Civil Renewal has developed into a major focus of the government’s community policy. All major political parties have expressed their concern at the disengagement of citizens from politics, the decline in ‘neighbourliness’, and the importance of making public services responsive to the needs of citizens. In this working paper, Runnymede considers the major challenges and opportunities for this agenda making a difference to racial equality in Britain.
Civil Renewal, understood as the redefinition of the relation between the individual and the state in order to reinstate the role of political community, has been described as ‘the centrepiece of the government’s reform agenda’. This redefinition is reliant on understanding the identities of citizens and their understandings of community and engaging with these identities to reformulate the state. In order for the political community to be effective, it has to be able to respond to the community of citizens and communities that make up multi-ethnic Britain. Success in civil renewal is then dependent on the success of a multi-ethnic society at ease with itself.

Understanding the dynamics of ‘race’ and racisms in as complex a society as that in Britain requires an ability to tackle the fundamental building blocks of social interaction as well as the ways in which the institutions of the state operate. ‘Race’ and ethnicity are about what people do, creating and re-creating them over time and in different spaces. In deciding to focus Runnymede’s research efforts on civil renewal and social capital the challenge posed is to apply an understanding of ‘race’ and ethnicity to policy trends that together aim to address the bases of social interaction and the institutional frameworks in which they operate; a tall order, but an important step. For too long issues of ‘race’ and ethnicity have been seen as an also-ran, an agenda that belongs to the margins and the ‘other’. In this civil renewal agenda there is hope that we can move to a situation in which ‘race’ and ethnicity are viewed as fundamental to understanding society and to ‘doing’ politics.

The key themes to be considered in this paper are:

- Building trust
- Representation
- Engagement and participation
- Democratising public services
- Creating capacity
- Race equality, cohesion and renewal

This paper aims to frame a debate on civil renewal in relation to ethnic diversity. By setting out some of the major questions, it is hoped that more people will be encouraged to engage in what we believe to be a crucial debate about the relationships between the state and citizens, at the same time recognising the significance of responding to the challenges and opportunities provided by a successful multi-ethnic society.

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1 David Blunkett, Civil Renewal: A New Agenda London: Home Office 2003 p.1
Background

At the centre of my political beliefs is the idea that individuals achieve their full potential when they are active as citizens in shaping their own lives and contributing to the governance of the community of which they are a part. It is by engaging in society that mutuality between individuals develops, and it is a two-way process of contributing to, and receiving support from, the wider community. This is more than just the exercise of rights and responsibilities. It is about the development and extension of our democratic processes in the community, which I believe can lead to a wider renewal of civic and political engagement. – David Blunkett, September 2003

In June 2003 the Home Secretary declared his intention to make civil renewal the “centrepiece of the government’s reform agenda”, noting, “civil renewal is about educating, empowering and supporting citizens to be active in their communities, socially and politically.” He argued that civil renewal should be the “ongoing ethos” to be applied to all of the government programmes concerned with communities. Social capital has also been the subject of recent debate from the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit among others, in terms of addressing disadvantage. However, there has been little public discussion about what these agendas mean for those concerned with tackling unfair discrimination and promoting racial equality.

Social capital has been criticised as a policy framework, it has been argued that it sets aside issues of power, privilege and authority to focus upon disadvantage and inequality as a consequence of community failure to organise and take responsibility. It has also been criticised for generalising under its umbrella very different causes and consequences of disadvantage. Nonetheless it is clear that government and others are keen to develop the concept alongside civil renewal as a means of understanding society. How best can those concerned with racisms and race equality engage with these policy concepts and use them to work towards a more successful multi-ethnic Britain?

In his June 2003 paper, the Home Secretary noted that we need to think much more broadly about the practical implications [of this policy framework] for all areas of government and the delivery of public services and invited agencies, think-tanks and voluntary bodies to develop ideas further. In January 2004 Runnymede published ‘Civil Renewal, Diversity and Social Capital in a Multi-Ethnic Britain’ by David Faulkner as our first contribution to this debate. In the meantime recent public service reform has begun to engage with the civil renewal and social capital agenda – in local government reforms, changes to the criminal justice system, in education, public involvement in health, and other areas of social policy. Runnymede’s work in this area is designed to respond to this call for public debate and to generate ideas and recommendations for academics, policymakers, and practitioners on the questions posed in this paper.

