



Walsall Council

Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2017 - 2020

CONTENT

Message from Councillor Sean Coughlan
Leader of Walsall Council



Our geography, people and history have shaped the place that Walsall Borough is today; Willenhall with its locks, Darlaston with its nuts and bolts, Walsall leather and many more industrial trades.

This gave both benefits and opportunity for many, but also challenges. Now, there are newer challenges that need to be addressed, especially in the current economic and austerity climate we are facing.

A strategy for Cohesion and Integration is complex and our policies need to be focused on meeting the needs of our changing communities and on developing policy led change. This is not about race or religion; this is about PEOPLE AND PLACES.

People and Places are at the forefront of that development. How people feel about themselves, their neighbours and where they live is influenced by living standards, employment, welfare reforms, learning provision, skills development and opportunities to influence the decisions that affect their lives.

Within this complex and challenging world, Walsall Council is committed to building a fairer society, where people feel they are appreciated, listened to and empowered to make their communities prosper.

Message from Councillor Ian Shires
Portfolio Holder – Community, Leisure and Culture



Listening to our communities is a real passion for me. Our communities are changing. They come from different backgrounds, different faiths and influences. We need to listen to what they have to say and learn from what we hear. The multi-cultural nature of our society is accelerating. This brings positive opportunities; but only if we accept our differences and work together will we achieve our goal of a better Walsall.

The Council has a strong commitment to the Voluntary and Community Sector not in a paternal way but in true partnership. There are some major issues to tackle if we are going to break the cycle of deprivation.

The Localities Model which brings us together across Walsall is all about Collaborative Participatory Governance. The work that has been done so far has brought the top down. The other part of this equation is to bring the bottom up and that's where the voluntary and community sector needs to play its part in building and maintaining community cohesion and more importantly, create opportunities for integration in all those essential areas of civic life.

The sector will decide how best to make that connection or how we “listen to our communities” and Cohesion and Integration Strategy will help us put resources in the right areas of our local government business.

The Corporate Plan 2017-2020

Walsall Council has a statutory duty to deliver specific services within the borough boundaries for all people and communities in Walsall. Ultimately, the Council exists to serve the people and communities of Walsall, by representing and working with them to protect and improve the quality of life for all, particularly the most vulnerable.

Our purpose, as set out in the Plan, is to **reduce inequalities and maximise potential**. Our population is more ethnically diverse than ever before, with just less than 25% of all residents from a minority ethnic background. The Council will continue to spend time understanding its new and emerging communities, as this informs our service delivery in meeting the specific needs of these diverse communities.

Walsall's demographic profile has changed, as economic migrants supply our economy with the labour it needs to replace old industries. According to The Office for National Statistics (ONS) country of birth statistical analysis from December 2015, 11.6% of

Walsall population were born abroad. It is estimated that about 8.4% were born in the countries outside of the European Union (EU) and about 2.9% in EU, with the majority (about 2.2%) in the EU8 countries (new member states since 2004).

Our relationship with the voluntary and community sector is particularly important and will become more so as we strive to design services around local need, especially in helping to empower communities to increasingly support themselves.

Our priorities

The Council is aware of the challenges our communities face and the areas the Council needs to focus on when planning and delivering services. Within the purpose of reducing inequalities and maximising potential, the Council recognises the importance of securing inclusive economic growth for people of all ages, from the very young to the very old and in providing clean, safe and healthy places for communities to thrive. These three elements of 'place' 'economy' and 'people' are intertwined and interdependent, meaning the delivery of services will continue to become more collaborative and joined up.

In considering where resources should be focussed and where improvements can be made, the corporate priorities have been updated. These four broad themes are;

Pursue inclusive economic growth

Make a positive difference to the lives of Walsall people

Children are safe from harm, happy and learning well with self-belief, aspiration and support to be their best

Safe, resilient and prospering communities

The Walsall Plan

Knowing Our Needs

The assessment of needs in Walsall is predominantly tackled through three key assessments, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Economic Needs Assessment and the Strategic Assessment to inform the Community Safety Plan. The needs identified have been used to inform the development of the Walsall Plan.

Knowing Our Priorities

A number of strategies, based on these needs assessments, are already in place across the Partnership in Walsall. The cross cutting themes identified within partnership and organisational strategies have been used to identify three overarching priorities for the Walsall Plan, where value can be added by working together in partnership:

- Increasing economic prosperity through increased growth;
- Maximising people's health, wellbeing and safety;
- Creating healthy and sustainable places and communities.

Reducing inequalities is key within and each of these priorities. The principle of “proportionate universalism” will be applied, in that the scale and intensity of effort will be greatest where our need in Walsall is greatest. The Marmot Review of Public Health Inequalities in England (2010) stressed the importance of taking a life course perspective and recognised that disadvantage accumulates through life. This approach has been applied to the three overarching and key priorities identified, below:

Increasing Economic Prosperity Through Increased Growth	Children	Young People	Adults	Older People
Reduce inequalities				
Increase opportunities for volunteering, increase take up of volunteering				
Develop strong and sustainable infrastructure				

Maximising People's Health, Wellbeing and Safety	Children	Young People	Adults	Older People
Reduce inequalities				
Improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people				
Enable children and young people to be better protected and safeguard themselves				
Enable and empower individuals to improve their physical and mental health				
Ensure services recognise cultural barriers, and are inclusive and accessible for existing, new and emerging communities				
Protect communities and individuals from the threat caused by extremist behaviour				

Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places and Communities	Children	Young People	Adults	Older People
Reduce inequalities				
Support a sustainable third sector through individual and collective engagement				
Empower connected, inclusive and resilient communities				

Walsall Council Community Cohesion and Integration Priorities 2017-2020

There have been considerable demographic changes in terms of increased diversity of the population. Local, regional, national and international events have influenced people's attitudes to this diversity. This has created increasing challenges around fostering good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

Numerous factors, such as austerity, lack of affordable housing, private rented accommodation rent increases, Brexit, increasing diversity, global population shifts, rises in extremism across Europe and reduced Council budgets are all contributing to increased pressure on residents and, in turn, a change in their attitude towards immigrants.

