Developing Community Cohesion
Understanding the Issues, Delivering Solutions
# Developing Community Cohesion

**Understanding the Issues, Delivering Solutions**

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About Runnymede

Our mandate is to promote a successful multi-ethnic Britain – a Britain where citizens and communities feel valued, enjoy equal opportunities to develop their talents, lead fulfilling lives and accept collective responsibility, all in the spirit of civic friendship, shared identity and a common sense of belonging. We act as a bridge-builder between various minority ethnic communities and policy-makers. We believe that the way ahead lies in building effective partnerships and we are continually developing these with the voluntary sector, the government, local authorities and companies in the UK and Europe. We stimulate debate and suggest forward-looking strategies in areas of public policy such as education, the criminal justice system, employment and citizenship.

Acknowledgements

Runnymede would like to thank all those who contributed to making this conference such a successful event: speakers, workshop presenters and moderators, active participants and engaged audiences.

Special thanks go to the Home Office’s Community Cohesion Unit for their support, in helping to mount the October conference which marked the second anniversary of the publication of the Parekh Report, and for helping to finance the production of this Conference Special.

Vic McLaren, principal organiser of the conference, had been seconded to Runnymede from the Home Office as a Policy Adviser in 2002/3. Assembling these conference proceedings was one of the last activities Vic completed before returning to the Civil Service, and we would like to thank him for his energetic organising of and input to a year of Community Cohesion for Runnymede, as described in the Conference Foreword.

The views represented in this publication, with the exception of the Runnymede editorial, are of necessity personal – whether they are those of an organisation or an individual – and may not represent either Government’s or Runnymede’s policy positions. However, they do represent deeply held convictions about the best ways to promote community cohesion within a modern, multi-ethnic society.
Runnymede and the Community Cohesion Debate

The Runnymede Trust has been a big player in the community cohesion debate over the past 18 months, despite its relatively small size. Runnymede has attempted to position itself as a ‘critical friend’ of government, and to work on issues of particular contemporary concern. During 2002 – following the previous summer’s ‘disturbances’, it could be argued that community cohesion was one of the Government’s principal concerns – it was certainly one of the Home Office’s most pressing considerations.

Runnymede had a particular stake in the issue of social and community cohesion, for, back in the autumn of 2000, the Trust had published the Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (CFM EB), a commission chaired by Lord Parekh, who gave his name to the report. The report is still relevant today, over two and a half years since its initial publication. The CFM EB report was wide-ranging in the scope of its recommendations, but also extremely prescient in anticipating and articulating a number of concerns which arose in the wake of disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. In the report, there is an influential chapter (Ch.4) which stresses the importance of linking cohesion closely with issues around difference and equality.

The CFM EB report had a difficult birth. Newspapers such as the Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph seized on one particular chapter (a chapter which cast a critical eye over conventional accounts of British history) and seriously misquoted, or misinterpreted, one solitary paragraph, to suggest to its readership that the Commissioners felt the term ‘British’ was racist. There then followed examples of lazy journalism, where reporters from other newspapers took their lead from the Telegraph, without bothering to go back to the primary source, and so, in consequence, the authors of the report were called upon to defend views they did not actually hold, and the report itself became political hot property.

This digression is necessary because it may explain why, amongst the welter of reports and recommendations which emerged in the run-up to Christmas of 2001, no references to the Parekh report were to be found. While the Denham, Cantle, Ouseley, Clarke, and Ritchie reports were all important in their own way, none was so carefully crafted, and with such a strong national focus, as the Parekh R report. This was understandable, for the Commission had had two long years in which to undertake its work, whilst Clarke and Ritchie had had to respond to the immediate and pressing concerns of their localities, and Ted Cantle’s independent review team and the inter-ministerial group had only three months in which to try to distil some common themes and to identify lessons.

On the whole, the various reports did a creditable job in a very short period of time, providing a plausible analysis of the causes of the disturbances:

- lack of civic identity
- fragmentation of communities
- disengagement of young people from decision-making
- weak political and community leadership
- high levels of unemployment
- activities of extremist groups
- disparity in police responses
- irresponsible press coverage

The Government responded to all of this with commendable urgency. The Denham report provided that rare commodity, a concise overview of all government policies having a bearing on cohesion. John Denham, the then minister for cohesion, made clear he wanted all of the issues tackled quickly. A dedicated unit established in the Home Office during spring 2002 has been, and continues to be, both productive and receptive to external ideas and participation.

Runnymede has been supportive of the Community Cohesion Unit, and fully endorsed the decision to make ‘community cohesion’ a defined aim of central and local government. But as a critical friend would, it also took an early opportunity to raise a number of concerns:

First, Runnymede felt a need to draw attention to the lack of definition in the Denham and Cantle reports regarding the term ‘community cohesion’. Was this simply a new term for ‘race relations’, rather in the same way that ‘urban regeneration’ had metamorphosed into ‘neighbourhood renewal’, or ‘poverty’ into ‘social exclusion’? On the face of it, the term appeared to conflate separate concerns about public order (the initial focus of government concern) with issues around social connectedness and social capital, along with matters of social and racial equality.

Second, questions were raised about the recommendation made by the Cantle Team, but endorsed by ministers, for a national debate on the subject. For Runnymede, the questions this raised were:
How was this debate to be conducted?
Who would be consulted?
When would the process be completed?
And (finally) how would government know when to signal closure?

Most of those questions have an enduring relevance. In order to kick-start this process of debate, Runnymede, in conjunction with the Industrial Society (now the Work Foundation), mounted an event in March 2002 providing the minister, John Denham, with a platform to set out the government’s plans for tackling the problems. (This presentation appears here on pp. 4-5.) Runnymede also dedicated a significant part of the Spring issue of its Quarterly Bulletin (no. 329, March 2002) to the issues raised in the various reports of inquiry, and the ensuing media coverage.

Attention was drawn to the fact that some critics had seen the summer disturbances as signalling a failure of multiculturalism, and that the power of choice for different communities to express their specific values (perceived by some as acts of self-segregation) had led to a breakdown in community relations through a lack of shared ‘British’ identity. This provided the opportunity for Runnymede to re-establish the importance of the precepts set out in the Parekh Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. As indicated earlier, the R epor t anticipated a number of the concerns voiced in the wake of the disturbances. Echoing the Parekh R epor t, Runnymede researchers argued that a successful multicultural society did not require a single common identity to hold it together; on the contrary, what was needed was an agreed set of moral values and principles—a commitment to democracy, equality and so on, together with a shared political culture, in the sense of institutions and practices (commitment to the rule of law, etc.). From our point of view, it was not entirely clear which of these positions the government supported, but this was subsequently clarified in the Home Office’s Strategic Framework of June 2003, which refers to the possible desirability of articulating a ‘small set of shared values’ (H O SF S ummary p.12).

In the same Bulletin, attention was drawn to some of the shortcomings of the Denham and Cantle reports, namely:

- Insufficient attention to the historical context of the disorder (e.g. no mention of previous mainland disturbances, or Lord Scarman’s Inquiry, etc.).
- A downgrading of the significance of economic factors, rendering suspect some of the comparative material.
- The decision to privilege deficiencies in civic leadership above issues of race and racism.

As a critical friend, Runnymede felt its duty was to be active in informing and influencing the substance of the national debate. To that end, in May 2002, it sponsored an international conference, in conjunction with LSE, to consider the philosophical and theoretical aspects of the concept of cohesion. The report of that conference (entitled C ohesion, Community and Citizenship) has been highly influential, particularly the chapter by Lord Parekh on the issue of common belonging, which Runnymede perceives as central to the community cohesion debate.

Then in October 2002, to coincide with the second anniversary of the Parekh R epor t, and with funding from the Home Office, Runnymede mounted a major national conference on the practical aspects of building cohesion from the respective vantage points of:

- neighbourhood renewal
- community safety
- employment
- education
- arts, media and sport
- health and social welfare

This Conference (entitled C ommunity Cohesion: Understanding the Issues, Delivering Solutions’) gave an opportunity to participants from all over the country to influence the governmental agenda by directly tackling issues of particular concern to the Community Cohesion Unit (CCU). Conference coverage appeared in the December issue of the R unnymede Bulletin (no. 332), but this publication brings together all of the keynote speeches from the Community Cohesion conference alongside specially commissioned articles based on conference presentations and policy discussion groups conducted on the day, as well as material from previous 2002 conferences.

Positive Progress

So, what is Runnymede’s assessment of progress, so far, in terms of the national debate and the government’s achievements in building community cohesion? In May 2002, for instance, the Home Office and Local Government Association drafted a satisfactory working definition of ‘community cohesion’, which states that it can be deemed to exist where:

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

In December 2002, the CCU, along with the Local Government Association and others, produced some very useful guidance to assist local authorities in developing quality community cohesion plans.

In addition, the CCU currently works with a number of ‘practitioner’ groups, broadly recruited and from outside of government (including 3 Runnymede nominees), tackling complex issues, along with 14 pathfinder projects, and a commitment to promote best practice emerging through the Beacon Council process.

Moreover, although Runnymede still believes the Parekh R epor t to have been unfairly marginalised upon publication (and that an effect of that marginalisation has
been to deter rather than foster progress on some aspects of promoting cohesive communities), nevertheless the Government has shown increasing signs of a preparedness to engage with the CFMEB agenda, for example, making positive comments about the R eport in a House of Lords debate, and at the October 2002 Conference. Furthermore, recent analysis suggests that something in the order of 70% of CFMEB recommendations addressed to Government have now been taken forward – or at least partially implemented.

Runnymede is generally supportive of the work of the Inter-Departmental M inisterial Group in its attempts to join up various departmental initiatives; is supportive of the community leadership role envisaged for local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships; and fully backs the Government’s argument that community cohesion needs to be mainstreamed.

On the Negative Side
Although there was little sign in 2002 of a repeat of 2001’s disturbances, there were worrying gains made by the BNP in Burnley, Blackburn and H altex. In the council elections of May 2003, the BNP failed to make the inroads it was hoping for in Oldham, Bradford and places such as Sunderland, where it had put up record numbers of candidates, but it did consolidate its position in Burnley. There is still plenty of evidence of ‘communities without hope’, particularly in the North and the Midlands, as well as the prevalence of racism. However, some of the BNP successes, in Burnley at least, have not taken place in the most deprived wards, but in the more affluent white suburbs. It would be wrong to pay too much attention to just one locality, but the fact remains that since the disturbances of 2001, Bradford, Oldham and Burnley remain very much at the centre of national attention, both singularly and collectively.

Whilst Burnley continues to endure particular problems, Bradford Council has invested heavily in trying to address community cohesion alongside its long-term vision for regenerating the city. Sharmila Gandhi, the Chief Executive of Bradford Vision, who spoke at the Conference has prepared a detailed postscript, and will be reporting further on progress for our September 2003 Bulletin. In Oldham, councillors rejected a number of the criticisms made by their independent commission of inquiry, and shortly thereafter found themselves castigated by the Audit Commission for failing to adequately get to grips with race issues.

If ‘community cohesion’ is to be successfully developed and realised as an aim of government, both centrally and locally, then there needs to be some common currency in the discourse around it. The baseline assessments and quality-of-life indicators proposed in the recently published guidance should assist with this process.

Local Authority community cohesion plans will need to be successfully integrated into the community planning process, and these initiatives properly linked with the implementation of the Race Relations Amendment Act, for as the FM E B commissioners have emphasised, effective policies around cohesion must be linked to those around diversity and equality.

The Government itself will need to re-evaluate its regional policy. With the new accent on ‘delivery’ rather than policy formulation there is the potential for more governmental activity to be devolved to the regions, particularly to areas which need a fillip to reinvigorate the local economy, rather than in the overheated southeast of England.

Finally, Runnymede offers a couple of suggestions which would assist the whole community cohesion agenda.

- First, the implementation of the CFMEB recommendation that Britain be formally declared a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. This would give impetus to the development of ideas for what should constitute citizenship in the 21st century.
- Second, working towards the uncoupling of issues around immigration and asylum and community cohesion in the public perception. Those involved in the disturbances of 2001 were not recent migrants, but sometimes third- or fourth-generation Asian Britons.

The policy frameworks and ideas of the late 1960s, which still inform many aspects of Government thinking, are no longer relevant for the year 2003, which is why the CFMEB report remains the best available template yet for promoting both the idea and the possible achievement of a successful multi-ethnic Britain.

Structure of This Publication
The first part of this publication is given over to reproducing the keynote speeches from the October Community Cohesion conference, but to give the maximum flavour of the continuing community cohesion debate we have exercised a degree of editorial licence in our arrangement of the material.

First, we have included John Denham’s speech to the Runnymede/Industrial Society event of March 2002, at which time the term ‘community cohesion’ still had an unfamiliar ring to it. This speech sets out the emerging governmental agenda, and provides the context for the subsequent Ministerial speech by the (then) new Minister for Community Cohesion, Beverley Hughes, six months on.

Sharmila Gandhi’s original conference speech, a little over a year, has been replaced by a new summary from Sharmila on the prevailing situation in Bradford.

The Conference attracted a particularly high calibre of keynote speaker, and Runnymede received many plaudits from those attending the Conference for having been able to set out the issues as they are experienced by people dealing with them on a day-to-day basis. Runnymede, therefore, owes a great debt to our distinguished speakers for having hit the right notes, and, by faithfully reproducing their contributions here, we hope that we have succeeded in recapturing the mood of what was a groundbreaking conference.
Promoting Community Cohesion


Early in 2002 Runnymede invited the then Minister for Public Order and Community Cohesion, John Denham, to set out his thoughts on how to begin the task of promoting community cohesion.

By organising this conference today the Runnymede Trust and the Industrial Society are demonstrating the usefulness of bringing people together to discuss issues around community cohesion and arising from the events of last summer. I don’t think any of us can pretend that we have all of the analysis or all of the answers to what are complex questions and some new things that have been put on the agenda for policy-making in this country. So it is very useful to have an event in which people do come together to share their ideas about the nature of these issues and what the answers could and should be.

The Analysis

The issues are obviously complex. There are no simple answers and it is a good thing that we have had such a wide range of speakers I just want, in the time that I have got, to talk about some of the things that Government has been doing around community cohesion. There is no doubt that what happened in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, and of course in other places, that things have been done in the past. But I think we have to have at least the aspiration that they shall be done differently from the way they had been done before.

And I think that at the end of last year various people were able to pull together a wealth of analysis and insight into what was going on. There were obviously the major reports: from Ted Cantle and his group; from David Ritchie and Tony Clarke on Burnley; and prior to that of course we had Herman Ouseley’s work on Bradford. And I chaired the group of Ministers that pulled together the report on what the Government was intending to do that was published at the same time as those reports.

I do think, if you read them collectively, you get a very good idea of what their strengths and weaknesses might be. They have a remarkable amount of consistency in analysis and in policy recommendations. They propose a very consistent series of challenges to the way that things have been done in the past and I think we have to have at least the aspiration that they mark a turning-point in some key areas of social policy, and that people hopefully in 5 years’ time, will be able to look back and say that that was the time people started trying to do some things differently from the way they had been done before.

What are they telling us? I think they are telling us one thing that is very important: whilst the drive for equality is vital for positive race and community relations, it can’t operate in a vacuum or be achieved in a vacuum. It needs more than just a drive for a policy to ensure that we are a cohesive society that shares common values and in which everybody feels that they have a full stake, and in which everybody feels that they are a full citizen. And one of the key conclusions is that we have to have the opportunity for debate and discussion to enable that vision of a future society to take place. I am in no doubt that the solutions to the problems that were revealed by the disturbances last summer lie in the hands of local people themselves. In local communities, towns and cities, people must find the ways of overcoming the suspicions and misunderstandings that were highlighted by all the reports. At the end of the day it is local people who are going to have to work out and implement a different and more positive vision for where they live. And I do accept that Government has a role and an important one in revitalising communities and in building community cohesion, through our support for regeneration, through national policies and programmes on housing, education, policing and the youth service, and through the support we can give to local leaders who now find even bigger responsibilities on their shoulders.

The Emerging Community Cohesion Agenda

What are some of the key features now on the community cohesion agenda? As I have just said, I think the events of the summer bring a new context to the work to which we are already committed on race equality. They tell us we have to go beyond a narrow commitment to race equality if we are going to generate truly cohesive communities. Of course, and there should be absolutely no room for doubt here, we must ensure that equality exists in the delivery of every public service, in housing, education, health or employment. And the newly passed Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) is going to push the promotion of equality in public services and is going to reinforce the work towards good community relations.

We must, absolutely, continue to tackle and challenge racist behaviour and discrimination and, of course, as part of that work we have to question why it is that often black and ethnic minority people who experience poor housing have poor achievement at school and high levels of unemployment. But I do think that nothing is more dangerous than giving the impression that this is a process driven by statistics rather than a process that is for people. That all the efforts are targeted at those communities that are most statistically deprived to the exclusion of other communities, particularly the white community or those parts of the white community that suffer similar levels of deprivation. Or an approach that ignores the significant differences within and between different minority communities as well as the majority community.

Now I am not saying this is what happens at the moment, but the perception of that being the case is not something we can ignore.

Ted Cantle’s report and indeed the others were full of instances of local people of all communities who felt they were being done down to the benefit of someone else. Even regeneration itself, which has to be the key to raising living standards and opportunity, has become in some places the source of conflict, misunderstanding and jealousy. So when we are approaching towns and communities as fragmented as those that were involved last summer, when different communities live lives as separate as some of those who spoke to Ted Cantle last summer, something more is needed than what we have done in the past. And of course regeneration is essential: all of the efforts are targeted at those communities that are most deprived in the country.

The Need for Debate

We cannot assume that regeneration itself will be enough. We have to get people themselves involved. When you have got fragmented communities when you have got people leading separate lives, all sorts of misunderstandings grow up. People assume that communities have values and aspirations that are fundamentally different without understanding or knowing what they are or even if this is true. People assume that people live the way they do from choice not from other pressures, and
as long as people are not actually talking to each other, those misconceptions are going to persist. Without the ability to discuss or debate we are not going to generate a common vision of how our towns and cities should develop. Without discussion and debate we are not going to be able to articulate common British values and have the confidence that our respect for diversity and our opposition to racism is founded on clear, common principles. And without a positive effort to promote contact and discussion and debate within and between communities, we will not be able to ensure that all voices are heard, the voices of deprived white communities as well as those of minority communities, the voices of young people as well as those of their parents and grandparents, the voices of women as well as the voices of men.

My reason for stressing this today is that such debates and discussions won't just happen, nor can we rely on a process of regeneration, for example, for that debate and discussion to take place. To bring it about is going to take local leadership of great vision and quality, certainly yes from the political leadership of all mainstream parties, but also from the leadership of faith groups, of voluntary organisations, of public sector institutions and from the business community. And the type of discussion and debate that needs to take place will not all be in one place, in one meeting or at one event, it needs to take place across the activities of different organisations, with every organisation asking what it can do to take these issues forward. And when we as Ministers at the end of last year called for community cohesion plans, that is really what we had in mind. Not a new plan but a commitment by local council officials who have been locked away in a cupboard for a few months to draw up the latest plan, but an attempt to challenge each local organisation to identify what it can do.

Progress with and by Government

As I have set the scene, let me talk very briefly about the things that Government has done over the last few months to take these issues forward. I think we have begun work. We are working with partners in local government and inside and outside government. Some of the things we have done have been quite simple but well received. We have tried to channel funds into activities that will promote opportunities for young people from different communities involved in activities together. We want to repeat the activities we undertook last year this summer; we have more time to do it in a targeted way and in a way that more directly promotes community cohesion. We will also in the short term put some money into Bradford, Oldham and Burnley and a number of other towns for activities over the Easter holidays. We are making available to local communities and authorities what we call community facilitators – people who have some skills in brokering discussion and debate between people from different communities, whether that is amongst young people or the wider community. So there is some resource going into local areas that can help generate the kind of local discussion that I have been talking about already. We are setting up community support teams particularly at the moment to help Bradford, Burnley and Oldham but in due course with other local authorities to develop the local capacity to lead on community cohesion issues. Essentially, though I probably painted a rather negative picture earlier, the reality is that not every town or city that has faced these issues in the past has failed. Many places have been successful whether in policing, housing policy or whatever. So we want to make available people with considerable expertise who are able to work in those areas that are facing these challenges over the first time to help them be successful in delivering policy change. We are trying to back up these early initiatives by the way that we are working in Government. The Ministerial Group that I chaired continues to meet and it is now supported by a dedicated unit based in the Home Office with links to all the major Government departments so that we are coordinating community cohesion activities across Government. And we have asked Ted Cantle to work with a group of people to continue to advise us and Government departments and local authorities and others in the development of work around community cohesion. We want as a group of Ministers to work with Ted and his colleagues in a new or unconventional way for Whitehall. They will be working with us very closely indeed and if we see the need, or they advise us, to concentrate on regeneration policy or youth policy or elements of education policy, we will have a team with external expertise able not just to advise us as Ministers but to work with our officials and with those people out there in the field who have to ability to make change happen. And having worked very positively with Ted and his team when they were producing the Cantle report we will look forward to continuing that relationship in the future.

