would bring significant benefits across a range of crime prevention and related issues including preventing and tackling extremism.

3.2.12 As we indicate above schools, particularly in the south of the borough, are very mixed in terms of the ethnic origin of their pupils. There are a small number with relatively large groups of Asian pupils. In addition, there are two schools where black students are in significant higher proportions than Asians – namely Rush Croft Sports College (20.4 black, 9.38 Asian, 55.3 white); and the Holy Family Catholic College (6.64 Asian, 41.04 black, and 36.97 white). Some schools (as well as other services) felt that the new challenge was in meeting the needs of the more transient communities in the Borough.

3.2.13 We have been pleased to note that the Council is now developing a new approach to working with EduAction and individual schools, as evidenced by the recent conference for local Head Teachers. The new duty on schools “to promote community cohesion” from September 2007 will, however, need more support and impetus from all stakeholders. The recent Headteachers conference provides an example of an event which could galvanise attention and focus on this issue. It may be productive to consider a repeat event following implementation of this duty in the autumn.

Young People

3.2.14 Unsurprisingly, perhaps, many of the young people we heard from in the focus groups complained about the lack of places to go and things to do in the borough. To some extent their ability to use or exploit the facilities which are available was limited by their fear of travelling out of their immediate area as we discuss below in the context of gangs and insecurity. The lack of a cinema in the borough was cited in particular by a number of young people.
3.2.15 Despite the criticisms – there were many positive comments made in the discussions in the focus groups and it cannot be implied that all young people are in anyway disengaged. Young people deplored the “labelling” or stereotyping of some communities (particularly the Muslim communities), for example in the context of the focus on preventing extremism and the effect this had. They argued that what people had in common was much more important than what divided them.

3.2.16 We also heard (from young girls in particular) that racism amongst parents was also an issue. They suggested that more needed to be done to encourage interaction amongst the diverse communities in the borough – recognising that parents were willing to accept difference eventually, but that it took time to persuade them.

3.2.17 There was a strong and consistently expressed view that so-called “community leaders” do not represent young peoples’ views. Young people seemed to appreciate the opportunity to offer their opinions and hoped that there would be some form of follow up to their discussion with us.

Gangs and insecurity

3.2.18 As emerged from the Council’s consultations for its Children and Young People Strategy security is a key concern for the young people we heard from in the Focus Groups and those we met who are involved in working with them.

3.2.19 We gained the strong impression from the discussion in focus groups and from talking to head teachers and others that the lives of many young people in Waltham Forest are strongly influenced by the prevalence of gang culture. This limits where they can (or are prepared to) go and with whom they consort and in effect creates “no go areas” in parts of the borough. And, as in other parts of the country, young people appear primarily to associate more or less exclusively with others from their own communities where they have a choice.

3.2.20 Whilst most of the gang activity is territorial, we heard that there are some Muslim only gangs which are not area based, some of which involve Somalis. As we mention above. We heard of some concern about the apparent harnessing of the Birardari system in the context of some forms of organised crime.

3.2.21 Some young people told us that fear affects their day to day lives, for example it apparently stops some of them using the buses, and gaining access to training or other opportunities which happen to be in the “wrong” part of the borough. And so-called “gang culture” may contribute to the pressures on girls we heard about from some of the people we met.
“Girls go around acting like boys nowadays. They want to prove themselves so they go out doing all the things that boys do but because they’ve got something to prove they take it to the extremes.”
[Young black man in discussion]

3.2.22 The concept of “discredited populations” has been cited in the context of gang culture [eg by Professor Pitts]: this resonates equally in the context of community cohesion more generally and the roots of disaffection and alienation on the part of some communities:

“Young people sense this discreditation in their own environment, in school or in the cultural or leisure establishments. Through this they experience stigmatisation of their difference, of their actions, and the perceived incompetence of the people they live among. The options for action are limited and possibilities for gaining status-enhancing resources are made more difficult. At some stage the process becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; young people and adults come to think that there must be “something in it” when their characteristics and ways of behaving are stigmatised, and some become confirmed in this uncertainty. One is no longer in control of defining oneself, one is defined by others.”

3.2.23 A few of the people we met mentioned the emergence of the extreme right in the area, linked to disaffection on the part of young, white men. We heard in focus groups about far right activity in Chingford, Leyton Road and the Forest areas. And, as we mention elsewhere some hijab wearing women have experienced racial abuse in supermarkets and on the streets. However others in the borough do not regard far right extremism as a local issue [despite the electoral success of the BNP in nearby boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham].

Changes in the borough

3.2.24 We heard from the people we met and in the focus groups about issues arising in connection with the arrival in the borough of immigrants from Eastern European countries, who, despite the obvious economic benefits, do seem to attract particular hostility and resentment:

“Eastern Europeans are no good and try to take over”
Young white male in focus group

“In 10 years time the Poles will carry more guns than us”
Young white male in focus group

3.2.25 We heard also that the number of Eastern Europeans coming into the area was likely to increase to meet the demand for building labour for the Olympics outstrips the supply of the “local” workforce. This may further heighten concerns and tensions between communities. As we mention above, some
schools have experienced problems in providing for new arrivals and transient communities.

3.2.26 Several of those we spoke to acknowledged the pressure placed on the Council and other agencies by such new arrivals and commented on the lack of information available to help them plan for and meet the needs of such communities.

3.2.27 Some of the young people in the focus groups expressed concern about their prospects for employment.
4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Corporate vision and leadership

4.1.1 The key challenge facing the Council in tackling youth disengagement and extremism within the wider context of building community cohesion is to make the transition from commitments and aspirations set out in the Council’s various plans and strategies into something which makes a real difference on the ground. For the Council itself (and possibly its partners), this means making delivery of this agenda fundamental to all the key services of the Council, and in particular in the area of Children’s and Young People’s Services.

4.1.2 As part of this, Executive Directors and their teams need to “own” the agenda, drive delivery in their own area and supported by a team who monitor and develop corporate performance with, for example, the provision of appropriate performance management data. We believe that the organisational changes currently being introduced by the Chief Executive will support this approach.

4.1.3 The development of the Council’s Sustainable Communities Strategy and the implementation of other aspects of last October’s Local Government White Paper provide an opportunity to take this agenda forward. The anticipated physical regeneration of the area, the changing labour market supply and the skills agenda should be seen as opportunities. The 2012 Olympics, however, presents a particular opportunity, one which has already supported positive examples of youth engagement through the Olympic Young Ambassadors scheme.

Tackling extremism and building community cohesion

4.1.4 As we illustrate above, many of our findings underline the potential benefits of tackling extremism within the broader context of community cohesion, rather than focus on the issues in isolation. Not only will this reduce the risk of increasing the sense of victimhood and isolation on the part of the Muslim Communities, but it will also avoid the need to “reinvent wheels” by building on systems and arrangements which are already in place (as we discuss, for example in the context of young people below).