The findings of the community cohesion consultation exercise (Appendix 2), along with some of the findings of the Casey Review (Appendix 3) relevant to Walsall, evidence the need for a pragmatic, fit for purpose cohesion and integration strategy. Following consultation with residents, Walsall Council identified the following outcomes and objectives that it sets out to achieve through the Community Cohesion and Integration Strategy. The outcomes and objectives are that;

- Our district centres residents are encouraged and offered opportunities to meet with others from outside of their locality;
- All communities have opportunities to discuss their perceptions and anxieties around an increasingly diverse world;
- Members from minority groups within localities feel empowered to shape their area and contribute positively to their locality;
- Communications are improved with communities to identify and reduce community tensions, misinformation and promote integration;
- The numbers of unreported hate crimes are reduced;
- Walsall residents feel safe whichever community they live in or visit;
- Opportunities to discuss the Prevent Agenda are increased;
- Communities feel confident to discuss and report extremist concerns;
- Resident aspirations are not reduced because of where they live, their age, gender, religion, racial heritage, sexual orientation or their disability;
- Tangible equality of opportunity exists for all;
- Our residents have raised aspirations, improved skills and qualifications which increase opportunities for social mobility;
- The take up of ESOL is improved and social isolation is reduced due to language barriers;
- Strong and effective partnerships exist with different faiths and places of worship;
- Opportunities to listen to our communities are delivered in ways that meet the needs and lifestyles of the different communities;
- The needs of the individual are considered by a confident workforce delivering effective services;
- Elected Members are further informed about different minority groups and better informed about the disadvantage that various groups experience;
- Community projects use an Equality Impact Assessment in the planning stage of project work and develop inclusive projects that promote wider inclusion outcomes;
- The faith, voluntary and community sector have the skills and opportunities to positively contribute to integration outcomes.

In assessing these outcomes and objectives, we have established 8 key priorities for this Strategy. A detailed action plan of activity relating to each objective is provided in Appendix 1.

Community Cohesion Priority 1

Improving Understanding and Challenging Myths in communities

Improved dialogue and the early identification of myths is required to reduce the suspicion of different communities and to mitigate the perception that “other groups” are receiving better treatment.

The influence of the media and social media, whilst acknowledged, has not been fully appreciated in just how widely, and strongly, some of the negative sentiments are held regarding different minority groups. Adding this to the lack of integration opportunities in certain wards, it is apparent that work is required to facilitate more opportunities to enable residents to air concerns, to discuss any misconceptions that work against integration and to increase the offer to meet new and different communities.

Improving consistent dialogue between elected members, Council officers and community activists is an essential element in building trust and developing meaningful discussions to enable the capturing of our minority and majority community perceptions, experiences and to establish early identification of any myths that are being propagated.

Community Cohesion Priority 2

Parallel Lives; Reduced Opportunity and Parochialism

The lack of social mobility and residents’ parochial thinking around town centre districts and wards is stifling wider integration. Opportunities for cross boundary activities and increasing opportunities for people to meet are essential to promote understanding. Further opportunities to ask questions, share commonalities, minimise misunderstandings, myth bust and reduce negative stereotyping are required.

There is, in Walsall, a clear divide driven in part by deprivation and locality which is impacting on self-esteem and aspirations. Data sets clearly demonstrate the physical impact of the differences in terms of health inequalities. Consideration is required regarding the psychological impact; hence a need to raise aspirations and facilitate increased opportunities for those communities living in the most deprived areas.

The issue of low self esteem was a common theme in areas of deprivation and more needs to be done to negate the impact. This materialised itself in low aspirations, poor educational attainment, poorer health and reduced life expectancy, which were all more prevalent in our most deprived wards. In the wards which are in some of the UKs highest quartile of least deprived areas, there was higher self esteem, higher aspirations and also higher expectations to achieve. Walsall Black and Asian ethnic communities, and to certain extent also Other White and Roma ethnic communities are experiencing similar rates of disadvantage as those reported in the Race Disparity Audit published by the Cabinet Office in October 2017.

Community Cohesion Priority 3 Extremism / Hate Crime

Walsall Council together with its statutory partners have been very effective in the delivery of their legal duties around challenging extremism through the Prevent strategy, an essential element of the Governments overarching Contest plan to tackle terrorism in this country. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a legal obligation on specified authorities, including local authorities and most of the statutory partners, to safeguard vulnerable people from the risks of becoming or supporting terrorism. Walsall has a comprehensive plan to achieve this. An essential part of that plan is the continued engagement with local communities, particularly those who are often the focus of those challenges. All partners, through the plan are committed to enhancing that engagement.

Media coverage of local, national and international incidents and events can have negative impacts on attitudes. The council's cohesion consultation indicated negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims existed across the borough. More work is required to tackle these impacts by creating greater opportunities to engage all communities and provide the opportunities for people to discuss their perceptions and concerns through open dialogue. The impact on some Muslim communities has been one of feeling targeted and treated with suspicion. These feelings are not conducive to encouraging integration and run the risk of more polarised living as individuals feel vulnerable to accusations.

Hate crime does occur but not in any significant volume. The majority of hate incidents are racially driven and occur in North Walsall. It is acknowledged that, while there are a number of different ways for residents to report hate crime, the consultation found significant under reporting of incidents, especially in the faith, LGBT and disabled communities. A more proactive approach is required to address the under reporting to ensure that support services are aware of the prevalence of hate crimes, support victims who have not informed the police and to reassure residents that hate crime is taken seriously.

Community Cohesion Priority 4 Indigenous Communities and Minority Communities

Through the consultation exercise it was clear that majority indigenous communities often felt ignored, especially within areas of deprivation. This attitude was often built on the misinformation that minority communities receive more or preferential treatment. Conversations on social media around housing, immigration and employment indicated anger towards newly arrived communities. The consultation found these grievances to be held across the borough, with a strong feeling of "charity begins at home" and a perception that minority groups get preferential treatment.

The consultation indicated that numerous indigenous communities had limited interaction with ethnic minorities and had no desire to mix. In minority communities, there was a willingness to mix but there was anxiety regarding the welcome that might be received. There were numerous examples of multi faith events where cultural mixing was successful and had positive outcomes regarding integration.

If events are to be one of the methods to bring people together from across the borough, then consideration to town centre events, which would be considered a “neutral venue” in attracting people from different wards across the borough. Events which are held in wards generally attract significantly higher numbers from the locality and does not break the parochial attitudes found through the consultation.

Skin colour was an indicator of whether a person was perceived, or accepted as, being British. This was regardless whether the person, or group, perceived themselves to be British. The consultation found that the African – Caribbean communities, Muslims, Hindus and Sikh communities were generally proud to be identified as British. However, the wider indigenous communities communicated that being “white” was a prerequisite of being considered British.

More work is required to ensure that all our communities feel valued, have raised aspirations, are empowered to change their localities and can fulfil their potential. Only then will residents be able to change their lives, and their communities, in a positive way. Opportunities to share perceptions and anxieties about different communities will be required to ensure that community tensions or misconceptions can be identified.

Those with disabilities, especially those with learning disabilities, were some of the most disengaged in the wider community. Often, those with disabilities develop their own networks of support. It was noted that those with disabilities were not a singular harmonious community, but a very diverse group, with distinct needs and differing life experiences. Those who had a disability and were from an ethnic minority suffered further disadvantage. In terms of locality influence and empowerment, those with disabilities felt they had very limited influence and were often ignored. While hate crime did occur, very few were reported and often carers, family or friends were most likely to be informed.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities were insular in terms of mixing and being “out” in the wider community. Faith communities were consistent in their views that marriage between a man and a woman is sacred. So, while no negative views were made directly against the gay community, it was apparent that prejudice may inadvertently occur. Young people expressed that sexual orientation was not an issue for them. The general consensus was that a person’s sexual orientation is becoming less of an issue and prejudice is reducing.