It is true that serious and sustained efforts are needed to build up the capacity and willingness of communities to engage in collective decision-making. We know too little about how to do this, despite the plethora of activity in this area, and our evidence base is thin. – David Blunkett, September 2003

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2 David Blunkett, A Civil Society; are we nearly there yet? London: IPPR September 2003
4 David Blunkett, A Civil Society; are we nearly there yet? London: IPPR September 2003
The vision of multi-ethnic Britain as a community of communities and citizens, as expressed in the Parekh Report⁵, presents a challenge to those developing how an ‘ongoing ethos’ of civil renewal and a commitment to build social capital will translate into effective policy and action. These early stages of policy development also provide an opportunity to ensure that issues concerning race equality, ethnic diversity, and cohesion are embedded within this agenda. There is a danger that without a serious and sustained effort to ensure that ethnic diversity is a major concern within this agenda at the outset, it may become sidelined. The effect of this would be policy and action that did not recognise the realities of the communities that it operated within, and worse, the development of an ongoing ethos that excluded certain communities and groups.

Runnymede has begun to engage academics, civil servants, community activists, and journalists in thinking about the relationships between civil renewal, social capital and ethnic diversity. Through responses to David Faulkner’s ‘Runnymede Perspectives’ publication and an expert seminar held in March we have honed in on some of the major questions. The seminar showed the range of interest in these topics, the potential impact of working to extend the conversation to a larger group, and the fundamental importance of developing understanding of ethnic diversity to the civil renewal and social capital agenda.

Below are some examples of how civil renewal, social capital, and ethnic diversity might have an impact on social policy.

**Education**

The Department for Education and Skills has recently announced reforms to the ways in which schools are governed in an attempt to enable more effective decision-making and increase opportunities for schools to work more closely together. This is part of a drive to recognise schools as a community resource, to reduce the negative effects of competition between schools and to raise attainment levels for those who have been excluded from a range of educational opportunities through the differential challenges under which schools operate. Schools are intended to be important sites of community focus and key in supporting citizens to find public spaces in which they can interact. Catherine Ashton, the DfES minister, noted:

Parents become more involved in schools that provide extended services, which helps them support their children’s learning. Schools providing services needed by local people become the focus of the local community and boost community pride and involvement. – DfES Press Release, 19 May 2004

This is an important way in which civil renewal and social capital agendas come together to make real policy impact. The government will spend £52.2 million over the next three years to encourage the development of ‘extended’ schools. Meanwhile research published by the DfES in December 2003 noted that:

The following groups are currently underrepresented in school governance: black and other minority ethnic groups, disabled people, people with low incomes and people who are unemployed, young people, lone parents and (to a lesser extent) business people. . . . Ensuring that school governing bodies are representative of their communities should be a key aim for all stakeholders (e.g. staff, pupils, parents), but care is needed to ensure that it does not become tokenistic. – Angela Ellis, Institute for Volunteering Research, December 2003

Therefore a key site in the renewal of civic society and a key site for building social capital; the extended school is governed by an unrepresentative group. Further, the recognition that all schools have a duty to build a relationship with their local communities and with neighbouring schools (often with very different ethnic population profiles, and sometimes with movements towards separation along religious lines) will involve capacity building in the education sector to enable dialogue. The outcomes are likely to exclude certain communities and lead to a failure to achieve the aims of the policy unless we can encourage a serious engagement with the challenges that are posed by diversity.

- what works in building effective networks across existing communities,
- how can public service reform deal with differential levels of social capital, how can these agenda operate in rapidly changing communities,
- what works in engaging with underrepresented groups, that would be key in making policy in this area more effective.

Health
A thriving citizen culture also depends on people having the capacity to get engaged in the world around them – David Blunkett, September 2003

The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health was established in 2003 as an NDPB. Its role is to make sure that the public is involved in decision-making about health through 572 Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums. NHS Trusts are legally obliged to respond to reports from PPI Forums.