Engagement strategy

4.1.5 The challenges we have identified, together with the increasingly sophisticated expectations of residents of the borough place ever increasing demands on the Leader (and others) to engage with all sections of the community. The Council needs to be able to demonstrate that it is genuinely in touch with younger people and with women. Building on existing initiatives such
as “ForestFlava” (which is not yet used by young people from all communities in the borough\(^3\), nor by all those working with them) and “Defendin da Hood”, and developing partnerships with groups such as the Active Change Foundation and the Leytonstone Young Muslim Centre, the challenge will be to set in place a transparent process, and to demonstrate that the Council and its partners listen to and take account of the views of its residents of all ages and backgrounds. Ideally, such a strategy should be developed on a cross-agency basis, to avoid subjecting communities to continuous “consultation” – and needs to be comprehensive and sustainable.

4.1.6 More effective engagement with all communities provides a way of addressing the issues of communal politics described in the report as well as supporting more sophisticated tension monitoring.

**4.2 Muslim Communities**

4.2.1 To succeed in engaging and working with the Muslim Communities in the borough, the Council and its partners need to understand better and take account of the complexity and diversity of the communities, as we have illustrated. Recognising and tackling the negative impact of communal politics, as it affects Councillors and officials will be a key element to this. It will also be important to find ways of engaging local Mosques with schools, colleges and the youth service.

4.2.2 Women and girls seem to experience particular and complex issues of “exclusion” from civic society (see earlier discussion). The challenge for the Council and its partners in this context, will be to find creative and imaginative ways of creating “safe space” and building confidence for women to engage more directly and effectively.

4.2.3 The Council and its statutory partners cannot, by themselves, tackle the issues we identify in this report. As we discuss below, the voluntary, community and faith sectors have a vital role to play. This is particularly the case in respect of the Muslim communities, given the invisibility of many until now, for traditional and historical reasons. And given the concerns about security and counter-terrorism at a national (if not local) level, these communities need to develop greater resilience and resources to counter and deal with the pressures they face and challenge radicalisation and emerging extremism if, or when it occurs.

4.2.4 It is clear from our contact with young people from these communities and other minority communities that many do not willingly or confidently engage with “officialdom”. The Council and its partners need therefore to identify trusted

\(^3\) Of the 233 young people (31\% response rate) who completed the Council's recent Young Voice survey, 64\% had heard of ForestFlava but only 45\% had used it
intermediaries, in whom they have confidence, and who have credibility with young people in its engagement more generally, and in tackling extremism and disengagement more specifically. Building the capacity of the voluntary, community and faith sector, amongst the Muslim communities in particular, is a vital task (see also discussion below).

4.2.5 A related issue, which will need to be fundamental to the Council’s engagement strategy is the need to change the perception of the Muslim communities by others and the need to work with others as part of this process – for example by developing strategies for interaction to break down barriers between communities.

4.3 Young People: child protection or crime prevention?

4.3.1 One of the challenges facing the police, schools and other agencies in tackling extremism is whether, and if so how, to “intervene” in cases where they suspect an individual is developing extremist views likely to lead to violent, illegal behaviour, or being recruited to a group or organisation with such aims. This raises a host of sensitive and complex questions. The approach taken in some quarters in Waltham Forest has been to see the locus for any intervention as an issue of child protection in the context of Every Child Matters (in particular the key outcome: stay safe). In developing a longer term strategy, one option, therefore to develop a more systematic approach - key elements of which would be:

- to ensure that the relevant professionals (eg working in schools, youth service, police, and other agencies) have sufficient understanding and awareness as to know when to seek advice about the behaviour/demeanour of an individual young person:

- that the relevant agencies have sufficiently well established relationships across the Muslim communities in Waltham Forest to be able to identify an appropriate individual who will be able to support the young person and provide a credible counter-narrative and support and work with the family and wider community as appropriate.

4.3.2 Another approach would be to see “radicalisation” as a matter of crime prevention, adopting tactics eg along lines of the Youth Offending Team and the YISP for young people most at risk, involving trusted adults as mentors. This might prove a useful model, including involving appropriate members of Muslim community seen as credible to challenge/present counter-narrative. A similar approach is being developed by the Home Office in its ‘Operation Channel’ – in which Waltham Forest is planning to take part. This is being run by the National
Community Tensions Team, and Waltham Forest has agreed to participate in this pilot.

4.3.3 It must always be clear that radicalisation (and/or holding “extreme views”) itself is not a problem – but illegal behaviour stemming from it has to be dealt with. The vast majority of young people who become interested in following the principles of Islam will benefit from the experience, as will their families and communities.

4.3.4 There is clearly a strong commitment within Waltham Forest to tackling youth disengagement and discourage extremist activity. In tackling such complex and potentially sensitive issues, effective partnership working will be essential. There may also be scope in building on the work already taking place, for example in the context of tackling gang culture, in the context of youth disengagement and extremism. Increasing the involvement of the police in schools on a day to day basis may make a significant contribution to this and we believe dedicating a police officer to all secondary schools as part of a Safer School Partnership will make a real difference on the ground.

4.3.5 As in other areas of work with young people, including those who are vulnerable/at risk, different approaches or interventions are appropriate in different circumstances. In the context of its commitment to Every Child Matters and Youth Matters, the Council is seeking to develop its “universal offer” to all young people in the borough. The Head of Education for Communities is currently consulting on this model with stakeholders. We offer at Annex 4 a possible model of tiered interventions to tackle extremism and disengagement.

4.4 Role of VCS/partnership etc: faith communities; [SMEs] etc

4.4.1 As discussed above, the absence of a strong, well developed voluntary, community and faith sector in Waltham Forest is hindering the ability of the Council and its partners from tackling the issues addressed in this report as effectively as it might.

4.4.2 As Demos commented in its report on Community based responses to Counter-Terrorism last year:

“Research shows that communities with a strong and rich infrastructure are more resilient and better equipped to deal with internal problems. They also find it much easier to engage with the Government and others outside their community because they have a ready made network through which to work. Some Muslim communities lack this infrastructure or have community organisations that are dominated by a small group of leaders who are reluctant to share power or adapt institutions to the needs of the wider community.”

iCoCo
Institute of
Community Cohesion
5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Council needs to

- develop a more sophisticated engagement strategy to ensure that all communities in the Borough feel represented, listened to, and included. This is particularly important in respect of the Muslim communities and young people. In terms of the former, further work needs to be done in partnership with the communities to build a clear understanding of the way the communities are organised, and to identify ways of engaging with and involving women in particular; and in terms of the latter it will be important to building on existing initiatives to listen and communicate more effectively with young people and demonstrate that the Council has taken account of their concerns. The Council needs to build on some of its existing and innovative initiatives (such as ForestFlava) and make them comprehensive. It also needs to be more creative in the way it engages with young people and women at a local level through using organisations that are able to have dialogue with the hidden communities such as the Kiran’s Women’s Group and Waltham Forest College who are good at engaging those excluded from school;