Walsall has a thriving gay community and the Walsall Pride events are well supported with increasing numbers attending. The perception of the Council by LGBT communities has improved significantly. Concerns were raised regarding the prejudice held by newly arrived communities, with increasing numbers of hate incidents reported through informal channels. Homophobic comments and bullying in schools was cited as a concern and that Section 28 was influencing the poor response from schools. It was felt a larger piece of consultation was required specifically with the LGBT communities.

Community Cohesion Priority 5

Changing Demographics

The profile of Walsall communities is changing and becoming more culturally diverse in line with globalisation and changes in the EU. These demographic changes have

occurred in a short space of time and in reasonably significant numbers and bring cultural differences which are often not fully understood by the established communities. This has caused an increase in low level community tensions. Newly arrived residents have sometimes struggled with integration and various low level criminality has been blamed on those newly arrived communities, which have added to negative perceptions.

The Brexit decision has seen a rise in anxiety in newly arrived communities to Walsall that they are unwelcome in the UK. The majority of those have moved to Walsall for economic reasons. The consultation has indicated many are in private rented accommodation in the Walsall South area and are in employment, positively contributing to the economy, and are not reliant on benefits. There is evidence of cases of employment exploitation and newly arrived individuals not knowing their rights in terms of accommodation and employment. In addition, language barriers are a constraint to support, advice and guidance around various issues.

Increased understanding of the needs and impact of newly arrived communities is required to provide opportunities to better integrate into local communities. Myth busting around some of the rumours that exist and facilitating participation in community groups will start the process of improved integration. Creating safe spaces to mix and share cultural norms, on a consensual basis which is not forced, to allow learning and discussions to develop, will be key to reducing tensions.

Community Cohesion Priority 6

Faith Communities

Faith communities in Walsall are diverse, However, they all share similar objectives, one being to make a difference in the community and for the most vulnerable. The consultation found that a large number of projects were being delivered through a multi faith approach. This aligns very closely to the British Values promotion by the Department of Education around the mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs. (Please see appendix 5 for detailed feedback from Faith communities).

The 2011 census, in terms of religion and belief, indicated that the majority faith community in Walsall was Christian at 59%. The next largest group was secular, having no faith, at 20%. This more secular society aligns to UK trends and needs to be considered around engaging with secular individuals to attend multi faith events.

Walsall Religious / Belief Faith Breakdown Census Data

	2011(%)	2001 (%)
Christian	59.0	72.1
Muslim	8.2	5.4
Sikh	4.3	3.0
Hindu	1.7	1.6
Buddhist	0.2	0.1
Jewish	0.0	0.0
Other religion	0.5	0.2
No religion	20.0	10.0
Not stated	6.0	7.6

http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/2011_census

The consultation indicated that faith communities were the most likely to volunteer in their locality. The diverse activities delivered included youth provision, homeless services, dementia support and social gatherings, making a tangible difference to the quality of lives of some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents. The various faiths deliver important social functions as well as practical support within localities. The borough wide activities through the strong networks of faith communities are less restricted by boundaries or parochialism.

Many ethnic minority groups felt faith to be an integral part of their lives and the faith sector is a vital source of support and provides an opportunity to integrate. The successful inter faith initiative, Near Neighbours, a Christian based initiative, has seen significant outcomes regarding integration between faiths and non-faith organisations, with strong partnerships developed.

It was apparent that both young people and many adults were often ill-informed about different faiths and held beliefs that were both inaccurate and unhelpful to integration. The media had negative influence on views regarding Islam and Muslims, so opportunities to learn facts and to myth bust is essential. Indeed, more needs to be done to challenge myths in communities around faith, particularly in schools, making learning relevant and current.

Faith communities clearly indicated their support for refugees seeking sanctuary from their countries of origin, which were often from places of war and persecution. All Faiths recognised that secular society was growing and that people were becoming more focused on “self” rather than on the wider community and older family members citing time as the biggest constraint to volunteering on behalf of the community.

Community Cohesion Priority 7

Representative Workforce / Workforce Development

Walsall Council has a strategic objective to employ a workforce that is representative of the communities it serves. By increasing the diversity of the senior management of the Council, elected members and staff will work to ensure that Walsall residents are confident in the organisation’s commitment to equality. Likewise, West Midlands Police is recognised as being proactive in increasing the diversity of its workforce and staff development. It is important that the sharing of best practice in recruitment and staff development is adopted when required.

Service providers are required to keep pace with the rapid change in the diversity of Walsall and the cultural differences that ensues. Considering the reduction in resources facing all providers, this is challenging. Discussions held with minority members of Council staff indicated that further exploration around their experiences and views of employment and service provision is essential.

Walsall Council annually publishes the Employment Monitoring Report, with analysis of its workforce by groups with relevant equality characteristics. Corrective actions are annually considered by the Corporate Equality Group, in partnership with Trade Unions and Equality Champions. For some years, data sets have shown under-representation of black and minority ethnic staff in the workforce as a whole, and especially when broken down to certain directorates and grades. In addition, some parts of the organisation show considerable under-representation of women in senior and leadership management roles.

http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/council_and_democracy/equality-2/equality_documents.htm

According to the 2011 Census, 23% of Walsall's local population is from minority ethnic background. Of course Census data may not fully reflect changing demographics. According to ONS, 10% of current Walsall residents were born abroad, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, South Asia, Middle East and Central/West Africa. It is therefore not surprising that our residents use over 75 community languages in their communication with the Council. Most frequently used languages, other than English, have been Polish, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Mirpuri and Slovak. With this in mind, Walsall Council is very keen to understand how we can build a more diverse workforce, representative of local communities. We recognise that, in order to identify effective interventions, we will require support from organisations with appropriate expertise. (Please see Appendix 4 for further data and demographic information).

Community Cohesion Priority 8 Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities

Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma are legally recognised ethnic minority groups with a rich history of cultural tradition of nomadism. Whilst all have distinct identities with different needs, the different groups have very similar life experiences in terms of racism, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.

The majority of the UK's 150,000 to 300,000 Gypsies and Travellers are part of their local communities and live in either 'bricks and mortar' housing or on authorised Traveller sites, the majority of which are privately provided. They continue to face high levels of discrimination and racism, contributing to and exacerbating the inequalities they experience in education, health, accommodation and employment. These issues need to be addressed, underpinned by the principle of bringing communities together, rather than driving them apart. Sir Trevor Phillips (in his role as Chair of the Equality Human Rights Committee) described discrimination against Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities as "the last respectable form of racism". 9 out of 10 gypsy, traveller or Roma children in the UK have suffered racial abuse, a study from the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Anglia Ruskin University shows.

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2014/Experts-by-Experience--JRTF-Report-Oct-2014.pdf>

In Walsall, there is a small, but growing, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller settled community. These communities are well established and accepted by residents in Willenhall and Bloxwich, where there is a history of integration and good community relations. Willenhall has 34 plots for a caravan and numerous families have settled into housing in and around Bloxwich.

