

## CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Purpose	3
3. Definition	3
4. Executive Summary	3
5. Brief and Methodology	8
6. Findings of the Cattle, Denham and other Reports	11
7. Leicester – A Profile of Diversity	14
8. Leicester Today – An Overview	15
9. Vision and Political Leadership	18
10. Community and Faith Organisation	21
11. Housing	23
12. Education	26
13. Employment and Economy	29
14. Community Safety and Policing	33
15. Health and Social Care	35
16. Culture and Leisure	37
17. Regeneration and Revitalising Neighbourhoods	40
18. Young People	45
19. Press and Media	50
20. Welcoming New Communities	52
21. Recommendations	55

## TAKING FORWARD COMMUNITY COHESION IN LEICESTER

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Leicester is Britain's most culturally diverse City. Unlike many towns and cities elsewhere, diversity in Leicester is widely recognised as a positive asset and a defining characteristic of the City. Leicester has a strong reputation for promoting positive community relations through people of different cultures and faiths coming together with local government and other key agencies to address key problems. There is underlying strength and resilience in the City's capacity to manage relations between its different communities. However, as many of the City's leaders we spoke to constantly stressed, '...good community relations cannot be taken for granted.' The City now needs to take the initiative, build upon its past achievements and pioneer new approaches to valuing diversity and promoting wider community cohesion.
- 1.2 Though Leicester has experienced social upheaval at times over the last three decades, the City did not experience the disturbances of some northern towns and cities during the spring and summer of 2001. The Government's response to these disturbances was to set up a Ministerial Group to examine and consider how national policies might be used to promote more cohesive communities. At the same time a Review Team - led by Ted Cattle - was also established to seek the views of local residents and community leaders in the affected towns and in other parts of England - including Leicester - on what issues needed to be addressed to bring about social cohesion.
- 1.3 These Groups have now published their findings and Leicester's experience was widely quoted in illustrating a number of examples of good practice. Following the reports, the Home Office in collaboration with the Local Government Association and the Commission for Racial Equality issued a comprehensive guidance document intended to help local authorities assess and develop community cohesion in their areas. Local authorities are now required to produce Community Cohesion Plans and will be externally assessed on their performance.
- 1.4 Leicester has worked hard over the last three decades to promote harmonious race and community relations and can rightly claim to have achieved a great deal. However, it is also recognized that major challenges that will need to be met in the future and that the City should be prepared to learn from the experiences of others and from good practice elsewhere. To help identify major issues for the future and how these might be addressed, Leicester City Council has commissioned the Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) to undertake an independent review and to propose ways in which community cohesion can be strengthened and reinforced within the City.

### **2.0 PURPOSE**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the findings of the first phase of the IDeA review to determine how community cohesion can be most effectively developed in the City of Leicester.

### **3.0 DEFINITION**

- 3.1 The review is guided by a definition of Community Cohesion that incorporates but goes beyond current ideas on race equality and social inclusion. This is not to say that these ideas and policy approaches have in some way become either less valid or relevant. It is to recognise that even where progress has been made, frequently communities have developed separately and share little in common. Essentially, community cohesion it is about the dynamic relationship between and within communities. Thus, for the purposes of this review, the guiding characteristics of cohesive communities are where:

- there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's different background and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, and;
- strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

### **4.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 4.1 Leicester does not take good community relations for granted. Its approach to valuing cultural diversity and tackling disadvantage has worked reasonably well, enabling the City to avoid many of the more extreme problems experienced elsewhere.
- 4.2 We found many examples of good practice within local government and the wider public sector, and also within the City's faith communities, voluntary and community sectors.
- 4.3 Valuing diversity as a positive asset and characteristic of the City is clearly a prominent and consistent theme within Leicester City Council. It is part of the Council's Vision for the City, ascribed a high priority in the Council's strategic policy documents and championed by the Council's political leadership as well as its senior officers. The Council was one of the first local authorities to respond positively to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has won Beacon Council status for promoting Racial Equality. Over 20% of the Council's staff are of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) origin and a great deal has been done to ensure that services are culturally sensitive and respond to the needs of all communities.
- 4.4 The Council also plays a prominent role in a number of formal and informal partnerships concerned with diversity. The role of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Group is particularly noteworthy in this respect, bringing together representatives of local government, the wider public sector, the local media, faith and voluntary sector organisations to discuss and address issues that might cause tensions in the City. The role of the Council of Faiths and the Faith Leaders Group should also be noted in this respect. We also found a similar determination to tackle inter-faith and cultural diversity issues at neighbourhood level. Taken together, there is underlying strength and resilience in the City's capacity to manage its community relations.
- 4.5 Leicester has successfully settled, integrated and incorporated successive waves of incoming migrants over the last four decades. Unlike the experience of other cities, the majority of post

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

war migrants settling in Leicester have been of an entrepreneurial or professional background – mainly from East Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent. This was repeatedly stressed as a critical factor in understanding the nature of community relations in the City.

- 4.6 After a tentative start Leicester's BME communities have been able to make a significant contribution to the manufacturing, commercial and cultural dynamism of the City. On an everyday level, the cosmopolitan character of the City is expressed in its shops, restaurants, fashion, music, arts as well as its temples, mosques and churches. More recently, the City has coped well with the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. However, the recent and unexpected arrival of between 8,000 and 10,000 Somalis from European Union (EU) Countries is putting pressure on housing, education and health services and has led to heightened tensions within the City.
- 4.7 Our baseline assessment of the state of community cohesion in Leicester takes as its starting point the many achievements of the City. Nevertheless, our assessment highlighted a number of major challenges that will need to be considered in the future.
- 4.8 We found that residential concentration along ethnic lines in Leicester is similar to that of other cities with large BME communities. Seven of the City's twenty-eight wards have an ethnic minority population of 50% or more. These wards are in Leicester's inner city. At the other end of the scale, six wards in the City's outer areas have 5% or less ethnic minority households. However, in most of the northern towns and cities experiencing disorder during the spring and summer of 2001, predominately white deprived estates shared common boundaries with areas of BME settlement, resulting in tension and confrontation on a daily basis. This is not the case in Leicester where predominately white outer estates are separated from the inner city by relatively wealthy wards or industrial areas.
- 4.9 Primary and Secondary schools in Leicester reflect the residential concentrations outlined above, though not rigidly. BME pupils predominate in inner city schools. Schools on the City's outer areas and estates are predominately white.
- 4.10 We found that people's leisure, sporting and cultural activities tended to be centred on their local neighbourhoods and also reflected the ethnic make-up of local areas.
- 4.11 In these three key areas of social activity, different communities in Leicester could be said to lead 'parallel lives' as described in the Cattle and other reports into community cohesion in northern towns and cities and elsewhere. As the reports point out, where there is limited or little contact between different communities there is the potential for fear, mistrust, tension and conflict.
- 4.12 We found that the lack of contact between Leicester's different communities is a factor in competition over scarce mainstream and regeneration resources, with communities on the City's outer estates and the African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bengali communities feeling that they have fared less well. The allocation of regeneration and voluntary sector funding to address the specific needs of different BME Communities was also thought to be factor in sustaining divisions between different groups.
- 4.13 Notwithstanding the City's efforts to value and celebrate diversity, there is evidence to indicate that the notion has come to be understood as celebrating BME cultures. Some sections of the predominately white communities on the City's outer estates have come to feel left out and ignored. There is also evidence of growing polarisation in voting patterns between the inner city and outer wards.
- 4.14 Further details of the issues, priorities and proposals can be found in the sections of this report dealing with 'Detailed Findings'. These cover Leadership, Community and Faith Organisation,

Housing, Education, Employment, Community Safety and Policing, Health and Social Care, Culture and Leisure, Regeneration, Youth, Press and Media and Welcoming New Communities. We do not claim to have all the answers and hope that our proposals will be taken in the spirit in which they are intended – that is to stimulate and ‘open, honest and frank’ debate within the City Council, the wider public and voluntary sectors and faith organisations on what is important and what needs to be done. It should also be stressed that we do not envisage these initiatives requiring major additional resources. In most instances it is likely to be a case of extending the range of existing priorities and adjusting the way in which existing resources are applied.

- 4.15 In responding to the many issues and proposals set out in this report, we are concerned that the efforts of the City Council and its partners may be dissipated in a large number of small individual initiatives. If the City is to develop new and innovative ways in which to promote more cohesive communities and its Vision for Leicester as one of Britain’s leading multi-cultural, multi-faith Cities, we would propose a clear policy focus on four strategic, crosscutting themes.

### 4.16 **Vision and Leadership**

- (1) The first is to develop a Vision for community cohesion in Leicester. A vision shared by the City Council and its partners in the wider business, public, voluntary, sport and faith sectors. Such a vision will need to add to current ideas on valuing diversity and tackling inequality and disadvantage. It should also be inclusive of communities of interest and groups known to experience social exclusion – women, people with disabilities, the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual communities.
- (2) Every effort should be made to ensure that the city’s three main political parties are given an opportunity to be involved in, and to sign up to the new Vision. Each political party should further consider how residents from all of the City’s main communities may be represented at all levels of their organisation – including candidates for election to the Council.
- (3) Responsibility for community cohesion should be clearly vested in the Local Strategic Partnership, helping to ensure the involvement of a wide range of partners and agencies. Consideration should also be given to the role of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership in promoting community cohesion across the sub-region.

### 4.17 **Young People**

- (1) With the best will in the world, patterns of residential settlement and concentration in schools cannot be changed over the short to medium term without adopting social engineering measures that may well create more problems than they solve. However, in our view the City’s young people offer a unique opportunity to develop a number of crosscutting and innovative initiatives that could help change people’s perceptions, patterns of behaviour and build community cohesion for the future.
- (2) One theme could be to give young people a far greater role in organising events that celebrate cultural diversity and pride in the City. Young people could also be encouraged to play a greater role in the faith leadership of the City – possibly through the establishment of a Youth Inter-Faith Council. ‘Residentials’ on leadership for young people across different communities might also be considered.

- (3) Shared activities between and around schools could be another key theme. Specialist and new schools should take positive steps to attract pupils from all communities. Twinning or grouping schools dominated by different ethnic groups leading to shared activities - projects, school visits, sport, leisure and parental involvement – should also be considered. The introduction of a citizenship course in all schools promoting understanding between different cultures has also been suggested.
- (4) In the transition from school to work, public sector employers should look again at opportunities for recruiting young people and be prepared to go into schools, colleges and the City's Universities. Flagship economic regeneration projects should be urged to work closely with neighbourhood regeneration initiatives to promote employment and training opportunities for young people – particularly on the City's outer estates.

### 4.18 Engaging the City's Outer Areas Communities

- (1) A striking feature of our baseline assessment was the extent to which communities settled in the City's outer area estates felt disengaged, isolated, ignored and unable to influence the policies of key public sector bodies. They also felt that their cultural heritage had been taken for granted and that their communities had fared less well in competition for regeneration and mainstream resources.
- (2) Engaging communities on the City's outer estates should be a key objective of any new vision and strategy for developing community cohesion in Leicester.
- (3) In part, this may be a matter of providing clear and better information challenging misconceptions and rumours. More significantly, it may involve a strategic policy focus on the needs and concerns of outer estates communities tackling barriers to inclusion and participation. Such a strategy should also consider how outer area and residents outside the City might be attracted back into the City Centre and Inner City.

### 4.19 BME Communities

- (1) BME communities have a vital role to play in the future of community cohesion in Leicester.
- (2) The first will be to embrace and help develop a new vision for community cohesion in Leicester alongside ideas on valuing diversity and continuing to tackle inequality and disadvantage – particularly in respect of the Pakistani, Bengali and African Caribbean communities.
- (3) A clear commitment to involving more women and young people in leadership roles.
- (4) Over time, Leicester's BME communities have built up strong and vibrant voluntary sectors. However, many organisations continue to focus on the needs of single communities rather than on the needs of local neighbourhoods. Voluntary sector organisations working with the local authority and other key agencies should consider ways in which organisations can move towards addressing needs across all communities.
- (5) Cultural and religious intolerance also occurs within Black and Asian communities. A great deal is being done to tackle this at all levels within the City. Nevertheless, BME communities should be as prepared to tackle intolerance between different ethnic

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

groups as they are to challenge racism. This needs to be reflected not only within the voluntary sector but also in other areas of community and faith organisation.

### 5.0 THE BRIEF AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 The scope of the brief set out by Leicester City Council for the overall project covers the following:

1. Current City Council and Partner policies, structures and processes that most directly contribute to promoting community cohesion and learning lessons from the past.
2. Potential triggers and factors likely to cause tensions and fragmentation between Leicester's main communities.
3. Barriers and obstacles to welcoming newcomers from abroad – including employment, National Insurance Certification, qualifications recognition and conversion, access to benefits and accommodation, support for homeless families from the EU and language support.
4. Current and future community needs and aspirations, including perceptions of community pride and sense of belonging.
5. The potential for strengthening existing partnership arrangements.
6. A strategy statement for the City on Community Cohesion.
7. Key performance indicators measuring progress towards achieving more cohesive communities.
8. A communications strategy to raise awareness on steps being taken to address community cohesion

5.2 We envisage the work being undertaken in three Phases. The first phase and subject of this report is a baseline assessment of how effectively current policies, structures, practices and networks – formal and informal – contribute to promoting community cohesion. This assessment is wide ranging and includes political, faith and community leadership, regeneration, community organisation, youth, leisure and cultural services, housing, health and social care, community safety and policing, employment and the economy, media and public relations and welcoming new communities.

5.3 Phases II and III of the Project will focus on developing and implementing a Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan.