- tackle the communal politics which have prevailed hitherto: no councillor should be expected by the Council to “represent” one section of the community, nor should the community expect such representation. The role of councillors in this regard needs to be clarified including ensuring adherence to the relevant Codes of Practice;

- ensure that all Executive Directors and service areas to see community cohesion [and tackling youth disengagement] as part of their core business. The corporate positioning and ownership of this agenda should be reviewed – and we understand that the Chief Executive now has this in hand;

- reflect its priorities for building community cohesion and tackling disengagement in the forthcoming Sustainable Communities Strategy;

- increase its understanding of the likely changes in population of the borough, especially in terms of the labour market, education, and housing to ensure that proper planning is put in place;

- ensure that Community Cohesion Impact Assessments are applied where major changes are anticipate to support the necessary planning;

- increase the links between Children and Young People’s Services, other parts of the Council and its partners to develop properly “joined up”
services and interventions for all young people in the Borough and in particular those most in need in accordance with the principles of “Every Child Matters and Youth Matters”;

- review the support provided to schools by the police;

- make more effective use of forums such as Head teacher Executive to build dialogue and joint action on cohesion with the Councils Management Board;

- support the wider community cohesion agenda and the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 through the curriculum in schools and colleges, having regard, for example, to the recommendations of the Ajegbo Report;

- be much more proactive in anticipating tensions in the community, understanding and responding to the malign influence of extremists and providing a stronger basis for democratic engagement;

- work with and build capacity in the Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors;

- support the above with appropriate training, support and guidance for staff (including in schools) and Councillors.
Annex 1

General Demographics

As of the 2001 census the borough of Waltham Forest had a population of 218,277 and the current population of the borough is now estimated to be around 227,000 and rising\(^4\).

Waltham Forest is split into 20 wards with the highest population densities occurring in the south of the borough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Population(^5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cann Hall</td>
<td>11388</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cathall</td>
<td>10608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel End</td>
<td>11098</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chingford Green</td>
<td>9497</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endlebury</td>
<td>10146</td>
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<td>Valley</td>
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<td>William Morris</td>
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<td>Wood Street</td>
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Waltham Forest is also a relatively young borough in terms of its residents with 7.2% of the population aged under 5 years. This is opposed to 6.7% of the population as an average across Greater London and Waltham Forest has the 6\(^{th}\) highest percentage of under 5s of the 33 Greater London Boroughs\(^6\).

\(^{4}\) 2003 Round Ward Projections v2: Greater London Authority, 2004  
\(^{5}\) 2001 Census  
\(^{6}\) 2001 Census
Waltham Forest also has the 7th highest percentage of residents aged under 15 of the 33 Greater London Boroughs. 20.3% of Waltham Forest residents are in this age group whilst the London average is just 19%\(^7\).

The ethnic diversity of the borough as a whole is illustrated in the map below, which reinforces the distinction between the north and south of the borough.

\(^7\) 2001 Census
Revised Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004
The Most Deprived Super Output Areas in Waltham Forest

Revised IMD 2004 Ranking
By Super Output Area
- Other (100)
- Top 5% Deprived (1)
- Top 10% Deprived (10)
- Top 20% Deprived (34)

Non-Residential area

The multiple index of deprivation 2004 measures 7 separate domains of deprivation that may be experienced by individuals living in an area. The deprivation is scored and ranked in order for all small areas in England. This map selects areas in Waltham Forest that are in the top 20% most deprived areas in England.

Map Reference No. 00221
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Created by Teresa Fuller, GIS and Information Analyst, Strategy and Social Inclusion, London Borough of Waltham Forest
Last Modified: July 2004

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(c) Copyright Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Indices of Deprivation 2004
Barriers to Housing and Services in Waltham Forest
Index of Deprivation 2004

The Barriers Index is a measure of barriers to housing and key local services. Access to housing includes indicators such as affordability, homelessness and overcrowding. Access to services measures the road distance to local services - GP, supermarket/convenience store, Primary School and Post Office.

Map Reference No. 00652
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Deprivation of the Living Environment in Waltham Forest update
Index of Deprivation 2004

Living Environment Deprivation was measured by housing in poor condition without amenities, by air quality and road traffic accidents to pedestrians and cyclists.

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Health Deprivation and Disability in Waltham Forest
Index of Deprivation 2004

The Index of Health Deprivation identifies areas with high rates of premature death and people impaired by poor health and disability using the following indicators:
- Years of Potential Life Lost
- Comparative Illness and Disability ratio
- Emergency admission to hospital
- Adults under 60 suffering from mental health difficulties.

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iCoCo
Institute of Community Cohesion
Education, Skills and Training Deprivation in Waltham Forest

Index of Deprivation 2004

The Index of Education Deprivation identifies children and young people with education deprivation and among the working age population is lack of skills and qualifications.

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Created by Teresa Tuttle, GIS and Information Analyst
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Income Deprivation in Waltham Forest

Index of Deprivation 2004

The Index of Income Deprivation includes the number of families reliant on means tested benefits such as Income Support households, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Tax credits (Working Families and Disability) and NASS supported asylum seekers.

Map References No. O5632
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Crime and Disorder in Waltham Forest Update
Index of Deprivation 2004

The Index of Crime and Disorder identifies areas with high levels of crime, particularly personal and material victimisation. There are four main crime themes:
- Burglary, Theft, Criminal Damage and Violence

Map Reference No. 00722
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iCoCo
Institute of Community Cohesion
## Annex 2

### Variables in 6 Wards Against Borough Averages

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<th>Category</th>
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<th>Borough Average</th>
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<td>Percentage of Residents Registered Unemployed</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<td>Percentage of those Residents Registered Unemployed for over 1 Year</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Population aged 16-74 with no Educational Qualifications</td>
<td>28.53</td>
<td>28.56</td>
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| Percentage of Population aged 16-24 with no Educational Qualifications (White, Asian, Black) | 20.38  
15.25 
12.34 | 15.37 |
<p>| Number of Lone Parent Households                                        | 586          | 425.9           |
| Percentage of Residents Living in Social Housing (inc Local Authority)   | 40.35        | 23.62           |
| Percentage of Residents aged under 16                                   | 24.15        | 21.4            |
| Number of Incidents of Violent Crime Against the Person per 1,000 Residents | 27.62 | 27.64 |
| Number of Drug Offences per 1,000 Residents                              | 9.52         | 8.13            |
| Number of Incidents of Robbery per 1,000 Residents                      | 11.6         | 8.38            |</p>
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<td><strong>Number of Incidents of Robbery per 1,000 Residents</strong></td>
<td>6.35</td>
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### Sources

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<th><strong>Percentage of BME Residents</strong></th>
<th>2001 Census</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Residents Registered Unemployed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of those Residents Registered Unemployed for over 1 Year</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Percentage of Population aged 16-74 with no Educational Qualifications</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Number of Lone Parent Households</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Percentage of Residents Living in Social Housing (inc Local Authority)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Percentage of Residents aged under 16</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Number of Incidents of Violent Crime Against the Person per 1,000 Residents</strong></td>
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<td>Metropolitan Police Service Crime Summary 1999-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Incidents of Robbery per 1,000 Residents</strong></td>
<td>Metropolitan Police Service Crime Summary 1999-2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Borough Wide Comparisons**

The Ward with the highest percentage of BME residents is Lea Bridge with 51.4%.
The Ward with the lowest percentage of BME residents is Chingford Green with 4.98%.