Most recently Walsall has experienced an increase in Romanian Roma, Slovakian Roma, Czech Roma and Hungarian Roma. The life expectancy, health inequalities and education attainment of the Roma communities are significantly below national averages in the countries of origin and in UK. It is positive that in a short space of time the Roma

communities are embracing education and sustaining employment in UK on a long-term basis.

Appendix 1

Cohesion and Integration Strategy 2017 – 2020

Action Plan

Priority	Stakeholders	Output	Indicators
Improving Understanding and Challenging Myths	Faith, Community and Voluntary Sector	Training Sessions	5 Equally Yours Trainers Trained
	West Midlands Police		20 Equally Yours Sessions delivered in statutory organisations / social landlords
	Social Landlords		12 Equally Yours Sessions delivered in community
	Walsall Council		12 Equally Yours sessions delivered in schools / youth clubs
	Primary Schools / Academies		10 Cultural Awareness Sessions Developed and Delivered
		Key individual network	Cultural awareness E-learning Developed
		Integration Working Group	A network of a minimum of 8 key individuals in each area partnership who feedback on integration related conversations / issues / myths
		Cohesion Conference	Bi monthly meeting of Elected Members, community groups, key officers
		On line	1 annual cohesion event to promote best practice good news stories challenges
			Daily monitoring of social media and pro active messaging to communicate factual messages

Priority	Stakeholders	Output	Indicators
Improving Understanding and Challenging Myths	Community / Voluntary / Faith sector	Increased take up of ESOL classes	ESOL Strategy Developed ESOL take up increased by 30%
	Walsall Adult Community College Walsall College Walsall Council	Raised aspirations increased social mobility	Improved qualifications Increased take up of education and training by those living in areas of highest indices of multiple deprivation Reduced worklessness in areas of multiple deprivation 5 self esteem projects delivered Delivery of the Walsall Economic Plan
	Walsall Council Faith based organisations One Walsall	Using Data sources to identify isolated individuals. Match volunteers aspirations with volunteering opportunities	Reduced social isolation by Increased locality networking Increase volunteering by 250 persons Increase volunteering opportunities by 150
	Schools Places of worship Community Groups Walsall Council	Reduce Social Isolation Targeted promotion of events to isolated / disadvantaged groups	Capacity build 10 new and existing voluntary groups in communities 20 Equality Impact Assessments delivered School twinning X 10 schools

Priority	Stakeholders	Output	Indicators
Extremism / Hate Crime	Voluntary sector	Identify key individuals to ask about incidents of hate	20 community members identified and trained to pro actively find out about hate incidents and hate crime 25% increase in hate reported to police
	West Midlands Police Walsall Council One Walsall Social Housing Staff	Frontline staff tasked with asking about hate incidents	25% increase in hate reported to police
	One Walsall faith sector Walsall Council West Midlands Police	Hate Crime Working Group	4 meetings per annum
	Walsall Council One Walsall	Build knowledge of extremism threat in organisations Increase Prevent agenda knowledge in the community Appropriate channel referrals	Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent training delivered to All schools 4 community Prevent discussions events held per annum Prevent Delivery Plan delivered

Priority	Stakeholders	Output	Indicator
Majority Communities and Minority Communities	Walsall Council	Promote the global language of smiling.	2 smile back weeks delivered per annum
	Community, Voluntary and Faith sectors	Reduce community tensions	
	Walsall College		
	Walsall Council One Walsall Elected Members	Increased participation of protected characteristics.	All community group meetings consider increase participation by minority individuals. Equality impact assessment process.
	Faith and community sectors	Promote faith sector activity	Faith Covenant Developed and adopted 1 Faith Based Showcase Conference Delivered per annum
	Community Sector One Walsall	Communities hold discussion around their views on cohesion	Cohesion monthly agenda item on area partnership meetings
	Walsall FC Community Sector	Cross borough tournament	1 annual under 18's cohesion cup football and cricket tournament 1 annual walking football cohesion cup
	Walsall Council	Improve social mobility opportunities raised aspirations through education attainment	Key Stage 4 – to meet or exceed national expectations Key Stage 5 – to meet or exceed national expectations 7 To improve the outcomes of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and narrowing the gap The proportion of young people entering higher education, further education, training and apprenticeships – to be at or better than the national average by July 2018. The proportion of young people who are NEET to be at or lower than the national average by July 2018.

Priority	Stakeholders	Output	Indicator
Changing Demographics	Walsall Council	Quarterly monitoring of schools admissions	Twice yearly school admissions data capture Increase diversity of schools Review admissions policy and appeals procedures
	Voluntary Sector Walsall Council One Walsall	Increased engagement with newly arrived communities	Existing community groups increase diversity of attendance by 20%. Equality Assessment process 1 Development officer employed
	One Walsall	Set up newly arrived to Walsall groups Capacity build groups who support newly arrived communities	5 new groups set up per annum 10 community groups include new to Walsall residents 10 existing protected characteristics groups capacity built
	Walsall Council West Midlands Police One Walsall Faith and voluntary sector groups	More accurate recording of hate crime Accurate recording of attendance and use of community groups and community projects	Monthly returns around hate incidents and hate crime from community members. Monthly data sets of community groups involvement and attendance profile

Activity	Stakeholders		Outcome
Faith Communities	Places of worship	Promote the difference faith communities make in localities	1 annual showcasing event
	Faith based groups		20 School places of worship visits per annum
	Faith communities	Increased inter faith work	1 town centre multi faith event
	Walsall Council	Increase the understanding of faith in schools	20 School places of worship visits per annum
	Faith community		
	Places of worship		
	SACRE Group		
	Walsall Council	Council to have a faith convent	Closer working and consideration of faith communities in the commissioning process
	Places of worship	Promote understanding of faith	10 open days per annum at churches, temples, gurdwaras and mosques

Activity	Stakeholders	Output	Indicator
Representative Workforce / Workforce Development	Walsall Council	Accurate data sets of diversity in recruitment and development	Quarterly data sets to corporate equalities group. Equality Impact Assessment process.
	Walsall Council	Equally Yours Training	12 sessions per annum
	Walsall Council	Improve the Diversity of Senior Management	20% increase take up of coaching and mentoring scheme by minority groups.
	Walsall Council	Workforce Development Cultural Competencies training	12 sessions delivered per annum
	Walsall Council West Midlands Police	Best Practice Recruitment adopted from West Midlands Police	Attendance at quarterly West Midlands Police Recruitment
Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Communities	Walsall Council One Walsall Walsall Adult community College	Identify key individuals undertake consultation to identify needs Improve cultural awareness of staff	Develop working group. Equality Impact Assessment process. Consultations with all of the nomadic heritage communities Identify key individuals network 4 awareness training session delivered

Appendix 2

Community Cohesion Consultation

Methodology

The methodology of the community conversations consultation followed guidance from The Consultation Institute.

