‘Preventing Extremism Together’ Working Groups

August - October 2005
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Shaukat Warraich from the Imams and Mosques working group and Ifath Nawaz from the Security and Policing working group volunteered to compile and format the final reports from all the working groups before submission to the Home Office.
CONVENORS’ FOREWORD

Following the tragic events of 7th and 21st July, the Government appointed a diverse range of people with different skills and knowledge in mid August 2005 to join seven Working Groups that it had resolved to set up, the objective being Working Together to Prevent Extremism.

The working groups concentrated on different strands identified through Ministerial visits which were conducted immediately following the terrorist attacks. The first meetings of the various groups took place around late August and Terms of Reference were provided to the groups to focus discussion and ultimately to provide their recommendations upon.

The timetable set for the groups to consider, deliberate, discuss and ultimately to reach their recommendations was a period of 6 weeks, with a further short period for submission of the final reports. It should be noted from the outset that the findings and recommendations presented are truly remarkable and immensely gratifying especially in the light of the time constraints.

The Government's initiative, to engage and consult with the Muslim communities, was widely welcomed and there was sincerity on the part of those invited to participate in this exercise. There was a general consensus that an analysis of what had happened on those two days in July needed to take place, together with a thorough investigation into how and why those terrible events had occurred. What motivated the four July 7 bombers to kill and maim innocent civilians? What deep underlying issues needed to be addressed? Coupled with this, there was also a clear and undeniable recognition that the Muslim communities along with other faith communities, had a deep vested interest in promoting a strong civil society built on shared notions of good citizenship, social cohesion, religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

The individuals involved in this process were acutely aware of the relevance and critical nature of this exercise due to the hostile climate that followed the events of 7th and 21st July, in the form of attacks on the Islamic Faith, the incessant demands for Muslims to repeatedly demonstrate their allegiance to the country, the demonisation of a whole community together with the unprovoked and marked attacks on Islam and Muslims by the media and in other more direct forms of physical attacks on mosques and individuals. All this dictated that the challenge had to be faced and that this process was an opportunity to respond in a constructive way which was inclusive, positive and forward looking.
From the outset it was recognised that whilst this process was largely looking at Muslim communities, that the responsibility for tackling extremism and radicalisation in all its forms was the responsibility of society as a whole. The Working Groups are united in the view that whilst the remit for various working groups was to tackle extremism and radicalisation, most if not all the strands see that the solutions lie in the medium to longer term issues of tackling inequality, discrimination, deprivation and inconsistent Government policy, and in particular foreign policy.

Emphasis has also been placed repeatedly on the need to look not only at the events that occurred on those two days in July, but to the causes behind them. The Working Groups are therefore united in calling for a Public Inquiry in order for all the issues to be considered and examined in the public domain. The inquiry will be instrumental in understanding and learning from what has happened in order to prevent its reoccurrence.

However, it is evident by participating in this process and producing the reports, that there is very strong support amongst the Muslim communities to work in partnership with Government and others to engage and contribute as equal and active citizens politically, economically and socially. The Working Groups are therefore also united in urging the Government to engage with Muslim communities at all levels in a sustained dialogue, and not as a one-off event. It is imperative to recognise that this report is regarded as the initiation of a long term process, and is a summary of the work undertaken to date.

Due to the nature of the process and the fact that each Working Group worked independently of each other, each chapter represents the work of that particular group. Dialogue across the groups would have been constructive and extremely useful, but this was limited. The order of the Chapters does not reflect the importance of the subject matter, as from the point of view of all those involved, each chapter and its components bear more or less equal weight, and all are immensely important in the way forward in tackling the issues. However it is equally recognised that some recommendations will require priority over others.

It is also important to recognise the exceptional work that existing Muslim organisations are already doing, and the chapters highlight some case studies of good practice. Obviously it is not possible to highlight all Muslim organisations that could potentially help in the ongoing process, but the work following this report should present ample opportunity for such organisations to be given due recognition. For this reason, Muslim engagement within this framework is critical and they must be involved in the direction and formulation of any strategic initiative delivered by the Government.
Summary of Recommendations
Working together to prevent extremism

The Convenors wish to express their thanks and appreciation to the individual members who made up the Working Groups for their contributions and understanding in working under the pressurised circumstances and for making the most of the opportunity presented.

Signed

Yusuf Islam  
Lord Nazir Ahmed  
Baroness Pola Manzila Uddin  
Inayat Bunglawala  
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Nahid Majid  
Abdal Ullah  

October 2005
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from the Engaging With Young People Working Group.

1. **Countering extremist ideas** – a national, grass-roots-led campaign of events targeted at Muslim youth enabling influential scholars to theologically tackle extremist interpretations of Islam

2. **Opportunities for young British Muslims to be leaders and active citizens** – UK Youth Parliament to train Muslim youth MPs to be peer facilitators and run debates/consultations with young Muslims in their local communities;

3. **Improving service provision for Muslim youth** – ensuring the Youth Green Paper is accessible to Muslim youth

Recommendations from the Education Working Group.

1. To instil a more faithful reflection of Islam and its civilisation across the entire education system, including the National Curriculum, Further Education, Higher Education and lifelong learning.

2. To improve the performance and achievement of Muslim pupils by strengthening a wide range of existing initiatives.

3. The establishment of a British Muslim-led “National Education Research & Foundation Centre” (NERF Centre).

4. To improve the quality of teaching and learning in RE with an emphasis on life-skills and citizenship.

Recommendations from the Engaging with Muslim Women Working Group.

1. Dialogue and communication which entails deepening the relationships between Government institutions and Muslim women.

2. (Building a) National campaign and coalition which entails increasing the visibility of Muslim women and empowering them to become informed and active citizens within society.

3. Strengthening existing organisations and building links which entails consolidating the good work that is already happening, with a view toward supporting and facilitating its development.
Summary of Recommendations
Working together to prevent extremism

Recommendation from the Supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions Working Group.

1. Improve data collection on Muslim communities through faith monitoring;
2. Invest in interfaith work mapping;
3. Increase the faith confidence and competence of public bodies through secondments and short-term contracts into and out of central, regional and local government agencies;
4. Strengthen the capacity of Muslim voluntary and civic organisations;
5. Support places of worship, including Mosques, to become co-located within community hubs;

Recommendations from the Imams training and accreditation and the role of mosques as a resource for the whole community Working Group.

1. A new national advisory body/council of mosques and imams. This Body would be Inclusive and representative of the many traditions practiced in the UK, independent and lead by the institutions it serves.
2. The setting up of a National Resource Unit (NRU) for the development of curricula in madrasah/mosques and Islamic centres. The NRU will also develop programmes and guidelines for the teaching of staff that function within these institutions. The programmes and guidelines will be developed with respect and in compliance with the diversity and schools of thought in the Muslim Community overall.
3. The establishment of a continuous professional development programmes for the ‘upskilling’ of current imams and mosque officials in the UK. Theological training to be provided only by specialist Muslim seminaries, Islamic scholars skilled in training imams in the UK and elsewhere for those seeking to pursue further development.
4. Design a publication that highlights and promotes good practice from amongst mosques, Islamic centres and imams in the UK.
Recommendations from the Community Security – including addressing Islamophobia, increasing confidence in policing and tackling extremism Working Group

*Recommendation 1:

The Government and the Muslim community to agree Guidelines on appropriate language, and appropriate procedures to ensure that these Guidelines are followed – particularly in times of crises.

Recommendation 2:

The Government must establish and undertake a Public Inquiry into the what, how and why of 7/7 and 21/7 – including an inquiry into the root causes of and the Government’s and other public agencies response to the atrocities. The inquiry should also consider the consequences of the events and impact of measures resulting from the events.

Recommendation 3:

The momentum developed by the Home Office in engaging and consulting the Muslim community through the Taskforce must not be lost. The effort needs to be formalised and professionalised as a means of undertaking the more long term and lasting work.

Anti-Terrorism Provisions

Recommendation 4:

The Government must encourage and empower greater Muslim participation in the various reviews of anti-terrorism provisions and implement the recommendations of these reviews in a more transparent manner. The Government must consult widely, and particularly the Muslim community, on any further anti-terrorism provisions. The UK must lead on and not unilaterally derogate from international principles and standards of human rights.

Addressing Islamophobia

Recommendation 5:

Update categories for race monitoring to reflect the race make up of Britain today and extend all race monitoring to include religion wherever appropriate. Audit all provisions on race and extend to religion and belief wherever appropriate – with particular emphasis on extending to Muslim communities. The audit needs to be undertaken and action plan implemented within specific expeditious timelines.
Summary of Recommendations
Working together to prevent extremism

Recommendation 6:

Establish a Unit at the DCMS, modelled on the Islamic Media Unit at the FCO, to encourage a more balanced representation of Islam and Muslims in the British media, (popular) culture and sports industries. Establish a Steering Group chaired by a Minister and including participation from the Muslim community and the relevant industries, to draw up a strategy for the Unit.

Recommendation 7:

Establish a Steering Group at the DfES, chaired by a Minister and including participation from the Muslim community and other experts, to draw up a strategy on combating Islamophobia through education

Increasing Confidence in Policing

Recommendation 8:

Pilot Recommendation 5 in the Police Service through ACPO & APA (working with representative organisations from the Muslim community), but with Ministerial oversight, and possibly also through specific monitoring by the HMIC. The piloting should, in particular, focus on key tools for equality (e.g., the positive duty, PSA targets, procurement provisions, etc.) and major areas of equality work (policy impact assessment, reporting and recording of Islamophobic crimes, recruitment/retention/promotion, training and awareness raising, etc.)

Recommendation 9:

Better resourcing for more meaningful engagement and partnership between the Police and Muslim communities – including capacity building in Muslim communities for such engagement and participation. In terms of resourcing, there needs to be a recognition that the Muslim community can provide intellectual and human resources. However, what it may not always be able to do is provide financial resources and skills. This is where Government agencies could help. A good starting point would be to set up and resource Muslim Safety Forums (MSFs) across the country where there are significant concentration of Muslims, which could be co-ordinated by a well resourced national MSF

Recommendation 10:

A Ministerial level ‘Review’ of the application and impact of anti-terrorism provisions, particularly in terms of raids, stop and search, and armed police policies (eg, shoot to kill policy). Review to be undertaken with Muslim community participation
Tackling Extremism

Recommendation 11:

Develop a British Muslim Citizenship Toolkit to be used through ‘natural pathways’ in the Muslim community. The Toolkit will articulate a new vision for a British Islam and equip university Islamic Societies, mosques/imams, parents and the youth to deal with violent/fanatic tendencies.

Recommendation 12:

Develop 10-12 Muslim ‘beacon centres’ around the UK, at the heart of Muslim geographic concentrations that will serve as model centres for smaller mosques, cultural centres, educational facilities, etc. The centres will also provide direct access for Government to the grass roots dynamics of the Muslim community. Establish a team at the HO/ODPM to consider how these centres can be developed and to deliver the project.

Recommendation 13:

Develop a five pronged strategy, to be implemented through the beacon centres, focusing on the following:

Leadership – to promote/develop a Muslim leadership appropriate for 21st century multi-cultural Britain – this means a leadership not just in terms of a skills set but a leadership capable of rethinking the universal principles and values of Islam for today’s Britain.

Citizenship – to develop a model of citizenship that reflects peoples multiple identities and allegiances and finds strength in its ability to accommodate each of them and to hold them together. Developing British Muslim citizenship would involve balancing responsibilities as a Muslim towards:

- the world (al-’aalam) – both humanity and the environment;
- the Muslim Ummah – the international Muslim community; and
- the society in which one lives (qawm/dawla)

Equality – to eliminate discrimination against Muslims and promote equality of treatment, opportunities and outcomes between British Muslims and other members of society – through measures stated in section above on addressing Islamophobia.

Integration – to develop a model of integration that recognises that our society is constantly changing; that integration is a two-way process between majority and minority cultures; and that places this recognition at the heart of a an evolving national identity towards a Greater Britain.
Summary of Recommendations
Working together to prevent extremism

Cohesion – to promote mutual understanding and bonding/relations between Muslims and wider society

Recommendations from the Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation Working Group

1. Muslim Forum Against Islamophobia and Extremism – an independent initiative to provide a forum for a diverse range of members of the British Muslim community to come together and discuss issues relating to tackling Islamophobia and harmful forms of extremism.

2. Muslim Affairs Media Unit - a special independent Muslim run-initiative with professional Muslim media experts/press officers to provide rapid rebuttal/reaction to extremist (including Islamophobic) sentiments or actions, and maintain a database of Muslim 'talking heads' who can speak to the press on a range of issues.

3. British 'Islam Online' website - this initiative is envisaged as a ‘one stop shop’ style website/information portal particularly aimed at young British Muslims. It will represent a wide range of views and opinions from all the major Muslim schools of thought, presenting young Muslims with a wide range of choice in terms of views within a mainstream spectrum.

4. ‘Islamic Way of Life’ exhibition - this would be similar to the ‘Jewish way of Life’ exhibition and would tour schools to help increase understanding about Islam and what British Muslims actually believe and stand for, as part of a wider set of educational initiatives designed to further public understanding of Islam and British Muslims.
CHAPTER 1

ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: WORKING GROUP REPORT
CHAPTER 1: ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: 
WORKING GROUP REPORT

Foreword from the convenor

This report is the culmination of a series of discussions around how, as a community and as a society, we can better engage Muslim youth: giving the next generation a better foundation and understanding of their religion - leaving less scope for extremist groups to take advantage. I am pleased to say that the conclusions reached in the report (and the subsequent recommendations) broadly reflect the consensus of the group.

I would like to pay tribute to the group members who gave up their time to make this happen. Hamza Yusuf, Mehboob Khan, Sara Al-Katib, Wakkas Khan, Shazid Miah, Yahya Birt, Huda Jawad, Irfan Chisti, Atif Imtiaz, Mohammed Amran and Farzana Hakim. The contribution and commitment of my deputy convenor, Shareefa Fulat, was particularly important. We were all committed to achieving a set of recommendations, which were both ambitious and workable – I think that is reflected in the report.

I would like to give a special mention to the very supportive staff from the Home Office whose help and commitment towards the group made this possible in the short time we had.

Abdal Ullah
ii. Background/Context

Extremist ideas

There is no single pathway into extremism – individuals can come from a range of ethnic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.¹ The one common denominator is the existence of an ideology that is rooted in political grievances but articulated with reference to a mistaken understanding of Islam. The working group identified particular areas for concern in the UK around, for example, the dissemination of extremist propaganda in universities and prisons, the lack of accessible information about mainstream Islam, and the lack of legitimate outlets with which young Muslims are able to register protest and dissent.

Leadership/participation

Participation by young Muslims in civic and political activity is lower than the national average – although this may be explained by socio-economic, rather than faith-related factors. Young British Muslims tend to face a double exclusion: from wider society and from conventional leadership roles within their own communities. In particular, many young Muslims have reported:

- disillusionment with mainstream Muslim organisations that are perceived as pedestrian, ineffective, and ‘part of the system’;
- that they lack a ‘voice’ and stake in the political and civic institutions of the UK;
- that they lack levers over which they can influence decisions that are important to Muslims²

Public service provision

Young Muslims share many of the same challenges and problems that other young people face – but these problems are often magnified because of a perceived taboo about discussing sensitive issues within the community or because mainstream services are not faith-sensitive enough. For those young Muslims not in university or college, it is critical that youth services are able to provide the support that they need.

¹ Definitions are important. The working Group noted that while there is clear opposition among British Muslims to terrorism and violence, there is less agreement about a definition of extremism that might incorporate sympathy or support for causes of self-determination in the Muslim world e.g. Palestine/Israel.
² Ministerial visits 2005
Chapter 1: Engaging with Young People
Working together to prevent extremism

Executive Summary

Key issues

- There is evidence that a few young Muslims are turning to extremism – fuelled by anger, alienation and disaffection from mainstream British society
- Young Muslims are often doubly disaffected – (1) from wider society and (2) from conventional leadership roles and traditions within their own communities
- Young Muslims share many of the same challenges and problems that other young people face – but these problems can be made worse if mainstream services are not faith-sensitive enough

Top three recommendations

1. **Countering extremist ideas** – a national, grass-roots-led campaign of events targeted at Muslim youth enabling influential scholars to theologically tackle extremist interpretations of Islam

2. **Opportunities for young British Muslims to be leaders and active citizens** – UK Youth Parliament to train Muslim youth MPs to be peer facilitators and run debates/consultations with young Muslims in their local communities;

3. **Improving service provision for Muslim youth** – ensuring the Youth Green Paper is accessible to Muslim youth

i. Preamble

This report sets out seven recommendations for action. Each recommendation is rooted in an analysis of what the problem is and identifies, as far as possible, the relevant delivery mechanisms for achieving success. The recommendations are not exhaustive – we do not claim to have identified any ‘magic bullets’. However, taken together, they represent the beginnings of a framework for action that will address the major issues relevant to young British Muslims: extremist ideas, leadership/participation, and public service provision.