The Wards with the highest percentage of residents registered as unemployed is Hoe Street and Leyton, both with 8.8%.
The Ward with the lowest percentage of residents registered as unemployed is Chingford Green with 2.5%.

The Ward with the highest percentage of residents registered as unemployed remaining so for over 1 year is Wood Street with 26.6%.
The Ward with the lowest percentage of residents registered as unemployed remaining so for over 1 year is Chingford Green with 18.2%.

The Ward with the highest percentage of the population aged 16-74 with no educational qualification is Valley with 33.15%.
The Ward with the lowest percentage of the population aged 16-74 with no educational qualification is Leytonstone with 21.52%.
The Ward with the highest number of Lone Parent Households is Leyton with 671.
The Ward with the lowest number of Lone Parent Households is Chingford Green with 188.

The Ward with the highest percentage of its residents living in social housing (including Local Authority) is Cathall with 40.35%
The Ward with the lowest percentage of its residents living in social housing (including Local Authority) is Grove Green with 12.16%.

The Ward with the highest percentage of its residents aged under 16 is Leyton with 25.72%.
The Ward with the lowest percentage of its residents aged under 16 is Chingford Green with 17.49%.

The Ward with the highest amount of Violent Incidents Against the Person per 1,000 residents is High Street with 43.4.
The Ward with the lowest amount of Violent Incidents Against the Person per 1,000 residents is Endlebury with 13.01.

The Ward with the highest amount of Drug Offences per 1,000 residents is High Street with 16.86.
The Ward with the lowest amount of Drug Offences per 1,000 residents is Hatch Lane with 3.64.
The Ward with the highest amount of Robbery per 1,000 residents is High Street with 17.4.
The Ward with the lowest amount of Robbery per 1,000 residents is Hale End & Highams Park with 3.37.

Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of BME Residents</th>
<th>2001 Census</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Residents Registered Unemployed</td>
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Annex 3

Understanding Muslim Diversity in Waltham Forest

Waltham Forest’s Muslim community is multi-diverse. It includes Africans, Arabs, South, South East Asian, new converts/reverts, of white European, Afro Caribbean and also those of Dual and Multiple heritage. Amongst this diverse community are well established British-born second, third and even fourth generations as well as recently settled and newer arrival communities. It follows there will be considerable differences between and within these communities – differences ranging linguistic, cultural, theological, ethnic, socio-economic class and of course generational.

The following provides an overview (see also Figure X) of the denominational breakdown of Waltham Forest’s Muslim communities, looking at religious and ethnic diversity, where these intersect to influence leadership structures and networks and how all these are evolving with focus on widening engagement and representation.

Islam is divided into the main two sects of Sunni and Shia and although, all Muslims share the same fundamental beliefs, there are many differences both between and within these Sects; there are many denominations, strands, groups and organisations all with varying degrees of following, adoption and membership based to some extent – though not entirely – on ethno-national heritage.

Islamic Sects

The vast majority of Muslims resident in Waltham Forest are of the Sunni Sect. There is also a well established – albeit much smaller – community of Muslims belonging to the Shia Sect. However, the Shia population has experienced rapid growth with the influx of new arrivals in light of recent events in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran. Both the Sunni and Shia Sects subdivide along denominational and ethno national lines.

Shia Muslims

Most Shia Muslims follow the Jafari School of Thought, which divides into several denominations however the only ones with significant representation in Waltham Forest are the two main denominations of Ithna Ashari and Ismaili.

Shia Denominations and Global Adoption

The Ithna Ashari denomination is predominant throughout the Shia world and constitutes the majority adoption amongst Shiites from Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, India, Afghanistan and Bahrain. The Ismailis live chiefly in the Indian Sub-continent, (Gujarat, Mumbai, lower Sind and Kutch respectively) and in a wide Diaspora, spanning East and South Africa, Arabia,
Sri Lanka and Burma. Both the Ithna Ashari and Ismaili denominations subdivide further into several branches, though, again only a few are found in Waltham Forest; the predominant Usuli Fiqh of the Ithna Ashari denomination and the minority Khoja/Nizari and Dawudi Bohra branches of the Ismaili denomination.

Sub-divisions and Ethno National Adoption
The Daudi Bohras and Khoja/Nizari constitute a small minority of Waltham Forest's Shia community mainly of Indian secondary migrant East African heritage. Despite their minority status, the Ismailis collectively represent an eminent section of the Shia community. The majority Shia Muslims in Waltham Forest are Usulis of which most and best established are of Pakistani Punjabi heritage (specifically Jhelum and Lahore). The Usuli community also includes a growing population of new arrivals of Iraqi Kurdish, Lebanese and Iranian heritage. Usulis of Pakistani heritage prefer to be described as Jafari, caring to emphasize on actually belonging to the first of ‘five’ Sunni Orthodox Schools of Thoughts, stressing being closest to the Sunnis in their theology. The Shia Ithna Ashari Usuli form the basis for two Mosques in Waltham Forest. The Sakina Islamic Trust and Mosque in Walthamstow, is the oldest and largest reportedly receiving Scholarly support and overall financing from the Shia Centre in Maida Vale. The Ismaili do not have a Mosque of their own in the borough, though – despite stark theological contention – reportedly make use of the facilities at the Sakina Islamic Trust.

Sunni Muslims

Most Sunni Muslims follow one of the four major Orthodox Schools of Thought (known singularly as Madhab and collectively as Madhaib) - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali, named after the Scholars or Imams who founded them circa 8th and 9th Centuries AD. Essentially, there are no divisive loyalties particular to any of the Madhaib, nevertheless, Madhab adoption varies and is generally related to global geographic region(s).

Global Adoption
The Hanafi Madhab is adopted by the majority of Sunni Muslims throughout the world, across the Indian sub-continent, Turkey, Albania, the Balkans, Iraq and Central Asia. The Maliki Madhab is predominant amongst Muslims throughout North, Central and West Africa. The Shafi Madhab constitutes majority adoption in South East Asia, Southern Arabia, and East Africa. The Hanbali Madhab is predominant throughout the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Over time – subject to scholarly re-interpretations, regional and cultural variations – these Schools (Madhaib) have become very diverse and have many complex sub-divisions that it is impossible to simply categorize them using general terms such as conservative or liberal. Then, there is the added complexity of Sufism. Sufis are organized into orders (Tariqas), grouped around a spiritual leader (Shiekh, Pir or Wali) often from the Prophet’s family lineage. Sufi Tariqas can belong to none or any of the four major Madhaib with the vast
majority of Sunni Muslim branches – irrespective of Madhab adoption – linked to Sufi Tariqas. And, although, popular perceptions often characterize Sufism as the mystical component of Islam, Sufi Tariqas actually vary in terms of practice and degree of emphasis, ranging from passive meditation to direct action.