Towards Solutions

Ministers have visited regularly – some people say too much; some say you can't have too much of a good thing – but between us we have visited the towns that have had the disturbances and other parts of the country with similar characteristics. I think there is a real willingness to learn the lessons of the past and engage with the type of agenda I have set out. I don't think that any of us are under any illusions. Some of these problems have taken many years to become entrenched, to become manifest in local communities and they are not going to be solved overnight. But I think the commitment that is now developing to break down the barriers to achievement, to participation to overcoming those separate lives and fragmented communities is a very real one.

I am delighted to have been here this afternoon to share some thoughts on the way we are approaching things but I end by saying what I said at the beginning. None of us thinks or assumes that we have all of the answers readily to hand to all the issues that we are now confronting. It is very much a process where we are trying to identify what has worked in different parts of the country and what has failed. So I am not here as the fount of exclusive knowledge on how to tackle these things but as someone who is interested in your own discussions and your own debates so that we can continue to draw on them in the way that we do.

Following this conference, Runnymede staged an international conference in May 2002, in conjunction with the London School of Economics, to explore the theoretical underpinnings of community cohesion. The proceedings of this conference are available (see below for details).
Conference Presentations

Michelynn Lafièche, Director of the Runnymede Trust, opened the conference by introducing Bhikhu Parekh as conference chair:

Bhikhu is a trustee of Runnymede, and has been for many years. He also chaired the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. This was a Runnymede Commission, and today we are celebrating the second anniversary of the publication of its final Report. Bhikhu is also a member of the House of Lords and an extremely active member too.

Introduction:
Bringing the Metaphor to Life

Bhikhu Parekh

It's nearly two years since the Runnymede Trust published its Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. The Report had a difficult birth, but it was sturdy enough to survive the initial trauma and has, I like to believe, had a healthy influence on the public discourse on race in Britain.

The Report - no report can be final - has to be judged by two criteria: (1) does it put important issues on the public agenda? and (2) does it indicate how those issues can best be tackled?

Its answers may not survive; its recommendations may change with changes in circumstances; but its diagnosis of the situation and the general direction in which the answer has to be found are the two criteria by which the Report has to be judged. I like to believe that, with all its limitations, the Report brought extremely important issues to the public agenda, issues which will continue to occupy a pre-eminent place in our public life.

I have in mind issues like British national identity, how to reconstruct the traditional narrative, cohesion, the nature of racism and ways of tackling it, how to combine equality with difference, and so on. Today's conference has grown out of the issues that the Report placed on the public agenda. The Report has some very important things to say about cohesion. I don't need to go through all of it here because we need to explore these issues afresh, but it wouldn't be proper for us not to remember what the Report did actually say on the question of cohesion.

First, it asked what we mean by cohesion. After all, cohesion is a metaphor, and sounds like an adhesive which is supposed to bring people together. Second, what are its limits? How cohesive can a society be consistent with individual liberty and differences? And, third, how do we go about achieving it?

On the notion of what we mean by cohesion the Report says that it means three things. A society is cohesive if (a) its members have a common commitment to the well-being of the community and are related to each other in a way that they are not related to outsiders; (b) its members are able to find their way around in it, that is, if they know how to navigate their way through their society, if they understand its conceptual or cultural grammar, and know how to relate to each other; and (c) its members share a climate of mutual trust, and know that were they to make sacrifices today for the wider community, it will take care of them when the need arises.

Obviously cohesion has limits. Since a society consists of human beings who want to make their own choices, especially a liberal society like ours, where people want to lead their own ways of life according to their own values, then obviously that society can't be cohesive in the same way, let's say, as a bee hive can be, or a tyrannical society. Therefore the Report made it clear that a cohesive society does not rule out three things.

It doesn't rule out differences, and some of these would be deep differences, because we have different moral and social biographies, see life differently, and are bound to take different views of
how we should live and how Britain should be organised. Second, it cannot rule out disagreements, because we are bound to disagree on how our society should develop, the acceptable limits of government action, and so on. Third, it cannot rule out disobedience either; because differences may be so significant that one might feel inclined to stand up and say that this is not the way our society or government should move. Social cohesion is necessarily limited in terms of difference, disagreement and disobedience.

That brings me to the third question: namely, how do we go about fostering cohesion? The Report suggests that there are five things we need to do if we wish to create a cohesive society.

(a) Ensure equal legitimacy for all citizens; that is, all citizens are equally legitimate members of the community, and are entitled to equal rights and equal life chances.

(b) Equality cannot mean uniformity. Different people have different needs, different biographies, different aspirations, different conceptions of life, and therefore equality has to be reconciled with their differences. Equality is not irrespective of differences, it's irrespective of irrelevant differences, but not irrespective of relevant and important differences. We should take full account of differences, but not in such a way that it leads to discrimination. Likewise we should take full account of equality, but not in such a way that we forget differences.

(c) Elimination of racism. Racism is exclusionary and discourages a common sense of belonging. We should remain alert to the new forms of racism that our society tends to throw up, and explore the best ways of tackling them.

(d) In order to achieve cohesion, we need to foster common values, shared symbols, shared ceremonies, in short, a common national identity.

(e) Finally, the Report says if we want to achieve cohesion, we need to make sure that our public institutions and public services embody these four principles. Cohesion cannot be achieved by constantly lecturing to people that they are all British and should behave as one. People must feel in their day-to-day lives, in terms of their daily experiences, that they belong to the same community, and that can only be achieved if our public institutions and public services embody the principles that I talked about earlier, whether it's the police service, the health service or the schools. All these institutions should be so structured and services so delivered that all are treated equally, their differences are recognised, and a sense of common commitment and community is built among them.

I am delighted that the Runnymede Trust has organised this conference in collaboration with the Home Office. It is a tribute to the Home Office that it is prepared to welcome independent and critical thinking; and it's a tribute to the Runnymede Trust that it is prepared to appreciate the political constraints of what can and cannot be done, and is prepared to go beyond what the Report had said.

The Trust of course has a wider agenda than merely dealing with the question of cohesion. It is concerned with many of the large issues that the Report has raised. In 2003 Runnymede wants to concentrate on questions of government leadership, regulation and inspection, and also on the large body of questions raised by devolution. Thanks to the Report and the critical attention that it received, the Runnymede Trust has a clearly thought-out vision which it is prepared to debate, defend and disseminate, and that kind of vision calls for well thought-out, concrete policies in different areas of life, such as education, immigration, asylum seekers, social services and housing. And our concern today is to make sure that we think hard and arrive at concrete, well thought-out policies in terms of which this kind of vision can be articulated.

Before I invite Mr Blair to speak I particularly want to thank Michelynn Laflièche, who has been leading the Runnymede Trust with great intelligence and sensitivity, and two other individuals, namely Victor McLaren (who was seconded to us from the Home Office) and Rob Berkeley: both of them have done a splendid job in putting together the various conferences this year.

Rob Berkeley, Vic McLaren and Michelynn Laflièche (L–R). All three were instrumental in developing the 2002 Runnymede conference programme, which actively explored issues of Community Cohesion.
Thank you Bhikhu. It's a little-known fact about me that when I was at Oxford University what I wanted to be was an actor, so to appear on the stage at the Barbican is something that's a great pleasure.

What I thought I would do this morning is to talk for 15–20 minutes or so, and then take questions on anything that you care to raise with me. In tackling this concept of policing a multi-ethnic society, a multi-ethnic Britain, I would like to look at policing as a contributor to community cohesion, but also, particularly with this audience in mind, policing as an exemplar of organisational change and impact in relation to the whole issue around diversity. So I am going to reflect on the Met's journey – which is not only ours but that of the community as a whole – and I'm going to think back to the significance and the enduring challenge of the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence. I'm also going to briefly review the last 12 months, which will be of interest to many in the audience here, and take a look at the issues ahead and their potential solutions.

My main thesis is that the aftermath of Stephen Lawrence's death is the greatest opportunity that policing in Britain has ever had. It's been a seismic event, changing the operating culture of the Metropolitan Police in particular; and events during the last 12 months have perhaps shown that some parts of that change have had an impact, in that some of the disturbances to social cohesion occurred away from London rather than in it. But there is no complacency to be derived from this, and I am going to finish by suggesting that there are huge challenges about the ownership of policing and community cohesion by a diverse community, and there are also challenges which I am sure you will explore during the day about the place of race within the hierarchy, as it were, of diversity.

So how did we get to where we were in the Stephen Lawrence events, and how do we move on from here? I would like to read an extract from a speech that I made a week before the Macpherson report was published. It created quite a storm at the time, but it's a reflection that is still worth thinking about, and that was in 1999, but it is still relevant to where are we now. In the speech I talk about the fact that:

"the next response must be the elevation of inclusiveness to be the hallmark of British policing. By “inclusiveness” I mean something very specific – an active reaching out to a diverse community. In common with many organisations, the Police Service is replacing equal opportunities policies with diversity statements [this was 1999], but by inclusiveness, I mean going past that to make the welcoming of diverse traditions central to the police service. Twenty-five years ago Sir Robert Mark wrote that “The Police are the anvil on which society beats out the problems and abrasions of social inequality, racial prejudice, weak laws and ineffective legislation”. If you will pardon the pun, the anvil is the very striking image – it’s solid, it’s
old-fashioned (if not quite obsolescent), and it's something which things are done to, but does not change as a result. There could scarcely be a better simile for the culture of the police – at its best brave (sometimes heart-stoppingly brave), capable, imperturbable, offering equality of treatment before the law, a safe haven. We all know examples of police culture at its worst, but even at its best it is not fitted to handle the disparate and shifting requirements of modern society. So if there is modernisation to do, it's here, because whatever is the internal cultural will be mirrored in the way the Service treats those with whom it comes into contact. The Service has been like one of those sleeping industrial giants which didn't notice change in the marketplace, like IBM refusing to accept the onset of personal computers, or Chrysler rejecting the notion that Americans might like small cars. So the police service is still seeking to serve a multi-cultural and modern Britain with a homogeneous and traditional working culture. But this is not about race solely, it's about the mind-set of the organisation. Talking to women officers, for instance (and as a generalisation), they clearly feel that they have to adapt to a male ethos. Only just now in my old Service (Surrey) are gay and lesbian officers feeling confident enough to come out. A recent forum for ethnic minority officers in my Service revealed little about prejudice or abuse in the workplace, but quite a lot about an unspoken requirement to adopt the mores of a white culture. So, in my opinion, the issue of race which appears to be so central to the debate after Macpherson, needs to be seen in the wider context of an overall working culture which quite frankly is now old fashioned.”

That was in 1999, and now I'm going to talk a little bit about where we've come in the last 3 years. But I'd like to give you a bit of a brief history, if I might, before we get to that point.

The second quote that I've got is this one, from the weekend of 10-12 April 1981:

‘... the British people watched with horror and incredulity an instant audio-visual presentation on their television sets of scenes of violence and disorder in their capital city, the like of which had not previously been seen in this century in Britain. In the centre of Brixton a few hundred young people, most, but not of all of them, black, attacked the Police on the streets with stones, bricks, iron bars and petrol bombs, demonstrating to millions of their fellow citizens the fragile basis of the Queen's peace…’

That, of course, was paragraph four of Lord Scarman's Report into the Brixton disorders. And were we surprised? Yes we were, but we shouldn't have been because there had been race riots in London for the previous 30 years, starting in Notting Hill in the 1950s. Of course, Brixton was followed by other disturbances around the country, and then 4 years later by the events of Broadwater Farm.

Scarman's Report is a brilliant analysis, but what followed were recommendations, endless discussions, training events, race relations meetings, equal opportunities. But in the Macpherson Report there is a very interesting statement, from one of the contributors, who talked about minority ethnic communities being under-protected and over-policed, and nothing having changed from Scarman to Lawrence. I think this is to do with (first) an imperial isolationism, the concept of Britain as a white nation believing itself to preside benignly over a Black and Asian empire, and ignoring the contribution of Black and Asian people to Britain itself during the 20th century. And, second, what I consider to be the famous mistake of fair play, that wonderful export of the British ruling classes based on cricket (a game of enormous duplicity and low cunning) which was put forward as a fair play process, because everything that Scarman said was interpreted by a White Establishment as being about treating everybody the same – if you treated everybody the same then you were treating everybody fairly, and I have heard people say in those 20 years: ‘I police in a colour blind way… I police everybody equally’. - a ‘when in Rome do as the Romans do’ argument. And if we look at the Establishment (of which the police were part) it’s not surprising that we weren't listening.

Of 50 Police Chiefs in the United Kingdom, one is non-white. Of the 250 members of the Association of Chief Police Officers (which is the next grade down), there are only three more that are not white. Of the 1200 district judges in England and Wales only 17 are not white. Of the 559 circuit judges only 5 are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Of the 102 judges of the High Court, all are white; and all of the Lord Justices of Appeal are white. No mainstream newspaper or TV channel has a black proprietor or a black editor. There are only three Bishops who are non-white in the Church of England, and I have very rarely met any Black bankers. And yet 5.5% of the population of the United Kingdom at the last census were from ethnic minority backgrounds, and of the 32 London boroughs, 5 have minority ethnic populations of over 30%, with one borough now reaching 45%, and we are constantly engaging with third- and fourth-generation Black Britons. But the ship of state sailed on. It certainly did in policing terms.

The Report of the Macpherson Inquiry into Lawrence I describe as the best possible night-time reading for police officers... it makes you pull the blankets over your head, because it gets worse and worse.'
said - that officers at the scene appeared to have assumed that there had been a black-on-black fight, and had ignored any evidence of white involvement. Officers involved in the family liaison duties had been insensitive to the needs and view points of black families; officers central to the investigation had refused, in the face of almost overwhelming evidence, to accept that the crime was racist in origin. Throughout the investigation, and indeed during the proceedings of the inquiry, officers used racist, inappropriate and offensive language. When officers were faced by criticism from legal representatives of the Lawrences, they used hostile and negative stereotypes of black activists to brief an ever-jaundiced media. But, interestingly, the Report found no evidence of deliberate discrimination - officers were merely requiring the Lawrences to behave first as they expected white working-class people to behave, and second refusing to acknowledge nor make allowances for the black community's different experience and expectation of policing.

It was a devastating report for the Metropolitan Police. It shook its foundations, of course, with the famous definition of institutional racism ("the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin"). It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantaged minority ethnic people. That is quite a way to get your greatest ever opportunity for change. But that is what has happened ... the Met has recast itself as an organisation, and this is where I want to get into the exemplar piece.

What we did was to operationalise anti-racism. As John Grieve (who was first appointed to head the Race and Violent Crime Task Force) made clear, his job was to make arresting racists as significant a cultural icon in the Metropolitan Police as arresting armed robbers and terrorists. And we have seen a growth in the reporting of racist crime by 400%; we have seen a 300% growth in the number of arrests for racist offences; we have created community safety units in every borough dealing with race hate, with homophobia, with domestic violence (there are 450 officers working in those units). We have provided a new method of family liaison training, with 500 staff trained, and much of that training is about the cultural needs of families from different backgrounds. We have put all of our senior managers through critical incident training which takes cases and then, over a weekend, takes people through the way in which they develop.

But I would also like to pay particular tribute to those who had the vision to bring into the Met our Advisory Groups - two in particular: we have an independent advisory group dealing with issues of Race; and we have a Lesbian/ Gay /Bisexual /Trans-gender advisory group. These are our most or were (and still are sometimes) our most uncomfortable critics. We sit down with them and they give us the criticism and we listen and sometimes we disagree; and Beverley Thompson and Linda Bellos who run those groups have been fantastic helpers to the Met. It has not always been comfortable. We've developed staff associations of all sorts of different religious and racial backgrounds, particularly the Black Police Officers Association, and for instance the Muslim Police Association that gave us the idea of having a uniformed hajib for women Muslim officers. I met my first Muslim Detective Sergeant the other day (female) that puts Morse into a completely different category! And we have trained thirty thousand staff going through community and race relations and diversity training.

Thirty thousand staff is a fair achievement, and what has happened is that the learning from Lawrence has moved on. Take the Damilola Taylor case, which had all sorts of difficulties with it, as you are all aware, but one example I can think of which shows how the Met had moved on is that when the arrest teams were going out to make the arrests on the young men who stood trial, the family of Damilola Taylor were in the briefing room. They heard the briefing as to what was going on, and had been engaged all along, and I think that's only one part of a number of significant changes that would have been different between Lawrence and Taylor.

We have taken the learning into internal matters, into grievance handling, into employment tribunals. It's not always easy because sometimes, as you will all be aware in your organisations, those can become very locked environments, but we are driving through with an approach which is trying to mediate through some of those difficulties. But most of all what the Met has tried to do is tackle the issue of race, and this is one of the challenges that I'd come to for this conference - to take the challenges of race into the wider issues of diversity, the issues around gender, sexual orientation, disability, and in my organisation (and there'll be equivalents in yours) the issues around the different professions that sit within it: the police versus civilian argument in my organisation, and particularly the concerns around the way full-time workers are treated as opposed to part-time workers.

Now all of this has a moral imperative, but it isn't of course just a moral imperative, it's a business imperative. The Met is the largest single employer in London; at forty thousand staff, we have to be the organisation of choice, and the only way you do that is by providing a working culture which enables people to work to their ability, and only if they work to the best of their ability, and only if they are treated fairly will that fairness be apparent to those with whom we come into contact, with our customer base. Because we have a difficult customer base, we not only have the many...
customers who report crimes to us (and the numbers rise all the time – in 1997 we had one and a half million 999 calls, last year we had two and a half million 999 calls) but we also have almost uniquely the concept of the unwilling customer, and our treatment of them is equally important.

So we've tried to take those lessons into our communities outside London, and we have worked with both the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office, and many others to take the London lessons into the rest of the country. We have seen what has happened in Burnley, in Oldham, in Bradford. We have read the reports of Cantele, and Ouseley, and Ritchie, and Clarke, and we've looked at what is it that is slightly different about London, and I think there are two aspects.

First, this is a city perhaps more forced into acceptance of diversity than others: 300 languages (perhaps the most diverse city on the planet), and that of course is the maturity of a society; but second, the work that has been done by the police within these Community Safety Units and by the Race and Violent Crime Taskforce has given us the opportunity to embrace and engage with the leaders of so many communities. In the aftermath of September 11, Cressida Dick (who is at this conference today), took over from John Grieve, worked tirelessly with the Muslim community and the Jewish community to try and understand and get a feel for the tensions that were there. We put police officers into so many places where there was the potential for community conflict. To some extent the death of Stephen Lawrence is part of the picture of a calmer and more cohesive London.

So what do I think are the challenges ahead? The first is how do we get a representative police service? How do we get an ownership of the Police Service by all communities? The numbers are interesting: 4 years ago we had less than a thousand visible ethnic minority staff, and now we've got 1360, so we're going up (but we're still less than 5%). We've got 2000 visible ethnic minority civilians (but that's less than 20%), and what we need, somehow, is to make that tipping point where it is a natural process for individuals from all races to want to be police officers. Now we've got African-Caribbeans, we've got Indians, we've got Sikhs, we've got Pakistanis, in considerable numbers, but there are communities from whom we are drawing almost nobody – for example, the Chinese and the Bangladeshi communities are very thinly represented, and getting that ownership and that understanding is a real challenge for us, but it is also a challenge for the communities themselves, and we can see things happening. We've just developed this new breed of officer called the police community support officer: the first ones are arriving in central Westminster at the moment. There has been huge interest in those jobs, and 35% of them are drawn from visible ethnic minorities (35% of the applicants). Our Special Constabulary is about the same as our volunteer cadet corps (which is young people under 18) at almost 50%, so it's like there are a lot of people there, but they are not yet trusting us, and how are we going to get them to do that? It's one big challenge for us.

A big challenge for communities is about honesty, it's about honesty concerning the difficulty of the problem. In our current wave of street crime 63% of the victim descriptions of the suspects are African-Caribbean. Engaging with the African-Caribbean community around that issue, not blaming not shouting, but saying how are we going to stop this? is really important. A figure that I think is really quite shocking is that the comparison between white and black homicide methods – fewer than one out of every 10 white people who are killed in London by homicide are shot, but more than 3 out of 10 of black people who are killed in London are shot. This is about drugs, turf wars, and this about the escalator between street crime, drug-dealing and homicide. We have to engage with the Chinese community about people-smuggling, and that is a very difficult issue. We have to engage with the Asian community about youth gangs. We need somebody to say that this is a problem for the community, not just for the Police. But, I suppose for the conference itself, the two I would want to be thinking about are: what do we do, are we mature enough to take the issues raised by race into the other issues of diversity? I am a good advocate of that within my own service but I am continuously accused of going soft on the race issues, saying well we've done race, that's alright; and my critics would say, you're just trying to defuse the issues around race by concentrating on gender and sexual orientation, and so on. My argument against that is that there are no hierarchies of oppression, and in fact in a previous talk one of the challenges that I got was from a black woman officer who was complaining about the sexist language and behaviour of her black supervisor – now where do we go with that?