In addition to the three recommendations set out in the executive summary, the working group felt that there were a number of specific problems that needed to be addressed in relation to extremism, including: radicalisation on campuses, a lack of accessible information on Islam, the lack of international opportunities for young British Muslims and the potential for extremist recruitment in prisons.
iii. Recommendations

1. Countering extremist ideas

The Working Group recognised that the threat of religious extremism would only be defeated once the ideas and ideologies that underpinned it were explicitly taken on and defeated. In other words, the problem is not primarily rooted in socio-economic deprivation: it is based on a global ideology - motivated by political grievances and justified by reference to a mistaken interpretation of Islam.

Recommendation 1

A national campaign involving influential international and national mainstream scholars and thinkers – run by Muslim youth organisations – to theologically and intellectually tackle extremist interpretations of Islam

Delivery/implementation

The proposed campaign would involve a group of international scholars, with credibility and influence amongst younger Muslims, travelling across the country to hold conferences and seminars in order to disseminate effective intellectual and theological counter-arguments against extremist interpretations of Islam.

The campaign would draw on the theological and oratory skills of the scholars to provide capacity-building and intensive training for young Muslims, youth workers and those working with vulnerable youths in universities, mosques and the prison service – enabling them to counter the ideological arguments of extremists. It would be delivered by a cross-section of grass-roots youth organisations and targeted at the major cities in which Muslims live in the UK (London, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester, Kirklees, Leicester and Luton). It is estimated that this initiative would cost an initial outlay of £100,000, including the delegation of scholars, conference hall hire and staff costs.

Lead agencies: FOSIS, Q News, YMO

Timetable: 2005-06
2. Developing opportunities for young Muslims to be leaders and active citizens

A strong message to come out of the ministerial visits throughout August and September was that many young Muslims feel that they do not have a voice or a legitimate outlet for protest, political expression, or dissent. Leadership roles are traditionally held by the elders, and the young people can feel frustrated at their inability to actively engage in decision making structures.

**Recommendation 2**

*The UK Youth Parliament trains Muslim youth MPs to be peer facilitators and run debates and/or consultations with young Muslims in their local communities. This would provide a forum and safe space whereby young Muslims could come together to debate difficult issues and register dissent towards Government policies, while in the longer-term, providing the platform whereby constructive policy alternatives could be developed*

**Delivery/implementation**

UKYP have been fully consulted and have proposed the development of a 3 year training programme for young Muslims who are currently serving MYPs and Deputy MYPs (DMYPs) to be peer facilitators. Having undergone some basic training the Muslim MYPs would run a consultation with peer groups in their local constituencies to identify key issues of concern. Once these issues had been identified the MYPs would be supported to run a number of focused debates - allowing young Muslims to express their opinions in the company of their peer group, and facilitated in such a way as to ensure that both young men and women were given a chance to have their say.

Where appropriate these debates would call on the experience of MPs and Government Ministers, and experts in international development, foreign policy, charitable aid, etc in order to provide an opportunity for a direct interface. It is hoped that through these events the young people would feel that they were able to offer solutions, instead of being seen as part of the problem. At the debate events UKYP would also promote different ways in which young Muslims could play an active role in their communities, as well as flag up existing organisations to whom they could apply to for funding for small community projects (e.g. the Russell Commission, the Prince’s Trust, Heritage Lottery Fund etc).
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The overall cost would be £125,000 per annum - including:

- *events/training* – 2 x residential (£7,500 per residential),
- *community debates* x 24 (£1,500 per debate)
- £70,000 staff costs
- Promotional material (£10,000)

**Lead agencies:** UK Youth Parliament

**Timetable:** 2006-09

Other ways of developing leadership capacity and projecting the ‘voice’ of Muslim youth discussed by the working group included:

- **Work shadowing schemes** – with MPs, Councillors, business people etc – specifically targeted at Muslim youth. This could be achieved at a relatively low cost and help develop knowledge of the political process in Britain and provide role models.

- **Media skills training for Muslim youth** – potentially administered by the proposed new Muslim media unit. Costs might run as high as £100,000 if such training were to be provided widely.
3. Improving service provision for Muslim youth

The Working Group felt that the Youth Green Paper offered a good opportunity to improve service provision for Muslim youth. However, it was felt that additional research would be needed to identify the gaps in youth provision in Muslim communities between Muslim NGOs and mainstream statutory youth service provision.

Recommendation 3

_Ensuring the Youth Green Paper is accessible to Muslim youth and that the new offer of things to do and places to go caters for young Muslims’ needs_

Delivery/implementation

NCVYS and the Muslim Youth Helpline have already been commissioned by DfES to consult Muslim young people on the Green Paper. Costs will be negligible. It is also important that further research is carried out to assess the gaps in services to Muslim youth.

**Lead agencies:** Muslim Youth Helpline, DfES

**Timetable:** Consultation ends in November 2005
4. Tackling radicalisation on campuses

It is known that universities are a major recruiting ground for extremists. However, currently, Islamic Student Bodies are left isolated and given little support in developing strategies to cope with the presence of extremist groups on campuses.

Recommendation 4

The Government and community to work together in equipping mainstream Islamic Student bodies to take on extremism in universities – whether through smarter use of literature, shared intelligence or closer partnerships with Vice Chancellors

Delivery/implementation

The Home Office, in partnership with the Department of Education & Skills, has already begun a dialogue with Vice Chancellors and the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS). As a result of this meeting, Universities UK have agreed to draw together a guide on good practice in working with Muslim and other faith communities. Costs associated with this recommendation would be minimal. The Working Group recommends that other Muslim student bodies are included in this process following the lead of FOSIS.

Lead agencies: FOSIS, Universities UK, DfES

Timetable: 2006-10

5. Disseminating more widely accessible information on Islam

One of the problems identified by the Working Group was the lack of accessible information (in English) on Islam. It was pointed out, for example, that following the Madrid attacks in 2004, it was possible to download from the internet a number of religious rulings justifying the use of suicide bombing – but that religious rulings outlawing the use of such methods were virtually non-existent. The Islamic Society of North America has recently published just such a booklet for the American Muslim community.

The Working Group was also keenly aware that in an age of mass media, much learning about Islam is autodidactic – rather than being based on teachings in the mosque, for example. This has resulted in innovation and creativity but has also provided opportunities for the propagation of extremist ideology,
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Recommendation 5

A ‘Muslim Youth Handbook’ be drawn up by a range of Muslim youth organisations and distributed to universities, mosques, schools and youth centres – containing accessible information on basic Islamic concepts (including the meaning of ‘Jihad’), as well as UK-specific information (e.g. on the political system).

Delivery/implementation

Such a book would need to be authored and endorsed by a number of different organisations in order to be legitimate. The Home Office Capacity Building Fund is a source of potential funds – it is likely that publication and dissemination costs would amount to £50,000.

Lead agencies: YMO

Timetable: 2005-06

6. Improved educational and community-led rehabilitation for prisoners

At 9% the Muslim prison population is disproportionately large. Aside from universities, prisons have been the other main recruiting ground for extremists, despite the excellent work being done by Muslim chaplains whose work should be supported further.\(^3\) Therefore improving the services that Muslim prisoners receive – both in prison and post-release – is critical if we are to meet our objectives of preventing extremism together.

Recommendation 6

The Prison service to work with the Muslim community in designing appropriate educational and other services for Muslim prisoners both in prison and post-release.

\(^3\) The case of Richard Reid being a case in point
Delivery/implementation

The NOMS Communities and Civil Renewal Strategy should develop a set of proposals specifically around involving local communities in meeting the needs of Muslim prisoners. Local and regional Muslim organisations, mosques and women’s groups need to be involved so that they feel a sense of shared responsibility for the welfare of current and ex-Muslim prisoners.

Lead agencies: NOMS (Home Office)

Timetable: 2006-10

7. Promoting Muslim Youth Participation Abroad

Young British Muslims have much to contribute towards building youth participation abroad and in sharing their positive experience of religious and political freedom.

Recommendation 7

Delegations of young British Muslims to visit a range of countries in order to facilitate youth participation projects and project a positive image of Britain’s Muslim youth abroad.

Delivery/implementation

UKYP has received a number of requests for help in the creation of a Youth Parliament in Jordan, Canada, Eastern Europe (Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo); as well as requests for support for a youth participation project in Afghanistan. With additional funding, UKYP could work with the British Council to develop projects in other countries, to enable young Muslims from the UK and other young people, to visit these countries to develop youth participation projects, begin to counter some of the mis-held perceptions of life in Islamic countries, and where required support the creation of other democratic youth parliaments.

Costs of youth participation work would be likely to run to at least £300,000 (this would include three delegations of young British Muslims).

Lead agencies: UK Youth Parliament, British Council

Timetable: 2006-09
iv. Conclusion/Vision

The Working Group - taking into account the limitations set by time - believes that these initial proposals, which came out of short but intense discussion, will help to prevent the next generation of Muslims from being attracted to extremism.

The major themes set out in this paper – ideology, leadership, citizenship, public service provision – go to the heart of the major issues facing young Muslims in Britain today. They also help provide the beginnings of a comprehensive framework for action that will need to be taken forward in partnership by both the Muslim community and the Government, a partnership that will need to continue well beyond the life of the seven working groups. It is important to avoid the notion that in any particular policy endeavour, one leading institution can deliver effective outcomes to a diverse and disaggregated Muslim community. Only a partnership that is broad, inclusive and representative will deliver outcomes that are truly effective.

Ultimately, we want young British Muslims to feel part of British society, to feel empowered, to be active role models in their communities, and most importantly, to achieve their dreams and goals.

Members of working group

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CHAPTER 2: EDUCATION: WORKING GROUP REPORT

Executive Summary

This report is the result of a consultation process involving the Government and a number of Muslim organisations and individuals. Seven informal Working Groups were established by the Home Office to develop a number of practical proposals aimed at preventing extremism and reducing disaffection and radicalisation in the Muslim community. The Education Working Group was asked to identify a “full range of education services, in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community”.

A series of intense meetings and deliberations took place over the period of a month and concrete proposals were agreed for the Muslim community and the Government to carry forward in partnership. The Education Working Group’s proposals are summarised as follows:

- To instil a more faithful reflection of Islam and its civilisation across the entire education system, including the National Curriculum, Further Education, Higher Education and lifelong learning.
- To improve the performance and achievement of Muslim pupils by strengthening a wide range of existing initiatives.
- The establishment of a British Muslim-led “National Education Research & Foundation Centre” (NERF Centre).
- To improve the quality of teaching and learning in RE with an emphasis on life-skills and citizenship.

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A. Background and Rationale

Extremism and terrorism of the kind recently witnessed is deeply abhorrent and foreign to us all. Those responsible for such acts are in no way representative of the overwhelming majority of Muslims; it should not be assumed that the Muslim community, or Islam, is intrinsically ‘problem-ridden’ and produces ‘extremists’ as a matter of course; nor should we be tempted to believe that it is simply a problem connected to underachievement or socio-economic imbalance within inner cities.

However, the Muslim community must accept its part of the responsibility to try to ensure that the culture of radical ideas and influences out of which such attacks grew have no rightful place in our community and country. We believe that a better and truer knowledge of Islam and improved educational achievement for young Muslims can impact positively on their outlook and future. An improved representation and acknowledgement of Islam and its positive contribution to European civilisation, if made more available nationally within institutions and places of learning, will enhance self esteem and help reduce substantially the alienation and imbalance that the present lack of such education breeds.

Any warped ideology that encourages resentment and extremism to express itself in religious terms needs to be analysed and understood. We believe that the roots of the problem are multi-faceted, leading to some young people believing that there is a conflict between being British and Muslim. One cannot ignore the effect of successive UK Governments’ foreign policies, historically and in more recent years on this belief; neither can Islamophobic attitudes still largely prevalent in British educational institutions, much of them based on mythical paradigms of Islam and Muslims cultivated by orientalists over many centuries, be considered irrelevant to the issue.

British Muslims have suffered significantly from various forms of alienation, discrimination, harassment and violence rooted in misinformed and stereotyped representations of Islam and its adherents – the irrational phenomenon we have come to know as Islamophobia. The proposals set out in this report seek to address these fundamental issues by acknowledging that education is the key to opening the doors to mutual respect between people of different faiths or no faith.

If we fail to provide authentic and traditional spiritual values and a correct representation of Islam and Muslims within the education process we effectively devolve that responsibility to those who would distort and hijack the teachings of this great religion.
B. Proposals into Action

1. To instil a more faithful reflection of Islam and its civilisation cross the entire education system, including the National Curriculum, Further Education, Higher Education and lifelong learning.

1.1 WHAT’S TO BE DONE?

1.1.1 Research and audit the National Curriculum and various directives and guidelines produced by the DfES, TDA, Ofsted and QCA

1.1.2 Make practical and achievable recommendations with the cooperation and assistance of Government officers to appropriate departments, and thus

1.1.3 Correct the current ‘alien’ image of Islam and represent a more faithful reflection of Muslims as an integral part of British society, and European history and heritage.

1.2 WHO WILL DO IT?

1.2.1 An interim task force composed of a Muslim board of advisers (initially drawn from the Education Working Group members) together with officers from the Department for Education and Skills or the Home Office (as appropriate) shall work on producing short, medium and long term plans and strategies to address the concerns raised.

1.2.2 The interim task force shall be empowered to commission educational consultants and experts in order to examine the content, delivery and assessment of the National Curriculum and other study programmes, including the initial teacher training curriculum, and analyse their impact on learning outcomes. Existing Muslim community institutions and organisations\(^4\) will be invited to contribute to this work.

1.2.3 The interim task force will be superseded by the National Education Research & Foundation Centre (see third proposal below).

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\(^4\) e.g. Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), Muslim Educational Trust (MET), International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR).
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1.3 COST IMPLICATIONS

1.3.1 An initial pump priming fund from the Government of £250,000 will need to be provided for the first six month phase to enable the work of the interim task force to proceed. During this first phase a more detailed budget, including the financial contribution required from British Muslims, will be prepared to cover the medium to long-term goals of research, publication and expanded activities together with administration expenses.

See also Appendix A.

2. To improve the performance and achievement of Muslim pupils by strengthening a wide range of existing initiatives.

2.1 WHAT’S TO BE DONE?

2.1.1 The Working Group is aware of existing Government and independent research initiatives that focus on pupil underachievement, including in more recent years the underperformance of Muslim pupils specifically. It is recommended that the Department for Education and Skills and other appropriate Government bodies, with co-opted assistance from Muslim communities and organisations, monitor and support the effective delivery of these local and national programmes and ensure that they are sufficiently resourced and expanded.

The scope of this work should include:

- Ensuring that the Every Child Matters national programme addresses the faith and cultural needs of all children.

- Promoting the use of the Extended School Programme to enhance and target the needs of Muslim parents (lifelong learning opportunities, family learning and parenting support programmes) and build educational links with mosques and madrasahs.

- Expanding the Minority Ethnic Achievement project to provide extra resources and skills to improve achievement levels among Muslim students.

- Professional development and targeted support and mentoring for Muslim and other teachers from minority ethnic groups to reach positions of responsibility in educational institutions in order to accelerate the raising of standards for those groups identifiable as failing.
• Encouraging parental participation and family involvement generally in helping schools to improve service provision and raise standards. This is a tried and tested approach worthy of Government support with help from mosques and other community organisations.

• The Government to encourage the media and organise high profile conferences for parents/carers to raise awareness of the issues of underachievement and how they can assist.

2.2 WHO WILL DO IT?

2.2.1 Existing organisations, consultants, schools and local education authorities already engaged in developing and providing guidance in this area should be supported and their successful practice disseminated more widely. Additional experts in the field, particularly from the Muslim community (the MCB, MET and members of this Education Working Group) can be commissioned to provide the human resources and skills in order to speed up the process and improve the quality of outcome.

2.2.2 The involvement of community based, interculturally skilled and appropriately qualified and experienced personnel at every level is an essential ingredient for any such successful formula.

2.3 COST IMPLICATIONS

2.3.1 Continued Government funding is required to support and bolster existing budgets for organisations and authorities already undertaking the required research and actions.

Examples of some of the other existing programmes are given in Appendix B.
3. The establishment of a British Muslim-led “National Education Research & Foundation Centre” (NERF Centre).

3.1 WHAT’S TO BE DONE?

3.1.1 A NERF Centre established as a joint venture between the Government and the Muslim community to provide the infrastructure to support the QCA, DfES, TDA, schools in the maintained and independent sectors and other educational institutions in delivering a more accurate and positive representation of Islam and Muslims. The focus would be on creating a better understanding of Islam and Muslims in Britain, as well as developing appropriate training and learning resources beneficial to the education system and towards improving opportunities for interfaith dialogue. This would be enhanced by the dissemination of shared ethical values through a Life Skills programme of studies and the organisation of culture-specific professional development programmes and multi-media presentations.

3.1.2 A NERF Centre could engage in a variety of activities including:

- Carrying forward the work of the aforementioned interim task force to reflect faithfully Islam and its civilisation across the entire education system.

- Launching a permanent educational exhibition to help marginalise extremist concepts and highlight the contribution of Islam and Muslims to Western culture.\(^5\)

- Identifying and developing new and existing talent amongst Muslim youth by promoting Islamic traditions through cultural workshops on recitation, art, poetry and song, as well as courses in journalism, writing and publishing.

- Researching and analysing the work and potential of existing structures and organisations working in education and interfaith dialogue, acting as a facilitator and bridge by identifying the specific needs of the Muslim community and linking with those providers who have responsibility for delivering education services, steering them towards making service provision more Islam friendly and Muslim inclusive.