This initiative has laudable aims to make the NHS more responsive to the public and acts as another site for voluntary action, expression of active citizenship and civil renewal. How do these Forums avoid ‘capture’ by certain groups in a system that is widely acknowledged to be short of resources? Decision-making on health needs should be informed by the experiences of patients from all communities. The increasingly well-documented ethnic differences in health needs (e.g. higher prevalence of kidney failure in Asian and Black groups, lower incidence of coronary heart disease in African Caribbean groups, ethnically linked diseases such as sickle-cell anaemia, and higher incidence of smoking among Bangladeshi and Pakistani men) is likely to cause some discussion in these forums about how services should respond. If this is not done in a way that engages all communities and enables all to understand the related key concepts of equality and diversity, the outcomes could translate into increased inter-ethnic tensions rather than a successful extension of civil society.

- How can trust be built across communities of interest as well as place?
- How can concepts of social capital be used as a tool to empowerment of disadvantaged communities?
- What are the best means of creating a participatory culture in all ethnic communities?
- What are the roles of the voluntary, government and private sectors in enabling the broadest level of participation and ensuring equality of outcome?
- What might success look like?

Preventing Racist Violence
A separate Runnymede project is currently examining existing local and community-based projects that use prevention as a means of reaching out to and changing the attitudes and behaviours of potential perpetrators of racist violence. It has become clear that the concepts of social capital and civil renewal are key in work with potential perpetrators.

The development of ‘negative’ social capital may be a key driver in offending behaviour. Negative social capital can lead in the extreme to criminal behaviour but also to exclusionary, xenophobic and racist attitudes. While levels of social capital are high within the ‘ingroup’, barriers have been erected to exclude others from joining in certain networks because of their race, nationality or ethnic background. How can negative social capital be broken down, how can networks which operate in racialised ways be opened to the benefits of diversity, whilst maintaining their potentially useful characteristics?

The importance of civil renewal in this area is in the dialogue that needs to be created in public institutions about the means of challenging racist violence, and working to prevent it, through schools and youth work, but also through police and health forums, parenting classes, adult education, local and neighbourhood decision-making, and work with older people.

Criminal Justice
As bonds of trust, belonging and mutuality grow, crime and disorder can decline. Working together our communities can be tuned from places of fear into ones of confidence and safety and take their place as the essential building blocks of a decent society. – David Blunkett, September 2003

The UK now has proportionately the highest prison population in the EU with custodial sentences increasing by 25 percent between 1996 and 2001 against a background of a 25 percent reduction in recorded crime. African Caribbean citizens were six times more likely than their white counterparts to be in prison. The recent Carter Review (December 2003) of the criminal justice system argued for greater engagement between it and communities. The Probation Board Association (PBA) highlighted its agreement in response:

Engaging the public is vital for the future of work with offenders in the community.

There remains, however, a historical mistrust between certain minority ethnic communities and the criminal justice system. Through celebrated injustices to daily street level harassment (African-Caribbean citizens up to six times more likely to be stopped and searched), there has been an antipathy developed. All the more tragic since African Caribbean citizens are also more likely to be victims of crime. There are recent reports from community organisations of increasing levels of stop and search on identifiable Muslim youth, which may lead to similar tensions between the police and these communities. Increasingly the criminal justice system will be relying on community involvement for the lay magistracy, restorative justice, meaningful community sentencing, mentoring, youth justice referral panels, inertia, against the backdrop of negative relations with large portions of certain communities.

- Recognising the complexities and histories of minority ethnic communities in the UK, what are the barriers to their engagement in civil renewal activities?
- How do you build trust out of such tensions, and what is the role of community development and leadership in doing so?
Building Trust

Social trust
Levels of trust and trends over time

Trust is fundamental to political systems and has been a focus of the discourse around social capital. It is argued that trust is important because it is the basis on which social networks are formed, enabling access to information, obligations of reciprocity and access to social capital; ‘a resource, which like physical and human capital, makes it easier to achieve certain ends.’