5.4 Our methods and approach to the first phase of the project involves the following:

- First, we thought it was important to assess the extent to which the strategic policies of the City Council and its key partners contributed to promoting and reinforcing community cohesion in the key areas of activity outlined above.
- Second, in order to obtain a comprehensive view of how these policies worked in practice and the current state of community cohesion within the City, we conducted in-depth interviews with:
  - leading Councillors and MPs
  - senior and specialist officers within the City Council
  - senior officers in Health, the Police, County Council and Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM)
  - faith, community and voluntary sector leaders



## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

Interviews were based on specific issues identified under key themes set out in the Home Office/LGA Draft Guidance on Community Cohesion. Further details of the Guidance can be found on the Local Government Association website: <http://www.lga.gov.uk>

- To the same end, we also attended and observed a number of events and formal and informal Partnerships in action. These included:
  - The Educational Partnership
  - The Council of Faith
  - The Faith Leaders Group
  - The Equality and Diversity Partnership
  - The Multi-Cultural Advisory Group
  - The Cultural Partnership
  - A meeting of Leicester City Council's Cabinet
  - A Leicestershire Constabulary Multi-Cultural Event
  - A Social Inclusion Conference sponsored by the Education Department
  - The Launch of Pakistani Community Needs Report
  
- Finally, in order to canvas the views of residents, neighbourhood community workers and volunteers in different communities across the City, we conducted a number of Community Workshops. Prospective participants were offered the options of individual consultation, small focus groups or meetings. Each workshop lasted 3½ hours, and a structured questionnaire used to guide discussions. Workshops were held at the following local venues:
  - The Parish Church – Christ the King  
Beaumont Way  
Beaumont Leys
  
  - The Linwood Centre  
Linwood Lane  
Saffron Lane Estate
  
  - The Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre  
Rothey Street  
Belgrave
  
  - The Highfields Youth and Community Centre  
Melbourne Road  
Highfields
  
  - The African Caribbean Centre  
Maidstone Road  
Two Workshops – Somali Community and Youth.

Due to time constraints, we could not see representatives of all the groups and organisations originally intended. We will seek to rectify this in later stages of the initiative. However, in total, we interviewed over 50 policy makers, voluntary sector, faith and civic leaders, and conducted five community workshops involving over 60 participants. Further details are available in Appendix II.

## 6.0 FINDINGS OF THE CANTLE, DENHAM AND OTHER REPORTS

6.1 We found the findings of the Cantle, Denham and other reports extremely helpful in shaping our approach to assessing community cohesion in Leicester. These reports identified a number of factors thought to limit the development of community cohesion - particularly in northern towns and cities experiencing disturbances in 2001. These factors may be summarised as follows:

1. A high degree of **residential concentration** and separation based on the ethnicity of different communities. Whether intentional or not, past discriminatory housing policies pursued by local authorities and other housing providers were thought to be key factors in creating these settlement patterns. But 'white flight' also contributed – white residents deserting areas of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) settlement, often stimulated by estate agents exploiting fears concerning property values. On a more positive note, BME communities did not necessarily see residential concentration in a negative light. Many expressed a strong desire to be close to others of their own ethnic background for reasons of safety, closeness to family and friends, places of worship and shopping. Whatever the combination of factors, residential concentration and separation contributed to a mutual lack of knowledge between different cultures and promoted fear and distrust. Residential concentration also compounded divisions across many other aspects of peoples daily lives – in education, employment, cultural and recreational activities, faith and community organisation. In short, many communities appeared to lead '**parallel lives**' which did not seem to touch at any point.
2. Where communities were geographically separated in residential terms, **schools** also tended to reflect the ethnic make-up of local communities. In some localities, either white or BME pupils overwhelmingly dominated primary and secondary schools. Even where the catchment areas of particular schools ought to have produced a mixed intake of pupils, parental choice tended to produce either white or BME dominated schools. Lack of contact between different communities in schools was also identified as a key factor in promoting fear and distrust. Where local LEA's did pursue initiatives aimed at teaching children to appreciate and value each other's cultures, often this was based on inadequate and outdated approaches. Moreover, inequalities of outcomes in educational achievement between pupils of different ethnic origin also contributed to tensions between communities.
3. Poor **employment** opportunities also limited the development of community cohesion. Over and above the lack of employment opportunities and in some areas low aspirations, the Cantle and other reports found evidence of certain ethnic groups being concentrated in particular occupations and of 'post code discrimination' affecting Asian, black and white communities. As the largest employers in most local areas, the role of the public sector – e.g. Local Authority, Health and Police – in promoting equality of opportunity in employment was seen as an important factor in either limiting or encouraging the development of community cohesion.
4. **Regeneration programmes** and initiatives often appeared to contribute to and reinforce divisions between communities. Different communities were frequently in competition with each other for limited regeneration resources. In addition, given the range and complexity of different funding regimes, community leaders were far from convinced that the allocation of regeneration and other funding was either transparent, equitable or according to need. In place of a cross-community, thematic approach to local issues, funding was frequently allocated on the basis of cultural groupings, reinforcing existing divisions. Moreover, the overwhelming historical focus of regeneration programmes on the inner city sometimes resulted in working class communities on outer city estates feeling relatively ignored. Concern was also expressed regarding the issue of regeneration funding being

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

substituted for mainstream local authority and other public sector funding, potentially leaving some communities worse off.

5. The Cantle and other reports found a great deal of support for **policing** in the towns and cities they visited. However, concerns were raised on two counts. Firstly, the implicit toleration by some forces of 'no-go' areas especially in relation to tackling drugs. Secondly, the extent to which some communities appeared to tolerate certain types of criminality and did not trust or co-operate with the police. The degree to which local Police Forces consulted local communities and recruited BME Officers was also cited as significant factors in promoting community cohesion.
  6. The role of the **local press and media** also came in for criticism in some areas. In part, this was aimed at the way in which the disturbances were reported, but also included longstanding complaints about the negative representation of certain areas of the city and BME communities in general.
  7. Both Lord Ouseley and the Cantle team were struck by the views of **young people** on the need to break down barriers and promote knowledge and understanding between cultures. It was stressed that the more levels on which different communities lead separate lives, the greater the potential for the growth of fear and conflict. Facilities for young people were found to be in a parlous state in many areas. Many activities and schemes lacked resources, failed to engage and empower young people or tackle disaffection and under-achievement. Giving young people a bigger say and stake in the local decision making process was identified as a key factor in promoting community cohesion, as was the need for positive role models and schemes encouraging cross-cultural contact between young people.
  8. The lack of a clear determination to tackle racism and discrimination by local **civic and community leaders** was found to be a significant factor in the breakdown of community cohesion. The importance of a clear and consistent message – challenging negative and racist stereotypes but also promoting a positive vision of diversity - was repeatedly stressed, as was the requirement to translate these messages into action at all levels throughout key organisations. Local political parties did not always take steps to ensure representation of minority groups both at party level and within the political system. The need to involve a far wider range of community leaders at local level – in particular black and ethnic minority women and young people – was also highlighted. In some areas, concerns were raised by members of the Asian community regarding what was perceived as political bias on the part of some Asian Councillors in favour of their own ethnic group and the influence of 'back home politics' in creating tensions between local communities.
- 6.2 We shall return to these factors in greater detail as they apply to Leicester later in this report. But first, it is important to set the scene by identifying the background, circumstances and issues central to community cohesion in Leicester.

### **7.0 LEICESTER – A PROFILE OF DIVERSITY**

- 7.1 Leicester City has the highest minority ethnic population in Britain. Detailed figures from the 2001 Census are not yet released, but estimates suggest that 33.7% of the City's 279,923 population may be of black and minority ethnic origin.
- 7.2 By far the single largest ethnic group is the Hindu Community, most of who arrived in the City as refugees expelled from Uganda, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania between 1968 and 1975, but also includes economic migrants from Gujarat and elsewhere in India. Based on the 1991 Census, this community makes up 22% of the City's population.
- 7.3 The City also has a significant African Caribbean community - dominated in numerical terms by Antiguans, but also including smaller national groupings of Jamaicans, Trinidadians, and Barbadians. Unlike the experience of East African Asians, migration from the Caribbean began in the 1940's with ex-servicemen, followed by a steady stream of economic migrants in the 60's and 70's. There is also a small African community mainly from Ghana and Nigeria. Based on the 1991 Census, the African and African Caribbean community comprise 2.4% of the City's population. But numbers will have increased with the arrival of refugees from Montserrat following the eruption of the volcano in 1995.
- 7.4 Leicester's Muslim community is composed of a number of different groupings. Economic migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Gujarat in India comprise the bulk of the community. According to the 1991 Census, the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community total 1.4% of Leicester's population. However, there are also Muslims expelled from East Africa and more recently refugees from Kosovo and Bosnia. Within the last few years, Leicester has also experienced a sudden arrival of Somali migrants from EU countries – in particular The Netherlands. Various, this new community is estimated at between 8,000 and 10,000 people.
- 7.5 Other communities within the City include Poles, Ukrainians, Serbians and Latvians from Eastern Europe, as well as Punjabi Sikhs and long established Chinese and Jewish communities. There are also new micro communities largely composed of asylum seekers and refugees from Vietnam, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe. It should not be overlooked that students make up 12% of the City's population during term time, play a significant role in the local economy and in defining the characteristics of particular neighbourhoods – in particular the City Centre

### **8.0 LEICESTER TODAY – AN OVERVIEW**

- 8.1 In our view Leicester today is at a crossroads.
- 8.2 The City has successfully settled, integrated and incorporated successive waves of incoming migrants often fleeing persecution, natural disasters or wars in other parts of the world. Unlike the experience of most other UK cities experiencing inward migration, the majority of post war migrants settling in Leicester have either been of an entrepreneurial or professional background - mainly from East Africa, but also from elsewhere. This was repeatedly stressed by many of the people we spoke to as a critical factor in understanding the way in which community relations has developed in Leicester over the last four decades and its underlying strength and resilience today.
- 8.3 This is not to say that Leicester has not experienced periods of cultural shock and negative - sometimes racist - reactions from sections of the resident population. In 1979, racial tensions erupted in a riot over a National Front March. Along with many other cities in 1981, Leicester also experienced riots and looting over three nights.
- 8.4 However, after a tentative start, Leicester's new communities have been able to make a significant contribution to the manufacturing, commercial, and cultural dynamism of the City. On an everyday level, the cosmopolitan nature of the City is expressed in its shops, restaurants, fashion, music, arts as well as its mosques, temples and churches. Leicester has a good record in celebrating cultural diversity. Its celebration of Diwali is considered the largest outside India. Its African-Caribbean Carnival is the largest in the UK outside Notting Hill. Black and Ethnic Minority communities have also successfully developed media networks within their own communities and have established a significant foothold in the wider local media. These factors were emphasised by Asian and Black residents we spoke to as significant in identifying with, belonging to and preferring Leicester over other Cities. The same factors were also manifest in attracting more recent migrants to the City.
- 8.5 We found that good community relations is not taken for granted in Leicester. Valuing diversity is a consistent message communicated by the City's civic, community and faith leaders and championed through a network of formal and informal partnerships within the City. The contribution of the Council of Faiths - Inter-Faith Council faith leader's group is particularly noteworthy as examples of different communities coming together to address and help resolve local tensions and the impact of wider international conflict on local communities. The work of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Group involving local government, public sector, faith and voluntary sector leaders along with representatives of the local media should also be recognised as an exemplar of good practice in this respect.
- 8.6 Black and Minority Ethnic communities have also gained a significant foothold in the local political process. A quarter of Leicester's Councillors come from ethnic minority communities. Compared to other cities, the City Council has a good record of responding to, and addressing, diversity and equality issues. BME employees make up over 20% of the Council's workforce. The Council was one of the first local authorities to respond to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry by accepting the definition of 'institutional racism' and has recently achieved Beacon Status for its initiatives on Race Equality.
- 8.7 Nevertheless, if Leicester is to build on its achievements of the past and promote more cohesive communities in the future, there are some major challenges that will need to be met. In residential terms, Black and Minority Ethnic communities remain concentrated in the inner city with white communities predominating in outer council estates and suburban areas. These residential concentrations are in large part replicated in the ethnic composition of schools and in the pattern of economic, cultural, leisure and other activities of different

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

communities. In other words, different communities in Leicester still lead 'parallel lives' that do not touch or overlap in any important respect.

- 8.8 Government policy and resources have been targeted at areas with the highest incidence of deprivation and disadvantage. By so doing, it was also assumed that a range of other issues would also be addressed – in particular, reducing tensions and promoting good community and race relations. In part, this strategy has been effective.
- 8.9 However, over time the pattern of deprivation and disadvantage has changed in Leicester with the City's outer estates now featuring far more prominently alongside the inner city. As a consequence, competition between inner and outer city communities for limited regeneration and mainstream resources has become far more intense. Nor have communities on the City's outer estates been able to build up the voluntary sector infrastructure and expertise in bidding for funding evident in the inner cities. Inevitably, given the residential concentration of BME communities in the inner city and predominately white communities on outer city estates, competition for resources has taken on ethnic overtones. Notwithstanding considerable resources – including Government regeneration funding - being invested in Leicester's outer estates stretching back to the Urban Programme, these communities still feel overlooked and neglected.
- 8.10 In addition, the way in which regeneration and community development resources have been allocated within the inner city, while helping to tackle the needs of different communities, has also contributed to sustaining ethnic, cultural and religious division and competition. This is not to deny that deprivation and disadvantage affect different communities in different ways or the need for communal facilities acting as a base for communities to organise, build capacity and get local people involved. Nevertheless, a large number of projects and initiatives continue to be targeted at the needs of specific ethnic groups rather than the needs of the neighbourhood or the wider local community.
- 8.11 The crossroad for Leicester is that its approach to tackling deprivation and disadvantage and promoting good community relations have worked sufficiently well in the past, enabling the City to avoid many of the more extreme problems experienced by other cities. There is much that is to be commended, retained and developed. However, social, cultural and economic divisions remain within the city not only between the inner city and outer estates, but between the City's different ethnic groups. Some communities – in particular communities on the City's outer estates and the Pakistani, Bengali and African Caribbean communities in the inner city – have fared less well from the City's efforts to tackle deprivation and disadvantage. The recent arrival of Somali migrants from EU countries has placed further pressure on local services and intensified competition for regeneration and other resources.
- 8.12 Leicester now needs to take a fresh look at its past approach to these issues and seek new ways in which inequality and disadvantage - as it affects the City today – can be tackled together with breaking down barriers between communities. We believe that the proposals in our report provide ways in which this new thinking can be developed.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### 9.0 Vision and Political Leadership

9.1 Local civic and political leadership is an important factor in the presence or absence of community cohesion. The reports into the disturbances in northern towns and cities found good and bad examples of this. Broadly, where civic and political leaders were seen to be promoting a clear and consistent message on valuing diversity and tackling racism, communities felt more included and that they had a stake in the future of their local area. Alternatively, where political leadership was either weak or divided, a vacuum was created, open to exploitation by extremist groups.