- Researching and developing curricula materials, particularly for interpersonal life-skills and citizenship to be used in maintained and independent schools and madrasahs.

- Supporting teacher training and the professional development of teachers, awarding Muslim teacher accreditation to those completing specially-prepared courses.

\(^5\) See "1001 Inventions" in Appendix C
3.2 WHO WILL DO IT?

3.2.1 The Waqf al Birr Educational Trust\(^6\) has a property available in London suitable for such a Centre. Plans have already been approved by the local council for a cultural centre with facilities that can be easily adapted to suit the requirements of the NERF.

3.2.2 The Trust will seek the support of Working Group members and other scholars and partnerships - particularly the International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR)\(^7\) – as well as other relevant bodies involved in researching, monitoring, evaluating and developing effective teaching and learning strategies and materials.

3.3 COST IMPLICATIONS

3.3.1 The refurbishment of the property (a former Methodist Church) is estimated to cost in the region of £3 million (half this amount would be sought from the Government as a capital grant). Running costs would be in the region of £300,000 per year with funding for this also split equally between the Government and the NERF itself.

Refer to Appendix C for additional information.

\(^6\) A registered UK charity promoting religious and educational aims and objects

\(^7\) [http://www.iberr.org](http://www.iberr.org)
4. To improve the quality of teaching and learning in RE with an emphasis on life-skills and citizenship.

4.1 WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

4.1.1 The Working Group supports the strengthening of the spiritual aspect of education and recommends strongly that the Department for Education and Skills supports the establishment of a National Strategy for Religious Education. It is equally important to review the structure and enhance the responsibilities of the Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). We believe this to be an integral part of our recommendation if this aim is to be achieved.

4.1.2 Life-skills and citizenship teaching should be promoted as a vehicle for imparting spiritual and ethical values, thereby assisting students to understand and appreciate the common ground between faiths and peoples whilst remaining true to their own traditions. Most schemes available today, like other subjects of the national curriculum, lack any real emphasis on the faith dimension and, regarding the Islamic perspective in particular, are inadequate.

4.2 WHO WILL DO IT?

4.2.1 The Religious Education Council of England and Wales in partnership with the NERF Centre (itself assisted by other national Muslim bodies such as the Muslim Council of Britain) will work towards promoting the structure of SACREs and encouraging increased participation from Muslim and other faith communities on governing bodies, advisory panels, and other significant local and central government bodies.

4.3 COST IMPLICATIONS

4.3.1 The Life Skills resources are currently being funded and developed by IBERR. It will need financial support to complete the project, including the design and production of textbooks, teacher guidelines and a web site. £150,000 over two years would be required to fast track the project.

See also Appendix D.
C. Conclusion

The members of the Education Working Group found the opportunity to work together under the auspices of the Home Office extremely valuable. The time constraints and the pressure to work within a set framework were very challenging and the number of issues and concerns were considerable. We believe we have arrived at a juncture where we can now move forward and progress through a number of workable proposals in partnership.

Members are willing to continue to serve the wider community in tackling extremism while ensuring that the character of Muslim culture is not lost or distorted in the process. The enhancement of spirituality within the framework of education is seen as a vital foundation in the effort to build a safe, just, benevolent and harmonious society.

The opportunity is available for nurturing better understanding and respect between people of various backgrounds and cultures in Britain through schools and places of learning. The Government has shown itself willing to work in partnership with different communities who are committed to the vision of a balanced multi-faith, multi-cultural Britain, one which can stand as a model society from which the rest of the world can learn. We believe this opportunity should not be missed.

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D. Appendix A

1 SECURING A FAITHFUL REFLECTION OF ISLAM AND ITS CIVILISATION ACROSS THE ENTIRE EDUCATION SYSTEM INCLUDING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM, FURTHER EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION AND IFELONG LEARNING.

- Those who study history will know there is a gaping hole in the National Curriculum and that the sizeable contribution Islam and Muslims have made to the development of European civilisation is generally missing from study materials. Genuine opportunities to learn about the true nature of Islam’s role in Europe’s history have been missed, including a lack of emphasis on the fact that Islam is a British religion, if longevity of presence is any yardstick, with substantial historical roots here.

- The inspiration needed to build confidence and self-worth amongst British Muslim youth can be found by providing substantive information on Islamic achievements and contributions in and to subjects across the entire National Curriculum.

- The QCA’s “Respect for All” web site offers a substantial range of practical suggestions and guidelines for incorporating multicultural perspectives in all curriculum subjects. However, it is just one of many examples where an opportunity to include the Islamic dimension is neglected (barring a few exceptions).

- The Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation, Museum for Science and Industry, University of Manchester and the Muslim Youth Foundation in Manchester have demonstrated clearly that effective cross-cultural, pluralistic collaboration is possible. Such initiatives, with additional financial support from the Government and its agencies, could go a long way towards challenging ignorance, correcting misconceptions, eliminating stereotypes, tackling Islamophobia in all its manifestations and improving community cohesion. The Muslim Heritage web site has excellent materials on the history of Islamic civilisation, concentrating in particular on developments in science and technology. The IQRA Trust web site and the Council on Islamic Education in the USA offer valuable information about Islam and Muslims. The Muslim Council of Britain has also set up an excellent comprehensive portal. There is a substantial list of sites dealing

8 http://www.qca.org.uk/301.html
9 http://www.muslimheritage.com
10 http://www.iqratrust.org.uk
11 http://www.cie.org
12 http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect
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with Islamic culture at the Inservice Training and Educational Development (Insted) web site.  

- It is imperative that local and central Government departments work closely with the British Muslim community to identify effective and successful good practices wherever they exist and make a concerted effort to seek ways of transferring these to target groups. The schools and teachers who are successfully meeting these challenges need to be acknowledged and better use made of their expertise in order to accelerate the management of change within faith communities.

Appendix B

2 Improving the performance and attainment of Muslim pupils

- It is common knowledge that Muslim students at Islamic schools exceed consistently national expectations – in fact, in many cases the schools they attend regularly top examination league tables – yet their counterparts in local schools are underachieving across all Key Stages. At the same time there is increasing evidence indicating that where British Muslims have the opportunity to make a mark with the right kind of personal and professional support they perform extremely well and are making a real contribution to society in every field.

- Although the Department for Education and Skills web site  has a wide range of guidance and information it fails to offer faith specific perspectives which teachers and governors can refer to with confidence. Similarly, the Ethnic Minority Attainment site  is a resource base for teachers developed by Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester Local Education Authorities with funding from the DfES. It contains many practical ideas and links but fails to focus adequately on faith specific as opposed to culture specific issues. Several local authorities have published valuable guidance on supporting bilingual pupils in the mainstream classroom. They include: Hampshire 16, Hounslow 17, Manchester 18 and Portsmouth 19

- The ‘Insted Consultancy’ web site  offers a good example on how to assist educators at every level. The recommendations based on the RAISE project set up by the Uniting Britain Trust, in association with the Churches

http://www.insted.co.uk/websites.html  
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities  
http://www.emaonline.org.uk  
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/ema.htm  
http://www.ealinhounslow.org.uk  
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/education/diversity/ema/eal.htm  
http://www.bliss.portsmouth.sch.uk  
http://www.insted.co.uk

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Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber are the closest thing to addressing the underachievement of Muslim children because its report and the accompanying handbook refer to ‘British Pakistani learners in schools’ and identify ‘WORK IN PROGRESS’ in eleven LEAs in the form of case studies.21

- The Teacher World web site22 based at Leeds Metropolitan University and funded by the Teacher Training Agency has a particular focus on the experiences and perceptions of Asian and black teachers which can be improved by focussing also on the way Muslim teachers can make a more effective contribution. Another example of a welcome initiative but which again falls short of providing a Muslim inclusive dimension is The General Teaching Council for England web site23 which is developing a network for education professionals to promote race equality in schools.

- Use should be made of the Leading Edge Partnership Programme to raise standards by sharing experience and excellence in approaches to teaching and learning that have helped raise the achievements of Muslim students.

- The BBC has valuable sites on black history for school pupils. This has gone a long way towards helping schools and educators to adopt an inclusive curriculum with particular reference to Afro-Caribbean pupils. Its excellent Windrush series offers guidance on amending the curriculum content in response to the school community. A similar focus on Islam and Muslims in partnership with the NERF Centre would have the desired impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

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21 http://www.insted.co.uk/raise.html
22 http://www.teacherworld.org.uk
23 http://www.gtce.org.uk/achieve
Appendix C

3 The establishment of a British Muslim-led “National Education Research & Foundation Centre” (NERF Centre)

- The NERF Centre would establish a board of qualified and skilled educationists equipped to help co-ordinate the often inadequately funded community based initiatives in their effort to organise and provide faith and culture specific professional development programmes, exhibitions, seminars and multi-media presentations. There is a huge demand from all schools, colleges and universities for information and guidance which is not being met. Some of the most frequently asked questions fall into the following categories:

1. General guidance for schools on identifying and responding effectively to the special but not separate needs of Muslim pupils
2. How best to meet legal requirements
3. Culture and faith identity
4. Racism and Islamophobia
5. Support on teaching about controversial issues
6. English as an additional language
7. Establishing, maintaining and developing global links through teacher and pupil exchange programmes
8. Citizenship education and life-skills programmes
9. Provision of enlightened forms of general information on Islam and Muslims by identifying and rewarding good publishers and suppliers of teaching, learning and training resources
10. Encouraging independent Muslim schools to integrate into the mainstream education system by minimising the bureaucratic hurdles for example in achieving Voluntary Aided Status.

- The "1001 Inventions" touring educational exhibition is an excellent example of work which could help to tackle extremism at its roots and is deserving of Government support. By using modern interactive “edutainment” techniques, it reveals the historical contributions of Muslims to the worlds of Science, Technology and Art. By breaking down social barriers and engendering respect, the exhibition promotes the concept of scientific and technical innovation as a positive and constructive channelling of personal belief and faith, as an alternative to religious isolationism and extremism.
• The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, DfES, Training and Development Agency for Schools, Ofsted, and other Government agencies and educational institutions are reviewing policies constantly in order to improve service delivery. We believe that the Muslim community has a responsibility to engage much more purposefully at all levels in an effort to ensure that a more accurate and positive vision of Islam and Muslims is represented throughout our education system. However, in the absence of a viable and sustainable infrastructure it is impossible to satisfy this requirement. Some examples of good practice in this respect which can be improved considerably with input from a fully functioning NERF Centre are:

A The extracts from the 2004 report of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, including a paper entitled Islamophobia and Race Relations.\(^\text{24}\)

B The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers booklet on Islamophobia available at their web site\(^\text{25}\) and also in print. It contains several useful guidelines for teaching about Islam and Islamophobia and reprints advice to schools issued by the Government after September 11.

Appendix D

4 Improving the quality of teaching and learning in RE with an emphasis on life-skills and citizenship

• The need for an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in RE was acknowledged by the previous Secretary of State for Education.

• Opportunities for Muslim men and women, both young and old, to train as teachers are improving thanks to the TTA’s initiatives in partnership with the Association of Muslim Schools (UK) and other Muslim organisations. It is hoped (and should certainly be encouraged) that some of these new teachers will wish to become co-ordinators for RE in primary schools or secondary school RE specialists. At the same time, it is important that all student teachers have some genuine appreciation of Islam.

\(^{24}\) http://www.insted.co.uk/islam.html
\(^{25}\) http://www.nasuwt.org.uk
CHAPTER 3

ENGAGING WITH MUSLIM WOMEN: WORKING GROUP REPORT
CHAPTER 3: ENGAGING WITH MUSLIM WOMEN: WORKING GROUP REPORT

Main Recommendation 1

Dialogue and communication which entails deepening the relationships between Government institutions and Muslim women.

Sub-recommendations

• Provide faith sensitive mentoring schemes within the workplace that offer opportunities for already engaged Muslim women to share experiences and learn from and provide support to each other.

• Extend the provision of equal opportunities and racial equality law to cover discrimination on the grounds of faith.

• Provide space on recruitment forms for job applicants to declare their faith as this may facilitate obtaining an overall view of rates of success and failure amongst Muslim women applicants to various posts in the public sector.

• The Government should consider providing Arabic as a language option in schools, just as French, Spanish and other Romance languages are currently available.

Background

At present, there is an under representation of Muslim women amongst the top positions in the public and private sectors. This lack of role models has led women to believe that higher levels of civic society are irrelevant, elusive or beyond the reach of Muslim women.

Championing existing Muslim women who are successfully leading work in the statutory and voluntary sectors would provide positive and accessible role models for up-and-coming Muslim women who might be interested in leading public lives.

Countries such as Arab countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan provide positive examples of highly engaged, professional Muslim women. Research into developing more opportunities and means of access for women to enter the workplace can help provide lessons of good practice that could be adapted and applied throughout the UK.
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Implementation and Delivery

A faith-based review of existing employment policy and practice needs to be undertaken by such organisations such as the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission to ensure the delivery of equitable opportunities for Muslim women.

A series of formal, national networking conferences aimed at creating pathways of professional development for Muslim women can be developed and led as part of the annual faith and race based recruiting strategy for the civil service.

Professional development can be also delivered through recognised regional and local Muslim women’s organizations and funded by central, devolved governments, local authorities and other relevant statutory agencies as part of their Racial and Faith Equality Scheme.

**Timescale:** 5 - 10 years

**Cost:** TBD

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**Recommendation 2**

*(Building a)* National campaign and coalition which entails increasing the visibility of Muslim women and empowering them to become informed and active citizens within society.

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**Sub-recommendations**

- Increase the number of women participating in civic life.

- Support those already participating so that their engagement remains meaningful, productive and has impact.

- The Muslim community needs to create opportunities for women to increase their scholarly and theological impact within the UK.

- ‘Female thinkers’ must be provided platforms to showcase their work.

- Muslim women need to be educated about Islam from varied intellectual perspectives.

- Mosque committees must allow women to partake in discussions and decision-making processes.

- Monitoring and recording the successes would help build momentum for similar work.
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• A campaign including a series of national events that showcase the positive work of existing Muslim women’s organisations.

• Higher profile involvement for Muslim women in International Women’s Day.

• Promoting projects from international Muslim women’s organisations.

• Develop a Muslim Women’s Manifesto.

• Establishment of a Muslim women’s forum/commission to map good practices amongst Muslim organisations and wider organisations that deal with socio political –economic issues that affect Muslim women and children.

Background

Muslim women living in the UK cannot be defined simply or be seen as a singular, homogenous group. Making broad assertions about the role of women in Islam is often fraught with difficulty. For many, political, socio-economic and cultural dynamics can shape the way in which Muslim women practice their faith. In particular, the role of mothers/women within the family nucleus, in the workplace, and within communities, all need to be explored across a variety of contexts. Consequently, the solution to inclusion of Muslim women in society lies in discovering the myriad and complex roles that they have therein. To this end, the empowerment of Muslim women in the UK needs to be addressed by Government and other statutory bodies understanding the importance of responsibility, honour and obligation.

One of the most concrete ways to engage Muslim women is to increase and enhance their involvement in civic and public life. Through more meaningful participation and direct engagement with the statutory, voluntary and faith based institutions that serve the country, Muslim women can encourage a more responsive behaviour amongst themselves and, in doing so; increase the amount of interaction between Muslim communities and society in general.
Case Study: Muslim Women Talk

Chaired and facilitated by Baroness Uddin the ‘Muslim Women Talk Campaign (MWTC) is a new UK-wide initiative aimed at including the voices of Muslim women from all walks of life. Supported by the Home Office, Welsh Assembly Government & Scottish Executive the campaign was initiated and organised through the established network of Muslim women from England, Scotland, and Wales. The overall objective of the Campaign is to act as a conduit between Muslim women and decision makers within government and other public bodies.

The Campaign has already acted on:

- Facilitating frank and transparent dialogue regarding policy development and action following the London bombings of 7th July.
- Enhancing community confidence, reducing community tension, increasing community cohesion, promoting civic responsibility and national security.
- Harnessing the social capital of Muslim women through on-going public debates in England, Scotland and Wales
- Setting up of the website as a platform for Muslim women to share their views and experiences
- Creating a safe and equitable climate for Muslim to communicate with mainstream service providers and government and initiate reciprocal training programmes to increase understanding of shared concerns and to ensure continued partnerships and joint-working.

Implementation and Delivery

A long term, multi-staged mentoring strategy must be established to assist Muslim women in building the confidence and capacity to explore their own identity in relation to their faith, culture, gender and race. Through this, they can begin developing a broader understanding of how Muslim women ‘fit’ within society. Likewise, society (including statutory service providers and legislators) can begin to understand the issues and concerns of these women in their own words.

This can be delivered through recognised regional and local Muslim women’s organizations and funded by central, devolved governments, local authorities and other relevant statutory agencies as part of their Racial and Faith Equality Scheme.

**Timescale:** 5 - 10 years  
**Cost:** TBD
Chapter 3: Engaging with Muslim Women
Working together to prevent extremism

Recommendation 3

**Strengthening existing organisations and building links which entails consolidating the good work that is already happening, with a view toward supporting and facilitating its development.**

Sub-recommendations

- There is a need for Local Authorities to better monitor and impact assess funding that goes toward services for hard to reach communities.

- Analyse how much of these resources benefit and advance the Muslim community, Muslim organisations and Muslim women.

