Operation Chettle
Community Engagement Strategy

Ps Rawkins/Insp Goldsmith

7th January 2010

The Trial for operation Auto refers to defendants from a protest which took place on March 10th 2009 within Luton town centre. This engagement strategy is to deal with engagements both after the trial itself and any subsequent critical or serious incidents that may occur.

All critical and serious incidents, which occur in the town, have the potential to negatively impact on the residents of Luton. It is not uncommon for such incidents to create an increase in community tension leading to policing implications and further criminality. It is therefore imperative that when such incidents occur a planned response to managing community tension runs in unison with the investigation strategy. It should be born in mind that in some circumstance the Investigation strategy might conflict with the community engagement plan, e.g. a series of arrests or house searches could increase community tension. Unless exception circumstances exist however the community engagement plan should not compromise any investigation into serious criminality.

Critical / Serious incidents occurs – Trigger plan

Plans are already in place for dealing with any incident that may occur during the course of the court case. This in itself has now been declared as a critical incident due to the potential for any result causing problems to community cohesion across Luton.

It is thought that any other Critical/Serious incident that might occur as a result of this case would fall under one of the following categories;-

1) Planned disorder as a result of the outcome of the trial – This would likely form by way of an organised protest by either the English Defence League or another party.

2) Spontaneous disorder – this could take place either close to the court or at any place associated with the defendants or their beliefs.

3) Targeting of defendants at home addresses.

With any of the above scenarios it is important that the communication strategy is flexible and responsive to the needs of Bedfordshire Police and the communities we serve.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

- Formation of a SNT engagement team. – This will be a team of experienced SNT officers (Constables, PCSOs and Special constables) who will focus on the operational crisis epicentre. This team should consist of a minimum of 4 officers to a maximum of 10. Officers should initially be drawn from the SNT who has geographical responsibility for the area where the OCE is identified. Local officers will have expert knowledge of the area and will have a better understanding of "the state of normality" for the area and to what degree tension has increased. Where sufficient resources are not available from the relevant SNT experienced officers from other SNT areas should support them. Where necessary consideration should be given to requesting SNT officers from other divisions (any such agreement would have to be reciprocated by our division if the need arose). Community Bronze and duty planning will be responsible for ensuring adequate resources are available for the formation of this team
- The SNT engagement team will be briefed at an agreed time the day after a critical / serious incident (and every day thereafter) at the relevant SNT office. Community "Bronze" (or Deputy) will be responsible for conducting the briefing. Where possible the Investigation SIO or Deputy should also provide a briefing.
- The objectives of the SNT engagement team will be:
1. Public reassurance through visible presence and circulation of key messages

2. Identify community tension and the core reason for the tension. The critical / serious incident may have been the catalyst for community tension and not the core underlying reason for the tension.
3. Engage with local community to reduce community tension
4. Gather intelligence to assist the criminal investigation
5. Foster new relationships with members of the community, which can be maintained and used in the future.
6. Counter any identified rumour or misinformation which is circulating within the affected area
7. Provide feedback to Community Command team to assist their decision making processes

- SNT engagement team will contact KINs, engage with local residents (house to house where necessary), liaise with appropriate stakeholders / partners and visit key locations in the areas e.g. religious premises, shops, community groups, educational premises, doctors surgeries, businesses, youth clubs, community centres, etc.
- Officers employed within the engagement team should not be deployed to other non related incidents or planned public order role which will impede their ability to achieve the objectives
- The need for continued deployment of the SNT engagement team will be reviewed at the end of each 24-hour period. Community Silver or Bronze will be responsible for any decision to withdraw the team.

BASSG / Officer's cultural and language skills

Where the SNT engagement team are to be deployed into an area specific to one or some of our minority communities consideration should be giving to identifying officer with appropriate cultural and language skills. Such officers would be a significant addition to the engagement team and could also act in an advisory capacity when appropriate to the Community command team and SIOs

Community Cohesion Team

- Will provide a written community impact assessment
- Will engage / consult with relevant external contacts (**Appendix A**) to use influence to assist in reducing tension.
- Identify key people to form a small "focus group" of "Community ambassadors" - Focus group to receive regular briefings from community lead and Investigation SIO providing them as much information as possible. Group to include IAG member and to act in an advisory capacity to both Community and Investigation teams. Group also to assist in tension monitoring and tension reduction
- Update community impact assessment as necessary

IAG/Police Authority.