Trust is not social capital in itself. Without trust individuals will not enter into social networks or be able to develop social capital. The implications for civil renewal are therefore great. Without trust there are unlikely to be social networks, but there is little hope of creating, sustaining or rejuvenating democratic structures without them.

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6 Francisco Herreros Why Trust: The problem of forming social capital New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004 p.6
Surveys of trust show that populations of different countries have differential levels and there are different trends in operation. Recent research from the Home Office Citizenship Study shows that trust is held differentially within a population. Differences between ethnic groups are significant. In response to the question 'Do you trust your neighbours?' there are quite marked differences. In the white population, the figure who answered positively is about 41%; in the Asian population it drops to 27%; and in the African-Caribbean population it is 16%.  

- How important is it to build trust?
- How do you build trust?
- What are the roles of government, and the voluntary/community sector in building trust?
- Are different approaches relevant for different ethnic groups?
- How can trust be built across and within communities of place, identity, interest and choice?
- What different understandings of social capital and civil renewal are necessary for these different kinds of communities?

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7 Graph adapted from David Halpin, Is social capital a useful social policy tool, presentation to Runnymede Conference June 24 2004
8 People's involvement in their neighbourhoods Duncan Prime, Meta Zimmeck and Andrew Zurawan in Home Office Research Study 270 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey: people, families and communities London: Home Office
Representation

- 2.9% of London’s teachers are from African Caribbean backgrounds, 19.5% of pupils in London schools are from African Caribbean backgrounds.
- There are only 13 MPs from minority ethnic backgrounds (12 in Labour Party), were parliament to reflect the ethnic diversity of Britain we would expect to see 60 MPs from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Despite efforts by the Metropolitan Police Service to increase the number of police officers from black and minority ethnic groups, they still formed only 5.5 per cent of the total in March 2003, against the target of 7.9 per cent set for this date.
- Black and minority ethnic groups in London form nearly 29 per cent of London’s population, yet fewer than ten per cent of the London borough councillors elected in 2001 are from black and minority ethnic groups. Of the black and minority ethnic councillors in London, seven per cent are of Asian origin and fewer than three per cent are of black Caribbean or African origin. Nationally, only 3.5% of councillors were from Black and minority ethnic groups.
- Just under five per cent of the 29,499 people on the boards of public bodies in March 2001 were black and minority ethnic appointees. Nearly 62 per cent of the black and minority ethnic appointees were men.

It has now become widely accepted that it is important to ensure that governance structures and workforces should reflect the communities that they serve. Considerable work has gone into improving the representation of people from minority ethnic communities in political parties, parliament, the police force, and teaching among other areas. These efforts are important first and foremost because of a commitment to social justice, if talent is distributed normally regardless of ethnicity then it follows that the make up of work forces should include people from minority ethnic communities at all levels. The failure of systems to deliver this outcome is evidence of institutionalised racism and action must be taken to address this failure.

However a range of other reasons are also given for increasing the representation of people from minority ethnic communities in positions of power and influence, e.g. more Black teachers are needed in schools to respond to the underachievement of Black children, more Black and Asian MPs are needed to give a voice to minority ethnic communities. These reasons for greater representation are questionable and contain a series of assumptions about the nature of ‘race’ and ethnicity. As civil renewal seeks to extend democratic structures and to address the issues of representativeness, these questions will become even more pertinent. Further, there is little use in changing the numbers of black and Asian people involved in politics at whatever level, if the systems do not change as a result and racisms are allowed to persist.

- Why is representation important (beyond social justice)?
- Can change be delivered by head-count?
- What is the latest good practice on positive action?
- Are political parties the right place to start?
- Will first past the post ever deliver the better political representation?
- Will proportional representation necessarily be better?
- How can existing and new democratic structures recognise diversity and equality?

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9 Black People Pushing Back the Boundaries II: Key facts London: GLA 2003
Engagement and participation

The turnout of 59.4% at the 2001 general election was the lowest since 1918, and the lowest ever under the full democratic franchise. This marked a dramatic fall since 1997 (71.6%) and 1992 (77.7%) and follows a period during which there was an underlying downward trend since turnout peaked in 1950 at 84%. The UK also has the lowest rate of turnout at European elections.