9.2 In our baseline assessment of the state of community cohesion in Leicester, we examined the nature and impact of political leadership from a number of different perspectives. What messages are being communicated, directly or indirectly, by leading members and officers of the Council and are these reflected in the Council's key policies and actions? How consistent have these messages been over time and are they shared by other key public sector agencies and Partners? Finally, to what extent are these views shared by the voluntary sector and the wider population?

9.3 We found that valuing diversity is a clear and consistent theme running through key policy and strategy documents of both the authority and its key partners. Indeed, valuing diversity is often cited as a positive characteristic, an inspiration and aspiration for the city. For example, diversity is cited as part of the strategic Vision for the City and its first priority in Leicester's Community Plan:

'Leicester is both a multi-cultural and a multi-faith city. The vitality and vibrancy that comes from having many different cultures living and working together can be experienced every day in Leicester; through arts, music, architecture, commerce, fashion and food. The energy of our community can be seen in many of Leicester's community and voluntary organisation. We must continue to strengthen our multi-cultural and multi-faith city by supporting and promoting healthy community relations, in which different voices can be heard, trust is built, understanding is developed and potential sources of conflict are resolved creatively.'

(The Leicester Partnership for the Future. Strategic Partners including the City Council, Health Authority, the Police, Chambers of Commerce, Young People's Council, Higher Education, Schools and Voluntary Organisations.)

9.4 These messages were also reinforced across a range of strategic policy documents within Leicester City Council - e.g. the Best Value Performance Plan, Cultural Strategy, Race Equality Scheme, Education and Sport. They were also replicated in the strategic policies of the Police, Health Authorities and other Partners dating back to the disturbances in the late 70's and early 80's. Indeed, many Asian and black people we spoke to in our community workshops stressed the importance of their own campaigns in helping to change the strategic direction of the City Council and other key public sector agencies on valuing diversity and tackling disadvantage.

9.5 Our Community Workshops also indicated a great deal of support for valuing diversity within the voluntary and community sector. However, opinion amongst residents was more mixed.

9.6 The City Council's Mori Survey of public opinion in 2001 placed 'diverse communities' highly in terms of an attribute of the City but low in the order of priorities to be addressed in the future. Similarly, the preliminary findings of a research project into the Future of the City currently

being conducted by the University of Leicester found that while 80% of respondents described Leicester as 'a multi-cultural city', only 20% described the city as 'harmonious'. A further 20% described the city as 'racially divided' and 14% thought the city 'racially tense'.

- 9.7 From our interviews with leading local Councillors, we found that the three main political parties in Leicester were in principle committed to involving black and minority ethnic groups at all levels of their political organisations, though only one has been successful in getting Asian and African Caribbean representatives elected to the Council or to Parliament. Currently a quarter of the city's councillors come from ethnic minority communities – 13 Asian and 1 African Caribbean. In large part, this reflects the political allegiance of Asian and Black voters, but it also reflects residential concentration in inner city wards. All of the leading Councillors we spoke to recognised the potential danger of particular political parties becoming identified with either the Asian and Black inner city vote or the predominately white vote on city's outer estates and areas.
- 9.8 We also found that while all political parties supported the basic theme of valuing diversity, there were differences of emphasis and approach mainly around the role and potential dangers of the Council actively intervening to promote these objectives. Here again, those we interviewed recognised the danger of these differences becoming increasingly polarised. Certainly, the potential for tensions between communities being exploited by extremist groups cannot be ignored. It is worth noting, for example, that BNP support in Oldham and Burnley has risen significantly following the disturbances in 2001.
- 9.9 A further issue raised during some focus groups with Asian and Black participants was the perception that some BME Councillors did not always represent the interests of all the different ethnic groups and interests in their constituencies. It is fair to say that such perceptions are not uncommon where local communities are asked about their local leaders and BME Councillors are not immune from accusations of bias. Nevertheless, these perceptions carry a degree of force, particularly when cited within the context and influence of 'back home' politics on local community relations in Leicester. Concern was also expressed regarding the lack of BME women candidates.

### **Priority Issues for the future**

- (1) Perhaps for perfectly understandable reasons, the wider perception of Leicester as 'culturally diverse', 'multi-cultural', 'multi-faith' city has become closely identified with the city's BME communities. Evidence from a number of different sources would seem to indicate that sections of the city's white communities increasingly feel left out, ignored or taken for granted. If the city is to develop a new and compelling vision for the future of diversity and community cohesion, consideration will need to be given to how communities on the City's outer estates may be re-engaged. This vision will also need to be inclusive of communities of interest and groups known to experience discrimination i.e. women, people with disabilities, the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities.
- (2) Though not the case at present, there is a potential for mainstream politics to become more polarised between inner city and outer areas and between different cultural groupings. If this trend is to be challenged, every effort should be made to ensure that community cohesion is not perceived as the property of any one political party. Consideration should be given to all political parties having an opportunity to be involved in, and sign up to, a new vision for diversity and community cohesion.
- (3) All political parties should give consideration to how BME communities, women and young people may be included at all levels of their organisation, including the selection of candidates for local elections. Political parties might also wish to review



## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

how candidates for local elections are short listed with the objective of diffusing the association between BME candidates representing inner city wards and white candidates representing outer areas.

- (3) It would be futile to pretend that Leicester's BME communities can somehow isolate themselves from tensions and developments in the Indian Sub-continent or elsewhere in the world. Indeed, we found a great deal of evidence of faith and community leaders attempting to address and resolve the impact of these tensions on local community relations. However, BME Councillors will need to actively consider how they can counter perceptions of bias in favour of their own faith or ethnic group.
- (4) Responsibility for leading and co-ordinating the City's community cohesion strategy should be clearly vested in Leicester's Local Strategic Partnership to help ensure that a wide range of partners and agencies are involved. Consideration should also be given to the role of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership in promoting community cohesion across the sub-region.

### 10.0 Community and Faith Organisation and Leadership

- 10.1 One of Leicester's strengths is the role and contribution of its faith communities and leaders. The Leicester Council of Faiths has been in existence for 17 years. It represents eight of the mainstream religions in Leicester including Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity. In addition to promoting greater understanding between different faiths in Leicester, much of the Council work is concerned with addressing and tackling issues likely to cause tensions between the City's different communities. During our period in Leicester, issues discussed by the Council included the prospect of war in Iraq, the local impact of September 11th, the recent inter-religious violence in Gujarat – India and the involvement of the Council in initiatives to regenerate the City. The Council of Faith is supported by an informal faith leaders group and faith leaders were also involved in other partnerships.
- 10.2 One such informal partnership is the Multi-Cultural Advisory Group. In addition to faith leaders, membership of this partnership includes representatives of local government, the police, the voluntary and community sector, the media and Leicester's Race Equality Council. At a meeting we attended, the main item on the agenda was a proposed National Front March, which was subsequently banned by the Home Secretary. Like the Council of Faiths, the Multi-Cultural Advisory Group also tackles issues likely to cause tensions between Leicester's different communities.
- 10.3 These are but two examples of partnerships providing leadership within the City. In fact, we found a network of formal and informal partnerships and Groups within the City tackling community relations issues either at a strategic level or in relation to specific communities. These included the Equality and Diversity Partnership, the Educational Partnership, the Cultural Partnership, the African Caribbean Working Group and the Leicester Strategic Partnership. We also found an underlying determination to tackle tough issues early and not to let 'things slide' or escalate at both strategic and neighbourhood level.
- 10.4 Leicester also has a strong voluntary and community sector. However, we found that voluntary and community organisation was more developed in the City's inner wards than on the outer estates. Community organisations in both the inner and outer city stressed the need to invest more resources in building capacity given ever increasing demands for voluntary and community groups to participate in the City's many partnerships.
- 10.5 As is the pattern elsewhere, a large number of voluntary and community organisation in Leicester's inner city, continue to be funded largely on ethnic lines - i.e. on their ability to address problems experienced by a particular ethnic group. There is no question that deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination affect different BME communities in different ways and that BME communities need to organise within their own ethnic and cultural groups. Nevertheless, whether the current pattern of voluntary and community sector funding reinforce or diffuse divisions between different communities is open to question.
- 10.6 There are also wider questions of where the next generation of faith and community leaders within BME communities is to come from and how community leadership is to be promoted in the City's outer estates.

### Priority Issues for the Future

- (1) Building community organisation, capacity, infrastructure and leadership on the City's outer estates and inner city communities.
- (2) Establishing and developing a Leicester Youth Council of Faiths.

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

- (3) Involving more young people and women in leadership roles and developing the next generation of leaders - possibly through 'residential' and establishing a 'Youth Common Purpose'
- (4) Greater emphasis on all regeneration and community development projects being funded on their ability to address the needs of local neighbourhoods and communities. Consideration should also be given to adopting the promotion of community cohesion as part of the criteria for funding.

### 11.0 Housing

- 11.1 Given the significant problems of multiple-deprivation and social exclusion that Leicester faces, plus the problems of disrepair particularly in the private sector, the performance of the Housing department in recent years can be seen as a source of encouragement for the Council and its communities. Its achievements include:
- being one of only ten housing authorities to achieve "A" grades for four successive years;
  - An "excellent" Best Value rating for services to Homeless people;
  - Beacon Council status for Housing Repairs and Maintenance in 2000.
- 11.2 Our study of the various strategies and policies produced by the Housing Department also confirms high standards set and achieved both in terms of mainstream services and in seeking innovative solutions to housing and housing related problems. For example, the Refugee Housing Strategy produced in 2002 is believed to be one of the first in the country. Similarly, the success of the BLISS (Beaumont Leys Independent Support Service) project providing tenancy sustainment support linked to Sure Start and Single Regeneration Budget programme (SRB5). Following a positive evaluation of this scheme by the University of Leicester, the plan is to rollout the project City wide – focussing on tenants from excluded communities and other minority groups.
- 11.3 Other positive initiatives include the introduction of seven new Community Development Workers to support established tenant associations and develop new ones under the Tenants Compact. Similarly, the BME Housing Strategy for Leicester launched last year in partnership with other key housing partners and work with the Leicester Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre to address needs within these communities. Both are examples of the positive contribution the Housing Service is making to the wider agenda in Leicester.
- 11.4 That said, the pattern of residential settlement by ethnic grouping in Leicester is not significantly different to that other cities with a large a BME population. Of the City's 28 wards, seven have an ethnic minority population in excess of 50%. Apart from these concentrations ethnic groups are distributed across the City. However, six outer area wards have 5% or less ethnic minority households and a further four wards have 10% or less BME households. It should be stressed that patterns of settlement – particularly in wards surrounding the City Centre is constantly changing with these communities becoming more mixed in terms of ethnic origin. There is also a trend amongst all communities towards middle-class migration out of the City into adjoining County Districts.
- 11.5 Leicester is also home to new emerging communities from a wide range of backgrounds including – Somali, Montserratian, Bosnian, Kosovan, Turkish and Afghanistani. By and large these communities have settled in the inner city through there has been some settlement on outer estates. More long standing communities – in particular the Irish and Chinese – should not be overlooked, or the City's students and communities of Gypsies and Travellers.
- 11.6 Patterns of residential concentration in Leicester cut across wider underlying housing issues.

In the view of the Housing Service:

- without intervention, over 50% of the Council's housing stock will have one or more defective elements by 2010;

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

- the backlog of private sector housing repairs is estimated at £420 million;
- demand for large four and five bedroom houses far outstrip availability;
- there is an overall shortage of affordable housing – it is estimated that 600 new affordable units will be required each year;
- different communities experience different housing outcomes – a breakdown of households unsuitably housed by ethnicity reveals:
  - 25.4% of Black households
  - 23.4% of Asian households
  - 9.8% of White households
- 43% of households who need to move into affordable housing are from BME communities;
- illustrating the pressure on housing resources, people from abroad represented 17% of all applications to the Council's Housing Register during the last year;
- the incidence of homelessness is increasing in the city.

11.7 In our community workshops on the outer estates some residents felt that their communities had not fared well in terms of housing improvement investment and came second to the needs of new communities. These views persist despite past, current and proposed future investment in housing improvements on the outer estates. Further, despite the efforts of the Council, Police and other agencies to tackle racist incidents and anti-social behaviour on outer estates, many inner city BME residents expressed reluctance to move into these areas, where they felt un-welcomed and unsafe. On the other hand, not all BME participants expressed negative views concerning ethnic residential concentration in the City's inner wards. This was also seen as a source of community, closeness to friends, families and places of worship, shops and community organisations.