And then beyond all of that is the great debate, which has been opened by a number of people in the last few weeks around language, citizenship and cohesion. I think the concept set out by a good friend of mine (Yasmin Alibhai Brown), the concept of the tribes of Britain, seems to me to be one of the ways in which we need to move forward, a partnership for the future. But I think nobody should underestimate the enormous implications that policing well done can have for social cohesion, and the enormous implications that policing badly done can have for social cohesion. And I'm most grateful for the opportunity to come and talk to you about where we have thought we are going, and to answer any questions that you have.
**QUESTIONS**

Ian Blair was the first speaker of the day, so a generous time for questions had been allowed before dispersing the audience to engage in the mini-plenary sessions. We are including this Q+A session because Mr Blair’s candid responses contributed greatly to the positive atmosphere in which those plenary discussions (reported in the second section of these proceedings) took place.

Q 1. Has the work that you’ve been doing in the last few years had any impact on witnesses, in other words have you had any quantifiable increase in the number of witnesses who are prepared to (a) come forward and (b) give evidence.

Reply:
I fear that we are part of a larger system called the criminal justice system, and we are seeing a distinct decrease in the willingness of people to come forward. I think that is something that the Government’s white paper ‘Justice for All’ has recognised as a hugely significant problem. There are a number of surveys which show the deep feelings of being ignored by the criminal justice system that witnesses and victims have, a feeling of (putting it bluntly) being mucked about; and the number of cracked trials [a term for cases that fall apart] is rising all the time, and much of that is about witnesses and victims feeling abused.

Again, returning to the Taylor case, for example, the question has to be asked as to why all the police officers in that case would have to go through extensive training before they engage with a child witness, but the barristers don’t have to have any training at all. So you have four Oxbridge trained lawyers versus one 13-year-old from a dysfunctional family, and you see what the result was.

Q 2. You were saying that in the Lawrence case it wasn’t a case of deliberate discrimination but rather that the police were treating the black families similarly to working-class white families, and I was wondering how you would suggest that police treat the black families differently, and better?

Reply:

What I would hope is that the family liaison officers now would understand the cultural background from which that family was drawn; and that’s what they would start off by trying to understand. I mean the police service has always traditionally been a device by the ruling classes to keep the difficult classes in place, and that whole Victorian approach has gone through most of the 20th century. Now we have a diversity handbook which we issue to all officers which explains the cultures, particularly the cultures around violent death, so that people can understand what concerns the different communities would have. How they would respond, for instance, to post-mortem examinations, which are very, very difficult procedures for some communities, or, even worse for other communities, the fact that if the assailant hasn’t been found the police will need to preserve that body, perhaps against all the mores of that society.

But in particular we are also trying to get people to understand that phrase around under-protected and over-policed in the sense that some communities in particular will have a long history of engagement with the police, a history that will not have been very successful or pleasant. Now that’s the difference; and family liaison officers do an enormously importantly job. As an example, we flew about 15 of them out to New York, where they worked with the families of the British victims of September 11. We wouldn’t have done any of that in previous times.

Q 3. You say that there are lessons to be learned from London and also the towns up north. I would like to hear what is going to happen for the rural communities. In Norfolk over 50% of the racist incidents that occur involve those of 17 years and younger; a high proportion of racist incidents in the school involve white boys as the perpetrators who are allowed to persecute youths of 6 and 9. We had, prior to the setting up of the racial equality council in Norfolk in the mid-1990s, 11 racist incidents reported to the Norfolk constabulary. We’re now having over 400 on a yearly basis, and a piece of research last year into racism in the Norfolk NHS over a period of 3 months identified 760-odd racist incidents which otherwise would have gone undetected; yet we still hear people in the public sector saying racism doesn’t happen in Norfolk. What is listening to the rural areas, and who is helping to build cohesive communities there, so that we do not end up in 20 or 30 years’ time experiencing the same things as London, Burnley, Bradford, and Oldham?

Reply:

That to me is a very challenging question, and I think it is for the communities, wherever they are in Britain, to accept the challenge that you are putting forward. I mean the idea that racism does not exist in a community that doesn’t have large minority populations is apparently almost the opposite of the truth. It’s almost the point I was making that because London is now so diverse – I mean you’ve only got to sit on the tube to understand that you’re in a diverse city – the way in which young people are being brought up is in schools which are full of people from different backgrounds, whereas in more rural communities ethnic minority people are a lot less visible.

What to do with people from Norfolk? I think it’s a huge challenge, but the one thing you can’t do is to ignore it. I mean you have to take it head on. What I would say, though, is that an increase in reporting is a success, and I think that is one we have got to grasp. The level of activity that is going on – we’re kind of glad when we get reports which previously you feel they would never have reported. They are actually saying this is unacceptable in my society. Very much in the language of a multi-ethnic Britain they are saying I have the right not to be treated this way, and I expect the agents of the state to do something about it. And our community safety units have a huge effect; they are also staffed by people from many agencies which is very helpful.

Q 4. Relationships with the media. I come at this particularly from coverage that the Community Fund has had in the Daily Mail, with the demonisation which has gone on, particularly of refugees and asylum-seekers, and I would just
like your views - in a sense how you are tackling it and, to some extent, how organisations can think about it.

Reply:
Well that's about another 3-hour lecture to start with. I have got a series of cuttings on my wall of what Richard Littlejohn from the Sun has said about me, and they are all extremely offensive and I take each one of them as a battle honour. Particularly on the issue around refugees and asylum seekers, there is an extraordinary use of language. I mean if the language which is used about asylum seekers was used about Jews or people from minority backgrounds people would be prosecuted, and I think there is an extraordinary carelessness in the media about the impact of what is said. We engage all the time with every aspect of the media and we must do. We have the largest news bureau in Britain and we must engage with everybody and we don't discriminate between the different sections of the press, but I have long ago almost stopped believing that a story can actually be as bad as it is made to look, and I'm afraid that all public sector people will have to live with that. But the more that we can do - and the best journalists as you know would not engage in that kind of language but some of them I'm afraid do - I think it is just a question of being as open as possible, that's what we try and do. All the time we are trying to be as open as possible, because the more the journalists work with us the less they are likely to attack us.

Q5: Has the metropolitan police now decided to update the concept of discrimination? The concept of discrimination is really restricted to some races, when really immigrant and race issues are often white based, and I think that this is quite an important question if we consider the next enlargement of the European Union when apparently more immigrants and asylum seekers from other Eastern European countries with a white background are going to come here. Our organisation promotes a new more ample concept of discrimination regarding not only the exact colour of your face but also your origin and your heritage, and I think that's quite important.

Reply:
Practically this is going to be quite difficult. Philosophically I am completely with you. If we were looking at what discrimination is about, in that wonderful phrase it is about 'power over', and if you are in the 'power over' position then you have power over people from different backgrounds, and I think that the issue around immigration and asylum seekers from Eastern Europe in particular, and also from other parts of the world, is going to lead, and we've already seen it leading, to violence on the streets and on the housing estates of London. Practically I mean it does start to become more difficult I think in terms of understanding the nature of the legal requirements that would be needed, we are already finding that with the religious components of discrimination it's a very difficult issue and what I would say is that certainly the police service and all other agencies of the government need to engage with the issue about immigration and asylum and the rights of those people in the same way as we're dealing already through race equality schemes and so on. Quite how it would look I am not sure, but I take your point. I also take your point about how we get the make-up of a group, and having somebody from that minority doesn't mean they represent all minorities, and in particular the other argument is somebody who is from a minority does not per se become an expert in discrimination.

Q6. I was very interested in the comments you were making about the police being an anvil. At the moment it appears that the police have got a crisis of identity nationally - of both living in and policing a massively different-looking society now from what we did 5 years ago. What are your views about that crisis of identity nationally, and the police's raison d'être in a modern society?

Reply:
Do you mean British society or the police as part of, if you like, an integral instrument of change and influence within a modern society?
That's quite a question! I think my answer would be that the police service needs to come out of its silence. The service has been a bit like the navy - the silent service, and I think it's partially to do with the political significance of crime and disorder. If we go back to the 1960s the main political parties would have had a complete consensus over crime and disorder, which was to leave it to the professionals and not to worry about it too much. Interestingly, in the focus groups which the different parties ran before the May elections this year [2002], crime and disorder was the most important topic being reported, and more important than education more important than transport more important than health - now that's what voters are worried about. If that's the case, then the service itself needs to understand that it is an agent of change and it is an agent of cohesion, and it is not enough just to say: well, our job is to enforce the law. That is a huge challenge, because of course going back to the question about the newspapers or the media, they may well have a view that that's nothing to do with the police, and what are the police doing at conferences like this? Why aren't they standing outside my house doing something useful like arresting a burglar? The important point is we've got to be part of the groups that are thinking around this issue and making our contribution.

What do the police bring to the party? They bring a huge ability to listen because that's what police officers are pretty good at. They're good interviewers. They need to listen to people. They need to work across boundaries. They need to take their learning into other communities, other agencies, and bring it back. One of the things I find (and this is a little hobby-horse of mine) that I do not understand about the public sector in Britain is why it trains people in silence. I don't understand why we have an Innovation and Development Agency for Local Government an NHS Management Training Agency, a Police Staff College, there's even a Fire Services College, specialising in strategic management of Chief Fire Officers (in Moreton-in-the-Marsh). Why don't they teach them with everybody else? I think that's part of why the police service has got to come out from the room in which they've been hiding for some time. ☹
Facing the Challenges of Community Cohesion

The first speaker of the afternoon was Beverley Hughes MP, Minister of State at the Home Office. In welcoming her to the speakers’ platform Lord Parekh reminded the audience that currently Ms Hughes’s overall responsibility at the Home Office was for matters of nationality, immigration and asylum, including work permits, and that included in the field of nationality was policy-making for coherent citizenship and inward migration. Beverley Hughes has held appointments at the Home Office since 2001.

Runnymede has had a long history of promoting race and community relations in Britain, and it’s very important that we have independent organisations such as R unnymede, working in this area of policy. It’s a difficult area. It’s sensitive. There is inevitably a range of deeply held views about the issues involved, and so informed and critical discussion, and the establishment of a culture in which that dialogue can take place, are crucially important. R unnymede fulfills all of those functions and more.

If we are to tackle the root causes of conflict, and help develop cohesive communities, it will take a long-term commitment and determination from all—government, in public bodies and among voluntary and community organisations. And a commitment above all to keep talking and keep demanding progress.

Contributing to the debate

The Parekh Report made an important contribution to the debate on national identity, equality and diversity, as well as creating a vision of a modern, multi-cultural Britain. It highlighted the challenges that remain if we are to create a more equal society, free from racial inequality and discrimination— the continued need for tackling:
• racial and religious discrimination
• educational inequality and disadvantage
• health inequality
• labour market disadvantage and
• political exclusion.

The recommendations of the report are extremely valuable to Government both in terms of the race relations agenda as well as community cohesion. Many are already Government policy.

Geoff Filkin (who has day-to-day responsibility for race relations) will be considering the Trust’s updated recommendations and using them to inform our thinking as we implement the R ace Relations (Amendment) Act.

Conference issues

As you would expect, then, the conference is addressing some of the issues most critical to promoting community cohesion:
• employment
• neighbourhood renewal
• community safety and crime reduction
• housing, education, policing
• the role of the media.

Two years on from the publication of the Parekh Report, we are faced with further challenges in race and community relations in our country, most notably from the disturbances last year in some of our towns and cities, compounded as they were by the aftermath of Sept 11th.

Disturbances:

Last year’s disturbances took many of us by surprise. The period that followed began to demonstrate just how much we all need to do to address the problems that lie behind the conflict and hostility in some of our most hard-pressed communities. Since then, central government, local agencies, voluntary organisations and local people have been trying to work out how best to meet the challenges of nurturing greater cohesion in communities.

And in one sense this isn’t rocket science. The theory isn’t difficult. But the practice is and there isn’t a lot of well-developed practice wisdom about. In any case, whilst there are common principles they have to be applied in different ways in different localities because each has its own unique set of characteristics and factors, its own unique population.

I want to talk to you about:
• the core principles and themes behind community cohesion;
• our commitment to having an open discussion on citizenship and shared values;
• the practical action we all need to take if we are to create more cohesive communities and
• our policies and proposals to tackle the root causes of conflict in some of our communities.

But let me say first why this is so important. It is not only essential if we are to avoid the kind of disorder that we saw last year. It’s also crucial to so many of the objectives we all have for helping people, especially young people, young people from all backgrounds to reach their potential, to do as well as they can in school and in work, and, through that, to foster strong families, strong communities, a strong economy and a strong, inclusive society. So it is linked directly with the most fundamental objectives of this Government.

It starts with a concern for people, but one which recognises the mutuality, the interdependence, of individuals, families, communities and the wider society. People will not achieve what they are capable of, will not have the chance of a good quality of life, if their community is isolated, divided from other communities, feels excluded, under siege and disconnected.

So what are the principles behind community cohesion?

Community cohesion is about building safe and strong communities and this is not easy. There isn’t a long-standing body of knowledge of how to do this. Building community cohesion must be based on: creating real equality of opportunity;
creating a common vision and shared sense of belonging, rightly identified by Bhikhu Parekh in his opening chapter to the conference report published today;¹ creating a positive and inclusive notion of citizenship and identity;² opening up education, social and economic opportunities for every section of the community;
creating a new sense of shared values, rights and responsibilities, a common sense of belonging and identity. In my view, this also needs to happen at national level.

The territory can be difficult, but it is of paramount importance that such a discussion begins and is not quashed.

Debate needs to be unambiguous and categorical in its rejection of racism and religious hatred.

Belonging, citizenship and identity

I’d like to dwell a little on these issues, because all of the places I have visited where community cohesion is a live issue have concluded that they need to generate open discussion in their communities about shared values, rights and responsibilities, a common sense of belonging and identity. In my view, this also needs to happen at national level.

The territory can be difficult, but it is of paramount importance that such a discussion begins and is not quashed.

Debate needs to be unambiguous and categorical in its rejection of racism and religious hatred.

There needs to be a clear recognition of the enormous benefits immigration has brought, and continues to bring to our country.

For all communities, rights must go hand in hand with responsibilities.

The way in which the debate is conducted will vary. How we engage people at local level will be necessarily different from a debate such as today, on the national stage. But of one thing I am clear: the terms of the debate have to be framed around identifying

¹ Following a government reshuffle in summer 2003, Beverley Hughes MP became the Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Counter-Terrorism.
² Fiona Macgaffey MP is Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal (summer 2003) with responsibility for community cohesion as well as race equality and active communities policy.
what are the shared values that define our identity and inculcate that common sense of belonging. A debate fuelled by a drive to preserve prevailing institutions narrowly based on territory and history, is both irrelevant and doomed.

We have to press for the terms of the debate to be modern, open and based on the centrality of diversity as a positive defining characteristic of Britain both historically and for the future. Such a debate needs clear and inclusive leadership at every level.

• That means bringing a challenge and lead public opinion where necessary, when it is the right thing to do.
• It also means challenging communities – all communities – when they need to change or start to think differently.
• It means creating a positive narrative of what we are as a country, with diverse communities.
• One country, many cultures.

No town, one city, many cultures. I am all too aware that, at national level, we need to get political and civic leadership right as much as we do at a local level. We need to recognise and ensure that at all levels politicians have a responsibility to help bridge division and hostility between communities. So the debate is important, but so is action on the ground. And I think we have to understand that action on the ground, learning by doing, is a fundamental characteristic of the endeavour we have set ourselves.

Locality, particularity, commonality
Tackling community cohesion issues does require commitment, policy and practice. This comes from the centre, and the stimulation of ideas and thought from conferences like this. But it can only be put into practice at local level and each locality is different. The process, then, has to be evolutionary and rooted in locality but there are existing mechanisms in place at local level that we can harness.

For a start, we have to bring a focus on race equality and community cohesion into all our mainstream work:

• Build community cohesion into local community plans;
• Build community cohesion into neighbourhood renewal strategies; and
• Make community cohesion central to local strategic partnerships.

Second, begin to forge and develop a collective vision for local areas with all communities – and communicate that vision widely. This encourages partnership working. An over-used word perhaps, but not yet an over-used practice. Both public and citizens have to be brought into partnerships to develop a clear vision for their areas. The need for this is both urgent and essential. We have to work towards a joint strategy and a shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve.

Third, encourage partnership working. An over-used word perhaps, but not yet an over-used practice. Whether in local authorities, police or other public bodies or the voluntary sector, effective partnership between key local agencies and local people is critical if we are to get service delivery right.

The task of analysing the issues faced in each community, agreeing a strategy to tackle them, and systematically implementing that strategy has to be done locally. For different areas some of the issues will be common, such as:

• tackling the root causes of prejudice and hostility
• fostering co-operation
• focusing particularly on young people, and
• reducing the sense of neglect and isolation.

However, the particular issues, the priorities you afford them, and the best ways to tackle them, will be different in each area.

Government policy
The policies we adopt at central government level are also important.

In government, we are working across departments examining our policies on education, housing, regeneration, youth policy – to name just a few. And we will change policies to promote community cohesion, where this is necessary.

There is an absolute commitment at the centre to challenge and reform those policies to ensure we build community cohesion.

We have established a Ministerial Group. From across government whose role is to ensure that community cohesion is built into the work of Whitehall departments.

We have established the Community Cohesion Unit within the Home Office to ensure we get government policy on community cohesion right, to co-ordinate policy across government and to mainstream community cohesion in all our work.

We have also established an independent panel of experts – the Community Cohesion Panel, chaired by Ted Cantle. The panel will act as a critical friend of the government and oversee as well as produce ideas for promoting community cohesion.

The panel has established a group of expert practitioners from a wide range of disciplines. They come together to look at policy solutions to some of the core policy areas related to community cohesion – including housing, policing, education, faith, the voluntary sector, health and social welfare, political leadership, to name a few.

So we now have an infrastructure through which to develop policy and practice, and action at national and local levels.

What are we doing to meet the challenges of community cohesion?
In government, we have sought to initiate both some immediate action as well as a longer-term programme of work to build community cohesion into our policies.

As an immediate measure and in response to the disturbances in 2001, we made £7 million available to fund summer activities. We released further funding for a similar and extended programme for this year including additional activities in those areas with high levels of street crime.

We are funding a programme of community facilitation to encourage dialogue and tackle local grievances or misunderstandings that threaten good community relations.

In addition, in recognition of the need to build cohesion into the agenda of local government, we recently announced that community cohesion would be one of the key themes of the Beacon Council Scheme.

We are also working with the CRE, LGA and ODM to produce draft guidance on community cohesion for Local Authorities. We have received over 80 responses which are overwhelmingly positive. The final guidance is being published in December 2002.

Guidance is only a start

• Community cohesion has to be built into the incentive structures for local authorities to ensure it is a part of their core work.
• So, I welcome the support and co-operation of the Audit Commission and am delighted that community cohesion is an issue which they are looking at as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Since the summer of 2001, a lot of good work has been done. Already, there are many examples around the country where local authorities, partner organisations and local communities are working together to overcome common concerns. So the potential is there – to be built upon.

To complement that work we have put in place sources of practical help in the form of guidance, seminars and conferences. What is certain, however, is that in many areas the foundation has yet to be developed, and the benefits of the work to be fully felt. Our challenge is now to turn that commitment into immediate action.

In order to help further embed community cohesion at a local level, I am pleased to announce today that we will be establishing a new Community Cohesion Pathfinder programme, with an investment of £6 million over two years. The programme will run in 15 local authority areas, will support local authorities, the voluntary sector, and communities themselves to build local solutions to local problems.

At the end of the 2 years, we should have 15 very real-life examples of local areas that have successfully put community cohesion at the heart of everything they do. Disseminating this knowledge widely – both during and at the end of the programme – will help all areas across the country.

To get the pilots up and running as early as possible, it is my intention to write by the end of the month, to all local authority Chief Executives setting out in detail the purpose of the programme and to invite expressions of interest.

Conclusion
This is not a short-term, quick-fix agenda and there are no easy solutions. Nonetheless, we recognise the urgency of the situation.

Our strategy has three strands:
1. To support local authorities and other public bodies in implementing their short-term goals to tackle immediate problems.
2. To help address the longer-term challenges of really integrating community cohesion into mainstream policy and practice.
3. To work with you to develop and disseminate the knowledge, experience and growing expertise that is essential.

This is challenging work in difficult territory. It is complex, multi-faceted, risky and at times may feel thankless. But we know the stakes are high, and that the cost of ignoring the issue and pretending it will go away would be paid by generations in the future.

So we all have to grasp the nettle and resolve to do our very best. The future for so many people, and for so many of our communities, as well as our wider society, depends on it.

* Launched by the Minister herself on 11 December 2002 at Local Government House, Smith Square.
Words, Wounds and the Power of the Media

Gary Younge took the platform for the final session of the Runnymede Conference on Developing Community Cohesion. His theme was the power of the media - something he observes and experiences as a journalist, and occasionally encounters as an object of press attention in his own right as a prominent black opinion-former.

I was reading Media Guardian a few weeks ago, on a Monday morning, and Paul Dacre says:

The old Daily Mail, I will be the first to admit, was slightly racist, but we are not now, and Stephen Lawrence was a turning point on that. It was a pivotal moment and, not that we did it for those reasons, we now have a lot more Black and Asian readers, and by God, I would like more of them. Racism appals me, and I wish I could get more Black and Asian reporters working for us but they don't come into journalism....