- To be engaged with the planned response to any incident providing advice and scrutiny.
- To use established networks to assist with countering any indentified rumour or misinformation that is circulating within the area.
- To help promote positive messages within our communities.

Other divisional officers and Non divisional officers

Despite any critical / serious incident our normal policing business will still continue. This will undoubtedly necessitate patrol officers, dog handlers, traffic officers and other officers entering the operational crisis epicentre. It would be unprofessional and damaging to the Community engagement plan if such officers presented a contrary or inconsistent message to local people they came into contact with.

Such officer should therefore be briefed as necessary regarding the community engagement plan to ensure they conform and provide a positive and appropriate response when needed.

Media

Should the community engagement plan be triggered a media strategy will also come into being. Any media strategy will support this plan as well as the ongoing investigation.

When appropriate we should use existing media outlets aimed at our minority communities e.g. Diverse FM, ACCDF new letter, BME newspapers.

Community Cohesion Contingency Plan

Consideration has been given to the existence of the community cohesion contingency plan (CCCP). Should it be necessary to invoke the CCCP and call together the associated group, the community engagement trigger plan will still be appropriate and can be encompassed within any wider CCCP action plan. This group have will be made aware of the current situation and be prepared to convene if required.

Human rights

All responses and actions contained within this plan are considered appropriate and proportionate and give due consideration to the rights of individuals and our communities.

COMMUNITY COHESION IN LUTON - A BRIEFING PAPER
JANUARY 2010

<u>**KEY MESSAGES**</u>

* The people of Luton have a long history of working together, Lutonians are traditionally proud of their town as a welcoming and inclusive place.

* The overwhelming majority of people in Luton do not share the views or beliefs of the extremist few who have disrupted community cohesion in the town recently.

* Everyone has the right to their point of view and freedom of expression but all must be respectful of others and act in line with the law.

* The Luton Forum and our residents and businesses support the police and the legal system in prosecuting anyone suspected of breaking the law or behaving in a disrespectful, threatening manner.

* The Luton Forum with local people is united in its aim to build even stronger and safer communities.

* Recent protest activity by a vocal few has only served to strengthen Luton's desire to work together as a community to promote cohesion.

* Luton's wider Muslim communities have been very unhappy with the actions of a small group of protesters and have publicly stated that this behaviour is not in line with mainstream Islam.

1) BACKGROUND

Luton has long enjoyed being home to a diverse range of communities and remains a place where community cohesion is very high. When asked in June 2009, 82% of residents said they lived in a town where people from different backgrounds got on well together.

However, Luton has had a lot of negative headlines in the media over the past year following a welcome home parade organised by Luton Borough Council on 10 March 2009 for 200 members of the 2nd Royal Anglian Regiment, returning from its second tour of duty in Iraq.

Protesters from a group known as 'Call to Submission' (CTS), organised a protest during the parade.

Instead of holding a peaceful protest, the group held placards, accusing the soldiers of being war criminals, and verbally accused soldiers of being 'rapists' and 'baby killers'. Members of the crowd in attendance to support the returned soldiers became angry with protesters. Verbal accusations were exchanged and two crowd members,

who were not involved in the protest, were arrested. A further seven men, who were involved with CTS, were later charged with an offence under Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 after CCTV footage was examined by police and put before the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

The seven men from CTS charged after the initial parade are currently standing trial in court. The two crowd members mentioned above were charged on the day. They have pleaded guilty and will appear in court on 22 January. All charges relate to public order offences and anyone who is found guilty will be fined.

2) IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

11-14 January – verdict likely in case of seven men charged over 10 March protests

22 January – Two crowd members from the protests on 10 March due in court

3 February – Protesters arrested during incident on 28 August due in court.

3) WHAT COHESION CHALLENGES HAVE WE FACED SINCE 10 MARCH 2009?

There have been a number of incidents since March 2009. Some appear to have been related to the protests. A brief time-line is set out below, together with a summary of some of the on-going community cohesion programmes and projects in the town.

13 April: Illegal protest by far right sympathisers communicating via the internet since March 10. Six people arrested by police.