Despite the variety and complexities, three main Sunni Muslim branches are found established within most British Muslim communities and likewise in Waltham Forest; the Barelwi, Deobhandi and Wahabi-Salafi.

Sub-divisions and Ethno national adoption
Both the Barelwi and Deobhandi are derived from the Hanafi Madhab (School of Thought), are interlinked with Sufi Tariqas, and originated in India during the 19th Century – however, represent two distinctly different types of Islamic practice with varying degrees of adoption related to a large extent on regional ethno-national heritage. Barelwism is essentially a Sufi Tariqa with strong emphasis on spirituality, whereas the Deobhandi, originating as a reformist movement represents a more doctrinaire approach. The Barelwi represent the single largest majority Muslim community in the UK (approximately 40%) and prefer to be described as Ahle Sunnah Wal Jammat i.e. exclusive adherents of the true Sunnah (Traditions of the Prophet). Barelwism is the predominant tradition amongst British Muslims of Pakistani Punjabi and Kashmiri heritage and also has a following among Muslims from Bangladesh and India. The Brarelwi tradition forms the basis for Waltham forest’s most formidable Mosque Masjid Ghosia located in Lea Bridge Road. The Deobhandi reformist focus and emphasis on education has meant they have developed proficiency for setting up Mosques and seminaries and are associated with Tablighi Jammat, the world’s largest Muslim evangelical organisation. The Deobhandi tradition constitutes majority adoption amongst Muslims from Indian Gujarat, the Northern Pakistani region of Peshawar, throughout Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The majority of Mosques (8) in Waltham Forest are based on the Deobhandi tradition.

The Wahabi or Salafi strand, though has its theological origins much earlier, also only emerged as an organized reformist movement during the 19th century in the Hijaz (Modern day Arabia). Confirmed primarily to the Hanbali Madhab, Wahabism is actually based on teachings that reject the need to be bound by any one of the four Madhabs, and significantly, considers teachings from all four. The Salafi – though most predominant in Saudi Arabia – draw followers from all nationalities and ethnicities. This relative accessibility has made Salafi Islam appealing to both converts and the young, who tend to relate more to their Muslim identity as distinct from their ethnicity. In addition, Muslims of Somali heritage, who generally adopt the Shafi Madhab are frequently drawn to the Salafi tradition. The Wahabi-Salafi divide further into many sub divisions – lending aspects of their theology to puritanical factions such as the Jihadist Movement and proscribed groups Al Muhajiroon and Al
Ghuraba. However, most Salafi follow a less puritanical form of Salafi thought as is espoused by groups such as Pakistani based Jamiat Ahle Hadith.

Uniquely, Waltham Forest also has a very well established Mauritian and Fijian Sunni Muslim community, the majority of which have original heritage from Indian Gujarat and Calcutta, together this community practice a diffused and tolerant form of Islam, rooted in the traditions of the Hanafi Madhab (School) successfully reconciling Barelwi, Deobhandi and Salafi traditions.

There are further variations within and between the branches of both the Shia and Sunni Muslim Sects, influenced by a number of factors including ethno national culture and theologically based interpretations.

Mosques
The differences outlined above generally tend to be accepted and tolerated and although sectarianism and factionalism would be quite entrenched in the Muslim world because of long established traditions, in the UK – a more cosmopolitan environment – Muslims tend to get along and can often been be seen worshipping together in the same Mosque. Nevertheless Mosques are most often established along ethnic and corresponding factional lines and though differences may be subtle and obscure, it is possible to find followers of a particular strand making a principle of boycotting other Mosques. The Barelwi and Deobhandi Mosques are typically run by an elderly management committee that represents the predominant ethnic group and traditional faction of the mosque. The committee also employs one or more imams from the same ethnic group or faction. Control of the Mosque committee is often the subject of ethnic, doctrinal and clan based rivalries. Within the Salafi Mosques, committees are often organised by diverse, devout young professionals.

Given the small numbers of Shia mosques, many Shias will use Sunni mosques, although the reverse is rarely true. In essence the Shia Ithna Ashari Mosques differ little from the Sunni Mosques, whereas, the Shia Ismaili, have a reformed understanding of the Sharia (Islamic law) and don’t practice the rituals of Islam such as prayer in the same way as other Muslims.

Mosques are an important focal point for Muslim communities and provide a unique indication/illustration as to the make-up of Muslims in an area or borough. Mosques are essentially places of worship, and although mainly frequented by more devout Muslims, congregational prayers such as the Friday (Jummah) and Eid (Festival) prayers have very high attendance rates, even amongst the nominally practising Muslims.

The range of services offered by mosques varies widely. Some are small places used only for worship, while others are almost like community centres that offer educational support, pastoral care, hall hire and even sports facilities for young people on rare occasions. Wherever possible the Barelwi, Salafi
and Shia Ithna Ashari Mosques cater for women to pray. However, many Deobhondi strand Mosques do not provide places for women to worship due to the theologically based assertion that the home is the most appropriate place for women’s prayer. To compensate, women are given access to the Mosque outside prayer times and often catered for by an extensive CB radio transmission system which carries key sermons and lectures from the pulpit into homes. In contrast to what may be expected, women followers of the Deobhondi strand generally possess a high-level of Islamic knowledge, relative to their Barelwi and Salafi counterparts. This is due to some extent to the Deobhondi education focus providing an impressive, sophisticated and large network of Mosques, madrassas (Islamic schools) governed by a high-level Islamic Scholar base.

Table 1 below provides a summary of Waltham Forest’s Mosques indicating Sect, Strand, capacity, Ethnic make-up of the management committee and facilities for Women. Mosques are listed in order of importance particular to specific branch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOSQUES IN WALTHAM FOREST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHIA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ITHNA ASHARI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sakina Islamic Trust and Mosque</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUNNI</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HANAFI BARELWI – AHLE SUNNAH WAL JAMMAT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghosia Masjid</td>
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<td>Daruloom Qadria Jalana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslim Community Centre and Jamia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mosque</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HANAFI DEOBHANDI</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Masjid E Umer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leytonstone Mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Education Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chingford Islamic Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masjid E Usman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madina Mosque Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masjid Abu Bakr</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WAHABI - SALAFI</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markazai Jamiat Ahle Hadith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masjid Al Birr</td>
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<td>Masjid Al Tawheed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masjid Al Tawheed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HANAFI – DIFFUSED (DEOBHANDI, BARELWI, SALAFI)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Noor Ul Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chingford Mosque</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated above Mosque’s are typically split along religious and ethnic lines, similarly leadership and representation structures within Muslim communities are often factional and ethnic based.
Leadership and Representation

Religious Leadership
Shia Muslims hold the same fundamental beliefs as Sunni Muslims. However, in terms of leadership, Shia Islam has the distinctive institution of the Imamate. This is essentially a centralized authority exercising both spiritual and temporal leadership based to some extent on hereditary rites, that is, direct blood lineage to the Holy Prophet Mohammed. Shia Imams are believed to have been appointed by Allah and therefore considered sinless and infallible in matters of faith and morals and thereby held in high esteem and reverence.