The same day Paul Dacre, who is the Head of both the Mail and the Evening Standard, fired three Black and Asian reporters from the Evening Standard. All of which is to say there is a lot of nonsense and hypocrisy, and obfuscation that surrounds discussions of race in the media, and I just want to unravel some of them within the context of the work of the Runnymede Trust.

So the first thing I think we have to accept, or understand, is that the media is not an island. It is rooted in our institutions, and to an extent, and only to an extent, it reflects the prejudice that we see and hear around us, to the same extent that it reflects prurience, occasionally positive images and everything else. Clearly, if a sufficient number of people found the Sun outrageously racist in the 1980s, then they wouldn't have bought it - in the same way that, for example, people from Liverpool stopped buying the Sun after its coverage of the Hillsborough disaster. And the same is true, in different ways, of the Mail and other papers.

But we are choosing easy targets when we talk about the Sun and the Mail, and far more tricky targets when we start talking about the Independent or the Guardian or the Times, in terms of either acts of commission, or omission, when they present a view of society that might not be one many black and Asian readers recognise, or that many others of us would not accept as being either fair or reasonable.

Power in and of the media

But the media also reflects power relations to an extent, and there is a truth in the fact that minority ethnic communities are poorer, less well represented and less engaged with crucial networks and civil society than many of their white counterparts. So, in America, a boycott of a newspaper or a TV station carries with it very clear financial reprisals for that organisation, because of the size of the African-American middle class, because of the number of African Americans, and the very crucial commercial difference their support, or lack of it, can mean.

Let me just compare for you the response to a journalist (I am not going to mention his name because it would be invidious)... a columnist on the Guardian, who also worked for the BBC, who had written about how white people shouldn't feel guilty or really responsible about Africa; that the people who are widely believed to have killed Stephen Lawrence were innocent; and that England was too small [sic]. I raised this at a Guardian conference. Somebody said he was just being controversial. I said: 'Well you see the thing about racism, it's not controversial; ... trouble is that it's very mainstream'. But then this person wrote a piece about the Countryside Alliance, and suddenly all hell broke loose. The Telegraph wrote a leader about it and, before you knew it, he was forced to choose between writing for the Guardian or retaining his very prominent place in the BBC. And, interestingly, he chose the former.

Here the point is that black and minority ethnic people don't have the power of a Telegraph leader writer, and the BBC, unfortunately, doesn't fear us in the same way that it might fear the leader writer of the Telegraph. And I don't talk about fear in any very dangerous sense; rather that to incur the wrath of the black community is regarded as quite often an occupational hazard of being in the media, rather than something that should be taken seriously.

All too often, the power of the media can be exaggerated. In a sense, one of the lessons this Government hasn't learned in over 5 years is that sometimes you have to go with what you know, or what you want to do, rather than what the media says might or might not be right. I think the media can help or hinder progressive change and a whole lot of other things, but I don't think it can arbitrate,
and I don't think it is the decisive factor; but it is a key and primary source of where many people get their views. Nonetheless, when those views run up against people's experience in the real world, usually the real world wins; so the reflection to some extent does need to be either faithful or plausible.

Interestingly, the Mirror, after Peter Mandelson was outed, ran a big phone-line number at the bottom of its front page, encouraging a response to the following:

Do you think that Britain is being run by a gay mafia?

Are there are too many gays in the cabinet?

Vote this number if you think 'yes' and this number if you think 'no'.

And alongside it was an article saying, basically, yes it is, and they called on the Great British Public to have their say. And the Great British Public said 'no, no we don't think that'; and interestingly enough that issue just faded into the distance, because a whole load of things had gone on around people – it may well have been personal relationships, but also gay characters in EastEnders – so there was a far greater familiarity with the issue of sexual orientation than the Mirror had given its readers credit for.

**Chairman Gary and the plinth**

Similarly, and briefly, I am going to describe my very bizarre experience at the hands of the Mail, because it is instructive in this context, and very much related to the Runnymede Trust's treatment in the press when the Parekh Report was published.

I am the Chairman of the Commission that helps decide what is going to be exhibited on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. I thought this was a very innocent thing to be doing. I have an interest in it, and I don't think it is the decisive factor; but it is a key and primary source of where many people get their views. Nonetheless, when those views run up against people's experience in the real world, usually the real world wins; so the reflection to some extent does need to be either faithful or plausible.

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I am the Chairman of the Commission that helps decide what is going to be exhibited on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. I thought this was a very innocent thing to be doing. I have an interest in it, and when someone asked for a volunteer to chair this committee, I said fine. Imagine my surprise when, about three months later, the Mail splashed 'The thoughts of Chairman Gary' over a double-page spread. Someone (Simon Hughes, I think) had suggested that the Queen Mother should be put on the plinth. But they didn't, because they didn't want the Queen Mother on the plinth. I had no idea how it would go on from there.

And then it just kind of faded into the background.

But it also asked the question (again very relevant to the Runnymede report) about Britain. It said that the saga of the empty plinth is another example of the yawning gap between the metropolitan elite hijacking this country and the majority of ordinary people who simply want to reclaim Britain as their own.... Q uite a sinister remark, I think, and heavily racially connoted.

**Asylum seekers**

One of the reasons why asylum seekers can be so easily targeted is because so few people know them, so few people ever meet them. A asylum seekers as a major problem in British society are, I strongly believe - not that there isn't an issue about immigration which must be discussed - an entirely confected and constructed media phenomenon. I dug out some figures from the Guardian's database about the number of times the words 'asylum seeker' were mentioned in stories and I got:

- 1994–5 = 135 times,
- 1995–6 = 456 times,
- 2001 = 3784.

Now, asylum seekers have been around for a very very long time, but they have been around in the media as a major force and a major issue only since the media decided that they would be a major issue.

When I was doing a story about asylum seekers, I called the hostels 'Bantustans', but really I was writing about a hostel they are trying to build for gathering together asylum seekers in a certain place in Nottingham. The local people were demonstrating against it. I asked them: 'W hat do you know about asylum seekers?' They replied: 'W ell we know about Sangatte... we know what we see on the television, and we don't like what we see.'

Clearly the media can create an issue. And it

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doesn't just reflect; it can also reinforce. The truth is that if we want to challenge racism in society then we must take it on where it exists, which is also in our workplaces, our homes, our schools, our streets, our pubs and clubs. If we do that successfully – and it's difficult because we are challenging a racism that comes partly from the media, but not wholly from the media (if there were no media there would still be an issue of racism in Britain) – I believe then, hopefully, we will reach a point where there is an intolerance of that kind of propaganda. So while the power of the media shouldn't be exaggerated, it shouldn't be underplayed either; and just as it may reflect, it can also reinforce and challenge; as it misinforms, so can it inform; and as it describes, so can it distort.

What about the workplace?
I am just going to touch on some of the issues that I think are key here: one is employment. Now I have a job, so I'm not asking for more work for myself, but there are all too few black and Asian journalists, and they are usually misused or abused wherever they find themselves. Quite often what you discover in the media world is that they have twigged only two things that can be done with, or by, a black journalist – to write about race, or never to write about race.

So, either you deny or you embrace; but what you can't be is a multi-layered person for whom race is an issue that you are interested in among many others; and that is a genuine battle people in the media do face.

There is also an interesting (and particular) emphasis on what I would call 'front-of-house' staff, which is that when organisations do employ black people they like to promote them in certain ways. I'm not saying that they over-promote them, far from it; but you are more likely to see a picture by-line for a black journalist, than for someone who works in an editorial capacity, deciding what is going to go on which page, and who is massively involved in the internal dynamics. They like to show the world the handful of people they have (regardless of the amount of power they represent within that institution).

The most obvious place for that is television. When you watch the news you would think that black people are over-represented; but when you look at who is deciding what is going to make the news, and what kind of stories are going to be featured, very few black and Asian people will be there. An interesting comparison or way of looking at this is if you take the difference between the 'Today' programme on radio, and any of the news bulletins: there are no black presenters on the 'Today' programme, and I can only assume that is because they think nobody can see them, so it doesn't matter! Not realising that there is an entire body of knowledge and experience that comes from black and Asian journalists. And they would never even think of trying to get away with that on a TV news programme.

Another incredibly peculiar and difficult development is the way race has become a touchstone for modernity itself. Probably the most obvious place to look at this just now is the Conservative Party, where currently there is an emphasis on ethnicity, that we need more black and Asian people. Now, there is no notion that black and Asian people are going to rush to actually vote Conservative, but what it does suggest is that somehow they are a modern party. Race is being used (and at other times different things have been used in this way as a tool to suggest that you are forward-looking as opposed to backward-looking). I think it's not a good thing, because you think you're talking about race, but actually you are talking about an entire baggage-load of preconceptions and prejudices that people hold.

The most blatant example of this in the media, as taken up by the Mail, was just a month after Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, conceded that he might have to look abroad for black and Asian recruits, because he couldn't recruit them in Britain. A photo in the Mail said this is a picture that reflects changing times and attitudes within the Police Force:

The exclusive picture of Scotland Yard's employees shows Forces are beginning to reflect the racial mix of the community they serve.

(and they had lots of people from many different races). Ethnic minorities make up 25 percent of the Capital's population, but only 4.5 percent of the Met, and it was an example of how equal opportunities are really being shifted into photo opportunities.

A similar thing happened when Teresa May was appointed (as Conservative Party Chair). They had corralled a group of people behind her – Asian women, young people (some of whom were on work experience, many of whom hadn't been there very long) - in order to suggest change where no change had actually taken place.

The most blatant example of this was when George W. Bush was standing for President. At the Convention, Condoleezza Rice was doing one prime-time news slot, Colin Powell did another. A political analyst in Washington said what the Republicans were doing was aimed at white Americans. Moderates don't want someone who is negative on race, so it says something significant about America as a whole. Really they were targeting women voters, and the message was: 'if we can be good to black people we can be good to anyone!' When race becomes a touchstone in that way, the media first of all can either run with it or they can question it, but secondly it becomes a tool within the media game. It's a way of playing the media game and I think we've seen a lot of that recently.
The press and the report

Finally, I want to concentrate just for a while on the response to the Runnymede Trust’s Report just two years ago, because it was breathtaking... it really was staggering. And remember this happened in a completely different time to the one that we are in now - this is pre-September 11th, pre- uprisings in Bradford and Oldham and Burnley and elsewhere. It was actually at quite a hopeful time. And when you look at the common sense that was being suggested in the Report and then you gauge the response on the front page of the Telegraph saying: 'This group have said that Britain is racist'. Also noteworthy was the blustering bafflement exhibited in other pieces (talking about your good selves, Lord Parekh):

They would have schools, the police and all public authorities treating everyone differently, according to their ethnic origins.

As though this is something bad! And then:

Yet what is black British history? What is British history if not the story of a group of islands and the way in which the multifarious people who have lived on them through the ages have rubbed along with each other?

No mention of colony, of Empire, of Ireland, and a staggering, breathtaking lack of self-awareness that, all of a sudden, forced the authors of this report into some peculiar place where they were called upon to defend things they hadn’t said, and to support things that they didn’t believe.

And the notion which the media found particularly troublesome was that it was possible to discriminate between people without discriminating against people! The idea of difference floored them completely, and so rather than try to come to terms with their own ignorance, they lashed out, not just the Telegraph but the Mail as well.

I seem to remember the Mail carried mugshots of all of you (the Commissioners) as though in a police line-up, with a little bit of blurb about the crimes that each of you have committed on our great nation. The Telegraph’s front-page headline read 'Straw wants to re-write our history!' - begging two questions: What do they mean by ‘our’? And precisely what version of history are they talking about?

I wrote a response which ended up being a response not so much to the Report, but to the media response to the Report. I said, if you really want to take the temperature, the racial temperature in Britain, you would be better off examining the reactions to the Report than the Report itself. Not that the Report wasn’t brilliant in all sorts of ways, but the reaction to it really showed us how much we’ve had to do; and what has happened since has shown how fragile some of the victories that we thought we had made have been!

My country

One of the responses that I got to my piece was from a man called Michael Henderson, who sent me a letter that had within it a piece by Paul Johnson from the Mail. I recognised this piece because someone else had already sent me the article; and the person who had sent it to me previously was a friend of the person who did the Brixton and the Brick Lane bombings, someone who has since been arrested for sending a number of prominent black people racist hate mail. It was the same piece!

And this is what Mr Henderson said: ‘You clearly know nothing about your country’ – well at least he thinks it’s my country, that’s a start. ‘This piece may set you on the road to partial knowledge,’ he says. He also advises me to buy a decent recording of the Meistersingers by Richard Wagner. Wagner, he acknowledged, wasn’t English, but he did know something of how the past informs the present, unlike some people I could mention!

The letter was on Telegraph headed notepaper. Michael Henderson is a cricket writer for that paper.

Lord Parekh thanked Gary for his presentation with the following tribute:

I think what is very striking about Gary’s presentation today, as well as in all he offers in the pages of the Guardian, is this wonderful combination of a sense of humour with high moral seriousness. People can be too serious for their own good, or too flippant, either about themselves or about racism. Gary combines a wonderful sense of humour with irony, which shows a capacity for self-detachment, but at the same time this great moral seriousness, which shows a capacity for identification, and I think he has given us a wonderful display and I want to thank him for that.
On 10 October 2002, I made a presentation to the Runnymede Trust Conference on Bradford's approach to Community Cohesion. Given the many difficulties facing Bradford, after the riots of July 2001 in particular, my presentation was upbeat and optimistic about the future. I stressed the importance of Bradford's bid for the European Capital of Culture 2008 and how much the process of submitting a bid had raised local people's confidence in the District, lifting their spirits about the future.

Sadly, soon after the conference, the announcement was made that Bradford was not amongst the six cities short-listed for the Capital of Culture Bid 2008. This was yet another blow for the City and the entire District - yet again the city felt it had failed and that all the efforts and resources injected into the bidding process had been wasted. Like the morning after the riots, the morning of the announcement left us all feeling pretty lost for words and unsure about the future. What could and would happen next?

In December 2002, the announcement of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of Bradford Council as 'good' reinvigorated the District, the CPA having highlighted the Council's efforts to improve community cohesion as particularly positive. The Council, having previously been criticised by others for poor leadership and inaction, has undoubtedly taken from the CPA result a new sense of optimism for itself and its partners, with both strong officer and political leadership having been identified.

At the same time Bradford Vision, the Local Strategic Partnership, which had experienced difficulties in its first year of operation, was accredited in Spring 2003 and recognised by the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber as a 'satisfactory' Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which is 'honest' and 'enthusiastic'. Again, this vote of confidence from Government has given all the partners and communities working together in Bradford a sense of hope for the future.

Whatever we are dealing with in Bradford one of our known strengths is partnership working. We still face the challenge of too many partnerships, but the LSP has started to get to grips with this and developed a Partnership Delivery Team focused on developing more effective partnership working and looking at ways in which eventually, with fewer partnerships, we could be helped to improve the delivery of our strategic goals.

In November 2002, with the support of the Home Office, Bradford Vision appointed a Community Cohesion Director to work hand in hand with the Council's Head of Policy, who has lead responsibility for community cohesion within the authority. A multi-agency community cohesion task group has been established under the LSP aimed at ensuring that community cohesion is being embedded within all organisations and sectors. In addition to this, specific initiatives supported by pump-priming funds from Neighbourhood Renewal are being developed.

In Bradford there are four key themes to community cohesion and these include:

1. Equitable Access and Outcomes to Services, Resources and Employment
3. Healthy Communities and Positive Interaction between the District's Communities
4. A Safer District for Individuals, Communities and Organisations

The index of multiple deprivation identifies 9 of Bradford's 30 electoral wards as amongst the most deprived in England and Wales. Tackling this deprivation is absolutely vital. However, how we do it is challenging. We know that the injection of resources into specific geographical areas has caused tensions between geographic communities and communities of interest, who are often dispersed and do not reside in one geographical area. The challenge for places like Bradford District is to tackle deprivation and yet at the same time ensure that there is an inclusive and equitable approach across the whole area.

The District's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, which has been recognised by the National...
The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) is two-pronged with a dual focus on improving public services for all and involving people in the process. On an annual basis local neighbourhoods are being brought together with service providers to look at the issues and how services can be improved within their locality. In addition, neighbourhoods are being invited to get involved in neighbourhood action planning, whereby they will be paid to carry out their own action planning and implementation.

What is becoming more and more clear is that whether it is partnership working, neighbourhood renewal or community cohesion, there is a real need for organisational development and change. Bradford Vision, the LSP, is therefore investing significant resources in the organisational development agenda, working closely in 2003 with Cordis Bright on neighbourhood renewal as well as other professionals on partnership development work.

The Council has embedded community cohesion within its corporate plan and an extensive internal series of briefings are taking place to raise awareness amongst staff across the authority. To complement this the Authority has established a District Equalities Forum, which will aim to improve equity of services to different communities within the District.

Working closely with Faith Communities and the District’s Inter Faith Education Centre, Bradford Vision and Bradford Council aim to establish a district-wide Faith Forum.

At the end of 2002, the Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament was established, the largest Youth Parliament in the country. Although still in its early days, the new parliament is already working closely with the Council and other agencies in improving services for young people. In addition to this, the LSP has invited two members of the parliament to become LSP Board members, and stronger links have been forged with the District’s Children & Young People’s Partnership, with the chairman of this partnership also joining the LSP Board.

Working closely with many criminal justice agencies, including West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Probation Service, the Prison Service, and specialist organisations like Ummid ('Hope') who work with prisoners, efforts are being made to reduce the risk of further offending. Given that 80% of the District’s crimes are committed by 20% of offenders it is important that Bradford invests in initiatives aimed at reducing repeat offending. Efforts are being made to ensure the work we do in Bradford is part of a wider regional resettlement programme.

As part of its communications strategy, Bradford Vision is making efforts to forge links with the local, regional and national media to ensure that communities are being informed of progress. Influencing national and regional media is not always easy, but the positive profile built up during the culture bid process, and coverage in the Guardian of a local project called ‘Safe’ (better known as the Mum’s Army) where local women have been empowered to improve safety within their communities, is encouraging.

All this progress to date notwithstanding, Bradford still has enormous challenges and barriers to overcome. Before people, both local and external, potential investors and visitors to the District can feel positive about the Bradford area, its persistently negative image must be rehabilitated.

It is hoped that with a combination of the above initiatives and the advent of the Urban Regeneration Company (URC), which will focus on the redevelopment of Bradford City Centre, things will begin to change and the image of the District will begin to improve, as has already happened in Leeds, Newcastle and other northern cities. But the success of the URC is also dependent on the success of overall partnership efforts to reduce crime and health inequalities, and at the same time improve employment opportunities, housing conditions, the environment and transport links within the District.

A more cohesive and prosperous Bradford District lies firmly in the hands of strong, effective and cohesive partnership efforts between the Council, the LSP, the Regional Development Agency, Yorkshire Forward and the Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber, along with genuine community involvement within neighbourhoods.

An exciting and challenging future awaits our very best efforts.

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Selected Runnymede Publications


Divided by the Same Language? Equal Opportunities and Diversity Translated (Briefing Paper March 2003)


Mentoring: Business and Schools Working Together, Linda Appiah (2001)


Improving Practice: A whole school approach to raising the achievement of African Caribbean youth, Nottingham Trent and Runnymede (1998)

Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All (1997)

This Is Where I Live: Stories and Pressures in Brixton (1996)

Challenge, Change and Opportunity + Multi-Ethnic Britain: Facts and Trends, pre- and post-Conference data compiled prior to setting up the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (1995 and 1994)

A Very Light Sleeper: The Persistence and Dangers of Anti-Semitism (1994)


Poverty in Black and White: Deprivation and Ethnic Minorities, Kaushika Amin with Carey Oppenheim (1992, CPAG)

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Mini-Plenary Sessions and Policy Formulation Groups

These Sessions and Groups featured in both the morning and afternoon of the conference.

Morning mini-plenary sessions were held immediately after Ian Blair’s presentation. These began with presentations from one or more convenors, which were succeeded by question-and-answer sessions aimed at eliciting active responses during the afternoon workshops to come.

In addition to these mini-plenary sessions, a total of 7 policy formulation groups gave participants the chance to wrestle with a range of questions posted by Runnymede and by Home Office CCU officials, who were present and took detailed notes.

The section that follows consists of texts produced by the convenors of these sessions. Some deal with the content of both morning and afternoon sessions; others give an exposition of their individual areas of expertise as exercised in the context of this conference; others again are think-pieces stimulated by the theme and events of the day.

Arts, Media and Sport

Arts. Naseem Khan is nowadays a freelance writer, but at the time of the conference, she was Senior Policy Adviser to the Arts Council of England. She ran her mini-plenary session with Jennifer Edwards, Director of External and Strategic Relations for London Arts.

Media. Nick Carter is Editor-in-Chief and Director of the Leicester Mercury Group. Samir Shah is Managing Director of Juniper TV and Chair of the Runnymede Board of Trustees.


