Report Part Title: City Policy

Report Title: Muslims in London
Report Author(s): Open Society Foundations
Published by: Open Society Foundations (2012)
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27141.10

3. CITY POLICY

3.1 Political Structures

3.1.1 The Greater London Authority (GLA)

London is divided into 32 boroughs.[26] The borough system was established in 1965 and replaced the old metropolitan boroughs set up in the Victorian period. Each borough is a unitary authority responsible for the delivery of local services, including schools, social services and social housing. They also provide local planning, gyms and leisure facilities, refuse and recycling services, parking, and licences for pubs, restaurants and clubs.[27] However, the GLA, which consists of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, is responsible for London-wide services such as transport and policing.[28]

Following the Greater London Act of 1999, a directly elected mayor, the London Assembly and the GLA were established in 2000. The GLA was the first London-wide authority since the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986. The GLA is responsible for the administration of Greater London, providing a coordinating function between local authorities. The GLA supports both the office of the mayor in developing and delivering policies for London, and members of the London Assembly, in their role of scrutinising the work of the mayor and representing the interests of Londoners.

The London Assembly has 25 members, elected by London residents at the same time as the mayoral election. The Assembly holds the mayor to account and scrutinises the mayor's budget, which it can amend with a two-thirds majority. Its cross-party committees[29] also look at important policy areas, including employment, economic development and housing.[30]

3.1.2 London Borough of Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest (LB of Waltham Forest) consists of 60 elected councillors.[31] The council determines the overall budget and policy framework.

---

[26] In addition to the 32 boroughs there is the City of London, home to the main financial district, which has a separate independent status as a corporation.

[27] See the GLA website at www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/london-boroughs (accessed November 2011).

[28] See www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Localgovernment/DG_073310 (accessed November 2011).

[29] See www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1 (accessed November 2011).

[30] See www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/the-london-assembly/investigations (accessed November 2011).

[31] More details of the structure of London Borough of Waltham Forest can be found at www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/council/about.htm (accessed November 2011).

It elects a leader, who then appoints between two and ten councillors to form a cabinet. Following local elections in 2010, the council has an eight-member cabinet whose responsibilities are organised into the following portfolios: corporate resources, business and employment; children and young people; the environment; health, adults and older people; leisure, arts and culture; community safety and cohesion; housing and development.

The cabinet leads council-wide policy and strategic development on issues that cover all council departments, and is scrutinised by other councillors in a scrutiny management committee and six scrutiny sub-committees. The executive of the council, which consists of the leader and the cabinet, is responsible for most day-to-day decisions, in line with the council's overall policies and budget. If it wishes to make a decision outside the agreed policy framework and budget, this must be referred back to the council.

3.1.3   Local Strategic Partnerships

Since 2000, service delivery at the local level has also relied on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).[32] These are non-statutory bodies that aim to improve public services by bringing together different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. They are led by the local council, and normally include the local police and the Primary Care Trust (PCT). The LSPs were created to encourage joint working and community involvement. In Waltham Forest the LSP, named Waltham Forest Together, is organised into five thematic partnerships: children and young people; employment and enterprise; housing; safety; sustainability and the environment. A key task of the LSP is to oversee the preparation and delivery of the area's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). Formulated by a LSP, the SCS is a set of goals and actions that reflect the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of a local area. The SCS acts as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the local area. In 2008, Waltham Forest published its SCS, called "Our Place in London".[33]

3.2   Governance of Policy Areas

3.2.1   Cohesion and Integration

Disturbances in northern towns in the summer of 2001 led to a raft of reports exploring the causes of the disorder and the broader economic and social disadvantages which had contributed to them. The Cantle report was "particularly struck by the depth of polarisation in our towns and cities … Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of

---

[32]   See www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1115932 (accessed November 2011).

[33]   See http://oldsite.walthamforest.gov.uk/ourplace.htm (accessed May 2012).

parallel lives."[34] The new agenda that emerged was to foster community cohesion. While equal life chances and respect for diversity were identified as features of a cohesive community, the thrust of the agenda is on promoting trust, belonging and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

It was clear from the beginning that the cohesion agenda was primarily to be driven by local authorities, in part by rethinking existing approaches such as the criteria for funding single ethnicity or faith groups.