In comparison the Sunni Imam does not share such an exalted position. The Sunni Imam is primarily a prayer leader, though roles and responsibilities do vary dependent on the individual’s skills and abilities. For Sunni Muslims central authority and ultimate allegiance is reserved for the Caliph, being the title given to the head of the Islamic State, the Caliphate. In contrast to the Shia Imamate the Caliph is elected and not considered sinless nor infallible.

Although these distinct differences exist between Sunni and Shia Muslims, there are some subtle overlaps. Followers of the Barelwi strand practice a type reverence for Mystical Holy Men (Shiekh, Pir or Wali) who have direct ancestral blood lineage to the Prophet Mohammed. This is similar to the Shia reverence for their Imams, who likewise have direct blood lineage to the Prophet Mohammed. However, Barelwi reverence for Holy Men is generally restricted to spiritual matters only. By contrast, followers of the Deobhondi strand who are sometimes known to practice a type of reverence in the form of unquestioning obedience to their scholars is both spiritual and temporal. Such practices are frowned upon by the Salafi who consider them to be Bidah (innovations) and generally reserve ultimate allegiance for the Caliphate.

Leadership – Traditional/Cultural – Community Lead

All societies and communities have hierarchical social structures. Most Muslim community leadership structures operate within traditional extended family, tribal/clan networks and allegiance systems, usually transposed from the cultural norms of their respective countries of origin. Common amongst Muslims of Arab, African and Indo-Pakistani origin, these systems are almost always organized with male elders at the helm and proceeded along nepotistic blood lineage and ancestry. The degree of influence, adherence and power is dependant primarily on the population size and concentration of the respective community.

Probably the most sophisticated and widely utilized in Waltham Forest and certainly most influential is the Birardari (brotherhood) or Khandani (ancestral clan) system. Originating in Indo-Pakistani sub-continent, this system is formulated on a complex combination of religious, tribal, economic and
regional dimensions and is also common in other Indian faith communities including the Sikh and Indian Christian communities. There are variations in terms of influence, representation, adherence and practice specific to Islamic Strand and ethno national heritage.

Since Barelwi Pakistanis form the majority of Muslims in Britain and likewise in Waltham Forest, the Birardari system is most prevalent in Waltham Forest’s Pakistani Barelwi community, though similar structures can also be identified in most Muslim communities, such as the Somali and Newer arrival communities, due to the tribal roots and politics of developing countries. There are many variations, for example the Bangladeshi and Indian communities tend to have a looser clan affiliation, though it is still present. Also some Indian Gujarati Muslims having had previously settled in East Africa are secondary migrants to the UK, meaning that some adaptation has already taken place in recognition of minority status.

Within the Shia community hierarchical position is based on Khormiath (Caste) determined by ancestral lineage. In line with Shia doctrine lead is restricted to those of the Syed Caste – with direct blood lineage to the Prophet Mohammed. Similarly, within the Pakistani Barelwi community hierarchical position/order is based on Khormiath (caste), and the Syed Caste is highly regarded. However, in general the Birardari System amongst Pakistani Barelwi is not as restricted due to lead being determined by ancestry based on either economic status or employment. Lead is thereby selected based primarily on Khormiath (Caste), however, can be assumed by whoever has the strongest Khandani (Clan) base or support. Whereas, within the Indian Gujarati Deobhandi communities, the aspect of Khormiath (Caste) is rejected as being an un-Islamic practice due to discriminatory effects and although hierarchical position/order is traditionally based on Khandani (Clan), lead is only attributed to those with Islamic knowledge and display of devoutness. Other variations are influenced by ethno national culture for example the practice of Birardari amongst Pakistani Deobhandi is a diffused version of the Pakistani Barelwi and Indian Gujarati Deobhandi traditional model. Overall, leadership in the Barelwi Pakistani community tends to be more pragmatic, amiable and secular, though is most often primarily aligned to the leading Birardari and therefore often perceived as being bias. Whereas, within the Indian Gujarati Deobhandi community, leadership is assigned to the Devout and thereby tends to command wider trust and representation, however is constricted by Faith. Within the Salafi strand leadership is based strictly on Devoutness and intellectual Islamic capacity – totally rejecting all ethnically based and discriminatory hierarchical Systems – thereby it is common to find prominent young leaders as well as Afro Caribbean and/or White European converts in highly respected leadership positions amongst the Salafi.

The Birardari/Khandani system is highly sophisticated and plays a dominant role in arranging marriages, organizing joint commercial activities, selecting community and mosque leadership, and vitally, in harnessing political support
for sponsorship of Local Councillors. In terms of secular political engagement the Pakistani Barelwi Birardari structure is best suited, due to numbers and its amiable character. It is therefore more common that Muslim Councillors will have origins from the Barelwi Pakistani community. Whereas, though the Deobhondi community leaders may have wider support, Islamic restrictions have traditionally restricted secular political engagement.

The culture of the Birardari system dictates that the leading Birardari or Khandani elders’ word is final. Along with elder control, this system is sometimes criticized by young British born Muslims for being exclusivist, discriminatory, engrossed in denial and fuelled by a defeatist victim mentality and excluding women and young people. However, there are also many voices commending the Elders and local Birardari leaders as providing essential services of representation and also being invaluable in settling disputes. The Birardari/Khandani system has undergone change and adaptation in a British context, no longer entirely dominated by the elders. There is a new generation of British-born, educated leaders in Waltham Forest, keen to make a change and widen participation to include all ethnicities, the young and women.

**Groups and Organisations**

Just as all cultures throughout history alter, adapt and are influenced by exposure to new ideas and environments, similarly Muslim culture in Britain has changed. British born Muslims practice and understand their faith in a different context to their parents, increasingly aware of their identities as Muslim as distinct from their ethnicities. There has been a diffusion of ideas and a growth in confidence relative to first generation elders. Moreover, recent events such as 9/11, 7/7, “the war on terror”, and the unrelenting media attack and demonising of Islam and Muslims have had a major impact in the current context. Yet a new factionalism is sometimes evident. An illustration of change in a contemporary British context is the array of Muslim Groups and organizations active and originating in Britain, their aims objectives and relative popularity. These organisations are many in number, though it is possible to categorise them into three types; Islamic, Muslim and Ethno National.