When people think of community cohesion, they tend to think about race relations and public order, and perhaps issues around safer communities, youth policy, education and employment. Some more sophisticated students of urban policy will also think about housing and regeneration issues. But it is doubtful that many would pinpoint Arts, Media and Sport as central to community cohesion. In a sense this was reflected at the conference itself, with the mini-plenaries on crime, regeneration, and education significantly oversubscribed. However, those who ventured into the cultural industries’ space were often genuinely surprised by the extent of the contribution both Arts and Sport could make to the generation of cohesion within localities.

Since publication of the Parekh Report, a good deal of progress has been made with the broadcast media, although much remains to be done. Samir Shah’s video presentation makes this point fair and square; and Gary Younge in his keynote speech graphically demonstrates that much of the national and regional print media remain largely unreconstructed, and do not take their responsibility for promoting community cohesion seriously. But why not when, as Nick Carter has argued, there is a strong business case for so doing, quite apart from strong moral injunctions.

The afternoon policy formulation sessions were chaired by, respectively, Kate Gavron and Alveena Malik (Arts and Sport) and Trevor Phillips (Broadcast and Print Media).
Pairing the arts and community cohesion might seem dubious at first. What can these two areas have to do with each other? Surely the arts, you might reasonably say, spring out of self-expression and an independent if not challenging voice? So, on the face of it, the arts and the broader cultural sector must work against community cohesion rather than for it?

In fact, quite the opposite can be proved, as Jennifer Edwards, Director of External Relations and Development at Arts Council, London (previously London Arts) and I sought to show in this Runnymede seminar of October 2002. The arts and culture, we argued, sit at the heart of community cohesion since it is only on the basis of communication and dialogue that understanding can come about.

The argument clearly needs to be made and heard. A narrower view of the arts has traditionally tended to classify them as 'Entertainment'. In this view, the arts are consumer items they exist to divert, to take people's minds off the pressures of life. Here is of course nothing wrong with this function, but it is sadly incomplete and fails to use the multiple other opportunities opened out by the arts.

The last 20 years have marked an extraordinary expansion in the reach of the arts and culture. They have determinedly broken out of concert halls, theatres and art galleries, and allied themselves to wider socially based issues. Because these activities are generally not reviewed or covered by the media as 'arts', they have tended to go unnoticed. But the numbers of interventions, the quality of engagement and the impact of work show that the arts and culture can be a most powerful ally in the quest for improved quality of life and community cohesion.

At its most obvious, you can see this at work in the arts and health sector. Hospitals have been made less threatening and antiseptic; health centres have been humanised. While it is not easy to establish a direct link between involvement of and with the arts and the recovery rates of patients, research has shown that patients with views of natural surroundings asked for fewer painkillers and left hospital sooner than those with similar ailments but whose ward windows faced a brick wall. St Mary's, an NHS general hospital on the Isle of Wight, has been built on the premise that art works, and natural light and attractive surroundings can help the healing process and also reduce stress for nursing and medical staff. The arts help a wider range of human faculties to come into play - humour, curiosity, sympathy, pleasure - all valuable qualities in a situation that can reduce a human being to a mere collection of physical ailments. Cohesion develops when people are no longer on the defensive.

The arts have engaged widely in a range of more contentious social issues. Housing estates have made videos of those aspects of estates management they want to see changed, using the arts as a communication tool. The arts can, in short, provide a voice and encourage cohesion around a cause.

The theatre group Cardboard Citizens works with homeless people in a participatory and equal way. Together they create theatre pieces that encourage audience members to identify with issues that earlier had seemed distant, if not threatening. Indeed, we need look no further than the dramatic impact in the 1960s of the television play Cathy, Come Home on the public's perception of homelessness. O'neill's film stimulated indignation at a social ill that had not had a high profile, and generated policy change. The arts, in other words, can create understanding of troublesome issues, reduce prejudice, humanise problems and stimulate practical change.

In general terms, the arts and culture can deliver on at least five fronts where community cohesion is a likely result. They can:

• Challenge prejudice and reduce ignorance
• Shape a common identity and a sense of belonging
• Provide an eloquent human voice
• Bring together diverse communities
• Create bridges between interest groups

All are highly relevant in the area of race and cultural diversity, where - for all the positive advances - inequality and discrimination still loom large. A number of recent events have sharply underlined the fragmented nature of contemporary Britain. The Cantle, Denham and Ouseley reports, variously analysing or predicting the disturbances in northern towns, stressed the reality of parallel lives. They noted the power and the danger of prejudices that operate on both sides of the ethnic divide. The arrival of higher numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers has also increased prejudice, and generated a process of media demonisation that has allowed real need to be ignored.

To expect the arts to deal with these weighty agendas might seem not only foolish but misguided - the application of a cosmetic plaster on a deep wound. But that misunderstands the nature of 'cohesion'. Cohesion is not uniformity nor even homogeneity. It is not an absence of conflict nor of discord. Instead it is a situation in which a range of voices are recognized and heard, and develop a
sense of empowerment. It is evident that the arts can facilitate the expression of those voices, in whatever form and at whatever level.

Neighbourhood Voices

London Arts' Creative Neighbourhoods Programme, for instance, located itself in six different London boroughs - from Barking, to Brent to Merton - diverse areas, but each with pockets of economic disadvantage. The projects developed had two targets – young people at risk and racism. They used a variety of tools – from film to multimedia, from theatre to storytelling. The evaluation states sensibly that a decrease in racism must have been caused by more than one factor. Nevertheless, many participants volunteered that their views had changed in the course of the programme, and that they felt they themselves had also changed.

The Creative Neighbourhoods Programme was active and participatory. It demanded that people work together, over time, and that they work through difficult issues in the process. That kind of hands-on involvement seems to be one key for success, particularly where diversity of cultures is concerned. It is an important key for the way that the Grand Union Orchestra plans its work. The Orchestra is a doughty big band initiative that has brought together different kinds of music and traditions for many years, touring them round the country and addressing serious concerns beneath the musical lines. Their recent ‘Bhangra, Babylon and the Blues’ is typical. It is about a young Asian couple struggling to make a new life in a new country and involves, tempts their publicity: ‘stark contrasts of culture, religious beliefs, tenderness, brutality – combining elements of Indian classical music and the rhythms of bhangra with jazz improvisation and rich bluesy harmony’.

Music has always been a very potent way of achieving cohesion and synergy, maybe more so than any other art form. Popular music has been transformed by the input of African Caribbean, South American and Asian sounds. The annual Notting Hill Carnival brings thousands together in West London streets to experience the different sound systems, bands and costume parades. In Belgium, constitutionally divided between French and Flemish communities, it is the magnificent Zinneke Parade through the streets of Brussels that almost uniquely brings both sides together every 2 years.

The examples might convince you that the initiation of a project involving participation and music might see you well on the road to community cohesion. However, these are essentially the outside trappings and not the basic principles that underpin a successful initiative.

Basic Principles

In 2002, the Arts Council of England gathered together 44 top arts managers from around Europe in order to try and isolate what those principles could be. How could they manage to achieve the quality of a genuine 'shared space' signalled in the UNESCO 1995 Culture Report or Creative Diversity? The secret, they saw, lay in the creation of cohesive partnerships. Over 2 intensive days' work, based on case studies and their own experience of what had and had not worked, they came up with the following 10 pointers:

1. Mutual benefit: partnerships should benefit both sides and be seen to do so. There should be no major and minor partners, even though one side may be a large venue and the partner a community organisation.
2. Clear communication: managers should use all appropriate channels of information and be transparent.
3. Clarity of aim: diversity should be clearly integrated into all planning.
4. Development time: sustainable partnerships need time to develop: no quick fixes.
5. Co-working: understanding and, subsequently, trust, grow through working on a shared project, sometimes as an introductory phase.
6. Integrated governance: local people – especially younger ones – should be recruited onto boards of management.
7. Political support: partnerships need to build a wider network of local support.
8. Artistic excellence: quality should always be the guiding light rather than experience.
9. Unified approach: a unified strategy sees diversity accepted as a function and responsibility across an organisation, not just for specialist black officers.
10. Focus on youth: the importance of recognising young people’s needs and developing strategies to meet them.

These points might not seem to be rocket science, but they have proved genuine challenges to a number of managers. Negotiating a shared space involves a readiness to surrender ground or, at the very least, to see things a bit differently. It is such acts of empathy and openness that allow cohesion to arise. It is also where the arts, with their ability to communicate other realities, come into their own.

Voices from the Creative Neighbourhoods Programme Report

With Photofusion, I went out on to Brixton streets to take photos of graffiti, of brick walls, people filming an advert ... I realised I had a good eye for photography, the eye of a tiger, man ... it's not every summer, or every day that you learn how tee shirts are printed. I would not usually be allowed to touch such an expensive computer. It has been a good experience for life in general.

J. aged 19

There are all ethnic groups in this project. This is important to me because we learn about each other ... it is interesting to find out about people ... I found it great to talk and work in a team, to be more free to talk with other people, free to give your ideas and hear others' ideas ...

D. aged 19

This project gives young people a platform on which they can open up on these issues [hostility to outsiders for example] ... Their enthusiasm has grown. They are here; they keep coming back. Their energy levels are amazing.

D. Video project leader in East London

I have not been to school for 2 years. I have never done anything like this project before ... someone who was going to sign us up for college said we should come and that it would be quite good. I've been coming ever since.

S. aged 15

Compiled by Evelyn Carpenter
Broadcast and Print Media

Presenters: Nick Carter and Samir Shah

Print Media

Nick Carter opened this session with a presentation that charted the changes in audience profile and the Leicester Mercury's response over the last 15-20 years reacting to the growth in, and active business profile of, the Asian population in the Leicester metropolitan area. A separate Asian version of the newspaper had been produced (in English) aimed specifically at that population. Agency material had been used, targeted articles on fashion, etc., had been offered, and the circulation was geographically controlled, covering only city areas of high concentration of the target population.

With the arrival of Nick Carter in 1993, a change in perception had produced a change in publishing pattern. Nick commented that his perception had been that as Leicester was a geographically divided city it didn't need to be socially divided too. Analysis of sales patterns showed him that the paper was then selling to 28% of the Asian community. He began to reduce the number of different pages between the Asian and the main issue, amid strong and consistent efforts to provide as wide a range of content as possible, and to avoid sensationalist or insensitive reporting of incidents of civil unrest. Nick Carter now judges the integration/representation process to be well on its way to success, and the Asian edition printed its last separate edition in October 2002.

A large factor in the success of the Leicester Mercury as a newspaper, in a city which has been arousing international interest because of the possibility that it would be the first in the UK to declare a non-white majority population, is its Multicultural Advisory Group. Called into being to help create an informed response to media pressure for reactions to any situation in which the race card might be played, the MAG brought together civic leaders, leaders of faith and other communities, and the police to meet regularly with the Mercury's editor. They continue to meet regularly to ensure that initiatives from any source are shared, debated and publicised. It is used as a sounding board for the paper and police and others.

The paper is trying to reflect the city's growing confidence. And as this confidence is confirmed, arts and entertainment have developed, and the paper has more to base its coverage, and confidence, on.

Now the Mercury has 40% penetration of the Asian community, and maintains 57% of the 'white'. The content is regularly evaluated through market research. It regularly features material from the different members of the MAG, and the aim is always to reflect the fact that Leicester is a city which is mature in its acceptance of its own diversity. It offers a model for other cities in how to keep information and debate alive among its varied readership.

Nick Carter admits that there are frequent debates in the Mercury's office about involvement and/or objectivity among its reporters. Ideally they should exercise a mix of judgement - social sensitivity and commercial hard-headedness. The issue of freedom to report what is happening also makes it inadvisable to boycott coverage of, say, the National Front. However, Nick Carter is clear that the MAG's relationship with the police creates a stronger awareness among the police of when to ban activities likely to disturb large sections of the population, and among the staff of the Mercury on how much, if any, coverage to give to certain points of view. He feels that the paper's function is to support what the Leicester community wants to stand firm on.

The Mercury has a role to play in bringing out the views of the 'alienated' - e.g. the older white population. The rural population in the countryside around Leicester city reverses the demographics of the city itself, and is predominantly white. However, social mobility could very well change this division too, and the Leicester Mercury should (as should any responsible local media) continue to look to the future in its efforts to respond to local needs and wants.

Broadcast Media

Samir Shah presented a video he'd commissioned to make in 2000/1 by Carlton Cultural Diversity Network (formed in October 2000) to examine the state of play in broadcasting, both in terms of portrayal and behind-the-scenes presence of Black and Asian people. Samir's video tracked the early days of television from the 1960s right to the way to 1998. The story was told through interviews with a number of key players involved in the broadcasting scene over several decades, including Trevor Phillipps, Anne Mensah and Parminder Vir.

It traced some substantial improvements from the days of blatant stereotyping in the 1960s through to the arrival of programmes like Goodness Gracious Me, Red Dwarf and This Life in which portrayal of Black and Asian minorities moved from a stereotypical image further into the mainstream.

However, there was widespread feeling that much still needed to be done behind the scenes. In particular, there continued to be a paucity of Black and Asian people at the most senior executive levels in the broadcast industry.
was that to bring about a real and sustained change in portrayal and to make British broadcasting reflect multi-ethnic, multicultural Britain, the key thing was that decision-makers needed to be drawn from a wider range of cultural groups.

**Screen Presence or Behind the Scenes**

The video presents the viewpoints of personalities, programme-makers and other movers and shakers of the world of broadcast media. Realising that their marketplace was changing, and that diversity among all segments of the operation would be not only socially responsible, but necessary to deliver true diversity of programme content, Carlton were interested not only in accessing the views of the minority ethnic personalities already active and successful in the world of broadcasting but in looking for ways of improving an inequitable situation.

Some of the outcomes included: training, educational events, compiling a talents database of minority ethnic media professionals, looking at how behind-the-scenes staff ratios - for camera operators, production team, etc. - could be improved to match the more cosmetic front-of-camera presence.

Trevor Phillips, in the video itself, identifies three challenges for the broadcasting industry in relation to the careers of minority ethnic workers in the media.

1. Do they hold real power?
   - Trevor Phillips thinks they are making no progress here.
2. Do they have presence?
   - Yes, but why is it always at the margins?
3. Is practice reflecting their skills base?
   - No, the business isn't really tapping into all the creativity they have to offer.

In the seminar, Samir asks:

1. Is the reportage better than 10-15 years ago?
   - Yes, but...
2. Strategies of the television channels - does the product reflect the activity?
   - To some extent only.
3. Is style representing or camouflaging the content?

Still too much window-dressing
4. Are the energy and resources that have been put in having an effect?
   - In front of the cameras yes, but things go more slowly behind the cameras

**Role of the Editor**

Further discussion focused on the role of the editor - on paper and on screen. For example, as Leicester is a multicultural city but not a particularly integrated one, should there be national policies to guide editors and programme makers on how the Far Right are reported in the media or should policies evolve locally as with the Mear?y?

Samir Shah says that individual editors and programme makers should have freedom to make their own decisions and exercise their own control. It is easier to say this in an environment that is quite highly regulated, for example in the BBC with its public service remit and regulations.

Nick Carter says media has to be credible, so a national policy would be problematical. National Front-style activity was planned in Leicester in 2002 - and a ban was sought. Leicester as a multicultural city would not be relaxed in allowing any kind of National Front march or rally. In 2002 the police agreed there would be a public disorder risk, so in that instance a ban was sought and obtained. However, Burnley (with 5% minority ethnic population) is in a different position, with white media showing great support for the BNP.

How can you maintain a consistent local-media position with regard to coverage of the BNP’s activities when the populations are different in their attitudes? Does Nick Carter see it as a moral or business issue? He sees it as both, and his approach to reflecting the community in which his newspaper operates is elaborated in the brief interview with him that follows.

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**Voices from Samir Shah’s Video**

Sanjeev Bhaskar, Actor
Goodness Gracious Me was marketed as a mainstream show, it was given a mainstream slot, and so we got a mainstream audience and healthy audience figures - but it could easily have been marketed as a show by Asians for Asians, at which point most people would have switched off.

Alkarim Jivani, TV Editor, Time Out
Of course, television needs to represent Britain as it is, and what’s interesting is that, if you look at young people, all their influences in terms of music and fashion come from Black or Asian sources. If these Black and Asian sources are not incorporated into television, young people will stop watching it.

Meera Syal, Actress/Writer
There are a lot of people who are like me, who are out there doing it. We’re not standing here with a begging bowl. We’re getting on with it. It would be nice if we did it together.

Anne Mensah, Managing Director, Noel Gay Television
I am definitely black, and I’m really proud of that, but I did go to a comprehensive in south-east London and I want to make programmes that the people I know there would want to watch and enjoy.

Celine Smith, Director, Reel Life Television
I think it is undeniable that television over the last two decades at least has made progress in terms of the representation of ethnic minorities. The sad fact is that there is still a long way to go.

Parminder Vir, Freelance producer
You know, we have come a long way from when the BBC’s only Blacks were in the canteen or in the postroom, and similarly with the commercial television companies, to now getting more people in PA roles and researcher roles. Where there is a blatant gap is in decision making in commissioning.

Sharat Sardana, Writer
It does annoy me when people expect a bit of a free ride because they’ve got an ethnic background and they feel they should be taken more seriously. You judge work on merit and that’s it.
The Mercury Rises

In conversation with Vic McLaren at the paper’s Leicester offices in early 2003, Nick Carter, long-serving Leicester Mercury editor and co-presenter of this media session, revisits some of the issues raised at the conference.

During the short journey from the station to the office, I took the opportunity of asking the taxi driver what he thought about the Leicester Mercury. The response was instinctive and positive: ‘Yes... it’s a good paper’. I quickly discover that my young Asian cabby is a graduate and, like lots of recent graduates, driven taxis while trying to find his first opening.

The Mercury has the warm approbation of Government (in the recently published Guidance on ‘Community Cohesion’) as a model provincial newspaper well attuned to the realities of multiculturalism. Indeed, Leicester’s national and international profile has really advanced in recent years, partly as a result of the Cantle Report which compared the city favourably to some of its northern counterparts, and partly from speculation that it would become the first city in the UK where BME communities formed the majority of the population. Newspaper reporters from all over the world descended upon Leicester in pursuit of the reality of that story – from Belgian State Television, from Le Monde, from the widely syndicated New York Times. In fact, the most recent census showed 39% of the city’s population coming from BME communities – a rather lower figure than some had anticipated – with the Hindu community constituting the third largest in the UK.

Despite its reputation as a successful multicultural city, it is far from being a particularly well-integrated one. Although more and more successful Asian middle-class families are now buying houses in the leafy suburbs like Oadby and Wigston, Leicester’s Asian community is still predominantly housed in the Belgrave (mainly Hindu) and Highfields (predominantly Muslim) areas. The poorer white working class tend to live on the outlying council estates, in areas such as Braunstone, which recently advertised nationally for a new local Regeneration Manager.

I ask Nick Carter what he sees as the key issues for the future well-being of Leicester?

He is concerned about signs of alienation from some sections of the white working-class population, disaffected by what they perceive as economic neglect. Although, fortunately, this is not currently manifesting itself in sinister ways, it will, he argues, undoubtedly inhibit progress within the city if it is not addressed. The city has been Labour-controlled throughout Nick’s time in Leicester (10 years), but with an overall majority now reduced to just a few seats.

‘There have been one or two false starts when it comes to urban regeneration, but I believe there is now far greater consensus amongst the key players, that is to say, Council, Business, Community, about what needs to be done. The Cantle Report put Leicester under the spotlight, and it has given the city a lot to live up to. But that has helped focus minds on the issues which still need to be addressed, such as education and youth inclusion.’

Nick Carter himself came to national prominence as chair of the City’s Multi-cultural Advisory Group, the first of its kind in the country. I ask him how this came about?

‘The group (originally untitled) was established in the runup to the last General Election. Its purpose was to inform the city’s media about race-related issues, and how it should respond were the race card to be played nationally, enabling the city to speak with one voice. Thankfully, the race card was not played to any significant extent, but the initiative was a success, and after the Election, the group took on a life of its own, becoming the city’s official Multi-cultural Advisory Group, with secretarial support provided by the City Council. I stood down as Chair, and these days it meets monthly, chaired by Iris Lightfoot of the local REC. It contains representatives of faith communities, plus senior officials from the Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Education, as well as a Chief Superintendent of Police, plus local media representatives, of course! It’s a really useful and confidential sounding board for all of the constituent organisations, and has helped to the City deal with some difficult issues, not least two planned National Front demonstrations the summer before last.’

The Leicester Mercury has a history of taking its role seriously as a representative body within the community. In the late 1980s, the Mercury produced a special Asian edition (in English) for the Belgrave/Highfields areas, with additional news from the Indian subcontinent and East Africa, an initiative welcomed at the time. But last year the special edition was dispensed with, as no longer relevant to contemporary Leicester.

According to market research, the newspaper regularly reaches 57% of the white population, and 40% of the Asian population, and Nick feels the figure is probably slightly higher amongst the younger Asian population:

‘Midlands Asian Television (MATV) launched in 1999 is very popular, and it takes its news coverage and news forums from the Mercury...’