- Make available a holistic capacity building consultancy package for Muslim women's s to support them to become fully functioning.

- Offer comprehensive information and training on how to access funding.

- A mapping of regional interfaith projects illustrating the role of Muslim women so that good practice can continue to grow.

- The Government could partner Muslim women’s organisations in the provision of materials designed to provide education and information on the subject of Muslim women’s sexual health.

- The establishment of common public areas for women, Muslim (et. al).

- Provision of local women’s centres throughout the UK would allow women from all walks of life to engage with one another in safe environments, fostering an organic method of interaction across communities to take place.
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Background

There are a number of Muslim women's organisations, throughout the UK, that are already active and successfully responding to the existing and emerging needs of Muslim women. These women's organisations serve a variety of functions, including direct service delivery and advocacy. However, success is often limited by the inability of women to fully develop the skills required to advance the scope and range of these organisations.

By playing an active role in developing the capacity of these organisations to assess their own needs, fully appreciate the guidelines regarding drafting proposals and establishing feasible plans for action, the Government can support these groups in accessing adequate resources and funding.

Government cannot, however, be the lone voice of support and assistance. Capacity building ventures such as mentoring schemes that partner up women across different organisations can be developed, which in turn would build links between existing organisations and strengthen Muslim women's networks across the UK.
Case Study: Cardiff Outreach Project

Following the 7/7 bombing incidents in London, the Saheli Project invested time in outreaching to various sections of the community and found raised incidences of racial and religiously motivated attacks against the Muslim community in and around Cardiff.

In a meeting with South Wales Police it was discovered there was a drop in the reporting of racist incidences recorded in the first week following the London bombings of July. It was concluded that the actual daily experience of the Muslim community did not reflect the Police statistics and that there was a significant underreporting of racist incidences. Further discussions with the community revealed that the underreporting was due to fear of backlash and a general feeling of distrust and apathy toward the Police especially in the reporting mechanism and lack of follow up action.

Through further engagement and communication, it became evident that the fears and concerns of Muslim women and children within ‘grass root’ sections of the Muslim community were disregarded by the statutory and service sectors; in fact they were becoming further marginalized than ever before. The women were also becoming increasingly distant from the reality of the UK climate of terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation.

To address this concern, there was a call from within the community for the arrangement of a woman only meeting. To that end, and with the intention of sharing concerns, supporting, informing, listening and offering assurance and confidence a public meeting for Muslim women took place in Cardiff. The meeting was attended by over seventy women, including Welsh Government representatives and law advocates and provided an open and equitable forum where women confidently discussed their concerns about safeguarding their families and questioned how best to promote national security.

This initiative was the springboard in the establishment of a UK wide Muslim Women’s Talk Campaign; Muslim women led project engaging grassroots voices and experiences.
Implementation and Delivery

By acknowledging cultural idiosyncrasies of Muslim women, a bespoke programme of capacity building seminars and certified training can be developed. This could be done by funding Muslim women’s organisations through continuation of existing programmes (eg. Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund). Another way forward would be through working in collaboration with universities and other education providers to develop their standing community development training programmes to incorporate working with faith-based communities (eg. University of Wales Swansea – DACE programme).

**Timescale:** 3 - 5 years  
**Cost:** TBD

Conclusion

Any effort to prevent violent extremism in the UK must take into consideration the multi-faceted and changing role of Muslim women within the community. In particular, Government needs to engage with Muslim women on terms that are relevant to their experiences.

Solutions lie in the development of extended programmes, policies and strategies that develop the means by which Muslim women can become an integral part of society and the decisions that effect a change in equality of opportunities, capacity building and the interlocking challenges of sexism, racism and Islamophobia as part of a more comprehensive strategy.

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With thanks to Zohra Moosa, Shavanah Taj and Monica Mahoney for their work on this report.
CHAPTER 4

SUPPORTING REGIONAL AND LOCAL INITIATIVES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS: WORKING GROUP REPORT
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Following the Prime Minister and Home Secretary’s summits with Muslim leaders in July 2005, several working groups were established to help develop proposals resulting from the government’s consultation with Britain’s Muslim communities.

1.2 Our working group examined the effectiveness of existing public policy and delivery and, how these need to be improved and resourced to “support regional and local initiatives and community actions”. Framed within the context of current urban policies relating to regeneration, education, unemployment and poverty, our deliberations were driven by the government’s stated anti-poverty stance on ‘improving life chances’, and widening opportunities for Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike.

1.3 The success, or failure, of regional and local strategies on issues such as poverty and exclusion can have profound impact in the UK’s poorest neighbourhoods, where limited official data indicates a trend towards increasingly segregated communities (by race/ethnic background and religion). Poverty and the reduction of life chances has an impact on all communities within the UK, whether white or ethnic minority, Muslim or non-Muslim and it is important to avoid simplistic assumptions about people, communities, cultures and ethnicity, and acknowledge that deprivation is one factor in a chain of circumstances that could possibly lead to ‘extremism’, political or religious. Deprivation and disaffection among young white people has made them as susceptible to extreme views as young people from minority ethnic and faith groups.

1.4 The Working Group decided to identify an approach to the particular needs of the Muslim faith communities within the framework of existing government strategies. It began its work by disseminating information about the range of government initiatives, partnerships and policies that are currently in place, alongside an examination of the decision-making processes that impact on effective and responsive public service delivery, including issues around representation on key decision making bodies.
1.5 A number of officials from government departments were invited to participate in the working group’s discussions. This enabled members to establish which, if any, policy instruments are being used effectively to improve the life chances and opportunities for Muslim communities, where policy gaps exist and where existing or future policies could add value. The Working Group examined the government’s agenda around civil renewal and active citizenship, driven by the Home Office, but relevant to other government departments such as the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) too. A common theme is the need to recast the relationship between state and citizen through promoting initiatives around partnership, community engagement and governance.

1.6 The process led to an engaging and intensive discussion amongst the working group - all of whom brought an exceptional degree of expertise and insight to the challenges that confront Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike. A number of recommendations were considered, and the most salient included in this final report.

1.7 The working group acknowledges there has been insufficient time to fully investigate the barriers to, and opportunities for, increased Muslim civic engagement. This report ‘signposts’ existing projects, initiatives and policy issues that the government and the proposed Commission on Integration should examine in more detail.

1.8 The working group recognises that the community cohesion and integration agenda is not an area where government can, or should, have all the answers. However, it has an important role in leading a robust and inclusive debate that penetrates political and community arenas at all levels. Existing government policy strands, such as active citizenship, civic participation, civil renewal, community cohesion, social capital, and the emerging integration agenda all need to reflect the realities of Muslim communities’ day-to-day experiences. Consequently, the government needs to examine and emphasise the roles and responsibilities of public institutions in achieving the full integration of Britain’s Muslim communities into wider society.

1.9 By far the greatest challenge in implementing these recommendations comes from their dependency on interagency collaboration, improved representation on key decision making bodies, improving the ‘faith-responsiveness’ of existing structures, and building the capacity of the Muslim faith community to influence the direction of current and future policies and strategies.
1.10 The way forward rests in recognising the significant gains that can be made in public diplomacy through the effective leveraging of public policy. Lessons can be learnt from international models of good practice. For example, Karen Hughes, US Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs identifies four pillars which guide her work: the need to engage vigorously, and to give a fair hearing to new ideas in order to enable real partnering in policy delivery; exchanges and bringing in new valuable and differing perspectives, particularly through exchange programmes; education, through language training and giving people skills that will help improve their own lives and learn more of particular common values, and the empowerment of the most disadvantaged groups e.g. women to enable greater participation.

1.11 This report is situated within a policy framework because it seeks to assist government in the delivery of the recommendations. We therefore suggest that the Home Office, alongside associated departments, work with us to produce a supplementary document, framed in a language more readily understood by the wider community, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, that could be publicly disseminated.

1.12 As a group, we recognised the need for a swift response to the challenges that we confront. However, we believe that it is critical that we continue to work alongside the Home Office, and other Whitehall officials, to take these recommendations forward. The starting point should be a feasibility assessment into which government departments should be responsible for the delivery and implementation of our recommendations.

1.13 We would like to extend a special thanks to the members of the working group whose input and professional insights have proved invaluable (see appendix three).

Nahid Majid, Convenor
Alveena Malik, Deputy Convenor

October 2005

26 The ways in which a country communicates with its citizens, starting from the premise that dialogue, rather than a sales pitch, is often central to achieving the goals of public policy and must be seen as a two-way street.
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2. Background

2.1 Working with all communities has been a theme of government policy since the emergence of the community cohesion agenda following the street confrontations in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001. The disturbances invariably referred to in the news media as ‘race riots’, were initially portrayed as a “law and order issue”. Various reports commissioned to examine issues arising from the disturbances and to make recommendations for action drew attention to the fracturing of local communities and the existence of ‘parallel lives’, whereby different communities and populations live, work and socialise separately.

2.2 The working group acknowledges the lessons learnt from the 2001 disturbances with nearly 70 recommendations coming out of the Cantle Report27. Whilst it is important not to reinvent the wheel, our deliberations concluded that ‘community cohesion’ isn’t sufficiently equipped to deal with the conceptual complexities of the issues, particularly in view of contested interpretations of both community cohesion and integration particularly as they are considered to be predominately concerned with race and ethnicity. The race and ethnicity prism is no longer sufficient for understanding the world in which we live. There is therefore, a need to re-define the terms and processes for traditional ‘race equality work’ in a way which can respond to a society where faith identity is increasingly significant. This is something which the proposed ‘Commission on Integration’ needs to consider in more detail.

2.3 The central question is where faith sits alongside other identities in the context of public policy. How and why is faith as important, or more important than race, when understanding and planning responses to needs of British Muslims? Muslims along with other religious, ethnic and cultural groups want to see Government policies that respect religious difference and facilitate true integration, based on a respect for fundamental religious beliefs and differences. As leading academic and commentator Ansari points out28, "a range of distinct identities is emerging among Muslims in Britain in the 21st century, but most of these identities have a strongly religious dimension”.

2.4 In the main, Muslim organisations and communities are asking for changes within the state system and not outside it. For example, they are asking for changes to produce a more inclusive approach in schools, colleges and universities, respecting pupils' Islamic identity and ensuring that it is not compromised. The emerging popularity of independent Muslim schools can be viewed as a direct response to Government's failure, or perceived failure, to respond to these concerns.

28 Ansari, The Infidel Within, p. 406
2.5 The working group emphasised the importance of inter-faith and cross-community dialogue. Targeting only Muslim communities would result in further stigmatising them as being the ‘problem’, which could potentially lead to increased alienation whilst society at large plays little or no role in the two-way integration process.

2.6 We acknowledge the important work that the Government has undertaken to tackle poverty and social exclusion, recognising its multi-faceted nature and the prominence given to reducing (relative) child poverty and ensuring that no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live or their background. However, whilst the diversity of experience between minority ethnic groups is acknowledged, ethnic inequalities remains large in many dimensions, including faith. There are conspicuous omissions relating to minority ethnic communities where policy (let alone impact) appears to be lagging behind analysis and target-setting, and where the scale of action looks less impressive by comparison with the challenge in tackling inequalities between ethnic groups.

2.7 Currently no accurate data exists for Muslim communities and this needs to be urgently addressed. Most research, such as a recent TUC report\(^29\), uses official data relating to the position of people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups to draw conclusions about the position of British Muslims. However, it would be a mistake to take statistics relating to ‘Pakistani/Bangladeshi’ groups as substitutes for ‘Muslim’. Although a majority of British Muslims are people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, there is a substantial minority from other ethnic backgrounds. It is important therefore to understand the makeup of Muslim communities in Britain: the diversity of race and culture, educational attainment and rates of employment.

2.8 What is clear from the research that the TUC has undertaken is that whilst British people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin account for about 2% of the overall UK population, they are the most disadvantaged and socially excluded ethnic groups in Britain today. For example, narrowing the gaps in GCSE attainment but not in labour market and area segregation remain major issues, particularly for Muslim communities. In addition, from the limited evidence available, there is a clear hierarchy of deprivation within Muslim communities. This needs to be further investigated, with universal programmes supplemented by programmes targeted at specific sections of the Muslim communities.

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\(^{29}\) Poverty, Exclusion and British people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin’, Trades Union Congress, August 2005
2.9 Over recent decades, government urban policy has attempted to deal with the issues of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion through a plethora of regional and local strategies. Strategies have shifted from being solely economic, social or physically focussed to being underpinned by the principle of ‘sustainable communities’. However, an opportunity for inter-departmental co-operation on regeneration has been missed. Future policies and practice at both macro and micro level need to be shaped by considerations of faith. Specific faith outcomes in PSA targets and CPAs, in this area and others, will go along way in improving life chances and widening opportunity for all communities at the local level.

2.10 People working at the coalface of regeneration need to debate these issues and identify other vital questions affecting day-to-day experience, such as what improved community cohesion and integration is intended to achieve in the long run and what is the role of regeneration in delivering it in practical terms? Community cohesion and integration is much more than just a means to prevent the racial tension and civil unrest that surfaced in the north of England in 2001. The primary objective must be sustainability. Throughout the country, local planning, education, housing and funding policies can be used collectively to build mixed and tolerant communities. Yet this will not happen without a unified approach. As regeneration projects impact all areas of social, economic and political activity, they are the key to bringing diverse initiatives together for ongoing community development.

2.11 In addition, regeneration partnerships and agencies have a clear role to play in influencing the development of community cohesion through their funding strategies. Targeting is often based on areas of greatest need, but not always allocated as such. Government and Whitehall need to appreciate the value of ‘softer’ outcomes and these need to be factor in determining funding criteria along with ‘hard’ outcomes, with penalties on regeneration agencies that do not deliver on these targets. Similarly, they need to invest in the process of capacity building communities which lack the tools and expertise required in applying for funds. The decision making process is as essential as the role of decision makers where grant allocation is concerned. The role and makeup of the Local Strategic Partnership is central to ensuring that common strategic priorities take community considerations into account and that ‘local area agreements’ are shaped accordingly.

2.12 The need to focus on projects stimulating and supporting inter-community communication and co-operation has been long acknowledged, but what is missing is the exchange of best practice. There needs to be the development of mechanisms to deliver this across government and the wider community. Much valuable experience is not being captured or shared in ways that would prevent the repetition of past mistakes or stimulate new advances. This applies equally to staff skills and questions of funding and delivery. Many employees within statutory bodies and agencies remain ill equipped to respond adequately to the needs of different faith or racial groups, and yet there continues to be little emphasis on training.
2.13 A more comprehensive set of objectives and a higher profile for regeneration-led community cohesion initiatives must be drawn up. These need to relate to long-term, holistic social outcomes such as employment, skills development, increased uptake of education activities. With the right participants, both Muslim and non-Muslim, communicating with government, we can prevent the tendency towards abstract discussion about theories, and achieve a strategy, that starts to address real and urgent issues.

2.14 Clearly the area of regeneration delivery requires a culture change within government, something that is often resisted, to harness new ways of thinking and the exchange of ideas. This will require emphasis on bringing in external experts or secondees with direct delivery experience and an understanding of faith dimensions. Public appointments matter so positive action needs to be seriously considered when examining the membership of regeneration partnership and agency boards.

2.15 Our recommendations seek to add value by bringing the interfaith dimension to the dominant discourses concerning key themes in contemporary public policy, including community cohesion, social mix, social capital, civil renewal and integration. The working group has identified the following issues as requiring urgent priority:

- improving the capacity of Muslims to participate and engage in local and regional processes - and understanding the barriers to effective participation;
- addressing the lack of leadership and trust among the Muslim faith communities especially the young and women; and
- increasing confidence and competence among public policy and delivery agencies so that public service choice and delivery for Muslim faith communities is improved.

2.16 In addition, the working group welcomed the Government’s efforts in examining how the race equality duty, and consequent monitoring, can be broadened to include religion. But the group emphasised that this would need to be linked to public service agreements and other targets, and asserted through performance management. It was acknowledged that the government might need to consider separate ‘stand alone’ procedures relating to faith.

2.17 Furthermore, government policies such as ‘Together We Can’ will also need to be harnessed if the community cohesion and integration imperative is to be achieved. The ‘three key ingredients’ of active citizens, strengthened communities and partnership with public bodies underpin the ‘Together We Can’ way of working and are of direct relevance to the recommendations contained in this report. It offers active and practical ways of allowing for civic engagement and influence particularly amongst the Muslim Communities.
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2.18 The following six recommendations were presented to the Home Secretary, at a meeting at the Home Office on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} September 2005. The working group’s analysis of the issues and subsequent recommendations were commended by the Secretary of State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve data collection on Muslim communities through faith monitoring;
- Invest in interfaith work mapping;
- Increase the faith confidence and competence of public bodies through secondments and short-term contracts into and out of central, regional and local government agencies;
- Strengthen the capacity of Muslim voluntary and civic organisations;
- Support places of worship, including Mosques, to become co-located within community hubs;
- Link community cohesion and community safety policy strands.
3. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Improved Data

Recommendation One

*Improve data collection on Muslim communities through faith monitoring*

The Working Group found it difficult to identify the complexity of the problems facing Muslim communities due to lack of raw data. It was felt that understanding the socio-economic position of Muslim communities and levels of community integration was of critical importance. To redress this and prescribe appropriate solutions we propose improving the data collection on Muslim communities through faith monitoring where appropriate.