There have been many different definitions of community cohesion emanating from the UK government. The "Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008–2011" considered the definition produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government to be particularly clear and useful. It defined community cohesion as based on three foundations:

1. people from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities;

2. people knowing their rights and responsibilities;

3. people trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

It noted three ways of living together:

1. a shared vision and sense of belonging;

2. a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside the recognition of the value of diversity;

3. strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

The "Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008–2011" argued that this definition puts a greater emphasis on the wider meaning of community cohesion beyond ethnicity and faith, including citizenship identity, individual rights and responsibilities, and the integration of individuals in their communities.[35]

The Equality Act of 2010 creates a duty on local authorities, including the London Borough of Waltham Forest Council, to have a due regard for the need to foster good

---

[34] The report *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, was produced after the 2001 disturbances by the independent Community Cohesion Review Team, chaired by Ted Cantle. The report gives an overview of race and community relations across the UK, based on the review team's site visits. See the Institute of Community Cohesion website, www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/Resources/AboutCommunityCohesion (accessed November 2011).

[35] London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy 2008-2011: Working Together, Living Together, Being Together*, p. 6, available at http://www1.waltham forest.gov.uk/ModernGov/Published/C00000287/M00001812/AI00009757/$9AppendixJuly08 CommunityCohesionStrategyv2.docA.ps.pdf (accessed November 2011) (hereafter London Borough of Waltham Forest, *Waltham Forest Community Cohesion Strategy*).

relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic[36] and persons who do not share it. This includes the need to tackle prejudice and to promote understanding between people of different religion or beliefs as well as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex and sexual orientation. The coalition government elected in 2010 reviewed the government approach to policy in this area and is published a new integration strategy in February 2012.

3.2.2 Education

Responsibilities for educational policy and services are spread between the Department of Education, the local authority and schools. The Department of Education has overall responsibility for the framework of educational policy in England, including the nature and type of schools that receive state support, standards for national exams and qualifications and the national curriculum. At the local level, councils have an important role in organising educational services, including funding schools, organising admissions and other support services. In Waltham Forest, the Council had commissioned Babcock 4S, an international company with experience in the engineering and defence industries that had in recent years developed its work in support services for critical infrastructure including education, to deliver some of its educational support services.[37]

As well as local authority maintained schools, academies were established by the former Labour government as a part of an educational strategy to improve the worst-performing schools and schools located in disadvantaged areas. Academies receive funding directly from the Department for Education. Those established before 2007 were able to set entirely their own curriculum, but following this date, they were made to follow the national curriculum in English, maths and science. However, following the Academies Act of 2010 brought in by the Coalition government, academies are able to renegotiate this restriction. Free schools are a new type of school that the Coalition government also legislated for in the Academies Act of 2010. The government opened its first free schools 2011. They were to be set up as academies and funded directly from the Department for Education.

3.2.3 Employment

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for employment, welfare and pension policy and for addressing child poverty. It is the UK's biggest public service delivery department, serving over 20 million people. At the city level, the London mayor, Boris Johnson, is responsible for strategies for sustainable economic growth and employment in London. The mayor's "London Plan 2008" outlined the framework for

---

[36] Every person has one or more protected characteristics and the Act ensures against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

[37] See www.babcock.co.uk/markets/education (accessed November 2011).

accommodating London's growing population, improving its infrastructure and retaining its competitive economic position.[38] Particularly relevant to this report, it emphasised the need to secure economic development in the outer boroughs.[39] In April 2009, the mayor began consultations with the London Assembly and the GLA Group to revise the "London Plan".[40]

Alongside the "London Plan", the mayor's "London Economic Development Strategy 2010"[41] provides a strategy for business growth, tackling unemployment, increasing skills and expanding opportunities and prosperity in London. Reflecting the aims of the UK government, the mayor has also embraced the policy of creating a more integrated labour market system in London, initially through a joint investment plan for the London Development Agency (LDA) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LDA commissions both public- and private-sector organisations to deliver projects and programmes through grants and funding agreements. However, in June 2010 the government announced that the regional development agencies, such as the LDA, would be abolished by 31 March 2012. In response to the mayor's proposals on devolution, the government has agreed that the functions of the LDA should be folded into the GLA.