The broadcast media have been relatively successful in attracting young Asian journalists, whilst in regional print journalism (and national for that matter) representation from BME communities has remained low. Sadly, the Mercury has not bucked the trend: only 5 of the journalists in the editorial department are black or Asian out of a total of 85. Nick Carter acknowledges that this is not good enough, and the newspaper has already changed its traditional sources of trainee recruitment as a first step. Creating job opportunities with a broader appeal across all Leicester's communities is the challenge, and one solution could be through a corporate response from the Northcliffe Group of newspapers, with its range of provincial titles stretching from Plymouth to Aberdeen.

However, my own thoughts turn briefly to the young Asian cabby I'd just met trying to get his first foot on the professional ladder...

Finally, since it was the subject of community cohesion which first brought together Runnymede and the Leicester Mercury, I ask Nick Carter what role he sees for the newspaper in building social cohesion?

‘As I see it, the Leicester Mercury has a responsibility to help build social and community cohesion. It’s not enough to simply stand and watch and commentate. It must find ways of helping the development of good community relations, but in a constructively critical way. I’m satisfied the paper accurately reflects the diversity of the city, but it must also articulate a voice for those apprehensive about change, or who feel left behind. That’s why the success of the bigger urban regeneration initiatives is vital not just for those poorer districts, but for the city as a whole.

The Mercury wants to see a happy, prosperous and cohesive city, just taking a hard-headed business viewpoint: you might sell a lot of newspapers in the aftermath of a riot, but as a rule, you don’t sell many newspapers within a fragmented community! So it is within the business interests of the Mercury to promote cohesion. As it happens, I’m very positive about the future of Leicester as a modern multi-cultural city. Leicester has a great deal of vibrancy and a lot going for it at the present time...’

1 The city now has a youth inclusion pathfinder project funded by the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit.
Race Equality in Sport and Improved Community Cohesion: A Practical Way Forward

Rakesh Chandar-Nair and Malcolm Tungatt

Compiled by Sporting Equals, in partnership with Sport England, this article highlights some of the practical actions that could be taken now by sectors pertinent to sport and the wider active recreation world as part of initiatives linked to developing community cohesion.

Sport is defined by the Council of Europe as all forms of physical activity, through casual or organised participation, aimed at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.

On this basis it is safe to say that over half the population participates in sport of some kind. Today professional sport is a major industry and there can be very few on whom sport has not impinged – as participants, spectators or through the media. Sport therefore has an essential role to play in our way of life and in contributing towards improved community cohesion.

Assessing sport’s potential for increasing community cohesion is best begun with an appraisal of its role in improving the well-being of our nation. Since its election in 1997, the Labour government has made and published a number of pronouncements on the wider expectations around sport to make a contribution towards the well-being of the nation. These include sport being used as a ‘tool’ to contribute towards health, regeneration, community safety, education, etc. As a consequence, Sport England has started funding initiatives and developing programmes that contribute to such agendas.

Case studies produced and research undertaken by Sport England and their partners indicate how sporting activities developed at local, regional and national level are helping to break down some of the barriers faced by different communities in England. While this is evident in sport, however, the issues relating to the summer disturbances in Northern mill towns in 2001 indicate that no single sporting initiative or programme can solve the complex challenge we currently face. Services in sport need to not only engage with communities more effectively but also more meaningfully, by developing policies to meet the needs of diverse sections of the population instead of focusing heavily on high priority groups, e.g. minority ethnic groups, if sport is to play a key role in building good race relations and promoting race equality practices in sport.

While some critics have argued that the 2001 disturbances were due to the failure of mainstream policies and programmes to engage effectively with communities living in isolation and those living within the deprived areas, others see it as the failure of multiculturalism in Britain. Whatever the viewpoint, there is no doubting the need to respond to the current environment of racial division and community tensions in a more effective and positive manner. As a result of appropriate interventions, it is to be hoped that incidents such as those in Bradford, Oldham, Burnley, Leeds and Stoke should not take place again.

Where to Begin?

When attempting to address issues relating to or promoting community cohesion through sport, one should begin by uncovering the causes of the fragmentation of communities within a given area, and then translating that understanding into practical actions. In sport, one way forward can be that of implementing the Sporting Equals Standard for Achieving Racial Equality in Sport.

Sporting Equals funded by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and Sport England, has been established to tackle racial inequality in sport. A series of recommendations within the Cantle Report emphasised that sport and cultural activities could encourage harmony and help develop a sense of belonging for local people from disparate backgrounds. The argument used at present by a wide range of agencies, including government officials, on the potential for sport sees it as a powerful tool for engaging with all sections of the community by providing better opportunities to those who are living in poverty and exclusion.

Although this is essential, it is not as straightforward as mainstream service providers merely identifying deficiencies in their existing programmes and activities. Ted Cantle’s report and others have been consistent in their findings that local people can often feel that their interests are being done down in favour of someone else’s. It is therefore only appropriate that mainstream services should re-think their policies and processes and design them to be more relevant to the people they want to involve, instead of just to serve a statistical purpose. The policies and programmes developed in response to tackling any community tensions or fragmentation must not only meet the needs of the diverse groups of local people but also allow the local people to come together to work out and implement what they want to define as cohesion in the community where they live.

Understanding Aspirations and Changing Pervasive Cultures

Because of fragmentation between the different sections of any local community, people can lead very separate lives over a long period, and this encourages individuals and families to develop all sorts of prejudiced and stereotyped views concerning their neighbours. Through a lack of understanding and true appreciation of the different needs of the various groups within the local neighbourhoods, prejudiced
views and feelings of mistrust have developed in areas such as those described by Cantle. Similarly, people involved at decision-making levels within the mainstream sporting structures in England assume that minority ethnic communities, for example, have values and aspirations that are fundamentally different from the opportunities offered to wider communities at every level in sport. There is nothing more dangerous than relying on mainstream service providers who neither know nor understand what the aspirations of excluded communities could be.

Promoting race equality in sport can create a genuinely participatory environment, one that allows people from all backgrounds to link up with each other’s agenda. Such environments can begin to support the exchange and promotion of individual abilities and ideas, encourage cultural sensitivity, address concerns about the common barriers faced in home and local environments, and beyond these to tackle wider issues, such as poor health, achievement levels, educational opportunities and employment. Although we cannot assume that this alone will be enough, sport can nevertheless promote greater contact, discussion and debate within and between communities, especially those initiatives genuinely based on race equality opportunities. Such authentic opportunities are vital if we are to overcome some of the conflicts, suspicions and misunderstandings that exist in a number of localities throughout Great Britain.

One practical approach to developing communities includes implementation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Sporting Equals Standard for Achieving Race Equality in Sport, both of which came into being in 2000. These resources can help service deliverers in the push for promoting race equality and developing good race relations through community sports programmes. Key players, such as local leaders and local authority services, can utilise existing frameworks in sport for not only promoting race equality but also to improve race relations by addressing the significant differences and deficiencies in services that exist for minority communities and between different racial groups in their local areas.

There should be absolutely no scope for the present culture in sport to continue, where sporting organisations and local clubs are concerned only with the needs of traditional white communities when implementing their strategies. Tackling and challenging racist behaviour and discrimination at all levels in our society must be one of the fundamental roles of government and its allies. At Sporting Equals, the CRE and Sport England we have no doubts about the capacity of sport to promote community cohesion. However, that capacity does require reinforcement from the present government to not only raise the profile of sport and promote its wider benefits to our communities, but in addition to increase its current level of investment towards achieving race equality in sport.
At the Conference, issues around Health and cohesion were addressed by Val Barker, Director of Public Health for East Wakefield Primary Care Trust, one of the country's few Public Health Directors not having a medical background, and Dr Linda Harris, a Wakefield GP who trained in London's East End, a mile or so from Runnymede's HQ. Again, when people think of social cohesion, they don't generally think of solutions that involve dealing with health problems, but as Val and Linda's presentations demonstrated, health imbalances and inequalities are driven by imbalances in power relations in society, and social and economic factors are amongst the most important determinants of health.

As also demonstrated within the Employment mini-plenary, there is a great deal of inter-connectedness in the field of public policy, and policy solutions need to be joined up across the board, a point well understood by Val who has made significant contributions to the debate concerning community safety and community cohesion within the Yorkshire and Humber region, drawing on her own varied professional experience.

Richard Stone, a Runnymede Trustee, chaired the afternoon policy formulation session.
include our personal behaviour and lifestyles – such as smoking, alcohol consumption, diet and physical exercise – which are in turn influenced or even determined by socio-economic, environmental and cultural circumstances that encompass the home, the workplace and the wider environment.

As individuals interact with families, friends and communities, their choices and behaviours are influenced and affected. Natural or biological factors such as age, gender and ethnicity also have an important influence on health but they are core factors and cannot be changed.

Wider and more pervasive influences are located within the layers of living and working conditions and those which govern access to the essentials for living, e.g. transport, social services.

But, inescapably, it is the overarching influences that determine our eventual health experience – the general social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions – as they bear down on every other layer. Surrounding areas of influence can only modify and be modified, for better or for worse, and these include lifestyle and work environment.

**Modernising Healthcare**

In recent years healthcare has been dominated by the drive to modernise and reform the N H S through the N H S Plan, National Service Frameworks (NSF) and a greater emphasis on partnerships and collaborations between health and social care, business, voluntary and private sector providers. This has all added up to the largest single programme of reform to hit the NHS since its inception and is an attempt to ensure a minimum set of standards in terms of access to and quality of care for key healthcare areas.

The government has tasked those of us in health and social care with significant targets, in particular those relating to improving patient experience (e.g. access, waiting times, cleaner hospitals) and on the disease areas for Mental Health, 2002. Frameworks to improve 'take up' and carer involvement.

The Diabetes National Service Framework has specific targets, which aim to address the inequalities detailed above. These include:

- Helping individuals reduce their risks
- Improving education about and access to relevant services to improve ‘take up’
- Providing meaningful psychosocial support to individuals and communities in order to illustrate what is to be gained from changing behaviour

But it's not only the physical well-being of individuals that suffers as a result of poor social cohesion. Securing the emotional and mental well-being of black and minority ethnic communities presents even greater challenges.

In 2002 The Sainsbury's Centre for Mental Health published Breaking the Circles of Fear, the report of a 2-year study of the mental health services received by Black and Caribbean people. (Research and statistical evidence shows Black and African Caribbean people are over-represented in mental health services and experience poorer outcomes.)

This report describes circles of fear that prevent black people from engaging with services mainstream services can be experienced as inhumane, unhelpful and inappropriate, and when black people come within the ambit of these services too late, when they are already in crisis, circles of fear will be reinforced. Primary care involvement is reported as limited and community-based crisis care is lacking too.

Evidence shows how black people are often frightened to engage with mental health services because they are perceived as part of a coercive system of regulation and control – with parallels to the criminal justice system. Black community initiatives are not taken seriously, service users are not treated with respect and their voices are not heard.

This content of this report, together with the equality strategy of the mental health act commission, has served to raise awareness among health and social care organisations of the specific issues in caring for this group of patients, which is a necessary precursor to any change in practice. Health and social care agencies now identify practical steps to encourage early access to services in non-stigmatising or generic community settings. Black primary care staff will be a key resource in bridging building; they need to be appropriately trained, supported and developed.

NSF implementation is the responsibility of all localities and they are expected to provide the framework for this and the other levers for change, such as access to and training in the use of interpreters, advocacy and user and carer involvement.

**The Goal of Better Health for All**

In the USA, life expectancy increased by 30 years between 1900 and the end of the 20th century. Recent research has estimated that 5 of those 30 years of extra life are most likely attributable to known, effective medical care, e.g. vaccination, screening, drug therapy, surgery. The remaining 25 years of gain could only have been obtained from outside the sphere of healthcare, and have arisen from changes in the wider social, economic and environmental settings.

This research is most probably true for British communities too, and for this reason health and social care is engaging with communities in a programme of neighbourhood renewal. This new approach, which requires every locality to possess a comprehensive neighbourhood renewal strategy, is born out of the realisation that many initiatives in the past have failed to deliver lasting change.

Through neighbourhood renewal, efforts will be made to bring together different communities with an understanding of difference, diversity and people's rights to equal citizenship. Sustained community development work is needed so that communities can become more powerful and begin to address the factors that influence their well-being – including those of being able to act collectively, question why things are as they are, and begin to influence things for the better.

Locally relevant targets will also involve action on jobs, crime, education, health and the environment – tackling the layer of influence that bears down on all the other layers and which, with commitment from the workforce and society as a whole, can be changed.
The term ‘Community Cohesion’ entered the British political lexicon in the summer of 2001. Areas like Oldham, Burnley and Bradford experienced the worst racially motivated riots of the last 15 years. At Fitton Hill in Oldham many were injured and arrested, shops and property damaged and looted. On 1 June the Asian Deputy Mayor’s house was firebombed and on the 8th the British National Party scored their highest success in a British election [until 1 May 2003 that is]. On 11 September, following the terrorism in New York, a local Mosque was burnt down and many Muslims suffered individual attacks.

Further consultation on the causes of lack of community cohesion and approaches to sustain it, produced government guidance that defines a cohesive community as one where:

- there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people’s different backgrounds 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.

Before June 2001 many towns and cities had experienced economic and social change in local communities that had not always engaged or benefited all its sections. As a result, relationships between different cultural communities were deteriorating.

One of the best-received sessions at the Conference was that led by Chris Browne and Karl Oxford, Regional Coordinators for Social Cohesion in the Government Offices in the East Midlands (Nottingham) and Yorkshire and Humber (Leeds) respectively. This was a wide-ranging session, examining issues around neighbourhood renewal, community facilitation and social cohesion, and Karl Oxford’s presentation of OHP data led and supported the discussions.

Here, we have a thoughtful piece from Chris on 'mainstreaming' community cohesion, which is clearly the government's stated aim, and on practical approaches to identifying 'what works' and what could be replicated. In addition, Chris highlights the role that community facilitators can play in putting in place the building bricks of potentially cohesive communities.
identified issues believed to reduce community cohesion. They included:
- Discrimination and fear of racist victimisation
- Inter-community resentments originating from perceived competition for resources and service provision
- Regeneration funding not meeting the needs of BME communities
- Decline in traditional employment opportunities and obstacles preventing some BME and white communities from successfully joining the labour market

Two years later the challenge is for community cohesion to be 'mainstreamed' into our strategic planning and service provision.

Community cohesion is an important dimension for all communities and local authorities and strategic partnerships across Britain. In Community Cohesion - Our Common Understanding, the Commission for Racial Equality describes how the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 requires over 40,000 public authorities to tackle racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and actively encourage good relations between people from different racial groups. The latter will be central to the approach that local authorities take to build community cohesion into their planning and service delivery.

However, community cohesion is wider than race equality.

As Professor Gus John stated in a presentation at a conference responding to the Denham and Cantle reports: 'Community Cohesion has got to be seen in the context of a strategic approach to eliminating the cycle of dispossession and social exclusion in which so many white working class are trapped'.

When thinking about how to mainstream community, three important pre-considerations need to be thoroughly explored before taking action:
1. Obtain a real understanding of current strategic planning processes and delivery, and perceptions of these from the communities' viewpoint.
2. Achieve a common understanding of what is meant by community cohesion rather than assuming a commonly held definition.
3. Involve local people before any significant action is taken.

Baseline Assessment Plus
The Government Guidance on Community Cohesion proposes a framework of practical measures that will mainstream the process across planning and service delivery. The section on baseline assessment stresses that all local agencies need a detailed understanding of the nature of the communities they serve in order to assess how equipped they are to build community cohesion. Local Authorities are tasked with carrying out baseline assessments to identify how they perform against the various themes in the guidelines - like young people, education, housing, sport and cultural services. These assessments should answer questions like: 'What impact does the housing situation have on community cohesion?'; or 'Do we really listen to people who truly represent all sections of our community?'

Building a Picture of Community Cohesion, a guide for Local Strategic Partnerships, sets out an index of indicators that measure community cohesion levels. Some of these, like 'Number of racial incidents recorded by authorities per 100,000', should already be available and are assessed on the basis that community cohesion is likely to be stronger in areas with fewer racial incidents. However, it is also important to assess local trends for under-reporting. Some require new surveys, e.g., 'Number of percentage of people from different backgrounds who mix with other people in everyday situations'. This measures the level of positive relationships being developed between different racial groups referred to in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. Such questions are recommended in the Best Value Performance Indicator user satisfaction survey. Others, about identifying residents' key priorities for improving an area, are statutory in the Best Value Performance Indicators, and help to assess individual aspirations and community perceptions and to what extent these are shared across different cultural groups.

Such measurements, suggested in the guidance, are starting points but need to be supplemented by more detailed local analysis and attempts to collect views from people who don't usually take part in surveys. Community held beliefs about black and minority ethnic communities or lifestyles of people living in deprived communities need to be checked out.

Baseline assessments should also include identifying which statutory, voluntary, community or faith organisation is already contributing to building community cohesion, and where the specialist skills and knowledge about mediation and conflict resolution, community development and detached youth work are to be found. Assessment of the Community Plans and other planning documents for impact on community cohesion, preferably carried out by someone outside the Local Strategic Partnership, could help identify levels of knowledge and possible training needs for strategic partnerships and community networks. Mapping of partnerships, organisations and forums which impact on local communities would identify the existing capacity for local action or the level of support required to effect change.

Common Understanding
Although the Guidance sets out a comprehensive description of a cohesive community there are still...
differences of interpretation and it is important that local strategies and references to community cohesion contain clear and common understanding of the term and how it will be recognised. This may vary depending on the perspective, e.g. resident's forum or Local Strategic Partnership, but needs to be recognised across the different partners. Some examples [opposite] taken from a recent multi-agency workshop on community cohesion illustrate this.

Community cohesion is about relationships across and between communities in schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods, not just within particular cultural, community or interest groups. As illustrated by Kearns and Forrest (2000):

A city can consist of cohesive but increasingly divided neighbourhoods. The stronger the ties which bind local communities, the greater may be the social, racial or religious conflict between them. The point is that cohesion at the neighbourhood level is by no means unambiguously a good thing. It can be about discrimination and exclusion and about a majority imposing its will or value system on a minority.8

A further element of this common understanding is that community cohesion is relevant to all communities, not just those with significant black and minority ethnic populations, and that assessments of equality of access and subsequent actions must focus on white communities as well.

Building on What Works

Many areas will already have local organisations and workers or volunteers whose input will directly contribute to strengthening community cohesion. In Neighbourhood Renewal areas, community cohesion can be strengthened through current activities within the National Strategy, like tackling long-standing inequalities in the standards of main services and the levels of resources different ethnic groups receive.

Recent research into the most effective approaches to resident participation in renewal programmes identified community development as one of the most effective:

Community Development emerges as the most significant factor in promoting and developing community involvement in renewal. The process of empowerment that is central to this intervention is a necessary requirement for tackling the barriers posed by previous life experiences. The good practice highlighted here [in the research] stresses the need to start with the views of local people. This can be achieved by strengthening and resourcing existing groups and working for the inclusion of excluded groups.9

Alison Gilchrist from the Community Development Foundation endorses this view:

The sustainability of cohesion strategies will be determined to a large extent by the quality of community participation in their design and delivery. Where communities feel empowered by the process and have developed a sense of ownership of both initiatives and outcomes, then they will persevere with their involvement through difficult times as well as when things are going smoothly. This is an important aspect of cohesion – there are no straightforward solutions and people need support and encouragement in order to experiment and take risks.4

Community Facilitation is another approach to involving the local population and developing positive relations between people from different backgrounds. This was part of a Neighbourhood Renewal Unit programme of action to reduce community conflict after 2001. Community facilitators now work across all 9 English regions, on over 50 projects, to resolve conflict, and foster dialogue, understanding and respect across different cultures. In the East Midlands we have evaluated the process, barriers and achievements and found that use of local community facilitators has been effective in providing a micro view of local communities' issues and solutions and the development of an infrastructure to assess and diffuse potential conflict. The 'Building Communities' project in Nottingham worked with streetwise young people who became peer facilitators with a focus on taking messages from the

Comments from a recent multi-agency workshop on Community Cohesion include:

‘Community Cohesion is inclusion, a sense of belonging, working and living together.’

‘A cohesive community is a community with glue not fragmentation’ - a local conflict resolution organisation who saw their role as providing the 'glue'.

‘Community Cohesion can be measured by the acceptance level of the indigenous communities towards new arrivals, e.g. asylum seekers.’
Karl Oxford’s presentation to the mini-plenary session was

ministerial capacity and housing tenure and subject to racial harassment, his sources

in Charnwood Borough in Leicestershire, community facilitators came from a range of backgrounds and included adult volunteers, youth and sport development workers as well as young people. Both ‘Connecting Communities’ in Charnwood and the Nottingham project built on existing good practice, and were developed by local organisations with experience and expertise in cross-community working.

Charnwood Arts (who manage Connecting Communities) were building on what we have done for years. All our work has a cross-cultural purpose. This programme has changed Charnwood Arts as an organisation, our balance and purpose, and has enabled more coherent thinking of the role and purpose of community cohesion. There will be interest and feedback for years to come.11

Mainstreaming community cohesion in planning and service delivery is a complex process and will depend on the level of infrastructure, local history and expertise and resources. The Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme2 aims to explore the most effective means of identifying and disseminating models by which community cohesion can be integrated across planning and service delivery. This 2-year demonstration programme will be providing support for participating local authorities, voluntary and community sector organisations to promote community cohesion and build their capacity. The progress of the 14 Pathfinder Partnerships will be monitored; analysed and disseminated to help other areas work towards creating more cohesive communities.