Faith data collection should occur in the major public policy areas where Muslim communities are at a significant disadvantage, including the health service and major regeneration programmes such as the Thames Gateway and Olympics.
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3.2 Good Practice Interfaith Audit

Recommendation Two

An interfaith mapping exercise funded by Government but delivered by an appropriate independent organisation, which will promote good practice and identify key gaps and barriers where targeted work needs to be undertaken

Many interfaith initiatives exist, such as the work being conducted by Aliph-Aleph and The Three Faiths Forum (see appendix one), but it was acknowledged that limited information is currently available about the extent of such work being currently undertaken. The working group concluded that there was a need for a good practice audit to look at inter-faith working, faith policies and faith communities. This audit should develop a classification of initiatives in particular to distinguish between ‘talking shops’ and more practical projects. It was also felt that the Government should be more active in holding Regional[?] Government Offices to account and requiring them and local authorities to develop pools of expertise on engagement with the Muslim community

In the aftermath of 7/7, many organisations asked for practical pointers on how to work with the Muslim community and more general inter-faith working. An audit of local and regional policy and practice relating to Muslim, other faith and interfaith organisations would be a good starting point. It should include consideration of the contribution of local Interfaith Forums.
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Delivery/implementation:

- Home Office Race, Cohesion, Equality and Faith Directorate
- Commission on Integration
- Ministerial Sub-committee on Equality
- Ministerial Sub-Committee on Active Communities and Community Cohesion

3.3 Improved Public Sector Faith Understanding

Recommendation Three

*Improve public sector faith understanding through secondments and short-term contracts into and out of central, regional and local government. The process should be two-way, with public sector employees taking secondments in faith related civic organisations, particularly those in the Muslim communities.*

The working group felt that there was a need to increase the confidence and competence of public authorities in dealing with faith issues through secondments and short term contracts into and out of central, regional and local government. Secondments/interchange and other forms of employment contract provide one means of transferring experience and expertise of people who have experience of working with Muslim communities, many but not all of whom will be Muslims.

Whilst the group was in favour of more secondments of Muslims into public authorities and institutions, there was sensitivity to the fact that faith and religious concerns of individuals in the UK are viewed as being a private matter. It was therefore important that faith should not be headlined but Muslims with the appropriate skills and experience should be selected.
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3.4 Muslim Civic Capacity Building in order to achieve Equity

Recommendation 4

**Strengthen the capacity of Muslim voluntary organisations, including through the use of mentoring programmes between Muslim and non-Muslim voluntary organisations, setting up regional networks and introducing leadership/exchange programmes for employees within the Muslim faith voluntary sector.**

The working group concluded that the absence of a strong Muslim civic capacity would hinder progress on community cohesion and integration and that a focus on capacity building was needed. This would enable Muslim communities to achieve equity in terms of information and knowledge and allow them to fully participate in the variety of civic engagement vehicles established.

Members cited existing good practice, including the Nafas Drugs project, the City Circle and the Muslim Council of Britain’s leadership programme, with evidence that this has had a positive impact according to the roles participants had gone on to assume (see appendix two). This should include a database of eligible individuals and available opportunities. Whilst it was acknowledged that funding constraints could hinder a greater rollout of such programmes, it would be necessary to use existing local and regional structures. For example, regional government offices could develop leadership and capacity programmes for Muslims at local level or the Active Community Directorate could take on a leading role in organisation and funding. In addition, the support of non-Muslims should be sought in preparing funding applications and developing the local capacity of public sector bodies. It was also felt that there would be value in the creation of regional networks of Muslim organisations supported by the Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations, National Council for Voluntary Organisations and other bodies (this should include a feasibility study of establishing a National Council of Muslim Voluntary Organisations) with funding possibly derived from existing funding mechanisms such as ‘ChangeUp’. These would further the understanding of Muslim concerns at regional level, allow the transfer of best practice and improve the ability of the community to articulate their concerns.

**Delivery/implementation:**

- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
- Active Communities Directorate
3.5 Places of Worship as Community Hubs

Recommendation Five

Support places of worship, including Mosques, to become co-located with community hubs

The working group found evidence and support for places of worship becoming co-located with facilities, acting as community hubs. By this we mean recognising the true character and utility of these buildings as places where the community congregates and benefits from wider social, educational and employment related programmes and activities. For this to be effective, design and access to places of worship would need to be addressed, as well as perceptions of funders who do not necessarily see Mosques as places for interaction between communities. It is important that sites where faith-based communities gather, including places of worship, have the capacity to function as a resource to the local community, including members of all faiths. The East London Mosque and the Ismaili Centre have been identified as best practice examples of both design and inter-faith inclusivity.

Locating community needs around mosques and encouraging them to function as community centres was a successful model both for winning funding and encouraging inter-faith contacts and working. The East London Mosque was cited as a good practice example in its inclusive outlook towards other faiths and its success in winning funding by emphasising its community role. Other local initiatives could benefit from advice on the terminology which would allow them to bid for funding for example a “Women’s Resource Centre” which functioned as a prayer centre would qualify for more funding than a “Women’s Prayer Area”.

The fact that many mosques draw on foreign funding in the absence of domestically available funding was discussed. It was accepted that direct public funding of places of worship may not be an option. Consequently we would recommend that the proposed Commission should take on the task of investigating alternative funding sources for places of worship, which could be easier if these were viewed within the context of community hubs.

In addition, the current debate concerning the design of urban spaces as championed by government bodies such as the Commission for the Built Environment, which is funded by the ODPM, needs to include a focus on ‘culture and design’ and respond to clear cultural and community references. Different communities use space in different ways, and the design process needs to reflect this. Failure to take into account such cultural and community references can lead to intra-community tensions on territorial boundaries.

Success stories such as Bangla Town in Brick Lane, East London, enhance cultural and community identity, foster integration and create a sense of pride
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and ownership between and within communities. The area has become a cultural quarter, and a hub of vibrant social and dynamic economic activity for many different communities.

**Delivery/implementation:**

- DTI via its access to European Funding
- ODPM together with the Commission for the Built Environment (CABE) in relation to the Sustainable Communities Plan and the Design agenda
- ODPM in terms of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme.

### 3.6 Joined up Policy

**Recommendation 6**

*To link Community Cohesion and Community Safety work and funding streams at local (LSP & CDRP) and regional (Regional Government Office) levels under the ‘Safer, Stronger Communities’ banner*

The working group recognised that there are many policies and programmes in existence and that there is no need to ‘reinvent the wheel’. The recommendations following from the 2001 disturbances need to be revisited, to assess what has been achieved and where more work needs to be done. There is a need to link community cohesion and community safety work and funding streams at local (LSP & CDRP) and regional (regional government office) levels under the ‘Safer, Stronger Communities’ banner. This would bring together integration initiatives and work on Islamophobia/Hate crime and tackling radicalisation all within the context of community protection. In addition, there is an urgent need to examine the delivery and accountability mechanisms for equality at a local level, whether these are effective in the context of faith, and how these can be enhanced in light of the impending Commission of Human Rights.

**Delivery/implementation:**

- Via an inter-government Ministerial Task Force (for example, modelled on the Department of Work and Pensions Ethnic Minorities and Employment Task Force) and Cabinet led.
- Government departments would be responsible for leading on specific strands of work relating to faith communities.
4. THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 The working group acknowledges the invaluable merit in continuing the work that the Government initiated since the tragic events in London during July 2005. There is an urgent need for serious re-thinking, re-education and imagination on the part of everyone from government and policy makers, to community and religious leaders, to ordinary Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

4.2 We also need to consider, in the words of Ted Cantle, that ‘the focus of previous race relations policy was on preventing discrimination and promoting equalities. These are still necessary, but there is another challenge facing us – which is, in a diverse society how do you make sure different minorities as well as the majority community actually relate to each other, and have a common sense of belonging and purpose?’

4.3 Achieving this should begin with increasing public sector understanding of faith issues at all levels and reframing multicultural policy. At a strategic level, bodies such as the Urban Task Force need to become far more representative of communities, particularly the faith communities, they seek to serve. Similarly, at a local level strategic priorities set through local area agreements and strategic partnerships needs to be more attuned to the needs of all communities. Specifically, we are concerned that there is confusion at local level about lines of accountability for race and faith issues. In particular, the roles of local authorities, local strategic partnerships, race equality councils and interfaith networks need to be more clearly defined, with the establishment of an effective partnership framework for these agencies. In addition, local infrastructure needs to be strengthened through capacity building and increased funding, in order to turn the national agenda on cohesion and integration into a practical reality.

4.4 Critically, the working group found evidence and support for large-scale regional and local strategies such as the Olympics, the Sustainable Communities Plan (People, Places and Prosperity) and the Northern Way adopting the approaches recommended in this report. Effective capacity building will achieve equity within the decision-making and delivery process. Representation through secondments or board appointments, and active targeting of key individuals, is of central importance. This is particularly so within government bodies and advisory groups, such as the Urban Task Force, the Core Cities Group, the Urban Development Corporations and the new Olympic Delivery Authority.

4.5 Due to the limitations of time, the working group has not had the time to assess the financial implications of our recommendations. However, we recognise the importance of assessing current and future budgetary information to determine how existing programmes can be ‘flexed’ in a way that makes them more sensitive to the varied faith communities in the UK. Only by doing so can we collectively deliver a flexible and responsive public sector which will allow for improved life changes and a widening of opportunity for all.
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Appendix One
Interfaith Good Practice

Nearly four fifths of the world’s population identifies itself as religious, and the allegiances stemming from this transcends partisan, national and ethnic lines. For many hundreds of millions, the most important community ties come from faith, not nation, the most authoritative pronouncements are those of religious leaders, not statesmen and the most effective provider of social and cultural resources are churches, mosques, and synagogues, not the state. Faith-based loyalties and providers typically outshine all others in terms of their ability to mobilize energies and tap into human resources of all kind, both material and spiritual. We need to recognise that faith identity is conceptually complex and its application in the arena of Muslim civic engagement with wider society is insufficiently understood.

This reality brings several implications. Perhaps the most significant is that religion remains a chief driver of conflict, providing pretext and context. This cuts across all religious denominations.

Alongside the long established Christian and Jewish communities, Britain now has significant communities of other faiths and has become one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. The working group acknowledged the importance of the interfaith work as a means to temper religious tensions, and signposted a number of good practice examples:

1. The Inter Faith Network for the UK was established in 1987 to foster good relations between the communities of the major faiths in Britain. The Network links over 100 member bodies from the major faith communities, national inter faith organisations, local inter faith bodies, academic institutions and bodies concerned with multi faith education.

2. The Maimonides Foundation is a joint Jewish-Muslim interfaith organisation, which fosters understanding, dialogue, and co-operation between Jews and Muslims through cultural, academic and educational programmes based on mutual respect and trust. The Foundation regularly runs a series of lectures on the commonality of history and experiences between the Muslim and Jewish communities. It also recently ran an innovative and exciting project which sent books to the West Bank and Gaza and to Palestinian children. The project had the support of the Israeli Government.

3. Alif Aleph UK is an organisation of British Muslims and British Jews who were brought together by Richard Stone, President of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, in 2003. They work collectively to develop positive contacts between Muslim and Jewish communities and seek to provide a ‘good practice model’ for all communities in the UK which find themselves on the opposite side of religious fault lines. Earlier this year they published a mapping report, which highlighted the good practise that is being conducted between Muslims and Jews nationally.
APPENDIX TWO
MUSLIM CIVIC CAPACITY BUILDING GOOD PRACTICE

1. **Nafas** was set up in 1998 to address the substance misuse needs of the Muslim community in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The borough has a diverse ethnic profile with the Muslim community forming the largest ethnic group. It was recognised that although some young Muslims were accessing existing treatment services, drugs misuse and its related problems continued to increase. It was clear that a specialist service that could engage, understand and work more closely with this community was required and new provision designed to meet the drug treatment, prevention and education needs of the Muslim community was established.

2. **The City Circle** ([www.thecitycircle.com](http://www.thecitycircle.com)) is a network of professional British Muslims guided by the three principle aims: promote the development of a distinct British Muslim identity which focuses on reconciling conflicts between belief and civic responsibility; assist the process of community cohesion and integration by building bilateral strategic alliances between Muslim and non-Muslim communities; harness and channel the skills and resources of Muslim professionals into practical community cohesion projects thereby facilitating and empowering young Muslim women and men to ‘give back’ to the wider British community and inculcate a strong sense of citizenship. It runs a number of community based projects, including the **City Circle Mentoring Scheme; Feeding London's Homeless Project; The Deen Club** aimed at providing children with an integrated approach to the study of the Qur'an and the Arabic language free from extremism or foreign influence; and **The Base** a youth inclusion project aimed at reducing crime, and mitigating the risk of re-offending of a target market of ‘at-risk’ youth in the Washwood Heath - Alum Rock area of Birmingham. The Base has a track record of consistently achieving over 75% reduction of a youth re-offending within a referred target group. Referrals of 100 youngsters per year come from Police, Probation Service and Social Services, LEA Schools, and the Youth Offending Service.

3. **The MCB leadership programme** aims to develop the type of leaders that will enable the Muslim community in Britain to develop strategies to contribute fully for the common good of both the Muslim and mainstream societies. It develops leadership capacity across the Muslim communities in Britain.
4. **Mushkil Aasaan** was founded by a group of Muslim women who shared concerns about the plight of families experiencing crisis, social isolation and a complexity of unmet needs. It provides a generic model of support to families, young people and the elderly. This includes Individual Counselling, Advocacy, Mediation, Bilingual Welfare Rights, Interpreting/Translation, Childcare, Family Support, Crisis Intervention, Respite for Carers, Cultural Awareness Consultancy to Co-Professionals.

Mushkil Aasaan embraces to all diversities of religion and culture, and as a ‘Specialist’ Provider, is regulated by the “Commission for Social Care Inspection” (CSCI). Spot-purchase remains its main source of income, and it was recently invited by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to do a presentation of its specialist services. Following a successful bid to City Parochial and Wates Foundation, its innovative Share-Aasaan group was launched in August 2005 for women with Learning Disabilities and Special Needs.

**APPENDIX THREE**

**REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY ACTIONS**

**WORKING GROUP MEMBERS**

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<td>Nahid Majid</td>
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<td>Alveena Malik</td>
<td>Deputy Convener</td>
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CHAPTER 5

IMAMS TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION AND THE ROLE OF MOSQUES AS A RESOURCE FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY: WORKING GROUP REPORT
CHAPTER 5: IMAMS TRAINING AND ACCREDITATION AND THE ROLE OF MOSQUES AS A RESOURCE FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY: WORKING GROUP REPORT

Executive Summary

The Working Group (WG) strongly believes that the vast majority of mosques and imams in the UK have never been sources of extremism; on the contrary we feel that these institutions have been beacons of moderation and tolerance. This does not negate the fact that there is a huge potential for mosques as agents for the community, and social development. The role of community leadership, from the imams to the mosque officials, in motivating, educating, guiding and involving the Muslim communities cannot be overestimated. Many mosques across Britain are active centres of community life, for a vast proportion of the Muslims living in inner city areas and deprived wards. A significant number of the mosque congregations are socially excluded and face acute disadvantages. The WG believes that mosques and community organisations can help to counter these negative trends, and it is in this sphere that the WG would like to recommend the following proposals that it feels can make a difference in building capacity within the Muslim community.

The broad thrust of the proposals is positioned around building capacity, providing a platform and a voice for the many stakeholders involved in established community institutions such as mosques and madrasahs. It is hoped that the proposals will also help to establish good practice and initiate and develop structures and processes that will help to foster greater community cohesion as well as to promote understanding and goodwill between Muslim communities from all denominations of the Faith and help in confronting potential seeds of extremism, marginalisation and isolation from within such institutions.
Proposed Recommendations

1. A new national advisory body/council of mosques and imams. This Body would be Inclusive and representative of the many traditions practiced in the UK, independent and lead by the institutions it serves.

2. The setting up of a National Resource Unit (NRU) for the development of curricula in madrasah/mosques and Islamic centres. The NRU will also develop programmes and guidelines for the teaching of staff that function within these institutions. The programmes and guidelines will be developed with respect and in compliance with the diversity and schools of thought in the Muslim Community overall.

3. The establishment of a continuous professional development programmes for the ‘upskilling’ of current imams and mosque officials in the UK. Theological training to be provided only by specialist Muslim seminaries, Islamic scholars skilled in training imams in the UK and elsewhere for those seeking to pursue further development.

4. Design a publication that highlights and promotes good practice from amongst mosques, Islamic centres and imams in the UK

Recommendation 1

A new national advisory body/council of Mosques and Imams.

Mosques and Imams National Advisory Body (MINAB)

i. Background/Context

Imams and mosque officials are generally perceived to be the religious leaders of the Muslim community, who are knowledgeable about the laws and teachings of Islam. It was felt that they are potentially best suited to form a representative body to regulate and protect their religious affairs, within the context of living in the UK. It was envisaged that this new body would be a platform of ‘unity’ for mosques and imams throughout the UK on a national level- and should have representation from all the traditions and schools of thought, as well as the major national organisations, reflecting their particular concerns in an equitable manner.
ii. Issues and Outcomes

The needs and priorities of this body would be defined solely by its representatives. The body is envisaged as a platform of ‘unity’ for mosques and imams throughout the UK on a national level- and would have representation from all the major denominations as well as the major national organisations. There is currently no national body currently that provides a common platform for mosques and imams.

