

# THE CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

## **Purpose**

**To introduce the Cultural Engagement Strategy to the members of the Surrey Heath Partnership**

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## 1. Background Information

Surrey Heath has proportionally fewer members of visible minority groups than Surrey and the South East and therefore the country as a whole but 7% of the population are from ethnic minority groups. Surrey Heath houses over half of Surrey's Nepalese population and has a significant representation of people of Asian origin, specifically Indian and Pakistani.

A number of faiths and cultures choose Surrey Heath as a base for the wider Blackwater Valley community. A significant Sikh population (300 families) utilise the Cadet Centre in Church Hill, St Pauls for a monthly worship and social gathering. The Islamic Centre on the A30 is well established and serves a population spreading from Surrey Heath to Fleet, Farnborough, Aldershot and Sandhurst. A Nepalese Buddhist Association have been trying for some considerable time to get premises within Surrey Heath for worship and a welfare organisation. There is a Nepalese community facility in Mytchett but this is mainly for private hire for functions.

In order to tailor the service delivery of the Partnership's Stakeholders we need to understand our population and build strong links with them in order to have mutual trust that enables communication on important issues. The central government push for greater community confidence in the statutory service providers has to include the specific needs of minority groups.

## 2. The draft aims of the Cultural Plan:

- To understand the population, its culture, geography and faith and to share this knowledge across the Partnership. The plan will identify key individuals within groups who are willing and able to promote the objectives of the plan
  - To support existing mainstream positive activities within cultural groups with the ambition of encouraging cross-cultural interaction
  - To explore, and if appropriate support, the creation of a Faith Forum to share experiences and provide a formal structure for engagement in service delivery
  - To deliver Op Fairway to frontline staff to increase awareness of the threat of terrorist activity and how to prevent it
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The initial phase of the plan to understand the existing cultures and structures within them will culminate in a multi-cultural celebration event in 2011 which will be the springboard to future engagement. Mainstream activities include sporting activities such as football and cricket, worship and social events within and across faiths and cultures.

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