### Priority Issues for the Future

- (1) the Housing Service should continue to monitor and evaluate its service ensuring that its policies and practices in no way contribute to sustaining existing residential concentrations within the city and that different communities have real and realistic housing choices.
- (2) working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private developers further consideration should be given to how new residential housing developments can attract residents from all communities – this should include BME led RSLs;
- (3) the location of new purpose built student accommodation within the City should also be considered a potential factor in helping to promote community cohesion.
- (4) the overall trend in Leicester is towards population drift out of the City – particularly amongst the middle class and upwardly mobile socio-economic groups. Consideration should be given to how these and other groups may be attracted back into the city centre and inner city.

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

- (5) any community cohesion communications strategy for the City will need to consider how negative perceptions and misinformation amongst different communities may be tackled.

### 12.0 Education

- 12.1 Reports into the disturbances in northern towns and cities found that the residential concentration along ethnic lines also determined the ethnic make-up of schools and contributed to the wider process of different communities leading 'parallel lives' that rarely touched at any point.
- 12.2 We would strongly endorse the findings of these reports that where primary and secondary school pupils are largely separated on ethnic and religious lines there is little chance of different communities coming to know, value or respect each other's culture or religion. Schools are in many respects at the core of the issue of community cohesion. Through shared experience peer groups are formed, diluting tendencies towards exclusively ethnic or religious groups. Rather than parallel or separate lives, the shared experience of different ethnic groups being educated together is about genuine diversity, of different communities trusting and respecting each other.
- 12.3 According to the 1991 census 28.5% of Leicester's population come from BME communities and nearly 45% of pupils belong to minority ethnic groups. We found that the ethnic make up of primary and secondary schools in Leicester broadly reflected residential concentrations, though was not as stark. The schools in the inner city are predominantly made up of BME pupils, while a number of schools on the outer estates are predominately white. However, recent statistics suggest more BME pupils are attending schools in outer city locations – schools that are culturally diverse. The recent arrival of Somali families from the EU, adding over 900 children - 2% to the school population - has increased this trend.
- 12.4 In contrast to the pattern of multiple deprivation in similar cities, schools in Leicester's inner city by and large achieve better key stage and GCSE's results for pupils than schools on the outer estates. Voluntary sector representatives and residents in inner city areas were particularly insistent that attainment levels reflected not only the quality of the schools but the emphasis placed by parents on 'a good education', and additional parental investment in private, out of school tuition. Nevertheless, the OFSTED inspection of 1999 found that at least four ethnic groups – Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Gypsy Traveller children - were not improving.
- 12.5 Most BME pupils and students we spoke to stressed the importance of contact with different communities. However, when pressed, most pupils admitted that there were few opportunities for contact with other groups either through school, extra-curriculum or other activities. Most pupils placed educational attainment above the benefits of attending a mixed school. This view was supported by parents, some of whom also stressed the need for the LEA to embrace and support the development of religious schools.
- 12.6 In our consultation with voluntary sector representatives and residents on an outer estate, opinion was far more hostile to the quality of schools and LEA plans for the future. Resident's thought that the quality of their schools were in general poor. They were also hostile to some of their secondary schools being closed – blighting their communities – and did not understand proposals being considered by the Council to site a new City Academy in their area, although the idea of a school coming back into the vicinity seemed attractive. Faced with the choice of where to send their children, they were increasingly opting for schools in neighbouring outer area wards or in adjoining districts outside the city.
- 12.7 The overall picture therefore is of BME parents resident in the inner city sending their children to local schools. If there is an emergent trend, it is towards more affluent, middle class BME parents migrating to more prosperous areas outside the city where children attend local

schools. Parents on the city's outer areas and estates send their children to local and other outer city schools or to schools outside and adjoining the city.

- 12.8 In light of the above observations it needs to be said that Leicester City Council has only recently taken over responsibility for education with the advent of Unitary Status in April 1997. In the intervening period the LEA has built upon earlier initiatives of the County Council and introduced a comprehensive range of initiatives intended to improve parental involvement and attainment levels. Race equality standards are also being tackled under the 'Young, Gifted and Equal' programme. There is little doubt that this policy approach represents a major step forward, but it is as yet too early to assess its impact.

### **Priority Issues for the future**

- (1) Very little can be done in the short to medium term to tackle residential concentrations along ethnic lines and the extent to which this translates into similar concentrations within schools. We would certainly not propose 'bussing' pupils across the city as a solution to this problem. Almost everyone we spoke to, Councillors, senior officers and residents, thought that this option would cause more problems than it resolved. However, because many schools in the inner city are full and some BME pupils are forced to travel across the city - particularly the newly arrived Dutch Somali pupils - many schools are becoming more mixed.
- (2) As recommended by the Cattle and other reports, consideration should be given to ensuring that existing schools converting to specialist schools attract pupils from all cultural groups. The same approach should apply where new specialist schools, centres of excellence or academies are being considered. This is not to challenge the view that new schools should be at the heart of their local communities. It is to say that such schools also need to look beyond their immediate localities, be prepared to address wider needs and ensure that they are open and welcoming to all groups.
- (3) In promoting community cohesion, a great deal of emphasis will need to be placed on encouraging contact and inter-action between schools at pupil, teacher, governor and parental levels. This might be promoted through 'twinning' schools dominated by different ethnic groups or promoting 'clusters' or 'federations' of such schools. Shared activities could involve sport, arts, music, dance, drama, projects, outings and - where feasible - link up with out of school youth focused activities through the Life Long Learning Programme.
- (4) A citizenship course, incorporating awareness of different cultures and faiths, could be introduced in schools from key stage 1. Leicester could lead the way nationally in this respect and in developing a community cohesion standard for schools.
- (5) More emphasis will also need to be placed on recruiting teachers from BME communities in general and particularly in outer area schools. Consideration could also be given to staff exchanges between inner and outer city schools. It might also be possible to arrange secondments to extend opportunities for longer-term placements.
- (6) The LEA will need to be clear and firm on all Governing Boards adopting a multi-cultural and multi-faith approach to managing LEA schools. This applies as much to predominately white outer estates schools as to schools serving ethnic minority groups in the inner city.



## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

- (7) The LEA will at some time in the future have to determine a policy in respect of extending the scope of religious schools. We would suggest that the key issue in this debate is not so much whether or not the range of religious schools should be extended but the criteria by which such schools are governed – in particular whether they will accept pupils of other faiths and pursue a policy that values and respect other cultures.

### 13.0 Employment

- 13.1 Black and Asian staff make up over 20% of the City Council's workforce. While this high in comparison with other authorities, it does not reflect the overall percentage of Leicester's BME population. Staff from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities are particularly under-represented, as are BME staff and women at senior management levels.
- 13.2 We found that there were mixed views about working for the Council. Those outside the Council focus on opportunities to access a route to a career. Those within the workforce were more concerned with career progression and promotional opportunities.
- 13.3 The City Council has taken steps to address overall and specific under-representation in its workforce. Management guidelines on recruitment and retention have been revised and 'balanced recruitment panels' introduced.
- 13.4 A briefing pack for managers on race equality issues has also been developed by the Council. This is a positive tool that highlights areas of improvement and development training for staff with a focus upon valuing diversity. Other examples of good practice include:
- A black employee's development programme;
  - ASPIRE – Actions to support and promote initiatives resulting in equality;
  - Women into management;
  - A recruitment strategy within the Youth service to develop existing staff through training and to attract young black people
- 13.5 However, staff interviewed expressed concern regarding the effectiveness of some of these initiatives – particularly in respect of enabling women, Asian and Black employee to progress to senior management posts.
- 13.6 The Council has also taken a series of steps to ensure that equality and diversity is at the core or mainstream of what the Council does – in relation to both employment and delivering services sensitive to the needs of different communities. Interviews with staff highlighted the role of the Chief Executive in chairing the Corporate Race Equality Group, which provides an opportunity to discuss issues and drive forward initiatives. However, there were a number of concerns, including:
- the view that implementation of the Council's equality policy is patchy across departments;
  - that good practice in some departments is not always shared with others;
  - that addressing inequality as it affects women, ethnic minorities, disability and other groups can cause friction between staff.
- 13.7 The Council is currently undergoing a Best Value Review that should explore room for improvement in its HR strategies. Attention could be given to initiatives that make the Council more attractive to young people e.g. work tasters. This is an area that could be developed through Connexions.
- 13.8 Leicester constabulary has its own recruitment drive aimed particularly at BME communities. The police acknowledge that each group has a different perspective of the police. But by coming in and experiencing the station, and the way they work, people get first hand experience of what the Police are about. This in turn helps the force break down cultural

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

barriers. The Leicestershire force is holding seminars and open evenings designed to appeal to the BME groups. Targeting recruitment of 500 'specials' including 50 from the BME groups is a long-term objective. The force is committed to addressing issues openly and honestly. This is a positive step that the Council may wish to adopt.

- 13.9 With regard to service delivery, 56% of those polled in the 2001 Leicester Residents' Mori Survey agreed with the statement that the quality of Council Services is good overall. Significantly, satisfaction levels were highest amongst Asian residents and residents in social class AB (managerial/professional) – both 65%. At 42%, satisfaction was lowest amongst Black residents. In addition, when asked if they thought Leicester City Council treats all people fairly, support was highest amongst members of the Asian community (58%), and considerably lower amongst White residents (32%). In overall terms, satisfaction levels compare well against a national trend of decline in levels of satisfaction with local government services. However, these findings do indicate that the Council has some way to go in sensitising its service delivery to different ethnic and social groups.

### Economy

- 13.10 Unemployment in the City remains relatively high when compared to the national average. National data also indicates that unemployment is most likely to be highest amongst the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. People we spoke to on the City's outer estates were also concerned about unemployed and disaffected youth and stressed the need to explore confidence and skill building programmes to encourage these young people to engage in the Labour Market.
- 13.11 Concern was also expressed about prospects for the long-term unemployed. Locally based solutions were most favoured. People wanted to see training available for local people to improve their employment opportunities and encourage businesses to set up and grow. Low pay was an issue for many and it was felt that more emphasis should be given to helping local people to find secure fairly paid work.
- 13.12 *'To remain competitive, it is vital that companies invest in training and development, the knowledge of their workforce, innovation, diversification and e-commerce offer new opportunities for the clothing and textile sector, and new skills are needed if companies are to succeed.'* (Paul Gates General Secretary, KFAT)
- 13.13 An Economic Development group has been established, membership of which include Council Officers and community representatives. The purpose of this group is to work with the community and look at ways of dealing with issues of poverty and unemployment and to ensure that people are trained to take up jobs or self-employment opportunities. Positive developments are at an early stage, but include:
- A construction based Intermediate Labour Market initiative, that brings together training providers and employers with the aim of meeting the challenge of providing the construction sector with a skilled labour force for the many large capital projects.
  - A work based learning textile initiative with Jobcentre plus.
  - Overseas graduate initiatives funded through the Lottery, NIACE, ESF and SRB.
  - At Beaumont Leys a volunteering project tackling confidence building and portfolio development.
- 13.14 The Leicester Shire Economic Partnership (LSEP) was established in Autumn 2001. Its purpose is to work on behalf of Leicester and Leicestershire with the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) to promote economic prosperity, quality of life and social

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

inclusion. The LSEP is preparing an economic regeneration strategy for the sub-region, setting out its vision and priorities for the next ten years. The vision is to:

- Help reduce present inequalities between differing parts of areas
- Improve the quality of built and rural environment
- Extend capacity to celebrate the sub-region's great diversity

The 10 year strategy will focus on:

- Building upon ethnic mix and richness of cultural diversity
- Giving people the confidence to develop and better use their talents and abilities
- Enable graduates to stay in the area because of the variety of jobs on offer
- Become a centre of excellence through the quality of education and training
- Create a strong enterprise culture
- Increase family incomes through higher wage rates
- Have a broad range of innovative businesses which are at the cutting edge of technology
- Support the transfer of research ideas from the universities in to business opportunities
- Maximise the use of development sites
- Promote quality buildings and community spaces through sensitive design
- Reduce the gap between deprived and wealthy communities

13.15 Leicester is also benefiting from a government initiative to provide Information Technology Learning Centres across Britain. The City Council in partnership with the Voluntary sector have led bids resulting in refurbished centres and equipment upgrades enabling access to the Internet. The target groups are unemployed people, low paid workers who have few or no ICT skills and adults not previously engaged in learning.

13.16 Some community centres within different areas of Leicester have over the years developed and progressed to offering a full range of life long learning and community development services. This is a strength in Leicester that needs to be explored and collaborative working encouraged, to look at skills development, work tasters and work shadowing.

13.17 Employment opportunities such as Bede Island, the Business Park and the space centre are all key routes to engaging young people.

13.18 A network of Partnerships exist across Leicester. However, there is an issue of the capacity of different communities to engage. Young people in particular need skills and support to participate in such partnerships – whether in the inner city or outer estates. People interviewed felt that this issue could be addressed in the following ways:

- Encourage people's potential through recruiting to new projects and ensuring that the workforce is diverse
- Create positive action teacher training programmes
- Review and evaluate the Employment Service strands
- Review the impact of the Connexions service although it is still new in Leicester
- Create employment and training schemes that lead to real jobs
- Ensure local input in Key Initiatives on inner and outer estates to ensure a real difference is made
- Explore programmes of engagement for young men aged 19-25 years on inner and outer estates
- Create local employer forums

### Priority Issues for the Future

- (1) The Council should explore the Employer Organisations National Graduate Development Programme for Local Government. The purpose of this initiative is to develop high quality managers for local Councils. The Council should also seek to be more attractive to graduates from the City's two Universities and its colleges.
- (2) More emphasis within the Council on:
  - Celebrating success in Human Resources (HR)
  - Promoting Leicester Council as an employer
  - Looking at succession planning
  - Developing mechanisms to credit individual skills/experience
  - Addressing under-representation of women and BME employees at senior management levels
  - Addressing under-representation of Pakistani, Bengali and African Caribbean staff
  - Sharing good practice on equality between departments
  - Staff training in delivering culturally sensitive services that respond to the needs of all communities
- (3) We found that there are tensions within the Council's workforce around issues of equality and how policy in this respect should be implemented. The Council should consider regular surveys of staff views and tackle concerns through its internal communications strategy.