The role of this body would be:

- To be a repository for good practice
- To provide guidelines on imams accreditation/eligibility
- To ensure that the profession of being an imam is attracting young suitable ‘home-grown’ talent
- To provide guidelines on legal requirements for mosques and imams
- To provide guidelines on and to take up the issue of ill-paid imams- possible campaign on minimum wage for UK imams
- To provide training for mosque management committees
- To act as a voice for Mosques and Imams
- To act as an unifying link between mosques and imams from different denominations in the UK
- To encourage the participation of youth and women in mosque structures
- To assist mosques and imams in playing their role in community cohesion and combating extremism
iii. Potential Concerns for the Muslim community

- Why was this group setup?
- What authority does this body have over the mosques and imams?
- Does this body interpret religious text for the imams?
- Will this body monitor Friday sermons and other religious talks and gatherings?
- Will this body be used to create a “new UK Islam”
- Will this body be a government tool to use against Muslims?

Recommendation to address these concerns

The key stakeholders and original initiating members of this body will need to be seen as independent of core governmental institutions or demonstrate authority and commitment in the area of helping mosques and imams.

A clear message from the stake holders will need to be presented through various mediums that this is an advisory body and have a non binding remit. The body will not monitor and interpret religious sermons. The body will be representative and inclusive of different schools of thought. The structure for the body will need to be developed and moulded by the key stakeholders over time in a transparent and democratic fashion, which the wider Muslim community will have access to.

iv. Delivery/implementation

Set-up objective: Medium to long term

Funding may come from the member organisations and affiliates.

Funding for various projects emanating from the body could also be sourced from statutory and non-statutory bodies as well as affiliate members

Key personalities and major organisations need to take the lead in setting up the body in order to get maximum buy in from the wider Muslim community
Recommendation 2

The setting up of a National Resource Unit (NRU) for the development of curricula in Madrasahs/mosques and Islamic centres. The NRU will also develop programmes and guidelines for the teaching staff that function within these institutions.

i. Background/Context

This initiative is aimed at British mosque ‘complementary/extended schools i.e. Madrasahs. These are the after school classes held in mosques, usually for 2 hours every day, where Muslim children from the age of 5/6 to 16 are taught how to read and memorise the Qur’an, among other related curricular activity.

This proposed initiative would be a Muslim run institute/unit, to develop resources and a standardised curriculum, for these extended schools, as well as to provide/facilitate teacher training of imams/teachers who run these classes. The curriculum and guidelines used in the Madrasahs could also complement wider ‘mainstream curriculum’ in addition to learning the Qu’ran. Such guidelines will be developed with respect and in compliance with the diversity and schools of thought in the Muslim community overall.

Where possible the model curriculum would be linked to accreditation by a mainstream education board in the form of an ‘Islamic studies’ GCSE/certificate. This will provide a real incentive for children, and potentially help mosques and madrasahs to synergise with the wider government after school schemes.

ii. Issues and Outcomes

The Unit could look into the

- Design and development of a holistic curriculum for madrasahs which could include such topics as rights and responsibilities of citizens, citizenship, identity and personal development

- Develop teacher training programmes for imams and teachers of children in mosques

- Liaise with national and local education authorities to develop accredited educational modules that could be used in mainstream education subjects.

- Develop best practice guidelines for mosques and madrasahs.
Chapter 5: Imams/Mosques
Working together to prevent extremism

iii. Potential concerns for the Muslim community

- Why was this unit setup?
- What authority does this Unit have over the mosques imams and madrasahs?
- Does this Unit interpret religious text for the imams and teachers?
- Will this unit monitor the teaching and other religious instruction within madrasahs?

Recommendation to address these concerns

The unit needs to be initiated by credible imams, academics and social scientists that can accumulate and disseminate the necessary information and concepts in a style and manner conducive to the target market. The delivery agents could be potentially many and varied but the unit would be the key interlocutor in helping to formulate themes and practices that would add value to the upskilling process. The unit again would be a source of material and guidance for anyone wishing to access it. Its recommendations would be non binding.

iv. Delivery/implementation

Set-up objective: Medium to long term

Key personalities and major organisations need to take the lead in setting up the body in order to maximise the potential utilisation from prospective end user. Islamic centres of research in the UK and Europe could also have a stake in the institution and future development of the unit. This could enable access to already established good practices and field research, consequently avoiding any duplication and to enable speedier access of information already available in the academic domain.

The bulk of the funding may come from established Muslim funding bodies and individual benefactors. Funding for various projects emanating from the body could also be sourced from statutory and non-statutory bodies.
Recommendation 3

The establishment of a continuous professional development programme for the ‘upskilling’ of current imams and mosque officials in the UK.

i. Background/Context

Muslims are facing new challenges in society at large; in places such as schools, courts of law, hospitals, prisons, social services and in charitable organisations in combating discrimination and crime. In order for imams and mosque officials to help the community to tackle these new challenges, it was felt that a programme should be developed that could deliver professional and managed skills which imams and mosque officials would need in order to serve the pastoral and other needs of the Muslim community in modern day UK.

The programmes and courses in some cases would be specific to the needs of imams and mosque officials, but could also use already existing provisions from established sources, for instance in the case where imams lack English language or other basic skills, relevant training can be provided (often free of charge under the Learning Skills Council’s (LSC) adult basic skills initiative).

It is important to stress that the training would not include matters of a theological or religious nature – this is for specialist Muslim seminaries and Islamic scholars skilled in training imams in the UK and elsewhere.

The programme/courses could contribute to the integration of the Muslim community, and to build community cohesion, which are Home Office aims. But it would be a community-led initiative delivering voluntary training for existing imams in UK. The programme could also link into the national aspirations of the DfES, ODPM, RDAs, LSC and others.
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ii. Issues and Outcomes

Further discussion is still required, but the WG envisages that this would need to be in partnership with the right HMG agencies- LSC, etc

- Train Muslim community leaders how to lead, develop and manage mosques, as active partners in the social cohesion agenda;

- Adapt current programmes that are successful to provide tailored training packages which address the needs of communities and their leaders. Particular emphasis on developing skills around interfaith dialogue, youth work, counselling, management, communication, citizenship and English.

- Accredit the leadership skills of community leaders through nationally recognised qualifications such as NVQ in Management;

- Develop and promote mosques as active community centres, which give information, guidance and community services to their communities, including children, young people, women, the elderly and the disabled.

iii. Potential Concerns for the Muslim community

- Why was this initiative setup?

- Who will redeliver this training and what authority does it have over the Mosques Imams and Madrasahs?

- Does the training body interpret religious text for the imams and teachers?

Recommendation to address these concerns

The message needs to go out to employers of imams; that there is a growing need for Muslim chaplains in schools, higher and further education, health service (hospitals and hospices), social welfare, prisons, the police, armed forces and industry. The development of special courses which facilitate and train professionals working in the areas of chaplaincy and pastoral care is essential and the need to link these with well established accredited national qualifications will help to calibrate standards for potential employers of imams. Courses in the training of Muslim chaplains could also be through already established Muslim seats of learning in the UK or Europe. The aim would be to build capacity in existing imams and to help and nurture new imams. The WG feels that this would contribute to the creation of sound and stable communities that could function harmoniously within the framework and institutions of wider society
iv. Delivery/implementation

Setup Objective: Short to Medium term

The need to work with current centres of Islamic scholarship and training are key, to enabling the smooth and seamless integration of any accreditation scheme. The content of any course and style of delivery has to be sensitive and culturally compliant. Immediate discussions need to be established with accreditation bodies to initiate the process of integrating courses with already established seminary programmes for the training of new imams. For imams already practicing in the field an open “opt-in” modular programme needs to be accredited and marketed from established seats of learning and accredited training centres or bodies. The course offered by these establishments would be sensitive to the diversity of the Muslim community and compliant with the various schools of thought. They could also dovetail into established national awards, making any potential qualification relevant in the employment market place and the skills acquired very much transferable. There are clear areas of overlap and synergy between the work and potential output of the proposed MINAB and NRU, hence individuals and institutions involved with these two bodies could be brought together to initiate the process of establishing a nation wide imam accreditation scheme.
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Recommendation 4

A publication that highlights and promotes good practice from amongst mosques, Islamic centres and imams in the UK

i. Background/Context

It was thought that a booklet could be produced that would celebrate the tremendous work some mosques, imams and mosque officials have done or are undertaking in the UK. The booklet could take the form of highlighting through case studies various initiatives, projects that have resulted in building capacity and encouraging inclusiveness especially of women and youth.

The Booklet could be used as a vehicle for disseminating and sharing good practices to mosques and imams in the UK.

ii. Issues and Outcomes

• A win win scenario for the WG in the respect of providing models of success in the community and also being able to disseminate good practice without being prescriptive.

• A booklet that would also demonstrate to the wider British community of the positive contributions mosques and imams are playing in community cohesion and tackling negative trends.

iii. Potential Concerns for the Muslim community

• Why was there a need for such a document?

• Why were “these” case studies chosen and not others?

Recommendation to address these concerns

The document needs to be compiled by Muslims and seen to be free from any established governmental sanctions. A very positive, fresh and creative paradigm needs to be articulated through the document that can inspire change and develop constructive thinking in addressing any potential “change-up” process within the institutions the document is looking to address. Future publications of a similar nature could be produced by the MINAB in order to highlight current developments and new practices.
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iv. Delivery/implementation

Setup Objective: Immediately

A small group of individuals with links to mosques and madrasahs could take on the task of compiling this booklet. Funding and sponsorship could be received from notable benefactors and also from statutory and non-statutory bodies.

Conclusion/Vision

Facilities and services that cater for the special needs of the growing Muslim community in the UK are poor. Although many advances have been made in serving the needs of Muslims from its institutions, many gaps still remain in provision. The statutory sector has also made some efforts to understand the needs of the Muslim community and shape services to suit them, yet a greater integrated and coordinated approach needs to be taken between the established Muslim institutions and the statutory and non statutory sectors. The Muslim community still has some way to grow before it can match other established faith communities, in influencing policy, which will in turn influence services. They are still at a stage where they are developing, and coming to grips with ideas and methods of regeneration. They are developing capacity at a steady rate, but it will still take some time before they can really serve their own community to a satisfactory level. It is with this in mind that the WG believes that a coordinated and strategic approach needs to be undertaken to propel this needed development. The proposals recommended in this document are only seen as initial steps in a gradual and progressive process of rejuvenation and constructive community and Muslim institutional development.

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CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY SECURITY INCLUDING ADDRESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA, INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN POLICING AND TACKLING EXTREMISM: WORKING GROUP REPORT
CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY SECURITY – INCLUDING ADDRESSING ISLAMOPHOBIA, INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN POLICING AND TACKLING EXTREMISM: WORKING GROUP REPORT.

The Working Group (WG) recognised that the Muslim communities, as stakeholders in our wider society, have a deep vested interest in a safer Britain with a strong civil society built on shared notions of diversity, good citizenship and social cohesion. The WG accordingly welcomed and expressed its strong support for the Government's initiative to engage and consult with the Muslim communities towards achieving this goal. Having said this, however, the WG also retained significant reservations about the Government's intentions for and commitment to the process. This is partly based on the rushed and poorly organised nature of the current consultation process; and the impression conveyed by the dialogue to date that these consultation meetings were designed more for effect than for any meaningful input. However, the WG recognises the political issues, imperatives and practical difficulties that the Government faces. There is, therefore, strong support amongst the Muslim communities to work in partnership with the Government and to engage in the political process. This report – its conclusions and recommendations – as set out below, are offered in that spirit of partnership.

The Working Group was provided with the Terms of Reference as attached in the appendix. The WG considered both the shortcomings of the given Terms of Reference and the substantive issues raised by it for consideration by the group. The WG's deliberations, therefore, cover both topics mentioned and missed by the Terms of Reference that the Group felt was important for a full consideration of the task and issues at hand. It was felt that this would make the whole exercise of consultation with the Muslim communities a more credible and worthwhile one. This report seeks to capture the main discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the WG that emerged over several meetings.
1. Language and Scope of Terms of Reference

a. The Working Group (WG) agreed that the language used to contextualise and describe its work, and that of the Taskforce (TF) as a whole, was inappropriate – and perhaps even offensive. The language should, therefore, be modified. For example:

i. The atrocities of 7/7 were not committed by ‘the Muslim community’, but a group of individual criminals (ab)using Islam to justify terrorism. We must, therefore, avoid any language that implicates Islam and the Muslim community as a whole and holds them responsible for the atrocities.

ii. The phrase ‘Islamic extremism’ is offensive – there may be a very small fringe element who claim to follow Islam but that does not make Islam as a whole, a religion followed by over a billion people, an extremist religion. The Government must provide a lead in decoupling Islam and Muslims from such pejorative phrases that implicate the whole religion/community.

iii. The language suggests that the terrorism we are facing today is ‘a Muslim problem’ – created by Muslims and to be resolved by Muslims. The WG is of the view that the problem is underlined by a multiple and complex set of causes that need to be more widely owned and addressed by society as a whole – with, of course, the Muslim community playing an important role.
*Recommendation 1:*

The Government and the Muslim community to agree Guidelines on appropriate language, and appropriate procedures to ensure that these Guidelines are followed – particularly in times of crises.

b. The WG agreed that the scope of its Terms of Reference, and that of the Taskforce as a whole, are very narrow. If we are to tackle terrorism effectively, the scope of the present work must be extended. The work must also be undertaken more thoroughly and supplemented with more long term and lasting work. Areas missing from the scope of the present work that need to be covered include:

i. An interrogation and understanding of the root causes of terrorism (e.g., discrimination, deprivation and alienation facing British Muslims; UK foreign policy; the plight of Muslims across the world; etc.), their respective weight and how they relate to each other – i.e., it is not enough to tackle only the act of terrorism itself without addressing its root causes.

ii. An investigation and understanding of the what and how of 7/7 and 21/7, and the consequences of the Government’s and other public agencies response to the atrocities.

iii. The balance to be drawn between promoting security and protecting liberty – a specific discussion with the Muslim community is required, as in the short term British Muslims are most likely to be impacted by this balance (or the lack of it).

iv. The role of the Muslim community in the promotion of national security – particularly in view of the fact that Muslims are disproportionately impacted by terrorist atrocities in multiple ways:

- as victims of the atrocities (more than 10% of the innocent victims of 7/7 were Muslims)
- as the target of any resulting backlash
- as the victims of excesses of law and order provisions and agencies following the atrocities

v. The extent and manifestations of the backlash against the Muslim community and the impact this is having on the community. The backlash is not just in the form of hate crimes – but also in far more subtle and insidious forms. For example, the media (often assisted by the political discourse) is developing a worrying picture of an ‘enemy within’, singling out respectable members of the Muslim community for particularly nasty treatment, and systematically and relentlessly bringing out the worst elements of
the community for public scrutiny and critique. This is resulting in both schisms between different sections of society and a complete siege mentality in the Muslim community.

* Recommendation 2:

The Government must establish and undertake a Public Inquiry into the what, how and why of 7/7 and 21/7 – including an inquiry into the root causes of and the Government’s and other public agencies response to the atrocities. The inquiry should also consider the consequences of the events and impact of measures resulting from the events. 30

Recommendation 3:

The momentum developed by the Home Office in engaging and consulting the Muslim community through the Taskforce must not be lost. The effort needs to be formalised and professionalized as a means of undertaking the more long term and lasting work.