At the local level, employment policy and practice are informed by Waltham Forest's "Strategy for Enterprise, Employment and Skills 2009–14".[42] Enterprise and employment form one of the areas covered by the borough's LSP. It brings together all the main commissioning and decision-taking agencies in the borough, with responsibilities for business and the labour market including Jobcentre Plus, the LSC, the North London Strategic Alliance, the LDA, Voluntary Action Waltham Forest, a representative from the housing associations and Waltham Forest College.

3.2.4   Health and Social Care

A distinction should be made between health and social care. Primary responsibility for health care lies with the national government and the National Health Service (NHS);

---

[38]   *The London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2004),* 2008, available at www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/thelondonplan.jsp (accessed November 2011).

[39]   Mayor of London, *A New Plan for London: Proposals for the Mayor's London Plan*, April 2009, available at www.london.gov.uk/archive/mayor/publications/2009/docs/london-plan-initial-proposals.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[40]   The draft replacement London Plan, including minor alterations (December 2009 and Sep 2010), is available at www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london/london-plan/strategy/download.jsp (accessed November 2011).

[41]   Available at www.lda.gov.uk/Documents/Economic_Development_Strategy_(2010)_6543.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[42]   London Borough of Waltham Forest*, Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise, Employment and Skills 2009-14,* December 2009, available at https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=10086 (accessed May 2012) (hereafter London Borough of Waltham Forest*, Waltham Forest's Strategy for Enterprise*).

the delivery of adult social care, however, is the responsibility of the local authority. This means that the local authority is responsible for nursing home care for older residents and the delivery of services such as meals on wheels and nursing care unless the treatment is deemed to be related to ill health, in which case it is funded through the NHS.

Health policy is governed by the Department of Health, whose responsibilities include health protection, health improvement and health inequality in England. Care in the national health system is divided into primary, secondary and emergency health care. The NHS is divided into authorities and trusts across the UK: acute trusts, foundation trusts, ambulance trusts, care trusts, PCTs, mental health trusts, special health authorities and Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs).

The Department of Health controls England's 10 SHAs, which oversee all NHS activities in England. In turn, each SHA supervises all the NHS trusts in its area. The trusts are responsible for developing plans for improving health services and for ensuring the high performance and efficiency of local health services as well as inclusion priorities for health into local health service plans.

In Waltham Forest, health care is provided by Whipps Cross University Hospital, the NHS trust, and Waltham Forest PCT, which is responsible for providing community services.

The governance structures for the NHS are being changed by the Coalition government.[43] A key part of the changes will be the abolition of PCTs and SHAs. The reforms aim to give greater power to general practitioners (GPs) than PCTs in controlling local health-care provision in England, as the former are considered to be the most responsive to patients and best placed to know their needs. However, concerns about the impact of the reforms have led the government to begin a process of reconsidering some of these changes and legislation for the amended NHS reforms had yet to be finalised by mid-2012.

In April 2011, NHS Waltham Forest,[44] which was until then responsible for commissioning health care for people living and working in the borough, was merged with the three neighbouring PCTs to become NHS Outer North East London. The Department of Health has accepted NHS Waltham Forest GPs as a pilot pathfinder group for GP commissioning on their GP Development Scheme,[45] which started the

---

[43] Department of Health, *Liberating the NHS: Legislative framework and next steps, White Paper,* December 2010, available at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/@ps/documents/digitalasset/dh_122707.pdf (accessed November 2011); and the Executive Summary at www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_123853.pdf (accessed November 2011).

[44] See www.walthamforest.nhs.uk (accessed November 2011).

[45] See www.london.nhs.uk/what-we-do/supporting-changes-to-the-nhs-in-london/londons-gp-development-programme (accessed November 2011).

initial transfer process of giving GPs control of their local NHS budget. It will also oversee the proposed abolition of the PCT in Waltham Forest, which is due to take place in 2013, unless government policy changes.[46]

3.2.5 Housing

Central government provides the overall framework for housing and planning policies. Responsibility for this lies primarily with the Department for Communities and Local Government. The government also sets out the statutory responsibilities of local authorities for the homeless and the system of welfare payments covering housing costs. Local authorities may have responsibility for providing accommodation for those who are homeless and for the allocation of social housing. The maintenance and management of the social housing stock may rest with local authorities or registered social landlords. The local authorities also have a primary responsibility for granting planning permission for new development and changes in land use. In London, the mayor has an overarching development plan for the city, the London Plan, which includes targets for building new housing, including affordable housing.