Research consistently suggests that certain types of people are more likely to vote than others. In the UK, turnout has been shown to vary by area, age, gender, ethnicity, social class and education, and by type and closeness of election. For example, in general, the affluent and the more educated middle classes are observed to have higher levels of registration and turnout. The people least likely to vote in the UK are from communities of black Caribbean and black African heritage. In addition, research has shown that people of black African heritage have one of the lowest levels of registration. There is considerable variation in the turnout of white people. It is notable, for example, that some of the lowest turnout figures in recent elections have been recorded in largely white populated, inner-city areas.

BME turnout rates are affected by generic factors including the younger age profile of these communities, the higher levels of social and economic deprivation experienced among these groups, and the fact that they predominantly live in urban areas where turnout levels tend to be lower than average. There are also community-specific factors affecting turnout such as lack of representation in high-profile public positions.

There is some evidence to suggest that dissatisfaction with political parties played a part in depressing turnout among BME communities. The idea that ‘my vote will make no difference’ was an important reason not to vote for all groups, including among BME communities. The concept of civic duty is important in determining whether people vote, but there is no real evidence of differential interest in politics or feelings of civic duty among BME communities.10

It is clear that turnout at elections is influenced by ‘race’ and ethnicity among other factors. This is likely to become even more significant as new democratic structures are developed in order to deliver civil renewal. The effect of differential levels of turnout is to weaken democracy. This is especially significant when the success of a multi-ethnic society is dependent on strong democratic principles in order to ensure human rights, race equality and to strengthen shared values.

The challenge to increase involvement goes beyond physical turnout. To respond to the criticism ‘my vote will make no difference’, civil renewal must lead to real engagement. To ensure longerterm participation, involvement will have to lead to discernible changes and improvements. Citizens are interested in what goes around them and many operate in informal relationships to address social needs, this may be especially true of BME communities if the research reported above is correct. Civil renewal must lead to similar engagement with the institutions of the state. This may require more wholesale change than currently imagined and new means of engaging citizens. Regular voting and local referenda may have to be complemented by other means of encouraging participation such as citizen juries, governance

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by lots, or use of new media in order to really engage citizens. Crucially, real engagement must lead to a shift in power relations.

- How can new and existing democratic structures respond to differential levels of engagement from different ethnic groups?
- What are the best means of engaging people from all communities in politics at all levels?
- What levels of participation are necessary for citizens?
- Is voter turnout a sufficient measure of engagement?
Democratising public services

Localism: from rhetoric to reality
Rt Hon Alan Milburn MP Secretary of State for Health 05/02/2003 - NLGN & The New Health Network - Lecture

. . . the uncertainty engendered by globalisation is driving people to take refuge in what they know - in their families, their communities, their regions. People find shelter in the very local because the local can be influenced even if the global cannot. The way politics is structured needs to reflect that yearning for local control. In this country the advent of locally elected mayors, renewal of local government and, I hope and believe, the birth of regional government will give life to localism. Public services too, in the way they are structured need to reflect the growing public desire to control what they know.

Ours is a small country with big differences. It is not uniform. It is multi-faceted and multi-cultural. Different communities have different needs. With the best will in the world, those needs cannot be met from a distant Whitehall. They can only be properly met locally not nationally.

Democracy is by no means perfect in practice but it is not a bad principle. Transferring ownership from the central state to local communities - giving local people a stake and a vote in the public services they use - is the best way of moving localism beyond a gift conferred by Whitehall - which can be taken away by Whitehall - into a permanent feature of our democratic landscape.

From Empire to Community - The Challenge for 21st Century Governance
Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP Home Secretary 22/01/2004 - NLGN 2nd Annual Conference

I actually think that engaging people in radical politics in their own neighbourhood, ensuring that they know that those who are elected are on their side, but that they inevitably will have to take much more difficult cross-cutting decisions and show leadership, that revitalising democracy by bringing it alive and making it real at local level makes sense.