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

### 14.0 Community Safety and Policing

14.1 The commitment of the City Council and its partners to tackling community cohesion issues through addressing community safety, crime and policing is set out in the Leicester Partnership Against Crime and Disorder Strategy. The structure of the Partnership ensures the involvement of key agencies either through the main forum or through a number of Action Groups focusing on each of the Strategic Priorities.

14.2 Whilst the overall trend in recorded crime is downwards and at a faster rate than comparable national figures, of particular note within the strategy is an increase in recorded racist incidents - 219 in 1998/99 compared to 640 in 2000/01 and 595 for the first 9 months of 2001/02. Similarly an increase in racially aggravated crime between 2000/01 and 2001/02, matched by an increase in detection rates. Reflecting these trends, the Mori Residents Survey for 2001 found that Asian residents were particularly concerned about verbal and physical threats and attacks because of the colour, ethnicity or religion. Black residents also expressed high levels of concerns on similar grounds.

14.3 In considering these statistics, it should be noted that the Police have made a great deal of effort to make it easier to report racist incidents and to persuade communities that such incidents will be taken seriously. An example of this is arrangements put in place after September 11<sup>th</sup> to assist Muslim women in reporting racist behaviour.

Other priorities for the Police are:

- youth crime and vandalism
- drugs
- burglary
- road safety

14.4 Beyond the published strategy, our community workshops also identified concerns around the fear of crime, anti-social behaviour, and a desire to see more local/visible policing. However, the overall impression was of a high degree of satisfaction with the Police Service. Certainly there was an acknowledgement that the Police were keen to engage locally and work with community representatives. There was also an acknowledgement that the Police have tried to tailor their services to meet local needs. In April 2002, Leicestershire Constabulary re-structured from five Policing Areas to four, whilst maintaining the same number of Local Policing Units. The changes were introduced to provide clearer working arrangements with Local Authority partners and were also aimed at enhancing community based policing. In addition, motorcycle patrols have been increased in parts of the City. A further interesting example is the proposed police office to be incorporated within the proposed Health and Social Care Centre at Braunstone. This arose from an extensive community consultation programme under the New Deal for Communities initiative.

14.5 This positive view is reinforced by discussions with the Police themselves, both locally and at Headquarters. The impression formed is of a Force that is aware of and sensitive to the multi-cultural/ multi-faith nature of Leicester, as exemplified by the Multi cultural evening held annually by the Chief Constable to thank members from diverse ethnic groups for the help and support they have given. Also various projects with partners targeted at youth e.g. 'Taking Art and Sport to Everyone' (TASTE) and an anti-racist educational video pack. Of particular note was the specialist unit at Headquarters where officers with operational experience provided guidance and support to the front-line on priority areas or newly emerging issues e.g. community cohesion, domestic violence and homophobia. The Unit also maintains its own contact list of people in the community who they would regularly consult on policing matters relevant to the work of the Unit.

### **Priority Issues for the Future**

- (1) The key issue is the under-representation of BME officers and staff. Figures for 2001 show that only 4.6% of actual operational strength came from BME officers and there were none above the rank of Superintendent. Only 8.4% of the Special Constabulary and 6.2% of Support Staff came from BME communities. All Police Forces have been set targets by the Home Office for levels of ethnic minority representation and a recruitment drive is currently underway. The initiative is supported by a multi-agency group from schools, colleges and different communities to ensure wide and targeted coverage. The recruitment drive comes at an opportune time given the Police Authority's decision to recruit an additional 122 constables - County wide - over the next 4 years. These officers will be solely deployed to work as community police officers.

### 15.0 Health and Social Care

15.1 This service area within the City Council has adopted a very positive and committed approach to issues that impact upon the Community Cohesion agenda. Externally their work has been acknowledged positively, for example by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) inspection of Mental Health Services last year, which reported 'evidence of a high degree of sensitivity amongst fieldworkers to the cultural and other equality needs of service users'. In addition, there are examples of where the Service has embraced joined up thinking and working with other Departments and Agencies. These include Early Years work, Health Care and new communities. In parallel, there appears to be a strong ethos within the Department itself to embrace diversity and equality issues positively and to contribute to Community Cohesion.

15.2 Much of the pioneering work appears to have emerged from the creation of the Leicester Health Action Zone in 1999 which focuses on eight neighbourhoods experiencing the greatest deprivation - Belgrave, Braunstone, Greater Humberstone, Highfields, North West Leicester, St Matthews, Saffron and New Parks. Of particular note is the partnership work with the various Health agencies, for example the work with Leicester City Primary Care Trust (PCT) on planning for the Health & Social Care Centre in Braunstone.

*" The whole concept of the scheme and its principle functional content was determined by the local community. It will be owned by the local community and requires new ways of working by the statutory and other agencies who will be tenants or sub-tenants in, and provide services from, the new building." (Executive Summary)*

15.3 Similarly the development of local forums for early years and other services to children which are all based in areas of deprivation including Beaumont Leys, Saffron Lane, Belgrave, St Matthews, New Parks. There is also a commitment to better integration of health care workers generally within a new structured service based on three planned Health & Social Care Centres, supported by six Primary Care Centres with GP services as the third level. Certainly the evidence appears to support a move towards a far more local or neighbourhood service on a partnership basis, across the City, with particular focus on the outer areas.

15.4 This commitment to partnership working is further evident in the Department's input into the Leicestershire Health Authority's annual report - 'Addressing Health Inequalities in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.' The report gives additional prominence to the health needs of excluded groups by the inclusion of a specific section in the Local Health Improvement Programme. Such steps allow real focus on neighbourhoods and their needs and also identify the requirement for further provision - for example the recent work to examine the feasibility of establishing an integrated interpretation and translation service across all agencies.

15.5 Other examples in the field of Health & Social care include:

- increasing funding to voluntary sector groups meeting the service needs of ethnic minority users;
- co-ordinating the 'Communities in Chorus' conference in January 2002, which looked at providing quality social care services in an ethnically diverse city;
- the use of 'Black Case Panels' to ensure that issues of race, culture, language are fully considered in work with children and young people;
- greater focus to children's heritage and cultural needs through the Heritage Model which allows staff to explore with service users, the various aspects of their individual heritage, what this means to them and how it will influence the services they need -



the aim being to move away from service responses based on assumptions about minority groups and focus on particular needs of individuals.

### **Priorities for the Future**

- (1) The City Council and two City Primary Care Trusts recognise that significant health inequalities exist between the City and rest of England and Wales, and between different social and ethnic groups and areas of the City. For example, the rate of emergency admissions of older people to hospital, the proportion of low-weight babies, life expectancy for women but particularly men, and coronary heart disease amongst the Asian community. It is also recognised that the incidence of ill-health is related to multiple-deprivation, which affects a significant proportion of the City's population. These problems are further complicated by the arrival of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from EU countries with additional needs in respect of language and other support in accessing services. We have already highlighted many examples of initiatives with the City to bring services closer to local communities and identify local needs. Nevertheless, further consideration should be given to monitoring service take-up, promoting and facilitating access across existing and emerging communities.
- (2) Work is already underway to attract more ethnic minority health care workers. Until this is achieved it should remain a priority.
- (3) Health Education tailored to particular schools is also seen as an area that could assist in reducing health inequalities.

### 16.0 Culture and Leisure

- 16.1 'Diverse City' – Leicester's first Cultural Strategy sets out a challenging vision for the development of cultural life in Leicester in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is a vision in which 'cultural diversity' is seen as 'one of the City's overwhelming strengths and defining characteristics' and where 'cultural difference can be celebrated, cultural heritages and traditions ...understood and valued'. It is also a vision in which cultural activity is seen as a means of tackling social disadvantage, revitalising neighbourhoods, regenerating the City and helping to reinforce Leicester's position as the cultural and economic hub of the surrounding County.
- 16.2 Compared to other cities, Leicester has a good record in celebrating cultural diversity. Its Diwali celebrations are considered the largest outside India. Its African-Caribbean Carnival is the largest in the UK outside Notting Hill. Moreover, on an everyday level, the cosmopolitan character of the City is expressed in its shops, restaurants, fashion, music, arts as well as its mosques, temples and churches.
- 16.3 We found that people's leisure, sporting and cultural activities tended to be centred on their local neighbourhoods and reflected the cultural make up of local areas. For example, schools pupils in the Highfields area when asked where they went for sports and other leisure activities cited venues in the Highfields and Belgrave. However, young people from these communities did visit the City Centre for shopping, to meet friends and for a night out. The Leicester City Barometer Survey, undertaken in 1998, supports these impressions. It found that while a significant proportion of the City's population visited the City Centre for a weekday or weekend night out, the majority preferred to remain in their neighbourhood.
- 16.4 Most people we spoke to agreed that festivals celebrating diversity was important. Black and Asian respondents stressed the importance of festivals to their quality of life. It was one of the reasons why they identified with the City and thought Leicester a better place to live. However, the feeling was that while events like the Diwali, Navratri and Vaisakhi celebrations attracted people from their respective communities both locally and from other cities, they did not attract significant numbers of white and other visitors from the wider local population. Events like the Belgrave Mela, the African Caribbean Carnival and One Big Sunday were thought to be far more successful in this respect.
- 16.5 While celebrating diversity was thought to be important in its own right, not all were convinced it contributed to greater knowledge and understanding between Leicester's different ethnic and faith communities. This theme was also identified in the preliminary findings of Leicester's University Research into the Future of the City with some Asian respondents expressing concern that multi-culturalism in Leicester could be seen in terms of 'lights', 'steelbands' and 'samosas'; that it was superficial and failed to address the life chances of people who live in the city. In the words of an African Caribbean Voluntary Sector Manager:
- 'The way that race is generally publicised doesn't necessarily sit with the realities of some individuals, groups and organisations. That's not to say what is published is an untruth. Its more about how it permeates through to communities; their receiving of the policies and practices is somewhat different to what is out there in the media and the wider domain'.*
- 16.6 In relation to sporting events, a number of people noted that it was not normal to see significant numbers of Asian or black spectators at football or cricket matches involving City and County teams – except where India, Pakistan or the West Indies played the County at cricket. Moreover, while cricket and football were popular games amongst local Black and Asian youth, players from these ethnic groups were yet to come through to City and County teams.

- 16.7 The pattern of local people remaining within their local neighbourhoods for leisure, sport and cultural activities is also repeated on the outer estates. Where people visited the City Centre it was mostly for shopping. In both interviews and focus groups with local residents the cost of transport was frequently mentioned as a reason for not visiting the City Centre – particularly for family events. Charges for sporting and leisure activities were also identified as a factor in the take up and use of sporting and leisure facilities. But there was also a wider issue of how the cultural direction of the City is perceived. In the words of one interviewee:

*'Would the sort of cultural sector being proposed by the City in its Cultural strategy interest people from the outer estates and the surrounding county? They will not feel part of it and drift away to other cities, which is already the trend'.*

### Priority Issues for the future

- (1) There is richness and depth to cultural diversity in Leicester. In part this is a consequence of the cultural resources and capacity of Leicester's long settled BME communities, but it also the result of the local authority and other agencies promoting the celebration of cultural and religious differences. Nevertheless, it is difficult to avoid the impression that celebrating cultural diversity has come to be widely perceived as celebrating Black and Ethnic Minority cultures, festivals and faiths and that insufficient emphasis has been given to the heritage and traditions of communities in the City's outer areas.
- (2) There is also concern that many of the major events intended to celebrate the cultural diversity of the city, while important in their own right, are largely mono-cultural events and do not contribute significantly to promoting a wider understanding of different cultures and faiths. No one we interviewed suggested that the current approach to celebrating cultural diversity should be abandoned. However, it was suggested that consideration should be given to promoting more cultural and sporting events that attract participants – in particular youth - from all communities.
- (3) Most communities remain within their local areas or neighbourhoods for sporting and leisure activities reflecting rather than helping to defuse wider social and residential divisions within the city along ethnic lines. The City Council has already taken steps to ensure that its sporting and leisure facilities are accessible to all. Nevertheless, it was accepted that a great deal more could be done through marketing, pricing and the range of activities offered to attract users from all communities.
- (4) A great deal is already being done to tackle racism in football and to attract BME supporters to matches of the City's football team. Similar initiatives should be considered in respect of other mainstream sports including the need to develop and promote local talent.
- (5) Perhaps the single biggest challenge facing the City is the need to engage its outer areas communities - and communities in the County beyond - in its Vision for the City as the cultural and leisure hub of the larger region. Surveys commissioned by the City Council have already identified the attraction of other major cities in the East and West Midlands. Public transport services and costs as well as charges for City Council sporting and leisure activities have also been identified as barriers to these communities visiting the City Centre and using Council facilities. However, there is a question against the extent to which communities in the outer areas of the City and surrounding areas in the County perceive the Vision for the future of the City as recognising their heritage and traditions or positively value them as significant users and contributors. This is not to challenge the thrust of the City's Cultural Strategy,

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

which we found to be inclusive at both a strategic and neighbourhood level across different cultures and communities of interest. Nevertheless, in implementing the Cultural Strategy – particularly attention should be given to positively engaging and holding the interests of communities in the City's outer and surrounding areas.