Stage 1 – Face to face interviews with numerous community members from a range of diverse borough wards. This was carried out to better understand any trends that existed which were attributed to any localities or specific characteristics.

Stage 2 – a set of questions that included the 5 factors to improving cohesion plus additional questions which related to localities and protected characteristics which were identified through the stage 1 process.

Stage 3 – face to face interviews with community members and focus groups using the stage 2 questions.

Stage 4 - reviews of data sets around health, economy, crime and education. Analysis of consultations pertinent to community cohesion in Walsall were undertaken.

The consultation was designed to explore experiences of community life with community members, groups, service providers and key individuals. The questions asked were designed to be meaningful to the indigenous majority communities and those communities which are either disadvantaged or from a minority group.

The focus of the consultation was on understanding how people get on with one another, their views on people who are different to themselves, equality of opportunity and how empowered residents feel to effect change in their locality. The consultation was in addition to the interviews held by Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Community Cohesion Working Group.

Summary of the findings

Walsall community relations have generally been good with only occasional increased community tensions. These occasional times have been linked to external influences or locality based issues. These quickly reduce through people working together to provide solutions and display unity. Good community relations at a locality level is partially due to individual parochialism attached to their respective district centres and lack of ethnic diversity. This lack of diversity impacts on attitudes that undermine integration on a borough wide level. In wards where there is lack of diversity, there are fewer opportunities to mix with and have a deeper understanding of minority groups. More work needs to be done to work in such wards to discuss parochial attitudes and offer opportunities to mix with people from other localities.

The impact of austerity, Brexit and increased diversity may well influence hardened attitudes towards minority groups. Whilst following the Brexit decision there was no increase in reported hate crime or increased tensions, anxiety levels did increase. It is important for all the communities of Walsall to have increased opportunities to

understand one another and to feel that they all have an equal stake in their locality and the Walsall borough as a whole. If we are to continue with our history of good community relations, individual and collective responsibility will be the key. The demographics and diversity of Walsall are changing, so together, in these times of uncertainty, unity is more important than ever. For example, those with disabilities are at increased risk of feeling disempowered to influence change. Through working with those different groups, their advocates and their carers, their views need to be considered to shape locality changes and empower individuals to improve participation in civic life.

It is important moving forward that any forms of hatred are reported and tackled proactively rather than reactively. By creating a network of trusted individuals, and groups, who engage regularly with Walsall diverse communities, a more accurate picture of levels of hate incidents can be achieved.

International terrorism and extremism remains a continuing threat which has directly impacted Walsall. Continuing the effective delivery of the Prevent Duty work with all stakeholders, including our communities, is key to remaining resilient to extremist ideology. Increased opportunities to discuss the Prevent strategy in communities which are impacted the most by the strategy is essential to on-going dialogue.

We must recognise and consider the impact that the media, and social media, is having in shaping peoples thoughts and raising suspicion of Muslim communities. The Muslim communities are feeling anxious, unfairly scrutinised and not recognised for the work done to challenge extremist ideology and build peoples resilience. Numerous myths were found to exist by many community members about other groups. The growth in social media use has heightened the impact that myths can have through posts that have the ability to reach unprecedented numbers. Extremist groups and individuals use social media to heighten anxieties and suspicion of groups. The dissemination of factual information must be the stepping stones to integration on both a face to face basis and through social media.

The voluntary, community and faith and sectors carry out vital work in communities and are often at the heart of supporting community cohesion. As the local council for Voluntary Services, One Walsall aims to support a strong, effective and vibrant voluntary, community and faith sector and facilitates local social action. At the heart of One Walsall's mission is to support residents and groups and to identify and take action to address challenges and to participate in their community and to unlock the potential they hold. Empowering people, regardless of their faith, gender, age, ethnicity, or other personal characteristic is central to their approach. One Walsall provides advice and support for new and existing groups and supports opportunities to discuss any concerns in an open, but safe way, without fear of judgement with an intention of promoting good integrated community and communities.

Appendix 3

Cohesion and Integration Statutory Duties and Legal Context

Cohesion and Integration are also part of the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) which states;

“in carrying out its functions The Council has a duty to foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those who do not share them”

In essence, ensuring that everyone has similar life opportunities, and that services are designed and delivered considering any disadvantage a particular group may suffer.

We know that the majority of time the communities of Walsall have good community relations. On the rare occasions that community tensions have increased, most recently, they have been linked to external influencers from outside of the borough. These increased tensions are monitored through a network of key individuals, partners and stakeholders. Through a partnership approach between the statutory, voluntary, faith and community sectors, when tensions do increase, a coordinated response is delivered to mitigate any negative impact and quickly return back to our normal good community relations.

It has to be recognised though that not all hate attitudes and actions perpetrated or experienced in our communities are reported. Our strong partnerships across the borough indicated increased incidents of hate crime and increased anxiety being expressed by newly arrived communities in Walsall after Brexit, despite no actual increases of reported hate incidents.

The strategy needs to deliver improved opportunities to reassure communities around fear of crime, proactively find out any unreported hate crimes to develop a richer picture of actual locality experiences beyond official reported hate crime.

Hate crime does, and can, increase community tensions. Walsall has a detailed community resilience plan to respond if community tensions significantly increase. The plan is a multi disciplinary response which includes the support of key community members and groups to disseminate messages out into the community, gather “community dialogue”, monitor social media and communicate reassurance messages. A number of high profile events which increased community tensions were mitigated through successful delivery of the community resilience plan. The Resilience Team are the service which manages community tensions;

<http://walsallemergencyplanning.co.uk/community-emergency-planning/>

On 14 April 2016 the Corporate and Public Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report from its Community Cohesion Working Group. A number of key recommendations were made, with a new strategy being one of them.

- That a new stand alone, community driven ‘Community Cohesion Strategy’ and action plan be created for Walsall. This strategy and action plan should be ready for delivery by April 2017.

One of the key aspects of the recommendation was that the strategy should be community led and respond to the issue that are important to our residents. Walsall Council’s Community Cohesion team worked with a range of stakeholders to develop questions that were relevant to the communities and linked directly to the Governments strategic priorities in developing integration.

The National Strategy - Creating Conditions for Integration

The Government recognise 5 key factors to improving integration:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-the-conditions-for-a-more-integrated-society>

1. Reinforcing a sense of shared aspirations, core values and common ground;
2. Promoting a strong sense of personal and social responsibility;
3. Enabling people to realise their potential and raise aspirations;
4. Empowering everyone to participate in local and national life;
5. Tackling intolerance and extremism.

Considering the governments strategic approach the 5 factors above were used as the basis of the community conversations consultation which was undertaken across the borough with numerous stakeholders between January 2016 and November 2016.

The Casey Review 2016

In December 2016 Dame Louise Casey DBE CB, released a review of integration called “A review into opportunity and integration”.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>

The 199 page review interviewed 800 individuals and over 200 written statements were considered. The Casey Review set out 12 initial recommendations for action, based around the themes of the review and designed to build local communities resilience in towns and cities where the challenges of integration were most acute.