Notes

1 Karl Oxford’s presentation to the mini-plenary session was accompanied by a battery of OHP slides which presented data to support discussion of minority ethnic issues in social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal. On the particular topics of minority ethnic community populations, average incomes, educational achievement, school exclusions, rates of employment, unemployment, self-employment and employment of others, housing tenure and subject to racial harassment, his sources included the following:

Birmingham LEA
DfEE Youth Cohort Study, Cohort 9, sweep 1
DfEE Annual School Census, press notices


5 Ibid note 3.


On 4 July 2003 the approved version of this guide to help local agencies build a detailed picture of the cohesiveness of their communities, and monitor progress, was published by the Home Office. Building a Picture of Community Cohesion sets out 10 core community cohesion indicators using relevant local data such as residents’ surveys, GCSE exam results and unemployment figures. These reflect the key elements that define a cohesive community and will help local authorities build strong integrated communities. Launched by Fiona Mactaggart, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Race Equality, Community Policy, and Civic Renewal, the booklet has been produced by the Community Cohesion Unit in consultation with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), the Local Government Association, the CRE and a selection of local authorities and local strategic partnerships. A library of local performance indicators, set up by the Audit Commission and the Improvement and Development Agency, will include indicators from this publication, and the booklet will be revised in Spring 2004 to include user feedback and new local area data.


9 A. Gilchrist (2003) ‘Community Cohesion – Community Development Approaches, A Society of Community Workers’. This brief report has recently been augmented by a longer document, published by the Community Development Foundation. [firm up this ref]


11 Connecting Communities website [http://www.connectingcommunities.charnwood-arts.org.uk]

12 For more information, see the Home Office Community Cohesion website [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/new_index/index_community_cohesion.htm].
Mini-Plenary Sessions and Policy Formulation Groups

Community Safety and Community Cohesion

The mini-plenary on Community Safety and Community Cohesion was presented by Martin Davis, Head of Safer Communities Services in the London Borough of Hackney and his colleagues from the Safer Communities Partnership, Chief Supt Derek Benson of the Metropolitan Police and Sule Kangulec.

Mike Nellis is a Senior Lecturer in Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Birmingham, and a former youth worker. He has strong views on the need to develop successful rehabilitative and reintegrative programmes for offenders, to ensure community cohesion. His contribution was specially commissioned for this collection, as there was insufficient space in the conference programme itself to address all aspects of criminal justice policy and its implications for community cohesion.

The term ‘community cohesion’ rather like the term ‘community’ has a certain elasticity. Both the presentation by the Hackney Partnership and Martin Davis's subsequent paper emphasise that ‘community cohesion’ and ‘community safety’ start from the same point and that one person's disorderly behaviour is another person's disruption of community cohesion. Both Davis and Nellis take a broad perspective on the idea of cohesion, and Nellis's article cleverly exposes society's continuing ambivalence about crime, the simultaneous abhorrence and fascination.

The afternoon policy session on crime was so oversubscribed it had to be housed in the Lecture Theatre. There, FMEB Commissioners David Faulkner and Inspector Matt McFarlane joined Martin Davis in a wide-ranging discussion and question-and-answer session, with particular emphasis on the ways in which different styles of policing could influence cohesion within localities.

For many who attended the Hackney Partnership presentation, particularly from those North of England towns which had experienced civil disorder during summer of 2001, the questions for Martin and his colleagues were on the lines of: What are you doing in Hackney to engender cohesion? Is there some special formula? How can we add value to what we are already doing elsewhere? It's not clear how far those questions were answered, but maybe one of the solutions is for some ‘twinning’ arrangements to develop between Partnerships in different parts of the country, to share best practice and ‘what works’, and to try to identify the elusive ‘x’ factor which can add to the cement of society. Runnymede would be keen to be kept informed of any developments in this sphere.
Community Living and Community Safety

Martin Davis

Living in communities requires the adoption of shared norms and standards of conduct. The degree to which such rules are accepted and understood will vary, but that is a common understanding (or misunderstanding) enables order to exist. It seems to me that in the loosest of compacts between people sharing space and time lies an essence of ‘community cohesion’; a necessary ingredient of ‘enabling’ social interaction.

This model of community cohesion balances out well with the classic definition of ‘community safety’:

The term ‘community safety’ is seen as having both situational and social aspects, as being concerned with people, communities and organisations, including families, victims and risk groups as well as with attempting to reduce particular types of crime and the fear of crime. Community safety should be seen as the legitimate concern of all in the local community.

This loosely framed social action approach enables community safety practitioners to work with diverse communities, in innovative ways, which can call upon the broadest range of methods to enable communities to become safer places in which to live and work.

Community Cohesion in a Dynamic Society

The current use of the phrase ‘community cohesion’ in the British context originates with the urban ‘disturbances’ in the north of England in 2001, and from this starting point it quickly gains status and credibility. Community cohesion policies begin to be showcased as a necessary ingredient for a lawful society, with the Home Office’s Community Cohesion Unit playing an important role in positioning policies for the reduction of crime and disorder.

When the Home Office commissioned the Cantle Report to seek the views of local residents and community leaders, its published findings (December 2001) provided a better understanding of the links between polarised and excluded communities and disorder, and offered some idea of how such problems might be challenged or removed. In response, new government policies have been developed to support cohesion, along with a receptive reappraisal of the ways in which services are provided to communities.

Cantle had underscored the need for radical change in the development and provision of services. What also became clear from the Cantle Report was that the social support needs of diverse local populations present an enormous challenge to politicians, social planners and those providing public services. The issue is not one of straightforward social control, or deficiencies in access to appropriate services. In diverse societies, to encourage harmony and a sense of belonging as necessary ingredients of community cohesion, a new praxis must be developed.

This praxis will have to be underpinned by an informed understanding of the new nature of our urban communities, the needs of all communities, and the services required to meet those needs.

To apply such a new praxis within the context of crime and disorder reduction presents additional, but not insurmountable, problems. Crime response and order maintenance generate large amounts of new legislation. The term ‘anti-social behaviour’ has become enshrined in law as a criminal activity; with a specific legal definition rather than a generalised sociological one. Community Cohesion has yet to be enshrined in legislation, but could easily be transformed into a ‘Community Cohesion Order’, or simply rolled up into that list of prerequisites upon which an effective bid for central government funding is based (‘the bid should demonstrate a commitment to ensuring community cohesion...’).

Quality Public Services

The divided northern English communities observed in the Cantle Report do not replicate themselves in London. In the capital the configuration is often more complex. My own borough of Hackney is part melting-pot, part staging-post, with the majority of the population identifying with a plethora of minority ethnic origins.

We sometimes talk of our borough as having ‘communities of communities’ in order to describe the fact that the local population comprises a range of large and small ethnic groups. The ‘them and us’ polarisation observed in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham is impossible to cling to in Catford, Hoxton or Kilburn. Inevitably, therefore, if you do not dump onto one minority ethnic group responsibility for the ills of the whole community, you are free to deal with the real causes of the problems: take an objective look at the links between deprivation and crime, and challenge the one to relieve the other.

To provide consistent and sustainable high-quality services, whilst tackling the complex issues of alienation...
key crime and cohesion issues:

- the built environment – sustainable settlement or alienated crime zone?
- inner city disorder and exclusion
- demographics – youth, ethnic groups and vulnerable people
- poverty, crime and disorder linked to working with diverse communities – involves social exclusion, neighbourhood renewal and community planning
- reality of crime environments – crime hotspots, disorder, fear of crime, limited services

and exclusion prevalent within the community, is the primary objective driving the policies of both community cohesion and crime reduction. This is the basic entry level in terms of general service provision, but how can the criminal justice service and community safety services in general make their contribution?

crime reduction as a co-ordinated community activity

statutory crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) were devised to support the systematic reduction of crime and disorder in local areas. These partnerships are able to implement short, medium and long-term work projects and draw upon a range of skills to prevent and reduce crime. In Hackney our CDRP is primarily concerned with implementing a detailed strategy, which requires the development and delivery of community-based ‘safer communities services’.

Although the strategic development and implementation of ‘community safety’ has been a statutory duty for the police and local authorities since 1998, outside the relevant authorities the term is neither well known nor understood. It was the exclusive aspect of crime and disorder reduction (and its close relationship to criminal justice services), with the consequent lack of community ownership, that led to the establishment of the Home Office Standing Committee on Crime Prevention; and to its final report recommending that local authorities and the police should work within and together with the community and other community services to challenge the problems leading to crime. Yet, there is still, even within government, a limited understanding of the nature and work of the statutory partnerships.

This has been a priority within Hackney for several years and, since the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, additional resources have been injected into the borough’s multi-agency partnership activities, and community safety work has developed a clearer focus. There are now over 80 active organisations in the Hackney partnership, including the Probation Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, Hackney Action for Race Equality, Victim Support, the Hackney Primary Care Trust, along with representatives from Tenants’ and Residents’ Associations, Head Teachers, Chambers of Commerce, and so forth; all of them working on a wide range of community safety projects. The benefits of the partnership approach have demonstrated how sharing our experiences, ideas and resources can enable us to deal with emerging problems faster and more comprehensively. This type of arrangement has now been replicated across the country.

Getting the community stakeholders and partners around the table, in various groups and configurations, is vital in both targeting our joint resources and linking our work to community needs and interests; it also has the potential to spread the load and develop community ownership. This has also aided the consultation process with the community, which lies at the root of any developed strategy, leading to identified priorities (in our case: Youth Crime, Street Robbery, Drugs Related Crime, and Burglary) and then developing the work programme of a range of projects to tackle the priorities effectively.

Our Robbery Reduction Strategy, for instance, aims to reduce street crime in the borough by 14% by 2005. A multi-agency group (led by the Borough’s Police Superintendent of Operations) gets together frequently to review the details of crimes, and steers the actions required. Police resources need to be effectively deployed, young people need to be actively diverted, courts have to have a range of services available to them to challenge offending behaviour, schools need to be involved and supported, drugs rehabilitation services have to be appropriately developed, and so on. As a direct outcome we have been able to fund and develop schools-based work in a way which responds specifically to this ‘opening up’ of the issues and the processes to resolve the problems.

Other essential activities undertaken by the Hackney Partnership are those that are instrumental in challenging perpetrators and assisting victims, for example:
A number of different agencies and programmes have supported targeted anti-burglary projects in similar areas – the Brownwood Burglary Reduction Project being a classic example, exhibiting all the relevant features (a crime ‘hotspot’ area with a definable group of victims, who experienced specific types of preventable crime).

This does not mean that generic projects should not be developed. The Youth Citizenship programmes and the Hackney Safer Schools Initiative are two obviously generic programmes that we have supported, but wherever possible we need to ensure that they meet carefully assessed priorities and will have a significant impact on crime and its causes.

**Real Communities, Real Needs**

‘Community safety’ and ‘community cohesion’ start from the same place. Both are concerned with the development of an ‘enabling’ society, and both are concerned with practical solutions to alienation and exclusion: one person’s causes of crime are another person’s disruption of community cohesion. The combination of people and organisations that cooperate in supporting those objectives and the range of services or activities they facilitate will vary, but what cannot be allowed to vary is the focus of activity, which should be not simply process driven, but seek constantly to meet the genuine and changing needs of real communities.

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**Crime, Punishment and Community Cohesion**

Mike Nellis

We got out and stood in the front yard of the prison. The outside gate closed on us. As it swung to, I saw the bit of road outside. There was an old man going past, shoving a handcart before him, his breath steaming on the cold air. As he looked in, I suppose he said to himself, ‘You’re never bad but you could be worse’ and pushed on in better heart.

(Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy* 1958)

The most informed and authoritative commentators have been saying for some time that many of the kinds of property crime which most perturb the British public have been decreasing since the mid-1990s. Not everyone agrees, pointing out that the British Crime Survey, the most reliable guide on these matters, does not routinely address crimes against businesses, nor crimes against those under 16 years old, and that even within the categories of crime with which it is explicitly concerned, there may well be instances that remain un- or under-reported to the survey’s interviewers.

But let us, for the time being, accept that property crime – though not violent crime – is falling. Why might it be so? And will the fall last? Let us assume – and it always has to be a cautious assumption – that there is a connection between the decline in street crime and government crime control policies. What has been happening that might have effected this change? Three factors suggest themselves.

**Factor 1.** The period over which crime has ostensibly been declining coincided with the period in which multi-agency crime prevention initiatives at local level – cooperation and coordination between police, social services, education and housing departments – began to take root in Britain. These originated, patchily at first, in the 1980s, but became more systematic and widespread – a community safety movement was born which has galvanised much creative activity within and across local authorities. To the extent that these initiatives were as well conceived and well implemented as their architects intended, it is entirely reasonable to expect that some types of crime would have declined as a result by the mid to late 1990s. Emphasis on multi-agency policing increased under New Labour after 1997, packaged now as one among several aspects of social inclusion, and it is again reasonable to assume that this has helped to sustain the fall in crime that began under their Conservative predecessors. Although the community safety agenda sometimes tilted dramatically towards high-tech...
situational approaches such as CCTV, there has nearly always been a community cohesion element embedded within it; however muted – even CCTV schemes have been rationalised in terms of creating safe public spaces where ordinary people can mix and fraternise more easily. The creation of integrated networks of people who have a common interest in quality-of-life issues in a given locality, and the reduction of conflict (ethnic or otherwise) which may give rise to crime, remains an important part of what it means to create safe communities.

Factor 2. Community penalties have been progressively toughened up. The move to switch the Probation Service away from its social work ethos towards ‘punishment in the community’ began in the late 1980s, and was initially associated with a short-lived political commitment to the minimum use of imprisonment. Although throughout the 1990s the Service was marginalised by the Conservative government, major changes of ethos and practice nonetheless took place at ground level. Offenders began to experience more cognitively demanding programmes which challenged their anti-social and criminal attitudes and which were enforced more rigorously. While the extrusion of the more personally supportive elements from probation practice may actually have rendered some interventions less effective, it is difficult to believe that the new-style community penalties have had no crime-reducing consequences, not least because they have mostly been used with lower- and medium-serious offenders. Under New Labour, the quest for tough community penalties has continued, with both young and adult offenders, culminating, in respect of the latter, with a blurring of the time-honoured distinction between community and custodial penalties and the creation of ‘seamless sentences’, which contain elements of both. In respect of young offenders, there has latterly been a marked emphasis on restorative justice – on their being made more accountable to their victims – and this relatively new ingredient may well be contributing to a reduction in the rates of re-offending.

Factor 3. Third, and most obviously to the press and public, the period over which crime has gone down has coincided with a dramatic rise in the prison population, currently at 73,000. The rise began in early 1993, following a low of 41,000 achieved during the ‘punishment in the community’ era. It was brought about by a deliberate government commitment to the idea that ‘prison works’, by direct encouragement to sentencers to use prison more, and by increases in sentence length. Even before they lost office in 1997 the Conservatives were claiming that early signs of a fall in crime were a direct result of their ‘prison works’ policy, and as prison numbers have continued to rise under New Labour, conservative commentators have continued to claim that this lies behind the sustained fall in crime. It would be a bold person who argued that increased prison use had nothing whatsoever to do with declining crime – chances are that some potential re-offenders have been taken out of circulation, for longer than might otherwise have been the case – but whether it is more important than the growth of multi-agency crime prevention initiatives or the toughening of community penalties is highly debatable. Even if it does play a significant part, it could still be argued that maintaining high levels of prison use, and being prepared to let them become higher still, is not in the long run the best way – certainly not the most economical way – of addressing crime.

Certainly, the present Home Office recognises that rising prison numbers are less than ideal, but – and this is true of the government as a whole – they have been unwilling to argue wholeheartedly for a significant reduction, and are in fact prepared to countenance a rise to 100,000 before the decade is out. Nor have they shown much overt enthusiasm for the corollary of reducing prison numbers, the better use of community penalties, out of fear that sections of the media and the public would brand them, fatally, as soft on crime. Measures such as electronic monitoring have not lived up to initial expectations that they would be the last word in toughness, although this technology has helped to sustain an early release programme which, by creating a safety valve, has made prison numbers marginally more manageable. The perceived inadequacy of release and resettlement procedures – indicated by high rates of reoffending in the immediate aftermath of release from prison – has made its own contribution to the development of seamless sentences (custody followed by, or entwined with, intensive community-based work), and has again focused attention on the nature of the communities to which released prisoners return.

In this resettlement debate, concepts like ‘community safety’ and ‘community cohesion’ remain important, but are not in themselves enough to ensure that progressive, constructive policies are developed. The reintegration of offenders is a two-way street, requiring law-abidingness on the part of the released prisoner (and the acquisition of skills needed to make this feasible) and a degree of opportunity-making, tolerance and trust on the part of communities. Safety must remain a paramount consideration, and while for some offenders this necessarily entails high levels of surveillance, and constant risk assessments, for others it is best achieved by steady acceptance and a willingness to let the past be just that – the past.

On Diverting Delinquent Energies and Fostering Law-abidingness

The kind of community cohesion which sustains itself by the indiscriminate exclusion, mistrust and demonisation of all manner of outsiders, including ex-prisoners, may well create a sense of safety, even of righteousness (or its secular analogue) among its members, but it does so by deferring, displacing and perhaps even intensifying the threat represented by crime. It certainly helps expand and consolidate the prison system, which becomes entrenched in the public mind as the only viable, seemingly ‘guaranteed’, means of reducing crime and, where politicians are pusillanimous, easily acquires a momentum
of its own.

There are, indubitably, people from whom communities need to be protected, and a place for their exclusion and punishment, but communities should be discouraged from the artificial manufacture of ‘folk devils’ and ‘suitable enemies’ out of awkward and unruly behaviour whose behaviour can be ameliorated only if over-reaction is avoided, and if the effort to understand their causes and motives is made. Sometimes, it is true, communities fuse together in the aftermath of atrocious crimes in hitherto unimaginined ways. Dunblane and Soham come to mind. But these are exceptional events in relatively peaceful places, and in the diverse, interconnected locales which comprise contemporary Britain, more mundane means must continually be found to reduce opportunities for crime, to stifle and divert delinquent energies, to create opportunities and incentives for law-abidingness, and to set meaningful standards of virtue, customised when necessary to suit local circumstances.

But – and here’s the rub – it should be recognised that the creation of community and the reduction of crime both go against the grain of life in what sociologists style ‘late modernity’, and that while occasional successes are highly likely, there is no certain outcome in the long run. Crime may rise again. Specifically, as property crime-without-violence is made progressively harder to commit (in life, if not on the net), violent crime may become more common – a trend that can, arguably, already be discerned.

Engrossed with this or that technique or strategy for making communities safer, it is perhaps rather easy for the target-driven professionals and administrators to lose sight of the wider economic and cultural forces which are countering and corroding community, which demand of us all an incessant assertion of individualism, a wariness of bonds, a loosening of ties and roots, a willingness to relocate, a soulless, carefree flexibility that enables us, first and foremost, to survive in the labour market. It is surely less easy to miss the fact that we are at heart deeply ambivalent about crime, that alongside our supposed fear of it, we allow ourselves to be entertained by it in countless books, TV programmes and movies, whose producers have a vested interest in our continued fascination – not to mention a security industry with a vested interest in our fear. In public consciousness, ideas and images from crime fictions merge, to the point of indistinguishability, with such crime facts as are available, eclipsing them, distorting them and shaping the sense we make even of the crimes we know of in our own community. Thus framed, these crimes rarely seem amenable to painstaking and laborious efforts at multi-agency crime prevention; the threat they represent seems so much greater, such that only prison will do as a response.

This is not a counsel of despair, merely a warning that the road ahead will be hard and a reminder that while the journey will be worth making, the destination may never be reached. Although the odds are stacked against us, we are not as a society bereft of the means to reduce crime and, as recent years have shown, some success is possible. But there are better and worse ways of reducing crime, and at the present time far more support needs to be given to multi-agency crime reduction programmes, and to the use of constructive community penalties – and then to the profile of these in the public mind – than to the continued use of imprisonment, whose substance and symbolism are easily overrated as solutions to crime in a civilised society. To raise that profile, the provision of crime prevention and of alternatives to custody might usefully be merged into a single, integrated sphere of policy, rather than being left, as at present, as separate ones. The synergy thus created, branded as ‘a community justice movement’, might yet introduce a much-needed new dynamic into debate about crime control in contemporary Britain.

Audience members at the plenary sessions. Over 250 attended the conference, including 9 FMEB commissioners

**David Faulkner (chairing) and Inspector Matt McFarlane (LHS), contributing to the Policy Formulation session on Community Safety**
Mini-Plenary Sessions and Policy Formulation Groups

Employment and Education

(a) The mini-plenary on Employment was chaired by Runnymede Trustee, Maggie Lee, and featured contributions from Peter Ramsden (East Midlands Development Agency); Debbie Gupta (IPPR) and Tony Burnett (Ford). The session report by Michelynn Lafîêche, Runnymede's Director, faithfully represents some of the key issues from the discussion in what participants felt was a particularly useful session.