5 May: Fire at Luton Central Mosque. An investigation into the fire continues.

24 May: Second protest by far right sympathisers.12 people are due in court, mostly on affray and violent disorder charges. One 17-year-old was fined on the day. One person is being prosecuted for racially aggravated assault, and two other men were charged with assault against a police officer and are currently due to appear before a court.

28 August: A further illegal march through the streets of Luton by people communicating via the internet. Police and civilians prevented young members of the Asian community from making a stand against the protesters, although some were later arrested for violent disorder.

August Home Office approves march banning order, which expired in December.

December: A walk-about in Bury Park by a prominent Muslim politician was disrupted. One man was arrested and bailed pending a decision by the CPS.

A great deal of work has taken place over these difficult months and partners, especially the Council and the police, have worked closely with all our communities to develop even closer working relationships with those groups affected by the tensions.

HOW ARE WE WORKING TOWARDS THE LUTON FORUM'S LONGER-TERM VISION OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES WITHIN A DIVERSE AND VIBRANT TOWN?

A **Commission on Community Cohesion** has been established to take evidence from local people and partners, and will report in summer 2010.

Luton in Harmony campaign has been under development since last autumn and will be formally launched in January to promote all that we know is good about the town - positive stories and images of local people working together to build civic pride and confidence. A key aim of LiH is to communicate positive images of day-to-day life in Luton to challenge the negative publicity generated by the actions of a small, vocal minority.

Neighbourhood Governance Pilot Scheme. This project encourages local residents to get involved in shaping and commissioning local projects and services, and is now up and running in west Luton. It has so far helped organise and run community festivals at the Chaul End Centre (for Challney residents), Hockwell Ring Centre (for Leagrave residents) and the Lewsey Festival, which attracted around 2000 people. Some 200 agreed to take part in future neighbourhood governance activities.

Luton Generations Together. Led by the Cultural Trust, this project will deliver programmes and projects which will bring younger and older members of the community together in a wide range of positive activities.

Youth work teams are currently working with a range of youth groups to address serious challenges faced by an above-average young population in Luton, reflecting the cultural diversity of our younger population. The success of a recent bid for 'myplace' – a £4.7 million youth facility for the town has just been announced.

50+ work is currently underway with an umbrella 50+ Forum to develop positive responses to an ageing population. Some very successful events have been held involving all communities: for example 50+ week last May.

Luton Council of Faiths. The Council has a long history of working with the Luton Council of Faiths. This has included working with local businesses and faith groups to develop Fair Trade venues in Luton.

Community safety. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, a multi-agency body, continues to work to reduce crime and counter negative press images, dealing with anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.

Love Music Hate Racism. The Council supported this one day event in August attended by hundreds of local people to celebrate the power of music to unite people from different backgrounds.

Luton Carnival. More than 80,000 people attended the biggest one-day street carnival in Europe in 2009, here in Luton. The day was trouble-free, with just two arrests for drink-related offences.

Luton Mela Festival. The Luton Mela Festival, celebrated most recently on 2 August 2009, highlights the best in Asian performance and visual arts, showcasing international, national and local south Asian performers from Bhangra and Bollywood Bangla Qawwali to Asian urban performances.

For further information contact:

Luton Borough Council 01582 547402: Chris Hall, Fiona Mair, Kasey Gardiner.

Bedfordshire Police 01234 842390: Jo Hobbs, Sarah Wilkinson, Julie Cox, Nicola Dalliday.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR JIM THAKOORDON

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Introduction

Since the July, 2003 bombings in London we have had lots of debates, discussions, suggestions, explanations and ideas regarding the reasons for extremist behaviour by Muslims in Britain and ways in which such behaviour and ideology should be challenged and eliminated. Reasons identified for the problem include lack of community cohesion; poverty and deprivation; the impact of cumulative disadvantages; under-achievement in education and socio-economic status; opposition to what has been described as 'British' or 'civilised' values; commitment to terrorism; alienation amongst young people and lack of integration within mainstream society.

The Government from the Prime Minister down have supported even more drastic legislation to restrict the rights and liberties of citizens to combat what they perceived as terrorism. At the same time they have largely ignored the national and international issues, which have contributed to dissatisfaction amongst a substantial minority of Muslims and black youths. The

so-called war on terror, at home and abroad and subsequent actions by security forces are examples why so many Muslim and black youths are alienated. Continuing poverty, discrimination, high unemployment, under-achievement in education are also important in shaping behaviour and attitudes.