Some recommendations had national implications, such as taking an oath of allegiance to the UK while others had a more localised impact. The localised recommendations are the ones which Walsall has considered to fit the findings of the Walsall community integration consultation are provided in Appendix 2.

Equality Implications

Walsall Council has legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that residents and service users of Walsall have equitable services provided. The approach of Walsall Council goes beyond the legal duties, and Walsall Council is committed to doing the right thing for all our communities through the design, evaluation and delivery of the corporate plan and the priorities driven

by what our customers have told us.

The PSED consists of a general equality duty and specific duties, which help authorities to meet the general duty.

The aim of the general equality duty is to integrate considerations of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day business of public authorities. In summary, those subject to the equality duty, must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't;
- Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

Protected characteristics are the following;

- Age
- Disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex (gender)
- sexuality

As part of the Community Cohesion consultation, single parents were additionally considered as this particular group can suffer prejudice and disadvantage.

As a service provider we have responsibilities to ensure all our employees deliver services free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. We aim to ensure that our services are both proactive and responsive, to meet the needs of Walsall's diverse communities through targeting those groups who may be disadvantaged, listening to our customers, redesigning services, constantly monitoring and by making decisions that meet the needs and priorities that have been communicated to us by our service users. To do this it is essential that we ensure that all members of Walsall communities have equal opportunities to contribute and have their opinions heard.

All the Councils service delivery, policies and strategies are developed using a robust equality impact assessment (EQIA). This process considers the effect and whether any groups are disadvantaged, and if they are, recommendations made to reduce or mitigate any negative impact.

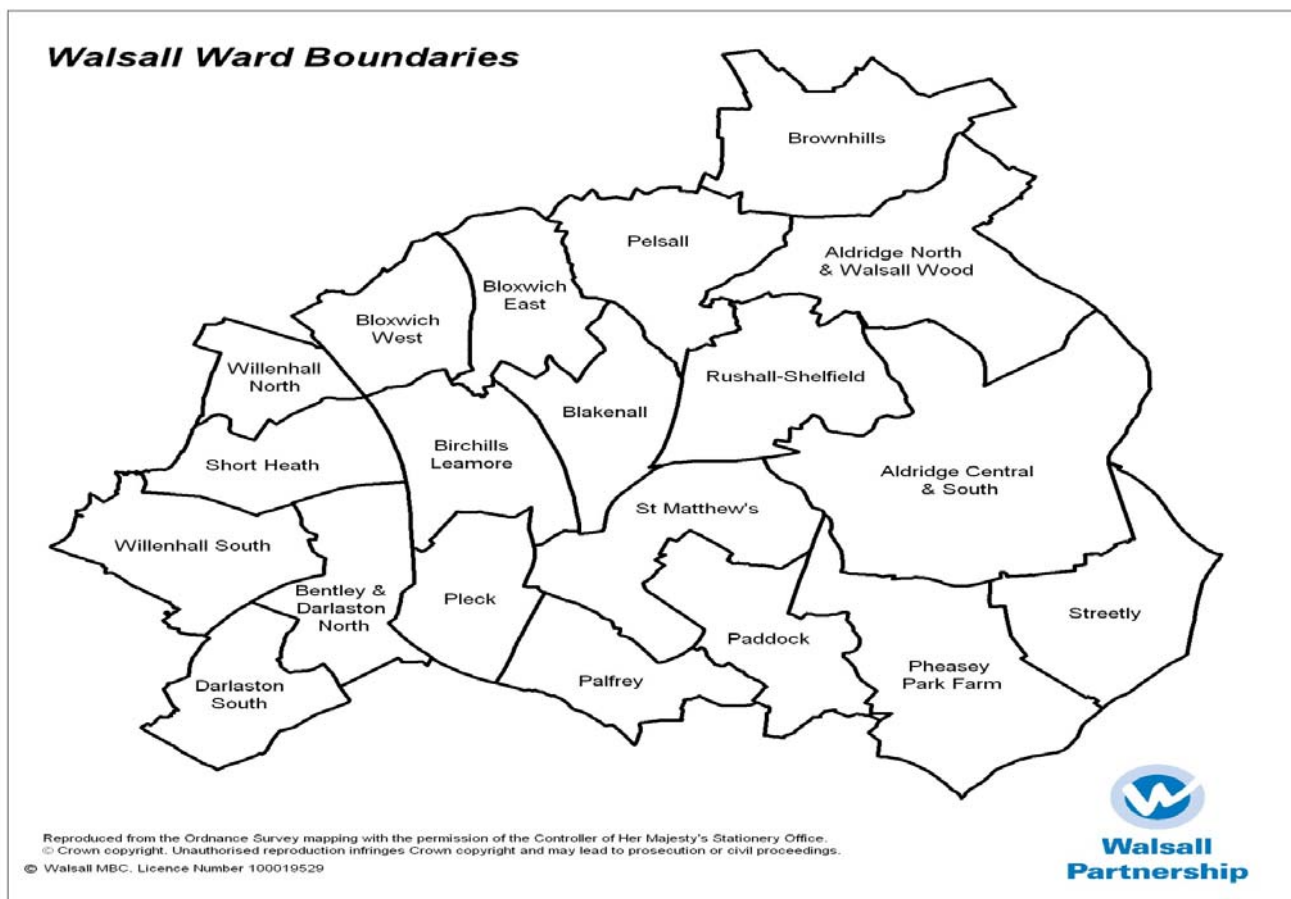
To further enhance community integration and to empower officers to consider cohesion outcomes an Equality Impact Assessment will be developed.

Appendix 4 – Walsall Data

The Borough of Walsall

The borough is split into 20 wards and these boundaries which are shown in Figure1

Figure
1



The 2011 CENSUS indicated that the population of Walsall was 269,300. In terms of neighbourhood integration it is evident that the diversity profile has changed in terms of the population increasing and more diverse with increasing numbers of newly arrived individuals. Nearly a quarter (23.1%) of the population are from an ethnic minority, an increase of 9% since 2001.

While Walsall town centre is the strategic and economic centre of the borough, there are the five key district centres of Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall, which influence integration across the borough. These distinct areas differ in terms of population density, deprivation, population profile, and age. The differences in ethnic profile of wards has an impact on the opportunities to integrate. A number of wards have very low ethnic diversity which limits opportunities to meet and mix with people who are from a different ethnicity. Other wards have a high percentage of ethnic minorities, which is having an impact in terms of social isolation through mother tongue languages routinely spoken and people feeling safer and more comfortable in their locality. This combination has resulted in a perception that good community relations exist.