### 17.0 Regeneration and Revitalising Communities

17.1 Regeneration is seen as one of the key priorities for Leicester, particularly in tackling issues of social exclusion and deprivation. Indeed, whilst the launch of the Leicester Regeneration Agency in 1999 was seen as the vehicle to co-ordinate physical and social regeneration in Leicester and to provide a citywide framework for the delivery of regeneration programmes, progress since then has mirrored Central Government's agenda of using regeneration as a means by which economic development and revitalising areas are approached in a joined-up way so that the beneficiaries of regeneration programmes include those groups who traditionally are excluded or who have been by-passed from the benefits of such programmes.

17.2 In that context Leicester City Council, together with its partners, have been successful in recent years in the development of a citywide framework for regeneration activity. A major tool in developing this planning framework is 'The Atlas of Social and Economic Conditions in Leicester' which maps deprivation by income, qualifications, health and other social exclusion indicators. In addition to identifying deprived neighbourhoods, the Atlas identifies neighbourhoods on the edge of deprivation – areas where preventative work is needed. The mapping exercise also includes survey information on the priorities of local residents.

17.3 The scope of regeneration activity within the City ranges from large scale, high profile projects e.g. the National Space Science Centre, through to a range of community-based programmes. Linked to this the City has been able to attract significant regeneration funding from the Single Regeneration Budget, New Deal for Communities, New Opportunities Fund, City Challenge and others – valued at over £120M over the next 5-10years.

17.4 Indeed the extent and range of coverage across the City is helpfully highlighted in the October 2002 issue of Leicester Link. Within the City Centre, underway or planned are projects such as:

- an expansion of the Shires;
- proposals for a £58M cultural quarter;
- refurbishment of the historic Leicester Market;
- restoration of New Walk;
- new residential and business development.

Beyond the City Centre the regeneration programmes and projects continue:

- £49M New Deal for Communities funding in Braunstone providing a new leisure centre, a new health and social care centre and refurbished homes;
- A new residential "riverside" development at Bede Island;
- Children's Fund schemes at Beaumont Leys, New Parks, Saffron, Braunstone, St Matthews and other areas;
- Sure Start projects in a number of outer areas including Saffron and Highfields.

Also a number of citywide programmes including:

- Free internet access at all Community Libraries by Dec 2002;

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

- Safer routes to schools:
- Improved sports and arts facilities in schools.

17.5 Certainly the current and future Regeneration programmes across the City, and the range of Partnerships established to support the work, offers Leicester significant opportunities for the future. However, the need for such a comprehensive approach is clearly evident when set against the context of Leicester's communities:

- skill levels across the City are generally well below those across the rest of the sub-region;
- unemployment levels are nearly 3 times those of the County - 7% of the workforce;
- 13 of Leicester's 28 wards are among the most deprived 10% in England:
- in some deprived communities there remains a strong belief that the Council, and other public sector agencies have ignored them, or have failed them. In some areas this is a historic perception, in others it is still the view.

The Community Plan highlights:

*'Many in our communities are being left behind by the speed of economic change. This is creating unemployment, poverty, outdated skills and poor health. Many people face additional disadvantage and social exclusion because they are disabled, have a long-term illness, are older, have mental health problems, have caring responsibilities or are socially isolated. More than half of Leicester's population live in areas that are classified as being among the 10% most deprived in the country. We need to embrace the future and look to develop jobs and new modern industries to ensure that everyone prospers in the 21st Century.'*

17.6 Within the context of Community Cohesion, self evidently the success of the overall regeneration strategy and the constituent programmes are of critical importance. Failure to ensure that the range of current and planned programmes directly benefit and engage with those people and communities that feel they have been left behind will, at best, be a missed opportunity and at worst, will likely be a trigger point for community tension. Thus the importance of targets such as that within the Regeneration Strategy, which states that, no ward will be within the 10% most deprived in the country by 2020 is essential. Furthermore the strong emphasis on community engagement in local areas and citywide community planning is equally essential.

17.7 Indeed, one of the key issues to be addressed is the view that some areas, and thereby, some communities, benefit more from regeneration projects than others. On the evidence available to us it is difficult to sustain this argument. Certainly the coverage of targeted funding e.g. the Single Regeneration Budget, is widespread. When this is overlaid by mainstream funding of the City Council and funding from other agencies e.g. Health and the Police, coverage across the City appears fairly comprehensive. Of course, there will always be a debate about the relative level of resources directed towards particular areas, but on a baseline position it is hard to see any sizeable area of the City, which is untouched by the range of regeneration projects underway or planned. Here again effective communication of these plans may be where difficulties arise.

17.8 Our work to date suggests that there is still some way for the City Council, and other agencies to go in terms of effective engagement with communities. That's not to say that it is uniformly poor. There are clear examples of very effective and innovative projects where communities are not only engaged but have taken a leading role. Some of the work in Braunstone through the Braunstone Community Association working with the Health Authority and Social Services are testimony to this. Similarly the leading role that the St Matthews Community Association has played in their neighbourhood has provided positive outcomes. However, all too frequently in our discussions with community representatives, other agencies, voluntary organisations, or ordinary members of the public, examples were given or criticism aired of situations where statutory agencies, and in particular the City Council had failed to engage in a manner that suggested others were seen as partners and their views were to be valued. It is perhaps here that the Council faces its greatest challenge to addressing community cohesion through regeneration as well as mainstream programmes.

17.9 Such comments should not come as a surprise to the City Council, indeed the driving force behind the launch of *'Revitalising Neighbourhoods'* is an acknowledgement that the whole issue of community engagement and the need for more responsive, better focussed local services that address local needs has to be one of the City Council's top priorities for the immediate future. The recent Comprehensive Performance Self Assessment (CPA) stated that:

*'A more "bottom up" approach geared to developing a local neighbourhood focus, giving local people a stronger stake and voice in the future of their community and facilitating local joined up service delivery throughout the City is now underway as part of the Revitalising Neighbourhoods project.'*

17.10 That the City Council, at a political and executive level, is committed to the *'Revitalising Neighbourhoods'* is not in question - it is referred to constantly in strategies, business plans and public statements. It has the personal endorsement of both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and it is recognised as a fundamental part of the change agenda that the City Council is now pursuing. Furthermore, it is also clear that Council staff, particularly those charged with taking forward the project, are enthused and committed to its successful implementation. However, in virtually all our discussions with community organisations, there were questions raised or criticisms expressed about the Project. Issues raised or comments made included:

- *don't understand it;*
- *not consulted on it;*
- *consulted but views not addressed;*
- *arrangements have been pre-determined - ability to influence the plans minimal;*
- *uncertainty as to how the proposals, particularly the Neighbourhood Forums, would "sit" with existing forums, partnerships, etc;*
- *uncertainty about the role of Neighbourhood Co-ordinators;*
- *criticism that appointment of Neighbourhood Co-ordinators has taken place without community involvement;*
- *no real "power" to communities envisaged e.g. minimal direct budget control;*
- *concern that new arrangements would weaken the effectiveness of existing structures;*
- *the new forums would be dominated by the Council;*

17.11 Whilst some of this criticism is no doubt unfair or misplaced, the fact that these perceptions exist in most of the communities we visited (and indeed were also aired by other organisations - statutory and voluntary) must give cause for concern to the City Council. *'Revitalising Neighbourhoods'* is a key "flagship" initiative within the overall plans of the City Council. It is

also likely to become a cornerstone of any effective Community Cohesion strategy. Put simply, if *'Revitalising Neighbourhoods'* succeeds in its stated aims, it will be a very powerful statement of the Council's commitment to strengthening 'our multi-cultural and multi-faith city' and fulfilling the objective of 'building a city where everyone has a place at the table'. However, if it fails, not only will it reinforce some of the community views and prejudices that led to its introduction but is likely to have damaged those existing arrangements which are seen to be effective.

- 17.12 The response to this issue may simply be one of improving communication, particularly two-way, and listening to and responding to feedback. One of the big motivations for local people to become active and stay active is that they need to believe they will have a high degree of control and influence. On this issue, two quotes from our community workshops are worth highlighting:

*'There is a creative vein of people wanting to make a difference, wanting to engage in a productive dialogue and willing to sit around a table, listen, learn and contribute. But these people are not necessarily the types who are "turned on" or encouraged by the way the system currently operates. Many of them are rather shy of the system, perhaps feeling intimidated by it.'*

*'Making communities shine and be energised is what I understand revitalising communities is all about, so I would plead with you to be less timid in your plans and to give your excellent framework the start it deserves by rethinking the level of autonomy you give the Forums.'*

- 17.13 Certainly the role of the Neighbourhood Co-ordinators will be critical in order to 'provide a local interface between council services and the City's many communities' and to 'champion an ethos of customer care and citizen improvement.' We note the commitment to 'restructure frontline services to make them more responsive to local needs' and also 'to stimulate a change in organisational culture to sustain these changes' and would urge that these are progressed with speed under the direction of the new Corporate Director as they are vitally important to the success of the initiative.

### **Priority Issues for the Future:**

- (1) We found that Leicester's regenerating strategy is targeting resources at areas of greatest need in both the inner city and outer estates. Nevertheless, perceptions of being ignored or overlooked persist – particularly on the City's outer estates. It needs to be said that given the sheer number and complexity of different Government and EU regeneration programmes and funding, most Local Strategic Partnerships in areas with a high incidence of multi-deprivation experience difficulty in convincing local communities that the allocation of regeneration funding is both fair and transparent. As illustrated by an article in the October Issue of Leicester Link, the need to provide information on where regeneration and other funding has been invested, is already recognised by the City Council. These messages need to be consistent over time and part of a wider communications strategy based on public perceptions gained from past and current surveys. Such a strategy will also need to communicate why new resources are being targeted at a particular area and how and when similar problems will be addressed in other areas.
- (2) Communications would also appear to be a significant factor in the future effectiveness of the Council's Revitalising Neighbourhoods initiative. We found that where local people understood the initiative they were supportive of it. However, even where this was the case, local organisations remain to be convinced that the initiative would actually deliver its stated aims. Part of the problem in this respect is scepticism



## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

concerning the degree to which Neighbourhood Forums will be empowered to make real decisions affecting local areas. The Council will need to consider the degree to which budgets and decision-making is devolved to Neighbourhood Forums as the initiative develops. It will also need to consider placing greater emphasis on building the capacity of local people and organisations to participate – particularly on the City's outer estates.

- (3) Consideration will also need to be given to including community cohesion and addressing problems across local communities as criteria for funding regeneration projects.

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

### 18.0 Young People

- 18.1 Leicester City Council has recently developed an excellent first unified Youth Strategy incorporating many of the government's current themes and with a strong sense of promoting more cohesive communities. Three initiatives are particularly noteworthy: The Detached Youth Work Team - targeting neighbourhoods where young people congregate; The Youth Initiatives Project - empowering young people to creatively address youth issues; and the Youth Impact Project - youth-led evaluation of Leicester's services for youth. These, especially the latter, demonstrate an ability to go beyond the norm, and experiment with new ideas.
- 18.2 In addition Leicester City Council has produced a comprehensive first cultural strategy 'Diverse City - A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester', which positively inculcates a sense of pride and celebrating diversity within the city. This seems to have permeated through to all sectors within the city. Indeed the overwhelming majority of youth interviewed expressed 'diversity' as 'the most attractive feature' of Leicester and why they were proud to be from Leicester.
- 18.3 Leisure and Sport were key features of the Cattle and other reports into the recent disturbances in northern towns and cities. These were seen as areas of social activity that could effectively break down barriers, bring people together and engage youth positively. In this regard it is encouraging to see that Leicester has embarked upon a major programme of developing and improving Leisure and Sports facilities throughout the City. The City already has a strong traditional attachment to Sport. Indeed 48% of the city's population go to watch a sporting event at least once a month (Leicester City Barometer Survey 1998). The following major flagship projects are planned: Braunstone Sports Centre, Peepul Centre, Cultural Quarter and Highfields Indoor Sports Arena. In addition, sports facilities sited at six secondary schools are to be enhanced and offered to the community in a way that will help cement school/community relationships. Moreover, Leicester City Football Club, in conjunction with Foxes Against Racism, has launched an initiative to try and involve and increase the participation of BME and other communities.
- 18.4 The Leicester Council of Faiths has been vital in calming potentially volatile reactions to world events, such as September 11<sup>th</sup> and the crisis in India. Faith leaders have demonstrated that they are still able to influence the views and opinions of many of the City's young people. The Council of Faiths has an outstanding track record of work within the community, from schools to chaplaincy work in hospitals and supporting asylum seekers.
- 18.5 Leicester City Council has made a good start in engaging young people within the local decision making process. The Council has shown it is prepared to 'listen' by sponsoring and supporting the 'Faces in Da Crowd' and 'Beyond Labels' conferences last year. Leicester is also involved with the UK Youth Parliament and has an active programme that promotes and supports youth forums within schools through the Young People's Council. One point of note however, is the need to ensure that this process of engaging and empowering young people does not become dominated by 'middle class' articulate young people but reaches out to all sectors.
- 18.6 This year has seen a large Summer Scheme initiative led by the Leicester Youth Service and supported by funding from the Government Office for the East Midlands. The Scheme involved nearly all communities and acted as a bridge bringing young people together.
- 18.7 It was encouraging to see that the Youth Service recognises the importance of its resources/facilities being open for youth during the weekends and holidays. During our community workshop in Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, mention was made of the reluctance of the statutory sector to open their facilities during holiday periods as compared to the voluntary sector. In the northern towns and cities experiencing disturbances last summer, the

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

times when youth were away from school and congregating on street corners was also the time when facilities for youth were closed.