Solutions include more legislation to restrict certain types of immigrants from entering Britain; greater security surveillance and monitoring of certain individuals and groups; deporting and or prosecuting people perceived to be terrorist or terrorist sympathisers and extremists; encouragement to the Muslim elders and community leaders to identify and inform on Muslim extremists, and a host of measures aimed at restricting further rights, liberties and freedom of certain people and groups in Britain.

Unfortunately, very little time and space have been given towards building community cohesion, reducing alienation amongst young people and creating a more just, fair, equal, inclusive society, free from fear, poverty, discrimination and extremist behaviour. In may towns, cities and even in rural areas of Britain, people are living in fear of anti-social behaviour, crime, violence, racism and poverty. There is a limit to what changes in law and order, immigration rules and security measures can contribute towards addressing the issues and solutions associated with the problems relating to lack of community cohesion and fear of terrorism.

The Muslim community and sections of the African Community have been characterised as criminals and threats to so-called "British values", whatever that is supposed to be.

Given the above it would appear that community development work (CDW) could be redefined in order to address some of the many concerns expressed since 2003 and respond to the changes, challenges and opportunities identified in the various neighbourhood renewal programmes, aimed at regenerating neighbourhoods, and making them more inclusive, prosperous and cohesive.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit which was formed some five years ago and located within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with a massive budget and strong commitment to community cohesion and social inclusion, has been trying to address some of the problems facing young disillusioned, alienated and disadvantaged people. The promotion of local strategic partnership (LSP's) and the focus on issues such as a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal, regeneration, community empowerment, capacity building of local communities, community cohesion and partnership networking designed to tackle poverty, deprivation and social exclusion have substantially changed the nature of CDW. Training and development in CDW will have to change continuously in order to equip workers with the new skills, qualifications, experience and knowledge necessary to think and act strategically, within a holistic framework designed to promote and sustain community cohesion, and ensure equality and access to opportunities.

Training and development of CDW must focus on issues associated with diversity, cultural awareness, religion and belief, discrimination, social exclusion, institutional racism, poverty and deprivation, inequality, social justice and alienation. CDW must be able to understand the impact these issues have on the lives of people who have suffered because of their race, ethnicity, religion or belief, culture, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, class or status. Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities have suffered for generations due to the cumulative and historical impact of their racial, cultural, religious and ethnic origins.

Unfortunately, at a time when it would appear that anti-social behaviour and violent crimes are on the increase many local authorities are cutting back resources for youth and community development work. This must have a significant negative impact not only on tackling anti-social behaviour and crime, but also discrimination and disadvantages amongst black and Muslim youths.

Black and Minority Ethnic Community and CDW

There are some 5 million plus BME people representing around 8.5% of the UK population who are amongst the most deprived, disadvantaged and discriminated against communities in Britain. BME taken as a whole are more likely to be unemployed, living in poor housing and environment, experiencing gross inequality in health, suffering from the impact of crimes, being paid less and having less access to career opportunities. In many large towns and cities they often make up a sizeable proportion of the local population and are more likely to benefit from quality CDW. Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African Caribbean young people have been the least achievers in the education system for many years. They have also been disproportionately represented in areas of poverty and deprivation, unemployment access to essential resources such as housing, and career opportunities. Even in the small number of areas where some youth and CDW is taking place it is only available to the most vulnerable and only a tiny minority of people.

In addition only a few CD workers are sufficiently equipped with the knowledge, understanding, confidence, resources or ability to involve and support the diverse BME communities. It would take much more than CDW to enable BME young people to break the cycle of deprivation, discrimination, exclusion and powerlessness. This will take much greater commitment and resources by central and local government to tackle deep institutional, cultural and economic problems which include people in the cycle of disadvantage and deprivation.

Institutions and even CDW sometimes tend to stereotype BME communities in terms of class, culture, religion and belief, lifestyles, class and needs. They often ignore the fact that the BME communities and the voluntary and community sectors, which support some of them, are very diverse and dynamic. BME communities are often marginalised from the decision making process even in areas where the LSP or public bodies have been awarded specific funding to tackle the obvious disadvantages being suffered disproportionately by BME communities. Ignorance, lack of awareness, stereotyping, tokenism or racism often play a large part in excluding BME from the decision making process and thereby perpetuates the cycle of exclusion and deprivation.