Islamic – Aims and objectives are based, governed and restricted by Islamic teachings. Such organisations are often linked to particular denominations and branches of Islam.

Muslim – Membership and representation is concentrated on Muslims, though not governed by Islamic principles. Umbrella groups, forums and Self-help groups typically fit this category.
Ethno National – Organisations that are formed around a particular ethnicity or nationality who also happen to be Muslim.

Some groups and organisations may overlap categories though aims and objectives can often easily be determined through simple semantic analysis. Some of the best known and most popular in Waltham Forest are listed below:

**Islamic**

**Tableeghi Jammat (Preaching Group)** – Largest Muslim evangelical group in the world, linked to the Deobhandi Strand and thereby Waltham Forest’s Deobhandi Mosques and large external network spanning form Newham to Dewsbury. Mostly appeal to Indian Gujarati heritage Muslims, though also have following amongst North African Arabs and Somali heritage.

**Hizb Ut Tahrir (Party of Liberation)** – Political Group whose “Ideology is Islam”. Aim is to re-establish the Caliphate somewhere in the Muslim world. Though not Salafi, operate at and appeal to the Sunni Madhaib (Schools of thought) level. Enjoy relatively high level of support amongst young professionals and some elders, mostly of Pakistani heritage.

**Ahle Hadith (Way of the Traditions of the Prophet)** – Pakistan based Salafi Group. Large base of support throughout Waltham Forest and the basis of one Mosque.

**Al Muhajiroon (The Immigrants)** – Salafi based group, and although proscribed by government, former members still actively promoting views within Waltham Forest. Mixed heritage support, typically Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali and African Caribbean reverts.

**Muslim**

**Active Change Foundation (ACF)** – Mostly concerned with de-radicalising Muslim youth.

**Leytonstone Muslim Community Centre (LMCC) Group** – Indian Gujarati heritage led initiative, primary role involves youth activities for a cross section of Muslim Youth. However, this organisation is of the type that overlaps categories as it is primarily linked to the Leytonstone Madrassa and Mosque i.e. Deobhandi affiliation.

**Ethno National**

**Various** – All/any organisations with specific ethnicity mentioned in title e.g. Pakistan Welfare association
Annex 4

TACKLING EXTREMISM AND DISENGAGEMENT: TIERED INTERVENTIONS

Areas of work relevant to tackling disengagement and extremism applicable to all young people include:

- clarity across the borough on civic values and principles

- using the Citizenship curriculum or other aspects of school and college life to reinforce what people have in common rather than what divides them, as well as to increase understanding of and sensitivity to issues affecting particular communities in the borough

- bringing people from different communities together – eg through sport and other activities to increase a sense of belonging on lines similar to those adopted for other young people at risk

- building confidence and understanding amongst young people and those who work with them to challenge and question different political and religious points of view.

Approaches aimed at those young people potentially vulnerable or at risk would include:

- ensuring that teachers and others working with young people are sensitive to changes in behaviour and attitude and aware of support structures and systems available to provide further advice and guidance as necessary, on a similar basis to approaches to dealing with issues such as substance misuse and other problems, supported by dedicated police school liaison officers.

- working with Mosques and members of the Muslim communities to identify individuals who can present a credible alternative vision or counter-narrative.

And for those at serious risk of radicalisation/developing violent extremist views, interventions might include:

- providing support and help to individual and his/her family either from statutory or voluntary sector, including it appropriate the relevant faith community.

Those suspected of being actively involved in illegal activities would primarily be subject to the appropriate measures on the part of the police and security services. However, bearing in mind the experience in the borough from August 2006 and subsequently, it is important in planning and carrying out such exercises to consider the impact on the individual's family and the wider community – again on the basis of strong partnership working.
Annex 5

Interviews, Discussion And Focus Groups Conducted

Individual Interviews

Roger Taylor, Interim Chief Executive
Mayor Farooq Qureshi
Councillor Clyde Loakes, Leader Waltham Forest Council
Councillor Afzal Akram – Portfolio Holder Community Safety
Keith Rayner, Deputy Leader
Syed Mazhar, Community Cohesion assistant
Councillor Johar Khan
Hanif Qadir, Active Change Foundation
Imtiaz Qadir, Active Change Foundation
Abid Qadir, Active Change Foundation
Abid Hussain, Community activist
Nawaz Khudar Baksh, ELF (East London Youth Forum)
Yusuf Hansa, Noor Ul Islam
Iqbal Mether, Masjid E Umer
Dr. Usma Hasan, Al Tawheed Mosque
Gulam Rabani, Lea Bridge Mosque
Jane O’Connor, Inspector
Abu Bakr, Masjid E Umer
Shahed Malik, (Leytonstone Muslim Youth Centre)
Dyon Mumroo-Robinson, Leading Manager, Mentoring, Pastures Youth Centre
Angela Parish, Youth Worker-Mentor, Pastures Youth Centre
Robin Tuddenham – Assistant Chief Executive
Claire Witney, Head of Community Engagement
Munir Zamir, Community Cohesion Advisor
Interfaith Communities network
Community Cohesion Officer Group
Jane Brown, Head of Equalities and Diversity
Shaminder Ubhi, Ashianna
Dianne Andrews, Community Safety Unit
Zahir Fatima, Director, Kiran’s Women’s Aid
Amtal Rana, Project Manager, Kiran’s Women’s Aid
Paramjit Sagoo, Outreach Worker, Kiran’s Women’s Aid
Leora Cruddas, Head of Education for Communities, Children Services
Patrick Morgan, Director EduAction
Neil Primrose, Head Teacher Norlington School
Yvonne Joseph, BNI Manager
Nasim Ullah, BNI Manager
Stanton La Foucade, BNI Manager
Nick Smith, Waltham Forest College
Michael Jervis, Defendin Da Hood
Anna Rinaldi, Acacia Children Centre
Robert Wood, EduAction
David Graaf, – Equality Champion
Suzanne Elwick, Project Manager, Children Services
Councillor Chris Robbins – Portfolio Holder Children Services
Michael Toyer – Service Planning & Research Manager
Satwant Pryce, Head of Policy and Partnership
Chan Badrinath – Executive Director, Corporate Services
Jan Wickham, Interim Assistant Chief Executive
Chris Kiernan, Executive Director, Children Services

iCoCo
Institute of
Community Cohesion
Discussion Groups

Primary Head Teachers Management group meeting
- Waltham Forest College Vision 12 staff
- YISP staff
- YOT staff
- Walthamstow Market observations and interviews with young Muslim men
- Islamic book shop, Walthamstow
- Representatives from Hizba Ut Tahrir Britain
- CBHA staff