- 18.8 Young people also admitted that a sense of 'parallel lives' exists among youth in Leicester. The reasons given were geographical residential concentration and a reluctance to venture beyond a geographical comfort zone. However, opportunities for contact and inter-action across cultural and religious groupings did exist to some degree within schools, and especially within Leicester's Colleges and the universities.
- 18.9 Over 50% of Leicester's population live in wards, which are the 10% most deprived in the UK. This has a negative impact on youth and ferments perceptions of the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. Sections of Pakistani, Bengali and white youth show signs of being locked into a cycle of poverty and becoming increasingly alienated from society.
- 18.10 Leicester has seen a significant migration of Somali families and young people from abroad over the last few years, which will most probably continue. One factor that has led to this migration is the need of parents to seek out a place where the cultural identity of the Somali community could be more freely expressed. Inevitably, the speed and scale of Somali migration has resulted in pressure on the City's housing, education, health and other resources. One symptom of this has been clashes between Somali, African Caribbean and white youth.
- 18.11 More widely, it is to be noted that only recently has Local Government Youth Services been brought together with Lifelong Learning & Community Development. Prior to this, youth service provision tended to be 'patchwork' in nature, leaving much to be desired in terms of vision and strategy and a joined up, collaborative approach between statutory and voluntary services. It is hoped that the need to produce new Youth Strategy Plans involving all youth service providers will be more effective.

### Priority Issues for the future

#### Emerging Trends

- (1) Past Census and schools rolls data indicate that Leicester's BME communities have a larger proportion of young people than the overall average for the city – 50% of the BME population is under 16 according to 2000 population estimates. New Census data is yet to be released, but it seems unlikely that this trend will have changed significantly – particularly given the arrival of new communities in recent years. It is important that the Council, health, Police and other agencies keep abreast of youth population trends and projections, since this may require changes in the way resources are targeted.
- (2) Monitoring service usage is essential to providing quality services and in shaping effective policies. There is a need to review what aspects of youth, sports and leisure services should be monitored.

#### Sport and Culture

- (3) *'The main reason different ethnic groups don't mix is not because they don't want to, but because they have no reason to'. (Quote from a Unity Centre Development Manager in Rotherham)*

Leicester must provide as many opportunities as possible for young people from all different communities to meet, interact, and possibly work together on projects, in a positive manner and in a culturally sensitive and welcoming environment. This may involve incorporating young people in organising festivals e.g. 'Celebrating Leicester'. Leicester must continue in its current vein of engaging, seeking out and consulting young people. There needs to be ongoing debate on what it means to be part of Leicester and how we deal with multi-cultural Leicester.

- (4) Following the lead of Leicester City Football Club, the other four professional sports clubs - Leicester Tigers, Leicestershire County Cricket Club, Riders Basketball Team and Leicester Ladies Hockey Team – should be encouraged to work with Sport England, the Youth Service and other departments of the Council including young people from different walks of life within their training, coaching and other schemes.
- (5) Consideration should be given to holding large citywide young people's sporting events, bringing together different communities, schools etc. For example this could be an Annual Swimming Gala or an Annual Athletics Day, with great publicity and fanfare, and heats throughout the year leading up to the main event. With these events it is most important that there is a clear sense of purpose in encouraging participation from all disadvantaged groups.
- (6) As well as 'twinning' schools, it would be a good idea to 'twin' youth and sports clubs across communities and also across the statutory/voluntary divide.
- (7) Many young people are unwilling to move out of their neighbourhoods as indicated in our interviews and surveys conducted by the City Council. But at the same time there are barriers to certain groups using existing Sports and Leisure facilities. These may include expense, transport, the lack of a welcoming ethos or hostility. These barriers need to be identified and addressed. It is essential that new flagship Sports and Leisure facilities set out from the very start to engage communities across the city. This will be particularly challenging for the new Braunstone Sports Centre. One way may be for the Centre to host citywide sporting events, with heats in schools and local centres and the final occurring in the new Centre. Steering groups should have local representation as well as include people from different communities.

### **Single Gender Work**

- (8) There needs to be separate focus on engaging young women from different communities. Currently, youth work in some areas tends to be male dominated. The new flagship sports and leisure centres planned and others, crucially need to look at how to make themselves 'women-friendly' especially women from different communities. For this they need to employ female staff who will act as advocates encouraging young women to participate. It might be an idea to have 'women only' classes or days and maybe an annual 'Women Only' Sports Gala. There may need to be school-based initiatives initially to make it easier to involve young women.

### **Faith**

- (9) There is a growing need to build a youth component to the Leicester Council of Faith - maybe by creating a Youth Interfaith Council or by involving more young people on the current body. Either way influential potential leaders must be sought out within each faith group. One task that these young people may be given is an annual Faith/Cultural event.

- (10) Though religious festivals are important and help bring communities together, many youth were not aware of the purpose or background to these festivals. Some of the white and other residents interviewed, did not know if Diwali was a Hindu, Sikh or Muslim festival. It would be good to supplement the excellent work done in this area by providing more information on the City's various festivals. This could be done through citizenship classes in schools or through exhibitions travelling around different localities. It could certainly be an early task for a Youth Inter-faith Council.
- (11) Committees responsible for organising the City's religious festivals should consider how other communities might be involved, contribute and encouraged to participate. This is already the case with regard the African-Caribbean Carnival and the Belgrave Mela but less so for other festivals. There may be scope of an annual 'Celebrating Leicester Festival' to bring different communities together.

### **Statutory and Voluntary Sectors**

- (12) Consideration should be given to more youth 'residential' involving youth from different communities in an environment that is culturally sensitive. This has been a very effective initiative in Bradford, Keighley and Halifax and a life-changing experience for some youth.
- (13) Leicester should explore setting up volunteer schemes encouraging young people to volunteer their services 'across town' in different community and youth centres.
- (14) A Youth Common Purpose initiative could be developed in Leicester, focusing on potential leaders for the future from different communities and importantly from different socio-economic class backgrounds.
- (15) Public bodies that fund community organisations should make 'demonstrating inclusivity' part of the qualification for funding.
- (16) In addition, community organisations, arts and sports bodies should be encouraged to review their current activities, staff profile and user base with the aim of becoming more inclusive to Leicester's diverse communities.
- (17) Frontline agencies working with youth, be it teachers or youth workers, need to tackle racism and prejudice head on, and this should be emphasised in diversity training for staff. We would encourage joint training programmes for staff from both statutory and voluntary sectors. Frontline youth workers especially need training on the sensitivities and values of the different communities and how to deal effectively with anti-social comments and behaviour.
- (18) More BME staff should be recruited especially for frontline youth work. It should not be overlooked that such staff often act as role models within their communities. In some communities there may be need to encourage stepped schemes - for example apprenticeships - to attract and train staff. This has already been highlighted within the Council's Youth Strategy, but it is of such a high priority that it needs to be reiterated.
- (19) The Cantle Report pointed to a deterioration in the relationship between the Police and youth. Leicester has already introduced community policing along with other initiatives to consult local communities. Nevertheless, it is important that the Police

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

continue to develop new and innovative initiatives encouraging positive interaction between the police and young people.

- (20) *'since citizens have differing needs, equal treatment requires full account to be taken of their differences. When equality ignores relevant difference and insists on uniformity of treatment, it leads to injustice and inequality; when differences ignore the demands of equality, they result in discrimination'. (Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: Bhikhu Parekh 2000)*

There needs to be a more sophisticated approach and a deeper understanding of the core values, principles and dynamics of different communities. All communities are highly complex and different adjustments may have to be made by service providers to engage different communities. In short, 'One size does not fit all.'

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

### 19.0 Press and Media

- 19.1 The role of the local media came in for criticism as a factor in the breakdown of community cohesion leading to the disturbances in northern towns and cities. This criticism was not limited to the way in which the disturbances were reported, but to longstanding typecasting and negative representation of BME communities and certain neighbourhoods.
- 19.2 We found a great deal that is positive about the role of the press and media in Leicester. Two year's ago a Multi-Cultural Advisory Group was established as a forum bringing together key community, faith and public sector leaders to discuss current community relations issues. Membership of the Group includes the Leicester Mercury, BBC Radio Leicester, 'Sabras' sound and MATV, a representative of the Bishop of Leicester and the Police. The Director of the Race Equality Council chairs the Advisory Group. The forum offers an opportunity to share understandings on developments within the City – particularly issues with the potential to raise tensions between communities. At a meeting of the Group we attended, the main item on the agenda was how the various agencies might respond to a proposed National Front March in the City.
- 19.3 In addition, we found that the Leicester Mercury – the main daily newspaper for the City and County - consistently tried to present a 'balanced' view of community relations. While it reported incidents that involved a racial or religious component, it also reported the efforts of individuals, community groups and local leaders to confront and tackle issues and resolve differences. It also routinely covered religious festivals and celebrations and well as local community events.
- 19.4 The City also has a vibrant Asian media sector. Midlands Asian Television (MATV) is Britain's first Asian terrestrial TV Channel. It broadcasts for 18 hours a day, 7 days a week with approximately 60% of programmes being aimed at Asian audiences. Plans are to extend the service to Derby, Nottingham and Coventry. Many of the City's BME communities also access satellite services from their homelands.
- 19.5 Leicester City Council is in the process of developing a new communications strategy for both external and internal communications. It is recognised that in addition to giving information the external communications strategy will need to tackle misinformation and negative perceptions across the City's different communities. The Mori Residents Survey of 2001 found that 80% of residents thought that the Council should make more of an effort to find out what local people want. Though nearly half of those polled felt very or fairly well informed about Council services, there were significant differences across communities and social groups. For example, while 54% of Asian residents felt fairly or very well informed, the figures for Black residents and Council tenants were 37% and 38% respectively. The new communications strategy will also have a crucial role to play in explaining how decisions are made within the City's many partnerships and within the City Council.

#### Priority Issues for the future:

- (1) Using the findings of recent public surveys and research to tackle key misconceptions amongst the wider population – in particular the perception widely held on the City's outer estates that their concerns are relatively ignored and not prioritised for regeneration and mainstream resources.
- (2) Adopting a similar approach to staff by conducting regular surveys of their views to better understand concerns, issues and perceptions that may be tackled through an internal communications strategy.
- (3) Promoting a positive new vision of community cohesion within the City.

### 20.0 Welcoming New Communities

- 20.1 In recent years the City has seen the arrival of small communities of asylum seekers in particular Kosovans, Bosnians, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghani's and Zimbabweans. Leicester is a regional centre for the dispersal of asylum seekers. The City Council is the lead authority of the East Midlands Consortium for Asylum Seekers (EMCASS) open to all local authorities in the region, together with Police and Health Authorities and the Voluntary Sector.
- 20.2 Local Authorities are unable to offer accommodation directly to asylum seekers. In conjunction with Nottingham and Derby a contract has been agreed with the Refugee Housing Association to provide specialist properties through agreements with the RSLs, the private sector and Councils. A separate organisation, Refugee Action, has been grant aided by the Home Office to provide support for asylum seekers and to co-ordinate activities with the voluntary sector. In addition, a refugee housing strategy has been agreed for re-housing and supporting asylum seekers moving out of specialist accommodation into local communities. By and large the City has managed to cope with the flow of asylum seekers and refugees though not without its share of tensions and pressures – particularly in respect of education and health services and in providing language and advice support.
- 20.3 However, by far the most urgent challenge facing the City is the recent and unexpected inward migration of Somalis. This new and emerging community is made of British Somalis from other UK Cities, refugees and asylum seekers fleeing the civil war and secondary migration of Somalis from the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway where they settled originally and obtained EU citizenship.
- 20.4 Estimates of the numbers involved vary between two and ten thousand with by far the largest group emanating from EU Countries over the last three to four years. The majority of this community has settled in poor quality private sector accommodation in the Highfields and St Matthews areas, with smaller communities in Braunstone, Goodwood, Beaumont Leys and Northfield.
- 20.5 Our interviews with members of this community indicate that a large proportion of males come from a professional or business background. Many men and women spoke two or three languages. However, most have experienced multiple trauma and dislocation – fleeing the civil war in Somalia, dispersal, resettlement and isolation in Europe and relocation in search of a better future in Leicester, often having first 'tried' other cities. In the process, family structures have broken down due to separation, displacement, divorce or death as a result of the Civil War. Many families are now led by single mothers trying to bring up children in an environment in which they do not speak English or understand how to access basic services.
- 20.6 The Somali population has become a highly visible community in Highfields and St Matthews areas. Attempts to re-house families in Council property on the city's outer estates have met with some success, but despite the efforts of the City Council and the Police, many families have experienced abuse and intimidation..
- 20.7 Nor has the community been wholly welcomed in inner city wards. Clashes have occurred between Somali, African Caribbean and White youth in the streets and at Colleges of Further Education. Most Somalis are Muslims, and initially used existing local mosques. They have now established their own place of worship led by their own Imams.
- 20.8 Many informants indicated that the Somali community experienced particular difficulty in finding work. Most are dependent on temporary, low skilled agency employment bearing little relevance to their qualifications or skills, which are not recognised by local employers. In addition, parents experience major difficulties in securing access for their children to primary and secondary schools in the Highfields and St. Matthews's areas, which are full. Difficulty



was also experienced in gaining access to local FE Colleges. Somalis we spoke to felt they needed a community centre in order to organise, develop and pull their community together. They also felt that language was the single greatest barrier to accessing health and other key services.

20.9 Nevertheless, we found a great many indications of the potential contribution of this community. In the short period since arriving in Leicester, a number of Somali led businesses have already been established without external financial and other assistance. A Somali Steering Group has been established and two community development workers appointed who have already produced a well researched report into the needs of the community spanning education, housing, health, employment, benefits advice, youth and business development. There was also evidence of voluntary agencies within the City beginning to tackle these issues and of innovative new projects like 'Resolving Differences' tackling tension between the Somali and other communities.