[NB: Recommendations 2 & 3 could be modelled on the Lawrence Inquiry and Lawrence Steering Group respectively]

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30 As unanimously agreed by all Muslim representatives (including Muslim Parliamentarians, and senior Muslim leaders, etc) at meeting with Mark Carroll, Director of Race, Faith & Cohesion, Home Office, on 14 September 2005.
Chapter 6: Security/Policing
Working together to prevent extremism


The Working Group expressed particular concerns regarding present anti-terrorism provisions and possible further developments in this area. The WG was critical of the misguided over-emphasis on law and order ‘solutions’. The WG’s specific concerns may be articulated as follows:

a. There was a strong feeling that the present regime of anti-terrorism provisions was already excessive, that it was badly implemented by the law enforcement agencies, and that it was resulting in ‘counter-productive counter-terrorism’ – in some cases, even used as propaganda to radicalise Muslims.

b. Particular concern was expressed around possible further developments in this area – as recently articulated by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary – on the following grounds:

i. The possible breadth and vagueness of some of the proposed developments. For example, the proposal on ‘inciting, justifying or glorifying terrorism’, as currently formulated, could lead to a significant chill factor in the Muslim community in expressing legitimate support for self-determination struggles around the world and in using legitimate concepts and terminology because of fear of being misunderstood and implicated for terrorism by authorities ignorant of Arabic/Islamic vocabulary – e.g., a speech on ‘jihad’ could easily by misunderstood as ‘glorifying terrorism’. This would not only result in an inappropriate restriction around the practice of Islam but also its development in the present context. The deficiencies in the proposed legislation can be demonstrated by the fact that there is a general perception that there is an extremely thin line between empathising with the Palestinian cause, for example, and justifying and condoning the actions of suicide bombers, a point highlighted by Cherie Blair during a speech in Jordan in 2004 for which she was publicly accused by Israel of “condoning” such bombings. It is not a line that can be drawn with any legal certainty.

ii. The reason for creating new offences of “acts preparatory to terrorism” is still rather unclear. Under the Terrorism Act 2000, the “possession of an article in circumstances which give rise to a reasonable suspicion that [it] is for a purpose connected with the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism” already carries a ten year jail sentence (s.57). It is an equally serious offence under the Terrorism Act to “collect information” or “possess documents” that could be used for terrorism (s.58). The Home Secretary has stated that “the new offence will lead to the capture of those planning serious of acts of terrorism”, implying surveillance powers rather than additions to an already broad offence. It is also possible that visiting a “jihadist” website could also be in some way
criminalised, notwithstanding the fact that visiting a website is obviously completely different to planning “a serious of act of terrorism”. ACPO has also called for a new offence of “inappropriate internet usage”, a concept more readily associated with regimes in China and Iran than governments in liberal democracies.

iii. The arbitrariness and possible misuse of some of the proposed provisions. For example, the proposal on closing certain mosques rather than simply prosecuting the criminality in those mosques could deprive a whole congregation from benefiting from a provision they may have heavily invested in because of a few fanatics misusing their facilities; the change from 14 to 90 days detention without charge could result in a completely arbitrary equivalent of a 6 months custodial sentence on an innocent person.

vi. The long term implications and impact of some of the proposed measures. For example, the banning of non-violent political parties could result in not only those parties going underground and becoming more problematic in the future, but also, a long term impact on the right of assembly/association. The Foreign Office is working on a database of foreign “extremists” and the Home Office a “list” of “specific extremist websites, bookshops, centres, networks and particular organisations of concern” in the UK. It is entirely possible that the resulting “clampdown” will be perceived as censorship of those who might criticise British foreign policy or call for political unity among Muslims. This is disingenuous, to say the least, carrying the dual risk of “radicalisation” and driving the “extremists” further underground. A recent report from the Metropolitan Police Authority stated that the current stop and search practice has created deeper racial tensions and severed valuable sources of community information and criminal intelligence. Rather than extend the period of detention of innocent people, the Police should concentrate on improving their intelligence whose failures have lead to huge resentment on the part of the Muslim community.

c. Concerns around the UK’s standing vis-à-vis international principles and standards of fundamental human rights. The UK was for a time in derogation of Art 5 of the ECHR. Further discussions, generated by the PM, around revoking/changing international (and now universally accepted) principles and standards of human rights developed by the international community in the aftermath of the unprecedented horrors of WWII are very worrying. It is the view of the WG that to change these principles and standards requires a discussion by the international community (including the NGO sector), and that Britain must not derogate from these unilaterally. Our moral high-ground rests on championing these standards. We must, therefore, go forward (e.g., adopt Protocol 12 of the ECHR) and not backwards (as we have done with Art 5 of the ECHR).
Recommendation 4:

The Government must encourage and empower greater Muslim participation in the various reviews of anti-terrorism provisions and implement the recommendations of these reviews in a more transparent manner. The Government must consult widely, and particularly the Muslim community, on any further anti-terrorism provisions. The UK must lead on and not unilaterally derogate from international principles and standards of human rights.
3. **Addressing Islamophobia**

Analysis of current /possible measures that could address Islamophobia:

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<th>Manifestation of Islamophobia</th>
<th>Existing/Foreseeable Provisions</th>
<th>Other Possible Provisions</th>
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<td>1. Islamophobic Hatred &amp; Hostility – or Islamophobic Hate Crimes</td>
<td>a. Aggravated offences – Anti-Terrorism, Crime &amp; Security Act 2001; Criminal Justice Act 2003</td>
<td>a. A nationally co-ordinated hate crimes initiative focusing on victims, witnesses and perpetrators – to specifically cover Islamophobic hate crimes along with other hate crimes, in: - recording systems; - 3rd party reporting systems; etc</td>
<td>HO, Police and other criminal justice agencies</td>
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<td>b. Incitement to religious hatred – manifesto commitment</td>
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<td>2. Direct &amp; Indirect Islamophobic Discrimination</td>
<td>a. Discrimination in employment and training – R&amp;B Regulations 2003</td>
<td>-- Robust civil law provisions on harassment on grounds of R&amp;B in all sectors: public, private and voluntary</td>
<td>HO</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Discrimination in the delivery of goods, services and facilities – manifesto commitment</td>
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<td>3. Institutional Islamophobia &amp; Entrenched Disadvantage</td>
<td>a. A comprehensive monitoring regime on grounds of religion</td>
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<td>c. Promotion of anti-discrimination, equality and good relations on grounds of R&amp;B through PSA targets</td>
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<td>d. Mainstreaming faith equality work through Govt inspectorates and regional offices</td>
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<td>e. Promotion of anti-discrimination, equality and good relations on grounds of R&amp;B through ‘procurement’ provisions and guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Islamophobic Stereotypes, Prejudice &amp; Meta-Narratives (narratives influencing the subconscious of the nation about Islam and Muslims)</td>
<td>a. A Government-led ‘media, sports and popular culture strategy’ to tackle Islamophobic meta-narratives</td>
<td>a. A Government-led ‘education strategy’ to tackle Islamophobic meta-narratives</td>
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<td>b. A Government-led ‘education strategy’ to tackle Islamophobic meta-narratives</td>
<td></td>
<td>DfES – to set up a Steering Group</td>
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The WG recognised the efforts of the Government to introduce legislation against Islamophobic hate crimes and direct/indirect discrimination. However, much work remains to be done to tackle the more covert, subtle and insidious forms of Islamophobia – Institutional Islamophobia and Islamophobic stereotypes and meta-narratives. In many cases, however, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. In other cases there may be a need to think afresh. Accordingly, the WG’s strategic recommendations are as follows:

* Recommendation 5:

`Update categories for race monitoring to reflect the race make up of Britain today and extend all race monitoring to include religion wherever appropriate. Audit all provisions on race and extend to religion and belief wherever appropriate – with particular emphasis on extending to Muslim communities. The audit needs to be undertaken and action plan implemented within specific expeditious timelines.`

* Recommendation 6:

`Establish a Unit at the DCMS, modelled on the Islamic Media Unit at the FCO, to encourage a more balanced representation of Islam and Muslims in the British media, (popular) culture and sports industries. Establish a Steering Group chaired by a Minister and including participation from the Muslim community and the relevant industries, to draw up a strategy for the Unit.`

* Recommendation 7:

`Establish a Steering Group at the DfES, chaired by a Minister and including participation from the Muslim community and other experts, to draw up a strategy on combating Islamophobia through education.`

4. Increasing Confidence in Policing

The WG expressed deep concerns around the overall level of confidence in policing in the Muslim community – arising, in particular, from the implementation of anti-terrorism provisions. This is unfortunate as there was wide recognition in the Muslim community of the good policing immediately after 7/7 to minimise the harm suffered from the Islamophobic backlash. The WG stressed the need to build on this and other good practice and build confidence in the Muslim community.
Not surprisingly, the WG’s discussion replicated discussions on race over several decades. Again, there was a strong feeling that we should avoid resource consuming re-inventing of the wheel and just extend existing race provisions to specifically cover religion/Muslims. The WG placed particular emphasis on capacity building in the Muslim community to effectively engage with police services.

Recommendation 8

Pilot Recommendation 5 in the Police Service through ACPO & APA (working with representative organisations from the Muslim community), but with Ministerial oversight, and possibly also through specific monitoring by the HMIC. The piloting should, in particular, focus on key tools for equality (e.g., the positive duty, PSA targets, procurement provisions, etc.) and major areas of equality work (policy impact assessment, reporting and recording of Islamophobic crimes, recruitment/retention/promotion, training and awareness raising, etc.)

* Recommendation 9

Better resourcing for more meaningful engagement and partnership between the Police and Muslim communities – including capacity building in Muslim communities for such engagement and participation. In terms of resourcing, there needs to be a recognition that the Muslim community can provide intellectual and human resources. However, what it may not always be able to do is provide financial resources and skills. This is where Government agencies could help. A good starting point would be to set up and resource Muslim Safety Forums (MSFs) across the country where there are significant concentration of Muslims, which could be co-ordinated by a well resourced national MSF.

Recommendation 10

A Ministerial level ‘Review’ of the application and impact of anti-terrorism provisions, particularly in terms of raids, stop and search, and armed police policies (eg, shoot to kill policy). Review to be undertaken with Muslim community participation.
5. Tackling Extremism

There was some concern expressed regarding the use of the terms ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalism’. There is a very big difference between violent fanaticism/terrorism and orthodoxy. Wearing the hijab or growing a beard is not extremism. If extremism here is referring to terrorism, then we may suggest that we consider some short term and some long term measures.

Short Term

* Recommendation 11

Develop a British Muslim Citizenship Toolkit to be used through ‘natural pathways’ in the Muslim community. The Toolkit will articulate a new vision for a British Islam and equip university Islamic Societies, mosques/imams, parents and the youth to deal with violent/fanatic tendencies.

* Recommendation 12

Develop 10-12 Muslim ‘beacon centres’ around the UK, at the heart of Muslim geographic concentrations that will serve as model centres for smaller mosques, cultural centres, educational facilities, etc. The centres will also provide direct access for Government to the grass roots dynamics of the Muslim community. Establish a team at the HO/ODPM to consider how these centres can be developed and to deliver the project.
Long Term

* Recommendation 13

Develop a five pronged strategy, to be implemented through the beacon centres, focusing on the following:

a. Leadership – to promote/develop a Muslim leadership appropriate for 21st century multi-cultural Britain – this means a leadership not just in terms of a skills set but a leadership capable of rethinking the universal principles and values of Islam for today’s Britain

b. Citizenship – to develop a model of citizenship that reflects peoples multiple identities and allegiances and finds strength in its ability to accommodate each of them and to hold them together. Developing British Muslim citizenship would involve balancing responsibilities as a Muslim towards:
   • the world (al-‘aalam) – both humanity and the environment;
   • the Muslim Ummah – the international Muslim community; and
   • the society in which one lives (qawm/dawla)

c. Equality – to eliminate discrimination against Muslims and promote equality of treatment, opportunities and outcomes between British Muslims and other members of society – through measures stated in section above on addressing Islamophobia

d. Integration – to develop a model of integration that recognises that our society is constantly changing; that integration is a two-way process between majority and minority cultures; and that places this recognition at the heart of a an evolving national identity towards a Greater Britain

e. Cohesion – to promote mutual understanding and bonding/relations between Muslims and wider society

NB: Starred (*) recommendations indicate key strategic recommendations
## Summary of Recommendations & Proposed Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Lead Responsibility</th>
<th>Timescale/Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language and Scope of Terms of Reference</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Recommendation 1:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Government and the Muslim community to agree Guidelines on appropriate language, and appropriate procedures to ensure that these Guidelines are followed – particularly in times of crises.</td>
<td>Government – HO</td>
<td>Dec 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Recommendation 2:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Government must establish and undertake a Public Inquiry into the what, how and why of 7/7 and 21/7 – including an inquiry into the root causes of and the Government’s and other public agencies response to the atrocities. The inquiry should also consider the consequences of the events and impact of measures resulting from the events.</td>
<td>Government – HO</td>
<td>Announce Inquiry by Dec 2005 Establish Inquiry by March 2006 Report by March 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 3:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The momentum developed by the Home Office in engaging and consulting the Muslim community through the Taskforce must not be lost. The effort needs to be formalised and professionalized as a means of undertaking the more long term and lasting work.</td>
<td>Government – HO</td>
<td>Dec 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-Terrorism Provisions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendation 4:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Government must encourage and empower greater Muslim participation in the various reviews of anti-terrorism provisions and implement the recommendations of these reviews in a more transparent manner. The Government must consult widely, and particularly the Muslim community, on any further anti-terrorism provisions. The UK must lead on and not unilaterally derogate from international principles and</td>
<td>Government – HO/DCA</td>
<td>Encouragement and consultation – ongoing Implementation of review recommendations – April 2006 Lead on international standards – June 2006, and then, ongoing</td>
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## Chapter 6: Security/Policing

**Working together to prevent extremism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Standards of Human Rights</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Addressing Islamophobia</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Recommendation 5: * Update categories for race monitoring to reflect the race make up of Britain today and extend all race monitoring to include religion wherever appropriate. Audit all provisions on race and extend to religion and belief wherever appropriate – with particular emphasis on extending to Muslim communities. The audit needs to be undertaken and action plan implemented within specific expeditious timelines.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Government – HO</strong></td>
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| * Recommendation 6: * Establish a Unit at the DCMS, modelled on the Islamic Media Unit at the FCO, to encourage a more balanced representation of Islam and Muslims in the British media, (popular) culture and sports industries. Establish a Steering Group chaired by a Minister and including participation from the Muslim community and the relevant industries, to draw up a strategy for the Unit. |
| **Government – DCMS** | **Establish Unit & Steering Group – April 2006** | **Strategy – Dec 2006** |

| * Recommendation 7: * Establish a Steering Group at the DfES, chaired by a Minister and including participation from the Muslim community and other experts, to draw up a strategy on combating Islamophobia through education. |
| **Government – DfES** | **Establish Steering Group – April 2006** | **Strategy – Dec 2006** |

## Increasing Confidence in Policing

| Recommendation 8: Pilot Recommendation 5 in the Police Service through ACPO & APA (working with representative organisations from the Muslim community), but with Ministerial oversight, and possibly also through specific monitoring by the HMIC. The piloting should, in particular, focus on key tools for equality (e.g., the positive duty, PSA targets, procurement |
| **Government/Police Service/Muslim Safety Forum** | **April 2006** |
**Chapter 6: Security/Policing**  
Working together to prevent extremism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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</table>
| 9              | Better resourcing for more meaningful engagement and partnership between the Police and Muslim communities – including capacity building in Muslim communities for such engagement and participation. In terms of resourcing, there needs to be a recognition that the Muslim community can provide intellectual and human resources. However, what it may not always be able to do is provide financial resources and skills. This is where Government agencies could help. A good starting point would be to set up and resource Muslim Safety Forums (MSFs) across the country where there are significant concentration of Muslims, which could be co-ordinated by a well resourced national MSF. | Government/Police Service/Muslim Safety Forum | Resourcing – April 2006  
MSFs – Dec 2006 |
| 10             | A Ministerial level ‘Review’ of the application and impact of anti-terrorism provisions, particularly in terms of raids, stop and search, and armed police policies (eg, shoot to kill policy). Review to be undertaken with Muslim community participation | Government – HO/Muslim Safety Forum | Establish Review – February 2006  
Report – Dec 2006 |
| 11             | Develop a British Muslim Citizenship Toolkit to be used through ‘natural pathways’ in the Muslim community. The Toolkit will articulate a new vision for a British Islam and equip university Islamic Societies, mosques/imams, parents and the youth to deal with violent/fanatic tendencies. | Muslim community (Islamic Foundation?) | April 2006 |
| 12             | Develop 10-12 Muslim ‘beacon centres’ around the UK, at the heart of Muslim community | Muslim community (MCB?) | Establish Team – Dec 2005  
Deliver first 5 beacon |

**Tackling Extremism**
geographic concentrations that will serve as model centres for smaller mosques, cultural centres, educational facilities, etc. The centres will also provide direct access for Government to the grass roots dynamics of the Muslim community. Establish a team at the HO/ODPM to consider how these centres can be developed and to deliver the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centres – Dec 2006</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver next 5 beacon centres – Dec 2007</td>
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</table>

*Recommendation 13:*
Develop a five pronged strategy, to be implemented through the beacon centres, focusing on the following:

a. Leadership – to promote/develop a Muslim leadership appropriate for 21st century multi-cultural Britain – this means a leadership not just in terms of a skills set but a leadership capable of rethinking the universal principles and values of Islam for today’s Britain

b. Citizenship – to develop a model of citizenship that reflects peoples multiple identities and allegiances and finds strength in its ability to accommodate each of them and to hold them together. Developing British Muslim citizenship would involve balancing responsibilities as a Muslim towards:
   a. the world (al-'aalam) – both humanity and the environment;
   b. the Muslim Ummah – the international Muslim community; and
   c. the society in which one lives (qawm/dawla)

c. Equality – to eliminate discrimination against Muslims and promote equality of treatment, opportunities and outcomes between British Muslims and other members of society – through measures stated in section above on addressing Islamophobia

d. Integration – to develop a model of integration that recognises that our
society is constantly changing; that integration is a two-way process between majority and minority cultures; and that places this recognition at the heart of an evolving national identity towards a Greater Britain.

c. Cohesion – to promote mutual understanding and bonding/relations between Muslims and wider society.

NB: Starred (*) recommendations indicate key strategic recommendations – i.e., recommendations that should be given priority over others.

October 2005

Convenor
Muhammad Abdul Aziz

Deputy Convenor
Ifath Nawaz

Working Group Members

Naheed Mather
Khalid Hussain
Lord Bhatia
Amin Mawji
Sadiq Khan MP
Sabhia Lakha
Elyas Patel
Councillor Mohammed Iqbal
Azad Ali
Tahir Butt
Maqsood Ahmad
Richard Stone
Ahmad Thomson
Ibrahim Master
Hanif Adeel
CHAPTER 7

TACKLING EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION: WORKING GROUP REPORT
CHAPTER 7: TACKLING EXTREMISM AND RADICALISATION: WORKING GROUP REPORT.