Real decentralisation: the denationalisation of local government
Bernard Jenkin MP Shadow Secretary of State for the Regions 19/04/2004 - NLGN Lecture

Our ambition is not bigger government but bigger people; people with the skills and character to stand on their own two feet; people caring for and supporting those around them. Conservatives want to support those institutions – many relational, small and local – far away from the interfering hands of the central state – that promote self-government and, therefore, civilisation


Liberal Democrats have always been committed to the principle of taking decisions at the lowest effective level. Devolution brings a number of clear advantages:

Democracy: Each elector’s vote and voice has a greater weight in smaller political units.
**Accountability:** Access to political representatives is easier at lower levels, and new centres of political decision making tend to promote a ‘civil society’ around them, for example, through local/regional pressure groups.

**Responsiveness:** The lower the level of government, the greater the sensitivity to particular local needs, conditions and preferences (as opposed to a Whitehall ‘one size fits all’ approach).

**Manageability:** Public services run on smaller scales are generally easier to manage than large national scale operations.

**Experimentation:** Innovations can be tried out at local level. If they work, they can spread rapidly, particularly if the centre gathers, analyses and publicises information on performance.

It would appear that there is cross party consensus on devolving power from Whitehall to local communities, beyond the traditional boundaries of local government to include other public services, notably health and policing. This approach raises a series of questions in a multi-ethnic society in which racisms and disadvantage operate. Given what we already know about representation, engagement and differential levels of social capital, the challenges to plans to devolve power and maintain and improve racial equality are great.

As highlighted in the examples above, attempts to create civil renewal through localism could potentially exacerbate the inequalities that already exist in governance structures. As schools become more important as civic spaces, the composition of governing bodies becomes more significant. The relationship between the police and African Caribbean communities has historically been marked by distrust. These problems will have to be addressed and greater understanding built before members of these communities approach involvement in governance of the police without trepidation. Localism will produce diversity of outcome. While this may be fine in some areas of practice are we willing to accept that services that have more impact on minority ethnic communities will be addressed in some areas and not others. Communities of place are not the only communities that civil renewal will have to serve; communities of identity and interest also have a role to play.

- What forms of local governance of public services can deliver civil renewal?
- How are all communities to be engaged with local governance?
- How can disadvantaged communities build the capacity to engage with local governance structures?
- What trade-offs will have to be made between equality and diversity?
- How will localised services meet the needs of communities of interest and identity as well as communities of place?
- Is public service reform based on individual choice workable where differentials in levels of social capital are great (between all types of community)?
- What kind of work needs to be undertaken so that reforms are equally beneficial to all communities?
Creating capacity

One of the most important findings from the research is that public and private funding bodies do not seem to appreciate there is a relationship between the health of the Black Voluntary and Community Sector and Black civic participation. Rather, Black voluntary organisations are seen primarily, if not solely, as service deliverers. This is borne out by the recent publication of the Treasury’s report on funding to the voluntary sector (HM Treasury, 2003), which puts the emphasis on service delivery. While this is important, we believe that the report has missed a vital element of the role of the sector as a whole, but particularly of the Black voluntary sector: that it has a part to play in assisting with the agenda for social cohesion, promoting good race relations and enabling better representation in all areas of public life. People join voluntary sector organisations for a variety of reasons, but one of the sometimes-unplanned outcomes is that individuals learn more about engagement in other arenas. As a result, the sector acts as a kind of conduit for social and political enfranchisement.

Black voluntary and community sector funding: its impact on civic engagement and capacity building by Karen Chouhan and Clarence Lusane, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2004

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Home Office Research Study 270 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey: people, families and communities
Chris Attwood, Gurchand Singh, Duncan Prime, Rebecca Creasey and others

There are different rates of civic participation between ethnic groups and different types of participation. The research above, suggests that we need to investigate further the routes to civic participation that different groups take and the best ways of encouraging active citizenship for all.