3.2.6 Policing and security

Responsibility for policing in London lies with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). In addition, the MPS also has a range of specialist units such as those concerned with counter-terrorism and royal and diplomatic protection. The head of the MPS is appointed by the Home Secretary. The work of the MPS is scrutinised by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC), which replaced the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) in 2011. This makes the mayor of London directly accountable for police performance in London. The work of the MOPC is scrutinised by the Policing and Crime Committee of the London Assembly.

Within the MPS, responsibility for day-to-day policing in each area lies with the Borough Operation Command Unit. At the local level, the MPA supports Community Safety Boards (CSB) as a mechanism for engaging local communities. In Waltham Forest, the CSB is made up of the local councillors, representatives from the local community and business groups, and the police borough commander, who attends with his senior officers.

In addition to the MPS, the municipal council retains a wider responsibility for community safety, including anti-social behaviour and hate crime. "Safe and Sustainable[47]" was a partnership plan for Waltham Forest running from 2008 to 2011. The partnership plan was designed to work with local residents to develop a sustainable

---

[46] See Ima Jackson-Obot, "Waltham Forest: PCT Merges Ahead of Reforms", 4 April 2011, available at www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/wfnews/8953254.WALTHAM_FOREST__PCT_merges_ahead_of_reforms (accessed November 2011).

[47] See https://democracy.walthamforest.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=7362.

community strategy for the borough on the basis that the population was likely to grow and diversify over the next 15–20 years. The partnership programme also focused on the engagement of local residents in forming priorities in crime reduction and community safety.

3.3 The Perception of Muslims in the UK

A survey exploring people's prejudices carried out in early 2005 found that around 58 per cent of people thought it was important for society to respond to the needs of Muslims.[48] The majority (66 per cent) of people supported equal employment opportunity measures for Muslims, while 19 per cent thought that such measures had gone too far.[49] The majority expressed positive (38 per cent) or neutral (43 per cent) feelings towards Muslims, although one-fifth expressed negative feelings about Muslims.[50] A quarter of respondents said that they did sometimes feel prejudiced against Muslims but would not let it show, while 9 per cent said they did not mind if they came across as prejudiced against Muslims.[51] When asked whether particular groups were accepted as British, Arabs were the ethnic group and Muslims the religious group that people felt were least likely to be regarded as British.[52] Around one-third of respondents viewed Muslims as posing a cultural and physical threat to the UK.[53]

An opinion poll by the polling company Populus of 1,005 adults in the UK taken in June 2006 found that 60 per cent of people felt that Muslims made a valuable contribution to British society; 60 percent also felt that Muslims were viewed with suspicion by their fellow citizens. A similar percentage felt it was unacceptable for police to view Muslims with greater suspicion because the 7 July bombers were Muslim. In addition, 45 per cent disagreed with the statement that Islam encourages more violence than other religions, compared with 30 per cent who agreed with the statement. A majority, 54 per cent, disagreed with the statement that Islam is a threat to the UK's way of life. Almost three-quarters (74 per cent) felt that Muslims needed to do more to integrate into mainstream British culture. In a Gallup poll of the UK

---

[48] D. Abrams and D. Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, Centre for the Study of Group Processes, University of Kent, 2006, p. 28 (hereafter Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*).

[49] Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 29.

[50] Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 34.

[51] Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 54.

[52] Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 56.

[53] Abrams and Houston, *Equality, Diversity and Prejudice in Britain – Results from the 2005 National Survey*, p. 67.

population, only 45 per cent of the general public said Muslims living in the UK were loyal to the nation, and 55 per cent said Muslims were respectful of other religions.[54]

---

[54] D. Mogahed, *Beyond Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation*, Gallup, Princeton, NJ, 2007.