What emerged above all was the need for joined-up policy solutions, as employment policies sit closely alongside issues of economic development and regeneration in the public realm, and corporate social responsibility in the private sector.

With regard to solutions, the new duty to promote race equality in the public realm (RRAA 2000) and the Government's clear commitment to tackle issues raised in Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market will go some way, as will the facilitative work on the various regional development agencies, but for the private sector there remains a significant challenge for many businesses to raise their game.

(b) The session on Education and Cohesion was led by Phil Green, Education Director for Bradford, in a session chaired by Robin Richardson, educational consultant and editor of the Parekh Report. Here, in a personal reflection, Robin stands out as being highly critical of many of the reports published in the wake of the 2001 riots, and also of the 2002 Guidance on Community Cohesion for their failure, as he sees it, to adequately tackle issues around racism and Islamophobia, and to properly absorb some of the key messages and detailed recommendations of the Parekh Report.

Ministers have always stated that there are no magic wand solutions, and that a public debate is required. In that context, Robin's critique will add to the content of that debate, and (hopefully) the relevant CCU practitioner group will be in a position to consider these points in its detailed deliberations.
Enhancing Community Cohesion through Employment

Michelynn Laflièche

On the website of the Community Cohesion Unit at the Home Office can be found the following statement with regard to building community cohesion and employment:

High levels of unemployment and variations in job opportunities can have a detrimental impact in building cohesion. Disparity in the levels of employment between varying groups can also breed resentment between different communities. Local authorities, learning and skills councils and the Employment Service should be engaged in developing equal access to employment for all sections of the community. (as at 12 May 2003)

The Local Government Association says virtually the same thing in its Guidance on Community Cohesion, as does the recent report of the Cabinet Office's Strategy Unit, Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market (March 2003), although in this latter case the link between social inclusion and community cohesion is clearly articulated.

The purpose of this conference session was to explore the relationship of employment policies and practices to enhancing community cohesion. But, in fact, the issue is somewhat broader than the title of this session at first suggests - it is not just employment per se that can or could be relevant in creating more inclusive and cohesive communities, but also economic development and regeneration and, indeed, the broader actions of companies falling under the area of corporate social responsibility.

The Runnymede Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain was the starting point for our work on community cohesion through 2002. It is therefore worth returning to what we said in our chapter on Employment.

Employment equity is perhaps the best-known issue in relation to achieving greater equality in the labour force, and therefore greater equality overall - on Employment.

Consequently, it is not surprising that many of the recommendations of the CFMEB's report focused on employment equity and the need to create and implement policies in the public, private and voluntary sectors relating to the elimination of discrimination and aiming towards the achievement of equality, specifically race equality, in employment opportunities across the labour market.

But the report went a little further - beyond employment - to also make recommendations relating to procurement, enterprise development and the provision of financial services to businesses. In other words, the additional role that employers play in promoting equality through business-to-business relationships, the focal nature of economic development and enterprise for creating employment opportunities and promoting economic activity, and the importance of business service providers (banks, investment, services, etc.) pursuing fair (non-discriminatory) practices were all seen as vital to overall success in creating equality in the labour market and, by extension, promoting social cohesion more generally.

While the CFMEB (Parekh) Report adopted the concept of cohesion and applied it to social policy broadly, it was the Cantle report and the responding Ministerial report that brought the term 'community cohesion' to the forefront of new policy debates at the end of 2001, and which predominated throughout 2002. Both of these reports had something to say about employment.

The Cantle report made several specific remarks, based on the findings of the Independent Review Team, which implicitly related employment to community cohesion:

- Employment opportunities for some groups were very poor.
- There was evidence of racial discrimination.
- Postcode discrimination was also identified as a problem which affected poor white communities as much as poor ethnic minority communities.
- Local agencies often have very low ethnic minority representation.

The Ministerial Group responded to the Cantle Report on these points, stating that:

- The Department for Work and Pensions was committed to narrowing the employment disparity for ethnic minority communities and also for deprived communities more generally.
- The Regional Development Agencies have an important role to play.
- The evidence provided an agenda for action on racial discrimination, but argued that there needed to be an emphasis on the issues surrounding poor white communities as well.
- Local agencies needed to engage with RDAs in tackling the problem.

The emphasis in these two reports at the time of their publication was most obviously about discrimination in the labour market and the lack of employment opportunities. Less clear, but nonetheless stated, was the idea that employment, as far as it contributed to community cohesion, was also dependent on economic
After all, economic growth and prosperity 
thereby addressing the gap between disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals'.

The outline Debbie Gupta started with an outline of the work of the IPPR’s taskforce on race equality and diversity in the private sector. The taskforce is an employer-led IPPR initiative, which is exploring the private policy options for promoting race equality in private-sector employment. At the time of this conference it was still at a very early stage in its existence; consequently the focus of the presentation was on how the taskforce aimed to fulfil its key objectives, namely to:

- set out the current position on ethnic minority participation and attainment in the UK private sector;
- identify examples of best practice in the private sector and understand the reasons for their success;
- evaluate the limitations of existing legislation and public policy initiatives; and
- determine what further steps the private sector and government should take to harness the skills and experience of people from minority ethnic communities.

The Case Study. Tony Burnett then introduced Ford’s approach to addressing racial discrimination and promoting diversity across its business operations. Ford, like many large companies today, makes a strong feature of promoting diversity across its business operations. Ford, like many large companies today, makes a strong feature of promoting diversity across its business operations. Ford, like many large companies today, makes a strong feature of promoting diversity across its business operations. Ford, like many large companies today, makes a strong feature of promoting diversity across its business operations. Ford, like many large companies today, makes a strong feature of promoting diversity across its business operations. Ford, like many large companies today, makes a strong feature of promoting diversity across its business operations.

Understanding demographic trends in Britain and Europe, notably the increasing proportion of available labour and potential consumers from ethnic minority backgrounds, was identified as a key driver to their diversity policy. It was argued that focusing on ethnicity was deemed to have real business benefits – for example, in terms of attracting employees from a wider talent pool; increasing staff morale and productivity; reducing costs (i.e. through fewer industrial tribunals); enhancing understanding of their consumer base; and, not least, projecting an enhanced public image.

The Agency Approach. Finally, Peter Ramsden introduced the work of emda (East Midlands Development Agency) on tackling social exclusion through economic inclusion. In supporting our premise that merely to remove the work of emda (East Midlands Development Agency) on tackling social exclusion through economic inclusion. In supporting our premise that merely to remove

headline economic growth is only part of the equation. When economic growth in the more advanced areas of the region improves, it does not necessarily bring improvements to disadvantaged areas – just as the lack of growth and opportunity in disadvantaged areas does not necessarily hinder those that are doing well. Three ‘catalysts’ for economic inclusion as identified by emda were to:

- help communities become more enterprising;
- grow micro and social enterprises focusing on under-represented and disadvantaged groups and communities; and
- establish and promote a broader range of community orientated finance providers.

Straightforward Messages

What came out of the session were clear, straightforward messages that have long been put forward by equalities organisations, recognised to a large extent by government, even implemented to some degree by the private sector:

- Create more cohesive communities through employment opportunities.
- Tackle racial discrimination first and foremost in the recruitment, retention and progression of employees.
- Tackle other forms of discrimination, including for example postcode discrimination, as well and with equal ferocity.
- Regenerate and stimulate economies to provide the much-needed opportunities.
- To achieve this put in place strong, targeted and measurable policies - and adhere to them.

Potential for Change

Given that the messages are not new, and discrimination and disaffection continue to exist, what is the potential now for change? The new Duty to Promote Race Equality (RRAA 2000) placed on most public authorities could go a long way towards tackling discrimination in the workplace. Having to make that shift from mere compliance in non-discrimination to the positive promotion of good race relations could engender a newly affirmative culture in the public sector. While the private sector is still not bound by this duty, it is unlikely that further regulation is forthcoming, voluntary action is still the key ingredient for change. Examples such as that provided by Ford are valuable in their encouragement of greater private-sector commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting diversity, even when reliant largely on the business case to do so.

Moreover, the strategy outlined in Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market (RRAA 2000) now to be adopted as government policy, also has great potential for making change happen. With a target of ensuring that ethnic minority groups will no longer face disproportionate barriers to accessing and realising opportunities for achievement in the labour market in 10 years' time, government is making the strongest commitment to change it has made yet.


2 Strategy Unit, op cit note 1; see in particular the Prime Minister's Foreword (p. 3) and the Executive Summary (pp. 4-7).
Including social cohesion as a measure of progress puts this strategy at the heart of the community cohesion agenda.

Finally, the four key objectives given to RDAs (Regional Development Agencies) to promote economic development, social cohesion, employment and employability and enterprise could support the community cohesion agenda as well. Examples such as that provided in this session by emda are positive starts in this direction.

**Corporate Social Responsibility**

But there is one further area relating to employment and economy that needs to be considered, that of corporate social responsibility. Many companies today recognise the importance of making a positive impact and giving something back to the communities in which they operate. The growth of CSR in the UK over recent years is marked and the potential value of private-sector engagement with local communities is considerable.

A Mori poll (2000) found that 60% of UK businesses stated they were involved in some form of CSR.

Remarkably, thus far, this idea is still not being pushed as part of the community cohesion agenda, with the exception of a short statement in the LGA’s Guidance on Community Cohesion suggesting that ‘Local authorities could also consider how the growth of corporate social responsibility can be harnessed to the greater benefit of the whole community.’

So what role could CSR play in contributing to community cohesion? To be sure, CSR activities, much like promoting diversity in the workplace (particularly in private-sector companies), are largely business case driven. Just one example of a popular CSR activity, business-school mentoring, is as much about tapping into the future labour force and enhancing the company’s public image as it is about giving something back to society, perhaps more so. Broadly speaking, the business case for CSR is usually put forward (in addition to bringing benefits to society) as a means of enhancing companies’ reputations, improving competitiveness, and strengthening risk management.

The DTI suggests that businesses might consider the following under their CSR activities:

- engage in local partnerships for renewal;
- support local partnerships by acting as business brokers to bring together private-sector contributions on renewal;
- seek new opportunities for investment in deprived areas, making use of the funding and other financial incentives that are available and utilising successful business models in use abroad;
- employ local people or purchase from local enterprises;
- support local projects through the contribution of resources including the secondment of staff, or allowing local groups to share facilities;
- show publicly their support for and confidence in the communities within which these renewal projects are taking place.

Clearly these kinds of activities relate much to neighbourhood renewal, and are indeed promoted by the DTI as something that businesses can do to engage in government-related activities. And as neighbourhood renewal is so obviously connected to the community cohesion agenda, why isn’t corporate social responsibility being identified as a potential element in the whole project?

With more and more businesses beginning to engage in CSR activities, the potential value for building community cohesion is great. Businesses, community organisations and government need to work together to identify strategic engagement in this regard – the loosely planned interventions common today will not suffice when it comes to building cohesion. This is a critical area in the whole agenda relating to employment and the economy. Taken together with tackling racial discrimination in the workplace, economic regeneration and non-discriminatory business-to-business practices, the contribution that the private sector, in partnership with the public and voluntary sectors, can make is vital to creating a successful and cohesive multi-ethnic Britain.

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**Education and Community Cohesion**

Robin Richardson

Recently a teenage pupil in a school in Southall, west London, wrote a four-line poem which ran as follows:

> The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
> that’s a long name for home.
> Somalia’s easier.
> Southall’s easy too.

It was a beautiful introduction to the theme of community cohesion, and to the implications of the theme in and for education. For cohesion is essentially about feeling at home – being in a place that you know and like, and feeling there that you are known and that you are liked. Cohesion starts at home, on the streets of the local neighbourhood. But it’s part and parcel of something bigger, broader, longer – ‘the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland’. It’s about being...
comfortable and fulfilled in many kinds and levels of home.

The word 'cohesion' was introduced to public debate in the current context by the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. The report began by stressing that the most problematic word in its title was not 'multi-ethnic' but 'Britain'. In this respect it quoted from a recent editorial in the Political Quarterly: 'The British have long been distinguished by having no clear idea of who they are, what they are or where they are. Most of them have routinely described England as Britain. Only business people talk about a United Kingdom ... It is all a terrible muddle.' Muddles can be disorienting, entrapping, depressing. But also they can be challenging, intriguing, energising and exciting - glorious as well as terrible. Getting to grips with concepts of community cohesion involves getting to grips with the muddle to which the word Britain refers. Also words such as France, Germany, America, incidentally, refer to muddle - every country known or knowable is a muddle, terrible or glorious according to your point of view. The name of a country, the point is, has three different kinds of referent: (a) a geographical territory (b) a state, namely a member of the United Nations and (c) a set of pictures, stories and sayings in people's imaginations about their home, and the feelings, beliefs and commitments which these switch on and mobilise.

In every country, in relation to feelings about home, there is a hegemonic story, a dominant self-understanding. The hegemonic story in Britain - which is essentially an English story - has four salient aspects. First, the nation's history goes back a long way. Second, it is a story of continuity, an unbroken chain over the centuries in which tradition not transition has been the dominant motif. Third, it is a story of calmness, gentleness and peace. Fourth, all people in Britain feel much the same about living here, and always have done. These four points can be summarised with the belief that Britain has, and always has had, unus rex, unus lex and unus grex - one monarch, one legal system, and one sense of community.

Clarifying the concept of social cohesion entails rigorously critiquing, and vigorously replacing, hegemonic pictures of, and hegemonic stories about, where British people live. For we live in a space that does not have an unbroken long story and which is not all gentleness and peace. There are tensions and disagreements related to class, region, nation, gender, age and religion, and always have been. The commission's phrase for an alternative picture was 'community of communities and citizens'. But cohesion is not an absolute value, said the commission. It has to be complemented and enriched by two further values. The commission named these as equality and diversity.

Equality, cohesion and diversity are like the three legs of a three-legged chair. Take one away, and you no longer have a chair, you no longer have a good society. It is extremely dangerous to try to talk about cohesion without talking about equality and diversity in the same breath.

These notes on political philosophy may seem rather abstract, a far cry from the practical everyday life of schools and local education authorities. In reality, however, they are what schools and classrooms are all about, all the time. They are the story of every teacher's professional life. How to hold a balance between treating pupils equally (and in that sense, 'all the same'); yet also recognising the unique identity, experiences and life-stories of each, and of the communities to which they belong; and at the same time striving to maintain a sense of a common stake in the well-being of the school community, and of the classroom community - this is the job of every teacher. It is the job that is supported, enriched and celebrated by local authorities and by central agencies.

In the light of the arguments in The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, sketched above, it is relevant to recall the five reports about community cohesion in northern towns and cities published in England in summer through autumn 2001. Also, one must recall the ways in which four of these were interpreted by the press: 'Ethnic communities scarred by the summer riots', said an influential headline about them two days before they were published, 'should learn English and adopt "British norms of acceptability"'. Since the phrase 'British norms of acceptability' was in inverted commas, readers could reasonably assume that it was a quotation from one of the reports, or else from an interview with the Home Secretary commenting on the reports. In point of fact it was not, but had been invented by the newspaper. The headline 'Blunkett's "British test" for immigrants', similarly purporting to summarise the thrust of reports, added to widespread disinformation.

A year later, the five 2001 reports were joined by a document from the Local Government Association, setting out the implications of the community cohesion agenda in a range of local services, including education. The did not excite any media coverage. Nevertheless it was a continuation of the previous discourse, not a departure from it.

There were differences of emphasis amongst the reports but basically all reflected hegemonic narratives and images of British society. They did not even acknowledge the existence of counter-narratives, and for example used words such as 'we', 'us' and 'our' to refer to all people in Britain when in fact there were lots who were not included. They advanced five claims:

1. The purpose of community cohesion is to prevent public disorder.
2. Community cohesion depends on shared values.
3. The main obstacle preventing the development of shared values is the self-segregation of ethnic minority communities, with the result that they live 'parallel lives', not lives integrated into mainstream (namely white) society.
4. A major aspect of this self-segregation is the refusal to speak English in the home, with particularly unfortunate consequences for children under five.
5. Another problem is ignorance - 'ignorance of others', said one of the reports, with significant indifference to the rules of grammar as well as to
countless academic research studies 'is an obvious sources of conflict' (what research shows, over and over again, is the exact opposite: it is at least as true to say that conflict begets and nourishes ignorance).

All five of these claims are at best half-truths and at worst plain wrong. A further problem is to do with what the reports did not contain, and in this respect their silences spoke volumes. They did not, for example, refer to the central topic of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, institutional racism. In so far as they referred to racism at all, it was to something to be found in 'extremist groups', not elsewhere. Nor did they refer to Islamophobia other than in throwaway references. This was particularly outrageous in view of the fact that many of the so-called ethnic minority people mentioned in the reports define themselves as Muslims. Further, none of the reports discussed issues to do with faith and religion in a modern secular society.

If the community cohesion agenda in education had been shaped by the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain rather than by the 2001 reports about northern cities, the emphases would have been rather different. Most obviously, there would have been substantial implications for the content of citizenship education and these would have been spelt out. But even more importantly, a major focus would have been on inequalities of access and outcome in the education system. Statistics released by the Department for Education and Skills in March 2003 showed the great gap between national averages and the attainment of children and young people of African-Caribbean heritage. The DfES has committed itself to giving this matter major attention. The same set of statistics did not appear to show such a large gap in the case of children and young people of Pakistani heritage. However, the term 'Pakistani' in official statistics refers to a range of different communities in terms of social class, cultural identity and migration history. It therefore obscures the plight of communities that are perhaps more accurately referred to as Kashmiri. In local authorities where most Pakistanis are in fact Kashmiris, the inequalities experienced by people of Pakistani heritage are every bit as serious as are (generally elsewhere, incidentally) the inequalities faced by people of African-Caribbean heritage.

In relation to the educational attainment of pupils of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage, the key questions for investigation include the following:

- **Leadership:** the role of headteachers and other senior staff
  - Are there, in relation to raising attainment of pupils of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage, particular leadership styles and approaches that are successful? If so, how can these be described and how can they feature in management training programmes?
- **Training and staff development**
  - What is the role of professional development and inservice training? Are there particular styles and methods of training that are particularly relevant and valuable?

- **Recognising British Muslim identity**
  - Muslim pupils experience a range of demands and expectations – from parents, community, the mosque, the school, their peers. How do schools help their pupils, both in the curriculum and in the pastoral system, to balance the pressures on them and to develop their identity? How does this affect their attainment?

- **Working in partnership with parents, mosques and community organisations**
  - Some schools and LEAs have good working relationships with Muslim parents and organisations. Others, however, frankly admit that there is much progress still to be made. What are key success factors here, and what seem to be the problems and obstacles that have to be overcome? What effect does partnership have on pupils’ attainment?

- **Multilingualism, language policy and English as an additional language**
  - Most Pakistani and Kashmiri-heritage pupils have competence in basic interpersonal and conversational skills in English. Many, however, appear to have difficulties in handling the subject-specific language and terminology of the National Curriculum. What are the issues here, and what are schools taken to address them? What are the key success factors?

- **Differentials in attainment between boys and girls**
  - There appears to be an emerging pattern, in many but not all LEAs, that boys appear to do better than girls of the same age. However, this must be seen in the context of the wider differences in the attainment of pupils of Pakistani and Kashmiri heritage. What are the factors causing or contributing to this? What is the role of teenage youth culture? What are the key success factors?

- **Preventing and addressing racism and Islamophobia**
  - Is institutional Islamophobia a factor in the under-achievement of Pakistani and Kashmiri-heritage pupils? If so, what evidence can be gathered? What are the distinctive features of Islamophobia in education and how do successful schools identify and remove these features?
  - A community cohesion agenda in northern cities built around these questions would be substantially more relevant than the programme proposed by the Local Government Association. Analogous questions need of course to be asked in relation to other communities. They are questions not only about cohesion but also, to repeat, about equality and recognition of difference. Only when all three of these values are pursued together can any one of them be achieved.
First I want to thank you all for coming and being so generous with your comments and ideas in various discussion groups.

Second, I want you to remember that the Home Office team has been here throughout the day attending not only the plenaries but also the various discussion groups, and has taken full account of all the suggestions and ideas that have been floated.

Third, the Runnymede Trust too has greatly benefited from your comments. You have given us the confidence and the courage to keep going forward with the contents of the Multi-Ethnic Britain Report, and thank you so much for that.

Finally, when the Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain came out the hostility of the press coverage shook us, and even a battle-hardened veteran like Stuart Hall felt slightly rattled by the response. But increasingly we began to realise that the reactions simply confirmed how important the report was. Though initially it looked like an act of self-destruction, I think history has proved us right.

Our report has spawned several major articles in academic and other journals, two PhD theses, and a research project on how the report was received and why. I can’t think of any other report which has received this degree of attention. The Home Office too are prepared to cooperate with us. Today, the minister has said some nice things, and I think it is an act of confidence in what we did.

If we have the courage to say what we hold to be true, without worrying about the media reaction, I think one can count on the basic sense of decency of this society to appreciate it. Without that degree of confidence in this society’s decency, one simply can’t fight racism.
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The ‘Developing Community Cohesion’ Conference was sponsored by the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit, who have also supported the publication of these proceedings.