Different patterns of civic participation represent a challenge to civil renewal, since in order to achieve its aims it will either have to change citizens’ patterns of participation or offer a range of ways of participating. All different ways of participating will have to be equally valued. This will again involve a shift in power. The views of the traditional ward councillor will have to be balanced by the views of the residents’ association, the youth parliament, the local web-based forums, or citizens’ juries. Increasing civic participation and the range of ways in which it is expressed will, if successful, increase the range of voices to be heard. Politicians’ jobs will be
made harder as a result as they will have to mediate between these voices and make decisions on priorities. Local government will have to adapt to respond to these new democratic structures and instead of being a service deliverer may have to develop as a co-ordinator of services and an information conduit.

- What is effective in encouraging civic participation amongst Black and minority ethnic communities?
- What is the role of the community and voluntary sector in promoting active citizenship?
- Can civil renewal be effective while groups respond differentially to participation?
- How can the black community and voluntary sector be developed to promote active citizenship more effectively?
- What role can local government play in ensuring a diversity of approaches to civil renewal does not lead to indecision?
Race equality, cohesion and civil renewal

Building community cohesion is dependent on the creation of a common sense of belonging. This cannot be guaranteed by policy; however, certain things can be done to facilitate its development.

- Firstly, a strong democratic structure in which all voices can be heard and in which debate and disagreement are resolved in a just manner. This must operate at local, regional, national and international levels. Meaningful participation from all communities at the most appropriate level of decision-making is crucial, from parliamentarians and policymakers to school governors and CDRP members.
- Secondly, building a pluralistic human rights culture as the basis of shared values in our society. The passing of the Human Rights Act was a significant landmark. Moving to ensure that the Act is properly understood and respected is now a key task. Human Rights are the necessary basis of the moral community of a democracy.
- Thirdly, ensuring equal citizenship in which every member of the community feels equally valued and enjoys the same rights and opportunities. Tackling institutional racism, combating inequalities in health, housing, access to employment, inequalities in education, and discrimination in the criminal justice system, as well as combating racist and other hate crime, are all part of building the sense of common belonging.

One of the tasks in delivering civil renewal is, then, to recognise the role it must play in promoting race equality and creating the conditions for meaningful community cohesion. Too often the civil renewal agenda reflects on changing governance and democratic structures without recognising this key role.

- How can race equality and cohesion be embedded in a civil renewal agenda?
- What benefits should we expect from civil renewal in terms of race equality and community cohesion?
- Can civil renewal be a tool to empower previously disadvantaged communities?
- How can civil renewal respond to individuals’ multiple identities, mutating racisms, and rapidly changing communities?
Conclusion

This paper aims to frame a debate on civil renewal in relation to ethnic diversity. Given the
diffuse nature of the agenda and its implications across such a broad range of policy areas, a
focus of this type provides a space that would not otherwise exist. Runnymede is working with
others to bring a wide range of individuals and organisations together, and enable open and
frank engagement with the issues. It is hoped that this debate will support the activities of policy
makers, the voluntary/community sectors, and wider civil society in ensuring that as these
policy frameworks develop the needs of all communities are taken into account and good
relations between communities are at the forefront of the agenda.

By focusing on these six key issues, we hope that a wider range of people will be enabled to
engage with this debate. The outcomes will be crucial for the future shape of our polity.
Successful approaches to civil renewal could have significant benefits for race equality and
community cohesion across the UK, but only if we are willing to tackle the difficult issues
addressed in this paper.

The process is an ongoing one. Readers are asked to join the debate by responding to this
paper, contributing to Runnymede conferences on the topic, and sharing discussion across
their networks and among their peers. Race equality is not an optional extra. Reform of the way
in which the state interacts with citizens must also be an exercise in addressing the impact of
racisms and an opportunity to build a successful multi-ethnic society.

About Runnymede
Founded in 1968, Runnymede is a leading independent think tank on ethnicity and cultural diversity. Our
mandate since inception has been to challenge racial discrimination, to influence related legislation and to
promote a successful multi-ethnic Britain. Runnymede fulfils its mandate through timely, high-visibility,
leading-edge policy research. We advise our target audiences on how best to promote the value of
diversity in our communities. Our ideas and research are of relevance to the policy-making community,
the private sector, and of course the voluntary sector, both in the UK and the rest of Europe.

For further detail about this research or any area of Runnymede’s work please visit our website
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