Focus Groups

- Waltham Forest College Focus group 1 – Vision 12
- Waltham Forest College Focus group 2 – Vision 12
- Youth Offending Team - young people
- International women’s group – Barclays School
- Cannaught Girls School
- Kiran’s Women’s Aid women’s group
- Walthamstow Girls School
- Pink Girls group
- Pastures Youth Group
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze group
- Leyton College – Muslims Group
- Leyton College – mixed group
- YOT young peoples’ Holistic and BME Young Offenders Groups
- Tom Hood School
- Somali young men’s group
- Duke of Edinburgh Gold group
- Muslim Community Club
- YISP young peoples group
- Muslim drug education project volunteers
- Aveling Park School
- George Mitchell School
- ELYF (East London Youth Forum)
- Pakistani elders group
- Muslim young people (1), Shisha café Leytonstone
- Muslim young people (2), Shisha café Leytonstone
- Somali Young people, Masjid E Umer
- Waltham Forest Muslim Business Community – Chingford Kebabish
- Waltham Forest Muslim Business Community – Punjabi Grill (Lord Nazir Ahmed in attendance)
INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY COHESION (iCoCo) TEAM

Professor Ted Cantle, CBE
In over 30 years in public service, Ted has held a wide range of senior positions at a local level and has served on a number of national bodies focussing, in particular, on urban regeneration and key social and economic problems. He has been responsible for many action research projects, a wide range of development programmes and has helped to establish a number of new policy frameworks. He regularly contributes to many journals and publications and speaks at seminars and conferences.

Mr. Cantle was the Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council between 1990 and 2001. He was Director of Housing in Leicester City Council (1988 to 1990) and in Wakefield MDC (1979 to 1983) and was Under Secretary at the AMA (1983 to 1988) and has also worked for Manchester City Council.

In August 2001, Ted Cantle was appointed by the Home Secretary to Chair the Community Cohesion Review Team and to lead the review the causes of the summer disturbances in a number of northern towns and cities. The Report – known as ‘the Cantle Report’ was produced in December 2001 and made around 70 recommendations. The concept of ‘community cohesion’ was subsequently adopted by the Government and Mr. Cantle was asked to chair the Panel which advised Ministers on implementation.

Ted Cantle is presently Associate Director at the IDeA. He is also a member of the Board of the Environment Agency for England and Wales.

He is Professor and Executive Chair at the Community Cohesion Institute, (established 2005) which is being supported by four Midlands Universities and a range of other partners and is presently conducting research in this area, sponsored by governmental and non-governmental departments and agencies.

Ted has contributed over 200 articles and publications on a wide range of subjects including, ‘social capital’, ‘housing defects’ race and housing ‘sustainable development’ ‘leadership’ and ‘community cohesion’ – which is the subject of his new book: Community Cohesion: A New Framework for Race and Diversity.

He graduated in 1972 and has been a member and Fellow of the CIoH for 30 years. He is a visiting professor at Nottingham Trent University and has been awarded honorary doctorates by Portsmouth and Oxford Brookes Universities.

He was awarded the CBE in 2004.

Daljit Kaur
Daljit is iCoCo’s Director of Service Development where her key role is to work with the public, private and voluntary sector to provide practical solutions to the Community Cohesion Agenda.

Prior to this Daljit has 20 years work experience in Training and Development, Organisational Development, Human Resources, Equalities and Diversity from Sheffield City Council and 17 years experience of working across the voluntary, community and faith sectors across South Yorkshire.

Daljit was also a member of the Cantle Review team in 2001.
Daljit was also an integral part of the IDeA’s Community Cohesion team in Leicester, and assisted the IDeA’s work with Blackburn with Darwen, Tameside, Plymouth, Redcar and Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Swindon, Brent and Sunderland in identifying strategic priorities and action planning for community cohesion. She also assisted in delivering Modern Member modules on community cohesion and leadership.

She was also the IDeA’s advisor for Beacons on the theme of supporting the Social Care Workforce and worked with Westminster, Tower Hamlets and Gloucestershire Council. Daljit also as part of a team assessed and advised the ODPM on the Race Equality Beacon’s theme.

In a voluntary capacity Daljit for the last 15 years has been a strong activist in Sheffield in the following organisations:
- Chair Black-CARD (Community Agency for Regeneration and Development)
- Secretary Roshni Asian Women’s Resource Centre
- Treasurer Ashianna
- Board member of VAS – Voluntary Action Sheffield
- Chair of Association of Community Languages
- Transnational European UDIEX member/advisor on social inclusion on behalf of SPAT-C (Sheffield Positive Action Training Consortium)

Her particular interests are in community cohesion, equality and diversity in service areas such as education, employment and housing and in broader areas of social and economic regeneration. She is experienced in community involvement, policy development, service delivery in the area of employment programmes, facilitation and training and development.

She is a graduate of the Common Purpose and 20:20 programmes, Matrix and Power Dynamics.

Judith Lemprière
Judith is an iCoCo Associate, following a career in the University Sector, Local and Central Government. Until July 2006, Judith was a Senior Civil Servant in the Home Office, where she was head of the Cohesion and Faiths Unit, which works to bring communities together and tackle inequalities. Before that she was a Head of Unit in the Drug Strategy Directorate, working to deliver the Government’s National Drug Strategy, focusing in particular on strengthening local delivery and performance management.

Before joining the Home office in 2001, Judith held a number of senior positions in the Cabinet Office. Her roles included Principal Private Secretary to a Cabinet Minister, leading the team responsible for recruitment to the Civil Service Fast Stream and to the EU Institutions, and Deputy Director of the UK Anti-Drugs Co-ordination Unit.

Judith’s career prior to joining the Civil Service was in HR – working in local government and the university sector in generalist roles, focusing in particular on equal opportunities. She is a fellow of the CIPD. She is also a Governor and Chair of Personnel for a Community Primary School in Islington.

Judith has a particular interest in tackling cross cutting issues through developing and supporting effective partnerships spanning the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Nadeem Akhter Baksh
Nadeem is a Principal Associate with the Institute of Community Cohesion specialising in engaging with Muslim Communities across all strands working with a wide range of organisations within the public and private sector.
Nadeem is widely experienced in community cohesion and has been involved in around 15 Borough-wide reviews in all parts of the Country.

An Alumnus of The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Nadeem is skilled in research and analysis methods across several social sciences.

Nadeem is a practising Muslim with an in-depth academic knowledge of Islamic History, Perspectives, Politics and Principles, and has an objective and intellectual appreciation for all faith, cultural and political perspectives.

For a number of years Nadeem has played an instrumental role in initiating, facilitating and chairing numerous focus/discussion groups and forums. This work has in total included participants of over 22 nationalities, of various faiths, cultures and political persuasion. Nadeem continues through extensive and frequent travel to maintain dialogue/discussion with an expanding network of contacts nationally and internationally.

Daniel Range
Graduated with Honours from The London School of Economics & Political Science in 2003. Since then he has worked in the Housing sector specialising in community consultation and stakeholder engagement. Daniel's work to date has centred around targeting and opening dialogue with under represented, traditionally hard to reach members of the community. He now acts as a research associate for the Institute of Community Cohesion and has completed a number of projects.
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