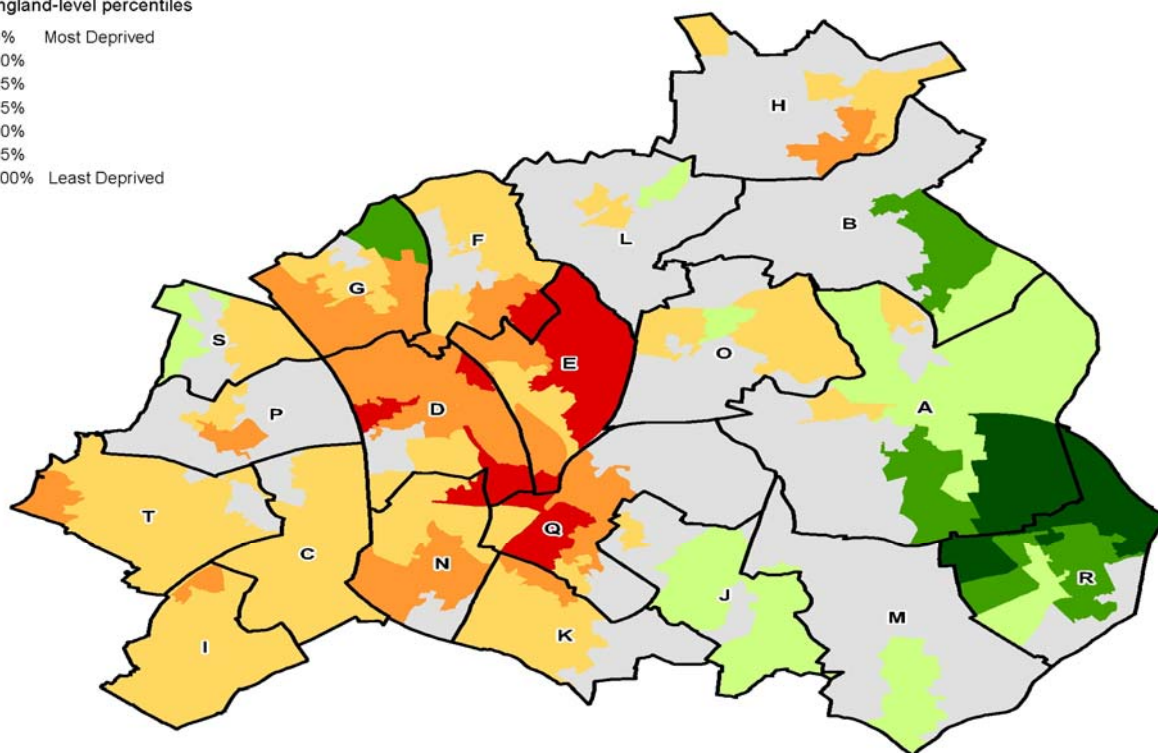
Ethnic Profile of Wards 2011 CENSUS data

	Total population	Ethnic Population	
Aldridge Central and South	13,781	1,139	(8.3%)
Aldridge North and Walsall Wood	13,207	845	(6.3%)
Bentley and Darlaston North	13,479	3,950	(29.3%)
Birchills Leamore	14,775	3,512	(23.7%)
Blakenall	13,773	2,748	(19.9%)
Bloxwich East	12,155	666	(5.4%)
Bloxwich West	13,246	709	(5.4%)
Brownhills	12,676	715	(5.6%)
Darlaston South	14,342	2,749	(19.2%)
Paddock	13,006	6,427	(49.4%)
Palfrey	16,532	10,729	(64.9%)
Pelsall	11,505	422	(3.7%)
Pheasey Park Farm	11,010	1,472	(13.4%)
Pleck	15,014	8,843	(58.9%)
Rushall / Shelfield	11,871	1,346	(11.3%)
St Mathews	15,088	7,083	(46.9%)
Short Heath	11,449	1,297	(11.3%)
Streetly	13,934	2,013	(14.4%)
Willenhall North	12,697	1,469	(11.6%)
Willenhall South	15,783	3,951	(25.0%)

Walsall has an overall figure of 23.1% who are from an ethnic minority (2011 Census).

Neighbourhood-level deprivation

LSOA by England-level percentiles



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Ward-level deprivation

Table 11: Ward-level summary measures for Walsall

Ward	2015 Rank	Average IMD Score	England Docile	2010 Rank	Map Key
Blakenall	1	52.9	1	1	E
Birchills Leamore	2	48.1	1	2	D
Pleck	3	44.0	2	3	N
Bloxwich East	4	41.4	2	4	F
Darlaston South	5	39.9	2	5	I
St Matthew's	6	38.9	2	8	Q
Bentley & Darlaston North	7	38.3	2	7	C
Palfrey	8	37.6	2	6	K
Willenhall South	9	37.4	2	9	T
Bloxwich West	10	35.0	2	10	G
Brownhills	11	26.7	4	11	H
Short Heath	12	24.5	4	13	P
Willenhall North	13	23.8	4	14	S
Rushall-Shelfield	14	23.5	4	12	O
Aldridge North & Walsall Wood	15	17.8	5	15	B
Pelsall	16	17.4	5	16	L
Aldridge Central & South	17	13.9	6	17	A
Paddock	18	13.8	7	18	J
Pheasey Park Farm	19	11.6	7	19	M
Streetly	20	5.5	10	20	R

The levels of deprivation correlate with areas that suffered low self esteem and low aspirations. A number of wards have an overall low deprivation however these wards also have pockets of severe deprivation. These small pockets of deprivation do suffer from negative attitudes of the surrounding localities in the wards which has a negative impact on integration.

The 5 district centres of Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall have distinct identities in terms of the local community attaching themselves strongly to their localities. This has both benefits in terms of local pride and activity in the community, however creates challenges in terms of wider community integration with people from other areas in the borough.

The demographic make-up of the borough wards has a direct impact on opportunities to mix with people of a different racial heritage. The cohesion consultation findings indicated that there are wards with very small percentages of ethnic minorities. This has resulted in reduced opportunities to mix with people from different cultures and had a negative impact on people's perceptions of those of a different racial heritage.

Appendix 5: Overview of Main Faiths Currently Present in Walsall

Christianity

Christian communities are delivering essential services to localities and supporting some of Walsall's most vulnerable people. Social isolation was recognised as a key challenge in communities and places of worship were an opportunity for social interaction and worship. It was felt that local authorities and the Government did not fully appreciate the difference that faiths make in communities and more needed to be done to engage with faiths.

The Christian communities are very active in terms of inter faith initiatives and a number of successful 'Love Your Neighbour' events were delivered which facilitated people mixing regardless of faith or no faith. Walsall has benefitted by the Near Neighbours project which is part of the Church Urban Fund and has delivered numerous integration projects around the borough.

Church leaders expressed differing experiences in working with schools in their locality. The more supportive a school was of faith, the better the relationship was with a place of worship. Evidence was presented that indicated where a head teacher was less open to faith in general, reduced interaction with local places of worship was indicative and resulted in missed opportunities for integration.

Some high profile, and highly regarded projects, were delivered by Christian based initiatives which targeted some of Walsall most vulnerable. These included Street Teams, Street Pastors, The Glebe Centre, The Small Street Centre, Street Associations, Food Banks, The Big Feed, Walsall Money Advice Project, Ablewell Advice Services, St Paul's at the Crossing, the Open Door Project, Green Lane Baptist Church Mend – It Project, numerous Scouts and Girl Guides groups and, additionally, numerous locality based church projects.