Racism is pervasive across Britain today and it is not restricted to urban or rural areas with high or low BME population density, nor is it restricted to gender, age, ability/disability, religion, belief, culture or class. It is deeply ingrained in our institutions, structures, processes and practices at national, regional and local levels. However, some sections of the BME communities such as those with disabilities, those living alone, the elderly and those who have difficulty with literacy and numeracy are particularly vulnerable to racism, bullying and harassment. People from ethnic groups other than white can sometimes perpetuate harassment, bullying and denial of human rights against vulnerable BME individuals and groups. This is not an easy area for CDW or institutions to cope with at times.

The Challenge of Equality, Diversity and Cultural Awareness in CDW & LSP's

The success of community development work in general and through local strategic partnerships, local and central government could be measured by their approach not only in identifying those involved in extreme, criminal and anti-social behaviour, but also on the actual resources available to deal with the cause of such behaviour. Working towards the promotion of equal access to resources and opportunities, community cohesion, social inclusion and cultural awareness should be at the centre of CDW. Sometimes CDW and people engaged in empowering local communities have to challenge established statutory agencies as well as community and voluntary organisations, which may consciously or

unwittingly exclude BME from their work. This could include tenants associations, groups dealing with youth, elderly or disability. To have an impact on tackling BME exclusion and racism in all areas of local communities CDW will need to familiarise themselves with the many aspects of equality and employment legislation and human rights.

Some considerations for local and central government and CDW

In order to work strategically, promote equality and social inclusion, social justice and sustainable communities local and central government and indeed CDW must address the following issues:

- Provide more resources for tackling inequality and social exclusion

- Acknowledge the many profound changes which have taken place in multi-racial/multi-cultural Britain during the last decade

- Involve BME communities in all areas of decision making, identifying priorities and resources

- Identify needs, concerns and issues associated with BME communities and involve them in all partnerships

- Welcome, value, promote and demonstrate commitment to equality, diversity, cultural understanding and greater social interaction

- Challenge stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and unfairness

- Promote inclusion, diversity, respect and understanding between all ethnic groups and communities

- Organise inter-cultural events and activities designed to reduce the isolation and alienation of particular cultural and religious groups

- Assist and support BME communities in accessing resources and opportunities

- Enable BME individuals and communities to access training opportunities and to work strategically to promote positive aspects of their culture and lifestyle

- Support local communities to become inclusive and to tackle common concerns such as worklessness, poor housing and environment, crimes, anti-social behaviour, health inequality, poverty and disadvantage

- Encourage BME individuals to become involved in mainstream activities and to fully participate in community development, skills for life learning, neighbourhood renewal and capacity building

- Promote and support empowerment of everyone in the community

- Identify and remove where possible barriers to social inclusion and community cohesion

- Research and share good practice in community relations

- Listen and learn from every community

- Share information and good practice with all ethnic groups and stakeholders

- Challenge their own prejudices and stereotypes and always try to be objective in all their work

- Set good examples and show leadership, professionalism and commitment to diversity

- Encourage interaction between various ethnic groups and assist in fostering trust and respect

- Ensure that all literature, posters and material are free from any unacceptable racial or cultural concerns

- Ensure appropriate use of language, presentation of information, communication of sensitive issues, use of venues, provision of food, use of artefacts and welcoming people
- Respect diversity in language, food, dress, lifestyle, body language, customs, culture and preferences
- Treat all others as you would wish to be treated

Jim Thakoordin has been a trainer and consultant on equality, quality, management practice, employment law and community development for nearly 20 years. He has designed and delivered training for voluntary and statutory organisations across Britain and has written over a dozen publications on issues associated with health, education, community empowerment, equal opportunities, employment law and management. He is currently a member of 2 Local Strategic Partnerships and has designed and delivered a wide range of OCN levels 1-3 courses in community development, capacity building and empowering local communities. Chair of an active BME organisation, member of several local, regional and national agencies and strategic organisations and has been an advisor to Government Ministers on Education and Employment. His academic qualifications include a BA Hons in Government and Sociology, Oxford Diploma in Social Studies, PGCE, Certificate in Counselling, Diploma in Leadership and Management and an MBA in Business. He can be contacted on jim@thakoordin.fsnet.co.uk