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**Ealing Council**

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date:  
**9 October 2007**

Dear Hazel,

### **Initial Government Response to 'Our Shared Future'**

Thank you for your letter, and for your appreciation of the work done by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion. It is rewarding to know that you considered our report to be thoughtful and ambitious.

I am greatly encouraged by the positive initial response of the Government that you have set out. I sense a fresh momentum across both central and local government to take this agenda forward.

Having reviewed the priority actions set out in your letter, I would like to initially comment as follows:

- Monitoring the success of additional local authority funding through a new and **extended emphasis on cohesion and new PSA indicators** is a very positive step forward. With regard to the new PSA indicators, I would see these supplementing a basket of local PIs that are collected by each Local Strategic Partnership. Within Ealing, our new Integration and Community Cohesion strategy sets out a local basket of indicators and I would be happy to share our approach with colleagues from across local and central government.
- Publishing best practice guidance for different types of areas and producing a consistent template for a **local area information pack**, and



creating new teams to offer support to areas experiencing rapid change are very welcome developments. In Ealing, we are seeking to integrate information packs into a wider discussion around rights/responsibilities (the cultural briefing element of the information pack) and we will be working with the I&DeA to take this work forward. However, we would welcome additional support from Government as to the best way forward to approaching this very sensitive area of integration and cohesion.

- During the Commission's work we found a high level of support, across the country, for activities that facilitate interaction between our communities. Therefore, your emphasis on "**bridging**" activities to bring people from different backgrounds together, the publication of a new interfaith strategy and a Citizens Jury to discuss these and other issues again are all very welcome developments.
- The new **one stop shop on cohesion, mainstreaming toolkit with new cohesion impact assessments and Cohesion Guidance** are all welcome developments and should provide a useful starting point – particularly for areas that are new to this agenda. With regard to the one stop shop proposal, it may also be beneficial to include information and guidance on the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda. This would enable practitioners to link the work they are undertaking around the PREVENT agenda to wider community cohesion activities.
- A renewed commitment to **citizenship and civic pride**, and guidance on how to run successful local citizenship activities are central to ensuring that people truly understand their rights and responsibilities. Nationally, the Commission saw effective citizenship ceremonies in North Yorkshire and excellent work in Scotland. I hope the Government will be able to build on this existing best practice and the outcome of the Goldsmith review of citizenship.

In addition to these specific comments I would also like to emphasise that a **key success factor will be for local areas to effectively map the make-up of their local communities**. Therefore, as part of the Government's full response to 'Our Shared Future' in January 2008, I would urge you to set out ways in which central government will work with/support local areas in undertaking these mapping exercises to ensure they are robust. By having robust data, local and central government will be able to ensure that community cohesion actions are targeted at the right communities and delivered in culturally sensitive ways. Further, having accurate information about the make-up of communities will enable local areas to ensure key integration services, such as ESOL, are effectively focused to meet demand.

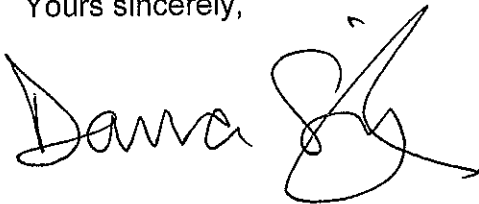


Further, the ONS should urgently press on with its work to understand the national picture of migration within the country, as this will set the overarching context of migration for local authorities.

In closing, I am encouraged by the personal commitment you clearly demonstrated at our meeting and feel the proposals you outline provide an excellent addition to the work already being undertaken in this policy area. In developing your full response to the Commission's report please do not hesitate to make contact if you would like to discuss any issues.

We have a tremendous opportunity and I am confident that by working together we will seize it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darra Singh', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Darra Singh**  
Chief Executive  
London Borough of Ealing