Hinduism

The Hindu communities, who are well established living in Walsall for over 5 decades, consider themselves British and fully integrated into Walsall communities. Hindus attended numerous community and inter faith events and are keen to encourage all communities to visit the temple open days. More was needed from the Council to support such events.

Incidents of hate crime were very few and it was felt that prejudice was equally very rare. In line with the other minority faiths of Walsall, Hindus felt that more should be done by the local authority to engage with Hindu communities and temples.

Hindus lead lives which are shaped by their faith and have delivered several projects in the wider community. The Sewa weekend is an annual time where Hindus volunteer in the community. Over the weekend several projects have been delivered for the benefits of the wider community, including the clean-up of a community project in Bloxwich, painting and decorating in an old peoples care home, a park clean up in Leamore and delivering items of clothing and food for a Muslim homeless project. Hindus often

volunteer in different areas of work out in the community and the helping of others is important to Hindus.

The Council needs to do more to recognise the work of not only Hindus, but all faiths, for the positive difference they make to peoples lives and communities.

The threat of terrorism was recognised as being dangerous to integration and Hindus fully supported the approach of the Government to tackle terrorism through the Prevent strategy. Faith leaders need to do more to safeguard those who are vulnerable to extremist messages. All faiths were against murder and terrorism and faith leaders need to publically state that fact more often.

It was felt that the way an area looked had an impact on integration. The Council needed to do more to work with Hindus to develop projects that improved community safety, community pride and integration. The planning and licensing function needs to consider the impact on cohesion that decisions can have.

As austerity increases it is important that the Council works with faith based organisations to capacity build and offer support to help organisations to be more effective. The increasing diversity in communities is raising tensions and increasing pressures on service providers.

Islam

Muslims were well established, having lived in Walsall for over 50 years, and were keen to integrate. It was felt that the wider borough communities were reluctant to integrate, partially as a response to negative press.

The Muslim communities lived their lives integrally shaped by Islam, which was deemed a positive influence in every area of their lives. The communities are very diverse in terms of their faith and racial heritage and are not one harmonious community. Elders expressed concerns that younger people were vulnerable to not following the traditions of Islam and this did create low level inter generational tensions. Muslims expressed their commitment to the UK and gratitude for freedom of religious worship.

The majority of Muslims felt disempowered within the community to make a difference in their locality. While most liked where they lived, there was a consistent theme regarding the concerns around the use of, and impact of, drugs on neighbourhoods. Prostitution and alcohol consumption was also cited as a concern.

Younger people expressed a desire to leave Walsall to enhance their opportunities while others cited that family and friends made them more likely to remain where they lived. One of the issues faced by Muslim communities in densely populated localities is that the areas were perceived to be untidy and unsafe.

A strong willingness to mix with other religions and racial heritages was expressed. However, concerns about the willingness of others to mix with Muslims was stated. This was perceived to be a consequence of the negative impact on people's attitudes towards Muslims through media coverage of international terrorism.

More needed to be done to ensure that in schools and communities people know the truth about Islam and that terrorists were criminals. It was felt that mosques and Muslims needed to do more to promote all the good things they did, amount of volunteering and the positive difference this made in the community.

The impact of right wing extremism was seen as threatening cohesion and increased community tensions. Concerns were expressed that this might lead to young people becoming radicalised through suffering abuse or threats.

Extremist groups were damaging normal Muslims and Islam. Those interviewed felt that as Muslims a combination of factors resulted in a perception of suffering extra suspicion linked to international terrorism, the Prevent Agenda, negative news stories in the media and the influence of social media.

All those interviewed stated that terrorism was against Islam and that the threat of extremism was an issue in Walsall. The Prevent agenda was not fully understood by the majority of respondents and the majority felt that Government needed to have something in place to manage the threat of terrorism.

It was felt that the Prevent agenda was inadvertently causing increased suspicion of Muslims, especially in schools, and the new Duty which subsequently damaged integration. Alternatives to the current approach were not forthcoming and more discussion is needed to understand both the threat of extremism, the methodology that extremists use and the thoughts of the Muslim communities that the Prevent agenda is having on them.

In terms of hate crime, the experience was significantly different. Those living in the south of the borough experienced very few incidents. However those living in and around the north of the borough suffered regular incidents. Taxi and private hire drivers suffered racist and religious hatred on a weekly basis, especially around the night time economy.

All of those interviewed expressed that they are British with younger people also bringing in their historic heritage, such as British Bangladeshi. All expressed that they felt the indigenous population would not consider them as “fully or totally British”. The British Values in schools was raised as an indicator of not been fully accepted as being British. This caused significant hurt and upset which was detrimental to integration, especially as driven by Government policy.

In terms of volunteering, older people volunteered more, whereas younger people were doing less volunteering, saying that time constraints stopped them.

Sikhism

The Sikh community are well established in Walsall having lived here for over 50 years and live their lives directly influenced by their faith. Although young people seemed to be less involved in the gurdwara, parents used the principles of Sikhism to guide their children. There are language barriers in the gurdwara, but children are positively influenced by Sikh channels on satellite TV.

The Sikh communities wanted to be considered Sikh as an identity and not British, British Indian or Indian. It was clear however that the identity label had no impact on the commitment to Britain and Walsall which was very apparent. While British values are promoted in schools it was felt that faith values should also be discussed more in schools as they all give key moral values and guidance for the benefit of all communities and neighbours.

The Sikh faith was integral to how Sikhs lived their lives. While the Sikh communities are renowned for being entrepreneurial it was felt that the local authority needs to engage more with the gurdwaras and the wider Sikh communities in terms of service provision, consultation and funding opportunities. It was recommended that a specific Sikh consultation should be delivered to develop a richer picture of Sikhs in Walsall.

The issue of family shame remained very strong and a barrier to engagement with external support. Issues such as domestic abuse, alcohol, sexual abuse, grooming and racism were specifically named. It was disclosed that the issue of caste seemed to be reducing especially with young people, but stronger views were held by elders. Social isolation was less of an issue in the Sikh community due to extended families and the value that elders have within the Sikh faith.

There is a long history of multi faith working and sport has been very successful in bringing Pakistani and Indian heritage people together. The Shaheedee Sports Weekend was specifically named as an effective event in community integration.

Whilst politics remains important, it was not a subject which Sikhs often considered, due to how busy peoples' lives were. It was felt that Sikhs were confident to raise issues with their local councillor, but would often initially seek advice from Sikh Elected Members, rather than the elected member for their locality.

There are a number of faiths with smaller numbers, namely the Ravidass and Ahmadiyya faith communities. Both communities are committed to working for improved integration and have a history of cross religious and community activism for the benefits of the wider community. These 2 faith communities do suffer prejudice. Heightened anxiety and low level tensions exist in the borough regarding these particular faiths.