### **Priorities for the future:**

- (1) It is rightly claimed by the City Council and other key public sector agencies that there was no way of anticipating either the scale or speed of incoming Somali migration and therefore no way of anticipating what additional services would be required. Nevertheless, the City Council and other public sector agencies have responded to the challenges. The Council estimates that it has spent up to £3 million from existing budgets in responding to the needs of this new and emerging community – without assistance from central government. A senior officer has recently been designated to co-ordinate services across City Council departments and to liaison with other agencies. The priority must now be for the Home Office to develop a policy and funding framework to deal with large and sudden migration of EU citizens. The Somali community in the Netherlands alone number between 80,000 and 90,000 and more families are expected to migrate to Leicester. With the proposed expansion of the European Union, economic migration may well become an increasing trend between member countries. There is an urgent need for clear policy direction from central government on how these population flows will be managed.
- (2) The Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) has made efforts to respond in providing support particularly to the innovative 'Resolving Differences' Project. However, GOEM has experienced difficulties in involving Local Strategic Partnerships throughout the region. Leicester's LSP has a decisive role to play in developing and leading a coherent cross-agency strategy in response to the emerging Somali community - working with the Somali Steering Group and based on research carried out by the Somali Development workers. Particular emphasis should be placed on communications – getting key messages across and tackling widely held misconceptions concerning new communities being given preference over the needs of established communities.

### 21.0 Recommendations

21.1 The issues, priorities and proposals set out in this report cover Leadership, Community and Faith Organisation, Housing, Education, Employment, Community Safety and Policing, Health and Social Care, Culture and Leisure, Regeneration, Youth, Press and Media and Welcoming New Communities. We do not claim to have all the answers and hope that our proposals will be taken in the spirit in which they are intended – that is to stimulate and ‘open, honest and frank’ debate within the City Council, the wider public and voluntary sectors and faith organisations on what is important and what needs to be done. It should also be stressed that we do not envisage these initiatives requiring major additional resources. In most instances it is likely to be a case of extending the range of existing priorities and adjusting the way in which existing resources are applied.

21.2 In responding to the many issues and proposals set out in this report, we are also concerned that the efforts of the City Council and its partners is not dissipated in a large number of small individual initiatives. If the City is to develop new and innovative ways in which to promote more cohesive communities and its Vision for Leicester as one of Britain’s leading multi-cultural, multi-faith Cities, we would propose a clear policy focus on four strategic, crosscutting themes. These are:

### 21.3 Vision and Leadership

- (1) The first is to develop a Vision for community cohesion in Leicester. A vision shared by the City Council and its partners in the wider business, public, voluntary, sport and faith sectors. Such a vision will need to add to current ideas on valuing diversity and tackling inequality and disadvantage. It should also be inclusive of communities of interest and groups known to experience social exclusion – women, people with disabilities, the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual communities.
- (2) Every effort should be made to ensure that the city’s three main political parties are given an opportunity to be involved and to sign up to the new Vision. Each political party should further consider how residents from all of the City’s main communities might be represented at all levels of their organisation – including candidates for election to the Council.
- (3) Responsibility for community cohesion should be clearly vested in the Local Strategic Partnership, helping to ensure the involvement of a wide range of key partners and agencies. Consideration should also be given to the role of the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership in promoting community cohesion across the sub-region.

### 21.4 Young People

- (1) With the best will in the world, patterns of residential settlement and concentration in schools cannot be changed over the short to medium term without adopting social engineering measures that may well create more problems than they solve. However, in our view the City’s young people offer a unique opportunity to develop a number of crosscutting and innovative initiatives that could help change peoples perceptions, patterns of behaviour and build community cohesion for the future.
- (2) One theme could be to give young people a far greater role in organising events that celebrate cultural diversity and pride in the City. Young people could also be encouraged to play a greater role in the faith leadership of the City – possibly through the establishment of a Youth Inter-Faith Council. ‘Residentials’ on leadership for young people across different communities might also be considered.

- (3) Shared activities between and around schools could be another key theme. Specialist and new schools should take positive steps to attract pupils from all communities. Twinning or grouping schools dominated by different ethnic groups leading to shared activities - projects, school visits, sport, leisure and parental involvement – should also be considered. The introduction of a citizenship course in all schools promoting understanding between different cultures has also been suggested.
- (4) In the transition from school to work, public sector employers should look again at opportunities for recruiting young people and be prepared to go into schools, colleges and the City's Universities. Flagship economic regeneration projects should be urged to work closely with neighbourhood regeneration initiatives to promote employment and training opportunities for young people – particularly on the City's outer estates.

### 21.5 Engaging the City's Outer Areas Communities

- (1) A striking feature of our baseline assessment was the extent to which communities settled in the City's outer area estates felt disengaged, isolated, ignored and unable to influence the policies of key public sector bodies. They also felt that their cultural heritage had been taken for granted and their communities had fared less well in competition for regeneration and mainstream resources.
- (2) Engaging communities on the City's outer estates should be a key objective of any new vision and strategy for developing community cohesion in Leicester.
- (3) In part, this may be a matter of providing clear and better information challenging misconceptions and rumours. More significantly, it may involve a strategic policy focus on the needs and concerns of outer estates communities tackling barriers to inclusion and participation. Such a strategy should also consider how outer area and residents outside the City might be attracted back into the City Centre and Inner City.

### 21.6 BME Communities

- (1) BME communities have a vital role to play in the future of community cohesion in Leicester.
- (2) The first will be to embrace and help develop a new vision for community cohesion in Leicester alongside ideas on valuing diversity and continuing to tackle inequality and disadvantage – particularly in respect of the Pakistani, Bengali and African Caribbean communities.
- (3) A clear commitment to involving more women and young people in leadership roles.
- (4) Over time, Leicester's BME communities have built up strong and vibrant voluntary sectors. However, many organisations continue to focus on the needs of single communities rather than on the needs of local neighbourhoods. Voluntary sector organisations working with the local authority and other key agencies should consider ways in which organisations can move towards addressing needs across all communities.
- (5) Cultural and religious intolerance also occurs within Black and Asian communities. A great deal is being done to tackle this at all levels within the City. Nevertheless, BME communities should be as prepared to tackle intolerance between different ethnic

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

groups as they are to challenge racism. This needs to be reflected not only within the voluntary sector but also in other areas of community and faith organisations.

- 21.7 We propose that this report is used as the basis for consultation within the City Council and with key partners in the wider public, voluntary and community sectors - including faith organisations. The primary aim of the consultation process should be to determine how organisations in each sector might contribute in developing a Community Cohesion Vision and Strategy for the City of Leicester.

## APPENDIX I

### Leicester Community Cohesion Workshops Focus Groups and Interview Schedule

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Personal Details:

Gender:

Ethnic Origin:

Occupation:

Neighbourhood:

Faith:

1. How important is cultural diversity and respect for each other's culture and religion to good community relations in Leicester?
2. Generally, how well do you think people of different races, cultures and faiths relate to each other in the City?
3. How well would you say that people of different races, cultures and faiths relate to each other in the following areas:
  - a. At home and in your neighbourhood
  - b. At school or college
  - c. At work
  - d. Through leisure and sport
  - e. Through Festivals and Cultural events
  - f. Community activity
  - g. Through Faith activities
4. To what extent would you say that people of different cultures and faiths lead separate lives or are isolated in the city?
5. How would people within your neighbourhood choose to identify themselves?
  - with the local area
  - with the City
  - as British or part of the UK
  - with their own culture of faith
  - with their country of origin
6. To what extent do you feel that people within your neighbourhood are able to influence decisions affecting their area?
7. To what extent would you say that people in your neighbourhood feel alienated or disaffected?
8. Would you say that the way in regeneration and other funding to the voluntary and community organisations is allocated promotes or discourages competition between different communities?
9. To what extent do you feel race, community and inter-faith issues are positively and visibly addressed by the following:
  - the City Council

## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

- the local press and media
  - the police
  - local community leaders
  - local faith leaders
10. Are 'extremist groups' active or influential in your area?
  11. How well do you feel Leicester welcomes new communities?
  12. What things would you say prevent people of different cultures from better relating to each other or cause tensions?
  13. What things would you say help and encourage people of different cultures to better relate to each other and how might improvements be brought about?
  14. Do you feel positive or negative about the future of community relations in Leicester?
  15. Do you intend to continue working and living in Leicester?
  16. Any other comments.

### KEY DOCUMENTS

Leicester's Community Plan  
Leicester's Best Value Performance Plan  
Regenerating Leicester: The Leicester Regeneration Strategy  
Revitalising Neighbourhoods  
Diverse City – Leicester's Cultural Strategy  
Leicester Early Years Development and Child care Strategic Plan 2001 - 2004  
Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002 – 2005  
Development of a Youth Strategy for Leicester  
Sports Strategy for Leicester 2001 – 2006  
The Education Development Plan  
Young, Gifted and Equal – Racial Equality Standards in Education for Schools  
In Leicester  
Leicester City Council – Comprehensive Performance Assessment  
Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy for Leicester  
Researching the Future of Leicester – A report for Leicester City Council, the Leicester Mercury and the University of Leicester: Dr Christopher Pole  
Leicester City Barometer Survey 1998  
The Atlas of Social and Economic Conditions in Leicester 1998  
Leicester Residents' Survey 2001  
Refugee Housing Strategy 2002  
Economic Development Strategy for the East Midlands: Regional Delivery Plan 2002-3 – East Midlands Development Agency  
Leicester Link October 2002 – Leicester City Council Community newspaper  
Research into the needs of the Pakistani Community in Leicester 2002  
Somali Community Development Report 2002  
Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain – Bhikhu Parekh 2000  
Community Cohesion – Report of the Independent Review Team chaired by Ted Cattle: Home Office  
Building Cohesive Communities – A Report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion: Home Office

### Biographies

**Ahtsham Ali** is Project Co-ordinator of the Himmat Project (which operates in Halifax, Bradford and Keighley). He has 13 years experience of working with Muslim youth from mainly Pakistani and Bengali backgrounds. He was Chief Editor of Trends, Britain's biggest selling Muslim magazine and President of *Young Muslims UK*. He has an MA in theology and Religious Studies, specialising in Islam and Christianity. For the last 8 years he has designed and run programmes of work for disaffected Muslim youths referred mainly from schools, and some from the Probation Service. He has lectured throughout Britain and abroad on the future of Muslim Communities.

**Chris Dallison** has over 20 years senior management experience in both public and private sector organisations. In his last position as Executive Director of Regeneration and Corporate Management at the London Borough of Ealing, he led on Corporate Strategy, Planning and Partnerships, Regeneration, Best Value, Innovation and performance Management. Prior to this he was Director of Housing at Ealing between 1994 and 2001. Steve also has experience of leading and co-ordinating innovative public, private and voluntary sector partnerships and of leading major economic and social regeneration initiatives. Steve is now an Associate Consultant with the IDeA and works as an independent consultant in his own right.

**Harris Joshua** is presently an Associate Consultant at the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government. He was previously Assistant Chief Executive (Policy) at Nottingham City Council with responsibility for social and neighbourhood regeneration, developing a community strategy, corporate policy advice, partnership development, EU issues and voluntary sector grants. Harris has eighteen years experience in local government with nine years at senior management level. Major publications include 'To Ride the Storm – The 1980 Bristol Riot and the State' Heinemann 1983.

**Daljit Kaur** works as an Employment and Training Manager for Sheffield City Council with a particular focus on Equal Opportunities and Best value. In a voluntary capacity, she is Secretary of an umbrella organisation Black Community Forum Ltd based in Sheffield. This organisation represents 93 black and ethnic minority community groups and has a particular interest in issues surrounding education, employment, housing and social and economic development.

**Steve White Med, DipEd** former headmaster of Rushey Mead Comprehensive School – now retired. Steve has worked on a wide range of local and national teaching and educational initiatives including the National Curriculum Association Committee, the Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools and the Campaign for State Education. Steve is also a member of the Leicester Council of Faiths, Chair of Radio Leicester BBC Advisory Council, Chair of Leicester Cultural Strategic Partnership and Vice Chair of 'Foxes Against Racism' at Leicester City Football Club.

**Maxine Tomlinson** has been employed as Consultant for Member Development with the IDeA since January 2000 and her duties include developing policy, research, training and advisory services for supporting elected members in change and democratic renewal. These duties have recently been extended to cover Programme Management of IDeA initiatives on Community Cohesion.

Prior to joining the IDeA, Maxine worked as a Policy Officer within the Equalities Division of Birmingham City Council and has also worked in a number of strategic policy roles in the City's Education Department. This was preceded by a six-year spell as an account executive with a firm of international stockbrokers.



## Taking Forward Community Cohesion in Leicester

Maxine has a particular interest in strategic management and organisational change and holds a first degree in Business and Finance from the University of Central England and a MBA in Public Sector Management from INLOGOV, University of Birmingham.

**Rani Singh's** main areas of expertise are project management and co-ordination. She has supported and co-ordinated a wide range of member development programmes across a range of authorities in England and Wales, preparing briefings, proposals and presentations. Rani joined the IDeA from the Association of London Government (ALG) where she worked as a communications support officer. She was seconded to the regional office in Brussels where she worked as Assistant European Officer.

**Ted Cantle** is presently Associate Director of Performance Support at the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government. He is also a non-executive director of a NHS Trust and the Environment Agency.

In August 2001, he was appointed by the Home Secretary to Chair the Community Cohesion Review Team, which was set up to 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. Ted now chairs the Panel, which advises Ministers on implementation.

Ted Cantle was the Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council between 1990 and 2001. He was the Director of Housing for Leicester City Council (1988 to 1990) and for Wakefield MDC (1979 to 1983) and was Under Secretary at the AMA (1983 to 1988) and has also worked for Manchester City Council. He also chaired the DTI Construction Task Force for local government from 1998 to 2002.