Executive Summary

Key issues

1. We recognise that a form of criminal radical extremism exists within an admittedly tiny section of the British Muslim community and that it must be challenged and defeated.

2. It must repeatedly be made clear through both word and deed that counter-terrorism measures are about dealing with forms of criminal radical extremism, and are not directed against Muslims specifically.

3. The current public discourse implies that British Muslim life revolves wholly around issues relating to terrorism/anti-terrorism, which only serves to stigmatise the community. Broader-based portrayals of British Muslim life should be regularly communicated to the rest of society.

4. British foreign policy – especially in the Middle East - cannot be left unconsidered as a factor in the motivations of criminal radical extremists. We believe it is a key contributory factor.

Top four recommendations

1. Muslim Forum Against Islamophobia and Extremism – an independent initiative to provide a forum for a diverse range of members of the British Muslim community to come together and discuss issues relating to tackling Islamophobia and harmful forms of extremism.

2. Muslim Affairs Media Unit - a special independent Muslim run-initiative with professional Muslim media experts/press officers to provide rapid rebuttal/reaction to extremist (including Islamophobic) sentiments or actions, and maintain a database of Muslim ‘talking heads’ who can speak to the press on a range of issues.

3. British ‘Islam Online’ website - this initiative is envisaged as a ‘one stop shop’ style website/information portal particularly aimed at young British Muslims. It will represent a wide range of views and opinions from all the major Muslim schools of thought, presenting young Muslims with a wide range of choice in terms of views within a mainstream spectrum.
Chapter 7: Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation

Working together to prevent extremism

4. ‘Islamic Way of Life’ exhibition - this would be similar to the ‘Jewish way of Life’ exhibition and would tour schools to help increase understanding about Islam and what British Muslims actually believe and stand for, as part of a wider set of educational initiatives designed to further public understanding of Islam and British Muslims.

Background/Context

In addition to the Key Issues outlined above, the following is a concise summary of conclusions reached during our discussions:

1. Every person has a right to disagree and oppose any particular government policy. However, disagreement and opposition should be expressed through lawful means: resorting to violent criminal acts is certainly not one such avenue, and cannot be condoned. It needs to be demonstrated that there are many lawful methods that provide effective means to achieve change, including increased participation in the political process.

2. British media coverage on issues related to Islam and Muslims is often disparaging and even incendiary. As such young Muslims often cite it as a cause of disaffection, and a plethora of research studies confirm its damaging nature. All levels of society, including government, should take responsibility for correcting this and confronting Islamophobia. Members of the Muslim community should be encouraged to engage more with the media at both the local and national levels to ensure more balanced coverage.

3. Labelling individuals or groups, as ‘extreme’ must be done with great care. Victimising innocent people mistakenly in this manner can contribute to a process of radicalisation.

4. The solution to challenging radical ‘pseudo-religious’ interpretations is not ‘less Islam’: it is through disseminating a more authentic understanding of Islam.

5. Multicultural Britain is a place where Muslims enjoy a position and freedoms that they do not have in many other countries; British Muslims cherish this and celebrate it.

6. Any projects initiated as a result of this consultation process with British Muslims should be done in partnership with them and existing Muslim organisations; otherwise, successful implementation may be difficult to achieve.
ii. Issues Examined

The events of July 2005 revealed that there existed a tiny minority of British Muslims who were susceptible to violent extremism. The remit of the working group on ‘Tackling extremism and radicalisation’ was to discuss methods to combat this extremism within communities in the UK. The group examined a number of pertinent questions in their discussions, to reach some tangible recommendations.

This report is an overall reflection of those discussions and conclusions, with the lead in construction undertaken by the Convenor and Deputy Convenor, and should be interpreted as such.

1. How can Britain increase a climate of transparency, mutual trust and knowledge?

a. Research projects with Muslim community involvement to examine relevant issues thoroughly. The work of the working groups must be continued in part by promoting and funding research projects through various institutions, including independent academic institutions, to thoroughly understand all angles and perspectives of the crisis we find ourselves in. Evidence-based solutions are more likely to derive benefit for the community. Joint schemes between the FCO/Home Office and the ESRC/AHRB that focus on Muslim involvement in the research process with scholarly Islamic input would be useful.

b. Proscription of groups: Proscription of groups that do not engage in unlawful activities should be avoided and could prove to be counterproductive.

c. Public Inquiry. Most members of the working group felt that an inquiry into the events of July 7 and July 21 should be held. This would help place facts as opposed to speculation – informed or otherwise – into the public domain about the process by which some British Muslims are being radicalised.
Chapter 7: Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation

Working together to prevent extremism

2. How can active citizenship be promoted?

a. Discourses within Muslim and non-Muslim communities that employ an ‘us versus them’ rhetoric are unhelpful and obstructive: a more appropriate and less confrontational discourse should be encouraged amongst all for the benefit of all.

b. Capacity building through current Muslim organisations must be strengthened and added to. Existing organisations need to be supported.

c. The pattern of successful participation of Muslims in British life should be showcased, domestically and internationally, without ‘glossing over’ issues of concern.

d. Information on how to successfully participate as citizens [through mentorship programs, teachers associations, magistrates, police associations, local councils and so forth] should be more widely disseminated.

3. What is the impact of UK Foreign policy on communities?

a. The government should learn from the impact of its foreign policies on its electors.

b. The radical impulse among some in the Muslim community is often emotionally triggered by perceptions (sometimes true, sometimes false, sometimes exaggerated) of injustices inherent in Western foreign policies that impact on the Muslim world. The government should better explain Britain’s role in the world, and highlight avenues of legitimate dissent. Criticism of some British foreign policies should not be assumed to be disloyal. Peaceful disagreement is a sign of a healthy democracy. Dissent should not be conflated with ‘terrorism’, ‘violence’ or deemed inimical to British values.
iii. Recommendations

Having considered the above issues the working group then addressed the question:

‘What can Muslim communities do, and how can the wider mainstream, including the government, facilitate and support them in tackling violent extremism?’

1. There exists a pseudo-religious imperative that is currently being used to justify angry and radical acts of violence. This is an ideological arena that can only be responded to and corrected by theological confutation and intra-Muslim engagement. At the same time, other types of dangerous extremism cause harm to British society in general and British Muslim society in particular, and should be tackled comprehensively and consistently.

Recommendation 1: Muslim Forum Against Islamophobia and Extremism

This independent initiative would provide a regular forum for a diverse range of members of the British Muslim community to come together and discuss issues relating to tackling Islamophobia and any type of extremism that impacts on the Muslim community in particular and British society at large. It will involve both scholars and community activists in addition to others. The forum will also have access to HMG in order to share outcomes and understandings.

2. We recognise that media portrayal of Islam and Muslims is at best unbalanced and often negative and potentially harmful. The media should recognise the privileged power they exert over public opinion in the UK. We envisage the formation of a specialised unit to seek to redress this balance of power in reportage.

Recommendation 2: Muslim Affairs Media Unit

This will be a special independent (from government) Muslim run-initiative with professional Muslim media experts/press officers who could provide rapid rebuttal/reaction to extremist (including Islamophobic) sentiments or actions, and maintain a database of ‘talking heads’ from the Muslim community who could speak to the press on a range of issues. They could also provide specialised media training to Muslim spokespeople.

3. An increasing number of young British Muslims are turning to the Internet for information on Islam. There are a plethora of inaccurate websites but few easily accessible relevant and current mainstream Muslim websites available.
Chapter 7: Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation

Working together to prevent extremism

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**Recommendation 3: British ‘One Stop Shop’ website about Islam**

This initiative is envisaged as a ‘one stop shop’ style website/information portal particularly aimed at young British Muslims. It will represent a wide range of views and opinions from all the major Muslim schools of thought, presenting young Muslims with a wide range of choice in terms of views within a normative, mainstream spectrum.

---

4. Islam is a British religion with substantial historical roots here. Cultural festivals, textbooks and teaching styles that emphasise Islam as primarily an aspect of foreign cultures, are counterproductive and out of date. The reality of our society that includes British Muslim songwriters, poets, artists, filmmakers and others, should be reflected.

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**Recommendation 4: ‘Islamic Way of Life’ exhibition**

This would be similar to the ‘Jewish way of Life’ exhibition and would tour schools and other parts of civil society to help increase understanding about Islam and what British Muslims actually believe and stand for. This would be part of a wider educational initiative to increase the understanding of local and national political leaders and the British public about Islam.

---

**iv. Delivery/Implementation**

A society that seeks cohesion and a multiculturalist form of integration must seek cohesive and integrated solutions to common issues.

The fulfilment and implementation of these recommendations are not for government to simply carry out on behalf of society without community input, or demanded of Muslim communities to achieve as though they were reactionary populations without long-standing wishes and concerns of their own.

Rather, they require a long-term vision that takes into account the legitimate concerns and needs of all parts of our society, and delivered through genuine partnerships.

In this context, the attainment of these particular goals should be led by the British Muslim community and their representative organisations, whilst facilitated by other parts of society where it is clear that Muslim communities do not have the necessary relevant resources or infrastructure.
v. Conclusion

The issues that have been touched here have, out of necessity, been done in a ‘crisis management’ style, with all the time restraints and unfortunate fetters that go along with such a process. We do believe that the above recommendations provide a basic framework for British Muslim communities to help tackle the issues of radicalisation and violent extremism.

Nevertheless, this should not and must not be the overwhelming tenor of discourse. The mantras and ‘quick-fixes’ that, intentionally or otherwise, reduce British Muslims to an inert & reactionary population, ever obsessed with negative issues, may be gratifying for many, but do not provide constructive foresight. Nor do they take into account the other challenges that face us as Britain marches into the 21st century. There must be a sense of imagination, and courage, looking far beyond these topics, and dealing seriously with the subjects that face our society, domestically and internationally, now and for the future. That sort of analysis cannot be comprehensively carried out in a process such as this.

Muslims have the internal intellectual and creative resources needed to manifest that vision, remaining faithful to their enduring principles of justice and universal kinship. Their commitment to those values and others from their normative tradition remains, regardless of how difficult times may be here or abroad. As a community of civic responsibility, aware of their rights and duties as Muslims and human beings, it is unlikely they will accept any other course, and British society is all the better for it.

Convenor:
Inayat Bunglawala

Deputy Convenor:
Dr. Hisham A. Hellyer

Working Group Members:
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Fareena Alam
Lutfur Ali
Iqbal Asaria
Bns. Kishwer Falkner
Dilwar Hussain
Sarah Joseph
Iqbal Khan
Sara Khan
Shahid Malik MP
Sulaiman Moolla
Prof. Tariq Ramadan
APPENDIX A

HOME OFFICE WORKING GROUPS
TERMS OF REFERENCE
APPENDIX A: HOME OFFICE WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT EXTREMISM

WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Home Secretary and Hazel Blears have been consulting with Muslim communities over the last few weeks to consider how Government and Muslim communities can work in partnership to help prevent extremism.

This document outlines the Terms of Reference for the seven informal working/reference groups that have been set up to develop workable proposals for Government and Muslim civic organisations to take forward, drawing on the consultation events and other sources of ideas.

Context and Purpose

Following the Prime Minister’s and Home Secretary’s summits with Muslim leaders in July, a series of summer Ministerial consultation events with Muslim communities are currently generating a number of suggestions for action to prevent extremism.

By mid-September, the Home Secretary and Prime Minister are looking for concrete proposals about how Muslim communities and the Government can further work in partnership to prevent extremism, and to reduce disaffection and radicalisation within Muslim communities across Britain.

Seven informal working groups are being established, initially for the next six weeks, in an advisory capacity to help develop and pull together proposals resulting from this consultation and generated from group members themselves.

These proposals will be action focused, and will aim to include some specific new ideas that can be announced in mid- to late- September, as well as issues that might need further deliberation. In considering which proposals could be announced, the Government and Muslim communities will need to pay due regard to the capacity and resource implications associated with each.
Appendix A
Working together to prevent extremism

Objectives for each group

1. To identify, by mid-September, a small number of proposals for community and Government led actions that will help prevent extremism.

2. To support the development of at least one of the proposals to a point that it can be firmly announced in mid to late September by the organisation that will take responsibility for delivery.

3. To help improve overall partnership working between Government and Muslim communities, through developing shared understanding and dialogue on issues associated with extremism and disaffection.

Themes for each Working Group

The seven group themes will be:

- Tackling extremism and radicalisation;
- Engaging with young people;
- Supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions;
- Engaging with women;
- Imam Training and accreditation and the role of Mosques as a resource for the whole community;
- Providing a full range of education services, in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community; and,
- Security for the community, including tackling Islamophobia, protecting Muslims from extremism, and building community confidence in policing.

There is inevitably some overlap between these themes and we will seek to share ideas between groups to the extent that this is possible within the tight timescales.
Appendix A
Working together to prevent extremism

Deliverables

The Convener and Deputy Convener of each working group will be responsible for presenting the outputs from all group work at a meeting with the Home Secretary, currently scheduled for the 20\textsuperscript{th} September. We are looking for a very brief summary of the key issues and a list of 3-5 action oriented proposals (for community organisations and government) to address the key issues.

We envisage that the proposals could be summarised on a single powerpoint slide, supported by a short report combining supporting information from the working group.

Each working group will be supported by a Home Office, Foreign Office or No. 10 Strategy Unit official (see below).

Timing

We envisage that the project timetable will include:

- An initial meeting for as many of the working group as possible during w/c 22\textsuperscript{nd} August;
- Correspondence by e-mail, telephone calls and possibly a further meeting of some or all of the group in the following two weeks;
- All working group members will be invited to attend a residential weekend, currently scheduled for 10\textsuperscript{th}/11\textsuperscript{th} September, to pull together recommendations.

Conveners, deputy conveners and possibly some other members of the working groups will have the opportunity to present the summaries of all the working groups to the Home Secretary in mid-late September, currently scheduled for 20\textsuperscript{th} September. Due to the large number of people involved in all the working groups, it would be unrealistic for all involved to attend this meeting with the Home Secretary. We will also look to find other opportunities to share findings with Ministers during September.
Functions and status of the Working Group

Working groups have been set up on an informal basis to provide advice to senior officials and Ministers for a time limited period (initially six weeks). They are not formal Government advisory groups with a statutory role. Establishing such formal advisory groups takes a significant amount of time and is therefore not appropriate in this instance.

Members of the working groups have been invited because of their expertise and experience. They are invited in a personal capacity, rather than as representatives of their organisations.

We are looking for groups themselves to:

- Manage any additional consultation with other stakeholders as part of the process;
- Generate and develop the analysis and reach agreement on which proposals to make to the Home Secretary;
- Negotiate agreements with relevant civic organisations on proposals which could be announced in late September.

We hope that members of working groups will work inclusively with each other and all sections of the Muslim community, to help derive solutions that are culturally and religiously sensitive and within the context of wider society.
Responsibilities of lead officials

The Convener and working group members will receive some support from a lead official. This support will usually include:

- Working with the group to develop proposals and advise on timescales and details of deliverables and act as a conduit to the Home Office and Government more widely.

- To distribute to Working Group members relevant papers and proposals associated with this project and be the conduit for information flow across workstreams. This will help avoid duplication and overlap where feasible.

- To take notes of the action points that arise out of the main working group meetings. To advise and provide limited support on engagement and consultation activities, if this is possible within current resource constraints.

- To consult with other Government Departments and external public bodies, if proposals require input from these sources.

- To provide a challenge function to the workstreams and share best practice, where possible, to inform decision-making.

- To integrate the findings from each workstream, and highlight dependencies, into the collated report and presentation.

Resources

A maximum of £10,000 will be made available for each workstream to progress work with Muslim communities. This can be used to pay organisations which facilitate community meetings; book venues; and all reasonable travel and accommodation costs which are associated to the project. All transactions are to be recorded and supported by receipts. The Home Office will provide a central administrative function to process these in a timely and efficient manner.

Working Group members are present on a voluntary basis and will not receive remuneration. Payment to individuals would necessitate a lengthy public appointment process to ensure probity. This is presently impossible given the deadlines by which the report is to be produced. We will, of course, pay reasonable expenses according to Home Office guidelines, which are available on request.
Appendix A

Working together to prevent extremism

Disputes

Where there is dispute within the working group, including at the final stage of choosing proposals, decisions will be made after due consideration, by the Convener and lead official. However, the report will note any significant disagreements. Clearly, firm announcements rather than proposals will need to be made, by agreement, with the lead organisation(s) which will be responsible for delivering that outcome.

Accountability

The Accounting Officer for this project is Mark Carroll, Director of Race, Cohesion and Faiths and the Project Manager is Elise Clarke. All final decisions rest with the Accounting Officer and ultimately Ministers.

Communications

Working group members (and lead officials) will not breach the confidence of any Government department, Minister or official and in accepting membership to the working group, fully understand the implications of this undertaking.

A full report will be made available to all working group members for dissemination to the community.

The Home Office is committed to undertaking our work openly and accessibly. The membership of working groups will be noted on the Home Office website.

The Home Office
17th August 2005